

EI-622
FRANCK AUGUST KOROSEC
BIRTH DATE: AUGUST 14, 1916
INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 20, 1995
RUNNING TIME: 29:14
INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME
INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND RECORDING STUDIO
USING THE PORTABLE DAT RECORDER
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED AND REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR, 7/1998

YUGOSLAVIA (SLOVENIA), 1923
AGE 7
PASSAGE ON "THE LAFAYETTE"

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. and Mrs. Korosec were visiting the Ellis Island Immigration Museum with a large tour group from Ohio on the day when Mr. Korosec was identified as an immigrant processd at Ellis Island when he was a child. He consented to be interviewed, although I did not know until well into the interview that they both had to shortly rejoin their tour group. This interview, which could have been much longer and more detailed, had to be rushed under those circumstances.

Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of Oral History, 7/13/1998.

SIGRIST: Good morning, this is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday, June 20th, 1995. I'm in the Ellis Island Recording Studio, using the portable Sony digital machine, with Franck August Korosec. Mr. Korosec came from Slovenia in 1923 when he was seven years old and was detained for three days at Ellis Island. Present also in the room is Mrs. Korosec. They're visiting from Ohio. May we begin by you giving me your birth date, please.

EI-622/KOROSEC

KOROSEC: My birthday is August the 14th, 1916.

SIGRIST: And can tell me exactly where you were born?

KOROSEC: I was born in Loski Potok, Stevilka Sest, Hrib,
Loski Potok is spelled L-O-S-K-I, and it's P-O-T-O-K.
It means, Loski Potok, "the watering place for the
deer."

SIGRIST: The deer?

KOROSEC: Deer, po--, uh, "loski" is the deer. And it's near
Hrib, which means "hill."

SIGRIST: Can you spell Hrib, please?

KOROSEC: H-R-I-B, Hrib. That's hill. That's the county seat.

SIGRIST: And can you describe where this town is sort of in
conjunction to other...

KOROSEC: All right. It's sixty miles south of Ljubljana, uh,

EI-622/KOROSEC

near, well it's sixty miles south. That's all I can tell. In that vicinity.

SIGRIST: Now, of course, this wasn't Yugoslavia when you were born.

KOROSEC: No.

SIGRIST: What was it?

KOROSEC: It was probably Austrian-Hungarian Empire. And it was the Slovenian part.

SIGRIST: That's the north of what we know of as Yugoslavia now.

KOROSEC: That's right, it's the north part, uh huh.

SIGRIST: I see.

KOROSEC: And I was there. I was born there. Like I said, my father gets, gets killed in the war. He was an Austrian citizen, so he was thirty four years old and they drafted him with seven children. I was next to

the youngest.

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

KOROSEC: Matij Korosec. (he pronounces as Ma-ti'-ah)

SIGRIST: Can you spell Matij, please?

KOROSEC: Matij is M-A-T-I-J. Matthew.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you know about your father's family background.

KOROSEC: Nothing. I was two years old when I, when he got killed and I have no idea. I know he was a happy-go-lucky guy. He played accordion and he had, he had a "grund," which means that he had land granted to him from the Austrian Empire for his grandfather serving in the service, armies.

SIGRIST: How do you spell grund?

KOROSEC: Grund is G-R-U-N-D, grund.

SIGRIST: And that would imply...

KOROSEC: A land grant.

SIGRIST: Land grant.

KOROSEC: And that he was very proud of that because he was then, makes, it makes him a "graf," a count, when you're a land owner in Slovenia. So he was, and his, his family had, his part of the family had money. My mother, why, my mother was a house maid and she was below the salt, shall we say, and so he was on his own.

SIGRIST: The word for count, "graf," how do you spell that?

KOROSEC: Graf. G-R-A-F, graf.

SIGRIST: I'm going to probably be asking, every time you use one of these words, I'll ask you to spell it.

KOROSEC: Sure.

SIGRIST: Did your mother tell you anything specific about the circumstances surrounding your father's death, other than...?

