

EI-839

JOSEPH (GIUSEPPE) LOCOCO

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE

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**U.S.: NEW YORK, NEW YORK AND MILWAUKEE,
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[NOTE: This interview takes place in a room where there are others talking in the background.]

LEVINE: Today is December 28th, 1996 and I'm here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with Joe Lococo, who came from Sicily in 1937 when he was eight years of age. I've just inter—interviewed Joe's sister, Santa, and her name is Mazza, and so there will be also a tape of her interview in this collection. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. Okay, if we could just run over a few things again.

LOCOCO: Okay.

LEVINE: Your birth date, please?

LOCOCO: Eleven twenty-eight, twenty-four, 1928.

LEVINE: And you were born in Sicily and the name of the town?

LOCOCO: Is Porticello. [PH]

LEVINE: Porticello. And you were in Porticello up until you left—

LOCOCO: Right.

LEVINE: For the United States.

LOCOCO: Right.

LEVINE: Okay, when you think of Porticello, those first eight years of your life, what are the things that really stick in your mind about it?

LOCOCO: Oh, the little town that—that it was and going to the seashore and catching little octopuses and scurrying around in the rocks and I was just there about a—last year and the town had changed quite—quite a bit. But I used to—my dad used to send me a dime in an envelope and I used to go to a tobacconist that was right on top of the stairs, right in front of the church, and I used to buy candy for the whole neighborhood. [Laughs] Ten cents was a lot of money in those—in those days.

LEVINE: Now, your father had come back and forth between—

LOCOCO: Yes, my father had come up, came here—I don't know exactly when he came here, but he traveled back and forth and it seemed that my mother used to get pregnant at least three times in his travels. And the last time he came back, the war was just starting in Europe and friends of his told him that he should get us out of there, and that's when he started—he start the ball rolling, so-to-speak, in—in trying to get us out of there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Now, you probably have memories of your grandfather.

LOCOCO: Yes. Yes.

LEVINE: What are the things you think of? Did you ever like do things with him or—

LOCOCO: Well, see, the funny part about it is my grandfather was here, too, had come here before my dad in 19—in 19—right after the war, First World War, and he had been here. And then he went back and he stayed back there, and I remember him as a nice old gentleman with a big white moustache and he—he always took me along to the—to the fishing pier and used to look at when the fishermen brought the fish and sold them in the little plaza there. So he was a good friend. He was a nice old gentleman that you—you see in Civil War movies, you know, with the fine moustache and the loving ways.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LOCOCO: So-to-speak.

LEVINE: And how about your grandmother, do you remember her?

LOCOCO: Oh, my grandmother! She always wore black and she always—I always remember she used to take me out when the fellow with the cows used to come along and sell her—sell some milk, and she used to get the milk for us in the little container and she—she would just heat it up to the point where it would get that scum on top.

LEVINE: Right.

LOCOCO: I used to hate that. [Laughs] But then she also was a very fine lady. I was there at—last year I was there.

LEVINE: Oh.

LOCOCO: And went through the house where I was born, and went upstairs and saw the old room, my old room. This lady that lives there—this lady that lives there.

??: I was just wondering if I left something in here?

??: No. [door shuts – unclear]

??: Did the same thing last time.

LOCOCO: Oh, she did? The lady that lived there, we were in the—it—where we lived there was a little square and there's houses all the way around, and we were there looking at the house and this old guy said, "Who"—asked us who we were and I said, "Lococos," and he says, "My name is Lococos, too," and then this lady is coming home and he told us, you know, we used to live there, which we knew. And finally the lady came

home and she said, "Would you like to look at the house?" and we went all the way up the third floor and I saw my old bedroom.

LEVINE: How did it strike you now?

LOCOCO: Oh, it was small. Very small, but it was nice. It was—it warmed the cockles of your heart. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Can you remember the view from the—

LOCOCO: Oh, the view, you looked out and you looked at the square and every—it seemed—in fact, I have pictures of people hanging out the balconies, you know, and there's the laundry hanging up on the other side and it was—it was just like beautiful pictures of old tenements of people hollering back and forth and discussing the catch of the day or the—the—who saw who or whatever.

