

EI-89

ANNA ZAGAR KLARICH

BIRTH DATE: MARCH 29, 1902

INTERVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 12, 1991

RUNNING TIME: 57:58

INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST

RECORDING ENGINEER: BRIAN FEENEY

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND RECORDING STUDIO

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 1992

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YUGOSLAVIA, 1920

AGE 18

SHIP: "THE AMERICA"

PORT: TRIESTE

RESIDENCES:

- **YUGOSLAVIA: BANYALOKA**
- **US: BROOKLYN, NY**

SIGRIST: Good morning. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Thursday, September 12, 1991. We're here with Anna Klarich here at Ellis Island, who came from Yugoslavia in 1920 when she was 18 years old. Good morning.

KLARICH: Good morning.

SIGRIST: Mrs. Klarich, can you please give me your full name, and include your maiden name in that.

KLARICH: Okay. Anna, A-N- ... you want me to spell it?

SIGRIST: Anna is okay.

KLARICH: Anna Zagar--Z-A-G-A-R, that was my maiden name--and Klarich is my married name. K-L-A-R-I-C-H.

SIGRIST: And what is your date of birth, please?

KLARICH: March 29, 1902.

SIGRIST: And where were you born?

KLARICH: I was born in, it was an Austrian dynasty before the World War I, but then after the World War I, it became Yugoslavia. So I came from Yugoslavia. After 1918, was Yugoslavia.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the town?

KLARICH: The name of the town was Banyaloka.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that please?

KLARICH: B-A-N-J... No, I'm wrong. B-... B-A-N-L-O-K-A, Banyaloka... Oh, God! I spelled the whole thing wrong. Can we erase it?

SIGRIST: That's okay. Don't worry. It's okay.

KLARICH: I should really write it down. I can't...

SIGRIST: It's hard to remember.

KLARICH: It's hard to... I missed...

SIGRIST: Sure.

KLARICH: But I mean, I could correct it. Can he correct it?

SIGRIST: Don't worry! It's okay. After the interview, we'll write it down. Did you live in that town as a child?

KLARICH: I lived in there. I was born there. And I went to school and I was baptized and confirmed in our church. It was St. Jacob's Church.

SIGRIST: And what denomination?

KLARICH: The Catholic, Catholic, Roman Catholic, yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the town for me? What did it look like?

KLARICH: It looked like, it was a big village. We had about fifty-six houses. And we had three, we have two general stores. We had a butcher shop and we had two restaurants like inn, you know. Two. And then we had school. We had church. And we had lot of people, you know, a lot of people living in there. It's not so many now, but there was lot when I was born and when I lived there.

SIGRIST: So it was a good sized town when you lived there.

KLARICH: It was a good size because we had a church and a school and everything was in our town then. We had lot of little villages around there that the children used to come to our school and the people came to our church because it was just one church in our village.

SIGRIST: These people from the outskirts.

KLARICH: From the outskirts. Then we had two, did have couple of branch churches and was Stena and Ible, but they only had the mass maybe once, celebrated once a year. But in our place, it was every Sunday and everyday who wants to go to church.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the church you went to, to me? What did it look like on the inside?

KLARICH: It was a beautiful church. We had the twelve apostles and we had the altar and St. Jacob's, it was our patron name, you know, church. And it was just beautiful. We used to go and we went to church every Sunday. I went with my grandmother all the time. And when I was old enough, we went with the children. We had a service, and it was just a lovely, little town. And we had, we had really good time. It was happy time.

SIGRIST: Would you say that most people in the town were Catholic?

KLARICH: All of them. All of them and all the surrounding. That was the only religion that I know when I was there that was. There was no other religion except Catholic.

SIGRIST: There was no Jewish population?

KLARICH: No Jewish, nothing. Nothing. No Jewish. No, the Orthodox Catholics, it was just the Roman Catholics.

SIGRIST: I see. Let me talk about your parents now. What was your father's name?

KLARICH: My father's name was Jacob. Jacob. And my mother's name was Maria.

SIGRIST: What did your father do for a living?

KLARICH: My father, we had little farm in our village. And then my father in the wintertime, he used to go to Czechoslovakia to make money to support us because you need money to, on a farm, you don't make money, just make enough for yourself. But going to, to Czechoslovakia, he made some money to support us and then he made enough that he had enough for summertime. And then in the fall, maybe in September, October, he went back to Czechoslovakia for five or six months.