KOROSEC: He was drafted and sent to the, to the Russian, Siberian or someplace, Russian border fighting the, the, whatever they were fighting in. (he laughs) Russian, uh, Russians, of course. So this, he, she got, uh, he was up there and that's the end of it because he was killed on the, according to the records, on November the 18th, 1918, after the war was over. The news never got up to the Russian border, so when his buddies, three of them, came back, he says, "Matij died." That's it. We don't know where he's buried, where or what. That's the end of it.

SIGRIST: Did you know how he died?

KOROSEC: Uh, he died of a wound and he contracted pneumonia and died as, because there, there was no medical services. That's, that's all I know.

SIGRIST: When you were a child, did your mother talk about your

father at all?

KOROSEC: Nothing at all. She did not. She, she thought he was a noble fool because he had a lumbering camp in Michigan and when he went back, Escanaba, Michigan, and he, 1914 in June he went back with the whole family. And she says, "You're foolish." And his buddies up in Escanaba said, "Matij, don't go. There's a war going on." "No, I have to take care of my "grund," my land, you know, it's valuable." All right, so he went with the four kids back and then lived back in Loski Potok and that was it. Then they got him and drafted him and that was it. And never saw him before. [sic, after?] And I, I don't remember him at all. I know he had a "brka" (pronounced "birka" [ph]), which means a moustache.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

KOROSEC: B-R-K-A, brka.

SIGRIST: And, was, was there a photograph in the house?

EI-622/KOROSEC

KOROSEC: Yes, there was a wedding photograph, uh huh. And I have that.

SIGRIST: I would also like you to spell Escanaba, Michigan.

KOROSEC: Escanaba is E-S-C-A-N-A-B-A. Escanaba, upper peninsula.

SIGRIST: You're going to be good at this. (he laughs)

KOROSEC: I'm good, yeah.

SIGRIST: Good. Tell me about your mother's side of the family. First of all, what was her name and her maiden name?

KOROSEC: Her, her name, her maiden name, I mean, her name was Johanna Bartol, B-A-R-T-O-L.

SIGRIST: And what do you know about her family background?

KOROSEC: I had, I have no idea. All that, uh, she came from the Bartol family from Ribnica (pronounced "Rib-neetz-ah" [ph]), R-I-B-N-I-C-A, Ribnica, which means fish town.

Riba is fish, Ribnica, so...

SIGRIST: Is that in Slovenia also?

KOROSEC: Yes, that's Slovenia, uh huh. And that's, that's where her family, I have no idea. She had one sister, that's all. And, and I don't know what her was neither.

SIGRIST: Tell me about when you were a child in Slovenia, tell me what you remember of your mother's personality and what she was like as a person.

KOROSEC: She was a, a hard working mother. She, uh, when, when Matij went to war she had to take care of the "grund." And, and we had nothing to eat, actually. We, it was 1916, is hard time. The, the worst thing I can remember is we had a calf and we named, I named her Matilda. And we had to kill Matilda. My mother killed Matilda for food. I cried because it was my pet but we had to have food. So that was it. That was the saddest part. Now, my mother was a strong woman. I couldn't, I couldn't kill Matilda. I mean, I was only seven years old. I couldn't anyway. I couldn't

kill anything. But she, she fed us. She took care
of us. There were, uh, in, three of us were three.
My two sisters and I. And the other three were still
in Escanaba, or somewhere farmed out, in
Cleveland, Ohio...

SIGRIST: So some had stayed in this country when your father
returned.

KOROSEC: Yes, that's right. And, anyway, right when my mother
get the, this black telegram with, you know, edges that
was for a casualty...

SIGRIST: Excuse me, we're going to pause just for...(break in
tape) We're resuming now. You were saying that you,
some of your sisters stayed in Michigan...

KOROSEC: Uh, no, yeah. One sister and one brother stayed in
Michigan and then my mother brought two, my sisters
Maria, uh, Mary and Frances, brought them back in 1914.
I wasn't born yet. And she, uh, we stayed there.
Then, when I was born, I thought it was a great big
house but it wasn't. It wasn't a big house. Because

EI-622/KOROSEC

it was a "grund," you know, a castle. No. All I remember is a little, little house.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever tell you anything about your birth? Anything about...