LEVINE: Huh.

LOCOCO: It was—it was beautiful.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you remember foods? Do you remember in particular things that you liked to eat when you were little?

LOCOCO: Oh, yeah. We used to like to eat—well, it was a lot of fish but we had spaghetti all the time and all done different ways, and not necessarily with sauce. Butter and with broccoli or cauliflower and then there was always the fish. Dad loved the calamaries and the ritzies and the little octopuses that you used to get. And—and the enjoyment was that you could go out and we were that close to the water that you could go out and just catch it yourself, you know. And when the tide used to go out, you used to—I used to go with some friends of mine, just go down there and we would catch the octopuses. They used to hide in little caves and the water would go out and—and we used to catch them. [Laughs]

LEVINE: And then what? You'd bring them home?

LOCOCO: You'd bring them home and we'd eat them, and there was—down—the town was very small and down from our house was just a—say a block away there was olive orchards that we—we used to go into and—and fool around in, as kids fool around out there, you know. Running around.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LOCOCO: And I remember one time I was hiding there. Not hiding there, but I was fooling around there and we used to take the old butcher paper. It was a brown, heavy brown paper and we used to roll them and make cigarettes, and I was smoking one of those and my mother caught me. I don't know how she found out. She nearly tore my ear off, grabbing me and dragging me home. [Laughs] But, yeah, that was a big open field with a lot of olives. In fact, my mother's aunt—I don't know, you would have to ask Sandy, but I'm pretty sure my mother's aunt, which was—she was a Dequesto [PH] and her—this lady's name was Jaco—Jacomina. In fact, two years—four years ago when we went to Sicily, Sandy and I saw her. She was still living there and she had a little grocery store of olive oil and she sold a lot of things. And her husband owned the olive orchards, and he owned all that land and it was called [Italian word].

LEVINE: That was the name of the land or—

LOCOCO: Yeah, the land. Like you would say Sherwood or Bay View or something like that.

LEVINE: I see.

LOCOCO: That was [Italian word]. In fact, more, better example is Milwaukee in relation to Bay View in Milwaukee, just that little ways.

LEVINE: Well, that must have been quite—I mean, I guess that was a good thing, to have a lot of land like that.

LOCOCO: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Oh, sure, at that time, yeah. Now, it's—it's all condominiums down there and it's—it's all—it's all houses.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LOCOCO: Which is sort of too bad.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LOCOCO: But you still say—see, which we saw last time we were there, the—the guy that owns the sheep bring the sheep down and bring them down there.

LEVINE: Shepherd.

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow.

LOCOCO: So it's—

LEVINE: Well, you attended school in Sicily?

LOCOCO: Ah, yeah. Now, we went to Bugaria for school. We attended school, but I couldn't tell you per se what school it was.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about it? What school was like maybe compared to what it was like after you got here or—

LOCOCO: Ah, it was altogether different, and you just, you know, went to—you compared it to a mountain school that you see in the movies, you know. You go and it's all different kids, all different sizes and—

LEVINE: In one room?

LOCOCO: In one room and you had one teacher and then I think Sandy went to the nun schools.

LEVINE: Yeah, she said she did.

LOCOCO: One of them, yeah. Yeah, but I—I don't know why they didn't send me to a priest school. [Laughs] My mother wanted me to become a priest, I think. I think all Italian mothers wish that their sons become priests.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Did you ever have an interest in doing that?

LOCOCO: Ah, well, when I was a kid I was an altar boy and served, you know. In fact, I still do.

LEVINE: Oh.

LOCOCO: At—at my Episcopal church.

LEVINE: Oh.

LOCOCO: [Laughs]

LEVINE: So that's close to being a priest. [Laughs]

LOCOCO: Oh, yeah.

