

EI-704

ROSE ANN BOLGOURES

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RESIDENCES:

- **GREECE: KASTANYA KALVITSIS**
- **THE US: WELCH, WEST VIRGINIA AND CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

LEVINE: Today is November 1st, 1995.

MR. BOLGOURES: All day.

LEVINE: All day, and I'm here in Concord, New Hampshire, with Mr. and Mrs. Bolgoures. Mrs. Bolgoures was born Rose Ann Christodoulou.

BOLGOURES: Christodoulou.

LEVINE: Christodoulou. And she came from Greece in 1926 when she was two years of age. Today is November 1st, 1995, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. Well, I know you have an interesting story, even though you were very young at the time. But I'm sure there's a lot of interest in this. So let me start with the beginning. Where in Greece were you born?

BOLGOURES: Kastanya Kalvitsis, a small village.

LEVINE: When you say Kastan—

BOLGOURES: Kastanya.

LEVINE: Kastanya, and what's the other part?

BOLGOURES: Kalvitsis.

LEVINE: Kalvitsis, which is the same larger area as where your husband was, when he was in Greece?

BOLGOURES: Oh, well, I think his—well, no. His is—a larger area.

LEVINE: Now, did you come from an area that was anywhere near, in Greece?

BOLGOURES: Almost near, yeah. But little did he know that one day he was going to marry the wife that was just born when he was nine years old in West Virginia!

MR. BOLGOURES: I thought she was a rebel!

LEVINE: A rebel?

BOLGOURES: In West Virginia, yes.

LEVINE: Wow. Okay, well so, you probably don't remember life in Greece, because you were so young?

BOLGOURES: No.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything?

BOLGOURES: It's a very strange thing. I do remember things that happened to me in the village. I call it Horio, in Greek. It's—I don't know, they didn't have the, well, you know, restrooms, things like that. You had to go outside, no matter what time day or night it was. And I was always afraid, because the village was up high, very high on a hill, almost. And although small, so young, I was frightened, because of the heavy wind and everything, and I would just go and hide under my mother's skirt! [Laughs] I remember that. And well, just—not too many things, though. But I was very interested when we were leaving to go—my parents told me this. But after they told me, I do remember. You see, we were going towards Athens so that we could leave to come to America. And every time I'd see a statue, I would think of Jesus Christ, because my uncle—my uncle!—my grandfather had bought the property right next to the little house that we had there, my parents. And so my grandfather bought the property to have a church built there. And when it was built and everything, I remember Jesus, and you know, the church was so beautiful! And I'd say my prayers all the

time, you know, every time I'd see one. So when we arrived in Athens and I saw the statues there, my Dad and Mom were laughing, they got such a big kick out of it. I started to say my prayers [laughs]. And I remember that. I remember that. And I also remember when we were on the ship, faintly though, I could see a lot of people, and how the ship, you know, makes that sound when you get on, ready to leave. And my father was carrying me for a little while, and then he put me down. And he was holding me, holding me by the hand. And I don't know, he told me that I just took my hand away from his, just for a second, and this guy that he was talking to on the ship distracted him to the point where, you know, I left my father, and there I was, by myself, running all over the ship there! And it was a time when they were anchoring the—you know, for people that were ready to come on the ship. And my mother and father were petrified; they thought, "Oh God, she must have—maybe she fell in the ocean!" or whatever [laughs]. But the truth is—and this is the funny part: I always loved music. So, being such a young little girl, you know, I was surprised—I could hear the sound of music, and it was earlier in the morning, where people hadn't gone into the dining room yet. And [laughs] my father was, you know, said, "Oh, I lost my little girl! She has black hair, curly black hair, and we have to find her!" So everyone on the ship was looking for me, and here I am, sitting at the [laughs]—sitting at this huge table, all alone, just sitting like that, listening to the music! And [laughs] when my parents told me about it, I couldn't [laughs]—I was laughing. I said, "Well, that goes to prove that I really love," and I still do to this day, a lot of music, and dancing, and everything. But it was funny, how, you know—

LEVINE: Do you know if you came over on a Greek ship? Was it Greek music, do you think?

BOLGOURES: It was Greek music; you're right. But even though—it could have been the Olympia. The Olympia. I wish I could remember the name of the ship at that time.

LEVINE: Now, I don't think you said your birth date for the tape, too. What--?

BOLGOURES: Birth date—August the third, 1924.

LEVINE: And let's see, did you ever celebrate name days?

BOLGOURES: Yes, my mother had a name day, and my father, no, he didn't have a name day. Just my mother; her name was Vasiliki.

LEVINE: And what was her maiden name, your mother?

EI-704/BOLGOURES

BOLGOURES: Lazarides.

LEVINE: Could you spell that?

BOLGOURES: Laza—well, I can't say it in English. Lazarides, L-A-Z-A-R-I-D-E-S, Lazarides.

LEVINE: And so when you came to this country, you came with your mother?

BOLGOURES: My mother, my father, and no, my sister was born in America, in West Virginia.

LEVINE: I see, so you were the only child at that time?

BOLGOURES: Yes.

LEVINE: Now, do you remember anything at all about the New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island?

BOLGOURES: I saw the Statue of Liberty, but I just thought it was [laughs]—say our prayers again! My father—I'm glad you reminded me. But that's about it. And then, in West Virginia.

LEVINE: So why did the family go to West Virginia?

BOLGOURES: Because my father, first, he came. He went to West Virginia when he was sixteen years old, because his oldest brother had already left to go to West Virginia, because of the coal mines, and they were making a lot of money. And my uncle, who was older than my Dad, about maybe four years older, and he wrote a letter saying, "I want you to come over. I need help, and that way we can help our parents, too." There were five in the family—no—five children, and his father and mother, seven in all. So they were very poor. And so my father said, "Okay, I'll come and help you." And he was only sixteen! But in 1921, he—the war was going on with the Turks and the Greeks, you know. It seems like that was forever and ever, all the time. So my father said, "I'm going to go over to Greece and fight for my country." So he did. He went to Greece, and that's how he met my mother. She was, I don't know how far away from my father's village. I don't think it was that far away, maybe a half an hour away or something. So he met my mother; she was the youngest of ten children that her parents had. And I lost my grandfather when he was real young, but my grandmother died a hundred and two years old! God bless her, yeah. And my mother just recently—well, it's five years now—she passed away, ninety-six and a half years old! I'm just saying that they came from a strong, healthy family. Just my grandfather who passed away

so young. But there were five girls and five boys. She lost, my grandmother lost one, one son, so that left her nine after that. But they, over there, at that time, when you have a big family, too, they didn't think that the girls should have to have a lot of education, because well, you get married, you have children. In fact, my mother used to say: "What do you want to go for?" Well, I didn't listen. I said, "I need to go, you know, have some kind of education." But the sons, they had to have their education: doctors—they would be either a doctor or lawyer, engineer, things like that. That's the kind of education they have over there. That's why they have so many lawyers, you know, from each family! But anyway, but she came from a big family.

LEVINE: What was your father's name?

BOLGOURES: Alcibiades, which means Al in short. My youngest son, we named him after my father. My oldest son, you saw the picture? He was named after my father-in-law. The first child, they name them—this is different. I mean, people that don't understand.

LEVINE: This is kind of a Greek tradition of naming?

BOLGOURES: Yes, yes. And not only that—here, if you say, in America, you want to name the child after the grandfather or the father, you say junior or senior, right? Over there, we don't have junior and senior. They want you to have the name of the grandfather first, from the—well, from his side of the family first. And then if I have another son, after my father. So over there they say, "Oh, that's," like my husband has his father's middle name, Constantine. So when they hear Socrates Constantine Bolgoures, they say, "Oh, I know! That's—his father's Constantine!" You see? So, that's the way they do it, instead of saying senior or junior.

LEVINE: And it doesn't matter if the father is, the grandfather of the child, is alive or not?

BOLGOURES: No.

LEVINE: That doesn't matter?

BOLGOURES: That's the tradition, is that—

LEVINE: How about girls? Are there any traditions about naming them?

BOLGOURES: It's kind of hard, because how could I say Rose Ann Alcibiades? That's my father's name. You know? But you could say, yes, that's

why Rose and Ann, considered to be Al—which isn't the same thing. But my daughter has my name, the middle name, Frederika Rose Ann Bolgoures.

MR. BOLGOURES: That's a good German name!

BOLGOURES: See, at that time, Queen Frederika was very high, and you know, in reigning, like. In 1954 when our daughter was born, his Godfather said, "I know what I'm going to name her, and I'm not going to say anything. She's going to be like a queen, a Queen's name." So he named her Frederika.

LEVINE: Now, is it the grandfather's, Godfather's role to name the child?

BOLGOURES: Yes, they're supposed to name the child.

LEVINE: Do the parents get to--?

BOLGOURES: Well, if you want to ask the parents. But his Godfather didn't want to. See, his Godfather baptized—his name was Aristotelius Mamelos. Okay, there's a family here, the Mamelos family. But they're dead now, the Godmother and Godfather. So we didn't say anything, we let him. But, he was my husband's Godfather, he was his sister's Godfather, and he was the Godfather of my oldest son, the Godfather of my daughter. But the youngest one was named after his Godfather who's passed away now, from Mattapan. Yeah, they were from Mattapan at the time. Now they lived in Dorchester after that. They didn't have any children, so they named him after my father, because they knew my father better than his parents. And they said, "No, we'll name his one Alcibiades."

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So it was a surprise to you when the names were chosen?

BOLGOURES: Well, I expected it, because I know the tradition, you know. That's why.

LEVINE: But I mean, like, Frederika. Did you expect that?

BOLGOURES: Well, when he said queen, I hesitated a while, but I said—yeah, he said Frederika, and I like the name. It's different.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Are there any other Greek traditions that people who came to this country continue to carry on?

BOLGOURES: Yes, no matter what—now, this is the difference between marriage of today. I mean, then, and marriage of today. You get married, of

course you have a family and everything. And I was raised like that, that the husband is the king, like, you know, and what he says, you should obey, and everything. Well, I didn't agree with that, because I was a little older after that. And I mean, of course respect and all that, but it should be mutual, fifty-fifty. I don't believe in seventy-five and fifty, you know? No. So it's tough, but I remember, because my father was just like an angel. He was so good to my Mom, and they—I never grew up in a household where I heard them even argue at all! It was so beautiful! So that's why my sister and I were very close, tight family, and we loved each other, and that's what I wanted, and that's what I was looking for.

LEVINE: Well, when your father took the family to West Virginia, was he working in the coal mines again?

BOLGOURES: No, no, my father never worked in the coal mines. The reason I mentioned coal mines: it was the richest coal mining town in West Virginia. And the miners that worked in these coal mines—I don't know how they could work under the ground like that. We had, my father had, two—and his brother, of course—they had two restaurants. We happened to be living up on a hill at that time, in a big, big house. But as they decided, why not have two restaurants? One for the miners, you know, they allowed gambling, horse racing tickets, you know, and things like that. There was nothing strict about their laws about anything like that. And if you go to West Virginia and see these beautiful, high mountains—if you go up to Laconia, we go through that area, and I say, "Oh, God, this reminds me so much of West Virginia!" The greenery and all that, I remember that vividly, and it was so beautiful! And they used to tell us stories, my father especially, because he came to America when he was sixteen. And he said, he didn't know a word of English, like my husband. But his brother had a chance to go into the World War One, you know. So he went to school. That's another reason he wanted my father, so he could have him working while he went to school to learn the English language, and he probably had a little college education, too. But my father didn't; my father worked hard so he could help to, help his family in Greece, help to marry off his sisters, because they were poor, and over they needed a dowry.

LEVINE: What would the dowry consist of?

BOLGOURES: Oh, money mostly. If you had something that—if you were going to be living in a village, they'll say, "Oh, I'll give you that horse, or cow!" or whatever [laughs].

MR. BOLGOURES: [Unclear]

BOLGOURES: So, just anything that, you know—but, I never liked that. I never, never liked that! Because my father never asked anything for my mother. She was poor, too, but he loved her, so that was most important. And I said, “When I get married, if any guy comes here and asks for me because they want a dowry, out they go!” But he didn’t ask, either [laughs]. Otherwise, you would have been out of my life! [Laughs]

MR. BOLGOURES: Suppose I had taken over your estate?

BOLGOURES: I didn’t have any estate! What estate did I have? You mean, my father’s estate?

MR. BOLGOURES: My grandfather’s.

BOLGOURES: Listen, never mind. You didn’t ask for it, and you weren’t going to get it anyway! [Laughs]

LEVINE: So okay, so let’s see. You were saying that you were in West Virginia. Your father was helping—

BOLGOURES: His brother, and in the mean time he’d send money to his sisters to marry them off and everything. You know, that was a hard time for the old people.

LEVINE: Excuse me, in West Virginia, was there a large Greek community?

BOLGOURES: No, five families, that’s all. When my father went—oh, this was interesting. My father used to say to me when he had to come to America, he was sixteen years old. He didn’t, like I said, didn’t know a word of English. So he came over with friends that he grew up with in Greece. And they all had to—when they were traveling, they didn’t know how to speak, so they put a tag on them, you know, on each of the guys that went to West Virginia, or wherever they were going, with their name on it.

LEVINE: You mean [unclear] they put that on?

BOLGOURES: Yeah, just like stamping an animal, or something! And the direction where they were going to go—that was it! That was it! And West Virginia at that time, it was more like these cowboy movies, you see the desert-like things, like that?

MR. BOLGOURES: John Wayne.

BOLGOURES: And [laughs] but you could see the trailing up the mountains where they used to have Indians! And when I'd go to the movies, we had on one side of the street there was Pocahontas—they named the theater Pocahontas. On the other side, across the street, Temple. So it was really, mostly an Indian reservation at that time, an cowboys and everything. So it was tough for my Dad, because he'd say here they'd come in in the restaurant, and at that time, before they built two other newer restaurants, they were coming in to have a drink or something. They'd take the gun out of their pocket and slam it on the counter. You know, my father was petrified. He couldn't say too much, you know. And not only that—we had a few Colored people down there, but they were very nice, you know. At that time they were considered slaves, and they had a tough time. But my father, no matter what color they were, he felt sorry for them, you know. And they'd come around and they'd say, "Al, could you give me a job? I need it?" So my father—because the law was they're not allowed to go in the restaurants at all. If they want to go and have anything to drink or whatever, they'd have to go to the back of the kitchen. So my father felt bad, you know, but that was the law! Otherwise, he would have been in trouble. But he was nice to them. They all liked him; I remember that, and they were always good to us, too, when I was growing up, and going up to the high school. They had their own section, the Colored people, and they had their own restaurants, their homes, and everything. But the only difficulty was for me to go to my school, which was a grade school—they had it all up on the hill—the grade school, the high school, and the gymnasium right in the middle. I have pictures somewhere. But the thing was, the Colored people would have to go, to go up to the high school, we'd have to go a little ways into where the Colored section was. They didn't harm us, or anything, but it's the way they would stare at you, and everything. It was kind of frightening. I knew they weren't going to bother me, because they knew my father, too, and everything. But that was interesting. You weren't allowed—if you went on a bus, the Colored people would have to sit in the back. If you went on the train, they had their own section for the Colored people. I remember that, because it's sad, in a way, too, you know.

LEVINE: Were the five Greek families—were they discriminated against in any way?

BOLGOURES: No, not at all. Not at all, no, because they all felt sorry for the Colored people, too, you know. They'd bow to you, like that, you know, and say, "Hello, how are you?"

LEVINE: Did the town remind you, or your mother and father, of the village in Greece at all?

BOLGOURES: Oh, yeah, a little bit. Not that—well, because it was a small city. But as I was growing up, and it became larger and larger—well, not that large: ten thousand population. They had beautiful stores, and I mean, it was a boomtown. It was really something else, especially when our own people had to go into the service. And I graduated in 1942, so I remember 1941 they were enlisting them—you know, the minute they graduated. And I'll never forget his name: John Landbury. He died the minute he went into the service. You know, they killed him, you know, with the war that was going on. And I cried and cried! Not because, I mean, we weren't close, but he was in my school, my grade, high school together. And we lost so many young people, too, at that time! And then, I used to say to my Dad, I'd say, "Dad," girls, too, were enlisting, WAC and WAVE. And I wanted to. Really, I really wanted to, because I felt like maybe it's the thing we should do, you know, to help this war. But at that time, they were thinking that the women were thought of as tramps, you know, if they did go. And my father said no. I didn't think of it in that way, but he did. He did. And then I said, "Well, maybe he's right," you know, and I didn't join. But I did graduate, and then I went to business college. And then while I was stills studying, and was about two weeks before graduation, my teacher said to me, "You know Rose Ann, they have two job openings for you. And I told them—they asked me who's the best one here? You know, who's the smartest girl that you have there?" And you know, I was good with my bookkeeping and shorthand, and secretarial work, and all that. And she mentioned my name. So she said, "Go to the bank first, and then go to the Appalachian Electric Power Company." That's one of the biggest—you hear of the Appalachian Mountains?

LEVINE: Mm-hm.

BOLGOURES: Well, it's all the way up to here, you know.

LEVINE: It's called Appalachian--?

BOLGOURES: Uh-huh, Appalachian Electric Power Company, yeah. So I worked there for three years, because they were paying more money. And I just went and had an interview at the bank; they weren't paying as much, and I didn't say anything. I says, "I'll think about it." So then I went to the Electric Power Company. They were paying more money, so I stayed there for three years. In 1941, Mr. Soc comes to town.

MR. BOLGOURES: Good thing I showed up!

BOLGOURES: We met [laughs], we met when I was in junior high.

LEVINE: How did you meet when you were in junior high?

BOLGOURES: I was coming home from school with my books under my arms.

MR. BOLGOURES: With anklets, you know.

LEVINE: Anklet socks?

BOLGOURES: Yeah, and Buster Brown shoes, brown and white! [Laughs] And here he is across the street in his uniform [laughs]. And he was talking to his uncle. But his uncle had an interest in me, and he was old enough to be my father.

LEVINE: Oh, his uncle was in your town?

BOLGOURES: His uncle, his uncle, yeah. That's how—he came to visit his uncle, that's how we met.

MR. BOLGOURES: She likes to tell the young mice.

BOLGOURES: The tender ones! And I thought—I always called him Uncle, because my parents taught me, the older people, to say Uncle and Aunt, although they weren't, you know. That's the way—

LEVINE: You called people Uncle and Aunt?

BOLGOURES: Uncle and Aunt, yeah, when we were young. And I thought of him as that. And although I'd never met Soc at the time, you know. So he was so funny—he knew that Soc was going to go down to see him, and he didn't want anybody to meet me! He was very funny [laughs].

LEVINE: He was saving was saving you for--?

BOLGOURES: Yeah.

MR. BOLGOURES: He was there, and this is mine, this is mine. That's mine, too, and this, too!

BOLGOURES: He was something else! He never was married; he never did marry, either. Anyway, you should have seen his face when Soc and I were going to get married! [Laughs]

[End of Side A/Start of Side B]

LEVINE: So when you met for the first time, what did you do? You just saw each other?

BOLGOURES: No, I was across the street, and I didn't pay him much attention, at first. But then I says, "Who's that handsome guy there, with his uncle?" Of course, I knew his uncle, but I didn't know him. [Laughs] And Soc stayed just for a few days; he had to leave to go into the service again. He was going to go across. So that's how we met. We went dancing one night, that one night before he left, and it was nice. But, no, I'm not going to say anymore. I didn't know whether, you know—I thought he was a little short, and this and that! I said, "No, that's okay, that's okay. He's all right."

MR. BOLGOURES: You know, the old Greeks, they used to have different things for—what was it? The Olympics, and go places.

BOLGOURES: Oh, okay.

MR. BOLGOURES: And there was this guy, his name was Pickio Cantes, and they used to give him, the community used to give him, a group of people, like five or ten, boys, fifteen. And if they didn't fit the length of that bench, and that guy had shorter, and shorter legs! [Laughs]

BOLGOURES: So I wanted to say, when I started working at the Appalachian Electric Power Company, and he came down in 1941—yeah, I said that before. That was before he left. No, it was when you came out of the service! What am I saying? Yeah, he was—I'm sorry, I forgot now.

LEVINE: Did you correspond at all while he was in the service?

BOLGOURES: He wrote to me.

MR. BOLGOURES: No, no, she was—she had correspondence with [unclear] way over in Tokyo, in China!

BOLGOURES: [Laughs] No! Soc, come on! No, you know what it was? [Laughs] When I was working at the office, he was writing, and I never answered him. It wasn't because I didn't want to. I had his address in my address book.

MR. BOLGOURES: Yeah, she didn't want to, but—

BOLGOURES: I don't know why, I just didn't answer him; I should have. My Dad said, "What's the matter with you? He writes all the time. Why don't you?" I said, "I will, I will, I will." But it was [laughs] the time when I was working.

MR. BOLGOURES: You were very, very busy.

BOLGOURES: No, we had Bob there. He was always—he said, “You know what we have to do?” He said, “We have to get these girls together, have their pictures taken and everything, and send it across—send their pictures and let them know that the girls in West Virginia really are thinking of them, and wishing them well,” you know. So one day—oh, this thing, it was so funny! Here I am at the office, and they had put the address where I was working. Thank God they didn’t send it to the house right away! And I received this big package! And the girls said, “My God, Rose, who is it from?”

MR. BOLGOURES: Wedding gown, huh?

BOLGOURES: No, no. So this guy was in the service; I never knew him from Adam, you know. But he saw my picture, and he chose me to write to. And the other girls, of course, they had certain guys that preferred them. You know what I mean, and all that. But I didn’t expect anything, you know. And then I opened up the package, and the girls got the biggest kick out of, because he sent me a grass skirt! I still have it in my trunk [laughs]!

MR. BOLGOURES: [Unclear]

BOLGOURES: A grass skirt. Soc, please, the lady wants to get it over with! [Laughs] A grass skirt, and letters, of course, and pictures. I have all that. But, it’s a good, you know, I like to keep them, just to reminisce sometimes.

LEVINE: Did you ever meet this person?

BOLGOURES: Not in person, because I cut it off. He came down, and I liked what I saw again. He didn’t have his uniform on. He looked good in his uniform, of course.

MR. BOLGOURES: Oh, yeah! And he died, huh?

BOLGOURES: Who?

MR. BOLGOURES: The other guy.

BOLGOURES: [Laughs]

LEVINE: So when you came back, you came again to see your uncle?

BOLGOURES: He came this time to see me! And his uncle warned me. And you know what he said to my husband? He said—we weren't married, or course, and he knew now that Soc was going to come down, the minute he came out of the service. So he says to my husband—

MR. BOLGOURES: His heart was in palpitation, boom, boom, boom, boom.

BOLGOURES: Yeah, he wanted to marry me, okay, and I disappointed him to the point where I said, "You're old enough to be my father." I didn't mean to hurt his feelings, because I knew he was really, really bad. And I felt sorry for him. He was nice looking, but he was old, you know!

MR. BOLGOURES: That's why he didn't want to okay the nuptials.

LEVINE: So what did he say to Socrates?

BOLGOURES: Socrates told him that he was going to come down to see me, and before [laughs], so before Soc came down, he comes up to me and he says, "Now, I want you to give me an honest answer," in Greek, of course, he was talking to me. He says, "So, do you want Socrates to come down? He wants to come and see you." I says, "Well, if he's going to come down." He says, "Are you in love with him?" I says, "How do I know if I'm in love with him? I never went out with him or anything." And he says, "I want to know now, so I can tell him not to come!"

MR. BOLGOURES: He wanted a guarantee!

BOLGOURES: So I says, "No, leave the man alone." I wanted him to come down, so we could see each other again. That was it, yeah.

LEVINE: Did he warn you against seeing her?

BOLGOURES: He didn't dare!

MR. BOLGOURES: He was [unclear] her.

BOLGOURES: Yeah, but he didn't dare say anything to Soc, because Soc would have caught on right away.

MR. BOLGOURES: You know what I would tell him? I'll go and buy you a gun to blow up your—

BOLGOURES: Soc was mad, and he was very upset. Well, being his uncle, you know.

MR. BOLGOURES: I knew two generals in the Army, Greek Army, and they were working for the King of Greece in the palace. And these two generals, they were old enough, and they were both in love with the young chicks, the daughters of the generals.

BOLGOURES: It was different in those days. I don't know, these older men that thought that, well, I can get anybody I want. But not for me, not for me.

LEVINE: So when you met, then, did your husband stay in West Virginia?

BOLGOURES: No, he was just out of the service, you know. We decided what month, you know, to go out. I mean, what month we were going to get married. That was September 15th, 1946.

LEVINE: And so did you get married there, in West Virginia?

BOLGOURES: Yes, definitely.

MR. BOLGOURES: And the funny thing was, it wasn't a Greek church, either.

BOLGOURES: No, well, you know what it was? In Welch—that's Welch, West Virginia, where I grew up. Where the high school is, on the other side of the hill—you go down the hill, then another hill going up. You know, I found it so fascinating, because the church, Episcopalian church, they called it, the little red church on the mountain. In other words, like many a time you'd say, "Oh, that's good luck, to get married in the little red church, you know." I don't know if you heard that described like that.

LEVINE: No.

BOLGOURES: That's the way it was.

MR. BOLGOURES: They have them in Tennessee.

BOLGOURES: So that's where we were married, although it wasn't a Greek church, but we had to have a Greek priest come from Roanoke, Virginia, Reverend Vooris.

MR. BOLGOURES: Oh, yeah, and where you used to wear no shoes!

BOLGOURES: Oh, no, I wore shoes! I wasn't up in the mountains, Soc!

MR. BOLGOURES: The priest!

BOLGOURES: Oh, forget him!

LEVINE: The priest—he didn't wear shoes?

BOLGOURES: No, no, no, no.

MR. BOLGOURES: One time he was traveling, and they stole his shoes [laughs]!

LEVINE: Did you do any Greek traditional things around the wedding?

BOLGOURES: The wedding was all traditional Greek all the way, Greek Orthodox.

LEVINE: So, did you remain religious, in the Greek Orthodox church?

BOLGOURES: Yes, yes, and of course I hated to leave Welch, because I was raised there, and I knew a lot of people. And I didn't know how things would be here. But I was just like a stranger, you know, and I was looking to find what I had down there. And the people here were kind of rude, too, you know. I had that real southern accent, which I've lost after all those years. So I got along better with the men up here than the women, I would say, really.

LEVINE: [Laughs]

BOLGOURES: Because I found them to be—they're not like that now! They know me better, and they know I don't take any bull. But I'm good, too. I can be real good. Down there, you know, people are so innocent, like, you know.

MR. BOLGOURES: They were not—

BOLGOURES: Soc! And the southerners are just different people! I'm not saying they're all like that, no. But I mean, they're very hospitable. He knows. He served in the south; he knows.

LEVINE: And when you came up here, there was probably like a larger Greek community than in Welch?

BOLGOURES: There was, definitely, oh yeah. Oh, we had good times. There wasn't a dance that we didn't miss! We went everywhere. And then, of course, he wanted to have children right away. I didn't, right away, because I was only twenty-one—just turned twenty-one. And my husband wanted children right away because he was turning thirty-one. No, I was turning twenty-two, I think. Anyway, so a month after, I'm pregnant! He wanted to keep me pregnant, I think, and barefooted! [Laughs] No, I'm just kidding. So we lived in this house

with his parents. It was a terrible experience for me. But anyway, he knows all about it. So finally, that's about it.

LEVINE: So now, why don't you say the names of your children, also, for the tape?

BOLGOURES: Right. My oldest son was—God bless his soul; he passed away. It'll be nine years November the tenth that he passed away. In fact, we're going to have his nine year memorial that Sunday. Yeah, the oldest son, Constantine. Then my daughter, Frederick Bolgoures, and Alcibiades Bolgoures.

LEVINE: How do you spell his name?

BOLGOURES: A-L-C-I-B-I-A-D-E-S, Alcibiades. He happened to be—see, in Greece, it's a very popular name, because they had a write up about Alcibiades, the general. So when he went to high school—

MR. BOLGOURES: [Unclear]

BOLGOURES: He liked, he loves his name. They call him Al for short, and when he was little I'd call him Alky, Alky, instead of Alcibiades. But people love that name. It isn't very common here, in America, but if you read the history books, like Al told me when he was in high school, they were studying the history, language, and they came across the name Alcibiades [laughs]. And he sort of was perking up a little bit, because they used to kid him about that name. He said, "No, that's my name!" So cute.

MR. BOLGOURES: But she never mentioned my name.

BOLGOURES: Who?

MR. BOLGOURES: Who? My grandfather!

BOLGOURES: Soc, we're talking about our children, now. And my other little child, Socrates! [Laughs]

LEVINE: So how is this time in your life, when your children are grown, and you're here in Concord?

BOLGOURES: Well, if we hadn't lost our Charlie, our life just—I mean, you know, I'm grateful that I have the other two, but there's something that's missing in our life, and that bothers me.

LEVINE: Yeah, that's hard, really hard. How about the fact that you came here as a two year old child, you left Greece and really lived your whole life here? Do you think that made a difference on who you are, the fact that you came from another place, and started a new life, although you were young?

BOLGOURES: I don't think I would have changed anything. Because you see, when you grow up believing in the values that your mother and father taught you, and you like—well, I'm not sorry about that. I am Greek American. I'm more American than Greek, of course, now. But I did have to have citizenship papers. Every time I went to Canada I had to have it with me.

MR. BOLGOURES: But, you can stop being American citizen, too!

BOLGOURES: No way, no way!

LEVINE: Would you have dual citizenships, otherwords could you have citizenship?

BOLGOURES: No, I don't think so. Now, look at the difference. I was born in Greece, and raised in America. My sister was born in America, and she lives in Greece! [Laughs] So I have one sister. We don't see each other, hardly; 1984 we went to Greece. We stayed there three months with my husband. We went to Vienna! We went everywhere, you know. It was so wonderful! Because that was the first time we actually had the chance to really have like a second honeymoon. And then my brother-in-law, after he passed away—my poor sister, she lost him, and she was only fifty-six years old, and he was sixty-nine. So there was an age difference there, but he was a wonderful doctor, and I miss Nick a lot. And then little did we know, two years after that we'd lose our son.

LEVINE: Well, what do you think of the idea of a melting pot? I mean, from your perspective, you know, that idea that America is the great melting pot?

MR. BOLGOURES: Used to be!

BOLGOURES: Soc, please! For me, I'm very thrilled and happy to be an American. I am more American than Greek, I think. And I wouldn't give this country up for no other country in the world. We have our problems, but when I hear and see what goes on in other countries over there! I love Greece, but I would never want to live there. No way! America is my country.

EI-704/BOLGOURES

LEVINE: Okay, is there anything else that you can think of that we maybe haven't covered?

BOLGOURES: Oh, I've kept you so long now!

LEVINE: Oh no, this was most interesting, I'm delighted.

BOLGOURES: So that's the story of my life so far, and I hope—

MR. BOLGOURES: Suppose you were in Belgium fighting in the Second World War? What would happen?

BOLGOURES: I'm not going to answer that!

MR. BOLGOURES: Well, let the dogs get killed.

LEVINE: Okay, well I want to say this was a very, very interesting interview, and I thank you so much! It was a pleasure to have you both.

BOLGOURES: I appreciate you coming over.

MR. BOLGOURES: So you're going to go to New York with those?

LEVINE: Yes, I'm going to bring these back to New York, and then put them in the Ellis Island Library. Send you a copy of the tapes.

BOLGOURES: That would be great.

MR. BOLGOURES: And also, you can make a small little card from Ellis Island, and you read the name and say, "What the hell, I know her, and I know her."

BOLGOURES: Oh, my daughter sent me an Ellis Island—

LEVINE: Wait, you're still hooked up.

BOLGOURES: Oh, I'm sorry, yeah, wait 'til, okay.

LEVINE: I've been speaking with Rose Ann Bolgoures, and it's November 1st, 1995, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm signing off.

[End of Interview]