

EI-653
MARY DOMYON
BIRTHDATE: MAY 7, 1922
INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 22, 1995
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 73
RUNNING TIME: 40:45
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME
INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND ORAL HISTORY STUDIO
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: JANET LEVINE

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1928
AGE: 6

PORT: BREMEN
SHIP: ADRIATIC
RESIDENCES: CZECHOSLOVAKIA: MEDVEZE (a village near
SVEDNIK)
US: NANTICOKE, PA; CLIFTON, NJ and LEAWOOD, KANSAS

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm here today in the Oral History Studio at Ellis Island with Mary Oblatilloff, Oblatilloff Domyon, who is here today with her husband and family members from Kansas visiting Ellis Island, and Mary came through Ellis Island from Czechoslovakia in 1928 when she and her twin sister were six years of age. Today is August 22nd, 1995 and Mary's seventy-three years of age at the time of this interview.

Well, I'm delighted that we were able to get together and to do this interview. If you would start at the beginning and say your birth date please.

DOMYON: I was born to Mary Breznochak in Medveze, Czechoslovakia, May 7, 1922.

?: 1922.

DOMYON: 1922. [Laughs] I'm sorry. May 7th, 1922.

LEVINE: Now, how do you spell your mother's name, maiden name?

DOMYON: B-R-E-Z-N-O-C-H-A-K, Breznochak.

LEVINE: And the town where you were born?

DOMYON: Medveze, M-E-D-V-E-Z-E, M-E-D-V-E-Z-E.

LEVINE: And you pronounce it?

DOMYON: Med-vegga.

LEVINE: Medveze. Now, did you live in Medveze up until you left for America?

DOMYON: Yes.

LEVINE: Okay. When you think of Medveze, are there certain scenes or things about the town that come to your mind?

DOMYON: Oh, yes, my mother had a sister living across the street and we had to cross a little bridge, a brook, and we were petrified because that brook was rather swift at that time. But after visiting, returning there almost forty years later, it wasn't as ferocious then as it was when I was a little girl. We had very happy joyous times there because we had a family; My mother's sisters had a lot of children there.

LEVINE: So you had—what was your father's name?

DOMYON: Peter Oblatiloff.

LEVINE: Okay.

DOMYON: And he had left for America six years before we had come.

LEVINE: Oh, so was your mother pregnant or had you been born yet?

DOMYON: We were born. We were two weeks or six weeks old when he left us; Left the twins.

LEVINE: Ah-ha, so you had never seen him until you met him here.

DOMYON: No.

LEVINE: And did you have sisters and brothers?

DOMYON: I had an older brother. He was eight years old when we came.

LEVINE: And his name?

DOMYON: And his name is John and my twin sister Anna.

LEVINE: Okay, and did you have grandparents in Czechoslovakia?

DOMYON: Yes, we did. Only on my father's mother, grandmother and on my mother's we had a grandfather and a step-grandmother.

LEVINE: And do you remember any experiences with any of them?

DOMYON: Oh, yes, I do. My uncle, my mother's brother used to come in the wagon and put us in the wagon and take us over to the next town in the wagon to visit the other grandparents. Those were very happy times.

LEVINE: And when you got to your grandparents, do you remember what you would do?

DOMYON: Oh, yes, running around with my cousins, getting candy from cedar chests. The older cousins would hide the candy in the cedar chest, and oh, when they would open that and give us the candy, that was the biggest deal.

LEVINE: (Laughs) I see. Let's see, how about the other side? The grandparent on your mother's side?

DOMYON: Yes, that's—those are the ones that we visited.

LEVINE: Oh, I see.

DOMYON: We stayed with my father's mother. My mother was the daughter-in-law and we stayed and were raised up with her.

LEVINE: So did this happen—like your father left for America and then your mother moved in with his mother?

DOMYON: Well, when she had gotten married, that's where she moved in and that's where we stayed and that's where we were born.

LEVINE: I see. So your grandmother was really living with you.

DOMYON: Yes.

LEVINE: Until you left, uh-huh. And how about that grandmother, what was she like?

DOMYON: She was fine. She wasn't as happy as the ones from the home of my mother because there were more people and more children.

LEVINE: And how did your mother—did your mother have to work? I mean, when your father was here in this country, how did your mother get along?

DOMYON: Oh, she worked in the fields. She managed a farm and she used to take us to the farm and we'd just play around while she was working.

LEVINE: What kind of a farm was it?

DOMYON: Well, I remember raising a lot of carrots, cabbage. It was really for only our use.