- LEVINE: Well, but you—you were religious? I mean the family was religious?
- LOCOCO: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, the—and the family was very religious and in fact they—my mother always prayed and so my father was very religious. In fact, we're all religious right now. Or I don't know why I said "right now." You know, we're still very religious.
- LEVINE: You still are. Do you remember any religious occasions, either festivals or—
- LOCOCO: The festas. They used to have the festas, and there was only one big church on top of the hill. That was—it was in the middle of town, but you had to go up the big broad steps to get to it. And on—on the feasts of the saints, we used to be very active, you know, and as they have the feasts nowadays, you know. I don't know if you're acquainted with the [unclear].
- LEVINE: Well, I know in New York in Little Italy they have statues.
- LOCOCO: Yeah, yeah, they—they carry the statues and they pin money on—on—on the Blessed Virgin and so on and so-forth. They had those things.
- LEVINE: Yeah.
- LOCOCO: And the patron saint of our town was Morono Lumo [PH] and they have at—at the feast day, they have a big to-do like they do here in Milwaukee, and you know, the thing is all lit up and they have the processions and the fireworks and all the good things that go along with—with the feast, you know.
- LEVINE: Hmm. Can you remember any ceremonies like birth, marriage, death? Any particular ways that—that these events were observed in Sicily when you were a little boy that maybe is somewhat different from here?
- LOCOCO: Well, I remember one where they had a funeral and they came through the town and, you know, they had the—the casket into—inside this cart drawn by horses, you know. And, and the women weeping back of it, and it was always, you know, when they had them exposed in the house where the person died, they always had, oh, wailers, you know, the women that used to cry. They would all be in black and—and whether they were relatives of the deceased or not, they—
- LEVINE: Was that their profession?

- LOCOCO: Yeah, I—I think some of those were professional persons.
- LEVINE: Really?
- LOCOCO: Really. And they just cried and cried and wailed and wailed.
- LEVINE: Wow. Now, the women were wearing black a lot. Was that because someone had died or—
- LOCOCO: That was because somebody had died in their family and they—it was—well, I shouldn't say it was just the old women because I used to see some of the young girls, you know, wear black, too, but eventually I think they got rid of that. You know, eventually the younger people would discard it, you know. They would keep it for a year, year and a half and then just—
- LEVINE: I see.
- LOCOCO: But the old gals always wore it. In fact, I have pictures of my grandmother that shows her in black.
- LEVINE: And she would just wear it all the time.
- LOCOCO: All the time, yeah. Yeah.
- LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Yeah. Well, now, did you have chores or were you too young to have—to take on chores in the family before you—
- LOCOCO: No. I—no, I don't remember having chores.
- LEVINE: And how—how did you feel about coming to America, do you remember what you thought about it or felt before you came?
- LOCOCO: Well—well, I was happy. I knew my mother was traveling back and forth between Bugaria and Palermo because she was trying to get, you know, our papers situated and she was having an awful time. And she told me that she always—she had to pay off somebody, you know, some politician or something or somebody that did a favor. There was always people that you had to pay to—to give favors and—
- LEVINE: Actually, a question occurs to me. In your town, who were the important people? Was it like the priests and then who else would be like an important person in the town when you were growing up?

LOCOCO: Well, definitely the priest was important. Ah, but when—the person that knew how to get things handled, you know, that knew somebody that knew somebody that knew somebody, all the way and I really couldn't tell you any—any—any names or anything.

LEVINE: Oh, no, I didn't mean names. I just meant like, you know, what was really looked up to?

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: It was the priest and—

LOCOCO: It was the priest and—

LEVINE: Police.

LOCOCO: The lawyer.

LEVINE: Were there police?

LOCOCO: The carabinieri, yeah. You know, they—if they knew you, it's—they did things for you.

LEVINE: Did you have a sense as a little boy like what you wanted to be?

LOCOCO: No.

LEVINE: No.

LOCOCO: No, he—I think I was having too much fun. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah, it sounds as if you had a nice childhood.

