

EI-794

MARIE LEVONIAN DARIAN

BIRTH DATE: MARCH 29, 1895

INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 22, 1996

RUNNING TIME: 58:13

INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED AND REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 8/1998

TURKEY VIA EGYPT (ARMENIAN), 1921

AGE 26

PASSAGE ON "THE KING ALEXANDER"

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: While speaking English, Mrs. Darian occasionally confuses the pronouns "he" and "she" and uses plural nouns for single nouns. For clarity and understanding in this transcript, I have used the correct form of the word without making any correction notation in the text. Denise Clements, a member of the social services staff, is also present during the interview, having previously procured the permission and support for doing the interview from Mrs. Darian and her family--with the provision that upsetting topics such as the 1915 massacre be avoided if possible because of Mrs. Darian's advanced age (101 years old at the time of the interview). It is also Ms. Clements who set the pace of the interview with signals to me, based on observing how tired Mrs. Darian was getting as the interview progressed. Sadly, Mrs. Darian's younger brother with whom she came to America in 1921 was also a resident in the same facility but was not interviewable. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of Oral History, 8/17/1998.

SIGRIST: I'm Paul Sigrist from Ellis Island. Ellis Island is now a museum. And today is Thursday, August 22nd, 1996.

DARIAN: Yes, I know it.

SIGRIST: Yes, okay, good. Your name is Marie Darian, correct?

DARIAN: Yes.

SIGRIST: What country did you come from?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: What country did you come from?

DARIAN: Aintab, Turkey.

SIGRIST: You're an Armenian who came from Turkey.

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: You're Armenian.

DARIAN: I'm Armenian. I talk Armenian, Turkish and English.

SIGRIST: Yes.

DARIAN: Three languages.

SIGRIST: What year did you come to this country, Mrs. Darian?

DARIAN: 1921.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how old you were when you came?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: How old were you when you came?

DARIAN: I was in my early twenties.

SIGRIST: Do you know what your birth date is?

DARIAN: March 29, March 29, 1895. Isn't that right?

SIGRIST: Yes. And, we're in Troy, New York right now. This
is Heritage House?

DARIAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You live here at Heritage House.

DARIAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And Danielle Clements on the social service staff is
with us also.

DARIAN: I didn't hear what you said to her.

SIGRIST: Oh, I was just introducing her on the tape. You see,
we're recording right now.

DARIAN: Yeah. Why?

SIGRIST: Why? Because I'm, because I'm interested in, in what
you have to say about coming to America. You were
born in Aintab?

DARIAN: Aintab, Turkey.

SIGRIST: Yes. What, what do you remember about Aintab when
you were a little girl?

DARIAN: Well, I went to school over there, American seminary.
I graduated from there. And it's a beautiful
country, a small one, but very beautiful. Very nice

weather. We didn't have severe winter in the
winter time. Very, very little snow. It was
little, and we tried to make (hips?) so we can
slide down. By the time we make it, it will melt
and fall down again. That's, that's what I
remember.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the house that you lived in?

DARIAN: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you describe it for me?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: Can you describe the house?

DARIAN: It was very nice house, ours. Living room and we had
guest room and we had bedrooms and kitchen and we
had, next to kitchen, dining room with the table and
(she pauses)...

SIGRIST: Do you remember what kind of food you ate when you
lived in Turkey?

DARIAN: Well, Armenian food.

SIGRIST: What kind of food is that?

DARIAN: It is meat rich; wheat, meat and vegetable. Most of
it with meat and wheat or rice or with vegetable.
We had very nice meals. Armenians had very nice
food. It is very nice.

SIGRIST: Where did the meat come from?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: Where did you get the meat that you ate? Where did
you get it?

DARIAN: Well, from the store. We got it from the store. My
uncle was very, very good for it. He would bring,
I had three, my, my father and my two uncles. And
one uncle was always, would take around (three
houses?) and...

SIGRIST: What other kinds of food did you eat? Meat and

vegetables. What else did you eat?

DARIAN: Meat on the bread and, well, all kind of things that we make, you know. Every one of them that they, but most of it, almost all of them was meats, either with vegetables or meat, meat, vegetable and meat or rice. Rice pilaf and chicken, turkey, we had all, all of them.

SIGRIST: Did you have any dairy products? Cheese or...?