KOROSEC: It was a question of when I was born because there were a pair of twins that were born and she named them, uh, Michael and Franck. And she mixed us up sometimes. (he laughs) They were born 1914. (he laughs) That's another Franck. And she said about, the only thing I remember, it's sad, but she said, "I named you Franck because the first Franck died, so I named you Franck because I want you to die, too, because I couldn't afford any more children." When my, my father went to war in 1916, he conceived me sometime there. And we came back, or never came back, their last visit, 1918, that's, that's it. That's the end. Uh, when she got the letter, the black-edged letter, the telegram, "Your husband is killed." Okay, that's it. So she packed up and went back to the United States in Cleveland, Ohio and left us. They left us, this is 1920. In 1923, she sent for my...

EI-622/KOROSEC

SIGRIST: Well, now, with whom were you left?

KOROSEC: I was living with my uncle, Dominick Stupitza [ph].

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your mother leaving, if anything?

KOROSEC: She left and she says she tried to farm me out with somebody but nobody would take me.

SIGRIST: You're about four years old at that time.

KOROSEC: Maybe, I think was two years old, about.

SIGRIST: 1920?

KOROSEC: 1920, I was four years old, yeah. So she was, she was trying to peddle me to the grandfather. He wouldn't have nothing to do with it because he didn't like my mother because she was below the salt, you see. The Korosecs, don't forget the Korosco [ph] family was a very family in Slovenia. Korosco [ph] was called

Corinthia [ph] at one time, and there was a duchy
from 915 to 1420. Korosco [ph] means "from the roses,"
by the way. Ko-ro-sco, from the roses.

SIGRIST: And for the transcriber, I should say that duchy is
spelled D-U-C-H-Y.

KOROSEC: Right, duchy.

SIGRIST: Well, you started talking a little bit about the house
that you remember growing up in. Can you describe it
specifically for me?

KOROSEC: Yes, it was on a hill, "hrib," hill. And, it, and I
remember that distinctly we had cows underneath, like
a cellar that the barn was there. And we had a hole in
the kitchen floor and (he laughs) we fed the cow or
took a leak down there on a, on a haystack because
the cows like salt. So that, that's all I remember.
But , uh, I was just so, well, I didn't know how big
the house was, very, it was a three bedroom house
I'd say. It was made out of cement, a thatched roof,
horses when they had horses. Or they sold them for food

or whatever it was or they were taken for the war. The only thing that was left at that time was Matilda, that little calf. And the house was, when I went back 19--, the first time about 1981, I was surprised how small it was. I was surprised because it was so small. And I figured there'd be a band, you know, my return. There was no band welcoming, so the Korosco [ph] family kind of died on the vine. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Is there a piece of furniture that sticks out in your mind as a child in the house?

KOROSEC: No, no, not at all.

SIGRIST: What about, how is the house lit?

KOROSEC: Uh, wood fire and lamps. Candles and kerosene lamps. No electricity. No telephone.

SIGRIST: How about heating? How is the house heated?

KOROSEC: Heated was wood from the woods, logs.

SIGRIST: And what did you do with the wood?

KOROSEC: Split it, cut it and made a fire.

SIGRIST: But, but where was the fire? How, what...?

KOROSEC: Dadgonit [ph], fireplace? A stove, yeah, there was a stove. Uh, the funny part of it, we, when we were fed, we had meat once a week, on a Tuesday, usually. And I was the youngest then because Matilda, my sister, died of malnutrition. She was only two years old, so...

SIGRIST: Malnutrition?

KOROSEC: Yeah, she did. And that was it. And I was very happy because Matilda died, not the calf but my sister. See, because you get to, you get to lick the spoons if you're the youngest. Of course, I was only two years old, so I didn't know any better, (correcting himself) four, four years old.

SIGRIST: Did your sister die once you were living with your uncle? Was this before your mother...

EI-622/KOROSEC

KOROSEC: Before, yeah, before.

SIGRIST: Well, tell me how your life changed once you went to
live with your uncle.