LOCOCO: Yeah, it was—it wasn't that—

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, so—so your mother was getting everything arranged and did she talk to you about America or did you have your own ideas? Did you know anybody who—

LOCOCO: No. She—she—she didn't—she didn't know anything about here, you know, except I suppose what my dad told her when he came—came home. And there was a friend of ours, his name was Papalardo [PH] that—he—he was either an architect or an engineer and he was our—our good friend and I—I guess he's the one that, as I remember it, was the one that was instrumental in talking my dad into getting us out of there because the war was—well, it already had started because a

couple times, you know, I remember hearing airplanes in the middle of the night in—in the—that was part of the beginning. But—

LEVINE: So, do you remember your goodbyes? Or do you remember how the departure was?

LOCOCO: Ah, the departure was great and it was great because we were going. We were coming here to this country and we had another family, an aunt to my mother, and she had three daughters that were going with us. So we—we did have company, you know, people that—that we knew. So it was easier getting along, I suppose, but I—I loved the ship. The ship was great because I just roamed it all over.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LOCOCO: You know, I just kept moving around and moving around and it was—it wasn't one of these ships that there was, you know, just a tub. It was an ocean liner and it was great.

LEVINE: The Count—the Countess Savoy.

LOCOCO: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Did it have—did it have a lot of—did it have steerage passengers, or it was simply a—a first and second class—

LOCOCO: Oh, no, no, it had steerage passage.

LEVINE: It did have?

LOCOCO: Yes. Yes. They had movie places and places where you can, you know, shuffleboard and all these other games, and they had nice dining rooms, you know, where we ate. And the food was great, as I remember it, you know. So it wasn't just a tub.

LEVINE: No.

LOCOCO: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And did you—do you remember when the ship came into the New York Harbor?

LOCOCO: Yes, we—we—we came in and we saw all these, you know—but I saw the Statue of Liberty through the fog first, and then we saw all the docks coming along, and then we came into a berth. And then it was all jam packed and we came off, off of there and we were steered by,

you know, people taking us somewhere and it was—it was nice and we were very glad after six days. I think it was six or seven days at sea.

LEVINE: And then did you go on a little boat, a ferry to Ellis Island? Do you remember that?

LOCOCO: I—I think so. I don't remember it too well, but I think we did.

LEVINE: Do you have any memories of Ellis Island at all?

LOCOCO: Just long lines. That's about it. Of course, my mother and we had somebody—my dad wasn't there to meet us, but we had some friends from New York that—that met us there.

LEVINE: Well, now, your father had become a citizen before you arrived?

LOCOCO: Before we were born. That's—

LEVINE: Oh, before you born.

LOCOCO: That's why it made us—made us citizens. We were automatic sons and daughters of a citizen.

LEVINE: I see. I see. So I'm trying to figure out why you would have been sent to Ellis Island.

LOCOCO: We—

LEVINE: Perhaps because you weren't met.

LOCOCO: That could—that could possibly be.

LEVINE: Because if you traveled first or second class, chances are you wouldn't have gone there.

LOCOCO: Well, that could—that could be. Yeah.

LEVINE: But anyway—but your father didn't meet you, but friends—

LOCOCO: Friends met us and they got, expedited the paperwork and—and then we stayed at their—their house or their apartment for a couple days.

LEVINE: Oh, and this was in Albany? Is that where you went? Is that—

LOCOCO: No.

LEVINE: Where—where did you go first, do you remember?

LOCOCO: In New York.

LEVINE: Oh, in New York City?

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LOCOCO: Yeah, yeah, and then we came here to—to Milwaukee where my dad was living with my—my Aunt Shefflo [PH] and when we got here, we stayed there for I don't know how long, and then we—we rented a house across the street.

LEVINE: Do you remember any first impressions? Those first days and weeks, first impressions of things in this country that maybe were different?

LOCOCO: Oh, well, you know, we—we didn't get out very much in New York. In fact, I know we took the train and the train was across the street from Ellis Island. Not across the street from Ellis Island, down—there's—there's another island, the main island where the railroad station was.

LEVINE: Well, there were—it could have been New York City, Manhattan, where you took the train from. It could have been Hoboken, from New Jersey where you took the train from.