DARIAN: Oh, yes. Cheese and milk and bread. They would all come to the house.

SIGRIST: What about yogurt?

DARIAN: Yogurt. My mother was, used to make it at home. They sell it in the store, too, but never good. I made my yogurt over here. Since I came to this country, I always make my yogurt in the house.

SIGRIST: How...

DARIAN: I take milk and I make yogurt.

SIGRIST: How do you make yogurt?

DARIAN: You boil first the milk. After it is boiled, it has to be, you know, some, it, it shouldn't be too hot, too cold. Then you put some mixed with yogurt. We call it magart [ph]. And when you put it, then you cover it. Two hours later it is yogurt. I, I showed one of my aides. She would make, just like me, very nice yogurt she would make me. But I wanted to make it but after she came she wanted to learn it. I showed her how to make it. And she said she made it home and it came out very, very nice. She would make it very nice.

SIGRIST: What kind of milk did you use when you make yogurt?
What animal did the milk come from?

DARIAN: From...

SIGRIST: In Turkey.

DARIAN: (she pauses) I can't remember.

SIGRIST: Did you have animals in Turkey?

DARIAN: Cow, but most of it from the lamb, lamb, lamb milk they eat. But we had cow, cow milk, too. What some people had at the house cow or lamb but they bring in the morning to their house and you take the milk. And my mother used to make it with that milk.

SIGRIST: I see.

DARIAN: It is not pasteurized. I don't know whether it is pasteurized or not but they were very nice milk.

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

DARIAN: Elijah, uh, Elia

SIGRIST: How do you spell Elia?

DARIAN: E-L-I-A.

SIGRIST: And his last name?

DARIAN: E-L-I-A, Elia.

SIGRIST: Right.

DARIAN: And last name in Levonian.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

DARIAN: L-E-V-O-N-I-A-N. When I came, I was Levonian, to
this country, my, my father's name.

SIGRIST: Yeah. What did your father do for a living in
Turkey?

DARIAN: She was, (correcting herself), he was businessman.

SIGRIST: What kind of business?

DARIAN: You know those, make dresses, things. He would

design it. You make it. And before it come out, it
was all sewed. He was very good designer, very,
very good designer, and other thing so they had
business and their office.

SIGRIST: What did your father look like?

DARIAN: Very nice man, very nice man. And I was very, when
my father died we were all little kids. When my
father died, we couldn't enjoy him very much. And
my brother, the one that came with me,
that's why I went Ellis Island. My brother was too
young, ten or eleven, something like that.
And they wanted affidavit that he will go
to school. Anyway, he came separated from my
mother. He came with me because he will go to
school. We wanted him to start the school over
here during the World War, you know.

SIGRIST: First World War.

DARIAN: First World War. And Turks close all Armenian
 schools. You can't go to school. But I teach my
 niece, my brothers, some relatives (lessons or

go to?) at home. And they would help out other people, you know, the ones that was their classmates, so.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me about going to school in Turkey? What do you remember about school in Turkey?

DARIAN: In Turkey?

SIGRIST: Yes.

DARIAN: Armenian school? I don't know any about Turkish school.

SIGRIST: But when you went to school, you went to an American school?

DARIAN: Well, first our church would take care of it. But the people are, can pay, pay it. The people cannot pay, the church would pay for it. And then, when you go to American seminary, and there was American college, too, for all the boys. For the girls, American seminary. And then, when you go America seminary, you pay for it. Your father pays

for it. And in the church, those who can pay, they would pay money. They would raise money for it. And the ones that they can never pay, all the children, Armenian children, would go to school, if they want to.

SIGRIST: How old do children begin school?

DARIAN: Five.

SIGRIST: Five.

DARIAN: Five, kindergarten. Three years, kindergarten. And then you go to first grade, second grade, third grade, just like that. And then higher school and then go to seminary, American seminary.

SIGRIST: So how...

DARIAN: Our, our principal was American. Our English teacher was American, and house lady because it was day and night. Some people come outside Aintab, you know, around, the little places that, the cities. They would come. And they wish day

and night to stay there, only go out
vacations, so.

SIGRIST: What was your favorite subject in school?

DARIAN: Well, I can't tell you. All of them was my favorite
subjects. I loved history, too, and I like all of
them. And Turkish language was pretty hard
thing to teach, you know. But it still, I like
all of them.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of your teachers?