LEVINE: Oh, I see.

DOMYON: Yeah, we didn't market it or anything. Well, my father had sent money to keep us going there.

LEVINE: Now, the town that you were in, was this a real town with shops on the main street and all that?

DOMYON: Oh, no. There were only about fifteen houses. Fifteen homes.

LEVINE: And were there any stores at all?

DOMYON: No, and a church, cemetery and that was it. We had to travel to a town named Svednik. That was the big city there.

LEVINE: Were you near to that town?

DOMYON: Yes, it was about—well, they traveled by wagon then, so I don't know how long, but now by car it's about twenty minutes.

LEVINE: And how do you spell the name of that?

DOMYON: S-V-E-D-N-I-K.

LEVINE: Okay. So you—so do you remember as a—up until the time you were six, do you remember any trips to Svednik?

DOMYON: No, because when my mother went, my mother sat on a horse. She took the horse and went there and the children did not go.

LEVINE: Was that unusual for a woman to get on a horse and go?

DOMYON: No. Oh, no, it wasn't. That was their transportation.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So tell me what your mother was like. What do you remember about her when you were a young child?

DOMYON: Well, the only thing I remember mostly about my mother, she was happy. Loved to be with her family and her children were her whole life. Being that she had no husband there, she really stuck to us. We were always together, the three children and my mother.

LEVINE: And do you—were you a religious family?

DOMYON: Yes, my mother was rather religious. Yes.

LEVINE: So you attended that church that was in the town?

DOMYON: Yes.

LEVINE: And what kind of church was it?

DOMYON: Russian [sic. Later said Greek].

LEVINE: And do you remember any celebrations or religious occasions that were celebrated while you were still in Czechoslovakia?

DOMYON: Well, we remember—I remember Easter. It was more colorful because you had the blessings of the Easter basket and the food and the Easter eggs, which my mother loved to make and we called them at that time, pisanka [ph.]

LEVINE: Is that a Czechoslovakian word?

DOMYON: Yeah, pisanka, Easter egg. Or Ukrainian name.

LEVINE: Now, were the eggs colored and—

DOMYON: Yes. Yes, my mother took great pains, days preparing the wax to make the eggs.

LEVINE: So the wax was so that you could make designs on them?

DOMYON: Oh, yes. Yes.

LEVINE: And then was there any kind of a ritual about hiding the eggs or anything like that?

DOMYON: No, at that time there wasn't. The only ritual, the Easter eggs, if you had young girls, young men would come to get them Easter Monday, sprinkle them with water or pour water over them and the mother would give an Easter egg to that young man who would come to get the young ladies.

LEVINE: So in other words, the young man would come and put water on the Easter egg?

DOMYON: No, on the person.

LEVINE: On the lady?

DOMYON: On the lady.

LEVINE: And did that mean something?

DOMYON: Oh, yes, it meant affection.

LEVINE: And then the egg would be given to him?

DOMYON: Yes, by the—my mother would come out or the lady of the house with the Easter basket and she would ask him to pick out his own egg.

LEVINE: I see.

DOMYON: Yeah.

LEVINE: Are there any other things about life in Czechoslovakia that you remember? Maybe things that were done differently than they are here or were done here when you came here. Any ways of life, any celebrations, anything to do with births or marriages or deaths that were something unique to that place?

DOMYON: Well, birth, christening, the whole town would come and celebrate. A wedding was an all week affair. There was always dancing, drinking. Everybody would make a lot of food. People or relatives from other towns would come in and help prepare the food for the festivities and burial, the body would stay in the house and there was always somebody watching. The whole town would walk and just carry out the body and sing very sad, religious songs. The whole town would mourn.

LEVINE: And then the body would be taken to the cemetery?

DOMYON: To the church and to the cemetery.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was everybody in the town Russian Orthodox, pretty much?

DOMYON: Pretty much, yes. I was a little young to realize or recognize who was different.

LEVINE: And then—I imagine it would have been a simple like casket and all that. It wouldn't—

DOMYON: Oh, just a board. Just three sides or four sides. There was nothing—

LEVINE: Oh, open and everything.

DOMYON: Yes, but they would have a lid. They would close it with nails and just carry it on the shoulders.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about healthcare in your—

DOMYON: No, none whatsoever. There was no healthcare.

LEVINE: Was there any folk medicine or ideas of folk—

DOMYON: Oh, yes, they did. My mother and so were her other relatives, having home remedies.

LEVINE: Do you ever remember any instances specific?