SIGRIST: How did he make money in Czechoslovakia?

KLARICH: What he did make money, they, he went to these taverns and sell candy and goods, you know, like they do in cafe. That's what. All the men from our village went over there to Czechoslovakia and make money like that, you know.

SIGRIST: Was Czechoslovakia a richer area?

KLARICH: It was the, wait a minute, it was near Prague, but it wasn't right in the Prague. It was outskirts of Prague. And I forgot, Hesevenchi, he wrote the address. It was Bohemia, but that was Czechoslovakia, you know. But it was near Prague that they went to these cafe houses and make

money just like they do here, you know, selling candies and whatever they sell, you know.

SIGRIST: Did he make the candies or did he buy them?

KLARICH: No, no. He bought the candies and then he, he had a nice basket, you know, carry around, and when they had these people in cafe, you know, young people, young girls and well-dressed young men would buy a candy or little heart design, a cookie or something for his girlfriend, and that's how he made money. That's how they make money.

SIGRIST: What was your father like as a person? Let's start by what he looked like. Describe him.

KLARICH: My father was a very handsome man. (she is moved) He was six foot two tall and he was very handsome and very, very good man. And he, he was just a wonderful person. And my mother and father were so very much in love. She was seventeen when they got married. He was twenty-three.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

KLARICH: Maria. Maria.

SIGRIST: What was her maiden name?

KLARICH: Zdravic. Z-D-R-A-V-I-C, well that was her maiden name. And then her second name was Zagar. Z-A-G-A-R.

SIGRIST : After she married your father.

KLARICH: After she married my father.

SIGRIST: Was she from that town also?

KLARICH: No, she was from another smaller town. Her, her parents, my grandparents, had a grocery store. They had a winery. They had, it was like an inn, you know. They had, they were, they had a restaurant. The people come and eat and drink. And they had dance. They had harmonica. And so they had really good time, you know, over there.

SIGRIST Is that how your parents met?

KLARICH: My, they went to same church and same school and that's where the met, you know. So my mother was seventeen and they got married. Father was twenty-three. And then when she was, my mother was twenty-five, she was, my father died seven years after they were married. And he left four children. My brother was only three months old, and I was six years old when my father died.

SIGRIST: What did he die of?

LARICH: He had double pneumonia. And he, he was just, my mother was so broken-hearted she was unconscious all the time while he was laid out, you know.

SIGRIST: You remember this.

KLARICH: That's what I remember. When he was sick and he had such a high fever, and the lady had an orange next door. Lady had orange, and she was giving it to my father that he could just swallow that juice for the fever was

so high. And then when he passed away, they had funeral procession, you know. And then over there, it was a custom, we all had candles. And I was six years old and I was sitting on a bench. And you know how the children are six years old, I tilt that candle and that wax was all over my apron, you know, and my grandmother said, "Oh, look at the wax on you!" But, you know, what does a child six years old know? I do remember that. And then I remember when we took my father to church and then the cemetery was right in the back of the church. And so that was it. Then my mother struggled for two years to try to support us.

SIGRIST: You said there were four kids.

KLARICH: Four children.

SIGRIST: You mentioned your brother and you. Who were the other two?

KLARICH: My brother and my two sisters. It was four of us.

SIGRIST: What were your sisters' names?

KLARICH: My sisters' names: One was Maria and one was Johanna Ivanka.

SIGRIST: And they were older than you?

KLARICH: No, I'm the oldest and my brother was the youngest. He was three months old when my father passed away.

SIGRIST: So your mother had her hands full, and she was trying, and then her parents tried to help her but it was too much of a burden to help her get along.

SIGRIST How did they try to help? Did you move in with your grandparents?

KLARICH: No, no. We stayed in our house and then we, my parents had a store, and they had, you know, a little money, but they have ten children. You know, they couldn't help everyone.

SIGRIST: Your grandparents had a store.

