

EI-767

JULIA CARMODY

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INTERVIEWER: PAUL SEGRIST

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- **IRELAND: TOURMAKEADY, COUNTY MAYO**
- **THE US: PERTH AMBOY AND FORDS, NEW JERSEY**

SEGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Segrist for the National Park Service. Today is Thursday, July 18th, 1996. I'm in Fords, New Jersey, and I'm here with Julia Joyce Carmody. Mrs. Carmody came from Ireland in 1921. She arrived September 15th. She was eighteen years old at that time. Present also in the room is Mrs. Carmody's daughter, Katherine Keneavy, and the family dog, Buddy, sort of a little white dog, a little poodle, I guess, of some sort. Pekingese, you said? Maltese. Anyway, thank you for letting me come out. Can we begin, Mrs. Carmody, by you telling me your birth date?

CARMODY: My what?

SEGRIST: When were you born?

CARMODY: 1902.

SEGRIST: Month and day?

CARMODY: Third of December.

SEGRIST: December 3rd, 1902. And where in Ireland were you born?

CARMODY: [Pause] I have to say Vallenrobe, or Tourmakeady. Tourmakeady.

SEGRIST: Can you spell that? Or Katherine, can you spell it out loud for us?

KATHERINE: T-O-U-R-M-A-K-E-A-D-Y.

SEGRIST: Thank you.

KATHERINE: It's in County Mayo.

SEGRIST: Mrs. Carmody, can you tell me what you remember about that town, when you were a little girl?

CARMODY: It was surrounded by mountains, every place you look. And from out the front door was a lake. And that lake was sixteen miles long, and eight miles wide. And I was brought up in the [unclear].

SEGRIST: Do you have any stories you like to tell about the lake?

CARMODY: Well, my grandmother said that's because there used to be seals. You know what a seal looks like? Comes up on the sand at twelve o'clock at night. And she swears that years ago they were women, and they drowned, and that was their ghost that used to come around the beach [laughs], twelve o'clock at night, and cry! And I believed her! I guess she did; she must have been lying to me. I don't know, but she swore that those were women!

SEGRIST: What else do you remember about the lake?

CARMODY: And I remember Saint Patty's Day. There was two cousins. Saint Patty's Day's a big day over there. And they got in the rowboat, and they were going on the—they went on the lake, and they were going to go to the pub, the Tiberon [PH], because these are big times then. And a storm came up, and they drowned, the two of them. And after that there was a song made about them, but I don't know the song. That's all I remember about the Lake, Loch Mask. That was the name of the Lake, Loch Mask.

SEGRIST: Mask?

CARMODY: Mask, M-A-S-K.

SEGRIST: What did you do at the lake as a child?

CARMODY: Nothing. You couldn't. My grandmother used to make us go out in the field and work! And the stuff that you used for the fire in the winter, that used to grow in the mountains, I had to dig that up.

SEGRIST: What was that?

CARMODY: They call it turf, right? And you cut it, but it was wet. And it was like loafs of bread when you cut it. Then you had to dry that out. And when that got dried, we used to get the month of August away from school. Now that was no vacation! And then you had a jackass with two baskets, one on each side, and you had to go in and pick up your stuff, bring it home, and she used to put it up against the wall, dry it. And that was our winter stuff, for the winter. They called it turf. In fact, my daughter's going to bring some back when she comes. She's coming home Saturday.

SEGRIST: How did you burn the turf?

CARMODY: Well now, well years ago, she used to put a piece of wood, or something, and then light the wood, and that would light this other stuff. Now, they got stuff over there that you buy in boxes. You throw a couple of them, and set a match to it.

SEGRIST: And what did you burn the turf in?

CARMODY: Fireplace!

SEGRIST: In the fireplace?

CARMODY: Yeah. The fireplace was open, and there was what they call a hob, like a seat here, and one on this side, and one on this side. You could sit on this side, I could sit on this side, and get warm. That's what—she was there; she knows what it's all about.

SEGRIST: Did the turf smell when it was being burned?

CARMODY: No, I don't think so. Did it?

KATHERINE: A good smell.

SEGRIST: Pretend that Katherine isn't here! [Laughs]

CARMODY: To her, it would smell! To her, but not to me.

SEGRIST: Uh-huh.

CARMODY: And every night at ten o'clock, my grandmother, okay, we all had to get on our knees, she was going to say the rosary. And my brother—he was a devil! He would reach over for the poker, and would make believe he was putting it in the fire, and would try to—he was going to put it on my bare feet, to burn me. He never did, but he was making the motions, you know? And if we didn't go to church Sunday morning, she made us go on our knees and say the rosary.

SEGRIST: What were other stories you have about your grandmother?

CARMODY: She was a hard-working woman, that's what I can tell you.

SEGRIST: Can you describe what she--?

CARMODY: But she had a daughter was an old maid, and she worked out in the fields, and I used to have to go work with her. And oh, like, she was digging potatoes, I would have to pick them up. And then they used to dig a big hole in the field, and take all the dirt out, and then when the potatoes were picked, she would take them and put them in this hole she dug, and cover them over with dirt, and then on top of the dirt she used to cut sods. You know how you cut the sods? And put that over them, and then put the dirt back on, and they would come out like this.

SEGRIST: Like a roof.

CARMODY: Yeah, like this.

SEGRIST: Roof.

CARMODY: That's needed for the winter. That was our winter potatoes.

SEGRIST: Do you remember the kinds of potatoes that you grew?

CARMODY: Yeah, we used to call them champions. And you know those red potatoes you buy here? She used to have them, too, but I don't know what you call them.

SEGRIST: And how did your grandmother prepare the potatoes to eat?

CARMODY: Boil them, and oatmeal! Oh, my God, oatmeal! And buttermilk. She used to make her own butter, and she used to make us drink the

buttermilk, because it was fresh. And I hated it! My brother hated it!
[Laughs]

SEGRIST: How did your grandmother make butter?

CARMODY: She had what they call a churn, they call it. It's like a wooden tub, but it's about this wide, and it stands about this high.

SEGRIST: That's about what, ten inches around, and two and half high?

CARMODY: Yeah, and then they had a handle, like you would on a broom? And on the bottom of that there was a round piece of wood, nailed to that piece of wood. And then she used to stand there and keep going like this.

SEGRIST: Up and down.

CARMODY: Up and down, up and down, and then she would take the lid off it, and I would see her putting cold water in there. She kept doing that, and then when the butter—she knew when the butter was done. And if you came in the house, and she was doing that, and you didn't say, "God bless all here," and she didn't get enough butter out of that tub, she would blame you. You had to put the eye on it! [Laughs] Yeah.

SEGRIST: Tell me about your grandmother's personality. You said she was hard-working.

CARMODY: Hard-working woman!

SEGRIST: What were some of her other aspects of her personality?

CARMODY: She was out in the fields all the time. And some of the guys used to come and cut the hay for her, or she'd go out there, and turn the hay over. And during the First World War, she was out in the field, and she had a hook with a handle. I don't know, I guess you have them here, too. It was like this, but it had a hook on it. And she was cutting wheat, and there was a plane come over. And I says to her, "Oh, my God! The Germans are here!" She got so scared, she [laughs] cut her finger with the—it was my fault!

SEGRIST: With the blade of that—

CARMODY: She was bleeding, so we went back in the house, and I wrapped it up for her. Then somebody came in; I was telling them. He says, "Julia, that was not a German plane. That was a French plane." [Laughs] Too late now! Then I had an aunt who was very sick. And that was the same

day, I came in and I went by her bed, and I says to her, “You know, the Germans are coming!” “Let them,” she says. [Laughs] She didn’t care!

SEGRIST: Did your grandmother—what did your grandmother enjoy doing for herself? How did—

CARMODY: Knit. She’d knit socks. And after she got so many, got them made, she would go to the market and sell them. And she had a bunch of chickens, and when they would lay the eggs, she would go in the grocery store with all these eggs, and get groceries for the eggs. You know, instead of giving you money for the eggs, they would give you groceries.

SEGRIST: Where did she get the wool to knit the socks?

CARMODY: From our own sheep!

SEGRIST: How did you do that?

CARMODY: On the spinning wheel.

SEGRIST: Can you describe the process for me?

CARMODY: Had like—some guy would come in, and he’d put the sheep in the barn. And then he would, with a big, I don’t know what you call it—like a scissors, it was, but it was a big thing. And he would take all the wool off them.

SEGRIST: With the big scissors?

CARMODY: With this big thing. And then, she would make us sit there and pull it apart, and clean it. And then she had a spinning wheel, and then she had something like, like a card, something like this, with a handle, and she’d put the wool on it. It had like teeth in it. And you had to go like this, and that took all the whatever was in the wool, would take it out.

SEGRIST: You pulled the wool through the teeth? That’s how you’re gesturing.

CARMODY: Uh-huh. They used to call it cards, but I don’t know what they call them here. And then she’d put them on the spinning wheel, and she would turn the wheel, and hold onto the wool there. And that came out like thread, made wool. Like you buy a skein of wool now? That’s what it looked like.

SEGRIST: And what color was it?

CARMODY: White.

SEGRIST: Did she ever dye it?