LOCOCO: Wasn't there directly down from the Statue of Liberty there's a railroad station. There used to be a railroad station?

LEVINE: Well, there was the elevated subway that went probably to the railroad station.

LOCOCO: Oh.

LEVINE: You might have taken that.

LOCOCO: But I know that we—we got on the railroad station. We came here. That's been—

LEVINE: Was it—do you remember that railroad—that train trip? Were you—

LOCOCO: No, I—I don't. That—

LEVINE: How was the—how was it with the language? How was learning the language for you?

LOCOCO: It—it was okay. It—got beat up a couple times with the neighborhood kids, but—and I remember going to Cass Street School in Milwaukee and that was hard. They put me in Special B because that was for retarded kids, I guess, and since you didn't know how to speak English, you were retarded, so-to-speak. [Laughs] But—but I—I—it was a slow learning person. They put you in the class with slow learning people. So that's—and you'd learn how to speak English on the street with the—with the gangs or—not gangs. The kids.

LEVINE: Kids. Let me—let me just pause here and turn the tape.

[END OF SIDE A]
[BEGIN SIDE B]

?: Yeah, let's go.

LEVINE: Okay, so did you have any teachers that were particularly helpful to you in—in learning English?

LOCOCO: No. I don't think so.

LEVINE: Yeah, and did—were there a lot of other children who were coming from European countries in your class?

LOCOCO: In our class?

LEVINE: Or in your school that you recall?

LOCOCO: No, not that I recall from—from Italy.

LEVINE: Were you called a 'greenhorn' by—I mean, was that a term that was used around you?

LOCOCO: No. No.

LEVINE: It was used in New York, I know. Greenhorn.

LOCOCO: No, a dago or a—you know, but there were a lot of Italian families in the area and of course the—the kids were, you know, American, Italian-American and they didn't know how to speak Italian and I—I didn't know how to speak English. And I'm sorry to say that they weren't helping the Italian kids. They were helping the German kids.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LOCOCO: Because this—this area was predominant German, you know, so—but I—I really don't think in real honesty there was any extra help for us.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LOCOCO: You know, nobody—no teacher took you aside and said, "Come here, I want to show you something." They just sort of let you go.

LEVINE: Was—was it hard for you the fir—like those first—before you got the language, was it difficult?

LOCOCO: Yeah. Oh, yes. Sure.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LOCOCO: Sure. They had--St. Rita's was an Italian parish and some of the kids helped out there, you know. Took you under your wing and showed you things, but as a whole, the public school, I think—I personally think it was a failure.

LEVINE: Um-hmm.

LOCOCO: But we got through it.

LEVINE: Right, right. Somehow you did.

LOCOCO: Yeah, you managed.

LEVINE: And how about like your mother and father, were they—were you—at some point you probably knew more English than they did.

LOCOCO: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm, and my mother wanted to learn English and—and she didn't—she knew English more than we gave her credit for. Of course my mother—my father was out working and he was working in the coal yards and worked for the railroad. He was a hard worker and I used to dread to see him come home because he—he worked delivering coal and he'd be black as can be, you know, and—but he provided for the family. He had to do what—what—what was—you had to do what you had to do.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

LOCOCO: So, it was—it was a good life in the family because although we didn't have much money and we—we didn't have much, we—it was always happy. We entertained ourselves. We used to—my dad loved music

and we used to have a little band, make little bands and sing and it was very family orientated.

LEVINE: Well, of course, you came here, it was still Depression time.

LOCOCO: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, and I remember going down the Third Ward from the East Side to get—they had a toy lending center that you could take a toy out for a week, you know, and use it and then bring it back at the end of the week and take another toy out. You know, like a scooter or a tricycle or something like that, and—but we sort of entertained ourselves, you know, and it was always family. Family.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you go through the phase where you felt embarrassed for your mother and father because they weren't American?

LOCOCO: No.

LEVINE: No?

LOCOCO: No. No, that never.