KLARICH: My grandparents, yeah. But my, my mother then, my mother had two brothers here In America and they said, "You come over here and try to earn some money to support your family." So my mother asked my grandmother if she would take care of four of us, and my grandmother said, what could she do? That was my father's mother. She said yes, she will take care of us if she goes to America to make money to support us. Then in the meantime, my aunt was a widow, too. That's my father's sister. She had four children. So she said, "You took Maria's children." She said to my grandmother, "You took Maria's children. You take my children too." My grandmother said, "Oh, my God! Eight children!" It was all from two to eight. See? My brother was two years old when my mother left. I was eight. And then my four cousins, the oldest, he was, Jacob was about six months younger than me and then it was two years apart, you know, all of them.

SIGRIST And your grandparents are elderly people at this point?

KLARICH: My grandmother was, she was fifty-five years old when she took over eight children, to take care of us. So, well, she struggled and then my mother and my aunt sent the money for us to live on, to support.

SIGRIST: Do you remember your mother leaving for America?

KLARICH: (she is moved) I do. I'll never forget that. She was standing on the podium at train. The tears were just going like a spigot, you know. And I was there hanging on my grandmother's apron, and I was eight years old. And see, I didn't realize it then what my mother, how she was just crying, leaving four children and going someplace to strange country, didn't know the language and she didn't know what was going into it, you know. It was heart-breaking. That picture I'll never forget as long as I live, you know. And she came here and then she worked and she sent us money. So did my aunt. So then we got along all right. She left in 1910 and they left in 1910 to come to America, and then my grandmother took care of us.

SIGRIST: Let's talk about your grandmother.

;KLARICH Oh, my...

SIGRIST: Because she obviously was important to your lives.

KLARICH: She was, yes.

SIGRIST: What was she like as a person?

KLARICH: She was such a good person. She was such a good person and a very, very religious person. And she was forever praying. She couldn't sleep at night. And she had these wooden beads and she would pray her rosaries, and then we would sleep in another room. And when we, we had a bad dream, we woke up and we listened for grandma's beads, because when she couldn't sleep she was praying. And then, when we said, "Grandma, can we come to your bed?" "What's the matter?" "I had a bad dream and

I'm afraid." She said, "I've already got two over here." Two of the other kids got bad dream and they were scared so they come to Grandma. She said, "Just say a prayer. Just say your rosary and you'll go back to sleep," so that's what we did, you know. But sometimes she had four kids sleeping on her bed because we had a bad dream and then we all come in her bed, you know.

SIGRIST: What was grandpa like?

KLARICH: Grandpa was, grandpa died before I was born. Grandpa, I never saw my grandpa, my father. I did my grandpa, my mother's parents were both alive. They were even alive when I, the grandma was alive when I left for this country. But Grandpa died before. But my father's father, my Grandpa, I never met him. He died two months before I was born so I never. But my grandmother, she was a wonderful person.

SIGRIST: Was she a good cook?

KLARICH: Oh, she was a good cook. She was so good. And you know what? My aunt used to send her dollar to buy herself a little bit wine because in Europe they believe if you have a glass of wine that gives you strength. So she put a little lump of sugar in that big glass of wine, and then she had a, a white bread and she would cut, but she give us each a piece of bread, you know, she cut it and she cut for herself, too. She cut ten pieces. Then she liked to dip that bread in the wine and then, and then we said, "Oh, Grandma, can we dip our bread in your wine?" And she said, "Go ahead." By the time eight pieces went in that glass, there was nothing left. She said, "Here, they send me money for my strength and here I got nothing," you know. It was just a sad, but it was a good life. I mean, we were happy.

SIGRIST: What was it like growing up in a house without parents, and with cousins?
I mean, this is a noisy household, I would imagine.

KLARICH: That's what my grandmother said. See, first there was just four of us and she said we were like angels. But when the other came, I mean, it was a little friction between, but we got along really, really good. Because she said, "Now, you say your prayers and God will take care of you and you listen to this," and we did. We really obeyed just what she told us. She gave us wonderful advice. She just told us, told us, "Behave yourself, be good. Don't wish nobody bad luck. If you can help somebody, do it. If you can't, leave them alone." That was her advice, her philosophy. And she said, "God will take care of you." Well, she was really very religious. She was very, very lovely person.

SIGRIST: Did you have to help out around the house?

KLARICH: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: What did you have to do?