CARMODY: No. I think once. She had something out in a field, and if you put in the pot and boiled it, and put some wool in it, the wool would turn black or red. I don't know why, but that's what she used to do.

SEGRIST: But usually it was white, what you remember?

CARMODY: All the time, white, yeah.

SEGRIST: The socks were all white.

CARMODY: And then they used to place a call—we'd call the guy Miller. I don't know what he was, but she used to take the wool to him, and he would make blankets, and she would bring the blankets back home. They were real woolen blankets.

SEGRIST: Did your grandmother have any personal habits that you remember?

CARMODY: No, no. She smoked a pipe.

SEGRIST: Tell me what you remember about that.

CARMODY: About smoking a pipe? Well, before I went to school in the morning—I had a great, great grandmother, at the same time. And every morning before I went to school, I used to have to light the pipe for her. For both of them. So they—the great grandmother, she was very nosy. We used to sit at the fireplace, my brother and I, and we used to throw stuff up the chimney. And when my grandmother would come out, come in—she was out milking the cows or something, and she'd come in, and she'd squeal on us, and tell her what we did! So, she was so nosy! So this one day she heard a noise outside, so she had to get up and go to the door and see what the kids were doing outside. Then she fall, and slipped and broke her hips. So she was in the bed one night, and my grandmother says—I got up in the morning, and she says, "I'm going to lay down for a few minutes. Will you watch her?" I says, "Yeah, I'll watch her." So I sat there alongside the bed. The first thing you know, honest to God, I can see it yet! Taking her two fingers like this, and taking her eyelids, and pulling them down like that! So my grandmother got up, and when she said, "How is she?" I says, "Don't wake her." I said, "She's asleep. Leave her alone!" So she went over and felt her, and she said, "My God, Julia, she's dead!" She had two weeks to go, she would have been a hundred years old. I can see it yet! But she must have been a very tall, tall woman when she was young, because she was tall then. But she was nosy, and everything—she used to

squeal on the kids. And that day, she couldn't mind her own business; she had to go see what the kids were doing out there, and the floor was wet. And she slipped, and that's what happened.

SEGRIST: Was your great grandmother your grandmother's mother?

CARMODY: Right.

SEGRIST: And who was your grandmother? Father or mother's mother?

CARMODY: What does he mean by that?

SEGRIST: Your grandmother that you lived with, was that your father's mother, or your mother's mother?

CARMODY: My father's mother.

SEGRIST: Father's mother. Tell me a little bit about your parents. What was your father's name?

CARMODY: Patty. Patrick.

SEGRIST: Patrick.

CARMODY: They used to call him—he had blond hair, so they called him Goldie.

SEGRIST: He had blond hair, so they called him Goldie! Tell me what you know about your father's family background?

CARMODY: I don't know much about them. He had a lot of cousins. They were all, a bunch of—that whole village, I think, were first cousins. So they must have had a big family when he was younger. I don't know anything about that.

SEGRIST: What do you remember about your father?

CARMODY: Not much. I don't know.

SEGRIST: Where was he at this time?

CARMODY: He used to spend a lot of time in England. He'd work in the fields in the summer time, and then when winter come he would go to England, and send my grandmother money, you know, from England.

SEGRIST: Did your mother and father live in the house with your grandmother?

CARMODY: No, no.

SEGRIST: No. What was your mother's name?

CARMODY: Kitty. Katherine. Named her after her.

SEGRIST: Named your daughter after her. What was her maiden name?

CARMODY: MacMullen.

SEGRIST: Can you spell that please?

CARMODY: MacMullen. How do you spell MacMullen?

SEGRIST: Katherine, can you say it out loud and spell it?

KATHERINE: M-A-C-Capital M-U-L-L-E-N.

SEGRIST: MacMullen, Capital M-A-C, Capital M-U-L-L-E-N.

CARMODY: Used to call her Kitty [unclear]. She had three sisters. One was Molly, one was Maggie Alice. What the hell was the other one's name? I forgot [laughs]. Maggie Alice, Molly—I don't remember.

SEGRIST: What do you remember about your mother when you were a child?

CARMODY: Just like any mother.

SEGRIST: Did she live in the house with you and your grandmother?

CARMODY: Oh, yeah.

SEGRIST: Yes? Do you remember what she--?

CARMODY: And she was wicked, too. If you did something out of the way, you got smacked!

SEGRIST: Do you remember a story about you doing something wrong, and being punished?

CARMODY: I got blamed for everything! Anything that went on, Julia did it! Of course, I was a [unclear]!

SEGRIST: You were a little devil! [Laughs]

CARMODY: There was a bunch of us used to walk the road every Saturday night, and we were singing. Singing all the stories. And there was an old couple lived in this house, and they got a ladder, and they put the ladder up against the house. They told me to go up it, put something in the chimney. So I did. I went up on the ladder, and I went up on the roof. And when I got up on the roof, they took the ladder away from me, and I couldn't get back down! I had to jump down. I come down; I couldn't find them. They were hiding on me. Over there, when I woman would have her baby, they would send you or me or her to stay the night there, so she could keep an eye on her baby. We used to do that, three or four girls. We were only maybe about twelve years old then, and we'd sit there. And when it was getting light outside, we'd go out, and we'd go along and open all the stable doors, let the cows out, let the horses out [laughs]. And I got blamed for it! Everything that happened, I did it!

SEGRIST: And how would you be punished?

CARMODY: Oh, they wouldn't let you out the next night. You had to stay home. No, she was very good to me. She was never much punishment. "But you're not allowed to go out tonight," she'd say to me. But the minute it got dark, I went! And coming home, all the other kids had a road that there houses were alongside the road. Our house, I used to have to go up to a big field to get to our house, and I was scared to death! And then over there, you know, if a person died, somebody would say they seen them the next day: a ghost. [Laughs] I had an aunt; she was an old maid. And we had to go way up half the mountain to visit these people. And we had this other woman with us, Lee. And coming back down, the one of them says to me, "Do you see anything up against that wall?" I says, "No, I don't see nothing." And my aunt, she was an old maid, she says to me, "You don't see up against that wall?" I says, "I don't see anything." And I got laughing. And she was very holy, this one, and she went on her knees, was praying. The other one start crying! We went back up to the woman's house, and her daughter come out of the bedroom, and she said, "Didn't I tell you, Mom?" Because her sister had died like six months before. "Didn't I tell you, and you wouldn't believe me?" Now they're seeing the same thing, they said. So anyway, we come back down to our house, but that girl lived, oh, a couple of fields away from our house, and she didn't want to go home unless my aunt went with her. And she's crying, and they wanted me to go! I says, "No ways am I going to go with you! I ain't going to see no—I didn't see no ghost." I said, "You're the two that seen the ghost; now you take her home!" So, she had to take her home. She says, when she came back she said, "I had to open the door to let her go in." She says, "That's how scared she was."

SEGRIST: People were very superstitious?

CARMODY: Oh, over there, yeah!

SEGRIST: Do you remember any of the other superstitions, any of the other things that people were afraid of?

CARMODY: Yeah, I was afraid to come home by myself when the kids left me down the road.

SEGRIST: What were you afraid that you would see?

CARMODY: I was afraid I was going to see a ghost! Would you believe it, because my grandmother didn't want me to be running out at night? So one night I was coming home, I see this big white thing by the house. I thought I was going to drop dead, I got so scared! And when I was coming closer to it, she went like this. It was my grandmother trying to scare me! She had a sheet over her, trying to scare me, so I wouldn't be running out at night! So, oh.

SEGRIST: Grandma had a sense of humor, didn't she? [Laughs]

CARMODY: Oh, my God!

SEGRIST: You talk about the ghosts. What were some of the other things people were afraid of? Were there other things outside that people thought would harm them?

CARMODY: No. Of course, there were so many cattle around. And my grandmother had a pony, and he used to work out in the fields. She'd put hay on his back, and you know, carry to hay to the house, put the hay in the back for the winter for the cows.

SEGRIST: Your daughter Katherine just wrote me a note to ask you about the banshees.

CARMODY: Oh, Jeez! The banshee was supposed a woman. When somebody's going to die, you'll hear her crying. Now, my sister-in-law, the one that's over there now, my brother, swear she heard the banshee. One night there were at somebody's house, and they were coming home through this field, and she says to him, "Look behind you." She says, "There's a man walking there with a dog." So Jimmy looked around, and he says, "I don't see no man, and I don't see no dog." So she says they walked a little bit more, and she says, "Jimmy, turn around again." And he did, and he seen this old man, but he didn't see the dog. And she says they kept walking 'til they got to their own house, and that man was still in the

field. So he was supposed to be a ghost. Oh yeah, a lot of ghosts over there!

SEGRIST: Did you ever see a ghost in Ireland?