DARIAN: Oh, yes. I can tell you, Miss Norton [ph] was house
lady. Our principal was (she pauses), Miss Bray
[ph] was our English teacher and she was very
beautiful, tall, thin lady, our principal. We
were used to like her very, very much. Our English
teacher, too. When, and she like me and my sisters,
too. When she was going for a vacation to
America, she wrote to us cards, our English
teacher, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the first words that you were taught

in English? Do you remember, when you learned English at the school...

DARIAN: Well, when we go to school, from first grade ABC, we started but after we finish it, of course, you can't, you don't talk. You don't have speaking, you know, experience over there. But you can read well, you can write well, you can, and history we got, too, American history, yeah. And our American teachers would give history to us.

SIGRIST: And you enjoyed history.

DARIAN: Oh, yes. I enjoyed it very, very much. I enjoy history, all kinds of history, I enjoy very much.

SIGRIST: Could your parents read and write?

DARIAN: Yes. My father go to school over there and I don't know whether that time there was college. I think he, and they wanted to send American people to send and come to this country, come to be professor (?) but my grandmother cried so much. Then my father said, "No."

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

DARIAN: Maryam

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

DARIAN: I'll tell you, M-A-R-, Mar, Y-A-M.

SIGRIST: Thank you. Do you remember what her maiden name was
before?

DARIAN: Arslanian.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

DARIAN: A-R-S-L-A-N-I-A-N.

SIGRIST: Thank you.

DARIAN: All Armenian names finish with I-A-N.

SIGRIST: Why?

DARIAN: Well, that's the way it is. (unintelligible) side.
They had little different. They don't have I-A-N.
They had different. But all Armenian names of,
when it is finished, I-A-N, it is Armenian.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's personality like?

DARIAN: Very nice. She was very, very nice lady but the
Turks closed all the schools and my mother couldn't
go to school very much. But she learned how to
write, how to read. My father teach her. And she
would read and write and she was very, very nice
lady. Very humanitarian. She would do,
give to the people that they don't have clothes
our clothes that (too small for it?) and she
would give. And she would give our books to them.
We have to buy our books over there ourselves,
you know. The people going to school, they buy
their books themselves. Not like here, over
there. And she would help to anybody. And my father
and my mother was very, very active in the church,
very active, especially my father. In everything, he
would, he was very active person.

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

DARIAN: No, I don't know that.

SIGRIST: You don't.

DARIAN: But I have in the book but I don't know it.

SIGRIST: What did your mother do around the house?

DARIAN: Well, she had, she did everything that, but she had
the helpers.

SIGRIST: Who were the helpers?

DARIAN: We were called to her, Mirambuppe [ph], and we all
born and she was very dear to us, that lady. She
would stay with us and she was very good. She
was very honest, very faithful, very nice
person. They could trust her the house, the
children and everything. She was so
nice. And after she was sick, my brother put, as
soon as my mother cooks, put it, "I'll take to

Mirambuppe [ph]." And he would take it before he eats, you know. She was so nice.

SIGRIST: She was like one of your family.

DARIAN: She was one of the family, yes. I can't say it. When my mother went to Cairo, Egypt, when my sister had first baby, and she took care of us. And I have my grandmother, too. She was, but my grandmother wasn't able to do everything. She would do our washing, everything. She would take us to the bath and she would do everything for us just like, you know, a mother or grandmother, just like a grandmother do it.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me going to the bath?

DARIAN: Well, we have to go outside, not in the house. We don't have bath in the house. You can take showers but when you're washing your hair and everything, you have to go. You could do it home, to make it hot water. It doesn't come like this, hot water, from the things, you know, pipes, over there. You have to take it out with a pail,

put it done and take it out, the waters. And she would make the hot water. We could take showers at home, too, but once in a month we go to, or if you want more you can go. Everybody had their own days. And you go to the bath and take over there. You wash, they wash your hair and then you come home, back again.

SIGRIST: You said that your parents were very active in the church.

DARIAN: Yes.

SIGRIST: What religion were you? What, what kind of a church was it?

DARIAN: It was Protestant church.

SIGRIST: An Armenian Protestant church.

DARIAN: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me what you remember about the church itself?