LEVINE: Yeah. I mean, it seems like the society has come full circle, but there was that period when—when the children got ahead of their parents.

LOCOCO: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: And then they—

LOCOCO: No. No, it wasn't that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LOCOCO: In fact, it was always a lot of fun, a lot of joking around that—it was a happy time.

LEVINE: Okay. So then what did you do? After you finished school, what—what kind of line of work did you go into?

LOCOCO: Well, when we—I finished school, I was working for at that time Gimbels, worked as—as a window trimmer or assisted in window trimming and I worked there for quite awhile. And then, oh, gosh. Then I worked in a machine shop and from there I went into—eventually went into sales and I've been in sales for forty-five years now.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LOCOCO: So—[Laughs]

LEVINE: That's your niche.

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, tell me, when you look back on your—the fact that you came here as a—as a—as a boy and do you think the fact that you started out somewhere else and then you sort of were uprooted and started out again in another place, do you think that influenced like the kind of person you became or somehow played a part in—in your life and in your person?

LOCOCO: Hmm.

LEVINE: Just this idea of two different worlds, you might say, experienced as a child.

LOCOCO: Two. Two different cultures, really.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LOCOCO: Yeah. Well, I think so. I think my—the family relations, you know, that I had and our family that's—that's carried us through, really. It—it really—

?: Oh, I'm sorry. Are there any coats in here?

LOCOCO: No.

LEVINE: No. [door shuts]

LOCOCO: It really was the family that—that made the big impression on you, you know.

LEVINE: You mean the fact that the family went through this transition together?

LOCOCO: Sure. Sure.

LEVINE: It brought you closer.

LOCOCO: And stuck together, yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, that's interesting.

LOCOCO: All the way through. Sure.

LEVINE: Hmm. And—and how do you think of yourself now? I mean how do you—how do you put your American and your Italian sides together? How—[unclear]

LOCOCO: Well, I love the Italian culture and very proud to be Italian, and I love the American culture, too, but it—it just—one is one and one is the other and you enjoy both of them, you know. You don't say "I love this one better." It—it's—you know, this country with all the—the craziness and all the political things that go on and everything, I still would—wouldn't want to leave this, you know.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LOCOCO: And I—I wouldn't want to leave my Italian culture. I still would say I'm Italian, you know.

LEVINE: Can you—can you—I don't know if this is possible, but can you say what it is about the Italian culture that you hold so dear and what it is about the American culture that you really value?

LOCOCO: Well, the Italian culture is—is the art, going back all to the Roman times that they—they had—they had enough—I don't know, foresight or whatever to run just about half of the world, you know, in Roman times. There's such history all the way back, and then the Renaissance, there's so much there and I been to Florence and you could stay there for a month and still not see everything, and the basic laws that the Roman Empire brought forth. And—and the families. Now, going to American, you have to admire the Americans of—
[children yelling loudly in background] Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey. Taking the Americans and building such a great country and literally pulling themselves up by the bootstraps and—and building a country like this that there is, and—and the get up and go. It's very simple, get up and go that this country has in doing things, in getting things done. You know, they have a saying, "you ask two Italians a question and they give you seven—seven different answers, seven different opinions." So in America you don't. You ask a question and they answer it and you get, go and do it. So maybe that's the difference.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. Uh-huh. And how—what makes you feel satisfied thinking about your life and what you've done and who you are? What do you feel satisfaction about?

LOCOCO: Oh, I—my family and my wife and—and the things we have, you know. We have our own home and we have three children, six grandchildren and they're all doing great, and that's all you hope for. And you hope that you did the best you could, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LOCOCO: And hope to God that everything turns out okay.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I forgot to ask you about your wife. How did you meet your wife?

LOCOCO: Well, my—my wife, she's—she worked for Domesturtle [PH] Candy Company in Chicago and I was the broker for the company, selling the candy in Wisconsin, and I met her at—at a sales meeting. And from then on, she eventually about three years later after I met her, she—she wanted to move out of Chicago because of the rat race that, you know, traveling back and forth to the Loop. She lived in Naperville and she came to work for us, for the company I was working for and she started sales. And then we got together and got married.