CARMODY: No, but the last time I was over there, this woman, Maureen Lydon, used to come to visit. But she would take a—she was kind of, she wasn't afraid of anything! And she would go home late, you know, and my brother is funny. You know, full of the devil. He used to say to her, "Maureen, when you're going home, put the lights out, because I'm going to bed." So this one night I says, "We're going to walk you to the gate." It was like almost a block from the gate. "Oh, I'm not afraid, Julia," she says, "Don't worry. I can go by myself." Because my brother told me, all hours at night, she was not afraid of anything. So we were going to the gate, and I keep looking over my shoulder, you know, because I see something white. So she got to the gate, and she says, "You're not coming no further now. I don't have far to go." I says, "Okay." So we turned around. So we're coming back, Jimmy says to me, "Why were you turning your head? Every time I looked at you, you were looking another way." So I turned around. "See that white thing over there?" He said, "Yeah." I says, "Well, I thought that was a ghost." Well, he got a fit of laughing. You know what it was? The day before, there was a tree there, and he took the bark off it, and underneath the bark, it was white. And this thing was standing there, and it looked like a person. So that's what I was thinking! [Laughs]

SEGRIST: [Laughs] We've gotten kind of diverted here. Can you describe for me the house that you lived in, the farm house?

CARMODY: It's on the china closet.

SEGRIST: I know, but can you describe it in words for me, what it looked like, and how it was made?

CARMODY: It was made with stone. They used to call what they called a thatched roof.

SEGRIST: A thatched roof.

CARMODY: A thatched roof with straw. And that's what was there, and it was nice and warm.

SEGRIST: How many rooms?

CARMODY: There was two bedrooms and a big kitchen, and a small room, and a back kitchen.

SEGRIST: And why did you have two kitchens?

CARMODY: Hm?

SEGRIST: Why did you have two kitchens?

CARMODY: Well, a small one, and a bigger one. She'd do the cooking in the small one. And then she had these big black pots with three legs on them, and there was a hook on the fireplace where you could hang your pot on. And she used to cook a lot on there for the pigs. You know, potatoes for the pigs and stuff.

SEGRIST: What kind of floor did the house have?

CARMODY: I guess it was cement.

SEGRIST: Cement floor. And did you have windows in the house?

CARMODY: Yeah!

SEGRIST: Yes? Did you have electricity in the house?

CARMODY: [Laughs] Are you kidding?

SEGRIST: How did you light the house?

CARMODY: With a lamp, with the kerosene.

SEGRIST: What do you remember about the kerosene lamps?

CARMODY: They had just a glass globe, and it had like a little dish under. You put the globe on that, and it had a wick where you had to light it. It was hanging on the wall. Now they've got electricity. They even got a telephone, now!

SEGRIST: But not in your day?

CARMODY: Oh, my God! I didn't know what a telephone was!

SEGRIST: Did you have running water in the cottage, in the farmhouse?

CARMODY: We had spring water.

SEGRIST: Where did it come from?

CARMODY: From the mountain.

SEGRIST: And who brought it to the house?

CARMODY: We had to go with a bucket over to the stream. There was a stream. All this water was running, and that's where you got the spring water. My brother used to go with a pail, bring a pail of water.

SEGRIST: And when he brought the pail of water into the house, did you put it in a certain place?

CARMODY: No, no. She used to boil potatoes with that water, heat water to wash dishes. There was no dishwasher, no sink, no nothing. Now they've got a sink, they've got a dishwasher—they've got everything! Everything is modern over there now.

SEGRIST: How often did you bathe?

CARMODY: Every Saturday night.

SEGRIST: Every Saturday night, and could you describe it?

CARMODY: She had a big round tub, and she would put it in front of the fireplace. One night [laughs] my brother was sitting in it, and my grandmother was sitting on the other side of him. And I went out in the back, and I got a big—not a big thing, but a pan of water, and I dumped it on him. Well, I was going to get killed that night! He was going to kill me.

SEGRIST: Did you have a bathroom in the house?

CARMODY: No, what they call an outhouse [laughs].

SEGRIST: An outhouse.

CARMODY: One time I had my daughter Alice, and she was with me, and I says to her, "Do you have to go to the bathroom?" She says, "Yes." "All right, I'll go with you." So we came out of the door, and we had to go, maybe from here to that door. And I walked in first, and I backed out. I knew what it was; I knew my brother did it, because he's a devil with something like that. He had a person sitting on the toilet, with those—what do you call those boots?

KATHERINE: Wellingtons.

SEGRIST: Wellingtons?

CARMODY: Yeah, Wellingtons, Irish sweater, and a hat. And I backed out, and I knew it was a joke. And I backed out, but she went in, and when she went in she started to scream the place down! She come running out again, her and my sister-in-law. The geese got out of the barn, and they were trying to put the geese back. They [unclear], "What's the matter with you?" "There's a ghost in there! There's a ghost in there!" [Laughs]

SEGRIST: Everyone's so nervous in Ireland about ghosts!

CARMODY: Oh, my God!

SEGRIST: What kind of furniture did you have in the house when you were a girl? What do you remember about the furniture?

CARMODY: Nothing, just regular chairs. That's all we had. Like a dining room chair, something like that, and that's it.

SEGRIST: What did you sleep on?

CARMODY: Oh, we had a regular bed.

SEGRIST: Yeah, what kind of a mattress did the bed have?

CARMODY: Straw.

SEGRIST: And how did you get the mattress?

CARMODY: My grandmother made it.

SEGRIST: How did she do that?

CARMODY: With the straw. She would dry it, cut it down and dry it. Then she would make a great big, like a mattress cover, and put that in there. Where else would you sleep? There's no other place to sleep!

SEGRIST: What kind of food did you eat in Ireland? You mentioned potatoes.

CARMODY: Oh, ham and cabbage, ham and cabbage and potatoes. When we come home from school, she would have a pot of potatoes waiting for us. And we had to eat those potatoes before we got supper, drink milk. And for ever she put buttermilk in front of me, and I hated it.

SEGRIST: What time in the morning did you eat breakfast?

CARMODY: We had to go to school for nine o'clock.

SEGRIST: Let me [unclear] your microphone here. So did you eat breakfast before you left for school?

CARMODY: Yeah.

SEGRIST: And what was a typical breakfast?

CARMODY: Oatmeal. Whether you liked it or not, you had to eat oatmeal. And that was it.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE ONE
BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE ONE

SEGRIST: What time did you eat lunch?

CARMODY: We didn't take lunch to school with us. At that time you had to take what we called a sods, a turf—that's the stuff I was telling you about for the fire? They were about the size of a loaf of bread. I used to have to take two, and my brother used to have to take two, and when we got to the school, they had a barn there. You threw those two pieces into the barn. That was for the winter, for school for the winter. My brother one time, we're coming down the road, and he disappeared, and I'm looking for him. And I've got my two sods [unclear] in my hand. And he came out of this field, and he had to sods [unclear] in his hand. And we got to the school, which room in the barn, and I didn't think nothing of it. But a couple of days later, I says, "Where the heck did you go?" And I went over the wall and I looked down. Here he was taking two sods, two pieces of that stuff, from somebody else's turf, and taking it to school, and throwing it in things. And when I went home from school, I told my grandmother. I said, "You know, he's stealing the turf he's supposed to have for the fire for the winter for the school?" She said, "He's what?" So the next day, she took the donkey, and two big baskets, and filled them with these year's turf, and took them to the school. And the guy, he was short. We used to call him the master. He was a son of a gun. And she told him what he did. So the schoolteacher told him—every week there used to be a priest come there. So he told him that when the priest came, he was going to tell the priest about it. It scared the heart out of him. Then he didn't take no more turf. That was it.

SEGRIST: Was the school run by the church?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: No.

CARMODY: They were an old couple. But his old lady, she was a son of a gun. They used to have, you know them bamboo canes you get? She had one about this long. And if you went in in the morning, and she would look at you—we used to go in our bare feet. If your feet were dirty, she'd come along with that, smack across the legs with it. [Laughs] There was a stream outside; she'd make you go outside and wash your feet. And then there was a couple there, they were two giggles, two girls. And one day she made them go outside and wash their feet. So when they got outside, they wouldn't wash their feet. Well, they kept on going someplace else, up over another field, just for devilment. So she came out after them, and she had this cane, and boy, did they get it! And the old man used to write on the blackboard [laughs], and this girl would stand there and she'd say, "Whoo!" she'd say, like that. He'd turn around, "Who said that?" You know? Nobody would answer him at first. Her was doing it! Every time they went to write on the board, she would make that noise. You know who that was? Michael Casey's sister. But the boys, every row was a class. My cousins were supposed to be in eighth grade; they were in the last seat. This old guy came along one morning; he wanted to know the sacrament of matrimony. My cousin was in the back because he was big. He poked me in the back not to answer him. So I wouldn't answer him. There was two other girls alongside of me; he asked them that question, and they got poked in the back. So none of us would answer him. So the second time he smacked me, my cousin jumped up. He says, "If you hit her once more," he says, "I'm going to hang you on the wall!" He was really short. Honest to God, about two minutes later he said something else, and this guy jumped up and grabbed him and had him up against the wall!

SEGRIST: Did you enjoy school?

CARMODY: Yeah, I was okay.

SEGRIST: Could your grandmother read and write?

CARMODY: No!

SEGRIST: What about your mother?

CARMODY: She couldn't read English. She couldn't talk English.

SEGRIST: Oh, Gaelic, did she speak?