DOMYON: Yes, my sister was burnt—

?: [someone whispering]

DOMYON: All right. [Chuckles]

LEVINE: Okay, your sister can tell when she was burned, okay.

DOMYON: Yes. All right.

LEVINE: And what was it like being twins in your town? I mean, were you the only set of the twins?

DOMYON: That we remember. We weren't fussed over in the town, but we noticed how people fussed over us our trip it started. Yes, my mother—

LEVINE: We'll talk about that when we get to—after we talk about the town. So are you identical twins?

DOMYON: Yes.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, so is there anything else about life in Czechoslovakia? Did you go to school or you were too young?

DOMYON: Well, we only went to school to sit by my brother when my mother had to do some farm chores, and she asked the professor if it would be all right if Annie and Mary would go there. Boys only really went to school. When my mother was growing up, she was the only girl going to school and she went only to third grade and then her parents stopped her because there were other more important things for her to do.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about those times when you sat with your brother?

DOMYON: Yes, we sat in sort of a wooden chair and we had to be very quiet because we didn't belong there in the first place. It was the goodness of his heart that he let us there, and like I said, there were just boys in there. Recess everybody went wild running around and then came back. Very, very obedient, quite and strict.

LEVINE: So did you feel privileged?

DOMYON: Oh, yes. Yes.

LEVINE: And let's see, how about your brother? What was he like as a child in Czechoslovakia?

DOMYON: Well, he was very quiet and extremely obedient. Learned everything. He was a very good student and there was nothing. Everybody just liked our John. [Laughs] [someone whispering]

LEVINE: Did John—how was John with his sisters?

DOMYON: Very good. John was very caring, protected us no matter where we went.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, how was the decision made for you to come to this country?

DOMYON: Well, my mother had the three children and she desperately wanted to come to be with her husband, like everybody else, and finally my father did send us the fare and we were just terribly happy that we were going to America. I don't remember anyone saying United States. It was Am-er-ica.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything that your father perhaps wrote in letters during that period when he was here and the rest of the family was there, that spoke about America and what it was like?

DOMYON: No, but he spoke about the friends in America that my mother had known and he'd send us pictures and he did send us clothes for his children and my brother got a sailor suit and he wore that for his passport picture. Yeah.

LEVINE: And before you left, do you remember what—I mean, what happened with your things? Did you pack them all or did you get rid of things or do you remember anything about the preparation?

DOMYON: My mother had one large trunk and everything was put in there and maybe two small suitcases because she had three children that she had to take care of, and for days and weeks my mother and her family would just get together and cry. Because of the departure, and the day we were leaving, the three children sat in the wagon with our feet hanging. We were facing the people and our friends. We were very, very happy, but my mother, of course, just cried and cried.

LEVINE: So do you remember the actual leaving?

DOMYON: Yes. Yes, actual leaving and waving. My mother wouldn't turn back. Once she set her eyes—she sat in with the driver and us three children with our feet hanging.

LEVINE: You were like facing the back of the wagon?

DOMYON: No, we were facing—our backs were turned back to—

LEVINE: To your mother.

DOMYON: Yeah.

LEVINE: And the driver.

DOMYON: And once my mother was facing the front, she didn't see the people behind the wagon.

LEVINE: And how about your grandparents, did they express anything to you before you left?

DOMYON: They were sad and they just, you know, wished well and best regards and "Come back," and "Don't forget me," and "Send me this," and "Send me that," and "Give my regards when you see my Johnnie or Mary in America."

LEVINE: So where did the wagon take you when you left the town?

DOMYON: I don't remember exactly, but I think it was to Bratislava, which is the capital now of the Slovak section. From there the train took us probably to Prague and then we went to Germany and I don't know what this stop, but we did depart from Liverpool.

LEVINE: Okay. So you—and were there any examinations before departure?

DOMYON: No. No.

LEVINE: And so you—when you got to Liverpool, did you leave immediately then?

DOMYON: Well, I don't know how long we stayed, but we were put on the ship and we had very good accommodations.

LEVINE: Do you remember those?

DOMYON: Yes, and running around. They had a sort of a nursery and they had a wooden hobby horse there and we would get there and if there were other children around the horse, my brother stood there or told them to leave because he wanted to put his sisters on the horse.

LEVINE: And the name of the ship?

DOMYON: Adriatic.

LEVINE: And how your accommodations, what were they like?

DOMYON: Well, my mother was very sick all during the trip, so we had somebody escort us to the dining area and we would come back and bring a lot of food to her, which she could not eat. That was the first time I was introduced to an orange.