KOROSEC: Uh, he was a schneider, a znidar, which mean a, a
tailor.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

KOROSEC: Znidar is Z-N-I-D-A-R, znidar. It means a tailor. And
he, I was six, uh, four years old. He took me under
his wing. And he had, uh, my sis--, uh, my uncle, but
Dominick was one of the brothers, uh, cousins. There
was Maria and Frances, and they lived in Sodranica,
S-O-D-R-A-N-I-C-A (pronounced so-drahn-nee-tza),
Sodranica. Stvilka, Stvilka ninety six,
nine-six. That's the number of the house.

SIGRIST: (mispronouncing) Selvika, selv...?

KOROSEC: Stvilka, S-T, stvilka, S-T-V-I-L-K-A. Stvilka means

EI-622/KOROSEC

number. Number ninety six.

SIGRIST: Is this your mother's brother?

KOROSEC: Uh, yes, no, no, yeah. Yes, that was my mother's brother.

SIGRIST: And what was his name again?

KOROSEC: Dominick Stupitza [ph].

SIGRIST: And tell me about what his personality was like.

KOROSEC: He was a very gentle man. He had three children. And he, he was, he sewed all day. He is a tailor, men's clothes. And he was never paid in money but in food. So he was, he was hunch-backed over, you know how tailors do hand sewing. But he taught me how to sew buttons then, you know, to, uh, in order to straighten out. He taught me a little bit about the tailoring trade, and I did not like it. First of all, I saw him bowed over and, a young fellow maybe thirty five, something like that. And he was old. I remember

sleeping in the wintertime on the top, on the Dutch oven. On the top it was nice and warm because that's where the heat, of course, how they were heated. A Dutch oven, the same thing in my, in our house. In the summertime, I slept in the barn. And that was it. And I remember the river, the little, Loski Potok was on it. And it was a beautiful place. And it was nice. I was there for three years.

SIGRIST: Was his house similar to...

KOROSEC: Just about, just about the same size. Three bedroom, uh, three families and a wife and mother, they lived in one and the three of them, they all lived in a very huddled place.

SIGRIST: Did he take only you or did he take any...

KOROSEC: No, he just took me, yes. And the other two went to other relatives. My sister went to a, a cousin and my other sister went to another. So we were divided for three years.

SIGRIST: Was there any communication with your mother during those three years?

KOROSEC: None, no, none. None at all. She was in Cleveland, Ohio. She was getting ready to get married so she can send for us because she has to have a U.S. citizen to send over, somebody to sponsor us. So, no, there was no communications for three years.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about what you, (he pauses as Mrs. Korosec, who is also present, silently reminds Mr. Korosec that they need to end the interview to rejoin their tour group), I'm sorry. (he laughs) I didn't realize you had to, you had a meeting at 12:05. Okay, then we'll have to speed this up a little bit. Tell me a little bit about what your mother did when she came. She left in 1920. And did she go immediately to Cleveland?

KOROSEC: Immediately.

SIGRIST: Why to Cleveland?

KOROSEC: Because they had relatives there and sponsors. She had an aunt there, Aunt Johanna, (saying the name he called her in English) Aunt Jenny on School Avenue, and that's, that's where we came in 1923. That's the only place I know, 1923.

SIGRIST: Why did she opt not to go to Michigan to where your...?

KOROSEC: That, that was a dead issue. She didn't want any part of the husband's past history. First of all, she couldn't handle it. It was too big to handle, so she went down here to make it easier because there was no money from the "grund." She was dis--, dis--, dispelled, whatever you want to call it, disowned from the family, so she was kind of by herself. So, 192--, she married a fellow named Anton Grzincic, G-R-Z-I-N-C-I-C... I-C...

SIGRIST: And Anton in A-N-T-O-N.

KOROSEC: Anton, uh huh. And he was a widower and he had a son. So she married him. (referring to the son) Evan was his name, Evan Grizincic. So in 19--, she married

EI-622/KOROSEC

in 1921 or '22, I don't remember. In 1923, she sent
for us. She had money. She had schifkrta. We saved
that much and we had to pay back the schifkrta.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

KOROSEC: Schifkrta is schif, S-C-H-I-F, schif. Krta is K-R-T-A.
That's the schifkrta.

SIGRIST: And that's the passage money.

KOROSEC: That's the passage money, right. Two hundred and forty
five dollars.