CARMODY: Yeah. I couldn't talk English when I first come out here.

SEGRIST: Oh, so you spoke Gaelic then, in Ireland.

CARMODY: Yes!

SEGRIST: Well, in some parts of Ireland it was illegal to speak Gaelic during this time period. Really? Can you still speak any Gaelic?

CARMODY: I used to have to milk cows, too?

SEGRIST: Yes. Can you still speak any Gaelic? Do you remember a prayer, maybe?

CARMODY: Only the dirty words! [Laughs]

SEGRIST: [Laughs] Well, I'd be happy to have them on tape! What about a prayer? Do you remember a prayer in Gaelic?

CARMODY: A what?

SEGRIST: Some kind of a prayer that you used to have to say?

CARMODY: You see, all our prayers used to say in Gaelic, but I don't remember how to say it now. My son-in-law, he came over here. He's married to my other daughter. He can talk Gaelic yet. He knows as well as me. Sometimes [unclear] as me, he tells me.

SEGRIST: So when you were growing up, you only spoke Gaelic, then? You didn't speak English?

CARMODY: Well, if you came over there, and you were talking English, she would say to me, "What are you saying?" And I would have to repeat what you said to her.

SEGRIST: Oh, that's interesting! Huh! And you said your grandmother—would she read and write in Gaelic?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: She couldn't.

CARMODY: She couldn't read or write.

SEGRIST: I see. Tell me a little bit about church. What religion were you?

CARMODY: Well, I was the first one to sing in the choir. At that time my voice, I guess was pretty good. We were picked from school, and there was about six of us. And I was the first one. They still talk about it, over

there. I was the first one to sing in the choir. The priest, he was young, and he was new. So every time that we were supposed to start a hymn, he would shake his head like that. That meant: start another song, you know? And that's how we learned.

SEGRIST: Do you remember any of the songs? Could you sing me a song right now?

CARMODY: Not in Gaelic.

SEGRIST: No?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: Did you ever sing in English over there?

CARMODY: Oh, yes!

SEGRIST: When you were a kid?

CARMODY: I had an uncle over there, he was in England, and he came home. Never smoked or drank, and he was lousy with money. He had what they call a Sovereign?

SEGRIST: Sovereign?

CARMODY: Yeah, that's like a pound, I guess, over here. He took five people with him over here, paid their fare and everything. I don't know whether he got paid back or not. And he wanted to take me with him, and put me in some kind of school in Ohio to learn how to sing. But my grandmother wouldn't let me go. She says, "No." So he came over here, and he married somebody from over there in Ohio.

SEGRIST: Do you remember any song that you knew as a child that you could sing for us right now?

CARMODY: I can't sing!

SEGRIST: Oh, I bet you can! [Laughs]

CARMODY: What could I sing, Katherine?

SEGRIST: Do you remember, like, a Christmas song that you used to sing as a child, maybe? Or a lullaby that was something your grandmother may have sung to you?

CARMODY: Oh, like “I’ll Take You Home Again, Kathleen”?

SEGRIST: Yes, you could do that. That’s—

CARMODY: I don’t know.

SEGRIST: Yes, Katherine wants to say something.

KATHERINE: Sing the song about over the cow shed. I know, it’s not the way, but that’s what I interpreted it as.

CARMODY: Oh, that’s in Gaelic.

KATHERINE: Well, you do that one.

CARMODY: [Sings in Gaelic] I forgot it. [Sings in Gaelic] It’s all for my true love and never more will see! Now that’s in Gaelic. I didn’t forget that one! But the English part of that song is: [Sings] All around my hat I wear the green and white [unclear]. All around my hat [unclear] comes to me. And if anybody asks why I’m wearing that ribbon, oh, it’s all for my sweetheart I never more will see.”

SEGRIST: Thank you!

CARMODY: I know that in Gaelic, but now I forgot it, see?

SEGRIST: Was there a church near where you lived?

CARMODY: Four miles away.

SEGRIST: And what was the name of the church?

CARMODY: The church, had no name. Finney, Finney, the place where the church was, the name was Finney.

SEGRIST: Finney. Is this a Catholic church?

CARMODY: It was a Catholic church.

SEGRIST: You were Catholics?

CARMODY: Yeah.

SEGRIST: You mentioned that your grandmother made you say the rosary at home?

CARMODY: Uh-huh.

SEGRIST: Were there any other ways that you practiced your religion at home?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: No.

CARMODY: When you left school, you had to learn the answer for a question the next day. And the old man had to have it awalking. I was sitting on the wall one night, and I seen him coming. I grabbed a book, but it wasn't the Catechism. So the next day at school he's telling the kids that I was a good girl. "I passed by," he says, "And she was studying her book." I wasn't studying a book. I was reading something else, but he thought I was studying Catechism! [Laughs]

SEGRIST: [Laughs] Tell me a little bit about the period around World War One, because a lot of things are going on in Ireland in 1916, 1917. What do you remember about that time?

CARMODY: Oh, I went through all that!

SEGRIST: Can you talk a little bit about that?

CARMODY: 1916, the Black and Tans, and the Sinn Fein? Oh, yeah!

SEGRIST: Yes, what do you remember about that whole time period?

CARMODY: Oh, yeah. Those Black and Tans were son of a guns. You would never know when they were coming. They were dressed in black. I guess that's why they called them Black and Tan. And there was a fellow, every once in a while we would get somebody would stay the night. Because I was living with my cousin 'cause she just had a baby, and I was staying with her, helping her with the baby. And you didn't know when they would come, but you had to listen. You could hear the trucks coming. So this one day my cousin says, "We have to go into town." And we had two boys there, and it was their brother that they were looking for, because he was the head of the Sinn Feins. [PH]And their name was Maguire. I says, "Now, if they come, your name is not Morin." The people I lived with, their name was Morin. I said, "Your name is Morin, not Maguire." I says, "If you tell them your real name, they're going to take you!" They would! So they came, this big black dirty-looking thing, oh, came to the door. I had my initials—I used to use that blue pencil. Blue pencil, they used to—I don't know what they called it. And he grabbed me by the hair, and he says, "Is that your boyfriend's name?" I says, "No, I don't have a boyfriend." And he said, "Where did

you come from?" So I told him, I give him my grandmother's address. So he went over to the kids, he says, "What's your name, and what's your name?" So the kids told him that their name was Morin, but their real name was Maguire. And I was a nervous wreck! He rolled his sleeves up, and my cousin had a closet where she used to put the cream to make the butter? And he put his hands all through this cream. Oh, my God! Never even washed his hands or nothing! Then he closed the door, and they left. So, they came from home from town. Her husband was a nervous wreck. He was scared, afraid of them, you know? So that night, the first thing you know the door opened, and in walks this soldier. And he was English. And there was about twenty more with him, and they all sat on the floor, because they had a big, big kitchen. They all sat on the floor, and they were writing letters, playing cards. Some were saying the rosary, and all that stuff. And then there was a guy there, and he wanted to know my name, so I told him. He says, "That's my name, too," he says. His name was Michael Joyce, and he had the rosary beads in his hand, and he said, "Where do you come from?" I says, "Oh, about twenty miles from here," I says. "You live with your grandmother?" I said, "Yup." "I have a grandmother over here someplace," he said. I says, "Oh, yeah?" So then it dawned on me, I bet he's a cousin of mine. But he says, "Don't be afraid of these guys. They won't hurt you. They're just writing letters home," he says, "And I'm still sitting here. If you want to go to bed, you go to bed, and don't be afraid, because they're not going to harm you." So he says to me, "What's your grandmother's name?" So I told him. "That's funny, isn't it," he says, "Now, my mother's name is Julia." So then I says to him, "Did you have a brother killed in the war?" He said, "Yup." I said, "Did you have another brother in service," I said, "That his chin was blown off?" He says, "Yup." And he looked at me, and he says, "How often do you see your grandmother?" And I says, "Not very often, but I see her once in a while." So he gave me the rosary beads, and I could tell him his father's name. His father's name was Thomasina. It was supposed to be Thomas, I guess, but Thomasina. He says, "You know," he says, "I think you're my cousin." And he said, "I think both of us have the same grandmother." I said, "I don't know." So anyway, he give me the beads, and when I went home, I gave her and I told her what he said. She said, "That was him all right." She says, "It was your cousin." Yeah. And those soldiers, oh! When I first saw they were sitting there by the fire, and I says, "Why do you come over here and scare the people?" And one guy whispered to me, "It's not us." He said, "The Black and Tans, they're the ones that give you orders. You have to do what they tell you."

SEGRIST: Do you remember seeing fighting of any sort?

CARMODY: The boys in the village used to disappear for four or five days. And I had a boyfriend over there. At the time that they'd be leaving, he always

knocked on the window of my bedroom, and I knew they were going someplace. Then you wouldn't see them, maybe, for five days. They were hiding someplace, trying to catch the Black and Tans. You know, they could fire their guns. The day they were at the house, when my cousin came home, he says to me, he was a nervous wreck. He went through the basin of milk. I said, "You better take it and give it to the pigs," you know. And he says, "What else were they looking for?" I says, "I don't know." I says, "They just went through the milk, that dirty-looking guy." "What happened to the kids?" I says, "No, they were fine. They told them their name was Morin, not Maguire." And he says, "Did you look under the kitchen, ever look under the kitchen table?" I says, "No, I never look under the kitchen table, unless I'm washing the floor or something." He said, "Take a look." I went down on my knees and looked. The whole thing was full of guns, that belonged to him! Then he had a big flag, as big as this table, in front of the fireplace. He went over, and he lifted that up. Everything that was in there was guns! He says, "It's a good thing they didn't find them, or they would have taken them." I says, "No," I says, "They only went through the milk, that's all."

