

EI-725

BRIDGET CONSIDINE

BIRTHDATE: JANUARY 21, 1900

INTERVIEW DATE: JANUARY 22, 1996

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 96

RUNNING TIME: 1:00:15

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE

RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE

INTERVIEW LOCATION: WARWICK, NEW YORK

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

IRELAND, 1921

AGE: 21

SHIP: BALTIC

PORT: QUEENSTOWN (CORK)

RESIDENCES:

- **IRELAND: COUNTY CLARE**
- **THE US: NEW YORK CITY**

LEVINE: Today is January 22nd, 1996.

CONSIDINE: Twenty-one.

LEVINE: Well, twenty-one is your birthday.

CONSIDINE: Twenty-first.

LEVINE: Today's the day after the twenty-first, right?

CONSIDINE: Oh, the twenty-second! Yeah.

LEVINE: And I am here at Mount Alverno in Warwick, New York, with Bridget Considine—

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CONSIDINE: Right.

LEVINE: --who had her ninety-sixth birthday yesterday, on January twenty-first.

CONSIDINE: Right.

LEVINE: Which means that you were born in 1900?

CONSIDINE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And Ms. Considine came from Ireland when she was twenty-one years old in 1921.

CONSIDINE: Yes.

LEVINE: Okay, well I'm very happy that we got the tape recorder going. Now we'll start. I'll ask you questions, and whatever you remember, relative to those questions, you can bring out, okay?

CONSIDINE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Where were you born in Ireland?

CONSIDINE: In Farmore West, Cree, County Clare, Ireland.

LEVINE: Okay, and what do you remember when you think back to Ireland? What's your earliest memory?

CONSIDINE: I don't know, where I was raised.

LEVINE: Could you describe that? What did it look like?

CONSIDINE: Well, it was a farm house, and I was with my grandmother and my uncles. And that was in another part of Ireland. That was in Doullah [PH], County Clare.

LEVINE: That was, in other words, you lived with your mother and father?

CONSIDINE: I did until I was two years old, and then I went to my grandmother's. She was alone, and my sister was born at the time, and they decided that they would take me, my grandmother would take me. And so I was with her until I was about eleven years old.

LEVINE: Oh, okay.

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CONSIDINE: So I remember that part more than I do where I was born, because when I was—as I say, I was two years old when I left where I was born. And then I was with my grandmother until I was eleven.

LEVINE: Which grandmother was it? Your mother's--?

CONSIDINE: My mother's mother.

LEVINE: What was your mother's mother's name?

CONSIDINE: Her name was Bridget Earls, E-A-R-L-S.

LEVINE: And so that was your mother's maiden name?

CONSIDINE: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you have a grandfather?

CONSIDINE: No, I never had a grandfather. They were all deceased before I was born.

LEVINE: Okay, and what was your father's name?

CONSIDINE: Patrick Considine.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you have brothers and sisters?

CONSIDINE: Yes, I had four sisters, and a brother.

LEVINE: In Ireland?

CONSIDINE: In Ireland, yeah.

LEVINE: So were you—you had a sister younger than you were?

CONSIDINE: I'm the oldest.

LEVINE: Oh, you're the oldest?

CONSIDINE: Yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember the names of your--?

CONSIDINE: Sisters? Yes, my sister—Hannah, and Mary, Margaret, and Katherine.

LEVINE: And your brother?

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CONSIDINE: And my brother's name was John.

LEVINE: And where did John fall in the—when was John born? Was he the youngest?

CONSIDINE: Eleven years later than I was born; he was the youngest.

LEVINE: Oh, I see, uh-huh. Now, of all your sisters and your brother, how many of you came to the United States?

CONSIDINE: Three of us, three sisters. I came, and two sisters. I came, and the two sisters came after I come here.

LEVINE: You came first?

CONSIDINE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, what do you remember about your grandmother, the one you went to live with when you were two?

CONSIDINE: Well, I was really happy there, and it was a nice part of the county. It was—on the back of the house there was a mountain, and in front, a lake. And I really liked that little place very much, because as I say, when I was about three years old and four years old, I could know what was going on, you know? So I liked that place very much. Where I come from, you know, it's different. It seems to me that where you're born, you know, where you're raised you think of more, than where you were born. When you leave at a certain time, you know?

LEVINE: Yes. And you say your uncles were living with you?

CONSIDINE: Yes, I had two uncles there, Uncle Morris and Uncle—Uncle Morris and Uncle Jim, yeah.

LEVINE: And they lived with your grandmother, too?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, they lived with my grandmother and they worked on the farm.

LEVINE: What did they raise on the farm?

CONSIDINE: Oh, they had, you know, a lot of cattle, and different things like sheep, and cattle, and cows and calves, and all things like that. All kinds of fowl, chickens.

LEVINE: So it was livestock?

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CONSIDINE: Yeah, livestock.

LEVINE: They didn't grow vegetables?

CONSIDINE: Oh yes, they did. They grew potatoes. They grew a lot of stuff, too, potatoes, and you know, vegetables of all kinds.

LEVINE: What do you remember about your Uncle Jim?

CONSIDINE: Uncle—no, not too much about my Uncle Jim. My Uncle Jim came to this country. I didn't know him. No, it was my Uncle John that was there; Uncle Jim wasn't there at the time I was. Uncle John was there.

LEVINE: And Uncle Morris?

CONSIDINE: And Uncle Morris, yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember Uncle John from the farm?

CONSIDINE: Yes, I do. He used to—he was there with Uncle Morris. It was Uncle Jim—I got that a little mixed up [laughs].

LEVINE: Well, that's okay. What do you remember about your Uncle Morris?

CONSIDINE: Oh, he was very good to me.

LEVINE: What did he do?

CONSIDINE: Yes, and he used to like to go fishing, and I always went along with him. I liked to go fishing with him.

LEVINE: What would you do? Say it was a day when you went?

CONSIDINE: Fishing trout. Fishing for trout, and I used to help him. Not help him, but I used to go with him, to be with him.

LEVINE: Just the two of you, your Uncle Morris and you?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, just the two of us.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what would you do? You'd get up in the morning, you'd go. Where would you go?

CONSIDINE: Well, you know, I used to hold the—what would you say?

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LEVINE: The bait?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, I don't know. What you fish with, you know?

LEVINE: The hooks?

CONSIDINE: The hook, yeah. And I just enjoyed it, to be with him. And we'd get quite a bit of trout, get home there and cook it, and have a good—I enjoyed it. The only fish I like!

LEVINE: Would your grandmother cook it?

CONSIDINE: Oh yes! She was a good cook. She cooked it; oh, she always cooked it!

LEVINE: What was she like? What was your grandmother's personality?

CONSIDINE: She was very nice. My grandmother was very nice. I always remembered her. She was always well-dressed and very nice.

LEVINE: And how did she treat you?

CONSIDINE: She treated me very good, and my uncles treated me good, too. I was well-treated, always. And then I came home, and I was well-treated at home, too. I was away from home. When I came home, my uncle got married, and then I came home after that.

LEVINE: Your Uncle Morris got married?

CONSIDINE: My Uncle Morris got married. And Uncle John got married, too. And they both left, and so I came home then. It was different for a while, but I was very happy. My father always—I was happy to be home, have a mother and father. So I had two families!

LEVINE: Yes! Now, did you have certain chores that you had to do?

CONSIDINE: Did I what?

LEVINE: Have certain chores?

CONSIDINE: Oh, yes. Not much [laughs]. I never worked too hard! Maybe that's why I lived so long [laughs]!

LEVINE: So when did—did you go to school when you lived with your grandmother?

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CONSIDINE: Yes, I went to school at my grandmother's place. I went to school there.

LEVINE: Could you describe the school? What was the school like? How did you get to school?

CONSIDINE: I walked to school. I was the first one there; I was always on time [laughs].

LEVINE: Did you like school?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, I did; I liked school. I always did like school. I had a teacher, and a man and a woman taught. They were both—I think they were both single at the time. I think—I don't know if they got married after or not. But I had single teachers, both very nice. And his name was McGuin, that teacher. I don't never remember the woman's name. I remember—

LEVINE: What was his name?

CONSIDINE: His name was McGuin, M-C-G-U-I-N, McGuin. And then I came home and went to the other school. I was eleven years old when I came back.

LEVINE: How many children were there in the school?

CONSIDINE: Oh, I would guess there would be about, maybe a hundred.

LEVINE: And in your class?

CONSIDINE: Different class. Maybe not that many. Maybe about, well, there might be about seventy, maybe, or so. I'm not sure how many students, how many children were there.

LEVINE: And were they boys and girls?

CONSIDINE: Boys and girls, yeah.

LEVINE: In the same classes?

CONSIDINE: In the same--boys and girls in the same class, but they had different classes, you know, like here: first, second. We never went to school we were about five or six years old. Not like here; they don't go to school that early. They didn't at that time, anyway.

LEVINE: So you had two teachers, so each teacher had several classes?

CONSIDINE: Yes. Different classes, that's right. The lower classes—the woman taught the lower classes, and the man taught the higher classes. Still, I thought of the man! I remember the man's name. And the teacher that I had there, the woman was the one that really—I forgot her name.

LEVINE: And then you switched to the other school?

CONSIDINE: I switched to the other school.

LEVINE: Was that the same, or was it different from the first one?

CONSIDINE: No, it was the same. It was the same school, [unclear] school, and it had two—I think two sections in that school. The other one was just one school, one section, like, you know. There was no division, dividing line. But the other one had two sections. And it was about the same distance that I had to walk to go to that school, too.

LEVINE: And how about religion? Was your family religious?

CONSIDINE: Yes, they were all pretty religious. Well, you know, average.

LEVINE: Did you celebrate certain religious holidays?

CONSIDINE: Did I what?

LEVINE: Did you celebrate certain holidays that were religious?

CONSIDINE: Oh, yes, Christmas and Easter, and different holidays that came along during the year. Oh yes, there were—we were all religious as far as that goes.

LEVINE: Do you remember any of those holidays, what you did in Ireland, when you were a little girl, to celebrate?

CONSIDINE: Well, Christmas was always good. I enjoyed Christmas when I was at home, and Easter, too. And different holidays, holy days. Like after Christmas, the day after Christmas, we had Saint Steven's Day. We had a good time. They had little parties and everything after that, you know. Not too much about the parties. My grandmother was always good to me, and my mother and father couldn't be better. My father was excellent. He went to see me every time, all the time. He went to see me while I was in, you know, while I was there. He'd always come; my mother couldn't come because there was other children. But it was a distance away, about ten miles away from where I was born. And so

he used to come and see me every once in a while, to know that I was okay.

LEVINE: How did he get there?

CONSIDINE: What dear?

LEVINE: How did he get to your grandmother's?

CONSIDINE: Oh, he'd take the cart, you know, the pony and cart, went together.

LEVINE: A pony and cart?

CONSIDINE: Yes. Unless you have to walk. But he came by car. But when I went—when I came home, and when I came back home after being with my grandmother, every, when I was off vacation, I always went back there for the vacation. That's where I spent my vacations when I was away from school in the summer time. I went back there. So it was [unclear] with them.

LEVINE: What did you call your grandmother?

CONSIDINE: What?

LEVINE: What did you call your grandmother?

CONSIDINE: But did he do?

LEVINE: What did you call her?

CONSIDINE: I called her Aunt. I didn't call her Grandma. I called her Auntie. Auntie. I didn't call her [unclear] [laughs].

LEVINE: And when you'd go back to see her in the summer time, what would you do together? What kinds of things would you do?

CONSIDINE: Oh, we would—well, we would—the people next door, the women next door, the young women and all the people, and then there were some next door to this, there was other children there. So I used to get in with the other children from the neighborhood there, when I went back. When I was there, I didn't mix in so much with them, but when I went back and they all came to see me. So they all came to the house, and we had a good time.

LEVINE: What would you do for fun, with your friends like that? What kinds of things would you do?

CONSIDINE: Well, I don't think we did too very much. But afterwards we'd have little parties at the house. We'd all come together and have a little party at the house. The different ones that I knew came to see me. We didn't do too much. But I always liked to be there. Go fishing? I'd also go fishing.

LEVINE: Oh, you went fishing with them?

CONSIDINE: The fishing was the [unclear]. The fishing was important. I liked it.

LEVINE: And did you have music and dancing at all?

CONSIDINE: Oh yes, but that was later on. When I got to be a teenager, I used to go back there, and then we had parties. Then they had music there. They had these—

LEVINE: Accordion?

CONSIDINE: Yeah. And we—dancing, and all that, at my grandmother's. They'd all come in, all the—the ones that I went to school with were growing up then. They were all teenagers, and they all came. So we had a good time then. But when I first went back it was—it was a little quiet, because you know. When I grew up to be twelve or fourteen, then we had a good time.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How long did you stay in school? What age did you stay in school?

CONSIDINE: Well, I stayed in school—you don't stay too long, you have to go to another school. I stayed, I think was it fourteen or fifteen? We don't really know whether it was fifteen. I think it was fifteen. But I was having a nice grade, you know, it was nice. Like we took all this, geometry, and all this kind of stuff, you know, yeah.

LEVINE: And then what did you do after you stopped going to school?

CONSIDINE: Well then I took up dressmaking.

LEVINE: Oh, where did you study that?

CONSIDINE: I studied that in another town, in Kilrush, in another town, I studied dressmaking. And I did dressmaking at home, like after I learned how to do it, I'd been at home for a while. But then, I couldn't—couldn't make any money on it, so that was it!

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- LEVINE: Well now, did you go—how did you learn it? Who did you--?
- CONSIDINE: I went to this woman. She was a dressmaker and made clothes for—different clothes, dresses and suits and all that stuff. All good dressmaking. I went there, and then I got a room from somebody in the town, and stayed there. It was about maybe twenty miles, no, fifteen miles away. And so I had to stay there. I was about sixteen when I went there, fifteen or—about sixteen, I think, when I went there. And I stayed there about a year or two. And then the other years I stayed home and was doing all this sewing, and I didn't have anything when I was finished! [Laughs]
- LEVINE: [Laughs] Did you like sewing?
- CONSIDINE: Oh yes, I always like sewing. I still like sewing, you know, but not now, I can't sew, you know. My hand doesn't work the way it used to. But I did like sewing.
- LEVINE: Did you make your own clothing?
- CONSIDINE: Yes. That's why I'm here, because [laughs] if I didn't make my own clothes, I wouldn't have anything left by the time that you pay your board and everything else!
- LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember the kinds--?
- CONSIDINE: This is going to be funny! [Laughs]
- LEVINE: Do you remember the kinds of clothes that you wore, and that your friends wore, when you were that age?
- CONSIDINE: Oh yeah, you wear suits. I always wore suits. I always liked suits. I like tailored clothes.
- LEVINE: You mean you could make a suit? You could make a jacket and everything?
- CONSIDINE: Yes, yes, I used to, yeah. I made suits. I never made [unclear] coat, but I made suits all the time.
- LEVINE: Okay.
- CONSIDINE: Not supposed to touch!
- LEVINE: That's right [laughs]! So, let's see. If you were to name your sisters again—

CONSIDINE: Huh?

LEVINE: Your sisters: Mary, Margaret—

CONSIDINE: Hannah, Mary, Margaret, and Katherine. And I lived with Katherine before I came here. Katherine was a widow, and I went and lived—that's where I lived before I came here, when I was retired, until I came—

LEVINE: Oh, before you came here to Warwick?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, before I came here.

LEVINE: Okay, well, but back in Ireland, what do you remember about Hannah when you were a girl growing up in Ireland?

CONSIDINE: Well, Hannah was the next one to me, but she was in—Hannah was okay. And she got the job, she was in a—she was working in a—what would you call it? We used to call it a—well, I guess you'd call it a dry goods store. And she used to work in dry goods store. She was all right, and she, she was away from home because she lived where she worked, in the store, like. He sold different things; he sold—I forget just what he sold. Shoes, and clothes, different kinds of clothes. And that's where she worked, and she lived there. You know, they give you your eats, and so much money. But she got married over there.

LEVINE: Now, was this at a great distance from where your home was?

CONSIDINE: Oh, about ten or fifteen miles, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was that usual, that someone would take a job in a store, and then live there?

CONSIDINE: No, but he had—this man, he had—anybody that worked for him lived there, like. That was unusual. But he had, like, a woman that cooked for him. He was—I imagine he was a widower. And he—the people cooked for him, you know.

LEVINE: And that person lived there?

CONSIDINE: And those people that lived there, too.

LEVINE: I see. And how about Mary? What do you remember about Mary in Ireland?

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CONSIDINE: Well, I don't remember too much about her. But when she grew up, she took nursing, and she went to England. She went to be a nurse before she came out here.

LEVINE: I see. And how about Margaret?

CONSIDINE: Margaret stayed home. She stayed home with my mother, and my brother. And they just passed away about—one passed away in October, and the other one in November, this year. Both of them died. So, I'm the last one left. I'm the only one left of the family.

LEVINE: Oh. So your brother and your sister stayed living in the homestead?

CONSIDINE: They stayed in the house with my mother until my mother passed away. Then my sister got married and my brother got married, and they switched. Not far away, just on the same district, you know, on the same place.

LEVINE: And what did your father do when you were a little girl?

CONSIDINE: A farmer. My father was a farmer.

LEVINE: And he was raising livestock, too?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, cattle, you know, cows and calves. And we had even everything that could be, you know, livestock. And a lot of vegetables, wheat and oats and grain, different grain. Big farm—not a big farm, a small farm, but we had a lot of stuff there. Potatoes, plenty.

LEVINE: Did your father travel with the farm goods to a market somewhere?

CONSIDINE: Yeah. He used to go to the market. They used to sell cattle, and all that. Used to go—they had what they called fairs in the town, and they went to that, to sell the things.

LEVINE: Did you ever go?

CONSIDINE: Butter, they had butter and everything. They had—[unclear] farm. I didn't like the farm.

LEVINE: How come?

CONSIDINE: Oh, too much! Too much work! [Laughs]

LEVINE: Were you interested in clothes? Did you like clothes? Was that what you--?

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CONSIDINE: Oh yes, I liked clothes. I always liked clothes, yeah. It was different, it was different in those days, years ago, you know?

LEVINE: What was different about it? What made it different?

CONSIDINE: Well, I mean, it wasn't as modern as it is today. Everything was, you know, different.

LEVINE: What do you remember about your mother?

CONSIDINE: Oh, my mother was a very good worker, and she was very good to us, and very good worker. She was [laughs], she was a better worker than I was! Always, always good, you know, always working, and kept everything going. She was very good, both my mother and father. No complaints about anybody, sisters or anybody, brother, or nobody. No complaints!

LEVINE: What was your mother's first name?

CONSIDINE: My mother's name?

LEVINE: First name.

CONSIDINE: Mary.

LEVINE: Mary, uh-huh.

CONSIDINE: Mary, uh-huh, and my father's was Patrick, yeah.

LEVINE: So, you were—you stopped working as a dressmaker?

CONSIDINE: Yes.

LEVINE: And then what did you do between the time you stopped doing the dressmaking, until you left for the United States?

CONSIDINE: Well, I stayed doing that until I left there, you know, until I left there. I didn't stop, because otherwise I'd have to do some other work [laughs].

LEVINE: [Laughs] Well now, when you were dressmaking, would people come, make an order that they wanted a certain kind of--?

CONSIDINE: No, they just came. A lot of people came, and they had something to make, you know, something. They didn't—I didn't get too much, you know, of any—if they had something to make, they'd always go to

somebody like—I just started, so you see, they'd give me what [laughs]—I can't explain this, but it didn't work too much. It didn't work! It didn't work! [Laughs] I might as well say!

LEVINE: [Laughs] I see. But did you make clothes for yourself and other family members?

CONSIDINE: Oh yes, I did. I made clothes for myself and for the family. And I made them all here, too.

LEVINE: Okay. When did you think about coming to the United States?

CONSIDINE: Well, I made up my mind pretty fast, because there was nothing much to do there, and if you stayed there, I'm sure you had to be on a farm. That didn't appeal to me. So I decided a lot of my friends were coming here, so I decided maybe I would take a chance, and come, too. I asked somebody how it would be here, how things were here. He was home on vacation. So he told me, "Well, it's okay," he says. "But you have to make up your mind. You've got to work." So I said, okay, sounds okay. So I figured I had to work, but I wouldn't have no farm! I would have something, so I came here, and I got a job.

LEVINE: When you decided to leave, were you going by yourself?

CONSIDINE: By myself, here?

LEVINE: Yeah.

CONSIDINE: Oh, yes! I came by myself.

LEVINE: So when you left your house, where did you go? Tell me the whole trip. You left your mother and father?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, I left my mother and father, and I had to take a train to the next town, where I got a train that came—I was in Clare, and we had to go to Cork. We had to go to Queenstown; they call it Cork now. So we had to go there; took a couple of hours to go there. And I had to stay there for four days before I could go on the boat. I don't know, the boat wasn't in, or something to that effect. But I had to stay in Cork for four days. Then we had to set sail for out here.

LEVINE: Okay, do you remember what you packed to take with you?

CONSIDINE: Well, I didn't pack very much, I'm sure, because I had just a small suitcase. And I suppose I took underwear and blouses or whatever, and whatever I had on. I remember I had a coat. You know, a light

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coat I had on. I had a light plaid coat on, and I suppose some skirts, I don't know. I don't remember the clothes that I was wearing, but the coat, that's about all.

LEVINE: Did you make your clothing that you had with you when you came?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, I had this coat with me. And it was a heavy coat. It was in August, and so it wasn't too cold, you know, at this time. And that's about all I had with me, and underwear and stockings, and whatever. A small suitcase.

LEVINE: And do you remember saying goodbye to your family and friends?

CONSIDINE: [Unclear] Oh yes, I used to write to them regular for a while, but then like everything else—

LEVINE: But do you remember, when you were leaving, do you remember saying goodbye?

CONSIDINE: I do.

LEVINE: What was that like?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, it was sad. Very sad. Never could go back again.

LEVINE: And your friends?

CONSIDINE: I was very homesick. Yeah, my friends were with me. There was nine of us. But alas, when I landed in New York, they all went to different places: Philadelphia, Boston, and all over.

LEVINE: So there were nine of you about your age? There were nine of you who left at the same time from Queenstown?

CONSIDINE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Nine of you, that you knew?

CONSIDINE: That I knew. There was nine of us that I knew. But when we got on board, I got sick. So I never saw them after that. I never saw them, because the steward had to—it was an English boat, and the steward, he was English. And he always brought me down tea, or whatever I wanted. He was very good to me, so I had no complaints about him! But I was sick the whole way! Oh, I was sick. I never saw the—as a matter of fact, I never saw them, because they went on. They all left the boat, and went, and everybody to meet them or put them on

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different places to go wherever they were going. I was the only one that was left in New York, and no one to meet me!

END OF SIDE A
BEGIN SIDE B

- LEVINE: Now, the name of the ship?
- CONSIDINE: The Baltic.
- LEVINE: And maybe you could describe yourself. You were twenty-one years old?
- CONSIDINE: Well, I was twenty-one years, and I would say I was about a hundred and forty-five or fifty pounds. I was—and I was a little taller than today! [Laughs] I lost about five inches!
- LEVINE: And how would you describe yourself? What kind of personality do you think you had as a twenty-one--?
- CONSIDINE: Well, I didn't change very much, to tell you the truth. I was always about the same. No change! [Laughs] Not for good or bad; that was it!
- LEVINE: Well do you remember when the Baltic came into the New York harbor?
- CONSIDINE: I remember all the way—yes, I remember when it did come in, came into whatever it come into. But I remember it was after the First World War, and the coffins were lined up where I came to, when I came here, from the First World War.
- LEVINE: Where were they lined up?
- CONSIDINE: Oh, somewhere along the line where I was coming in. I don't know where it was, but it was someplace there. I can remember seeing those coffins when I came here. I don't know just where.
- LEVINE: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?
- CONSIDINE: Yes, I guess that was pointed out, but I thought that—see, I was a little bit upset, and I didn't get upset all together until I found out that there was no one to meet me.
- LEVINE: Who did you think was going to meet you? Who did you expect?

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CONSIDINE: Well, I expected the woman that sent for me, my father's cousin. She sent for me.

LEVINE: Oh, did you know her?

CONSIDINE: No, I didn't. I never met her, but she was out here some years. She was here quite a few years at the time. And I wrote to her. She's the one sent me the passage to come here. And she sent me a passage for second class, to come second class. And I changed it to steerage, to be with my friends. That's why I had no one to meet me when I came here.

LEVINE: Oh!

CONSIDINE: That was the story!

LEVINE: So she thought you were going to get off the ship at Battery Park?

CONSIDINE: No, she worked in the hotel, and then the man from the hotel, this what do they call them? They go down to meet the boats when they come in—used to in those days, go down to meet the boats when they came in from Europe, and take them to the different hotels. There'd be different ones waiting, but they'd have to take them to their hotel. So they had a plan that he would look up the cabins and see where I was coming. So when he saw that there was no one second class my name, they decided I didn't come. So she didn't show up!

LEVINE: Oh!

CONSIDINE: Oh, that was my trouble!

LEVINE: So then you were ferried out to Ellis Island?

CONSIDINE: Yes, I had to go to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: And what was your impression of Ellis Island?

CONSIDINE: Well, I can't remember too much about Ellis Island, only that there was a lot of dark furniture there. And it looked to me like a place where you'd be waiting for a train to come in. That was what it looked to me; I don't know whether it was like that or not. But that's what I think about, because I had so much trouble, thinking of going back, being sent back, without anybody coming to meet me, that I couldn't think too much what was going on when I got here. But I remember a lot of brown furniture, and it looked like a place where you'd wait for a train or something to come in. Was it anything like that?

- LEVINE: Yes.
- CONSIDINE: It was?
- LEVINE: It looks like a big train station, in a way, with benches.
- CONSIDINE: Yeah, it was benches, and then, then of course they asked me who was going to come to me. But in the mean time, what happened? When I found out there was no one to meet me--some one came along and told me there was no one to meet me. I don't know who that was. So [laughs] the steward came along, that used to wait on me. And I was—he was the only one I confided in. I think, I knew this fellow. So I said, "You know, nobody is to meet me." I said, "Would you do me a favor and mail a letter for me?" I had letters; I had that with me. So I wrote a letter to my cousin. She was on Forty-Second Street, Grand Central Station. And I asked him—so I asked him if he would mail the letter. So he said he would. So off he went. But instead of mailing the letter, he went right to her, to the hotel and gave it to her, because the letter would take a couple of days. And I guess he knew that, so he went to the hotel. So it was about eight o'clock at night when they picked me up at Ellis Island.
- LEVINE: Can you remember what you were thinking, first when you were on the Baltic and you were seasick, and you felt terrible, and then when you got to Ellis Island and you found--?
- CONSIDINE: I was still sick, even when I got here, you know. I couldn't—I don't think they gave me anything in Ellis Island, because I guess I wouldn't eat anything, I was so sick! Because I remember the first cup of tea I got was in the Bronx! [Laughs] Up in the Bronx was the first cup of tea!
- LEVINE: Well, what were you thinking about?
- CONSIDINE: I was thinking—well, I was thinking what's going to happen to me? Whether I'm going to go back again or not, you know? It's a funny feeling. You've got to be there to find out.
- LEVINE: And did you get examinations at Ellis Island? Physical examinations?
- CONSIDINE: Oh yes, they examined! Examinations, you got plenty! You got them before you got on the boat, and before off the boat, and all the things. They didn't miss a thing! [Laughs]
- LEVINE: Do you remember anything particular about your particular examination?

CONSIDINE: About what?

LEVINE: Do you remember anything in particular about the examinations? I mean, you weren't feeling well, to begin with.

CONSIDINE: No. I remember that different people came along and asked me, you know, who was going to meet me. And I said, "Nobody come." I said—and I never realized that [unclear] steerage, see. I never realized that, and that was the reason. And I was thinking, "Why didn't they come?" Everybody came and took the other people away, and why didn't they come? And I—well, you know, it's, it's something to be all alone. I never was away from home before! And you're waiting there for someone to come, and nobody come. So then they must have told me that there wasn't anybody coming, when I wrote that letter, you know, and gave it to him. And he—so eight o'clock at night they came in and told me. But they said they're not going to—they told me that I couldn't see her; they had to be sure that I had the right person. So they asked me questions, but she answered them okay.

LEVINE: So this was a person that you had never met?

CONSIDINE: What?

LEVINE: You had never met your father's cousin before?

CONSIDINE: No, no.

LEVINE: You didn't know her?

CONSIDINE: No.

LEVINE: The one who came for you?

CONSIDINE: Yeah. Well, you mean—what do you mean?

LEVINE: I mean, this was your father's cousin?

CONSIDINE: Yes.

LEVINE: And she came for you?

CONSIDINE: She came for me. She's the one that sent for me, and she came for me. But, she didn't know that I was on that steerage. She thought that I was coming second class, so when the man went down from the hotel, and looked up all the passengers on second class and I wasn't on that,

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they decided that I didn't come. And so she decided she's not—so she didn't bother, until she got the letter. I don't know what time the letter came, but it was eight o'clock at night. She had to get someone to take her down there, because she was never in Ellis Island before, I guess. And so she had to get someone to take her down there, so somebody came along with her. I don't remember who that was. And they took me out to the Bronx. That's where I landed.

LEVINE: Do you remember when she found you, when you met her at Ellis Island?

CONSIDINE: Oh yes, she—she gave me a good scolding.

LEVINE: What did she say?

CONSIDINE: That was her! She told me I had no business—you know, she yelled at me. And that made me worse! I was really homesick then, sorry I left. So, but to think that I'm here, [unclear]. They're going to have a good laugh at this! I can see that [laughs].

LEVINE: [Laughs] So she picked you up. What was her name?

CONSIDINE: Susan Brown.

LEVINE: Susan Brown.

CONSIDINE: Susan Brown, God bless her! [Unclear]

LEVINE: Yeah, and she took you to the Bronx.

CONSIDINE: She took me out here. See, her and her sister and my uncle, between them, none of them had too much money, because you know, you didn't get much money in those days. So the three of them—well, the other two I gave up the money right away when I got it, but Susan, she didn't take it. So, but I did manage to make it up to her anyhow. They're all dead, gone now.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, so where did you go in the Bronx? Do you know where you went?

CONSIDINE: Three forty East 137th Street, in the Bronx. That part of the Bronx, now, it was [unclear]. And they were very nice.

LEVINE: Did you stay there for a while?

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CONSIDINE: I stayed there two weeks, and then I went back into the hotel with my cousin where she worked, and I got a job there sewing.

LEVINE: On Forty-Second Street? Forty-Second Street?

CONSIDINE: Forty-Second Street, the Belmont Hotel. It's gone, too, for years.

LEVINE: So what were you sewing? What did you sew?

CONSIDINE: In the linen room. I was in the linen room where that sheets and all that stuff, you know, that they made an mended, and did all manners of things. And you had to, you know, answer this telephone, and things like that. And there was four of us there, four sewing, four machines, sewing, on the nineteenth floor, on the Belmont Hotel.

LEVINE: What was your first night like, when you were in the Bronx, when you had come from Ellis Island?

CONSIDINE: To the Bronx?

LEVINE: Yeah, to the Bronx. What was that first night like for you, when you got to the Bronx?

CONSIDINE: Well God bless us! It looked so strange to me! I can't [laughs], I can't believe it!

LEVINE: What was so strange about it?

CONSIDINE: Well, I don't know, I can't explain it. There were so many people! You know, in those days there was a lot of apartments, one on top of the other. A lot of apartments that couldn't see. You had to go up all these stairs, and all, maybe on the third, second or third floor, and apartments on both sides. So many people! I couldn't—after leaving a place that was just plain farm, I got into this place! And there were so many apartments, and so small! [Laughs] You went into a house, and so many rooms, and so many—oh, God! It was strange! But, one of those things.

LEVINE: I bet that cup of tea tasted good.

CONSIDINE: Oh, yes! She made me a cup of tea, and the best I ever drank, yeah! [Laughs] It did the trick! It was okay.

LEVINE: And did you like her right away?

CONSIDINE: Well, I think one thing, I'll be dead when they hear this [laughs]!

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LEVINE: When they hear this tape! So did you get along with your aunt then, after you arrived and she scolded you?

CONSIDINE: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: But then you got along?

CONSIDINE: Well of course, I had to, because I—well, I just went along. You know, I didn't—never, I never was much for arguing. I just—up to today, never. No arguments. No arguments. I don't want. So if whatever she said, went, until I left there, until I left there, you know. And while I was there with her, everything was okay. Once in a while I didn't like it, but I had to suffer!

LEVINE: Then did you live in the hotel where you worked?

CONSIDINE: Yes, I lived in the hotel. At that time, you got, you got your room, and to eat. And you got thirty-five dollars a month. Thirty-five dollars a month. And of course, the eats were not too good, because, well. So, there was a stove on the nineteenth floor, and we used to buy our own stuff, and do a little cooking up there at night, after we were through.

LEVINE: How many people were living there?

CONSIDINE: In the hotel?

LEVINE: Who worked with you?

CONSIDINE: Oh, the [unclear] that worked with me, there was about four or five of us worked. I think four and myself, and then there was the woman, she was over us, like. But she lived there, too. And it was all right; it wasn't bad.

LEVINE: Do you remember when you ventured out into New York City, either by yourself or with your friends?

CONSIDINE: I lived at the hotel, which was the Belmont on Forty-Second Street, and I used to go to that little, the church there—I forgot the church's name now. It was on Forty-Third Street. It was on the next street. It was a church upstairs. I can't think of that. Now I can't think of that church. I used to know that; I can't think of it. And we used to go—then the next thing after we [unclear]. We're all here; we were all greenhorns, the ones there.

LEVINE: Did people call you that?

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CONSIDINE: Yeah, yeah! Yes, they called us greenhorns, sure! And so, we'd go to Coney Island on the weekends, that's all together. We'd go on the street, come home late, all together, you know? Nobody bothered you, you know. And we wouldn't do it today! [Laughs]

LEVINE: How did you feel about being called a greenhorn?

CONSIDINE: About what?

LEVINE: How did you feel about being called a greenhorn?

CONSIDINE: Oh, I didn't mind it. And you know, in Ireland, they called them then, the different counties, they had a different name for each one that comes from there, like they called. Now we were called the biddy ellies. And my uncle used to call me that; that I didn't like. But after that, after a while I got wise. I got wise to it, you know? I thought he was calling me biddy elly.

LEVINE: What does that mean, biddy elly?

CONSIDINE: Yeah. Just a name for, and like in Kerryonins, that's from Kerry, and all that. Different names, they called them. But that they used to call them, biddy elly. So I didn't know what it meant, you know, until afterwards I found out what it meant. But in the beginning I didn't like that. But the greenhorn, I didn't—that didn't bother me.

LEVINE: The other people that worked with you, that you used to go to Coney Island with?

CONSIDINE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Were a lot of them from Ireland as well?

CONSIDINE: They were all from Ireland. They were all—we were all about the same age, you know, twenties, you know, each one. And we used to all go together down there, five or six of us. One was a real tomboy; she used to go on everything there. Her name was Kearn, her name was Mary Kearn, and she'd get dressed up in some kind of a [unclear] all in a way. She'd go on all the different things. We'd have to wait for her to come back! [Laughs] But we weren't as bad as she was; she was bad! And we'd come home late at night, and nobody bothered us. But we all came to the same place; we all had rooms in the same place. We were together.

LEVINE: And how long did you stay there, at that hotel?

CONSIDINE: I stayed there until about four years. I got sick; I got sick after four years, and I got—had a couple of operations, and so I left there, the hotel. But I went back to the hotels later on anyway. But at that time, I left. I was sick; I had to leave there. I had—at first I had appendix, and it didn't work out too good, so I had another operation after.

LEVINE: And where were you staying when you were ill?

CONSIDINE: When I was sick? Well, I stayed with these friends in the Bronx, too, but they weren't the people I lived—they were other people. They were cousins—they were cousins—they were nothing to me. They were cousins, but they were very nice people. They were Susan's cousins that I went. And I went there when I was sick, and for a while after. I had it pretty tough for a while there, I was sick.

LEVINE: Did you ever wish that you had not left Ireland?

CONSIDINE: Did I ever--?

LEVINE: Wish that you hadn't left Ireland?

CONSIDINE: Well, no! No, I figured there was no use in staying there, because it isn't what I wanted. And I love this country! Oh, I love, I love, I love New York. I love the country! I love New York, and I love both. Both, was one the same as the other. I love Ireland just as much, and here just as much. No difference. I was only here five years when I had my citizen papers. I voted for Al Smith in 1928! I had my citizen papers then, [unclear].

LEVINE: Were you proud of that, of getting your papers?

CONSIDINE: Oh, delighted! Delighted to get them. I figured I was here; that's where I should be. And that was it. But still, I love Ireland. You have to love where you're born! You wouldn't be right if you didn't.

LEVINE: When you think of yourself as Irish and as American, how do you think about, like—how do you think about like what part of you is Irish and what part's American? How do you think about that, being both?

CONSIDINE: Well, I think, you know, I'm here longer than I was in Ireland. But I was born in Ireland, so that makes up for it. I was born there, and raised there in the beginning; that makes up for it. And here, the other part, and that makes up for that part. So it's equal. I like them both the same.

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LEVINE: What other things to do you remember? Like you said you voted for Al Smith? Do you remember any other--?

CONSIDINE: Oh yes, I remember, when I voted here. This was another thing that—when they voted here in this country, and instead of—there was no, when I came here, there was no radio, no TV, here, when I came here. So they had—when we used to go to the Bronx to find out who won, you know. Especially the presidential election, that first time when I was here, when Al Smith went. There was a great big board on whatever it was, someplace in the Bronx. I don't know where, but tell you how—instead of seeing it on the TV like you do now, [laughs] he'd get out on this board, and keep looking up! [Laughs] What a change!

LEVINE: Do you remember any other big changes that occurred in your lifetime?

CONSIDINE: Oh well, I remember the first, the first, let me see. The first radio that I saw. It was made by one of the boys that worked with me in the hotel. Believe it or not, he made the first—a little bit of a radio. Oh, just about that—

LEVINE: Not even a foot.

CONSIDINE: Just about that size. And everybody was in the room! It was packed! [Laughs] To hear the first sound of this radio! Can you imagine? In 1924 that was, believe it or not.!

LEVINE: Do you remember what you heard, what came over the radio?

CONSIDINE: Remember what?

LEVINE: Do you remember what came on over the radio when you were all listening?

CONSIDINE: Oh no, I don't. I imagine it was music or something like that that came along. I didn't, I didn't pay too much attention, because believe me, that little radio was so small, and there was so many, you couldn't see it! [Laughs] It was about the size of that box there, that has the Kleenex.

LEVINE: The Kleenex box?

CONSIDINE: Yes, it was about the size of that that the radio was, a small little thing. But his name was Tommy Kelleher, the fellow that made up that little radio. He was, he was clever. He worked in the—he worked in the electric department, you know, the electricity, or whatever. They had electricity! They had electricity in the hotel, but where I stayed, where in the apartments—

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LEVINE: In the Bronx.

CONSIDINE: They had gas. They had gas at that time; they didn't have electricity.

LEVINE: How about water? Did they have like a regular bathroom, and running water, and all that?

CONSIDINE: I don't know. They had—well, where I stayed, they had, it was like a—I forget. I know they had a coal stove. It was made with coal, instead of electricity, it was coal, that stove, the coal stove. But they baked very good; she used to make very good bread, you know, regular, nice bread with raisins and things, nice. Raisin bread, she used to make. And it was very good, in that coal stove. We used to go there once a week. That was my—that was Susan's cousin. I didn't have anybody; I was the first one here. Thank God, you know, and then my sisters came out, and then they got families, and no, no [unclear] they were calling me last night until all hours of last night, from all parts! Some of them, I couldn't understand who they were [laughs]!

LEVINE: So did you help your sisters come over? Did you help your sisters come over to this country?

CONSIDINE: I did; I did. I helped Katherine, and I didn't have too much [unclear] for her. And then the first thing I made them do is take out insurance! Because if they were [unclear], because I didn't have any money [unclear]! [Laughs] I can see. You know, they got to go down from the hotel, and [laughs]—this is going to be the funniest one!

LEVINE: Now, did you ever go to Ellis Island to meet any of your sisters?

CONSIDINE: Did I ever what?

LEVINE: Did you meet your sisters at Ellis Island when they came? When you sent for your sisters, and they came to this country?

CONSIDINE: Oh, when they came, I got them.

LEVINE: Did you go to Ellis Island?

CONSIDINE: No, no, they came right off the boat. No, because I went and got them. You know, I just—it's a funny thing, I don't remember either one of them, how they came. But I remember that I used to help carry their suitcase for them. You know, I guess—I'm funny. When I get excited I forget what's going on, and I suppose I got so excited at seeing them that I forget. I don't even remember the boats, or anything, that they

came on. Because, see, with myself I had nothing to think about, only myself. But when I saw them after so many—I was here about, I must have been here about—I had to be here a good while before I was able to send for her. I was here—I think she came in 1926. So I was here from 1921; I was here five years before I sent for her.

LEVINE: Who was the first one?

CONSIDINE: Then I sent for her, and she came to where I was living. She came where I was living. I was living in Far Rockaway, and she came there. And then, my sister Mary, the one that—this was sister Katherine. Then sister Mary, she was nursing; she took up nursing in England. And then she wrote to me and asked me. She didn't like it there, and she said she wished she was here. So she kind of used to be writing to me. So I said to Katherine if she had any money [laughs] to help me out, it's been so hard. So I sent for her. So I got the two of them here, and they called me—now I was the one that started the whole thing. And they had their families, and they're spread all over, all over the country. So I was, as I say, I was last night here until eight o'clock, eight-thirty last night, the last one called.

LEVINE: That's wonderful! Did you feel better when your sisters came over? Did you feel--?

CONSIDINE: Oh, well, I didn't see too much of them, because they had, you know, they were both working. Katherine got working in housework, you know, and she used to live there. And then my sister Mary got into the children's—where they took care of orphans or something. And she used to live there, too. So I didn't, just met them, you know? That's it. And I didn't bother them. I didn't take them under my wing; I let them work their own way through, because I had to do the same thing, you know. So they didn't have no [unclear] like I had. I had supervision.

LEVINE: Did you ever belong to a social club, or anything like that?

CONSIDINE: No, nothing like that, no. Never went out too much, because [laughs] no, no, I never. He always used to say, "Why do you have to stay in the house all the time? You'll never get nowhere if you stay in the house all the time."

LEVINE: Who said that?

CONSIDINE: Oh, someone used to come to the house there. Some of the friends where I lived used to say that.

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- LEVINE: Well when you look back on your life, what makes you feel satisfied? What do you feel proud of, or satisfied about?
- CONSIDINE: Well, I'm satisfied that I came here, one thing. I am satisfied, because I know that if I was over there—well, there was many times I wasn't happy here. But all together, I'm happy that I came here, that I came to the United States.
- LEVINE: And how is this time in your life? How is your old age? How is this time in your life?
- CONSIDINE: My old age?
- LEVINE: Yeah.
- CONSIDINE: Okay, very good. Couldn't be better! No complaints, no complaints about it. Like through sickness and everything, but that comes in between. I have nothing to say about it.
- LEVINE: Okay, is there anything else you can think of that you'd like to say?
- CONSIDINE: Oh God help us! No, you talked about everything!
- LEVINE: [Laughs] Well, I think we'll close here. This has been a real pleasure! I'm so happy that I had the chance to meet you and talk with you.
- CONSIDINE: [Laughs] It was nice meeting you, too, very nice meeting you!
- LEVINE: Thank you. Okay, I'm going to sign off here. I've been speaking with Bridget Considine, who came in 1921 through Ellis Island when she was twenty-one years of age. And today she is ninety-six years of age, as of one day.
- CONSIDINE: Right!
- LEVINE: You turned ninety-six yesterday! And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm signing off.

END OF INTERVIEW