DARIAN: Well, the church is a, there was three Protestant churches and the, our was second church just next to our house. (?) You could go in a few minutes to the church. There was another one in another location, middle part of the city, and that was called church, first church. And then there was a another one, third. When the three churches come together, they would go to the, always in the one first church because it was the biggest one and the crowds were too big. And our church had over two thousand members.

SIGRIST: How often did you go to church?

DARIAN: Every morning. Every Sunday morning, my father wouldn't leave anybody home, my mother and my father. We go Sunday school, the young people, we've grown up in the church, all of us.

SIGRIST: How did you practice your religion at home?

DARIAN: Every morning my father would read the Bible, pray, and then we would have breakfast. And sometimes,

summer time, he would take us, all of us, the whole family, go outside, you know. There was nice places over there. He would read the Bible. He would pray and then we eat our breakfast over, my mother would take it over there, and then we would come and the bell is ringing. The school bell is ringing. Then we go to school. And they were very religious. They were very, very nice. They raise us in very nice way.

SIGRIST: Can you still pray in Armenian?

DARIAN: I can pray in Armenian, in Turkish and in English.

SIGRIST: Can you say a prayer for us in Armenian on, right now, the Lord's Prayer, perhaps?

DARIAN: The Lord's Prayer?

SIGRIST: Or any prayer in Armenian that you can say.

DARIAN: Well, I say to myself my prayers and I, most of the time in English. And Armenian, I know it. Let me think about it. It is always coming my English

one to my mind. (she laughs) This is Turkish.
(she prays in Turkish)

SIGRIST: Thank you.

DARIAN: This is in Turkish.

SIGRIST: Turkish.

DARIAN: Yeah, in Armenian I know the same thing but I can't
remember it now (she pauses) because most of the
time I say in Turkish and in English.

SIGRIST: Do you remember a song that you could sing in
Armenian?

DARIAN: Well, but, you know, our services was in Turkish in
Aintab because when they closed it, so many people
lost their mother language and so every, our
services were in Turkish. So I can tell you in
Turkish.

SIGRIST: What language did you speak at home?

DARIAN: Turkish.

SIGRIST: Turkish?

DARIAN: Because, you know, it is like our mother language.

But we learned Armenian after we went to Armenian schools. The people like my generation learned Armenian in the school but before that generation they couldn't speak Armenian because they closed all the schools, just the teachers you can talk. If you don't talk Turkish, they'll kill you. So, they lost that language but some can say it. They never lose it. They speak. They don't know any Turkish, you know, they were under Turkish government, too. But they don't look Turkish. But our side, that Beirut, Haleb, Aintab, Aintab is near Aleppo and Beirut, all those places, near (?) places. So, they, they can't, all that generation can't talk. Those who are going to school, after the schools are started, they know Armenian.

SIGRIST: But you always spoke Turkish?

DARIAN: But in the house because your mother knows Turkish.
And, so you talk Turkish but you can talk any
other language. You come out with Turkish
language, you know.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: Can you explain to me how Aintab was affected, the
Armenians were affected in Aintab by the Turks?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: Can, can you explain to me the relationship between
the Turks and the Armenians in Aintab?

DARIAN: Well, sometimes very nice. Sometimes, when the order
comes from Istanbul, they'll come and kill
everybody. Everybody has to go someplace, keep
themselves and then, then another thing comes,
they'll stop. It was always, but my father was
very (?) in the business. We had some Turk

people, too. One of them told me, after my
father died when I grew up, he went to the army.

He says, "The first, when I came first home,
before to go to my home I came to see my boss. And
then I went home," he said. "Why did you do that?"

"Because I love him very much." He was very good with
the, you know, all the employees. He was very, every
one of them. And he was very nice, my father, to
the poor people. Fifteen years after the doorbell
rang. I went to the door and he, he ask about, "I
like to see your father." I said, "My father
died long time ago," and he started to cry. "How,
he can't die. He's poor's father. All the
poor's father. And how he can't die." And I, I
started to cry, too. And I came, I told Mother,
"Somebody's looking for my father and he said that
how that good man can die. He was the father of
all the poor people because he would take care
of." From the church, when somebody's name come,
if it belongs to our church, there was a ladies.
They would go and see and they would come and tell my
father. My father would bring to the meeting and they
would give so much money according the family, how
size it, you know.

SIGRIST: How old were you when he died?

DARIAN: How old I was? I don't know.

SIGRIST: Small?