SEGRIST: What do you suppose he was looking for in the milk?

CARMODY: He was looking for guns!

SEGRIST: In the milk?

CARMODY: In the milk, yeah. He was going like this. And then he—dirty old thing he was!

SEGRIST: Dragging his hand through the milk?

CARMODY: Yeah.

SEGRIST: Uh-huh.

CARMODY: Then he went and got a—there was a dishtowel laying there, and he picked the towel up, and he wiped his hands off. Of course, my cousin wanted to know, "What did he do when he came in?" I says, "He went in there, and put his hands in the milk." I says, "You better take it out and give it to the pigs."

SEGRIST: Your boyfriend who used to disappear, did he ever—?

CARMODY: Four or five days at a time.

SEGRIST: Did he ever tell you what happened when he went away?

CARMODY: Oh, they wouldn't tell you! They weren't allowed. They went out to try and get the Black and Tans, and I guess the Black and Tans were looking for them. And they'd be gone maybe four or five days.

SEGRIST: Do you know how your grandmother felt about what was going on in Ireland at that time? She's from an older generation. How did she perceive all of that?

CARMODY: It didn't seem to bother her. But I have a cousin that lived in Philadelphia, Kay Casey. Her mother lived in a house like we lived in, and she went out and walked on the road. I guess she was going for a walk or something. And she heard this noise, and all of a sudden she looked behind her, and here's all these soldiers, English soldiers. And she stood there, and when they came close to her, she cursed them upside down. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Your father and mother's over here, and you are English over there!" And the guy says, "Ma'am, don't holler because we can't help it. We have to listen to what the Black and Tans—we don't want to do this!" he said. So they kept on going.

SEGRIST: Are there any other memories of that time that you can think of, your interaction with the soldiers, the Black and Tans, anything like that, that sticks out in your mind?

CARMODY: We were afraid! We were afraid!

SEGRIST: It was a time of fear?

CARMODY: And if you heard a truck coming, you'd think, well, it was them. Then I was taking the horses one morning to get water. There was a pond there. And these two guys, they were soldiers, come down on a motorbike. You know, they come, with the side seat that they had? And he says to me, "Where you going?" I says, "Get the horses some water." And the guy that was sitting along side of him was saying, "What's your name? Peggy O'Neill?" I says, "No, my name is not Peggy O'Neill." So they start singing that song, Peggy O'Neill. They said, "Okay, go ahead, feed your horses." [Laughs] Off they went! That's the only time I got scared of them.

SEGRIST: Did you know anyone who was killed in any of these--?

CARMODY: Oh yeah, oh yeah! In fact, there was a neighbor that, where I was living with, helping my cousin with the baby. And that night when the soldiers came, that was the day the Black and Tans were there. And his name was Michael O'Bryan. And my brother told me when I came out, I wrote him a letter. He says, "The day that they went into the Morin's house,"

he said, "They got a hold of Michael and took him." So I don't know whether they killed him, or whether they put him in jail, or what. I forgot to ask.

SEGRIST: Tell me a little bit about World War One, because that's a little bit earlier than this time period, right? The First World War, you mentioned the airplane going over. What else do you remember about--?

CARMODY: I remember the day that peace was signed.

SEGRIST: What happened?

CARMODY: Because I told you, we had a big lake in the front. And all of sudden it was dark, and I see this big light, you know. I ran into the house, and I says to my grandmother, I says, "There's something lighting up over the lake there." She came out with me. I said, "I don't know what that could be." And then before we went to bed, my other cousin came, and he was all smiling, you know, and says, "What's the matter?" I says, "I got scared tonight." I says, "That place over by the lake was all lit up." He said, "Didn't you hear? The peace is signed! No more war!" Yeah.

SEGRIST: Did your family have any hardships because of the war?

CARMODY: A lot of cousins at war.

SEGRIST: No, did your family—was your family affected by the war somehow?

CARMODY: No, no.

SEGRIST: No, you were pretty much removed from all that?

CARMODY: Only that one time when that plane came over, and I told my grandmother the Germans are coming. She was sitting there cutting wheat.

SEGRIST: Well let me ask you: when you were growing up in Ireland, what did you know about America?

CARMODY: Nothing. I used to stand—we had a gate, and I used to stand by the gate, and this great big, big mountain, you know, that mountain above the house. And I used to think that Canada was behind that mountain [laughs]. And I was going to walk in some day; I was going to find Canada. They got a big kick out of that. [Phone rings]

SEGRIST: We're going to pause just for a moment. [Tape off/on] Okay, we're going to resume. Yes, if anyone died?

CARMODY: They had wakes, big wakes.

SEGRIST: What do you remember about the wakes?

CARMODY: They would play, play games all night, the men, you know. And you don't get embalmed like you do here. The way you died, that's the way you're stretched out on some kind of table. And there was a guy died, and he had a hump on his back. I always remember—you know that house your father-in-law lived in? Well, it was a house like that, because it had upstairs to it. And the women were downstairs making tea and everything, and the guys were upstairs. So the guys got it in their head they're going to pull a joke on the women. So they took a rope and tied it on the guys arms, or back, I don't know what. So when the tea was made, they called the women to come upstairs. So two or three of the women went upstairs. And just as she walked in the bedroom door, this guy pulls the rope, and the guy with the hump sat up in the coffin! [Laughs] He sat up, and the women made it [unclear], and one of them broke her leg coming down. She fell down the stairs, broke her leg! [Laughs]

SEGRIST: Well, they all had senses of humor in Ireland! [Laughs]

CARMODY: Yeah, and I got blamed for a lot of stuff that I didn't do, either.

SEGRIST: But not that?

CARMODY: I didn't know the guy that time. And every Halloween, if you had a lot of cabbage sets, say. And we had an old guy there, him and his wife lived alone, and we didn't like them. So us kids would go and pull all their cabbage up out of the ground and hide it. So Halloween night, he would come out and watch, but nobody came into his garden. So one time, the week before Halloween, I says, "Let's go take the cabbage and hide it." So we did. We got an awful lot of cabbage, and we hid it in somebody else's field. And that night, on Halloween, he was out there. And he called the cops! They were from England, these cops. They were English, and they lived in a small barrack. And he went after them, and the cops came out, and we seen them coming, and we were running through the field, and the cops was running after us! But we knew where to hide, so we hid on them. They never found us, but he lost all his cabbage because we took it! [Laughs]

SEGRIST: Bringing up Halloween is interesting, because of course you're all thinking about ghosts over there. How did you celebrate Halloween in Ireland? What kinds of things did you do?

CARMODY: We took everybody, went in everybody's garden, and pulled all the cabbages and turnips, and everything we got our hands on?

SEGRIST: Just generally being destructive?

CARMODY: That's right.

SEGRIST: What about Christmas? How did you celebrate Christmas in Ireland?

CARMODY: Very nice.

SEGRIST: What do you remember?

CARMODY: My grandmother used to—on Christmas Eve, it was fish, fresh fish that the guys used to go in and fish. There was a couple of lakes in the back of the mountain. They used to go in there and fish, bring all this fish home. So Christmas Eve, that's what she'd boil. We had to eat that at night, Christmas Eve. And then she would light twelve candles, one for each apostle. And she had a little shelf there, and she would put those twelve candles, and light the whole candles. We had no water to do dishes, and if you washed the dishes, you know, and you'd have dirty water in the pan? One night I was walking towards the door; I was going to throw it out. That's what I always did, throw it out the door. And she caught me, and she says, "Wait, wait, wait!" I says, "What's the matter?" "What are you going to do with that water?" I says, "Don't I always throw it out?" Because there was a drain there where it could run out, you know? "Now how do you know?" she says. "A poor soul might be passing that door, and you're throwing that water out at them?" I says, "No soul's going to pass!" "You don't know that!" she says. [Laughs] And whether it hit the soul, I don't know, but [laughs].

SEGRIST: Did you exchange presents at Christmas time?

CARMODY: No, no.

SEGRIST: No. What did you do on Christmas day?

CARMODY: Nothing. Go to church.

SEGRIST: Was there another holiday that you celebrated?

CARMODY: Saint Patrick's Day.

SEGRIST: Yes, you mentioned Saint Patrick's Day.

CARMODY: That was a big day!

EI-767/CARMODY

SEGRIST: Did you go to church on Saint Patrick's Day?

CARMODY: Yup.

SEGRIST: Yeah, so it was a religious holiday.

CARMODY: You had it, whether you liked to or not! We used to go, and you had to climb half the mountain, and go down the other side of the mountain, to get to the church. Yeah.