LEVINE: Oh, tell me about that.

DOMYON: Well, you know, you started eating it and biting it with the skin on, and somebody told us how to eat it. They peeled it.

LEVINE: Now, where did you get the orange?

DOMYON: In the dining, when we were out for our meal. After the meal, they would pass out the bowls of fruit.

LEVINE: Now, were you what you would call in a third class, in a cabin? Is that where you were?

DOMYON: We had bunkers and my mother slept on the first one. Just a very small room. I don't know if you would call that a room or just sleeping quarters.

LEVINE: So it was you and your sister and brother and mother?

DOMYON: Yes.

LEVINE: And that was it?

DOMYON: That was it in the party. My mother had an awful lot of help. Leaving the train or getting on, there'd be men just running to her and help her with us small children. They would give us candies, Hershey, the other passengers. They just felt sorry for this nice little woman, age twenty-eight with three children.

LEVINE: Okay. So was there anything else about the voyage that you remember, that sticks out in your mind?

DOMYON: Just an awful lot of people all the time.

LEVINE: And do you remember when the ship came into the New York Harbor?

DOMYON: Well, I think it docked at night and they made us—you know, we spent the night on the boat and then early in the morning you had to get up and they put us on these ferries or smaller boats to bring us in. It seemed that we just stood there an awful long time before they let us off and I kept asking my mother, well, "Why are they keeping us?" Well, we have to wait like everybody else.

LEVINE: So then what was your impression of Ellis Island?

DOMYON: Just wondering what's going to happen to us. We knew my father was going to pick us up, and all these physicals, and telling us to walk up the stairs while other people watched us. The thing I really remember is they took us into a room where there were large, long skinny tubs to take a bath. They had water in there, and my brother fussed because he didn't want to get undressed with the other people. While he was fussing, I was wondering and thinking secretly, "Well, Mary, you better just get undressed and get into that tub because they're going to drown you anyway," and with that, we were put in a lot of water and they washed my long hair. That's when I realized that they were just cleaning us up.

LEVINE: Wow.

DOMYON: And I still would like—this is my second visit here and I really would like to see the tub.

LEVINE: Yeah. Hmm.

DOMYON: But outside of that, I really have very fond memories. Everybody was nice, and we were lucky that we were healthy and we went through.

LEVINE: Now, did you stay overnight?

DOMYON: We stayed overnight and then we had a relative of my father's from Hoboken, they picked us up and took us to their home and my father came in from Pennsylvania. He was a miner in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania. He came with somebody. He hired a car and took his family to Pennsylvania and that was the first time we met my father.

LEVINE: Wow. Now, did you know the person from Hoboken?

DOMYON: Yes. I didn't know him, but we knew it was a relative.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember meeting that person?

DOMYON: Over there, yes. They lived—and they had a tavern and I just remember the French doors and when you opened it, you stepped right out on the sidewalk, on the street. They had a tavern, a lot of people there. A lot of relatives. It was a happy time when we got there.

LEVINE: Oh, so your mother knew this—

DOMYON: My mother knew them. Oh, yes, my mother knew the relatives that had picked us up.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh, and where did you say your father was coming from in Pennsylvania?

DOMYON: Nanticoke, Pennsylvania. It's just near Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. Scranton area. Mining area.

LEVINE: N-A-N-T-I-

DOMYON: C-O-K-E.

LEVINE: And so what was the reunion like for you and your mother and sister and brother with your father?

DOMYON: We were sitting—there were a lot of people when my father came to pick us up, you know. When we finally got in the car, I was sitting in the back. I guess my mother was there and I was sitting on his lap and he had a blue serge suit, so his suit came contact with my bare skin and it was very itchy. I didn't like that feeling and I says to mother, "Who's this man?" and she says, "He's your father," and I just became very quiet. [Laughs]

LEVINE: And what was it like getting used to having your father in your life?

DOMYON: Strange because, you know, you grew up seeing you had a lot of freedom. Yes.

LEVINE: Was he the disciplinarian of the family?

DOMYON: Very. Very.

LEVINE: So what was life like for you once you got to Pennsylvania?

DOMYON: Very enjoyable in the younger years. We were very happy. A lot of relatives and friends. They knew our language. We knew their language.

LEVINE: So you were in a community with a lot of people from Czechoslovakia?

DOMYON: Yes. Yes, that my mother had known. And went to school.

LEVINE: So a lot of the Czechoslovakian people who immigrated here were working in those mines?