LEVINE: And her name?

LOCOCO: Is Kathleen.

LEVINE: And her maiden name?

LOCOCO: Ah, Kathleen Fay Metz.

LEVINE: M-E-T-Z?

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And your children's names?

LOCOCO: Ah, Ricky, Danny and Deborah.

LEVINE: Okay. And you have grandchildren?

LOCOCO: Yeah. You want to know their names?

LEVINE: Well, I don't know. How many are there? [Laughs]

- LOCOCO: There's—there's five of them. Why don't we leave them out.
- LEVINE: Yeah, okay. We'll say five grandchildren. Okay, I'm trying to think if there's anything else. Now, are—are you working now?
- LOCOCO: Yeah, I'm retired.
- LEVINE: And how is that? How is retirement for you, when your children are grown?
- LOCOCO: It's—it's—it's nice. I—I'm semi-retired, I should say. I work three days a week, and I'm still selling candy. And I'm enjoying it. I'm enjoying it. I—I—the Social Security allows me to make so much monies and then—then I stop working and just take—I took the whole month of December off.
- LEVINE: Oh.
- LOCOCO: So it—it's working out for me.
- LEVINE: Oh, so it's a nice combination of leisure and—
- LOCOCO: Right, and eventually I'll—I'll retire all the way through, the good Lord willing.
- LEVINE: Yeah. Well, do you have any—what do I want to say? Any plans or hopes or dreams that you—that you want to do now? Now that you're going to have more time than—than you've had?
- LOCOCO: No, I—I have—although I haven't done it lately, I have a potter's wheel in my little studio at the house and I have a kiln and all the clays and glazes and I hope to do some of that. In fact, I have a bunch of pots that should be glazed and stuff like that. And I love cooking and that—that's working out okay.
- LEVINE: Oh, great. Do you have any recipes from Sicily that you actually use?
- LOCOCO: No. Well, I—I—I use cooking octopus, the recipe there.
- LEVINE: Oh, can—do you know it by heart? I mean can you say it?
- LOCOCO: Well, you—you have a pot full of water and you throw some salt in it and then when it boils, you get the octopus and you hold it there and you dunk it three times. That's so it makes the arms go up, that it stimulates the meat.

LEVINE: Huh.

LOCOCO: That's what my dad used to tell me. And then you cook it and you let it cook and then you—you get a brown paper bag and put the brown bag, paper bag on top of the pot and you shut it off and put the cover on top of the paper bag and the paper bag will absorb all the fishy smell. And then you—you slice it up and make a salad out of it. And there's breaded chicken. Of course, you take the bread—the chicken and you wash it down with salt and then you take the breasts and you dip 'em in oil and you—you take the bread crumbs and you—you throw in Italian seasoning and garlic and salt and pepper and anything else you want in there, and then dip it in oil and you—you bread it, and then bake it in the oven, and it's very delicious.

LEVINE: Hmm. Sounds great. Okay. Well, is there anything else that I might not have covered that has to do with coming to this country and—

LOCOCO: I don't know.

LEVINE: And really living your life out here.

LOCOCO: Yeah. No, I don't think so. We covered it pretty good.

LEVINE: Well, when—when you visited Ellis Island—

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that was—did that bring back memories or did you have any feelings when you visited or—

LOCOCO: Ah, I really enjoyed it. I—I could—you know that big hall they have, I visualize all the—all the benches that everybody used to sit on.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LOCOCO: But it—it was very nice. It was—it brought back a lot of memories. I was surprised how many people went through.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LOCOCO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Over twelve million.

LOCOCO: Yeah.

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LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, well, when you visit next time, you let me know—

LOCOCO: I sure will.

LEVINE: And I'll show you around. I want to thank you so much. I've been talking with Joe Lococo, who came from Sicily in 1937 at the age of eight.

LOCOCO: Eight, right.

LEVINE: And today's December 28th, 1996 and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]