SEGRIST: Why did you want to come to America? Why did you want to come?

CARMODY: Well, everybody else was coming here. I had cousins were coming, too.

SEGRIST: And what were they telling you about America?

CARMODY: Nothing, they don't tell me nothing. But when I came over here, it was a German ship.

SEGRIST: Oh wait, don't tell me that yet. I just want to know, I want to know why you wanted to come? What was the appeal?

CARMODY: Because the other girls were coming?

SEGRIST: Who? Who were the other girls?

CARMODY: A lot of girls. My cousins of mine.

SEGRIST: Yeah, and what were they doing when they got to America?

CARMODY: Housework.

SEGRIST: Where?

CARMODY: In a priest's house.

SEGRIST: In what city? In what place?

CARMODY: Philadelphia.

SEGRIST: Had you ever done anything like that before?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: Had they ever done anything like that before?

CARMODY: I guess not. They were getting broke in, I guess. Because I went there one time to visit, and there was about four or five women there, and they were working there. They're like servants, you know. And one priest there had no—used to say mass in the morning, he had no altar boy. So he made the housekeeper—she was the altar boy. She had to go to church every morning and say mass with him.

SEGRIST: Had your mother or father ever been in America before?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: No?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: When you wanted to come to America, where were they?

CARMODY: Over there.

SEGRIST: Where was your mother when you wanted to come to America?

CARMODY: Over there.

SEGRIST: We're going to pause just for a moment so I can put another tape into the machine, and then we're going to get you to America. So this is the end of Tape One.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE ONE

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE TWO

SEGRIST: Okay, we're beginning Tape Two, with Julia Carmody who came from Ireland in 1921, when she was eighteen. We were just talking about why you wanted to come.

CARMODY: I was dumb!

SEGRIST: You were dumb?

CARMODY: I was dumb when I came here! My mother was over here; she went back and got me.

SEGRIST: I see. While we were off tape, we established that your mother was indeed here America. Was your mother writing back and forth to you before you got here?

CARMODY: Yeah.

SEGRIST: What was she telling you about America?

CARMODY: Not much. Not much. If I was to come today, like these other kids that come, they're smart. And if I had the money, I would have went right back. I hated Perth Amboy!

SEGRIST: You came to Perth Amboy, New Jersey, when you first came to the United States.

CARMODY: I hated it!

SEGRIST: Do you remember how you—when you were in Ireland, what did you have to do before you left Ireland?

CARMODY: Nothing.

SEGRIST: Did you have to get papers?

CARMODY: Oh, yeah!

SEGRIST: What did you have to do to get the papers?

CARMODY: I have no—I don't remember. I had to go, I guess—there was about four of us at that time, we had to have to go get your passports and stuff. No trouble, no bother.

SEGRIST: Did you have to have a medical examination in Ireland?

CARMODY: No, nothing.

SEGRIST: How did your grandmother feel about you leaving for America?

CARMODY: Oh, she was sad!

SEGRIST: Do you remember how long it took for you to get your papers, before you could leave?

CARMODY: No, I don't remember. We might have gotten them the same day we went for them. Was no trouble.

SEGRIST: Do you remember what you packed to take to America?

CARMODY: What I packed?

SEGRIST: What you packed?

CARMODY: Not much.

SEGRIST: Do you remember what you took?

CARMODY: My mother had a trunk full of stuff.

SEGRIST: What was in the trunk?

CARMODY: Her clothes. Different—she was dressed as American.

SEGRIST: Oh, did your mother go back to Ireland to get you?

CARMODY: She went back to get me.

SEGRIST: I see, I see. How long had your mother been in America?

CARMODY: I don't know. Maybe about ten years before that.

SEGRIST: Did she look different when you saw her here, when she came back to Ireland?

CARMODY: Yeah, because I had a job. My grandmother couldn't talk English. And I had to stand there, and my grandmother would say, "What is she saying?" and I'd have to tell my grandmother in Gaelic what she was saying. And different things like that, you know.

SEGRIST: So you were functioning like an interpreter?

CARMODY: Right, right.

SEGRIST: Yeah. You said your mother had a trunk. Do you remember what was in the trunk?

CARMODY: Just all her clothes, I guess.

SEGRIST: What about your clothes? What did you take?

CARMODY: Oh, she bought me clothes.

SEGRIST: Yeah, do you remember any of the outfits?

CARMODY: No, a skirt and a blouse, that's all. A jacket. And I had a pair of shoes that you could lace them up to your knee. You see them once in a while here, too, now. That was it.

SEGRIST: How did you wear your hair back then?

CARMODY: I was real platinum blonde, and when we were on the ship, this nurse came along, and she got all the girls together, all black-haired. And she took them upstairs on deck, and she was looking for lice. And I was standing there, and she took me by the head, and she said, "You come with me." So I went with her, and she sat me down on a chair by the railing of the ship. "We're not looking at your hair," she says, "We're only looking at the dark haired ones. Because," she says, "There's nothing in your head, you're so light." I was like a platinum blonde, a real blonde. And on the day I got on the ship, I was seasick from that day 'til I landed.

SEGRIST: What was the name of the ship?

CARMODY: I can't remember the name, but I know the ship was a German ship, and I thing during the First World War the English got it. So the day we landed, of course, first class was let off first.

SEGRIST: Wait, let's get you on the ship before you get off the ship. Where did you go to get on the ship? In Ireland, where did you have to go to get on the ship?

CARMODY: Oh, we had to go to Cork.

SEGRIST: Had to go to Cork. How did you get from your town to Cork?

CARMODY: Somebody took us.

SEGRIST: By what—how did you travel?

CARMODY: By a jaunting car. Did you ever hear of a jaunting car?

SEGRIST: A jaunting car. Can you describe a jaunting car?

CARMODY: Yeah, it's a car that a horse has to pull. Sometimes there's a seat on the side, and sometimes you get one where four people can sit in there. But on the jaunting car, you have two people sit on this side of the horse, two people sit on this side of the horse. That was the jaunting car.

SEGRIST: And who's going to Cork? You—?

CARMODY: Well, there was a bunch of us?

SEGRIST: A whole bunch of you traveled?

CARMODY: And they had to stop, they had to stop in a place called Queenstown. Twelve o'clock at night, the ship had to stop and pick all these people up. They were coming here. There was an old woman from Scotland. Oh, my God, was she funny! She told us so many jokes, and dirty jokes, some of them! And she never got sick. She would knock on the cabin door, and open the door for her—a plate of mashed potatoes, turnips and meat. And when I just took a look at it, I started puking! And she would start laughing. She never got sick, all the ways over. She was always playing jokes with us. And there was two Scotch girls on there, too. There was one poor girl, she was supposed to be going to Chicago. That poor thing was so sick from the day we got on the boat, 'til we landed! Every morning, the doctor would have to come, and two nurses, and carry me, and put me up on deck. And the minute I hit the top floor, I'll puke all over the place! And this poor thing, she was worse then I was, and she was supposed to be going to Chicago. So when we went to Ellis Island, I had a bunch of nurses there. You had to strip. But they were nice, I mean, they were okay. Because I asked one nurse, "What's that over there?" On the whole width of the [unclear], there was partitions, and people were sitting in there. And then there was a piece of a, like a board this way, where you could—every one of them was like locked in, you know? And I asked, said, "What are those women over there?" She says, "Lady, they come from different countries. They're all different nationalities over there, and they're waiting for their turn to be examined by the doctor, and stuff like that." So when it was our time, the nurse took us up to this desk, and there was a man sitting there. He says to me, "Can you read?" I says, "I guess I can read." Like, I still was scared. So all I did, I read one line across the book. "You're okay," he says, "You can go." So he says to my mother, "Can you find your way?" And my mother says, "Tell us which door to go out." He says, "That door over there." "Goodbye," she says, and off we went! But then we were put on another boat, and that boat took us to New York. The Saint George's Ferry, did you ever hear of the Saint George's Ferry? And then we got that. Then we came to Perth Amboy, and we got off that boat, and another boat over to Staten Island, I guess it was. And I turned around. I says, "If I have to go on one more boat," I says, "And if I see another ferry, I'm going to jump overboard!" I couldn't—oh, I was sick of the water! I was so sick coming over! I seen the dining room of the boat, ship, the first day I got on. I never seen it 'til the last day when I was coming off! I was sick the whole nine days.

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SEGRIST: Let me get you back on the big boat. How long did it take for the big boat to get to New York from Ireland? How long did it take to go across the Atlantic?

CARMODY: Nine days.

SEGRIST: Nine days. And you were sick—was your mother sick?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: No.

CARMODY: No, the Scotch woman wasn't sick, either.

SEGRIST: And the Scotch woman wasn't sick, either. Do you remember there being safety drills on the ship?

CARMODY: The what?

SEGRIST: Safety drills?

CARMODY: Drills?

SEGRIST: Drills, drills, in case something—in case there were an emergency on the ship?

CARMODY: I don't think so. But that poor girl from Chicago, she was still sick the day we landed.

SEGRIST: When you landed, where did the boat dock? Where did the ship dock, when you first arrived?

CARMODY: Dock?

SEGRIST: Yes, where did it dock?