KLARICH: Well, I was the oldest one. I have to do, to go to the store if what we need something. Then help with the washing clothes. We didn't have washing machines. We had to do it by hand. And go and get the water. We didn't have running water. We went to a well and bring the water in, you know. And then we work on a field. And we went to school. And we went to church.

SIGRIST: You said you worked in the field.

KLARICH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did she have a plot of land?

KLARICH: Yes, yes. We had a, that's how we raised our vegetables, you know.

SIGRIST: What kind of vegetables did you raise?

KLARICH: We raised everything. We had rye and we had wheat and we had corn and we had potatoes. We had beans, we had a lot of cabbage. I mean, it was a lot. I mean, we had a quite nice little farm.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the house for me where you lived?

KLARICH: The house was a, it was an old house when my grandfather bought it in 19, 1893. It was a school house that was two years, two hundred years old when my grandfather bought it, because they built a new school after that. So my grandfather, it was a beautiful room. One was a big room, you know, for the first, for the higher grades. Then there was two other rooms for the lower grades. And then, that's how the house was.

SIGRIST: And your grandfather converted it?

KLARICH: Yeah, in, in a living... So we had a nice, it was, it was a beautiful little house, too.

SIGRIST: Was it stone?

KLARICH: It was concrete and then stuc... stucco around, you know. It was a well-built house. It was two hundred years old when my grandfather... It's still

standing.

SIGRIST: One story.

KLARICH One story, yeah.

SIGRIST: How was it heated?

KLARICH: Heated, we had a wooden, oh, we had that built-in stove. You know, they have those old fashions, and they have the ceramic on the, in the, in the inside, and we used to fire it from the kitchen, from the back, you know. It was a lovely, lovely house and it was a nice, lovely house, just nice. We had three, three rooms and a kitchen. And then we had, we had some cows and we had chickens. I mean, it was...

SIGRIST: Were the animals pets or were they more for food?

KLARICH: For food. It was for food. And we had, we had about three cows and I don't know how many chickens we had, you know?

SIGRIST: So you didn't name your cows or anything like that.

KLARICH: Yes, we did.

SIGRIST: Oh, do you remember what their names were?

KLARICH: Well, one was Detchka. One was Taletza, and one was Belsa because she was mixed up--she had brown spots and white belts. So we had, you know, Taletza, Belsa, and oh, I forgot now what I say the other one was. Anyway, whatever I did, it's there, you know.

SIGRIST: Did you have to milk them?

KLARICH: Yes, I milked them. Um-hmm. So that was our food. You know, we had milk and then we had, made butter. We had butter milk and we had butter and we had milk to live on.

SIGRIST: Grandma was a busy woman, wasn't she?

KLARICH: She was a busy woman. She was a very busy woman. Very busy woman. So that was, that was the life, you know.

SIGRIST: What was your school life like? Talk about going to school.

KLARICH: Oh, school life was wonderful. I had very good grades in school. It was very nice. It was lovely. When I went to school and my teacher would pick on me, when she give us a poem to remember and then I used to rehearse it in front of the class, you know. And then she give us a poem to learn by, you know, to remember it. So I came home and I read the poem right away and I remember it. So the next day, when she asked me to come to the front of the class to rehearse that poem, I was able to do it. Then one time she gave me a poem of that General Radetski. Maybe you heard in history. He was an Austrian general, General Radetski. And was two and a half pages full. And she said, she told everybody, you know, you can, she give us on Wednesday and she said, "On Monday, we're going to rehearse that," you know. So I came home and I started reading. I said, "I had enough time till Monday." And the next day she called on me and I only remembered a little bit, and I was never so embarrassed in all my life. And she know I was embarrassed but she got so much confidence in me that she thought I will be able to rehearse that the next

day, but it was too much. And she gave us enough time, you know, you get lazy and you think, "Oh, I got lots of time to do it." So then I came home and I remembered that, everything the next day. I raised my hand and I asked her if she wants me to recite. She said, "No, wait until Monday," you know. But I was so embarrassed. But that was a lovely...

SIGRIST: Were any of your cousins in your class with you? Was this a one-room schoolhouse?

KLARICH: It was a two-room schoolhouse. We had a first, second, third and fourth grade school. So you pass, I pass every grade: first, second and the third grade. Then I was in the fourth grade three years because we didn't have no higher school, no higher classes in my village. But if you want to go to high school, it was twenty kilometers to go over there, so I didn't go, so I just finished the school in my school.

