

**EI-714**

**AZNIVE POGARIANE**

**BIRTHDATE: MAY 6, 1904**

**INTERVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 11, 1995**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 91**

**RUNNING TIME: 47:15**

**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**

**INTERVIEW LOCATION: ROSLINDALE, MASSACHUSETTS**

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**TURKEY (ARMENIA), 1915**

**AGE: 11**

**SHIP: ZEALAND**

**PORT: MARSEILLES**

**RESIDENCES:**

- **TURKEY: ALEPPO**
- **THE US: WATERTOWN AND NEWTON UPPER FALLS, MASSACHUSETTS**

LEVINE: Today is November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1995, and I am here in the Armenian Home with Aznive Pogariane, who came to this country—she's not exactly sure if she came in 1905 or 1907, but she was around eight years old. And Mrs. Pogariane doesn't remember her birth date, but if you do remember it later on, you can just say so, okay? Now, Mrs. Pogariane came from Turkey when she came to the United States. Maybe if we could start out, Mrs. Pogariane: what was your maiden name, your name before you were married?

POGARIANE: Aznive Pogariane.

LEVINE: Oh, this is the name you were born with?

POGARIANE: Yes.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh, okay, and why don't you tell a little bit—what was your father's name?

POGARIANE: Mihran.

LEVINE: How do you spell that?

POGARIANE: Myron.

LEVINE: Myron?

POGARIANE: Yeah, Mihran.

LEVINE: And what did he do for work when you were still in Turkey?

POGARIANE: We were farmers.

LEVINE: What kind of a farm did your father have?

POGARIANE: Grape farms. They made grapes, and all kinds of fruit.

LEVINE: And your mother, what was her name?

POGARIANE: My mother's name was Mary.

LEVINE: Mary. Do you by any chance remember her maiden name, before she married your father?

POGARIANE: Yes, she was Abdalian.

LEVINE: A-B-D-A-L-I-A-N?

POGARIANE: Abdalian, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, and when you think back about your mother, before you came to this country, up until the time you were eight years old, what are the things you remember about her? What did she do, and what do you remember her doing?

POGARIANE: She was a hard-working woman. Well, farmers, they had all kinds of fruits and grape yards, and everything.

LEVINE: Did she farm as well as your father? Was she out on the land, doing farming, too?

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POGARIANE: No, men did the farming. Only women, women did the work.

LEVINE: She did the work in the house?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Now, did you have running water in your house?

POGARIANE: Yes, yes we did.

LEVINE: Do you remember—can you describe the house you lived in in Turkey?

POGARIANE: It was a very nice house, and we had a great, big hall, and in the hall there were wells, water wells. And the water wells got into the well, and they used that.

LEVINE: So when your mother wanted water, what did she do?

POGARIANE: She went and plugged the water.

LEVINE: She drew up the water from the well?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Did she do that in a pottery kind of a jar?

POGARIANE: In a pottery kind of a jar.

LEVINE: And when she did the washing, how did she do that?

POGARIANE: Well, she had—they had the wells. They did it, did the washing. They took the water from the wells.

LEVINE: Did you help your mother do some of the household chores?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: What did you do, up until you were eight years old, when you were in Turkey?

POGARIANE: I didn't do anything.

LEVINE: You just sat still?

POGARIANE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember playing at all?

POGARIANE: Playing?

LEVINE: Yeah, did you play with your friends?

POGARIANE: Yes, I did.

LEVINE: What kinds of things did you do?

POGARIANE: Nothing special.

LEVINE: Now say again for the tape, where in Turkey was your family living?

POGARIANE: Hm?

LEVINE: Where in Turkey were you living with your family?

POGARIANE: In Turkey, in the family, right in there [unclear] for us. But before that I left for, it was Turkey. And then they were mean to us.

LEVINE: What did they do to you?

POGARIANE: They did [unclear]. They killed them; they hate them! They did everything.

LEVINE: Did you ever see any of that kind of thing?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: What do you personally remember about that time?

POGARIANE: All we did was pray.

LEVINE: Where did you pray?

POGARIANE: In our church. We had a church in our house.

LEVINE: You had a church right in your house?

POGARIANE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was that unusual, to have a church right in your house?

POGARIANE: No, it's very usual. They all had it. But of course, when the Turks got bad like that, I don't know, maybe we didn't even have the church there.

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- LEVINE: When you say you had a church in your house, does that mean you had like an altar? And it was just for your family?
- POGARIANE: Yeah. Yes, it was just for our family. We had an altar, but we had, our church was right next to our house.
- LEVINE: And that church that was next to your house, would other people come from other houses?
- POGARIANE: Yes, they all came.
- LEVINE: And did you have a minister?
- POGARIANE: They killed him.
- LEVINE: Did you ever see any of that kind of violence, the killing of Armenians? Did you ever witness any of that.
- POGARIANE: Well I didn't see it, but I heard about it, what they did.
- LEVINE: Do you remember what you heard?
- POGARIANE: I heard that they got hold of the people, and they put them in the church, and closed the doors on them.
- LEVINE: And then?
- POGARIANE: And then after a while, they killed them.
- LEVINE: So, do you remember your mother and father talking about the Turks when you were a little girl?
- POGARIANE: Oh, that was a—that was the fact! There was nothing else to talk but those!
- LEVINE: Uh-huh. People were frightened, in other words, for their lives?
- POGARIANE: Yeah.
- LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah. Did you go to school at all in Turkey?
- POGARIANE: No. We had [pause] we had a man that taught us how to learn in Armenian.
- LEVINE: Did that man come to your house?

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POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: And who did he teach?

POGARIANE: Whoever was available. Young children, older children, and they sang an awful lot of songs.

LEVINE: In Armenian?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Do you by any chance remember any of those songs in Armenian that you sang when you were a little girl in Turkey?

POGARIANE: Yes, I do.

LEVINE: Would you care to sing a little bit, sing a song? It would be very nice to have a song, an Armenian song on the tape here.

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Why don't you pick one out that you remember, and sing it.

POGARIANE: I don't know which one to call. I know so many of them!

LEVINE: Why don't you pick one that you particularly like.

POGARIANE: I don't know why my tongue is twisted. I don't even hear it well, but I will certainly sing a song. [Pause] It's a very sad story to remember, but it's all right to remember, if I could. But I have forgotten, I guess.

LEVINE: Oh, you've forgotten the songs?

POGARIANE: Mm-hm.

LEVINE: Do you think maybe you could say the song, if you can't sing it? Perhaps you'd rather not. Would you rather not sing it, or say it?

POGARIANE: They're sad songs!

LEVINE: Do you remember any happy times when you were in Turkey, before you left?

POGARIANE: Yes.

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LEVINE: What were the happy times that you can remember?

POGARIANE: They had churches, going to church every morning, and at night. And then, and then sing—sing the songs, and look at the—I don't know why I have forgotten.

LEVINE: That's okay, it doesn't matter. Whatever you remember is wonderful, and if you don't remember something, it doesn't matter at all, so don't feel badly about it. It's fine.

POGARIANE: When I was coming to America, we went to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Well first tell me when you left Aleppo, or—where did you leave from? When you first left Turkey, where were you leaving from? Where did you say goodbye to everyone?

POGARIANE: Aleppo.

LEVINE: Aleppo. And you remember saying goodbye to people?

POGARIANE: There wasn't many people left. My close relatives were all killed.

LEVINE: And who did you travel with when you came to this country?

POGARIANE: I was young and I couldn't come, but my father wrote and said that a very close friend is coming to America. You go and find them in Aleppo, and come with them.

LEVINE: Now your father had already come to America?

POGARIANE: Yeah.

LEVINE: When did he go? Do you remember what year your father went, or how long before you went did your father go? Was it a long time? Had he been in America a long time.

POGARIANE: No, not very long. The war was over by that time.

LEVINE: Well, so he wrote, and he said to find this friend?

POGARIANE: And find me, to come to America with him.

LEVINE: Now what about your mother?

POGARIANE: My mother was dead then; they killed her!

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LEVINE: Oh, how old were you when they killed your mother?

POGARIANE: I was young!

LEVINE: Was it right before you came to America?

POGARIANE: Oh, yeah!

LEVINE: So, did you have brothers and sisters?

POGARIANE: Yes. I had three brothers, two sisters. And those were exiled and got killed and died without any help.

LEVINE: All of them?

POGARIANE: All of them. I was the only one left, because somebody kept me.

LEVINE: Who kept you?

POGARIANE: The girl, a distant relative was alive, and she kept me for a while. And after that, an Aleppo family kept me.

LEVINE: Do you remember how long you were kept before you came to America? How long did you stay with the relative, and with the family in Aleppo?

POGARIANE: Until the war was over.

LEVINE: Was it a matter of months?

POGARIANE: Yes, and they kept me.

LEVINE: Do you remember how you lived when they were keeping you?

POGARIANE: They were good.

LEVINE: Did you have to be hidden, or did you just live in their house with them?

POGARIANE: They fed me, too.

LEVINE: Were they also Armenian?

POGARIANE: Yes. They were Syrians.

LEVINE: And did you have to hide?

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POGARIANE: No. And when I was in Aleppo, what did he said? That—and I was getting ready to come to America. When I was in Ellis Island, a man hold up me, and I speak. “Do you know how to talk your own language? Read your own language?” I said, “Yes, of course I know my own language!” He said, “Say it.” So I said it, but I said it in Armenian, but I translated for other people there. It said—

LEVINE: When you were at home in Aleppo, did the family speak Armenian?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: What did the family speak at home?

POGARIANE: Syrian.

LEVINE: Syrian, I see. And you learned some Armenian when the teacher came to your home and taught?

POGARIANE: No, I knew that much, and then the Aleppo people wanted to take care of the Syrian people, and they were taking care of me. And they decided that they were going to send me to the old country. She said, “Do you know how to talk Armenian?” I said, “Yes.” She said, “Well read.” And the reading was: Turn your ears to me, and turn your ears to me.

LEVINE: Was this at Ellis Island?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Where you had to read that?

POGARIANE: Yeah.

LEVINE: In Armenian?

POGARIANE: Yeah.

LEVINE: And you could do it?

POGARIANE: I did it. I did it: Turn your ears to me, and [pause] [unclear]. Forget the thing in your mind, and forget your ears, or something. But in Armenian, [unclear], turn your ears to me.

LEVINE: Well, when you left Aleppo with the people that your father told to find you, what was that like, getting to the ship, getting to the port? Where did you have to go when you left Aleppo?

POGARIANE: Well, we went to Marseilles, because Marseilles is the port, and that we could come to.

LEVINE: Marseilles in France?

POGARIANE: Yes, Marseilles in France was the port, so we came to the port.

LEVINE: How many of you were there? How many people were you traveling with?

POGARIANE: From my family I was the only one, but those friends of my fathers were about seven.

LEVINE: So you all traveled together from Aleppo, and then you went to France. And was it from Marseilles that you got the Zealand? Is that where you got the ship?

POGARIANE: No, we didn't, because the grandmother was no bono, and they wouldn't come. They wouldn't take her. She had to stay there; she was no bono.

LEVINE: She was what?

POGARIANE: No bono.

LEVINE: No bono?

POGARIANE: Yeah, so she had bad eyes, and she couldn't come. She had to stay there until she gets better. But I didn't. Another relative came along, and she said, "You can be my daughter. Never mind." And she, I became to his daughter, and from his daughter, we went to—I forgot the name of that other port.

LEVINE: Where you got the ship, where you got the Zealand?

POGARIANE: Yeah, Zealand. To get to Zealand. From Zealand we got the ship, and from Zealand we took the ship and came to [pause]—

LEVINE: New York?

POGARIANE: We didn't go to New York. We went to another place, that other place.

LEVINE: Ellis Island?

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POGARIANE: No. [Pause] Was it Ellis Island? Ellis Island was in [pause] Marseilles. Marseilles was Ellis Island. This other place was—it was another. They had a seaport, ocean, and was Zoland.

LEVINE: Zoland?

POGARIANE: Yeah, the name was Zoland, and we stayed there until my father came and his friends came, and brought me to America.

LEVINE: Okay, well when you got on the ship, when you got on the Zealand, do you remember what kind of a little girl you were? Can you describe what you were like when you were eight years old, and you were really the only one left in your family, and you were traveling to the United States? What kind of a little girl were you? How would you describe yourself then?

POGARIANE: Oh, the men that were taking care of me, they were very good, and they had a little girl I loved. And I was always [unclear].

LEVINE: Good. What was the little girl's name?

POGARIANE: I forgot her name.

LEVINE: And did you—were on the ship together with the little girl?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Did you go around the ship together?

POGARIANE: After we got there, they didn't go with the ship anymore.

LEVINE: Oh, they just went to the seaport?

POGARIANE: Seaport, they stayed at the seaport, and then another family came from the seaport and took me.

LEVINE: Oh! Now how many people were in that family?

POGARIANE: There were quite few, I guess. There weren't too many. I don't know, about eight, ten.

LEVINE: What do you remember about that family, that you went on the ship with?

POGARIANE: They were a very good family; they loved me.

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LEVINE: They were Armenian?

POGARIANE: Yes. They were Armenians, and they were very good to me.

LEVINE: What did they do for you? How were they good to you?

POGARIANE: Well, nothing. We had enough to eat. Not too much.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about the voyage, when the ship was coming to the United States? Do you remember anything about that voyage?

POGARIANE: What was coming to the United States?

LEVINE: Yeah, when you were on the ship, and you were coming to the United States, do you remember anything about that? It was probably a few weeks when you were on the ship, going across the water to the United States.

POGARIANE: I have forgotten.

LEVINE: Now, do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

POGARIANE: Yes. They made it their business to go and see the Statue of Liberty.

LEVINE: Did you know what that was when you first came to this country?

POGARIANE: Well, the other people talked about it, but I didn't know much about it.

LEVINE: Do you remember what they said? Do you remember what they said about the Statue of Liberty?

POGARIANE: They did say, but I forgot.

LEVINE: Okay, that's all right. Then you came to Ellis Island, and you were asked questions. Do you remember that part?

POGARIANE: [Pause] Turn your ears to me, and free me!

LEVINE: Do you remember being examined?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: Did you have to stay at night in Ellis Island? Did you have to sleep there?

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POGARIANE: Yes, we had to stay in Ellis Island!

LEVINE: Where did you sleep?

POGARIANE: I don't know. It wasn't anything special.

LEVINE: Did you all—you must have had some meals there, too. Did you eat in the dining room?

POGARIANE: They ate with the money they had.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else about Ellis Island? A great big building where you were asked questions and examined? And you say you stayed overnight. Do you remember anything else about that?

POGARIANE: That church. That church was a great, big church, and we went to see it, but I forgot the name. They still have it.

LEVINE: Oh. You mean, you went to see it after you left Ellis Island?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Now, did your father meet you?

POGARIANE: My father came to [pause] that other state, with my—my father came with my cousin. He came.

LEVINE: Did he come to Ellis Island and meet you?

POGARIANE: No, we were out of Ellis Island. We were out of—all together different state.

LEVINE: I see. So did you come to Massachusetts?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: Where did you go when you left Ellis Island?

POGARIANE: When we left Ellis Island? Ellis Island was all [pause] mixed people! Mixed people, I don't know how it was. We left and went to this other state, and those other people that had eye trouble, had to stay in Marseilles.

END OF SIDE A  
BEGIN SIDE B

LEVINE: And then where did you meet your father?

POGARIANE: My father. We [unclear] my father in—what's the name of that place? Zoland.

LEVINE: Zoland? Your father was already in the United States when you came here, is that right? Was he already here, or no?

POGARIANE: No, he came afterwards. I went to the Armenian place first, with those other people. I lived with them. They were related to us.

LEVINE: Was this in New York?

POGARIANE: In Marseilles.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. And then, when you got to Ellis Island, then where did you go? You went to another state?

POGARIANE: We are still, stayed in Ellis Island, and were getting ready to come to America, but they didn't let them come to America, because the grandmother had eye trouble. So the people that I was with, they wouldn't go. So this time I met another friend of my father's, and he took me and took care of me, until my father found me and back to that other country, I forgot the name. Zealand, the boat's name was Zealand, but I forgot the name of the boat's place.

LEVINE: The country?

POGARIANE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was it in Holland?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: The Netherlands?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: Was it Germany?

POGARIANE: It was something like Zealand.

LEVINE: It was a name like Zealand, like you were saying Zoland before?

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POGARIANE: Zealand. And then the boat that we went to, it had a lot of deep water in it. We passed that to another big city, and we stayed there. My father and the new friends that I made, they came with my father, and took care of me, and brought me to America.

LEVINE: I see. So when you came to America, your father was with you?

POGARIANE: My father didn't come to America to pick me up, he picked me up from that Zoland, Zealand. Zealand. It was a lot of water, and lot of things.

LEVINE: What was it like to see your father again, because you hadn't seen him for a while?

POGARIANE: I didn't like him.

LEVINE: Why didn't you like him?

POGARIANE: I don't know. It was another problem.

LEVINE: Another problem?

POGARIANE: Yeah, because my father wasn't close to me by that time. He—I liked him, but I felt as though I'm going to go with them, with those other people.

LEVINE: So when you came to the United States, where did you go to live?

POGARIANE: [Pause] When I came to United States, I went to Aleppo first. Aleppo.

LEVINE: No, after you came. After you took the Zealand, and you came to the United States, and you went through Ellis Island, and then you came and you lived here. You lived here and you went to school—where were you? What town, what city?

POGARIANE: I went to Watertown.

LEVINE: Watertown, uh-huh. And did you go to school in Watertown?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: What was it like going to school here?

POGARIANE: It was good. It was—there was a teacher, her name was Miss McKenzie, and she had children, all young children. And our house was right next to it, so my father took me to her, and he said, "This is my girl, and it's your girl." And she took me up, and, "My name is Miss

McKenzie.” And she had kindergarten and fourth grade. Not fourth grade—second grade. And then the year after, they sent me to another school. I learned English pretty good.

LEVINE: How was it for you, learning English?

POGARIANE: I liked it.

LEVINE: Did you learn it quickly?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: And how did you learn it? What helped you to learn it?

POGARIANE: Miss McKenzie did. She used to teach kindergarten. I used to learn kindergarten, and I said, what did I say at those kindergarten songs?

LEVINE: Oh, can you remember any of those, of those kindergarten songs?

POGARIANE: Yes!

LEVINE: What do you remember?

POGARIANE: I knew a lot, but I don't remember now. I'll see if I can remember.  
[Pause] Well, why don't I remember? I knew it like water, those songs, because I loved it!

LEVINE: It sounds like you liked Miss McKenzie. She was very nice to you, huh?

POGARIANE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, that's good. Okay, well then you stayed—were you living alone with your father, or were you living with other people, too, in the house?

POGARIANE: I was living with my father.

LEVINE: And then how long did you stay in school?

POGARIANE: Not very long. After that year was up, then I didn't want to go with the kids, the young children. So I said, “[Unclear], why can't I go to a school that's a regular school?” So I went to that regular school, a school. And after that, some trouble started. It was a Catholic school, and well, the Catholic school. And there was another school that they were Protestant school. So the Protestant people wanted us to go to their school, and Catholic people gave up. So I went to the Protestant school. I have forgotten now these things.

LEVINE: So you went to the Protestant school, then?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: When you were in Turkey, what religion did your family practice?

POGARIANE: Apostolic.

LEVINE: Apostolic?

POGARIANE: Yes, Armenian, and Christian.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was it Catholic?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: No, it was Apostolic. So then you went to the Protestant school? And what was that like for you?

POGARIANE: It was very good.

LEVINE: Were you a good student?

POGARIANE: I think so. I didn't forgot anything that I learned. Now, I forget everything. I don't know why I forget it.

LEVINE: Yeah, well you remember quite a bit! You remember a lot!

POGARIANE: But I am not remembering the most important things!

LEVINE: Well, yes you are. It's just the songs and things that you can't remember. But you're remembering a lot; you're doing just fine. Why don't you—when you stopped school, how old were you? Do you remember when you stopped going to the Protestant school?

POGARIANE: No, I was young.

LEVINE: You were young. And what did you do after you finished school, after you stopped.

POGARIANE: I didn't go to school anymore.

LEVINE: And did you go to work?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: You stayed at home?

POGARIANE: Yes, I took care of the cooking for my father.

LEVINE: What kind of work was your father doing?

POGARIANE: He worked in a—what do they call it? They did some factory work. He had a good job in there, but then the factory closed up, and he was out of that job, and he left and came to Watertown. And from Watertown, he learned more Armenian, and more of Armenian readings, and said, [Sings]: “Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John, went to [unclear]. One shoe off and one shoe on. Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John.”

LEVINE: Good for you! You remembered that!

POGARIANE: I remember the whole, the whole—my tongue is not working right!

LEVINE: Well I think you're just doing fine. Why don't I ask you: did you work after—did you ever work outside the home? Did you work at a job anyplace?

POGARIANE: No.

LEVINE: No, you stayed at home and you kept house for your father?

POGARIANE: Yeah, and did cooking.

LEVINE: And you did cooking. Did you cook any Armenian dishes?

POGARIANE: Yes. I had friends; I used to ask them how to cook and they used to tell me, and I used to cook.

LEVINE: What kind of Armenian dishes did you cook?

POGARIANE: All kinds of vegetables, and meat and chicken, and everything.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Were you a good cook?

POGARIANE: They considered me as a good cook.

LEVINE: What makes you feel satisfied? What have you done in your life that makes you feel proud, that makes you feel satisfied, that you did?

POGARIANE: [Pause] I find trouble to—I feel satisfied, everything I did.

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LEVINE: You feel satisfied about everything you did?

POGARIANE: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

POGARIANE: If I cooked, and the cooking my father didn't like, that's all right. I knew I was going to make a good cooking for next time.

LEVINE: Good for you. Are there any things that when you look back on them, they make you feel happy? Things that you did, that you feel happy about?

POGARIANE: Yes. If my father brought his friends, and I'd cook, and made a good cooking for them. And then—what was the name of the place that I lived in?

LEVINE: In Watertown?

POGARIANE: In Newton Upper Falls, I lived in a house. I was satisfied; I was happy. My father brought his friends, and I cooked, and they'd praise me. And I liked it.

LEVINE: Oh, good, uh-huh.

POGARIANE: But this was awfully funny, though. They took me out of Catholic school, and put me to Protestant school, because that school, that church was all Protestant. And what was the name of the girl? And I liked her. In that Protestant school, she had a night teacher. You know?

LEVINE: Night school? Was it night school that you went to?

POGARIANE: Night school.

LEVINE: Did you go at night, or did you go in the day?

POGARIANE: In the day time. She was a teacher of that school for day time. Day time was school.

LEVINE: And she was your teacher?

POGARIANE: Yes, she was. Miss May. Her name was Miss May!

LEVINE: Good!

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POGARIANE: And I loved her!

LEVINE: Why did you like her so much?

POGARIANE: Because she was nice. I learned everything she said!

END OF INTERVIEW