SIGRIST: When, when your mother was in America and you were
living with your uncle, how did you perceive America?

KOROSEC: It was, I had no idea. The only, I, somebody, somebody
says, "Remember these three words and you'll get by."
He said, "When you come to America, say, 'Mister,
please, bread' and you'll never go hungry." You
know, that's what he said. That's the only three words
I know. The three words I came over with. And the

other two words, he said, "Don't forget to say 'thank you.'" That was it.

SIGRIST: Tell me how it was brought up with you about the fact that you were going to be leaving your uncle. How did it all...?

KOROSEC: Oh, all right, leaving my uncle is 1923. My mother had some relatives and she wrote to this lady, a distant relative, Mary Vesel, V-E-S-E-L, which means happiness. So she's the one that brought us over, the three of us, in 1923, she was the, the trip guardian. And my mother paid her schifkrta. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: But did this woman just appear on the doorstep one day?

KOROSEC: No, no.

SIGRIST: How was all that arranged?

KOROSEC: It was, it was letter writing and, "I'll pay for your schifkrta if you bring my children over to Cleveland, Ohio."

SIGRIST: How did your uncle feel about all of this?

KOROSEC: He was glad to, because he couldn't afford to, to have me. I was, not, I mean, I was six, four years old, you see, six by then, seven. He couldn't afford me.

SIGRIST: And children of his own.

KOROSEC: Oh, yeah, three of them, uh huh, so he was glad.

SIGRIST: Tell me just quickly like what kind of food you ate on a daily basis.

KOROSEC: Uh, there was never any meat. We all, we had our own garden. And I had to hoe the corn, whatever it was, peas, potatoes. Mostly potatoes because they were filling. And we, if he, once in a while he would get paid in money, he sprung for meat. And that was a very big thing. He couldn't afford, very poor.

SIGRIST: What kind of meat?

EI-622/KOROSEC

KOROSEC: Beef, I suppose pig, pork. Lamb, perhaps. I do not know what it was. And I do, not much beef, though.

SIGRIST: What about schooling at this point in time?

KOROSEC: I went to a school about a year and a half and I was going to a Catholic school. And I remember going to school barefooted. I had no shoes. This was in November, so, not at all, it was cold, I had to go to school. That's it.

SIGRIST: And what language did they teach you?

KOROSEC: Slovenia, Slovenian. And also they tried to, tried to learn us German. It didn't stick very long because Germany, it really doesn't make no difference. But they tried to talk us Serbian. They tried to teach us Serbian because Serbs were in control. We didn't stick to that. Us Slovenians are very proud people. We want to talk in Slovenian. That's it.

SIGRIST: Could your uncle read and write?

KOROSEC: Yes, he could read and write. And the kids could read and write.

SIGRIST: We're just sort of flying here (he laughs) through these things. Tell me about religious life. What religion were you in...

KOROSEC: Catholic. I was born a Catholic and ninety nine percent of all Slovenians are Catholic.

SIGRIST: Tell me about what it was like to celebrate christmas in these rather meager circumstances.

KOROSEC: Christmas was always celebrated on December the 6th, Nicholas, Nicholas Day. Christmas was a holy day. It was a holy day. There was, only about going to church, that's all at Christmas. But Nicholas, St. Nicholas Day, you got something. You got something, whatever it was, I don't remember. On St. Nicholas Day, that was a present day, and St. Nick.

SIGRIST: What about practicing the religion at home? How, how did you practice Catholicism in the house?

KOROSEC: We didn't. We did not. We were too busy or too poor.
We went to Sunday church. That's all. It was a, it
was a Catholic school, so we had to say our prayers
or our, whatever it was you had to say. Lord, our, the
Lord's Prayer. That's all I remember.

SIGRIST: And in what language were you taught that?

KOROSEC: Slovenian.

SIGRIST: Can you say the Lord's Prayer in Slovenian?

KOROSEC: No, not now. Not any more.

SIGRIST: Is there any, any prayer or poem or some sort of
childhood nursery rhyme that you can say in Slovenian?

KOROSEC: I can say this. At least, I think I can say this. (he
sings in Slovenia) Which means, "Mary, Mary, the
daughter of the blacksmith, will drink if somebody will
buy her a drink. But she will never return the drink.
She will drink to your health always if somebody buys."

SIGRIST: May I ask how you learned that?

KOROSEC: (he laughs) In the village. (they laugh) So many things you hear as a six year old kid. He says, "I'll teach you something," so that's the (Slovenian).

SIGRIST: Learning a Slovenian drinking song.

KOROSEC: It is. A drinking song. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Funny. Tell me what you remember about what you took when you left to go to America.

KOROSEC: I took nothing because we had nothing. It was just the clothes we had. But I remember the biggest thing was, from, there was no transportation or, so we went on a, what do call these, cable cars from Slovenia to, over the Alps to, we went to Le Havre, France. That's, that's all I remember. I was scared stiff looking down on a cable car because we couldn't afford to go to Trieste and the Mediterranean, so we had to take a short cut. It was cheap and there was three of

us, (correcting himself), there was four of us; my
three sisters and myself and...

SIGRIST: Oh, so this woman was actually was gathering the other
two sisters...

KOROSEC: Yes, right, all of us.

SIGRIST: What was your relationship to the woman? How did you
get on with, with the chaperone?

KOROSEC: Mary Vesel was a strange woman, a spinster. I don't
know how old she was. When you're over twenty, you're
a spinster if you're not married. So, but, she did not
like us. And she was just a convenient thing. After
she brought us over, we never, never socialized with
her at all. That's it.

SIGRIST: You were probably just as much an inconvenience to her
as she was to you.

KOROSEC: That's right. She had to do this for her schifkrta.

EI-622/KOROSEC

SIGRIST: That's right. What happened once you got to Le Havre?

KOROSEC: Le Havre? We waited and we, we did S.S. Lafayette.

SIGRIST: How long, did you have to stay overnight in...?

KOROSEC: Yeah, two, two or three days. I don't remember that.

SIGRIST: Did you have to undergo any examinations in...?

KOROSEC: Not in Le Havre, no. Then we came. It took us six days to cross, six days and six nights.

SIGRIST: What did you think, as a little boy, getting on a ship?

KOROSEC: I was scared, very scared. Afraid, you know, I never saw a ship before. I never saw an automobile. Never saw a motorcycle. Never saw a colored person. Never had "slado led" which was ice cream. Never had that. Never had sugar, "sukr." We didn't have that.

SIGRIST: Can you spell slado led, please?

EI-622/KOROSEC

KOROSEC: Slado led is S-L-A-D-O, slado led, L-E-D. "Slado led" means ice cream.

SIGRIST: And you had that for the first time on the ship?

KOROSEC: On the ship. And, and sukr was S-U-K-R, is sugar, first on the ship.

SIGRIST: Did you like these new discoveries?

KOROSEC: Oh, I loved them. Oh! I was running around the ship all over. (he laughs) And me, you know, I couldn't (sleep?) with Slovenians, see? But I was a cute little kid so, you know, they took me in.

SIGRIST: Is there, is there a story about something that happened on the ship that you like to tell?

KOROSEC: The one that I remember, I was a daredevil so I went to the prow of the ship, the foremost prow, and I hung on that damned yardarm and looked down this thing. Oh, my God, (he laughs) and I was kidding my sisters. "Hey, come back!" (he laughs) I didn't fall but I was a

daredevil.

SIGRIST: So you said the ship lasted, six days you were on the ship.

KOROSEC: Uh huh.

SIGRIST: It's November. What is the weather like on the ship?

KOROSEC: It's not bad. It's cold but not bad. It's, it's good sailing weather. We were, you know, there's a route, it's the regular route. There was no problem.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the accommodations on the ship for me?

KOROSEC: We were third class.

SIGRIST: Yes. What did that entail?

KOROSEC: It was just meals and a cot, that's all. I don't remember the meals. It doesn't make a difference because we ate.

EI-622/KOROSEC

SIGRIST: Was everyone together? Were you all...

KOROSEC: Yeah, just about, yeah. My, my sisters were with the, with the girl that brought us over. And I was with the boys, some, I don't know who it was, but it was (?)

SIGRIST: Well, tell me about what you remember about the ship arriving in New York.

KOROSEC: It was eleven o'clock at night, November the 15th, and I saw this light and I had no idea. We were never taught about Liberty, the Statue of Liberty. All we knew was to say, "Mister, please, bread." And I saw this light and I didn't think nothing of it. Never thought because I didn't have a connection. But what I do remember, there was, the trains by the, by the, right here someplace in Manhattan, I don't know. But the beautiful train lights; the red, the green and the yellow, the amber lights. And the shining tracks, and the busy, busy, busy, the trains. That's what I remember. You see, we were waiting for trains to come to Cleveland.

EI-622/KOROSEC

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me the process of, of how you got to Ellis Island?

KOROSEC: Uh, we embarked from the S.S. Lafayette, embarked, and we stayed three days and we got a thorough examination. And we were there three days. We were fed something, I don't know. All I remember is the crackers, soda crackers and sardines. That's, that's what I remember. That's what I remember.

SIGRIST: Is there anything else about the Ellis Island experience that sticks out in your mind?

KOROSEC: No, not a thing. It was...

SIGRIST: Do you remember what it looked like on the inside?

KOROSEC: No, not a thing. It was drab. It was big. It was scary and all these people were, Italians and all kinds, we couldn't converse. I don't remember Slovenians. But one thing about, a thing, my sister met a fellow there. His name is Tony Mramor, M-R-A-M-O-R. And he came at the same time. And they married

EI-622/KOROSEC

many years later. But they didn't know each other, see? So that was the only thing we had, no, Tony Mramor.

SIGRIST: The chaperone that was with you, did she only speak Slovenian or did she have some English?

KOROSEC: She was, no, no.

SIGRIST: She had never been to this country before.

KOROSEC: No, none of us spoke English except for a few words.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the trip to, how did you get to Cleveland?

KOROSEC: By train.

SIGRIST: And what sticks out in your mind about that train ride?

KOROSEC: Pennsylvania Train, and I remember (he laughs) again sardines and crackers. The cheapest thing you could find, you know. So that was it. And we stayed on

the train a day and night, whatever it was. And then,
when we were greeted by a friend or a neighbor of my
mother's in a 1929 [sic, they arrived in 1923]
Ford Model T with isinglass windows. And it was
eleven o'clock at night again (he laughs) next day,
perhaps. Anyway, we finally had met my mother and my
stepfather. And he loved us because he loved kids. He
was a nice guy. I loved, I loved my
grand--, (correcting himself) my stepfather and he liked
me because, I don't know, he liked all kids.

SIGRIST: I just want to clarify for the tape, this is 1923 and
you said a 1929 Ford. You mean a 1923 Ford?

KOROSEC: Yeah, a 1923 Ford, yeah. It was a brand new one,
that's right.

SIGRIST: (to Mrs. Korosec, who is gesturing to Mr. Korosec to
end the interview because of the time) Just a couple
more questions quickly?

MRS. KOROSEC: All right, but we're going to hold up a whole
group. (referring to their tour group)

SIGRIST: Okay, it's 12:05 that you're going to be..

MRS. KOROSEC: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you just tell me quickly how you met, uh, spoke English? How you learned to speak English?

KOROSEC: I went to school, uh, first grade. I knew the numbers. I knew, uh, I knew the ABC's and the 1-2-3-4. And I, and I kept, I went to number one with Miss Jones, a colored teacher, and she, I was bright so she skipped number two grade and three and four. And it just, it, you know, by sixth grade I went to Oliver Hazard Perry [Cleveland, Ohio]. I went to Collinwood High School, graduated. And I insisted on graduating from a high school. I needed that. I needed education. I needed a caring family and I needed, I needed a business of my own. I accomplished all three, so that was it.

SIGRIST: Yeah, well, I'm sorry we have to cut this interview so short.

EI-622/KOROSEC

MRS. KOROSEC: I'm sorry.

SIGRIST: I thank you very much for, for letting me ask you the questions that I did.

KOROSEC: Uh huh.

SIGRIST: And this is Paul Sigrist signing off (microphone disturbance) with Franck Korosec on Tuesday, June 20th, 1995.