CARMODY: Where did it park?

SEGRIST: When the ship came into New York harbor, the big ship, then where did it--?

CARMODY: Hoboken.

SEGRIST: In Hoboken. And then—

CARMODY: And that clock is still there.

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SEGRIST: What did you see in Hoboken?

CARMODY: Nothing, just a damn big clock, and that was it [laughs]. Get off it, that's when they took us off that ship, and then put us on another boat. And that's the boat that took us to Ellis Island.

SEGRIST: And when the little boat went to Ellis Island, what happened when you got off that ship? What did they do to you?

CARMODY: We had to go inside. That's what I tell you, all these nationalities were on one side, and I didn't know what they were. I asked the nurse, and she said, "Every one of them come from a different country."

SEGRIST: You said that you had to remove your clothes at Ellis--?

CARMODY: You did, strip off everything!

SEGRIST: How did that make you feel?

CARMODY: I was scared! But everything came out all right.

SEGRIST: What did they examine you for? What were they looking at?

CARMODY: I don't know. There was one girl there, she was sent back home. She had T.B. When the doctor examined her, he found she had T.B. That's the only one I remember that was sent back.

SEGRIST: Was your mother with you while you were going through Ellis Island?

CARMODY: Yeah, she had to do the same things as I had to do. My mother was kind of heavy. She had beautiful skin, and the nurses were even bragging! Her kept saying, "I wish I had her skin." But I was scared to death. I had a pimple, and I figured, I'm going to be sent back, because they're not going to pass me, I've got a pimple up here. [Laughs] And I says to the nurse, "What happens now? They're going to send me back?" "What for," she says. "They ain't going to send you back." I says, "Look at this here." "Forget about that!" she says [laughs].

SEGRIST: So the nurses treated you nicely at Ellis Island?

CARMODY: Yeah, very nice.

SEGRIST: Yeah, they were nice to you. Did you eat while you were at Ellis Island?

CARMODY: No, we didn't get nothing to eat.

SEGRIST: How long were you there?

CARMODY: Oh, my God, we were there like maybe four or five hours, yeah. This guy was sitting at the desk, and I guess everybody that went to him had to read something for him.

SEGRIST: Did they ask you any other questions?

CARMODY: No, no. Just examined me. And that's all. We had to go to that guy that sat at the desk, and that was it. It was nothing else.

SEGRIST: You said then, when you were done, you got back on another little boat, and you went to New York.

CARMODY: Jesus! Went to Saint George's Ferry to New York, got off of that one, went on another one, got off of that one, went on the train, took us to Staten Island. I got to Staten Island, there's the damn ferry from Perth Amboy waiting there. I says, "If I have to go on one more boat like this," I says, "I'm going to jump in the water!" That's how sick I was of the water. And for three days, on the ship, there was a whale following the boat. And I asked the guy, I says, "What is that?" He says, "It's after the boat." "Is it harmless?" "No," he says, "It's wicked." After three days, we didn't see it no more, but when the ship landed, and all the first class got off, this Black man—no, they were big tall guys, with these little round hats on, and earrings in their ears. He took us on a tour of the ship. So when we get to one room, it was solid gold! He says, "You know who slept there?" I says, "No." He says, "Everything in here is gold, and the Kaiser slept here." That was his ship, and I guess the English much have got it, or something. I can't remember the name of that ship. But every room, when I was on the top of that ship, was gold. And it belonged to that German guy.

SEGRIST: How did you feel about seeing the first class accommodations?

CARMODY: It didn't bother me.

SEGRIST: I would have been kind of excited, I think, [laughs] to be able to see that? When you landed in Perth Amboy, did somebody meet you?

CARMODY: No, we just got off the Ferry, and came up Smith Street, and she knew where she was going.

SEGRIST: How did you do up Smith Street?

CARMODY: Just got off the ferry, walked up on the sidewalk. And she had an apartment there.

SEGRIST: And can you describe what the apartment looked like to me?

CARMODY: Just like any, [unclear] that's all. It was nice.

SEGRIST: Was it in a house, or in a big building?

CARMODY: A house, and there was a fruit shop downstairs, and the people that owned it were Italian. And she was a very nice woman; she was very nice to me. And one day, my mother says, "You go downstairs and get," she gave me a ten-cent piece. "Go down and get some potatoes." So I go down, and I'm thinking to myself, "What the heck am I going to do with a little thing like that?" It was a ten-cent piece. So I didn't go in the store; I just looked in the window. I went back upstairs. I says, "They don't have no potatoes down there." "Julia," she says, "The window's full of them!" So she says—I didn't tell her I threw the dime down the gutter. I wasn't going to use that little thing! And [laughs] came downstairs with me, she says, "You see there?" The window was full of five-pound bags of potatoes! [Laughs] I thought I was going to get a hundred-pound bag, and I said to myself coming down the stairs, "If she thinks I'm going to carry a hundred-pound bag of potatoes, she has another thing coming!" And she came back down with me; there were only five-pound bags of potatoes. And they had a telephone, and somebody called looking for her on the phone. And the woman called me, and I went down, and I answered the phone, and I hung up. So I went upstairs and I tell her, "Somebody wants you down on the telephone, down in that place down there." She went down, and she came back. "There's nobody on the phone." I says, "The woman spoke to me!" She said, "What did you do?" I said, "I hung up." I didn't know I could hang up and cut you off! I didn't know what it was all about.

SEGRIST: Was that the first time you had seen a telephone?

CARMODY: Yeah! I didn't know what it was. The woman told me to pick it up and say hello, and I said hello, and I guess they didn't know what I was talking about, so I hung up! But I didn't know that she could come back down—I thought she could come back down and still talk, and I didn't know that! So I hung up on her.

SEGRIST: Was your mother working at that time?

CARMODY: My mother worked in cable works in Perth Amboy.

SEGRIST: The cable—what was the name of the company?

CARMODY: Perth Amboy General Cable Company.

SEGRIST: General Cable Company. And what did she do at the General Cable Company?

CARMODY: They were making wires, you know, like for plugs, the wire liked you plugged in just now? That's what they were making. And she got me a job there.

SEGRIST: Was that your first job?

CARMODY: My first job.

SEGRIST: How long were you here before you got your first job?

CARMODY: Oh, not long, a couple of weeks. Because the girls broke me in on the machine. And the boss, he was a friend of my mother's. But when I would stop, this girl would come to me, start taking to me, or five or six girls would come. They're all standing around me! So this one day I says to the boss, "Is there something wrong with me?" He says, "Now why, Julia? What's the matter?" "Why does all those girls come stand around me when I'm talking to somebody?" "Because they like to hear you talk," because I had the brogue, you know? There was an old guy run an elevator, and he used to come up right in back of where I worked. And he thought I came from Denmark, because on account of my hair. He thought I was Swedish. So the boss told me what he said. I say, "Denmark!" I says, "Where is Denmark?" He says, "It's another country," he says, "But he thinks you came from Denmark because on account of your blonde hair." [Laughs]

SEGRIST: Do you remember how much you got paid at that first job?

CARMODY: Huh?

SEGRIST: How much did you get paid at that first job?

CARMODY: Not much.

SEGRIST: Do you remember how much?

CARMODY: I think I got, like, they paid you by the week, those days. I think the first pay I got was thirty-four dollars, and that was supposed to be a lot of money in those days.

SEGRIST: How long did you stay at that job?

CARMODY: Well, I met John, got married. I was here three years when I got married. Then I had five kids.

SEGRIST: Did you have that job until you got married?

CARMODY: I was working there for three years, at that time. And then the Second— was it the Second World War? I guess it was. And I met one of the bosses on the street, and he said, “Why don’t you come back, Julia? We need help.” I said, “I got five kids. How am I going to go back?” So I came home and my mother was here, and I told her what the guy said. She says, “Go to work,” she says, “I’ll take care of the house.” So that’s what I did, and I put twenty-one years in!

SEGRIST: The second time around?

CARMODY: The second time, yeah.

SEGRIST: Tell me how you met your husband-to-be.

CARMODY: Well, I was sitting looking out the window. And every night I looked out that window, I cried my eyes out, because I hated it.

SEGRIST: You hated it in America?