SIGRIST: Was your grandmother supportive of the children getting an education, or did she really want you home working?

KLARICH: She wants us to have an education. She sent us to school. And she also, we have time to help her out on the farm. So that part was okay. I mean, it was, we managed to do it like that. In between all of us, we managed to do it. And then we got, we had some good handyman. He was really good. Like, like he was a good neighbor and a good friend and he help us out because we didn't have no man in the house, you know, just the children and the grand, my grandmother and my aunt. But then my aunt got married a couple of years after my mother left. She got married. So it was grandmother alone, you know. And then one of my sister passed away. She had diphtheria.

SIGRIST: How old was she?

KLARICH: She was even when she died. And then one of my cousins went to baby sit for her cousin, so then it was just six of us left with the grandma.

SIGRIST So bit by bit...

KLARICH: Bit by bit, but anyways, it was six of us until 1915. In 1915, my grandmother passed away. I was thirteen years old.

SIGRIST: How did she die?

KLARICH She died, she start coughing. She never went to doctor. So then when that undertaker was, make the death certificate and all that, he said she died from TB. But we don't know. She did cough and she was sick. And that was in 1915. I was thirteen years old. Then she said, "You..." Now, we didn't get no letter from my mother because it was war. 1914 the war broke out.

SIGRIST: Had you mother been writing to you all along?

KLARICH: My mother, we got a letter from my mother until 1914, and even a little bit maybe in the '15 we still got a letter from my mother.

SIGRIST: How regularly was she writing to you?

KLARICH: She wrote to us every couple of weeks, every couple of weeks.

SIGRIST: And she was sending money.

KLARICH: Sending money and then we answer. When we told her everything what we're doing, what mark we got in school, and we go to church and go to communion, all that. So that part was all okay. Then, when my grandmother died in 1915, she, we send a letter to my mother but we never got the answer. So we didn't know whether she knew that the grandma died or not. But grandma told us before she died, she said, "I want you children to stay together and behave yourselves and after the war your mother is going to send for you and you're going to go to America." Well, that's what we did. We used to pray three rosaries every night because that's what Grandma said we should do, and we did it, you know.

SIGRIST: When your grandmother died...

KLARICH: Yes...

SIGRIST: How did you feel? I'm sure you were sad, but there was certainly this big unknown as to what to do?

KLARICH: Yes.

SIGRIST: And you being the oldest, how did you feel about that?

KLARICH: I was the oldest, so my aunt, the one that used to live with us, she was in the village. She lived in the village. And she told us, she said, "Now..." She told all the children, I was the oldest, she said, "Now she is going to be the mother and she's going to be the housekeeper, and I want you to remember whatever she say, you do it because she is the oldest one and she knows what to do," and she was the one who helped us out. And she said, "after the war is over, the mother is going to send for you and you're

going to come to America and it's going to be everything all right". So we did, we managed really very well.

SIGRIST: Were you frightened by that responsibility?

KLARICH: Yes. It was, and we didn't have no money. No money. But then we had cows and we had chickens and we sold maybe some eggs to get some kerosene for your lamp, you know. And you need matches to light the fire, but wood and all that stuff we got from our farm. And the food we got from the farm. But one time was really bad because we didn't plant enough food. That was, I think, 1915. And 1916 was bad. Then we had plenty land and we plow everything. We plant lots of food. Then we were okay then next couple of years until 1918. Then in 1919, we got the first letter from my mother. 1919. Then we wrote back. Then she told us that she got the letter that Grandma died, and she wanted to know how we are right now, you know. So then I wrote everything, how we are, how we spent the four years after Grandma died. And that's how, that's how it was, you know.

SIGRIST: You were basically children having to suddenly be adult.

KLARICH: That's right. That's what I say. I was the oldest one, but we managed and then my aunt was really good and she told the other children what to do and to respect me and help me. And we got along just beautiful. Even the people in the village would say, "Look at this. Two different children and they're getting along so beautiful." They said, "Our own children don't get along as well" as we did. Two sets of children you know.

SIGRIST Well, you had to pull together.

KLARICH: We did. We did because Grandma told us to stick together, work together, and that was is going to be over soon. we go to America and everything is going to be okay.

SIGRIST: Even though Grandma was dead, she still had a tight reign on the way you were thinking.

KLARICH: Exactly. That's just what she did. We just remember everything grandma said and we live up to that. We live up to that. And how we did it, it as a miracle. I mean, it happens. When you have to do it, you just do it.

SIGRIST: Were you affected by the war at all?

KLARICH: Yes, we did. When the Austria broke war with the Italian, because they in Italy, we weren't too far from Italy's border. We could hear the thundering at night. And we were ready to evacuate our village. And the priest and the teachers told us we were going to go. And we had our carriage stuff on what we could take across the river Culpa to go on Croatia side. That's where we were supposed to go. It was our destination if the war would be near us, to go. So it didn't happen. But we were close by there, you know.

SIGRIST: What about food shortages or anything like that?

KLARICH: Food shortages were awful. We didn't have, we had a rationing stamp but there was no food in the stores. My grandparents had nothing in the stores because they couldn't buy nothing. So it was just what we raised on the farm and that's how we live and that's how we helped one another. It was just, it was bad.

SIGRIST: It was a miracle, like you said.

KLARICH: Miracle. It was just a miracle. But we did pull through and we got all right. Then was okay.

SIGRIST: Good. We're going to pause for a moment now.

KLARICH: Okay, okay, yeah.

END SIDE A BEGIN SIDE B

SIGRIST: Well, let's get you to America. (they laugh) So you got a letter from your mother in 1919.

KLARICH: 1919.

SIGRIST: And you wrote back to her.

KLARICH: Then I wrote back to her and I said, told her everything about how we did, how we managed. And then she said, "I'm going to try to get you." In the meantime, my mother got married in 1917, and I got half-sister here that was born here in America. And she said, now, when she wrote us a letter she said, "My name is not Zagar. My name is Lanarcic. I got married..."

SIGRIST: Her name was what?

KLARICH: Lanarcic.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that please?

KLARICH: L-A-N-A-R-C-I-C. Lanarcic, yes, yeah.

SIGRIST: How did you feel about getting a letter from your mother and she was married?

KLARICH I was very much surprised and I was sort of surprised, you know, that she got married. But she was, my step-dad and my mother were together in a Jewish orphanage in Brooklyn on Ralph Avenue. That I remember because...

SIGRIST: On Ralph Avenue.

KLARICH: On Ralph Avenue. They had one square block, a Jewish orphanage.

SIGRIST: Was he Jewish, the man that she married?

KLARICH: No, no. He was a cook, chef. He was a cook. My step-dad was a cook and my mother was working the, I think she worked in laundry. Anyway, and they met and he was a single, he was never married. He was a single. And I guess, it was really wonderful thing because then my mother had a good life. He was a good provider after they got married. And then he made the application, sent for me, and I came to this country. Well, he made the application, I came over here in 1920.

SIGRIST: So you came by yourself.

KLARICH: I came by myself because my sister wasn't well enough to come here and my brother was eleven years old and he was in the apprenticeship. When you work in a store in Europe, you've got to have a couple of years

apprenticeship. So he only had one year apprenticeship and it was in Alcocheria. That was our big city, next city from our village. And we worked in my cousin's store. So he had another year for his apprenticeship so they just sent for me and my two cousins came. Maria and Ivonka came.

SIGRIST: Came with you.

KLARICH: Came with me, yeah. And my other cousin, he stayed home, and his sister. In the meantime, one of his sister got married. So my, my cousin and my sister went and lived with my aunt then after we left. They closed our house and then a couple of years after my sister got married, then she went back in our house.

SIGRIST: Do you remember packing?

KLARICH We didn't have really too much to pack. I had, I had new pair of shoes. And I walked, when the ship, I was walking barefoot because I want to save my new shoes for America. And I had a new dress on and I just wore my skirt and blouse but I was saving my new dress for America, you know.

SIGRIST: Do you remember saying goodbye to everyone?

KLARICH: Oh, yes. Everybody cry.

SIGRIST: Could you tell me about that a little bit?

KLARICH Everybody came when we went. And they carry, shall take us to America with our little suitcases. And everybody came and everybody cry. We all

cry, you know. It was very sad because you don't know where you're going.

SIGRIST: Did it remind you of seeing your mother leave?

KLARICH: Yes. Then I remember my mother crying and my aunt was crying so pitiful to see us go. She was like a, like a mother to us after, you know. So then...

SIGRIST: So where did you leave from? What port?

KLARICH: I port, it leave from Italy. Trieste.

SIGRIST: How did you get to Trieste?

KLARICH: Leaving on a train. First we went to Alcocheria on a, on a carriage. Then we took a train to Ljubljana. Then we stayed in Ljubljana for a day or so to get all our passports in order. Then we went to Trieste on a train again.

SIGRIST: How long? That's a long trip.

KLARICH: Long trip, yes. Then we stayed in Trieste a couple of days.

SIGRIST: Where did you stay?

KLARICH: In, I think we had one, like a, it was like a soldier's barracks, you know. We had one big room and little cots, you know. And then they put the girls, ladies together and the men in another room, you know. That's how it was. And then we board the ship on the 15th of August, 1920.

SIGRIST: Did you have to undergo examinations?

KLARICH: Oh, yes. We were vaccinated. We were vaccinated. And if you feel, they felt that you were healthy they let you go on the boat. If they felt you were sick, well you didn't go.

SIGRIST: What were you thinking about at this time? What was running through your mind during all of this?

KLARICH: Through my mind was just, we were afraid of the water, the ocean, what's going to be on the ocean, you know. And everybody, we heard about and we read in the paper how people get seasick, you know. That's what we were thinking about. And then we got on the boat.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the boat?

KLARICH: "America." It was the army ship. And we had like bunk beds, you know. We just had this screen with little thin mattresses on, and my two cousins, I slept on the bottom of one and my two cousins slept on the top.

SIGRIST: Were you in your own cabin?

KLARICH: No. It was one big, it was army ship. You know how the soldiers, I mean, it was just one big, big room and there was these bunk beds and there was all kinds... But, I mean, they put the ladies together, females together, and the men in another section, you know. So we got there. Then when we went through the Gilbratar, you know, from Italy, then we stop in France for two days. And we asked questions, "Why are we stopping?" They said, "Oh, they are loading on the coal and what something, some supplies they need." Then when we come to America

we find out that they were loading the dead soldiers from the First World War, you know? The remains of the American soldiers. But they didn't tell us because we would be so afraid then, you know. So they told us when we were already here on Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: Did you get sick like you...

KLARICH: Yes. We got so sick.

SIGRIST: Talk about that.

KLARICH: We were so seasick and we couldn't eat nothing and my cousin, you know how she got seasick, Ivonka. "Oh, hold my head! Hold my head! I'm going to throw up again!" You know, so that's how it just happened. Then after a couple of days, we got all right.

SIGRIST: Was there a dining room on the boat?

KLARICH: No. We had, it was a army ship. In there, they give us a ticket for ten people. So there was ten people we would have to share. We go in a line to get our food and they give us soup in a big bowl and then we each got our own dishes. And then we went and just on the deck, and we sat on the floor and then we have a little ladle and we spoon the soup in each one, you know, so we could eat more but we didn't have too much food, you know.

SIGRIST: Did you spend a lot of time up on deck?

KLARICH: Yes. We spent and then we looked on the ocean and then once, when the weather was really bad, we felt like we were in a deep valley and

those, oh waves, you know how those waves, and those--what those, those big ship, fish that they, what they call them?

SIGRIST: Dolphins?

KLARICH No, the other...

SIGRIST Sharks?

KLARICH: The other ones.

SIGRIST: Whales?

KLARICH: Whales. That's it. Oh, we could see them. And we said, "Oh, look at this! Look at this!" And then we would wash our clothes, everybody wash their clothes because we were on that ship for so long. We didn't have clothes that you could change everyday. You have to wash it, you know.

SIGRIST: And you're still saving your best dress.

KLARICH: I'm saving my best dress, but my underclothes, you have to was it, and then everybody would hang their clothes on the deck. And I don't know who give us the soap, but we did get water somehow, you know. So that's how...

SIGRIST: How long was the boat ride?

KLARICH: The boat ride was from 15th of August. We landed in New York harbor 11th of September.

SIGRIST: So it was a long boat ride.