DARIAN: Yes, maybe twelve, eleven, twelve, uh, and one, one was eight years old, one was seven years old. My last brother was a year and a half when my father died. We were all grade school students, you know, yeah.

SIGRIST: How many, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

DARIAN: I got five, we were five of us, five sisters and two brothers.

SIGRIST: And how do you fall into that group? Are you the oldest, the youngest?

DARIAN: No, I, I was the fourth one and then another sister. She's, we have very little difference. We went to school together. We were, just less than two

years, little bit less than two years we had our
difference. We went, I went only two years. She
went three years but then, afterwards one time,
they mixed lower class and my class together. Then
we two sisters became together. We finished the
school together, seminary we finished. After that
we were always together. But many people (fell
down?) but my sister was all right. She just, we
were together. We go together to school, come
together from (?).

SIGRIST: Tell me why you wanted to come to America?

DARIAN: Well, because of First World War, after that we see
that you can't live, Armenians and Turk people
fight together but the Armenians won the war. But
after that, no Armenian left in that city, every
one of them (those who can't come?). My auntie
wrote letters, "Being rich over there, come and
put in this country . At least you will have
peaceful mind to live over here." And then it
was English people came. It was so nice. We
thought that, "Why, should we go?" And then,
after that, English people went back again, you

know, they backed up. It wasn't good. All Armenians scattered all over, you know, Aleppo, Beirut, Damascus, and in England, (Persica [ph]?), every place.

SIGRIST: Where was your family?

DARIAN: My family, my two sisters was married to, Cairo, Egypt. Some people from our church but they settled in, in, they moved to Cairo, Egypt and they were over there. And then they come to Aintab. They meet. My two sisters was married in Egypt. We came to Egypt. From Egypt, we came to America. We didn't want to stay there. We came, I wrote to my auntie. We lost everything over there, all our money, everything in the bank, every, nothing. We had, came, borrowed money, borrowed money and came to this country.

SIGRIST: So you went from, you, from Aintab to Cairo.

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: You, you went, you went from Aintab (a telephone

rings in the background) to Cairo...

DARIAN: To Cairo and from Cairo we came over here.

SIGRIST: I see.

DARIAN: So,...

SIGRIST: Who, who was traveling with you? When you went from Aintab to Cairo, who...

DARIAN: Well, my brother came first because we wanted him, he wanted to be a doctor for school. And then, when we came, then I came three months later. He came 1920. We came 1921. Seventy six going to be next thing and my brother came earlier than us. Then we came together with my younger one and I was going with, that he would go to school but when we came to this country it was the bad, bad time, you know, depression.

SIGRIST: What, what do you remember about traveling from Aintab to Cairo? Do you remember anything about that?

DARIAN: Well, I came with carriage. There was no, uh,
automobile or anything that time yet. And I came
and from there the boat and I came to Cairo.

SIGRIST: And, and you were traveling with your little brother?

DARIAN: When I was coming to the, no, the two sisters went
first over there. After the war, Aintab (warred?)
with Turks. My mother, my older brother, my
brothers, my one sister and my mother came there.

SIGRIST: I see.

DARIAN: And we came over here, my mother and my sisters left
over there because there was no money enough to
come. We would make money and send them and then
they would come. So they stayed with my sisters
over there.

SIGRIST: In Cairo?

DARIAN: In Cairo. And then, afterwards, my mother came.
Then my sister came. We were all here.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about getting on the ship to
come to America?

DARIAN: Well, we came, you can't take the ship from Cairo,
Egypt. You have to come to Iskandariya. And from
there we get the ship and in Greece they change
the ship. And then we came "King Alexander."

SIGRIST: You came on "the King Alexander."

DARIAN: "King Alexander." It was taken with, I guess,
English people during the war. And then we came
with that ship to America.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about being on the ship?

DARIAN: Well, you know lots of people was sick but I was all
right. My brother was all right. And we met some
people, Armenian people, some teachers, that
they teach. We were all together. We have, in
the morning we would come together and we would have
nice time together. And we were good friends.
And the last, before we arrived we had a very

bad, bad thing, you know. The boat was just going up like that, (she gestures) down, up like that, down. And many, nobody left on the floor except two girls, me and another young girl like me. And we ran to everybody, help them what they want, you know, because there wasn't enough people to help to everybody in the boat, so.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what it looked like where you slept on the ship?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: Where you slept on the ship, what did it look like?

DARIAN: On the beds, in the beds. There was beds like that (she gestures) and like that.

SIGRIST: Do you know how long it took to get to New York on the ship?

DARIAN: We came to the New York. We arrived there. We came out and the people, some, my friend came to meet us. And the man that was going to take us to my

auntie in Detroit, he came to take us out. But when we came, after everything is finished, our papers is all right and everything is finished, they told us that my brother has to go to Ellis Island until the affidavit comes for him, that they would send him, that auntie will send him to school. I know that he will go. That's why I brought him to go to school over here, you know. He was school age because we like education very much, my family. And Aintab is educational city.

It was small place, made three hills, on the three hills. When you come into the city, it has very nice look, so.

SIGRIST: What happened when you went with your brother to Ellis Island?

DARIAN: Well, it was very hard for us. He started to cry and said, "Don't leave me." "I will never you, Brother, " I said, "Wherever you go, I am over there. We will be together wherever we are." We went over there. At night, they were separating the children from the ladies and he, he cried, cried. I cried, too. And then he, he went in

the morning, he would come again and we would be together. In the morning, we were together again. And it was in the afternoon late when we came to Ellis Island. Then, when we came over there, the office man was very, very good to us. He said that, "I'll call your auntie," and my friend and the other one that came to take us over, he said that they will call as soon as possible. Then one whole day we were over there. The third day, the man said that, "As soon as it comes out, I'll put your name on the top." And the next day when we went, my brother said, "Our name is coming up." And all of a sudden it said "Levonian." We were Levonian. And then we came out. The people were ready over there. We go out and we went to my, we stayed for a little, a few hours with my friend and then we went to Detroit.

SIGRIST: So how many days were you at Ellis Island?

DARIAN: Just the day we went, it was afternoon. We had dinner over there. And second day, whole day. The third day, in the afternoon we went.

SIGRIST: So you slept over two nights.

DARIAN: Two nights.

SIGRIST: Two nights.

DARIAN: Just two nights. Slept over there two nights.

SIGRIST: You said you had dinner at Ellis Island. What do you remember about eating at Ellis Island?

DARIAN: I remember just one, it was (?). I don't remember anything else. (she laughs) Just one time we had, in the noon time or at night, that I don't know, bowl that I broke it and everybody had bread and (?). That's all I remember. I don't know anything else over there.

SIGRIST: How old is your brother when he came to America, you little brother?

DARIAN: I said to you I am not sure. Either ten, eleven, something like that, very young. He was very young.

SIGRIST: Where did you, you went to Detroit? Did you say you
went to Detroit? Where did you go when you left
Ellis Island? Where were you heading when you left
New York?

DARIAN: Oh, when we left we went to Detroit to my auntie,
Auntie's family.

SIGRIST: And whose sister is she? Is that your father's
sister or your mother's sister?

DARIAN: No, father's sister.

SIGRIST: Father's sister.

DARIAN: My father's sister my auntie is.

SIGRIST: Had you ever, had you ever met this woman before,
your father's sister?

DARIAN: Well, when we were very young she went to, to
America. They moved over there. Her husband was
over there. Then asked them to come over there,

too. They all went after First World War or before, no, before they were there. Before they were there because she wrote letters to us, my auntie, "Why don't you come to this country?" And that's the way they were before. They were not over there in the World War. And I can, always they send their pictures. With the pictures I, uh, more, I know her in Aintab but she was, she get fat over here. I wouldn't, she didn't know us. I wouldn't know her, you know. But they came and they were somehow, I don't know how, but my brother came before me. And he came to my auntie. And my brother came with my auntie to meet me and my younger brother. And, so my brother find us so quick. We came down from the train and my brother hat was...(she gestures waving a hat)

SIGRIST: How did it feel to see your brother?

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: How did it make you feel to see your brother?

DARIAN: Oh, very good. But, you know what he said to me. My

one foot was on the ground, he said, "This is not country we can stay." And, because he was so disappointed, you know, no work, nothing. But, but still, we like it very much over here. We establish a store here. He couldn't go to school but he was a very good, very loved businessman. He was very good businessman.

SIGRIST: How long did you stay with your aunt?

DARIAN: I stayed only three months. And after I came, my cousin was in Troy [NY], you know.

SIGRIST: In Troy [NY].

DARIAN: First cousin. We don't know each other very well. She was too young. I was too young. And she asked that I was going to New York. I wrote to my friend, "If we come over, can we find any job?" And she said that, "If you come, somebody knows your family very well," (?) in the same church, too, and she promised that she'd give me job. "If you come, I don't think it is, there is any work." When we came Troy...

SIGRIST: To Troy.

DARIAN: To Troy, my, there is a family from our church, he,
they didn't know us but they knew my family. And
he said that, "I'll get job for you over here.
Why to go New York? New York is not to live any
place? It is too much for you." I said, "If you
can get." And my cousin, first cousin, she's my
auntie's daughter, she said that, "Don't go. Stay
here. Don't go." We loved each other so much.
And I said if he can get, he got me, I came
Sunday morning and I went to work Wednesday.

SIGRIST: And what job did you get?

DARIAN: It is Browning [ph] chain, clothing, men's clothing
factory.

SIGRIST: The Browning chain...

DARIAN: Huh?

SIGRIST: ... clothing factory.

DARIAN: Yes.

SIGRIST: And what job did you have there?

DARIAN: Basting, basting. And you know, it was so hard to get job on that days, but I would go over there four or five. Then, I don't know, month after or two months after, I ask boss if he can give job to my brother, too. He said, "I'll see." And Friday he came to me and said, "Call your brother Monday morning to work." So he gave job to my brother. I telegraphed him. There was no telephone yet over, over by, we were living with my first cousin. I was living with them. And telegraphed to my brother, "Come Monday morning. You'll go, you have to go to job." And then the telegram, my brother got my telegram and he telegraphed to me that "I am coming Sunday." But the telegram came after my brother, two hours later. My brother came and it was raining like buckets, you know, and he's looking, looking. The number was under the stairway, long stairway, couldn't see the address and looking. Then he met somebody that,

from Aintab going to church to put the heat on,
and my brother ask, "Please tell me where
Achalian [ph] live." "Over here," he said, "on
Eleventh Street." They are on Tenth Street but
couldn't see. He came to the Eleventh
Street. That's the way he saw the man and then
we see that he's come. And I was so happy. We
didn't know what happened because we didn't get it,
two hours later the telegram came.

SIGRIST: And what kind of job did your brother get in the
factory?

DARIAN: Ironing.

SIGRIST: Ironing.

DARIAN: At that time you can't be, anything that you can get,
you get it because we had no money.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much you got paid for that job?

DARIAN: Yeah, three dollars a week.

SIGRIST: And how many days a week did you work?

DARIAN: Every day, not Saturday, Sunday. Monday through
Friday.

SIGRIST: And what were your hours of working?

DARIAN: 8:00 to 5:00, I think. And sometimes overtime you
get little bit more, you know, sometimes. But
sometimes you get four dollars, five dollars, like
that at that time.

SIGRIST: And what did you do with the money that you made in
the factory?

DARIAN: We put one side, both of us, put one side we have to
send to my auntie. Auntie sent the money. We
had, with the interest, we paid them in one year
because we didn't spend any money. We put in the,
in one side and we paid it, I don't know, in one
year, little after. It was all paid. We were
so happy. You don't know how happy we were to sleep
that night when we sent the last check, you
know.

SIGRIST: How much did it cost your aunt to bring you to
America?

DARIAN: Well, we, we got, we wanted a thousand dollars. And
at that time it, the things were, the boats were
not so expensive, you know. And my brother came
first. Then my younger one and I came. He came
in the first class but we came in the third or
lower. But it didn't, we didn't mind it as
far, as long as we came to this country, you know.

SIGRIST: Do you, do you consider yourself American or
Armenian? How do you think of yourself in terms of
nationality?

DARIAN: Oh, I feel, we feel, we feel that we are Americans,
born here and real American. We are very faithful
to our country, very, very. And we like it and we
love it and we enjoy it.

SIGRIST: Thank you, Mrs. Darian. Thank you for...

DARIAN: We, we like America very, very much. And God gave us

again the money and everything. And thank God.
And my two brothers work hard in this country,
very hard.

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist, signing off with Marie Darian
on...

DARIAN: Levonian.

SIGRIST: Levonian...

DARIAN: And Darian.

SIGRIST: ...Darian on Thursday, August 22nd, 1996. Thank you.