CARMODY: Oh, I hated Smith Street! And the whistle blew, the fire whistle blew. I went out in the kitchen, I says, “What is that noise?” She says, “A fire.” “A fire?” She says, “Yes.” I says, “Where?” She says, “Around the corner, down there.” So I went down. I’m going to see where this fire thing is. I went down, it was a place they called Rector Street. And I went around the corner, and a lot of people were standing there. And I’m looking, you know, and I don’t know what it’s all about. First thing you know, somebody grabbed me on the shoulder. And I looked around, and I looked up at him. It was John, my husband. He says, “What are you doing here?” I says, “I want to see the fire!” He says, “Julia, the fire is out; there’s no more fire.” He says, “Come on with me.” So he took me down to his mother’s house, and his father, and his father says to him, “Why don’t you take Julia out and show her Perth Amboy?” So he said to me, “Will you go with me?” I says, “Yeah, I’ll go with you.” So we’re walking up and down different streets, and there was a cemetery down in Perth Amboy. And I stopped dead. I says, “What is that?” He says, “They’re ghosts.” He says, “They come up after dark, and they walk around with little lanterns.” Well, I believed him! So when we went back to his mother’s house, the father says, “What did you see, Julia?” “I seen someplace where the ghosts come up at night,” I says, “And they walk around with little lanterns.” So the next night he takes me up another

street, and I see these two green lights. I says, "What is that over there?" He says, "That's a dance hall for the Irish." I said, "Will you take me there?" He says, "Yeah, I'll take you there some night." Went back to his house again, the father asks me what I seen, and I told him. He said, "You seen that building with two green lights?" I said, "Yeah." And he looked at him, and he looked at his son, and he says, "Why are you lying to her?" He said, "I don't lie to her!" "You just told her that was a house for the Irish." And then he says to me, "Julia, you know what that was? That was a police station," [laughs] with two green lights, you know? I said, "Oh, my God!" And he says, "Those things that you seen down in the cemetery—they're lightning bugs." He says, "There is no ghosts in there." He says, "Those little things you seen were flies that have a little light on them, something on their wings that lights up." And he's hollering at John for telling me, lying to me. [Laughs] And after a while, he—but my mother was strict. Lots of times she wouldn't let me go out with him.

SEGRIST: Was he from Ireland?

CARMODY: John? No, no. His father and mother was from Limerick.

SEGRIST: But he was born in the United States?

CARMODY: Yeah. But they were the best mother-in-law, and the father-in-law. They were very good to me, and so was John.

SEGRIST: What year did you get married?

CARMODY: 1924.

SEGRIST: Do you remember the month and the day?

CARMODY: August the third.

SEGRIST: 1924. And can you name your five children for me?

CARMODY: I had Katherine first, then I had a boy. He died about ten years ago.

SEGRIST: What was his name?

CARMODY: Cornelius.

SEGRIST: Cornelius.

CARMODY: Then I had John, another John. I had Katherine first, then I had Alice. She's the one that's in Ireland now; she's coming home Saturday. And Frances. I called her after my mother-in-law.

SEGRIST: Frances was the baby?

CARMODY: She was the baby, yeah. And she still is the baby!

SEGRIST: [Laughs] You mentioned to me before that you really hated America when you first got here.

CARMODY: I did.

SEGRIST: What were some of the things that you really hated about America?

CARMODY: I think I missed everybody. And there was two kids come to visit me, and they were coming up the stairs, and I heard them. And they were fighting, and I heard one of them saying to the other one, "Go to hell." Well, I couldn't believe that! I wrote a letter back to my girlfriends, and told them about the two girls were fighting on the stairs, and I says, "You should have heard the tongue!" I said, "They were cursing!" You wouldn't dare say anything like that back home! Then, of course, I was over here thirty-five years before I went back.

SEGRIST: What was it like to go back to Ireland for the first time?

CARMODY: It was good. I thought she was kidding. She says to me one day—

SEGRIST: You're talking about your daughter Katherine?

CARMODY: Yeah. "Would you like to go back home for a visit?" But I just looked at her. And John says, "You want to go?" Because I thought maybe he wouldn't want me to go. And I says, "I don't know." And he says, "Go! If she wants you to go, go! I'll be all right here with the kids." So when I got off the plane, [unclear], I was standing on the top steps, and my brother and his wife were waiting outside some kind of gate. And he pointed to the wife, "That's Julia up there." She said, "How do you know?" He said, "I know the way she turns her head." He said I used to turn my head a certain way when I was younger, and that's why he noticed that I was me. And it was me!

SEGRIST: Why didn't your brother ever come to America?

CARMODY: He came twice here, on a visit only.

SEGRIST: But why didn't he ever move here?

CARMODY: No! He came here. We took him to Atlantic City, and she was with him. And my God, we couldn't get her away from the machines. Katherine kept giving her silver. We were supposed to go to my son's house for supper, and we were late. Supposed to get out of the hall five o'clock. My God, we never got to his house, and he lived down in that, down in Asbury Park there. We were two hours late before we got there for supper, because we couldn't get the other one away from the machines!

SEGRIST: Now when you were in Ireland the first time, did anything look different to you?

CARMODY: No. Only one woman came there, and she was the one that when she used to have her kids, we used to sit all night and watch her baby for her. And she started talking Gaelic to me. My brother says to her, "Don't talk Gaelic to Julia, because she doesn't know how to talk it anymore; she only talks English." Well, she laid the law down to me! She got mad at me, and I don't know what she was saying, but when she left, Jimmy says, I says, "What was she saying, Jimmy?" "I'm not going to tell you," he says. So then she invited me for supper one night, and I says to Jimmy, "I'm not going." I said, "I don't want her supper, after the way she yelled at me, when after thirty-five years she comes to visit me, and talks like that to me!" So he says, "Okay, we won't go." So we didn't go. So then she let Jimmy in, and she told Jimmy, "I stood all afternoon cooking chicken, and your sister never showed up!" I says, "You can tell her to kiss my behind!" But I knew—I should have said it in Irish. I knew what to say, kiss my ass, [Gaelic]. But he didn't tell her.

SEGRIST: When you first got to America in 1921, did you speak enough English to get by?

CARMODY: Oh yeah, I spoke English, but I would rather somebody talk Gaelic to me. And I couldn't find anybody. There was a woman worked in the cable works, and they used to call her Irish Maggie. She was from Ireland years ago, but she was real old, and she used to sweep the floor. So one day she came along, and she says to me, [Gaelic]. And I looked at her like that, you know, and I says, "Oh, my God! You speak Irish?" "I used to, but no more," she says. I said, "I know what you just told me. I knew what you said." So she was laughing. She got a big kick out of it, you know?

SEGRIST: Were there other immigrants who worked at the cable factory?

CARMODY: What?

SEGRIST: Were there other immigrant women who worked at the cable--?

CARMODY: Oh yeah, a lot of Polish, young Polish people. And I worked with some Colored people, and they were very nice! But of course, the White ones didn't like them, you know?

SEGRIST: Were there any problems communicating to each other, because these people were of different nationalities?

CARMODY: A little bit. When I went in there, he put me with this girl. There was like nine girls in a row, and they're all nice to me. They're all trying to tell me what to do, and how to do it and everything. That's how I learned, from them. And then the Second World's War, I was on the streets in Amboy, and I met one of the old time bosses. And he says, "Julia, why don't you come back? We need help." I said, "Oh, I can't come back." I said, "I got five kids!" So I came home and told my mother. "You go to work," she says. "I'll stay here and mind the kids." So that's what I did, and I went, I spent twenty-one years there.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE TWO

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE TWO

SEGRIST: What part of you is Irish? What part of your personality now is part of your Irish heritage?

CARMODY: I don't know. Well, we had some good times here, when we had parties or anything. My brother likes to sing. And I used to end up singing with him.

SEGRIST: When you were children did you sing together?

CARMODY: Me, not him.

SEGRIST: Yeah, later he sang. Would you have—if a young person came to you and said, "Look, you're ninety-three. You had this long interesting life." What kind of advice would you give a young person about how to have a long, happy, successful life?

CARMODY: Well, I'd tell them, I says, "John and I got married." He died in 1962. Because we had a good life together. We raised those kids, we put them through high school and everything. And Connie—we used to call him Connie, Cornelius. He was in the service, the Second World War. He was in the army, and my younger boy was in the navy. And we had a good live together. He was the kind of guy that if you wanted help, he

was right there to help you. Then he was Fire Chief of Fords for a long time.

SEGRIST: Here in Fords, New Jersey?

CARMODY: In Fords, yeah. And anything I wanted, I got it. The kids, you know, sometimes the kids would be bad, and I used to say to them, "Wait 'til your father comes home." And the minute he would come in, the youngest one, Frances, right away, she's going to tell her story. He'd say to her, "Now you go sit down in the chair there, and when I hear your Mama's story, then I'll come back and hear your story." By the time he went back in, she's gone, run upstairs, and stayed there [laughs].

SEGRIST: Did any of your children ever want to learn Gaelic?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: What about your grandchildren?

CARMODY: No.

SEGRIST: No, no one wanted to learn Gaelic?

CARMODY: Only that [Gaelic], they know that!

SEGRIST: Oh, yeah [laughs].

CARMODY: And the one that was talking to you, she's very good to me. That's her daughter.

SEGRIST: Yes. Well, Mrs. Carmody, this is a good place for us to end. I want to thank you very much.

CARMODY: You're welcome!

SEGRIST: You have been a wonderful interview. You have a great memory, and you're a good story teller.

CARMODY: Oh, these grandchildren—her grandchildren, rather—there's one of the ones, she comes here, she'll sit here, "Tell us a ghost story!" A ghost story, mind you! I had a sister when I left; -she died when I came out here.

SEGRIST: in 1921?

CARMODY: She died when she was only seventeen years old.

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SEGRIST: What did she die of?

CARMODY: They said she had a rheumatic heart? And she had real blonde hair, too.

SEGRIST: This is Paul Segrist signing off, with Julia Carmody. Today is Thursday, July 18th, 1996, and I've been in Fords, New Jersey, with Mrs. Carmody. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW