

EI-598

ANNETTE TERLIZZI MONOUYDAS
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ITALY, 1928
AGE 8
PASSAGE ON "THE CONTE BIANCAMANO"

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SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Monday, April 24, 1995. I'm in the Stonequist apartment complex, and that's S-T-O-N-E-Q-U-I-S-T, in Saratoga Springs, and I'm in the apartment of Annette Terlizzi Monouydas. And Mrs. Monouydas came from Italy in 1928 when she was eight years old. I also want to comment, for the sake of the tape, that there's traffic outside that may be picked up on this recording. Anyway, thank you for letting me come out. Can we begin by you giving me your birthdate?

MONOUYDAS: April 18, 1920.

SIGRIST: And where in Italy were you born?

MONOUYDAS: The outskirts of Naples, Provincia de Valino[ph].

SIGRIST: And the town?

MONOUYDAS: Andretta.

SIGRIST: And can you spell that, please?

MONOUYDAS: A-N-D-R-E-T-T-A.

SIGRIST: Thanks. What do you remember about the town?

MONOUYDAS: What do I remember? It was a small town, very neighborly. We all used to go to each others' home, I remember. And we used to have church processions in the streets, and we always end up going to other people's home back and forth, or they would come to our home, and it was just one happy party, it seems like every weekend, every weekend. It was just wonderful.

SIGRIST: Is there one specific building in town that sticks out in your mind for some reason?

MONOUYDAS: The church was so beautiful. That's, I don't remember too much, but that the church really was outstanding to me.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the church?

MONOUYDAS: No, I cannot remember that, I'm sorry to say.

SIGRIST: Is there a particular feature of the church that you found particularly beautiful?

MONOUYDAS: No. It's just, it seems like the statues got to me. They were so beautiful, and the way people used to carry them on the streets, and that's, that's about the only thing I really remember, to tell you the truth.

SIGRIST: What kind of a celebration are you describing to me?

MONOUYDAS: You know, different saints day.

SIGRIST: Like a saints day.

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Um, do you remember, do you remember all the details of how that was celebrated? Like you say, they were carrying a statue through the street. Elaborate a little bit for me on that.

MONOUYDAS: Well, all I remember is people used to carry them, certain people used to carry the statues, and then everybody followed, and we used to walk all over the streets. That's what I remember.

SIGRIST: Was there a specific saint's day that you recall celebrating?

MONOUYDAS: NO, because we celebrated so many, you know? It was one after another. And . . .

SIGRIST: Would you say, was this a recreational activity as well as a religious activity?

MONOUYDAS: Yes, yes, it was.

SIGRIST: How did you, how did you celebrate your religion at home? How did you practice it at home?

MONOUYDAS: We just said our prayers for Mother, you know, we just said our prayers every day, and that was about it.

SIGRIST: What religion were you?

MONOUYDAS: Catholic.

SIGRIST: Was the whole town Catholic?

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Everyone that you can remember.

MONOUYDAS: Everybody that I remember.

SIGRIST: Was there, did you have a shrine in the house?

MONOUYDAS: No, I don't remember a shrine.

SIGRIST: Religious picture of some sort?

MONOUYDAS: My mother had God hanging, you know, a little cross. That's about it.

SIGRIST: Were the children expected to undergo religious education of some sort?

MONOUYDAS: Well, not like they did here, no. They just, just said a prayer, you know, and that was it.

SIGRIST: What about Communion or Confirmation?

MONOUYDAS: You know, Mr. Sigrist, I don't remember that, and yet I made my Confirmation.

SIGRIST: Might you have made it here, though?

MONOUYDAS: No, in Italy. I was confirmed and all that. But I can't remember. Is that awful?

SIGRIST: Well, no. It may not have been memorable. (he laughs) Can you tell me how you celebrated Christmas perhaps?

MONOUYDAS: Christmas, we never had any toys, if that's what you mean.

SIGRIST: Well, how did you celebrate?

MONOUYDAS: Just by people, either we'd go to other people's home or

they'd come to our home and enjoy wine and eating and . . .

SIGRIST: Were there special foods for that?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah. There's just certain kind of foods that we make.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what those are?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. Spaghetti (Italian).

SIGRIST: Spaghetti . . .

MONOUYDAS: (Italian)

SIGRIST: (Italian)?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. That's with olive oil and garlic and anchovies. And another one was stuffed peppers, Italian stuffed peppers. Not like the kind they make here with hamburger, you know. And another one was, uh, fish.

SIGRIST: What kind of fish?

MONOUYDAS: Whatever they could find. Whatever would be in season.

SIGRIST: Was this town landlocked, or was it on the ocean?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no. It wasn't on the ocean. I don't know how far it was from Naples, but I know it was the outskirts of Naples. That's what I remember.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me the house that you lived in?

MONOUYDAS: The house?

SIGRIST: Or apartment, whatever the structure was.

MONOUYDAS: Well, it seems like we're next, you know, attached to other

homes, and all I remember is we, we used to have tamed rabbits, chickens in the house, because we used, my mother used to kill the chickens, and that's what we'd have for meat once in a blue moon. We were mostly raised on, our breakfast was, we used to make our own homemade wine, and our breakfast used to be stale bread after a week old, and you break up onions in there, and then you pour wine over it, and that used to be our breakfast seven days a week.

SIGRIST: Who made, where did the bread come from?

MONOUYDAS: Well, my mother used to mix it, and she'd take it to this, one man had big ovens, and everybody took it there, and in payment we gave him a loaf of bread to use his ovens. He used to cook it for us.

SIGRIST: And how often did she do this?

MONOUYDAS: Once a week.

SIGRIST: And can you describe for me the process of making your own wine, what you remember about that?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, we had to stomp the grapes, my two brothers and I. You know, we had these big barrels, fifty gallon barrels, drums. And we used to raise our own grapes in Italy. So we had to stomp them and make the juice out of them. And I can't remember the rest of it, what my mother did.

SIGRIST: But that was your . . .

MONOUYDAS: But we had the hardest part to do.

SIGRIST: Yeah, that was your participation.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, that's what we had to do.

SIGRIST: This maybe seems like a silly question, but was it difficult to wash the grape stains off of your feet? Do you remember that?

MONOUYDAS: Well, no, I don't remember that, to tell you the truth. It couldn't have been too bad.

SIGRIST: It must not have been too hard.

MONOUYDAS: I don't have any discoloration on my feet today. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about the layout of the inside of the house. How many rooms did you have?

MONOUYDAS: Well, my mother had a room, and my brother, and I, I slept with my mother. That's, and my two brothers had one. Two bedrooms.

SIGRIST: And then, was it just a two-room structure?

MONOUYDAS: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: So what about . . .

MONOUYDAS: And we had a kitchen with a fireplace there. That's where my mother used to do the cooking. And a table.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what the floor was like in the house?

MONOUYDAS: It seems like there were hard, I remember stone, stone floors.

SIGRIST: May I ask, is there a window open? Do you have a window open?

MONOUYDAS: It's right over there.

SIGRIST: Do you mind if I close it, because the . . . Let me just shut this off. We're going to pause. (break in tape) We were talking about the inside of the house. You remembered perhaps stones for floor.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, I remember stone floors somehow.

SIGRIST: Do you remember furniture in the house?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah. We had beds and tables and chairs.

SIGRIST: Is there one particular piece of furniture that sticks out in your mind?

MONOUYDAS: No. All I remember, I used to get on a stepladder, like, to get into bed. They were so high, the beds were so high. That's what I remember.

SIGRIST: Was there anything unique about the bed that you slept in?

MONOUYDAS: No. Just that it was so high for me to get up to, to get into.

SIGRIST: Tell me how you lit the house, the house? What kind of light did you have?

MONOUYDAS: Light?

SIGRIST: Did you have electricity?

MONOUYDAS: I can't remember. Isn't that awful? I can't remember. I can't remember that. Would you believe it?

SIGRIST: What about, um . . .

MONOUYDAS: We had lights of some kind, but I can't remember what kind.

SIGRIST: How about heat? Do you remember how you heated, if you even had heat?

MONOUYDAS: No, we didn't have to have heat there because we were in the southern, southern part. It was always warm.

SIGRIST: Did you have a garden?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, my mother worked in the fields, and after school we had to go and visit her. We had to go and work out there. So it was a combination between grapes and, and a garden.

SIGRIST: What kind of field work did your mother do, do you remember?

MONOUYDAS: A bit of everything.

SIGRIST: Was it her field that she was working in?

MONOUYDAS: Yes, uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Um, was it her field, or was it your father's field? I'm just wondering how the family, who owned that piece of land, I guess, is what I'm . . .

MONOUYDAS: My parents, that's all I know. You know, they owned it. That's all I know. Because my father wasn't home, you know. I'd never seen my father until I came to this country, and he'd never seen me. So my mother was, brought us up alone in Italy, until we come to this country.

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

MONOUYDAS: Alex Terlizzi, Alexandria Terlizzi.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about when he came to America and why.

MONOUYDAS: Well, he went to the war, during World War One he went there, and after the World War One was over, he went home. I don't know, I don't think he did come home, because I don't remember it. He came straight to this country, and he started working on a railroad. That's what he told us. And after he was here for so long, then he sent away after us. But in the meantime he was, he became an engineer on a railroad between New York and, um, Chicago. Then he got sick. He got TB, and they sent him to Saranac Lake, Trooodle[ph] Sanitarium, and that's where he cured. In two years, while he was there, after he was getting better, then he started getting rides, you know, with different people, and they were going out taking rides, and he always said he wanted to settle there because the weather, the climate was so good for him. He never wanted to go back to New York or Chicago again. (she clears her throat) So that's where he decided to buy this piece of land, and he started building, after he got out of the sanitarium, he started building this little hot dog stand. And I don't know how long he was there, a couple of years, two or three years in business, and then he finally sent for my mother and my two brothers and I. That's when we came to this country.

SIGRIST: When you were a little girl in Italy growing up, did you understand that you had a father who was here? How did you perceive the absence of your father?

MONOUYDAS: Well, because I'd never ever seen him, or he never seen me, and my mother just told me, you know, that someday we'll see him. She kept telling me that. "Someday we'll see him." And

that's . . .

SIGRIST: Did you have any perceptions about what America was?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, gosh, no. None whatsoever. But the grownups, when we were leaving, they said, "Oh, now you're going to be rich people," and all that. That's no such thing. You have to work for anything you get. You have to work hard. And, of course, I didn't know how to speak English when I came here, you know, that's pretty tough.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Well, we'll talk about that when we get you to America. Was your father, so your father went to America just after the First World War. Am I understanding this correctly?

MONOUYDAS: He came, after the First World War he came straight to America, yeah.

SIGRIST: He came right over to America.

MONOUYDAS: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Did he have family here in America?

MONOUYDAS: Well, he had a brother, two brothers, and a sister here. They were in New York and Chicago, too, area.

SIGRIST: Do you know if they were instrumental in bringing him over at that time?

MONOUYDAS: Why, gee, I really don't know. We, you know, it seems like we never talked about it. You know, we were so excited, but in a new country that you . . .

SIGRIST: Well, and so often later on . . .

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: People don't want to talk about what they left behind.

MONOUYDAS: That's right.

SIGRIST: That kind of thing. Um, when you were in Italy with your mom, how did she support the family?

MONOUYDAS: By having this garden and wine and, oh, she didn't have a job, because she had to bring us up. I don't know if my father sent her any money. I really don't know. But actually we were, I mean, I never seen any money around, and that's how we used to go to this baker and he used to cook our bread, and then that was his payment. We had to give him a loaf of bread. And that's how my mother did things, I guess.

SIGRIST: Were there other family members in this town, grandparents or, um . . .

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, but they all died. I was younger, you know, pretty young, and I can't remember them. The only one I remember is my grandmother on my father's side. I remember I used to fan her. I used to come home from school and she was so sick in bed. She was in bed all the time. And, um, it was my duty to go and fan her by the hour, sit there and just fan her because it was so hot. She was burning up all the time.

SIGRIST: Did she have a fever, or . . .

MONOUYDAS: Well, she had some kind of sickness, you know, where she was bloated up like a balloon. I don't know.

SIGRIST: Was she living with you at that time?

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: No.

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: Do you remember when she died?

MONOUYDAS: I was six or seven years old.

SIGRIST: I was wondering if you remembered the funeral practices or anything like that at the time.

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: What did a little girl do for fun in Italy? What kinds of games . . .

MONOUYDAS: We didn't have no games. We didn't have no toys. None of that. What we had to do after school is go in the fields and help my mother.

SIGRIST: What kinds of . . .

MONOUYDAS: Work.

SIGRIST: . . . work in the fields did you do?

MONOUYDAS: Well, whatever it was for hay, corn, vegetables, you know, hoe, what is it, using the hoe, or whatever. Pick grapes, bring them home, things like that.

SIGRIST: You said you had two brothers.

MONOUYDAS: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: What were their names?

MONOUYDAS: Louie and Danny, and they're both deceased.

SIGRIST: Are they older than you are?

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: How many years between the children?

MONOUYDAS: Well, let's see. My young, my oldest brother was, he was born in 1913. My other one, no, wait a minute. Danny was born in 1917, my oldest one was born in 1913 or '15? I think it was '15. And I was born in 1920.

SIGRIST: So sort of two or three years between.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Were you closer to one brother than the other as a child growing up?

MONOUYDAS: In Italy you mean?

SIGRIST: Yeah.

MONOUYDAS: No. Because we, but we all had to do the same thing, you know, and, no, I can't say that I was any closer to one or the other.

SIGRIST: Is there . . .

MONOUYDAS: In this country, I was closer to Danny because he lived near us, where my oldest brother, he moved to Connecticut, so we didn't see him only practically once a year.

SIGRIST: Is there a story that you remember about, something about you with your brothers, maybe something that happened that

involved the three of you, or some trouble you all got into together, that comes to mind?

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: If you got into some trouble, if, how would your mother deal with the situation?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, she was no softie. (she laughs) To tell you the truth, the only time I got a beating in Italy, and that was a schoolteacher, if we were, if we were bad, I don't even remember what I did, but she told me to go out and get myself the switch, that she's going to use it on me. And that's all, that's the only time I remember whatever I did wrong. I don't know, I can't remember what I did wrong.

SIGRIST: Whatever it was, you paid for it.

MONOUYDAS: I paid for it. You had to, everybody had to go out and get their own switches on trees, you know, take it right out, try and pull it as best they could.

SIGRIST: How many years did you go to school before you came to America?

MONOUYDAS: I was eight, what, two or three years?

SIGRIST: What else sticks out in your mind about school and the experience of going?

MONOUYDAS: In Italy?

SIGRIST: Yeah, in Italy. (Mrs. Monouydass sighs) Was the building, was it a separate building in town?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, it was a separate building.

SIGRIST: How did you get there?

MONOUYDAS: Walk.

SIGRIST: And what did you wear when you went to school?

MONOUYDAS: What did I wear?

SIGRIST: Did you wear a uniform?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no. No uniforms, no. Just whatever clothes, whatever we could, you know, whatever we wore every day.

SIGRIST: Was there, was the school part of the church, or was it a city-run school?

MONOUYDAS: Like a . . .

SIGRIST: Like a regular school.

MONOUYDAS: Like a regular school. You know, one building.

SIGRIST: There were no nuns or priests in it.

MONOUYDAS: No, no. No nuns or priests, no.

SIGRIST: Um, what was your favorite subject, do you remember?

MONOUYDAS: No, not, not in Italy. I don't, I don't remember any favorite subject.

SIGRIST: Could your parents read and write?

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: But the children learned.

MONOUYDAS: We learned after we came here.

SIGRIST: Well, in Italy, in school.

MONOUYDAS: In Italy, oh, yeah, in Italy we'd, we spoke Italian.

SIGRIST: Right. But you could read and write . . .

MONOUYDAS: Read and write in Italian, yes.

SIGRIST: Could your parents read and write in Italian?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yes, yes. They both did.

SIGRIST: So they had, they had education in Italy.

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yes. Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Do you remember your mother saying to you, well, "We're going to America. It's finally happened. We're really going to go." Do you remember that moment in your life?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. I mean, that's what she was saying. We've got to get to America. We've got to do this. We've got to do that.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how you felt about having to go to an unknown country, really to meet an unknown father.

MONOUYDAS: Well, in a way I was sort of happy. But I didn't know if I was going to be happy here, you know, and leave all the friends that you did know behind. That's . . . (creaking noise is heard in the background on the tape)

SIGRIST: Good Lord! I don't know what that noise is that you're hearing on this tape. But, so you were ambivalent.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: I mean, in one way you wanted to come, and in . . .

MONOUYDAS: Another way you don't, yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you have a photo of your father?

MONOUYDAS: A photo of my father?

SIGRIST: Was there a photo in Italy of your father? Did you know what this man looked like?

MONOUYDAS: God, I can't remember. Although that's . . . (creaking noise is heard in the background on the tape)

SIGRIST: That was probably taken here, right?

