

**EI-673**

**JOSEPH BRADY**

**BIRTHDATE: AUGUST 13, 1906**

**INTERVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 1995**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW:**

**RUNNING TIME: 1:00:06 1:46:55 kd 12/14/21**

**INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST**

**RECORDING ENGINEER:**

**INTERVIEW LOCATION: WHITING, NEW JERSEY**

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**IRELAND, 1925**

**AGE: 18**

**SHIP:**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES:**

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995. I'm in Whiting, New Jersey with Joseph Brady. Mr. Brady came from the north of Ireland in 1925 and he was eighteen years old when he arrived in the US.

Can we begin, Mr. Brady, by you giving me your birth date please?

BRADY: I was born August 13, 1906.

SIGRIST: And where you were born?

BRADY: In County Armagh, Northern Ireland.

SIGRIST: Can you spell the county name please?

BRADY: A-R-M-A-G-H.

SIGRIST: And whereabouts in the north of Ireland is that?

BRADY: That's about, I would say about thirty-five miles from Belfast, which is one of the principle towns in Northern Ireland.

SIGRIST: Were you born in a specific town or village in that county?

BRADY: Yes, our village was called Clady, C-L-A-D-Y. Clady.

SIGRIST: And did you live in Clady the whole time that you were in Ireland, before you came here?

BRADY: Unless while I went to school in Belfast for about eighteen months, I suppose.

SIGRIST: But for most of the time you lived there.

BRADY: Most of the time I lived in Clady.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about Clady?

BRADY: Certainly, it was an agricultural country and that time in northern Ireland one of the big products was flax from which linen was made, and it was very profitable until later on when I suppose linen fell out of a use and then you know, there was—the economy went down after that. Of course, Northern Ireland, too, was noted for its ship building, but we were not near any seaport town.

SIGRIST: Were there factories in Clady that converted the flax to—

BRADY: The nearest—the nearest factory was in a town called Market Hill.

SIGRIST: Market Hill?

BRADY: Yeah, and that's where—it did employ a lot of—I don't know how many, but quite a lot of younger people. A lot of girls were employed in the factory in making the linen.

SIGRIST: Tell me what sticks out in your mind as a child about Clady, about the town itself?

BRADY: Well, I guess what sticks in my mind is going to school. We had a lot of fun. Went to a lot of dances and that kind of stuff.

SIGRIST: Are there any buildings in that town that you remember specifically?

BRADY: The only big building and of course after that the school, but the school was a one-room schoolhouse taught by a principle and an assistant. Two teachers in the school.

SIGRIST: And what was the school made out of? What was the building constructed of?

BRADY: I think it was made out of stone. It was masonry, stone with a slate roof, that kind of stuff.

SIGRIST: What about your own house? Can you describe what it looked like and how it was made?

BRADY: Our own house was made of brick and it consisted of a kitchen and I guess three or four rooms. That's where I was raised. We had a garden where we raised vegetables and my mother raised a lot of roses. She was very fond of roses and we had a lot of roses around the door.

SIGRIST: Is this a freestanding structure, the house?

BRADY: Yes. Yes, it's—

SIGRIST: And two stories?

BRADY: One story.

SIGRIST: One story. What kind of a roof did it have on it?

BRADY: A slate roof.

SIGRIST: Did it have a cellar?

BRADY: No, no cellar.

SIGRIST: How was it heated?

BRADY: By coal stove in the kitchen. That was the only heat we had.

SIGRIST: And how was it lit?

BRADY: By kerosene lamp.

SIGRIST: Where would you get the coal and the kerosene?

- BRADY: From the village. They delivered the coal. You know, when you called up and you needed coal, they came and delivered. I think a load of coal was about fifteen hundred weight, I guess. Then the kerosene for the lamp we got in the nearest little village store.
- SIGRIST: Does anything stand out in your mind about the use of kerosene lamps from your childhood?
- BRADY: Not particularly. The one thing that you had to watch with a kerosene lamp was keep the globe clean and that was—you had to do that every evening, I suppose, and then you raised the wick by turning a little screw on the side of the lamp to turn up the light.
- SIGRIST: Can you describe for me the kitchen in the house? You mentioned there was a coal stove in there.
- BRADY: Right.
- SIGRIST: What else was in the kitchen?
- BRADY: There was a shelf where my mother kept all the dishes, and a table where we used to eat at, and then chairs and I think there was a bench in it. And that's about all.
- SIGRIST: What kind of a floor does the house have?
- BRADY: A cement floor?
- SIGRIST: Cement floor. Of course, there's no cellar you said.
- BRADY: No cellar.
- SIGRIST: Can you tell me what kinds of vegetables you raised in the garden?
- BRADY: Many potatoes. We also raised peas, carrots, cauliflower and—cauliflower. Onions, of course. I think that's about all.
- SIGRIST: And you mentioned your mother raised roses.
- BRADY: Yes.
- SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about her raising the roses? Would you have a story about her and her roses that you'd like to tell?

BRADY: No. She was very fond of raises and raised them, especially around the door and around the windows she had these climbing roses, which made the place look very, very nice. We lived across the way from the school, and I only had to walk across the road to go to school.

Another thing I remember about my mother, the kids used to all the—a lot of them, when they got out for lunch, would come across the road to my mother to get a drink or to get some milk or something. She was very popular with all the kids in the school.

SIGRIST: Very convenient for them.

BRADY: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: Was there a front yard to this house?

BRADY: No, we called it a street. There was just about two three about yards wide and then there was a fence between the road and the street—the house.

SIGRIST: Did your mother or father ever tell you anything about your birth? Do you know anything about when you were born?

BRADY: Very, very little. I don't remember any—I don't remember them telling me anything.

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

BRADY: John. John Brady.

SIGRIST: And what did he do for a living?

BRADY: He was a mailman.

SIGRIST: Really? Can you talk a little bit about his job as a mailman?

BRADY: Well, yes. He was what we would call on the railroad here, he worked a swing shift. He would go out in the morning, pick up the mail and deliver it, and he walked all around. He walked, I would say, about six or seven miles every day delivering mail. Then he was through with that about lunch time and then in the afternoon, he went to the post office and took it down to another village where they picked up the mail, the outgoing mail. He knew—of course, being a mailman, he knew everybody in the village.

SIGRIST: What did your father look like? Describe him in words for me.

BRADY: The big thing I remember about my father, he was tall and he had a very flowing moustache. That's about all I remember about him.

SIGRIST: Can you talk a little bit about his personality?

BRADY: As I remember, he was very jolly and he could sing. I remember him singing quite a bit and most of the people that he talked to liked him and they would always come and talk to him. Especially when we went to church on Sunday, they would come and speak to my father and ask him about several things. Then standing around and talking to all the farmers, he knew quite a bit about farming and sometimes he would advise them what to do. If there were an animal sick, he would always give them advice, tell them what to do and possibly give them some remedy that could help, you know, cure the animal.

SIGRIST: Had he been a farmer beforehand?

BRADY: Yes, his parents were farmers, I guess.

SIGRIST: Do you remember his parents?

BRADY: I remember his mother, but not his father. I don't—

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your grandmother on your father's side?

BRADY: I remember that she was an old lady and I remember that she was very, very fond of my mother. My mother and her used to have little talk sessions together, nobody else around. That's about all I remember about her.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

BRADY: My mother's name was Ann.

SIGRIST: And her maiden name?

BRADY: Maiden name was Duncan.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that please?

BRADY: D-U-N-C-A-N. I think her family were originally Scotts, because her uncle, as I remember her Uncle Tom, used to come on vacation in the summertime and he lived in Glasgow. So I don't know if they

were originally from Scotland, but I know they had some—a lot of Scotch connections.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's personality like?

BRADY: Well, she was a very loving kind of a person. As I said, the kids all loved her and, of course, we did, too. But she was the disciplinarian. My father never had to correct us. My mother did the—if anybody had to be topped or disciplined, she was the one who did it. My father was always back us up with something that she did, but she made sure that we were corrected.

SIGRIST: What were some of the rules in the house that the children had to follow? What were some of the ground rules of living in your parents' house?

BRADY: The main thing was that you had to keep all your clothes clean and keep all your own possessions individually and you had to take care of them, and it was your responsibility to take care of them. It was also we were designated to do certain chores around the house. Like I was designated to get the coal for the fire in the morning and the kindling for the fire. I remember that being my chore.

SIGRIST: I should say for the sake of the tape that Mrs. Brady has joined us. No, you can if you'd like.

MBRADY: No.

SIGRIST: Just don't walk in and out because the microphone will pick up all that. Has also joined us. What was I saying? Your mother—talking about your mother. Tell me some of her chores around the house? What were her responsibilities in the house?

BRADY: First of all was feeding us and cooking for us. Then, of course, she had to do the washing and the ironing and she didn't have any washing machine. She washed in a tub with a washboard and then we had a line outside in the garden where she hung the clothes out to dry. And then took them in and put them away and made sure that we were dressed up, especially for Sunday and going to school.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the process of ironing? Can you just describe what that entailed at that time?

BRADY: Yes, she had a very modern iron for that time. You had a heater and you put the heater in the stove and then you opened up a little thing in the back of the iron and put the heater. It was a concave thing

inside, and you put the iron inside it. They also had flatirons that you could put on top of the stove and that, but you put this iron in and then it didn't soil the clothes or anything. You could always keep the clothes very clean.

SIGRIST: Did you have running water in the house?

BRADY: No, we had to get our water from a well outside the houses. We called it the spring well and that supplied water for the whole village.

SIGRIST: And was there a certain routine that you followed concerning getting the water?

BRADY: Oh, yes. One of my brothers was the one who got the water. He carried—went to the well and got the water in the cans and brought it to the house.

SIGRIST: Toilet facilities?

BRADY: No, we had—we didn't have running water. We had a toilet outside and you flushed it with a pail of water.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. Tell me, brothers and sisters? Did you have brothers and sisters?

BRADY: Yes, I had six brothers, no sisters.

SIGRIST: Can you name them all for me, please?

BRADY: Yes. My oldest brother was Charles. Then they had James, Michael, William John, Thomas, myself and Leo.

SIGRIST: William John is one?

BRADY: One person, yes.

SIGRIST: Right. How many years' span between the oldest and the youngest?

BRADY: Oh, let's see. I guess about sixteen years, I'd say.

SIGRIST: Do you know what year your parents were married?

BRADY: No, I don't.

SIGRIST: Do you know how they met?

BRADY: I don't.

SIGRIST: Tell me, you mentioned a little bit before that one of your mother's responsibilities was feeding the family.

BRADY: Right.

SIGRIST: What did you eat in Ireland in this period?

BRADY: Something what we eat today. My mother made the bread. She got the flour and mostly we had homemade bread. It was a treat when we got, as we called it, store boughten bread. But she made the bread and for breakfast we generally had—we had tea, rather than coffee. We had bread and butter and eggs more than anything else. Eggs and sometimes bacon and tea. Then for lunch we had—we had bacon and cabbage and potatoes and carrots sometimes and we had soup, a lot of soup. I think that was about—and then for supper we always had—we always had oatmeal. Oatmeal porridge it's called and the local name for is was stir-about. I don't know why they called it stir-about, but in some of the old books that I read I see it. They called it stir-about.

SIGRIST: And then what would you drink for breakfast—for a beverage while you're eating your stir-about?

BRADY: Milk. Fresh, and sometimes buttermilk, but mostly fresh milk.

SIGRIST: What times were these meals? What time was breakfast?

BRADY: We started off about eight o'clock in the morning. The dinner was always at noontime, around noontime, between twelve and one o'clock. Then the supper at six o'clock. Sometimes we had tea in the afternoon, afternoon tea, which was just bread and butter and tea, and then the supper was around eight o'clock.

SIGRIST: What would your mother prepare for a special occasion? Did she have a special food that she made for certain occasions?

BRADY: Well, that was mostly cake if we were having company. She would make what she called a courant cake. She would make like soda bread with raisins and fruit in it.

SIGRIST: What did she call it? Kern?

BRADY: Courant bread.

SIGRIST: Oh, courant, like the berries.

BRADY: Made with currants, yeah.

SIGRIST: I see. What about religious holidays, for instance, like Christmas, was there a certain meal that you ate at that time?

BRADY: Yes. Yes, we always had—we always had steak for Christmas. That was one of the things we had, and then we had pudding, you know, like plum pudding.

SIGRIST: Steamed pudding?

BRADY: Yeah, right. That was a specialty and then a regular meal. But that was one of the times of the year where we had steak. We very seldom had steak.

SIGRIST: How much of your food did you produce yourself and how much of it was purchased?

BRADY: Well, we produced most of the potatoes and most of the vegetables. All the vegetables. I think we produced all the vegetables we ate and then of course bacon and meat we got from the butcher. That was all, unless the raisins and stuff like that that we bought at the store for making cake.

SIGRIST: You've got five brothers and yourself, did you say?

BRADY: Six brothers and myself.

SIGRIST: Six brothers. So there's seven boys.

BRADY: Seven boys.

SIGRIST: In the family. What was your job specifically? Did you have a chore in the house? You mentioned your brother had to get the water, one brother.

BRADY: Then I think I mentioned before that I was the one who set up the kindling for the fire in the morning and got the coals all set and ready. So when my mother got up, or one of the boys got up first and put the kindling in and then put the wood and started off the fire.

SIGRIST: Where did the wood come from?

BRADY: I guess around. We had a lot of bushes and a lot of trees around and we used to go around and gather the broken down branches and stuff like that. That was mostly what we used.

SIGRIST: Did your family keep animals of any sort?

BRADY: Just a dog. We always had a dog.

SIGRIST: Do you remember a specific dog from your childhood?

BRADY: Yes. One dog was—I don't know what breed he was. I guess a mixed breed. We called him Rollo.

SIGRIST: Rollo?

BRADY: Rollo, yeah.

SIGRIST: Is there a story about Rollo that you can remember?

BRADY: Yes, I remember that my mother had liked the dog very much because she said once when I was small, I wandered away and there was a stream near us, like a little brook, and she saw me down by the brook and she was worried. But when she went out and saw the dog was always keeping between me and the stream, so I wouldn't wander too near it. So she always told me that.

SIGRIST: Tell me about what games you played as a child? How did you entertain yourselves when you were kids?

BRADY: Mostly football. That was jelly footballs, little. It's not like the football. It's more like soccer, but in jelly football, you're not permitted to touch the ball. Oh, pardon me, you can touch the ball. In soccer you're not supposed to touch the ball unless kick it with your feet or with your hand, but in the football we played, you could catch the ball and you could run with it only for three steps and then you had to either kick it or throw it to somebody. That was the main thing. I guess that was about all the games we played. Then, of course, in the evenings we used to play cards. Played cards a lot.

SIGRIST: What card games did you play?

BRADY: Something we called it Twenty-Five. I think it was—I'm not too sure what game you could compare it to here. I think you have a game here among the Irish, anyhow, they call it Euchre and it's something like that. You played with—it was played with five cards and you got

the game when you got twenty-five tricks or something like that. We played that quite a lot.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the card game, Ukert?

BRADY: Euchre.

SIGRIST: How do you spell that?

BRADY: E-U-C-H-R-E, I think. Something like that. I'm not too sure of that.

SIGRIST: Would the cards be something the whole family did or just the kids?

BRADY: Oh, the whole family could play and sometimes did sit in, but mostly it was the kids. Then, of course, when the older people played, we weren't allowed to play, unless once in a while, when they were short somebody. You used to play partners and sometimes when there wouldn't be enough to make it, like if there weren't eight people there, if there were only seven there, one of us kids would sit in until somebody else came in.

SIGRIST: Were there ways the entire family entertained themselves? Did you do something special all together?

BRADY: No, very little. We had—we generally had a lot of neighbors come in and I think that was the rule, I think, in the place where I lived, that you always had visitors. In the evening you always had, the neighbors would come in and sit around and chat, or else we would go to a neighbor's house and sit around and chat. That's generally what we did.

SIGRIST: Was your family musical at all?

BRADY: I think my brother Charlie was the only one and he played the violin. But he was the only one that was musical. I tried one time to play the flute and I wasn't too successful.

SIGRIST: You started talking about school earlier, the school was right across the way from you.

BRADY: The way, right.

SIGRIST: Tell me what sorts of things stick out in your mind about the experience of going to school as a kid?

BRADY: Well, I don't remember anything, but I know we had, as I said, the principle was always a man and the assistant was generally a lady, a young lady and she taught what we call here kindergarten. We called it infants there. She taught infants class, first, second class. Then after you got from second class, you went to the master's side of the side of the room and he taught third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade. Then what we usually did, we did a lot of silent reading. You know, we'd sit down and he would give us a passage in the book to read and we would sit down and then he would question us to see how much we learned from it. We read Shakespeare and Oliver Goldsmith it was, an Irish writer, and history. When we took geography, we stood up and looked at a map and we stood in a— because there weren't enough seats for all of us. We stood in a circle around and the teacher pointed out places on the map and then next time we came back, he would ask us about the places. So we learned quite a bit about geography that way.

SIGRIST: Were you taught any Gaelic in school?

BRADY: No. I don't think we were taught that. We were taught Gaelic separately and I learned my prayers in Gaelic and a little conversation, but that's all. I don't think I could carry on conversation with anybody in Gaelic now, though I could understand quite a bit, if they said anything.

SIGRIST: But in your home you spoke English?

BRADY: Oh, yes, all the time English.

SIGRIST: So Gaelic would just be a second language.

BRADY: Second language, yeah.

SIGRIST: In school is there a story that you can remember about maybe one of your classmates in school? Does one of them stick out in your mind? Do you have a story about someone you went to school with at that time?

BRADY: The only thing that I vividly remember is around one of the holidays somebody got one of these, what do you call them? Things that you light at fourth of July?

SIGRIST: Like a sparkler?

BRADY: A sparkler. They got a sparkler and we were standing in two rooms because there were a lot of us then and he got in the back row and

somehow he lit the sparkler. Of course, that caused consternation among—and caused him to get punished. I think there was a girl standing in front of him and she yelled and jumped when the sparkler went off. So that's one of the things I remember.

SIGRIST: How would they punish you in school if you did something you weren't supposed to?

BRADY: They'd give you a slap. Slap your hand. You held out your hand and the teacher hit you sometimes with a ruler, but more times with a stick about eighteen inches long or something that he had cut out of the hedge. Depending on the severity of your crime, you got so many slaps. Sometimes you got two on one hand, two on the other which was big punishment.

SIGRIST: Do you remember an instance where you were punished in school?

BRADY: No.

SIGRIST: You're remembering something, I can tell.

BRADY: Yeah, I do remember. We had one boy in school who was—he was little, but not too bad, but he was so scared of the teacher that he'd give a silly answer or couldn't answer, and the teacher got so aggravated, he got very mad at him and he gave him slaps on the hand, and then he hit him across the back of the neck with the thing, and I got so enraged. I went up and pulled the stick out of his hand and broke it across my lap and walked out of school. So that—and I had forgotten all about that until I went back to Ireland and one of my classmates told me. He said, "Do you remember the time you beat the Master?" and of course that brought it back to me. I went home, only across the street, as I say, and my mother says, "You have to go back to school right away. You can't." So I said, "If you permit me to stay home this afternoon, I will go back tomorrow." And I went back tomorrow and the teacher never paid any attention of anything that I had happened, and I was treated with kid gloves after that.

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

SIGRIST: What were your parents' views about education? How did they feel about education? Was that important to them?

BRADY: Very important. You had to go to school. You couldn't stay home from school for any reason, unless you were very sick. And my mother, as a matter of fact, my mother didn't have any education. Very, very little. I think she left school when she was less than

thirteen years old, and she couldn't read or couldn't write, and I'm often surprised now that us boys, who were always reading, didn't try and teach her, but we didn't. My father was very well, you know, he had a very good basic education. Of course, I think he had to pass some kind of an examination before he got the job as postman.

SIGRIST: When you were small children, did your parents offer any kind of educational instruction at home?

BRADY: No. No. Later on, my mother made sure that my older brother, made sure that we looked up what our homework was and that we did our homework.

SIGRIST: Now, some of your brothers are quite a bit older than you, correct? Are you the next to youngest?

BRADY: I'm the next to youngest. All my brothers are dead.

SIGRIST: So some of them would have been young men when you were a child.

BRADY: Right. Right.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about their lives? What were they doing when they were fourteen and fifteen?

BRADY: I think mostly—we didn't have a big farm. We didn't have a farm, just a small—and I think they worked with farmers in the neighborhood. You know, like day workers and they got paid whatever they got paid.

SIGRIST: So they didn't live with the farmers, they just went.

BRADY: They just went daily and they stayed home. My brothers never stayed away from home for a night, that I remember.

SIGRIST: Did your mother seek employment outside of the house?

BRADY: No. No, she kept pretty busy taking care of us guys.

SIGRIST: Doing the ironing!

BRADY: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What religion were you?

BRADY: We were Roman Catholic.

SIGRIST: And you mentioned there was a church in town.

BRADY: Right.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the church?

BRADY: St. Michael's.

SIGRIST: And tell me a little bit about your religious life at that time with your family?

BRADY: Well, the main thing of our religious life, I suppose, was we were supposed to go—not supposed to, but we had to go to church on Sunday. We had to go to mass on Sunday, and I think that we also said the Rosary day in the evening in our house. You know, when we were old enough, we were confirmed and I think that's about it.

SIGRIST: Who was the most religious of your parents?

BRADY: Oh, my mother.

SIGRIST: And what were some of the ways that she expressed her interest in religion to the children and at home?

BRADY: Well, I suppose the fact that she made sure that we went to church all the time. I would say that was about all I remember. And she taught us our prayers and made sure we knew our prayers and all that.

SIGRIST: Is there a priest that sticks out in your mind from that time period or someone connected with the church that you think of when you think of the church?

BRADY: Well, the one that I think of most are there was a parish based on the curate. The curate was a younger man and he was always nice to us kids, and I remember him. His name was O'Brien, Father O'Brien. I always remember him coming around. He came to school and very often when he came to school, he brought candy for us or something like that. So that's what I remember about him.

SIGRIST: Were there times during the year when the priests would be invited into your house for any reason?

BRADY: No. Unless somebody were very sick, they wouldn't be invited. But the priests would drop in, casually, just come in and say hello and

maybe sit down and have a cup of tea or something like that. But we never invited them formally or anything like that.

SIGRIST: Did the school offer any kind of religious training?

BRADY: Yes. One half hour every day we had religious instruction, they called it, and we had some Protestants come to our school and they were released. They could go home, when we got that. I don't know whether they got any religious instruction. At home, I'm sure, but they went to our school and the teacher, you know, treated them just normally like us guys. Of course, we envied them because they got out half an hour earlier than we did.

SIGRIST: What was the religious makeup of the town?

BRADY: I would say about fifty-fifty.

SIGRIST: Fifty percent Catholic—

BRADY: Fifty percent Catholic, fifty percent Protestants, which I don't know whether they were Presbyterians or what they were. [adjusting microphone]

SIGRIST: Yeah, it's okay. Just—here we go. Were there any other religions in town, other than the Catholics and the Protestants that you can remember at that time?

BRADY: I don't remember them, but there must have been—I know there were some—later on, as I began to distinguish between religions, I knew there were some Quakers there. We had quite a few. There were quite a few Quakers all over Ireland, but I know we had some in the little town there.

SIGRIST: At that time, what was the relationship like between the Catholics and the Protestant groups in your town?

BRADY: Very cordial. Very cordial. If one of the Catholic people died and they brought the remains to the church, some of our Protestant neighbors would come and come to the ceremony, come to church. If anything happened among the—any misfortune happened among one of the Catholics, Protestants were there to help out, and the same with the Catholics, if it was any of the Protestants. We knew they were Protestant, but there was no big distinction made of them.

SIGRIST: Was there a geographical difference? Did all the Catholics live in one part of town and all the Protestants live in another?

BRADY: Yes, mostly. Mostly. The Protestants all lived in the southern. Then they were mixed, you know. There wasn't a big division, but there was certain spots where there was some little congregation. Around the Protestant church there were mostly Protestants, I guess, but there wasn't any fine drawn line that way.

SIGRIST: Well, with a small town, they can't live that far away.

BRADY: No.

SIGRIST: No. Tell me a little bit about the period of the beginning of World War I, the Irish Revolution, the nineteen teens.

BRADY: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Talk about that period and what sticks out in your mind. You would have been ten in 1916. What do you remember about that period?

BRADY: Well, I remember the time World War I started, which was 1914. I remember I think my father came home early and we all wondered what happened and he said, "We didn't get any mail this morning on account of the start of the war." Then I remember one of our neighbors was in the army, was in the English army and lost both of his legs. I remember him coming home. That's about all.

Then, of course, as you come to the Irish part of it, that was 1918, I suppose. It was an election and the group that finally got Irish independence was called Shin Fin and they put up a candidate for election. Of course, there were a lot of electioneering speeches and that. I remember that, but that candidate failed. Another man got the job. Then of course—actually, there wasn't any fighting or any ambushes during that period, and then I went off to Belfast to school. But there was no actual ambushes or no fighting around where I came from.

SIGRIST: When you went to Belfast to go to school during this period—

BRADY: Right.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about that because the situation would have been a little different in Belfast?

BRADY: Right.

SIGRIST: What did you witness in Belfast?

BRADY: I remember rioting and fighting in Belfast.

SIGRIST: Can you describe it a little more in detail?

BRADY: Well, I think one of the things that precipitated a lot of trouble in Belfast was the big industry there, as I said, was shipbuilding and all the Catholics were put off. They put all the Catholics off the placement of shipbuilding. They lost their jobs and then of course they started to get guns and try and shoot at these people that they figured were discriminating against them. Then, of course, the English soldiers came in. England sent over some soldiers and they were there to try and keep peace between—

SIGRIST: And what do you remember seeing at that time? What did you experience?

BRADY: Well, where I was staying I remember two or I think four English soldiers came up and they put a machine gun on the ground and just stayed there in the streets. There was nobody on the streets, but I guess to frighten people, they sprayed the street with guns. That's about the thing I remember about it. I never had anything that bothered me ever, you know.

SIGRIST: Why did you go to Belfast to school?

BRADY: To go—well, because actually my teacher at that time thought that I would make a good—could make a great candidate for civil service, an English civil servant. There was a school in Belfast that just grinding for this particular examination. Boyd Clark's was the examination and I went there to sharpen up on the subjects that they asked, you know. Then when I was ready to take the exam, they stopped it. They were only giving it to ex-servicemen. So I lost out and I come back home.

SIGRIST: What year was it that you went to Belfast?

BRADY: 1921 or '22, I'm not sure which it was.

SIGRIST: Tell me about things that you saw in Belfast that were new to you, that you hadn't seen from your town.

BRADY: Of course, I never saw a movie. That was the first movie I saw. The first movie I saw was Charlie Chaplin and the kid, Jackie Cougar. Of course, we didn't have any buildings any more than two story high. The school I went to, we were on the fourth floor in the school. Of course, you had trolley cars in those days, you know, with the

overhead wire and they had street lighting. The street lighting was gas and we had a lamplighter went around with a stick and lit each individual lamp. So I thought that was—that fascinated me.

SIGRIST: Had your parents ever been to Belfast in their life, at that point?

BRADY: No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

SIGRIST: Had any of your brothers been?

BRADY: Yeah, my brother—one of my brothers was—hadn't been in Belfast, but he came there because I was there. He came to visit me.

SIGRIST: How did you feel when you were in Belfast about being there and being away from your family?

BRADY: Well, first I was very, very lonely but I got—because where I was staying, in a boarding house, and there were I think four other boys my age and we had a pretty good time ourselves, you know.

SIGRIST: Were you disappointed when you had to return?

BRADY: Of course I was. Yeah, because I thought that I was going to—I thought I was going to go to London when I passed this examination.

SIGRIST: What did you do when you went back to the town?

BRADY: I worked with a farmer, and then I worked on making roads.

SIGRIST: Rope?

BRADY: Roads.

SIGRIST: Oh, roads.

BRADY: We were working on the roads, you know. The roads had to be kept and they always had men working on the roads and I got a job there until I went to America.

SIGRIST: What were the roads like at this time?

BRADY: Oh, I thought they were very tremendous wide roads and everything, until I came to America and went back and was surprised at how narrow they were.

SIGRIST: But how was the road—were there paved roads at that time?

BRADY: Yes.

SIGRIST: Or were they dirt?

BRADY: No, they were paved. The way they paved them was put rock on them and then I think just soil in among the rock. Then they had a steam roller and they rolled that. They put water and rolled that in and made a good solid steady road.

SIGRIST: And what was your job in all of that?

BRADY: Doing anything and everything. Mostly they put me along the side of the road to keep the grass trimmed along the side. I wasn't given any heavy work. I was a boy, and then at lunchtime, I was the one who went and got the—went into some farm house and had them make tea, and they were always happy to make tea for us. We brought our own tea and stuff, but they'd boil water and we'd have it. That's what I did most of the time.

SIGRIST: Were you paid a daily wage to do this or was it like a weekly?

BRADY: A weekly stipend. I don't know—I don't remember what it was, but something like I think about fifteen shillings a week, which was at that time three dollars.

SIGRIST: Did you keep the money that you made?

BRADY: No, I always gave it to my mother and gave me some money for cigarettes, or go to a dance or whatever.

SIGRIST: Was that also the same situation with your older brothers?

BRADY: Yes. Yes, everybody come and give the money to my mother and she give back and if you ever needed anything, of course. When we bought clothes or anything, my mother was a good bargainer. She went with us to buy our clothes, our shoes and all that.

SIGRIST: So your father's income as a mailman is supplemented by the children.

BRADY: By whatever we did, yeah.

SIGRIST: You mentioned buying cigarettes. I have to ask you, how old were you when you started to smoke?

BRADY: I guess I was about fourteen.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how you started to smoke? Who taught you?

BRADY: Oh, one of the kids at school at a pack of cigarettes. We could get a little package of cigarettes with five in them for I think two pence or something like that. We didn't always have the two pence to buy the cigarettes, so we couldn't smoke all the time. So we smoked when we got the price of a package of cigarettes.

SIGRIST: And do you remember the brand name of the cigarettes?

BRADY: Yes, it was Woodbine.

SIGRIST: Woodbine, like the plant. Woodbine.

BRADY: Yeah, right. Woodbine, and we didn't see a package of cigarettes, we said a package of Woodbines.

SIGRIST: Did anyone else in your family smoke?

BRADY: I think they all smoked. My father smoked a pipe. I think all my brothers smoked.

SIGRIST: Did your mother smoke?

BRADY: No. Mother didn't smoke.

SIGRIST: When you were growing up in Ireland, what did you know about America? Before you got here, how did you perceive America?

BRADY: Well, I knew, of course, that if you were willing to work in America, that you could always get a job, which wasn't the case in Ireland. If you did—I always thought that if you did work here and were sober and watched your step, that you could make quite a bit of money and that you would be quite comfortable. I knew that the price of certain things that, you know, in Ireland you would have to work about two weeks to make the price of a suit of clothes, and here you could buy a suit of clothes with one week's salary and have some money left for yourself. That's about all I knew about it.

SIGRIST: Did you know anyone who had gone to America?

BRADY: Oh, yes, but I didn't talk to much to them. You know, they were older than me, but my brother was—as I said before, my brother was out here. My brother came to America.

SIGRIST: Which brother was that?

BRADY: My oldest brother, Charlie.

SIGRIST: And what year did Charlie come?

BRADY: '23, I think.

SIGRIST: And where did he go when he got here?

BRADY: New York City.

SIGRIST: Did he have a sponsor in New York City?

BRADY: As a matter of fact, a girl from home came home on a vacation and Charlie and her fell in love and he come back with her. I don't know just how he managed to get in. But I guess she sponsored him. That's how he came.

SIGRIST: What job was Charlie doing when he first got to New York?

BRADY: I think he did several jobs until he went to work in the subway. He was a subway conductor.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's interesting. Is that before you got here?

BRADY: Before I got here. When I got here, he was a subway conductor.

SIGRIST: Do you know any stories that you might have told you about his experiences as a subway conductor?

BRADY: No, I don't. He got me a job in the subway when I came.

SIGRIST: While you were still in Ireland, was he writing back?

BRADY: Oh, of course.

SIGRIST: What was he telling you about his life?

BRADY: I don't think he wrote particularly to me, but he did write to his parents. You know, generally he wrote to my mother and then we all shared in the letter.

SIGRIST: How did your parents view his going to America? How did they feel about that?

BRADY: Well, my father thought it was a good thing for him, but my mother was very upset when he left. I know she was.

SIGRIST: Do you remember when Charlie left for America?

BRADY: I was in Belfast at the time. I do remember it because he stopped in Belfast to say goodbye to me, when he was going.

SIGRIST: Well, what made you decide that you wanted to come to America?

BRADY: Well, I thought that I never could make much money in Ireland. It was always a hand to mouth existence, I felt, and I felt if I came to America, I could do better. I could make some money and be independent. I thought.

SIGRIST: How did your parents feel about your decision to go to America?

BRADY: Well, they didn't mind me coming so much because they knew that my brother was here and that he was established. That time he was married and that I was coming to him and that he would certainly look after me.

SIGRIST: Did he marry the girl that he—

BRADY: Yes, he did.

SIGRIST: He did?

BRADY: He did.

SIGRIST: Well, tell me a little bit about the whole process of getting ready to go. What did you have to do prior to leaving Ireland?

BRADY: You had to have—I think you had to have a sum of money. You had to have fifty dollars. You had to go to fill out a form, go to a doctor that certified that you were physically fit and go to your clergyman and get a record that you were of good character.

SIGRIST: Do you remember doing all those things?

BRADY: I do. I remember especially going to my parish priest, who was new. So he said—he said, "How do you expect me to give you a reference? I don't know you. I've only been here for a short time." So I was pretty spicy. I said, "Well, don't mind, Father." I said, "I know Mr. Irving, he's known me a long time and he's also a pastor."

That was a Protestant clergyman. I said, "I'm sure he'll give me whatever he can for a reference." "No," he said, "I'll give you it."  
[Laughs]

SIGRIST: What about in terms of medical information? What did you have to do before leaving Ireland, if anything, in terms of physicals?

BRADY: You had to get a physical, see that you were—mainly I think the doctor looked at my chest and listened to my heart and that was about it.

SIGRIST: Where was that doctor that you went to?

BRADY: In Market Hill, the little village.

SIGRIST: Was this a doctor that you had had interaction with before?

BRADY: Well, I guess my parents did, but I never had been to the doctor before in my life.

SIGRIST: Do you remember being ill as a child at all, or anything like that?

BRADY: No. No.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any kind of home medicinal remedies that maybe your mother made, if someone was sick?

BRADY: No, I think—well, if we got a cold, I think what my mother usually did was feed us a little whiskey punch and put us to bed. That seemed to cure all ills.

SIGRIST: [Laughs] Tell me about packing. What did you pack to take with you to America?

BRADY: I packed underwear, socks, shirts. I think two shirts and a sweater. That was it, and then the clothes that I wore.

SIGRIST: Did you get any new clothes prior to leaving? Did you—

BRADY: Yes, I got a new suit.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the suit and the process of going to have it—

BRADY: Right. I went to the tailor where my mother and, you know, they knew the tailor and he always had made the suits for them. I went to

him and he measured me for a suit and I got a suit made to measure, which was a big deal.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the color of the suit?

BRADY: Yes, it was blue with a stripe in it.

SIGRIST: And do you remember how much it cost?

BRADY: No, I can't remember. I think about five pounds. I'm not too sure. I'm not too sure.

SIGRIST: Did you pack any objects to take with you? Something other than clothing?

BRADY: No.

SIGRIST: Nothing to bring to your brother or from Ireland or a memento or a bible or something like that?

BRADY: No, nothing.

SIGRIST: No, nothing like that. And was there some kind of a send off for you? Did your family—

BRADY: No, for me there was no send off, for which I was glad. But that was a regular thing at that time, when you were going. As a matter of fact, they called it a wake. All the neighbors gathered round and they did singing and dancing and stuff like that, but that was sending you off.

SIGRIST: Why would they call that a wake?

BRADY: Because in those days they figured once you went to America, you were dead. You never, never came back. Very few—prior to that time, very few people that went to America, they stayed here. They never came back because they got married here and then had children and I suppose never could get enough money for a passage.

SIGRIST: What was the hardest thing for you to leave behind when you went? What was the hardest thing for you to say goodbye to?

BRADY: I don't think anything. I was so enamored of coming that I was glad to get going, I think.

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

BRADY: To Londonderry. I think the port was Foil, and we took a tender. The harbor wasn't deep enough for the big ship to come in, and we took a tender out to the big ship and got on there.

SIGRIST: And what was the name of the big ship?

BRADY: The name of it was the Arcadia.

SIGRIST: And how did you get from your town outside of Belfast to Londonderry?

BRADY: By train.

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything about that train ride?

BRADY: No.

SIGRIST: We're going to pause just for a second and I'm going to put in a new tape and then we'll get you to America.

BRADY: Okay.

SIGRIST: Okay.

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

SIGRIST: Okay, we're not beginning Tape Two with Joseph Brady who came from the north of Ireland to America in 1925 when he was eighteen years old. Mr. Brady, we were just talking about you arriving in Londonderry. You got on a tender that brought you out to the ship the Arcadia. Does anything about—how long did you stay in Londonderry before you could get onto the ship?

BRADY: We got on—we didn't stay overnight. I think we got on the same afternoon. We got there in the morning and we got on in the afternoon.

SIGRIST: Were you traveling with a group of people or are you by yourself?

BRADY: I'm all by myself.

SIGRIST: No one from the family went with you.

BRADY: No.

- SIGRIST: What about anyone from town? From your town?
- BRADY: Nobody that I knew.
- SIGRIST: Nobody that you knew. Does anything stick out in your mind about the tender ride out to the ship?
- BRADY: No, I think it was very uneventful. We just were directed where to go and we followed on. I guess we were so excited we didn't think much of what we were doing there.
- SIGRIST: Had you ever been on a large ship before?
- BRADY: No. No.
- SIGRIST: What did you think when you saw this ship that you had to go to by another boat? I mean what was going through your mind at that time?
- BRADY: I was thinking this was the biggest ship I ever saw in my life, and I was surprised when we got on the ship all the things, you know, all the things it had on it. The rooms and all the dining rooms and all that kind of stuff.
- SIGRIST: Can you describe the inside of the ship for me? We can start with where you slept.
- BRADY: Oh, yes. I slept in I guess one of the lower decks. I think that was where the cheaper passengers like myself slept. I remember there were four boys in the room, three more and myself. On either side there were two bunks, one up and one down and four of us were in the room. We had running water, wash basin and that was all. I think we had to go out to a common shower for our bath.
- SIGRIST: Did you have a porthole or anything in the cabin?
- BRADY: No. No, nothing.
- SIGRIST: Do you—what sticks out in your mind about the three men that you shared the cabin with, if anything?
- BRADY: Well, one of the men was going to Detroit, a young man like myself, and he was telling us that he was going to get I think five dollars a day working for Ford. His brother had a job, and I said, "Five dollars a day? That's two pounds a day," was almost as much as I

was making in a week at home. So that's one of the things that I've always remembered.

SIGRIST: Describe the dining area on the ship.

BRADY: It was a great big room and we sat at the tables, I think having about eight people at each table, and the food was good. We were well treated, as I remember and—

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of the meals or anything maybe that you had never—a kind of food that maybe you weren't familiar with?

BRADY: Well, some of the—I never—one of the things that I do remember was peppers. Green peppers, sweet peppers. I never had peppers before, but mostly all the food I was familiar with. It was mostly for breakfast tea and toast and scrambled eggs, and for lunch I remember it was potatoes and vegetables. I don't remember what the—we generally had some kind of meat, either lamb or beef as lunchtime. Then the evening it was tea and sandwiches or something like that, as I remember.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much the passage cost?

BRADY: No, I don't. By the way, my brother had prepaid my passage so I don't remember what it was.

SIGRIST: Did you have any landing money with you?

BRADY: Oh, yes, I had. I had the equivalent of—I think you were supposed to have at least fifty dollars, and I had that much money.

SIGRIST: Do you know how you carried that money?

BRADY: Just in my—it was bills just in my wallet, in my pocket.

SIGRIST: Did the ship supply any kind of entertainment for the passengers?

BRADY: I don't think so, but we made our own entertainment. One of the men could play an accordion, you know, and he played the accordion and we danced on the deck. We had a heck of a good time.

SIGRIST: Can you talk a little bit about the other people who were traveling with you? Ages, nationality, that sort of thing.

BRADY: Most of them—most of them traveling with us on our part of the ship were immigrants that were coming the first time to Ireland, and one man I remember—

SIGRIST: To America.

BRADY: To America. One man I remember was an older man, who had been in Ireland on a vacation and he was from out west some place. I don't remember, and he was giving me advice. He said, "Really, what you should do when you get to New York, if you're going to stay in New York, is get a job on Wall Street." You know, he said, "What I mean is get a job as a porter or something, anything you can get a job," and he said, "Stay on Wall Street," because that's where the money is. I remember him telling me that.

SIGRIST: Do you remember them giving you safety drills on the ship or anything like that?

BRADY: No, I don't remember if they ever did anything like that.

SIGRIST: Did you have any interaction with the ship's staff at all? The captain, the stewards?

BRADY: No, the stewards were the people that we saw and they were mostly—they were mostly English. Mostly English. I think maybe they were—as I remember, I think there were one or two of the boys were from the north of Ireland and they were stewards. That's mainly what we—the other people that worked on other decks and so, we didn't have any talk or anything with them. We just watched them work or something like that.

SIGRIST: Were there women traveling as well as men?

BRADY: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, I think even more girls than men. Of course, the people in the upper decks were first class passengers and once in awhile some of those people came down and watched us dancing and I guess thought that we were crazy or something. But that happened.

SIGRIST: How long did the ship take?

BRADY: Ten days.

SIGRIST: And what time of the year is this?

- BRADY: We arrived here the third of June.
- SIGRIST: Third of June.
- BRADY: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: And did you have your luggage with you in the room?
- BRADY: Yes, I did because it was only a very small suitcase I had.
- SIGRIST: That was it, you had the one—
- BRADY: That was it, only one, yeah.
- SIGRIST: Does anything else stick out in your mind about being on the ship?
- BRADY: The only thing, I guess most of the people were sick on the ship. Only me, I wasn't sick. I never missed a meal. I was down for breakfast, dinner and supper. I was a good eater, but most of my companions were sick for a while and then they got better. Then, of course, after a week or two on the ship, it gets very boring and we were all bored. So.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty when the ship—
- BRADY: Oh, yes. We got here early in the morning and I guess the ship's people told us that we were now outside—so we all got up on the deck and everybody was. A lot of people were crying, but most people were jubilant, as I was. I thought it was marvelous, and then we watched the ferry. We were watching the people on the ferry because they were dressed differently than we were. It was summer and they were all dressed in light clothes and all, which we didn't notice ever before. But everybody was—as I say, some of the people were just crying with emotion—some of the girls were, but we were all just jubilant.
- SIGRIST: So in Ireland in June, am I to understand that you're still wearing heavy clothes?
- BRADY: Right, right, you're still wearing—as a matter of fact, today they don't have any nice light suits like we have. They're all made heavy because the summers are not very hot over there and the winters are quite cold and then it's damp. So they wear heavier clothes.

SIGRIST: And that was probably something that your brother didn't think to tell you.

BRADY: Right, right, didn't tell me to. But as soon as I got here, he immediately got me a lighter suit.

SIGRIST: So the ship comes into New York Harbor. Then what happens?

BRADY: Then we get—I guess we got on a ferry to take us to Ellis Island, and I don't remember much about that. Unless, the traveler's aid—the traveler's aid, I guess, was on the ferry, on the [unclear]. Had a pin with [unclear] on it. That's traveler's aid, so they would make sure that we all knew where we were going and there somebody meeting us.

SIGRIST: I see. So you became their responsibility at this point?

BRADY: Right, right. Right.

SIGRIST: So the ferry takes you out to Ellis Island?

BRADY: Ellis Island, yeah.

SIGRIST: What happened there?

BRADY: Then we were all lined up. I think the first thing we did was go through a doctor's examination and we had several doctors. One doctor listened to your heart, another doctor your eyes and looked at your hands and looked at your hair to make sure your hair was clean. I think—not that I knew, but I heard about some girls had their hair cut off because there must have been lice or something in their hair, but not in our group.

SIGRIST: Can you describe what it all looked like on the inside? Or what sticks out in your mind about being there?

BRADY: Well, what sticks out—what sticks out even to today in my mind was how nice the people were to us. The doctor I saw in Ireland was very casual, didn't speak to me at all. Here the doctor was smiling and talked to us like we were people, and that stood out in my mind. As a matter of fact, the doctor I had examining my teeth, I know that—I don't know what else he was examining, but he said, "Young man, what you do when you get to New York, get yourself a job advertising toothpaste because you got very nice teeth." Of course, that's what—he was kidding me, and that was really nice. That was one of the big things that stuck out, and everybody that

we come in contact was very courteous. I remember that quite well.

SIGRIST: So the Ellis Island staff is working their best to put you at ease.

BRADY: Put you at ease, yeah, and get you through it as easy as possible for you, you know.

SIGRIST: So you go through this series of doctors and they're checking, you said, the hair, the heart, the eyes, the mouth.

BRADY: Right.

SIGRIST: Anything else that they were looking for?

BRADY: Not that I know, no. No.

SIGRIST: Not in your case. What else did you have to go through while you were there?

BRADY: Then they had to go through, I guess immigration to make sure that you had your passport. You had a valid passport.

SIGRIST: How did they do that? What was the process?

BRADY: As a matter of fact, they just took your passport and looked at you. Maybe asked you a few questions, I don't remember, and then they give that back to you and said, "You're all through now."

SIGRIST: And when you were done?

BRADY: Then you got on the ferry to come over to the Battery.

SIGRIST: Did your brother—your brother didn't meet you at Ellis Island?

BRADY: No, he met me at the Battery when I got off.

SIGRIST: At Battery Park. Did they feed you at all at Ellis Island?

BRADY: I don't remember. I don't think so because we weren't there that long.

SIGRIST: How long do you think you were there?

BRADY: I guess maybe tops three or four hours. I think that's about all.

- SIGRIST: Did you see anything at Ellis Island that you had never seen before?
- BRADY: No.
- SIGRIST: So you got the Battery and tell me about seeing your brother. You hadn't seen him—
- BRADY: I hadn't seen him since he left Ireland. His friend was with him and of course they met me and were glad to see me.
- SIGRIST: Did he look different to you in any way?
- BRADY: Well, he was dressed differently. You know, I never saw him dressed in a light colored suit. I don't think he had any hat on, and I do remember his friend had his jacket over his arm. He was in his shirtsleeve and I thought that was rather peculiar.
- SIGRIST: It was very informal.
- BRADY: Informal, yes. Yes.
- SIGRIST: Well, where did he take you?
- BRADY: He took me over to the Second Avenue Elevator. We went north to 65<sup>th</sup> Street. We got off at 65<sup>th</sup> Street. He lived on 65<sup>th</sup> Street on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 65<sup>th</sup> Street. 204 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember anything specific about being on the elevated train?
- BRADY: No, nothing, but I do remember that I was wondering about the train being up the air, you know, but nothing sticks out in my mind.
- SIGRIST: Describe his apartment where he was living.
- BRADY: He lived on the first floor. You went up a flight of stairs and there were two apartments on each floor, and there was no bathroom. The toilet was in the hall, used by both. We had a key and the other tenant had a key. Then went in and you walked in first into the kitchen and then from the kitchen you walked through along like a hallway. Not long. You walked into—I think you walked into the bedroom first. First bedroom. Then there was another bedroom, and then the front room looked out on 65<sup>th</sup> Street. No, the kitchen looked out on 65<sup>th</sup> Street. The bedroom looked out on the court. As I say, there was a coal stove in the kitchen and—

SIGRIST: Did he have electricity in the apartment?

BRADY: No, he had gas.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about using gaslight?

BRADY: Well, I was using gas in Belfast, so I was quite familiar with that. The first time I saw gas, you know how you used to have a little mantel on it, and I felt the mantel and of course it disintegrated in my hand. So I knew enough to not touch the gas mantel. Through the rest of the rooms, I think gaslight was in all of the rooms and he had—there was a fireplace in the front room, as I remember. That's all, but I don't remember ever having a fire in the fireplace. The whole—the kitchen stove was the heat of the apartment.

SIGRIST: Like your house in Ireland.

BRADY: Right, right. Not much different.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you did that first night? How did you spend the first night in America?

BRADY: Gee, I don't remember. I guess I was tired. I went to bed, and—oh, yes, I do remember. Some friends from Ireland came in to see me and we sat chatting around and they were asking me about people in Ireland, about you know, how they were doing all this kind of stuff. So I do remember we sat up late and then I just went to bed, and we had tea before we went to bed. Tea and cake and stuff.

SIGRIST: How long was it before you got your first job?

BRADY: About two weeks.

SIGRIST: So what did you do in that interim time? How did you spend those two weeks?

BRADY: Mostly my brother then had his first child, who was a year old, John, and I used to walk with his wife. While my brother went to work, I used to walk with his wife out to Central Park and we sat in Central Park. Then she would go shopping. I would go shopping and I would mind the baby outside while she did the shopping, and then come back. I wanted to go to work, and my brother said, "No, take it easy for a while. Take it slow." I think for two weeks he wouldn't let me go to work and finally I was ready. And I didn't

know how to go about looking for a job, you know. I didn't know that you could walk into some place and say, "I'm looking for work," or "Are you taking any applications or something." I didn't know that. He had to come along and get me a job.

SIGRIST: The wife, this woman, what was her name?

BRADY: Catherine.

SIGRIST: Catherine, and did she help in any way? Did she help you to adjust?

BRADY: Oh, yes. Yes.

SIGRIST: I mean what kinds of things did she tell you to help you, to ease you into this?

BRADY: Yeah. Well, she told me, you know, about how—mostly how things were done in America, rather than how they were done in Ireland, and to be—to be careful when I went out, and not start talking to any strangers or anything like that. I think that's about all. Then, of course, these other men who were older than me from home, they came and took me out and took me out to lunch and took me out to dinner and stuff like that, once in awhile.

SIGRIST: Having come from where you did in Ireland, would you have been inclined to talk to strangers, if you didn't know you shouldn't have?

BRADY: No, I don't think so because in Belfast I had been taught that. Basically everybody was scurrying around. Everybody was doing their own thing.

SIGRIST: Right. What kinds of things did you discover in New York that were maybe completely new to you in those two weeks? Things that held a particular fascination for you?

BRADY: Ice cream parlor. At the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 65<sup>th</sup> Street there was an ice cream parlor and I had had ice cream, of course, but I never had an ice cream soda. I never had a Sundae, and of course not being an American, because I had some money when I came here, I had money to go in and get an ice cream soda. That's one of the things that stuck in my mind. Of course, in Central Park all the—we used to go to the—I don't know what monument it is there. The fountain in Central Park, we used to sit there and that was fascinating. And I think that's about all.

SIGRIST: Were there any discoveries that you made of things that you didn't like that made you wary or uncomfortable in the city?

BRADY: No, I don't think so. I think I liked everything that I saw. I was very happy that I was here and I wrote to my mother and told her that I was here safe and that everything was good and that my brother was feeling well. And that's about all, I think.

SIGRIST: Well, tell me about getting that first job. How did your brother help you to do that?

BRADY: My brother didn't know anything about getting me a job, either, or didn't know much about it because he had gotten—I don't know how he had gotten a job in the subway, but he did know the union. They called it a brotherhood, that time.

SIGRIST: And he was, as you said, already a subway conductor.

BRADY: A subway conductor, yeah, and he brought me down to the union hall and said to one of the men, "My brother is here and he would like to get a job," and they said, "Well, all right. Take him down to 165 Broadway," and he gave me a note. I went down to 165 Broadway and presented this note. I guess that was Mr. Headley's office down there asked for it, and the man said, "All right. Go to work," and he said, "You have to get a uniform. A uniform hat is all you need now, but then you will have to get a uniform when you get paid." That's all. Then my brother took me for my first job and they put me on a train with another conductor and he showed me what to do. That was—I got paid for that and that was—then I was a regular guard they called them at that time. You were a guard first before you were a conductor, and went out to work the next day without any job. I went out shaping up. I sat down with some other men there who were on the extra list, and me being hired last, I was at the bottom of the extra list. When a man, somebody didn't show up for the job, they called you in turn. Of course, I was last to be called. Then I went working on my own. I did that for I think about three months I was on the extra list and then finally as I moved up in seniority, I was able to pick a job for myself.

SIGRIST: And which job did you pick?

BRADY: As a guard, as they called them guards at that time, there were on each train—I worked the local trains. On each train there was a man in each car and that's what you did, you opened the doors when the car come in, and then you pulled the valve and the bell passed up to the motorman then. He proceeded to the next station.

When the train stopped at the station, you opened the door and you'd say on the door, the side door behind you, you just threw up a handle and that opened the door. Then when everybody was in, you closed it down and then you got your two doors closed, and then passed the ball.

SIGRIST: So that was all done manually?

BRADY: Everything was manual.

SIGRIST: The doors were opened manually.

BRADY: All manually, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you have some stories about your experience working on the subway and things that you remember happening during your time?

BRADY: No, it seemed to be all so routine, that I don't remember anything unless it was routine.

SIGRIST: How long did you work for the subway?

BRADY: I guess maybe about a year.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you were paid?

BRADY: Yes. I was paid fifty cents an hour.

SIGRIST: And do you remember what kind of a schedule you were on?

BRADY: When I started at first, the schedule changed. You reported for work. On some days you didn't get any work. You went home without work, but you reported for work and then if you reported, let's say, six o'clock in the morning, maybe it would be seven or seven thirty before you got to go to work. Then whatever kind of a job that was for that. Some of the jobs were what they called swing jobs. You worked—you made two trips in the morning, and come back in the afternoon and made two trips in rush hour. That's what they did then. And your pay varied because some days you didn't work and other days, some days you worked a whole—and you had to work Sunday and Saturday, too.

SIGRIST: Of course, nowadays in 1995 we hear so much about subway crime, that sort of thing. In your time working as a subway guard in 1925, do you remember any instances of a dangerous situation or any kind of crime going on at that time?

BRADY: No.

SIGRIST: Would it have been your job to stop that? I mean, was that another part of your job?

BRADY: No, actually, it wasn't. If anything untoward happened on my train, the only thing that I would do is try to keep out of it and try and call a policeman.

SIGRIST: Were there phones?

BRADY: There are phones all along. There still are. Every six hundred feet in all the subways there's a blue light with a phone there. But generally—bit I never saw anything untoward happening. The people were all nice. Generally come in with a smile and you didn't have any reason to have any trouble.

SIGRIST: Were the subways crowded at that time?

BRADY: Very crowded. Very crowded.

SIGRIST: Of course, these are the days before air conditioning.

BRADY: Correct. Correct. Correct, and as a matter of fact, I worked on the platform sometimes at 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and I remember there were four of us at one door, and then the stationmaster come and used to help us. What we did, there was bars up there with chains across, so you kept the people that wanted to get on the train, you kept them back when the doors opened to let the people out. Then you opened, took down the chain and from both sides they swarmed into the car and pushed everybody back. We let them—stood back for a few minutes and let them see what they could do best, and then if there were a few stragglers, we'd push them in and pull the doors closed. [Chuckles]

SIGRIST: That's very interesting. Do you remember there ever being a medical emergency on any of the trains that you were on?

BRADY: I remember. One of the things I remember was a suicide. You know, somebody jumped in front of the train and what we did then, the motorman or the conductor, the first thing you did was cut off the power and then phone in that, just said, "I got a man under the train," or "a lady under the train," something like that. Then you stood back and in a very short time the policemen, the emergency squad came and it was up to them to get the body out. Then they'd

give you the okay, you had to make sure that everybody was off the track and call back and tell them put the power back on again. That was, I think one time.

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

SIGRIST: Did you enjoy this work that you were doing?

BRADY: Yes, I did. As a matter of fact, I went back to it. That's what I spent my life on. My sister-in-law wasn't too happy with me working in the subway, so she was getting the groceries in the A&P at that time.

SIGRIST: What was her objection?

BRADY: I don't know. I think maybe the irregular hours that she would see her husband working and that's possibly what, but she thought that working in A&P grocery store was a very nice job. So she asked the manager there, "You think you could get a job for my brother-in-law?" and he said, "Of course," he said, and he wrote down an address and he said, "Go down to this address, and see, they may be hiring." So I went down there and they hired me right away. I said, "Well, I can't go to work right away. I have to give some notice to the subway people that I'm quitting," which I did. Then I went to work for the A&P.

SIGRIST: How did you feel about being in that position? I mean you were enjoying work in the subway. How did you feel about—

BRADY: Well, I was enjoying my work, but again I didn't like—I didn't like Sunday work. Everybody would be all dressed up on Sunday and here I was with a uniform and working. And Saturdays. I didn't like working Saturdays and Sundays. Then there was no day off that time in the subway. You worked seven days. This other place I could, I was assured I'd be off Sunday. I had one day a week off.

SIGRIST: And you said that you eventually went back to work.

BRADY: Oh, yes. Yes, after I think I worked about four years for the A&P, went back to work with them.

SIGRIST: And went back to work in the subway.

BRADY: In the subway, yeah.

SIGRIST: And how long did you stay there the second time?

BRADY: Thirty-nine years.

SIGRIST: Wow. Doing different kinds of jobs in that amount of time?

BRADY: Well, actually, yes. I started off—I started off as a guard and then I went to school and became a motorman. Then the city subway opened up, so you could take an examination and go for that. So I always thought that a city job was good, so I took the examination and passed that and got a job as—no, I had for an assistant specialist. That was a desk job in the city subway.

SIGRIST: An assistant dispatcher?

BRADY: Yeah, and I stayed there for the rest of my work. Actually, I became—you could—that was the entrance point. Then you could take your examinations and move up. So I took examinations and became a train dispatcher. Then I got killed in and I was what they call a crew dispatcher. I was in charge of all the men's jobs and picking jobs and all of that. I had a crew—after awhile I had a crew of thirty in my office, and it involved several things, you know. Dealing with the union and all of that, and I liked that very much. That's what I—I finally took another job, which was the highest you could go in civil service, and I got that job. I come out I think number three on the list and I got that job, but I had to go working nights again. So I took a voluntary demotion and went back to my old job, which I wound up with.

SIGRIST: During all that time, in your professional career, did you ever find—were you ever prejudiced—did you ever experience any prejudice because you were foreign born?

BRADY: No.

SIGRIST: Did you not get a job that you wanted or—

BRADY: No. No.

SIGRIST: What about just in your social life, did you ever find any kind of bigotry because you were Irish?

BRADY: No. No, I don't think so. I never experienced that, and later on, as you know, in the subway now we've got a lot of Black people in, and I always had great rapport with the Black people and got along immensely well with them and have some very good friends. As a

matter of fact, I wound up with a Black man as my supervisor, and I never—I really never experienced any discrimination.

SIGRIST: What about, did you ever go back to Ireland? I mean, did you ever want to go back for a visit?

BRADY: Oh, I did. I went back several times.

SIGRIST: What was the first time you went back?

BRADY: 1952, I think.

SIGRIST: Okay, so you'd been here quite a while.

BRADY: I'd been here a long time.

SIGRIST: What did it feel like to go back to Ireland?

BRADY: It felt funny. Yes. I was married and I went back with my wife, and we went to visit her family, and the first thing I remember was when I got again to Belfast, a gal who went to school with me, met me and she's a nurse in Belfast now. She said, "The reason I came to meet you, Joe," she says, "I took some time off, because your mother's in the hospital and I didn't want you to get home and find out your mother's in the hospital." So she said, "She's in Armagh, in the city of Armagh," and she said, "If you go there and tell them that you just came, no matter whether there are visiting hours or not, you can get in to see her."

SIGRIST: What was the name of the town with the hospital?

BRADY: Armagh, A-R-M-A-G-H. Same as the town that I was born. So that's what I did. Then when I got home, of course, a lot of people came in to see me and all big welcome and all this kind of stuff.

SIGRIST: How did it feel to actually be there? I mean what kind of feelings did you have when you were looking at all of this?

BRADY: Yeah, I was thinking that I was lucky that I'm not here now. Our house was so small. The roads were so narrow, and I didn't realize that I was thinking that way for a while, until I got used to it again. But I was—of course, I was happy to be back, see all the people and got a welcome from them all. I enjoyed my visit.

SIGRIST: You mentioned that your wife's family lives in Ireland.

BRADY: That's my first wife. [unclear] This is my second wife. We're both [unclear].

SIGRIST: I see. What year were you married the first time?

BRADY: 1929.

SIGRIST: 1929, and what was your first wife's name?

BRADY: Sarah.

SIGRIST: And her maiden name?

BRADY: Cunniffe, C-U-N-N-I-F-F-E.

SIGRIST: And then when did you marry Mrs. Brady?

BRADY: Fourteen years ago, when my wife died.

SIGRIST: And her first name is Rose, I know.

BRADY: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: And what is her maiden name?

BRADY: I can't—it's Lithuanian. I can't say it.

SIGRIST: Okay. Is Mrs. Brady born in this country?

BRADY: Yes, she is.

SIGRIST: She is, and do you have children? From either marriage?

BRADY: Yeah, from my marriage. None from Rose's marriage.

SIGRIST: Right.

BRADY: I have a lot of children.

SIGRIST: Yes?

BRADY: I have—one of my—I have three children. Two girls and a boy, and they have, among them they have thirteen grandchildren. One of my grandchildren is dead. Eleven of them are married and one is not married. I have at the moment I have thirty-one great grandchildren. So we have a big family.

- SIGRIST: Sounds like quite a brood.
- BRADY: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: How do you think your life would have been different if you had never come to the United States?
- BRADY: It's difficult to say. My brother had a very good—my younger brother had a very good life in Ireland and he did very well. He was a bread server over there. Worked for a big company.
- SIGRIST: Bread?
- BRADY: Bread server. You know, he had a van and went round the country selling bread.
- SIGRIST: Like delivering—
- BRADY: Actually selling bread.
- SIGRIST: Oh, selling it. Selling, uh-huh.
- BRADY: And he made out very well and wound up with a nice pension and also had his social security or whatever they call it over there, and he had a car and a nice house and all. So he did all right. One of my other brothers had two boys and one of them is a—one of them is a—he had a boy and a girl. The boy is vice president of one of the colleges in Belfast and his daughter stayed home and her husband is in big business there and they have a great big house and very nice car and they did all right. So it's difficult to say how I would have made out, you know.
- SIGRIST: You might have made out very well.
- BRADY: Yeah, right. I might have made out pretty good. That's difficult to say.
- SIGRIST: When you think of—when you think of yourself and your nationality, how do you think of yourself? Do you think of yourself as Irish or as an American?
- BRADY: As Irish American.
- SIGRIST: Irish American. Did you become a citizen?

BRADY: Oh, definitely. As soon as I could.

SIGRIST: What year was that?

BRADY: October 25, it must have been 1930.

SIGRIST: It took five years?

BRADY: Yeah, it took five years. Or maybe a little ahead of that, I don't know.

SIGRIST: Can you talk a little bit about the process of becoming a citizen, what you had to go through?

BRADY: Well, that time you had to get—first papers. First, you know, and then I think you had to have your first papers—oh, I guess maybe only three years because you had to have—before you could apply for a citizenship, you had to have your first papers two years. Then you applied for a citizenship and of course the big thing was that we were so scared. You had a big book or a big pamphlet about different things, you know, the Constitution, what's the Constitution, how many Senators there are and a lot of technical questions, you know. Then you went before a judge and he questioned you on this and then you got your citizen paper. Of course, I was scared to death and I think the judges were—they looked at you and they could figure out, you know, that you were a subversive or anything like that. So you didn't have any difficulty.

SIGRIST: But you were still nervous?

BRADY: I was still nervous. Very nervous. Very nervous.

SIGRIST: How did it make you feel when you passed?

BRADY: Oh, now I can vote and I'm great. I'm an American citizen. I couldn't wait until the first election come around so I voted.

SIGRIST: Do you remember who that was?

BRADY: No, now I don't. Now I don't, but I know in every election, even little elections, I always vote.

SIGRIST: It meant a lot to you.

BRADY: Of course, to have the vote.

SIGRIST: I guess my final question for you is you're eighty-nine now. You've had a long and very interesting life. What are your secrets? What has contributed to you having a long and happy life? What things have you lived by that has contributed to this?

BRADY: I don't know. I ask my doctor and he says, "It must be your genes," he said. I don't know. Well, I don't think I did anything in excess. I was all moderate and I think that helps a little bit. I always, up until twenty years ago I smoked. I still take a drink. Now I eat moderately and my wife is a kin of a fussbudget about vitamins and all that kind of stuff, and I—and maybe that helped.

SIGRIST: What about did your parents or someone in your family bestow philosophies of life when you were younger, you know, rules to live by that have always stuck with you?

BRADY: No. No. I think they said "Go out and do the best you can."  
[Laughs]

SIGRIST: Well, Mr. Brady, I want to thank you very much. We've been talking now for an hour and forty-six minutes.

BRADY: An hour, yeah. Oh, that's not—it went quite quickly.

SIGRIST: A long time. This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Joseph Brady on Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995 here in Whiting, New Jersey. Thank you very much, sir.

BRADY: You're quite welcome. Thank you.

[End of Interview]

EI-673/BRADY