DOMYON: Yes, and then after we graduated from high school, my mother left and took her children. Well, we had a rough time during Depression and she just didn't want us to have anything to do with the mines and she moved us. We all moved to New Jersey.

LEVINE: Your father, too?

DOMYON: Yes, my father, too, and we were all educated there and before my mother and father had passed away, they've seen their children married professionals and had grandchildren. My brother became a CPA. I have two nurses, registered nurses sisters, and I was a medical technician. So my mother saw the fruits of her labor.

LEVINE: Yes, uh-huh. What was life like in Nanticoke? Was there any kind of a social organization that had to do with people who were coming here as immigrants?

DOMYON: Well, we belonged to a church and they had all the activities and social parties and weddings and dances and balls. They had a baseball team in Nanticoke that everybody got dressed and went to sit on the grass and we had a very—the baseball player became rather famous. He was one handed and he made the Major Leagues for a few years by the name of Pete Gray. They made a movie of his life, too.

LEVINE: And was he someone who had immigrated from Czechoslovakia?

DOMYON: Well, no, he was a Lithuanian, but he started playing baseball on this little diamond in Hanover. Then he went to the Major League and was there several years. Like I said, they even made a movie of his life and of his baseball.

LEVINE: Were there other particular immigrant groups in Pennsylvania around where you were?

DOMYON: Well, they had the Polish, Ukrainians and Lithuanians and some Irish. Italians. It was a nice mixture.

LEVINE: And were they all working in the mines, the men?

DOMYON: The men, yes, and the women stayed and took care of the family. Then there were offices and they went into Wilkes Barre or Nanticoke. There was a big cigar and silk mill that took all the young ladies and they worked there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did your mother ever work there?

DOMYON: No, not while she was in a Hanover, in Nanticoke, but she did work in New Jersey.

?: [someone whispering]

DOMYON: Yeah, when we moved to New Jersey, my mother was a seamstress and she worked in a clothing store—factory.

[End of Tape One, Side A/Start of Tape One, Side B]

LEVINE: Is there anything else about getting adjusted to this country? Were there any things that when you first came here were new and different, that you recall?

DOMYON: Well, everything was new. We were introduced to a lot of different foods and fruits. My mother went to the store and she saw all the other women buying pineapple because it was a butcher that he didn't always have pineapples or oranges. So my mother bought one and I says—she brought it home and we didn't know how to eat it. She tried to cut it and bite into it. So she threw it away and she told us about the experience and we went after it and we didn't know how to eat it, either. So that was one nice experience, too.

LEVINE: How about learning English, what was that like for you?

DOMYON: Very easy. I don't even—it just seemed we just slid right into it. Although we had a Polish teacher and she helped us out. She carried my sister and I under each arm and if our teacher had any problems understanding us, they would get Miss Noel and she would help us out.

LEVINE: Now, Miss Noel, was she an immigrant from Poland?

DOMYON: I don't think so, but she knew, she understood us. She was raised by Polish parents.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, so she could understand the Czechoslovakian.

DOMYON: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: Any other school experiences that stand out in your mind?

DOMYON: Well, no.

LEVINE: Okay. Let's see—

DOMYON: Except we were just—the attention. The only one set of twins and everybody just fussed over us constantly. People would meet us on the street, "Which one are you, Annie or Mary?"

LEVINE: Did you dress alike?

DOMYON: Yes, my mother dressed us alike. She made our clothes and dressed us alike.

LEVINE: So how did you feel about being a twin?

DOMYON: Well, it didn't bother me. It really didn't bother us. We were just one of the kids, that's all, and our friends didn't really treat us. Once you got to be friendly with people, they really didn't treat us any differently.

LEVINE: And how did you meet your husband?

DOMYON: Well, when we moved to New Jersey—

LEVINE: When did you move to New Jersey, do you remember?

DOMYON: We were living in New Jersey about fifty years. Before the years, about 1943, '42. I don't remember exactly when. I'd have to figure it out. '41 around. '41.

LEVINE: So you—now, let's see. How far had you gone in school before? Had you finished school when you moved?

DOMYON: I didn't finish completely, but I went to New York, a commercial school where I became a laboratory technician. That was in New York. Paine Hall in New York City.

LEVINE: So had your family moved to New Jersey when you went to Paine Hall?

DOMYON: Yes, we were all—I went to Paine Hall a little later. I worked in a defense factory and then I decided to go back to school.

LEVINE: Could you give any impressions or experiences that have to do with the Depression in this country?

DOMYON: Oh, yes. We didn't have any toys. My mother made all of our clothes. She did a lot of canning and making the bread and our entertainment was Saturday night a good bath. She put us in a nice warm bed and would read mystery stories to us, and family picnics. Church clambakes and we were getting older. We did notice that we were lacking a lot of things and some of our friends had better clothing than us.

LEVINE: Now, how about the Second World War, what do you recall about how that war affected you and your family?

DOMYON: Well, we got jobs. There was more income coming in. My brother was working, had a very good office job and he volunteered. He volunteered into the service and then Ann graduated from nursing and she went into the service. But Ann will tell you that.

LEVINE: So you—were you personally working in the defense industry?

DOMYON: Yes, I was working for about two years and then I decided to leave. I was making a very good income and I decided to leave and go to school.

LEVINE: And what were you doing in the defense—

DOMYON: I was a spooler. Khaki thread was being spun on big spools and then that spool would go into where they would make the material. Forstmann Woolen Company.

LEVINE: That's the name of it?

DOMYON: Yes.

LEVINE: F-O-R-S—

DOMYON: F-O-R-S-T-M-A-N-N.

LEVINE: And where was that?

DOMYON: In Barfield, New Jersey, and they also had a big mill called Botany Mills in Passaic, New Jersey.

LEVINE: And do you remember any of the attitudes of people, of yourself or people around you, about the war at that time?

DOMYON: Everybody was happy. Everybody was willing to do anything to help. Really, no one complained.

LEVINE: And then when was it that you met your husband?

DOMYON: Well, I was already out of school and I was working and I met this friend working in the hospital and she wanted to go to Domyon's Hall for a dance, to a dance. I really didn't want to go and my mother made me go. So I went with her.

LEVINE: Now, what was Domyon's Hall?

DOMYON: It was a local hall that had dances, banquets, church affairs and this was I think a Policeman's Dance and I went.

LEVINE: Where was it located?

DOMYON: In Clifton, not too far from where we lived. I met him there and we had such a good time and I got home about three o'clock in the morning and my mother says, "Did you have a good time?" I said, "Sure, if I didn't, I wouldn't have stayed out until three," and then that was what started it.

LEVINE: Now, what was your husband's name? Or what is your husband's name?

DOMYON: Rudy. Rudolph Domyon.

LEVINE: And what did you like about him?

DOMYON: His smile and just the happy attitude.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So then do you have children?

DOMYON: I have two daughters.

LEVINE: And their names?

DOMYON: Janet Domyon Grable, who lives in Elkhart, Kansas, and Karen Domyon who lives in Cupertino, California. I have two grandchildren, Nathan and Kelly.

LEVINE: Do you think the fact that you came here as a young child and started a new life in a new country, do you think that affected your life or the way you are as a person or had any affect?

DOMYON: Oh, I think so. I became more observant of how you should spend your money, how you should watch it and take care of it because we never had excess, or a little extra money. Just being careful and just saving my money, make sure that my children went to school with a little easier and-

LEVINE: And do you think there are carryovers in ways of doing things or attitudes that maybe your mother had that you also have, and perhaps passed onto your children? Or any ways that you do things or ways that you are that are of that—that were formed from your Czechoslovakian background?

DOMYON: The only thing that I think I sort of followed is budgeting, money.

LEVINE: From your mother?

DOMYON: From my mother. My mother was—she watched her pennies and she made it go a long way, and if she wouldn't have watched, then she wouldn't have been able to give what she gave to her children.

LEVINE: How about this period in your life? I take it you're retired.

DOMYON: Yes.

LEVINE: How is this for you, this particular phase?

DOMYON: Very happy and I'm proud where we got where we are and that we could have retired and enjoy life and spend a little money. You know, now I have what I wanted, what I needed, so I could go out and make trips, where other years before then, you had to watch. My children have good jobs so they're not my burden anymore.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else that you can think of that has to do with starting out in Czechoslovakia and coming to this country and really living out your whole life here? Is there anything you'd like to say before we close?

DOMYON: The only thing is that my mother had an awful lot to do—who we are today and what we are, and I tell my children it's not how you start, it's how you wind up.

LEVINE: Well, thank you very much for a most interesting interview.

DOMYON: Well, you're quite welcome.

LEVINE: I've been speaking with Mary Oblatilloff Domyon, who came from Czechoslovakia at six years of age in 1922 and today is August 22nd, 1995. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing off.

DOMYON: Thank you.

[End of Interview]

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