MONOUYDAS: No, that was taken in Italy.

SIGRIST: We're looking at a photo hanging on the wall. Well, might that, I'm just curious if you had a mental image of what your father might look like.

MONOUYDAS: No. I didn't, no. It didn't sink in.

SIGRIST: And children didn't question.

MONOUYDAS: That's right.

SIGRIST: Do what you were told. Do you remember the process of packing up and getting things ready to go?

MONOUYDAS: Well, my mother did most of the packing, whatever we took, which wasn't too much. You know, you could only bring so many trunks. That's all I remember.

SIGRIST: Do you remember taking something that was yours as a reminder

of Italy, or maybe a toy or a piece of clothing that was special to you?

MONOUYDAS: No. I told you, we didn't have no toys. We didn't know what toys were. And clothing no. No, no, nothing special.

SIGRIST: Did your father come back to Italy to get you, or did he stay in America . . .

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no.

SIGRIST: Expecting to meet you when you came?

MONOUYDAS: He met us in New York city.

SIGRIST: I see. Do you remember saying goodbye to either people in the town . . .

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, all of my relatives.

SIGRIST: How did that happen? Did, was there a dinner, or . . .

MONOUYDAS: No, they all came to this, you know, when we were getting ready to go on the ship, they all came with us.

SIGRIST: Where did you go to get on the ship?

MONOUYDAS: Wherever we had to go from our home to the ocean.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

MONOUYDAS: I don't know how far that was.

SIGRIST: And, and so the, um, the relatives traveled.

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how you got from your town to wherever it was

that the ship left from? Do you remember what time of year this was?

MONOUYDAS: In June.

SIGRIST: It was in June.

MONOUYDAS: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Okay. Before . . .

MONOUYDAS: I don't know after, I don't know if it was buses or, I really don't know how we got there, to tell you the truth. It's been so many years. Like I said, I've never, we never talked about it any more from the time we got here, and that was it.

SIGRIST: I'm just curious. You have children, I assume, looking at your birthday cards. Do they ask you questions? Is this something that's . . .

MONOUYDAS: No. Lately, you know, now and then they'll ask something of what we did, or something like that, but no, not too much.

SIGRIST: Your situation isn't unusual. I mean, people, the older generation didn't talk about it, and often times the younger generation didn't either.

MONOUYDAS: I mean, you know what? Because you're so busy trying to learn here and do things here and work, you know, that you don't, you forget the past, it seems like. As times goes by, you forget, forget, forget. You forget more.

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing the ship for the first time?

MONOUYDAS: That's the first time I ever seen a ship.

SIGRIST: What did you think when you saw this thing?

MONOUYDAS: All I remember, I see so many people. It was just packed. And trying to get on, and then they reexamine you again. And the first time I didn't pass.

SIGRIST: This is in Italy.

MONOUYDAS: Yes, they didn't pass me. I was ready to get on, and all of a sudden they, they examine you again, and they found one little bug on my hair, and they wouldn't let me go through. So I had to go all the way back home and start all over again.

SIGRIST: Did they send you by yourself, or did your mother and everybody go with you?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no, we all went. My mother wouldn't let me go back by myself.

SIGRIST: This leads me to ask you, before you left for America, do you remember either you or your mother or your brothers, anyone being seriously ill in Italy, or any kind of medical affliction in some way.

MONOUYDAS: No, none of us were.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any kinds of, of, um, home remedies or ways of treating illness that your mother might have used on you children? Of course, if you were all fine.

MONOUYDAS: See, I never remember catching a cold there or anything, because, like I said, the weather was always so nice.

SIGRIST: Or a broken arm or something?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. No, none of us had anything.

SIGRIST: Did your mother want to come to America, I mean really want to come to America?

MONOUYDAS: Yes and no, because she hated to leave all her relatives and friends over there. You know, you're happy and you're not happy.

SIGRIST: She hadn't seen her husband for a long time.

MONOUYDAS: Quite a few years, yes. That's what I say, she was happy in one way and sad in another way.

SIGRIST: After you went back home and you got rid of your bug in your hair, then did the family go back to whatever port it was to get back . . .

MONOUYDAS: Had to do the same thing over, yes.

SIGRIST: And that time you passed?

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the ship that you boarded? Oh, is that the Conte Biancamano?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, Conte Biancamano.

SIGRIST: Conte Biancamano.

MONOUYDAS: That's it.

SIGRIST: And that's the ship that you got on.

MONOUYDAS: Yes. The SS. Don't forget, SS.

SIGRIST: And, uh, tell me about your impressions of being on that ship.
What sticks out in your mind about (?) .

MONOUYDAS: Oh, because it was so huge. To me it looked like it was so huge. But then after traveling on that ship, oh! After, you know, everybody's saying, kept going, going, and the first thing you know you don't see no more land. All you see is water, waves, you know, coming up and such huge waves, we remember. And on the third day everybody got so sick on the ship. I mean, really sick. You didn't see anybody for three days. On account of those, you know, because the ship was going, swaying back and forth, back and forth. That's what I remember the most of all, that trip. And it took us nine days to get here.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me where you slept on the ship?

MONOUYDAS: What is it, the lowest deck? That was the cheapest?

SIGRIST: Did you all, were you all in one big room, or did you have . . .

MONOUYDAS: Like bunk beds, yeah.

SIGRIST: Was it just your family in your own cabin, or were you in a big room with other people?

MONOUYDAS: No, it's just our family.

SIGRIST: Did everyone get sick in your family?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, everybody. Everybody on the whole ship. It was horrible.

SIGRIST: Do you remember if the ship offered some kind of a treatment for your seasickness?

MONOUYDAS: No, because they said they didn't have anything. We'll get, we'll get by it. "You'll get better, you'll get better," they kept saying.

SIGRIST: Do you remember being on deck of the ship, uh, as a child? I'm just wondering, as a child, what were your impressions of being, before you got sick?

MONOUYDAS: The ships are not like they are today, believe me, entirely different. You just stayed there in that room, and if you went out you just, like, walk around there like one hallway here and one hallway there. That's about it. You didn't do much walking there.

SIGRIST: Was there a . . .

MONOUYDAS: And we all used to eat in one room, I remember.

SIGRIST: That was going to be my next question, actually. You know, what were the dining facilities that you can recall?

MONOUYDAS: No, you just, you just go there and sit on a chair and table, and everybody's squishing in.

SIGRIST: And after you got sick you probably didn't eat very much.

MONOUYDAS: Oh, gosh, no. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So the ship is, the ship took nine days.

MONOUYDAS: Nine days.

SIGRIST: Do you remember coming into New York Harbor?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah, everybody yelling, everybody yelling, you know, "There's the Statue of Liberty, the Statue of Liberty, the Statue of Liberty."

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: And do you remember what time of the day the ship came into the harbor?

MONOUYDAS: I think it was around noon, somewhere around noon.

SIGRIST: Did you know what the Statue of Liberty was?

MONOUYDAS: At that time? No. My mother didn't know herself. Just that it was a peaceful place, you know.

SIGRIST: And once the ship came into New York Harbor, then what happened? What was the process?

MONOUYDAS: Then, oh, gosh. You had to wait for your trunks, you know. They had to unload them off the ship. And then they'd take you to this one big, one room, and there were so many people it seems like everybody was screaming and yelling and hugging. You know, we were looking, my mother was looking to find my father, because there were so many people, you know, it took a long time just to find one another. And then it took time, by the time we got out, I don't even know what time we got out of there, because it took so long. It seems like it took so long.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what, what you did while you were waiting, what . . .

MONOUYDAS: Just hung around.

SIGRIST: Did you see anything, I mean, we're talking about Ellis Island, I assume, the big room and all.

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no, Ellis Island, that's what I say, there was so many people all over the place trying to find a seat and just seems like everybody was shoving everybody, you know. That's what I remember.

SIGRIST: And it was an extended amount of time that you were there, that you recall.

MONOUYDAS: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Describe for me, when you finally found your father, he finally found you, what was that experience like, from your point of view?

MONOUYDAS: Well, like I said, he was a perfectly stranger to me, and he hugged and kissed me. You know, I kind of hugged back a little. And then on the way, in a way I was sort of scared, like, you know, because, like I said, he was a perfectly stranger.

SIGRIST: Did that, did that apprehension that you had towards your father, did that extend for a long period of time once, once you were here?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no.

SIGRIST: When was it that you finally started to warm up to him?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, as time passed. Not too long.

SIGRIST: Because, I mean, as you say, here's a man . . .

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You don't know this man, he is acting very familiar with you.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: I can see why you would be standoffish. And your mother, too.
What was her reaction to him? She hasn't seen him in quite
some time also.

MONOUYDAS: I know. Well, at that time, you know, when, I mean, like I
said, everybody's trying to hug everybody and, you know, to
say hi and how are you and all that. I mean, everybody's
trying to do the same thing, so, I don't really know exactly
how she felt, you know. All I remember is my father trying to
say, well, we got to do this, we got to do that, and we have
to go stay overnight here, and have supper with my relatives,
some relatives we had in New York. We have to eat supper
there, and then first thing in the morning we have to travel
and go back where we were going to land for ourself, the
duration of our, our stay here.

SIGRIST: So your head is just swimming.

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah. It's, you know, one thing after another, and you
don't, you don't pay too much attention to your parents, what
they're saying.

SIGRIST: Tell me how you spent that first night in America and what,
and, what did you experience during that first night?

MONOUYDAS: Gosh, I don't know. We were in a strange home.

SIGRIST: These were, you said they were relatives.

MONOUYDAS: Relatives.

SIGRIST: How were they relatives? Do you know?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, my mother's, my father's sisters, and her family.

SIGRIST: And this is in New York City?

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: What did, what did they do for you, if anything, when you arrived?

MONOUYDAS: They just, you know, they just cooked dinner for us that night, and we had to leave the next day. The next morning we had to leave to go back to Loon Lake where we landed. That's where we were going to make our home.

SIGRIST: At Loon Lake, the Saranac area.

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember if, did you just stay overnight in New York?

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Or just stay that one night?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, just that one night.

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing anything either on the ship or at Ellis Island or in New York during that first night that you had never seen before, something that was very strange and unusual to you?

MONOUYDAS: No. In Ellis Island I remember like bars, I remember, like, bars, you know, like you're behind jail today. To me they looked like bars here and there. That's what, and some people would be in there, and other people would be in this other room. They'd have bars there, and they'd be in there. That's what I remember about Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: What about, um, food, for instance? Did you experience any food, maybe even, let's expand it to like your first month in America. Did you experience any food that you had never seen before in Italy that was new and different to you somehow?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, like my father, he was selling hot dogs. We didn't know what hot dogs were. (she laughs) And ice cream cones. We didn't know that.

SIGRIST: And how did you approach these new foods?

MONOUYDAS: All I remember is people eating them and they loved them, and after a while I guess we started eating them, you know, you just automatically, you see people eat them enough that you finally want one. That's how it came about.

SIGRIST: Hot dogs. Um, all right, so you go up to Loon Lake which, of course, is a very woodsy . . .

MONOUYDAS: Woodsy is right.

SIGRIST: And, of course, you came from a slightly more urban environment in Italy. I mean, you came from town.

MONOUYDAS: That's what made it so horrible. It was very, very lonesome up there. Because the closest town was, was in, I mean, a

little village, they call it, it had about ten homes, eight, ten homes. It was twelve miles away. And then the other, Saranac Lake was seventeen miles away. Plattsburg was thirty-five miles away, and Malone was thirty-six miles away, and that's where we were, like you're in the end of the world. To us it was like the end of the world.

SIGRIST: I'm curious. Do you know what, when you first got up there, do you know what your mother's reaction was to this? I mean, how did she approach her new life in the woods?

MONOUYDAS: (she sighs) Oh, gosh. She was just shocked and surprised, you know. There was nobody around.

SIGRIST: Was there a school up there?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, we had to walk to school. It was a mile away, just about a mile.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the experience of beginning school and the process of learning English.

MONOUYDAS: Well, to this day I can't remember, I don't know how I learned English. It was a one-room schoolhouse, you know. Everybody, one teacher taught everybody, and it seems like I still don't know how I learned. Isn't that funny?

SIGRIST: Did you feel any, any prejudice against you because you were an immigrant in this school, or were there other immigrant children?

MONOUYDAS: No, we were the only ones. We were the only ones, my two brothers and I.

SIGRIST: Well, how did the other children treat you?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, after, at first, when they couldn't understand us, you know, because, like I said, we had to start in first grade, ABC. That's how we had to start. And from there you learn as you go, and then the kids, at first they're making fun of us, but after a while they kind of got used to us, and they start playing games with him, you know, and that's when we first learned how to play this, throw the ball over the roof. That was our game in this country.

SIGRIST: Did your brothers, were they put in the first grade, too?

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: So, in a way, it's probably even harder for them, in a way, because they're so much older.

MONOUYDAS: That's right.

SIGRIST: And they're there with young kids.

MONOUYDAS: That's right. That made it very, very tough.

SIGRIST: Did your father speak any English?

MONOUYDAS: My father spoke English, yeah, brokenly, yeah.

SIGRIST: What about your mother? Did she make any attempt to learn English?

MONOUYDAS: Well, that's, my mother, see, my father, like I said, my father had this little hot dog stand, and there was no other Italian families around there for us to speak with, so we, my two brothers and I, we went to school to learn how to speak

English. In turn, we come home and try to teach my mother. Everything we try to learn we try to teach her, because she was going to be with the public all the time, you know. And, uh, that's how she learned, from us. She never went to school.

SIGRIST: How did she feel about having to learn a skill just to get through her life, having to learn it from her children, do you think?

MONOUYDAS: Well, she didn't mind it too much, because it was, you know, she was learning from her family, not from strangers.

SIGRIST: She wasn't embarrassed by that, I guess is what I'm saying.

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no. No.

SIGRIST: And was she supposed to be the person out there selling the hot dogs? Is that what her job was going to be when she came to this country?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah. I mean, whatever, pumping gas, or putting oil in the car, or whatever had to be done.

SIGRIST: I see. So this was, this was more than just a hot dog stand that your father had created.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: It was a service station.

MONOUYDAS: A service station too, yeah. Cigarettes, you know, hot dogs, hamburgers, no, not hamburgers, just hot dogs, ice cream, candy. That's how he started off, real small.

SIGRIST: Did your mother want to return to Italy soon after coming here?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. Well, she never mentioned it. No, she never mentioned it. But later on, as we got a little older, how she missed Italy, you know, how much she missed her family and everything. You know, when you don't see your family for years and years and then they die, and naturally you feel heartsick.

SIGRIST: Well, and just the initial disappointment, I guess, of what she found when she got here.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, what she found, that's right.

SIGRIST: It wasn't at all what she was expecting.

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: Whatever that was.

SIGRIST: She didn't expect to be out in the country so far away from everyone, you know.

SIGRIST: Did your parents have more children once they were reunited?

MONOUYDAS: Yes, they had two more.

SIGRIST: And what were their names?

MONOUYDAS: Rose, that's my younger sister, and Mickey, Michael.

SIGRIST: Between the American-born children and the foreign-born children, is there any kind of conflict between the two sets of kids?

MONOUYDAS: No, because my two older brothers, then they were on their own

before my other brother, you know, he was a kid, because there's quite a space, span in between. So, no, there was no conflict. But, see, they got, they got the education, they graduated from high school, where we didn't get the opportunity, my brothers and I.

SIGRIST: Were you expected to go in to work as soon as you could to help make money, or . . .

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah. Well, my father was always in business of some kind. Then there was Prohibition time, you know? My two brothers, my two older brothers and I, we had to, my father's, how did you say it, bootlegged whiskey?

SIGRIST: Like the whiskey (?).

MONOUYDAS: You know, you had to do those things to make a living, you know. And, um, so my other two brothers, my two older brothers and I, we had to go and hide in the woods, dig holes, you know, and cover it up, and put it here and there, all over, different spots. And then when people come it was up to us to go and dig it out, whether it was raining or storming or what, we had to do that. And the weather, we never seen snow until we came here either.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the first snowfall that you experienced?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, my God! And freezing to death. Oh, it was so cold. And when we saw that white snow at first, oh, God, we were, like you're devastated. You wonder, "What is it? What is this, the cold stuff coming from?" You know? But we got used to it after a while, after a couple of years. And then we started playing in it. And we had to shovel it, you know, in the

wintertime, driveways and different things, so we had to get used to it.

SIGRIST: Did, um, did your father make the whiskey, or did he just simply get it from somewhere else?

MONOUYDAS: No, he got it from somebody else, and then we sold it to somebody else. That's how it went.

SIGRIST: And that was probably quite profitable, actually, at that time.

MONOUYDAS: And that's when my mother got caught, too.

SIGRIST: Oh, she got caught.

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me about that?

MONOUYDAS: Yes. She was sitting in a chair, and she had a blanket over her lap, you know, and she had the whiskey hidden underneath, but somebody must have squealed on her. Somebody was jealous, you know? When you start making a little bit of, a few, a little money, the people get jealous of you, like people are jealous today. It never changes, I guess, all through the years. And, um, so the troopers came, and they used to be on horseback in those days, you know, not cars or anything. Everything was on horseback. And, gosh, when we seen those troopers, they seemed to be so big to us, you know, so huge. They were all over 6'5", I guess. And those big horses. We used to be so deathly scared. So finally they came, and they just came in the business, they just pulled up the blankets, and they had the evidence right there, and they took her away

to jail in Malone. She was gone for three days. Well, my two brothers, we cried, we cried. (she is moved) We thought we were never going to see our mother again.

SIGRIST: How did she get released?

MONOUYDAS: My father, you know. I'm sorry.

SIGRIST: That's all right. Take your time. Take your time.

MONOUYDAS: My father kept going there every day, you know, discussing whoever he had to see, and try to get her out, and he did, on the third day.

SIGRIST: I'm curious, after this incident, did your father continue to . . .

MONOUYDAS: Yes. (they laugh) Yes, we did.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever tell anything about that experience, about what those three days, what she experienced?

MONOUYDAS: It was horrible. She said.

SIGRIST: Well, what happened to her?

MONOUYDAS: They just kept her locked up, she said, and brought her her meals, and that's all she did. She says she thought she was never going to get out of there. She was going to be in there for the rest of her life.

SIGRIST: Did she speak enough English at that point to . . .

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: To understand what was . . .

MONOUYDAS: No. Because we hadn't been here long enough for her to really understand English. No, she couldn't speak English. And that's why she, you know, when she wasn't there then, of course, in Italian she knew what it meant, but not in English. And that's what hurt her so bad, you know, to think that she got caught.

SIGRIST: Caught red handed. (they laugh) How long did your father run this service station?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, the gas station? We had it for a good many years, yes.

SIGRIST: He was sort of like a local fixture, I would imagine.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Um, as you were growing up and, and being more Americanized, of course, because you're probably, your friends are American kids. Was there any conflict between you wanting to be more American, however you defined that, and your parents more old world ways? Strictness, or rules, how they wanted you to live, as opposed to how maybe you wanted to live?

MONOUYDAS: Well, the only thing I remember, you know, my father, from that little hot dog stand, then, well, of course, we didn't even have a home. When we came here, we had to stay in the tent. That's where my two brothers and I slept, in a tent. Because my father didn't have a house, and then a hot dog stand, he just had one little room back there for her and him. And so he rented a home about a couple, three miles down the road, and we used to walk there back and forth for the winter. And then we did that I think two, three years, and finally

then he started building a home about five, eight hundred feet above, on the same land, and he built a home there. And, of course, we still had our stand of groceries, you know, and gas station, and all that bit again. And then Prohibition days were over, and then he started building, beer and liquor, you know, when you could sell that you could get a license? That's how he started. He got that. And then after that he started building a dance hall, and we had, it turned out to be quite a nightclub after a while, as the years passed, you know.

SIGRIST: By the time it became a dance hall, I mean, what year are we talking about? Are we in the '40s by now?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, um, in the '30s is, in the '30s is where we had the dance (?), because we lived near a hotel there. Loon Lake Hotel? And, uh, those people used to come at our place, you know, to drink and dance and eat.

SIGRIST: Your father's quite a success story for an Italian immigrant.

MONOUYDAS: For, he never went to school here or anything. And in Italy, my father only had a third grade education. He did everything on his own. He learned everything on his own.

SIGRIST: And he's not, he's not following that more typical path of doing manual labor and that kind of thing.

MONOUYDAS: No.

SIGRIST: I mean, he's actually building his own business really from nothing.

MONOUYDAS: That's right, yeah. He did, yes.

SIGRIST: Was he conscious of the accomplishment? I mean, did he, did he realize how unique he was that way, do you think?

MONOUYDAS: Well, I think so. He knew he was a pretty smart man, because he could read papers, books, in and out. I mean, he could, he could spell better than I can right today. I mean, he knew the meaning of a word more so than I can, and I went to school a little longer. I didn't graduate, of course. But, yeah, he was smart in his own way.

SIGRIST: Did he become a citizen?

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: What year was that? Do you remember?

MONOUYDAS: Well, he became a citizen before I came here.

SIGRIST: Oh, so he was already a citizen.

MONOUYDAS: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: When you all came. I see.

MONOUYDAS: See, that's why I automatically came naturalized when I came here.

SIGRIST: Did you ever, as an adult, or a young lady, then get your own papers, though?

MONOUYDAS: This is all I, this is all I had to have, they told me.

SIGRIST: I see.

MONOUYDAS: This paper that I've showed you.

SIGRIST: Right, right, right. What about your mom? Did she, the same situation for her, because your father had already done all this.

MONOUYDAS: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Um, have you ever gone back to Italy?

MONOUYDAS: Never.

SIGRIST: Did you ever want to?

MONOUYDAS: Never gave it a thought up until this, my sister wanted to go. And, uh, in a way I want to go, and in another way I don't.

SIGRIST: Well, why, why wouldn't you want to go?

MONOUYDAS: Because I've been sick now for the last eleven years, you know, with my back, and that kind of, I say to myself suppose I get sick when I get over there, what good am I going to do, you know?

SIGRIST: So your reasoning is purely from, maybe it's not an emotional response to Italy . . .

MONOUYDAS: No, no.

SIGRIST: It's just that you don't want anything to happen while you're over there.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: How do you suppose your life may have been different if you had not come to America? Your father had a third grade education in Italy, and I think it's safe to say he probably would not have had the opportunities to build a business the

way he did here in America. How do you think your life would have been different?

MONOUYDAS: Gosh, I really don't know. In Italy, I don't know if it would have been better or worse, I really don't know. But, I mean, we worked hard here in this country, my two brothers and I. I mean, we, because when he was in that business and we were, we were still kids. We had to do everything, we had to cut our own wood up there, we had to cut our own ice and put it in the ice house, you know? That was all hard work for us. We were only kids.

SIGRIST: I mean, you know, you're living like a lumberjack. You're living in a tent.

MONOUYDAS: That's right.

SIGRIST: I can see why your mother would have been horrified when she arrived.

MONOUYDAS: And learn everything and, you know, everything new. My mother had to put up with a lot. And my father, he got very, very strict with us, too. We couldn't breathe. We couldn't do anything.

SIGRIST: I think that's what I was driving at.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: In asking you about, you know . . .

MONOUYDAS: It isn't like here, you know, where when you live in a town like this where you can go to your neighborhoods or your friends, you know, this house and that house. There was

nowheres for us to go there, because the neighbor would be a mile one way and two miles another way, you know, and there weren't enough, there weren't enough kids. You get about eight or ten kids in the school, that's not too many, different grades, you know? So.

SIGRIST: Do you remember some of the rules of the house, you know, certain rules that you were to obey as you were growing up that your, rules that your parents set down for you like, I don't know, times you had to be in?

MONOUYDAS: They didn't set any rules. My father, he was strict in one way, and yet he wouldn't tell us what we had to do or what we didn't have to do. We'd just go do this or go do that. That's how they would tell us. And, uh . . .

SIGRIST: But he didn't say you must always be in by ten o'clock.

MONOUYDAS: Oh, no.

SIGRIST: Or you must never go out with so-and-so, or . . .

MONOUYDAS: We never, well, that's why I'm saying. Then we used to watch all these people, young people, come in our business, you know, to have fun. Everybody was having fun. But us, all we had to do, it seems like, is just work, go to school and work, go to school and work. That's all we used to do. So my two brothers, they got disgusted, and they took off. First it was my oldest one, and then it was next oldest brother. When they were sixteen they, sixteen, seventeen years old, out the door they went.

SIGRIST: Well, and understandably so, under those circumstances.

MONOUYDAS: Then it came my turn, then I went, eighteen going on, eighteen, nineteen years old. I didn't get very far. I got as far as Plattsburg and somebody called my father and told him exactly where I was. So he was right down there with my other brother to come after me.

SIGRIST: Do you think your, do you think your father understood your side of the story, why you would want to get away?

MONOUYDAS: No, he, he couldn't understand that.

SIGRIST: Did you and your brothers ever try to understand why your father was holding you in the way that he was?

MONOUYDAS: Well, you know why, Paul? There it isn't like here where you sit down and have dinner and you start talking about your problems of the day and things like that. When you're in business, there was always people coming in. You always had to, you'd be doing something. If you ate, you ate by yourself. You know, nobody discussed anything with you, or you take turns eating, or things like that. That's, it's not like here in this country.

SIGRIST: And not a lot of communication between the different members of the family.

MONOUYDAS: No, no. And the business was seven days a week, too. It was not four days or five days. It was seven days a week. So you're, you're just in, with the public, day in and day out.

SIGRIST: It was your whole life.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah, that's it.

SIGRIST: It would be interesting to speculate what might have happened to your father had he not come to America. How his life would have been different?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. Oh, I don't know. If he didn't come here, yeah, that would have been a different story, i don't know.

SIGRIST: When you think about yourself, who you are, do you think of yourself as Italian, or as American?

MONOUYDAS: No, I think of myself as an American now, I've been here so many years.

SIGRIST: IF you, um, your sister is, your sister's born here.

MONOUYDAS: Yes.

SIGRIST: This is Rose, who wanted to go to Italy with you. What's her motivation to go to Italy? I'm just curious. Because she was born here. Why . . .

MONOUYDAS: Why would she want to go?

SIGRIST: Why would she want to go?

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. I don't know. She just says she wants to go, see if she can find any relatives, and she wants to go to Switzerland and different places.

SIGRIST: I see.

MONOUYDAS: I don't know if it's because other people go or . . .

SIGRIST: She wants to see where she came from.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You know, in a way, or what her roots are. Look, I want to thank you very much. You remembered more than you thought you remembered.

MONOUYDAS: I'm sorry, I sort of remembered more, but . . .

SIGRIST: Tonight it will all come in as you're lying in bed.

MONOUYDAS: But at eight years old, that's, you know . . .

SIGRIST: That's young.

MONOUYDAS: That's pretty young.

SIGRIST: It's young. And you did remember a lot.

MONOUYDAS: I didn't even tell you, gee, we used to, to scrub our clothes we had to walk three miles to the, what do you call it, a brook, like? And on rocks, that's where we used to scrub our clothes in Italy. You see what I mean? It's, it was always . . .

SIGRIST: You probably did that in Loon Lake, too. (they laugh)

MONOUYDAS: You see what I mean? I mean, it's always, it seems like all we had to do is work, work, work, is all I remember when we were kids.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Both in, both in Europe and here.

MONOUYDAS: Yeah. And I never had a toy in this country, and when I came here the girls, they were two sisters, they dumped their old doll out. So one day I was going by, and I happened to see it, and I asked them, I says, "Gee, could I have that doll?" And they told me, "Yeah." That was my only toy I ever had.

SIGRIST: What did your parents, how did they react to that?

MONOUYDAS: Nothing.

SIGRIST: Nothing. I was wondering if maybe they were, you know, would be insulted that you had gotten it that way or something.

MONOUYDAS: No, no. They weren't insulted. Yes. That was our way.

SIGRIST: Well, this is Paul Sigrist signing off with Annette Monouydas, Monouydas, correcting, on April 24, 1995, here in Saratoga Springs. Thank you very much.

MONOUYDAS: Thank you.