KLARICH: Long boat ride. And then we couldn't get in Ellis Island because they, the island was too crowded so we had to stay in the boat. Then when we saw the Statue of Liberty, it was such a relief, you know. We said, "Oh, my God! Look at Statue!" because we study in school, you know. Statue of Liberty. And then we were watching these automobiles. And we said, "Oh, look at this car! Look at the automobile again!" because we only saw one automobile in 1914 when they delivered the telegrams that the war was broke out. That was the first time we ever even saw the automobile. So that was an adventure for us, you know, to watch. So that's what we spent the two days on the boat. Then after, on the 13th, tomorrow is going to be seventy-one years that I put my foot on American soil.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's wonderful.

KLARICH: Seventy-one years. And then my mother and my aunt came over to meet us.

SIGRIST: What was Ellis Island like? What was it like to be here?

KLARICH: It was, Ellis Island was, like I told you, it was like, it wasn't finished like it is now. It had like a iron gate, gates like or something. It was different. Then they, they serve us a meal in the dining room. We did go in the dining room.

SIGRIST: What did it look like?

KLARICH: It was just one big dining room and they just had benches. They had one long table. And then my aunt and my mother and my cousin's step-dad

came. But my cousins were left behind because the mother couldn't come here, my aunt...

SIGRIST: The cousins that you came over here with.

KLARICH: When we came, yeah. And they were crying because I left them there and my aunt was in, she just had a baby and she was in confinement. So she couldn't, and they wouldn't release my cousins to the step-father. They thought my aunt could take care of it, but they wouldn't do it. So they had to go back home and get my aunt somehow to come and get my two cousins. But my mother took me home because they released me, you know. Oh, and then they check us. We went through the examination to see that we didn't have no chicken pox, no. Black, no. What they call those, not chicken pox. The other, that dangerous pox that you get sick.

SIGRIST: Small pox.

KLARICH: Small pox. That's it, yeah. And so when you go through the examination, I was okay and my cousins were okay, too, for that respect, but they wouldn't release them because the mother wasn't there.

SIGRIST: Were your cousins really upset?

KLARICH: They were upset. They were crying so pitiful and I was crying too because I want them to come with me, you know, but they said, "No. We can't release them to the step-dad or aunt. It's got to be mother." You know, because, well, she signed the application. So her name was, that's why they want mother over.

SIGRIST: Describe seeing your mother for the first time in ten years.

KLARICH: (she is moved) Oh, it was so beautiful to see her. Ten years I didn't see her. I mean, she looked different, and I was so grown up. I was only eight years old when she left and then I was eighteen. I was young lady. Well, I came and she was hugging me. We both cry. We all cry, you know. Then we said, we went to the dining room and they served us. I don't know what they serve us, the main meal, but the French bread and butter was so delicious because we didn't have much on the boat, you know. It was so good. And my aunt say, "You want some more," and I was ashamed to take another slice, but I said, "I like it." She said, "Just eat because," she said, "I know you didn't have that on the boat", so we did. So it was nice.

SIGRIST: Was Ellis Island crowded when you were here?

KLARICH: Yes, it was very crowded. And that dining room was so full of people, you know. And almost every bench was seated, you know. Then we went home. My mother took me home.

SIGRIST: Where did she live?

KLARICH: She lived in Brooklyn on 229 Bainbridge Street.

SIGRIST: Bayberry Street?

KLARICH Bainbridge, yeah. Um-hmm. So we took first we took the train, the upper, what they call that...

SIGRIST: The "L", the elevated.

KLARICH: Elevated.

SIGRIST: What was that like?

KLARICH: Oh, it was so noisy, but it was nice. It was nice. So we took part of that. From Ellis Island, I think we took the ferry. Then from ferry we took that elevated train. Then we got off on Broadway. We took Reed Avenue to go to Bainbridge Street in Brooklyn. That's how I remember. And then I came in my mother's apartment and she had lace curtains. We didn't have that in Europe. And I was just admiring these lace curtains. They were so beautiful, you know. And my mother said, "There are cookies in the kitchen. When you want, you just go and help yourself, you know." And then I said, "Oh, tomorrow morning when I'm going to get up I'm going to get those cookies." I got up six o'clock in the morning and she gave me her night gown, big night gown. I put it on, and then I went in the kitchen and I got myself four big cookies and I put them on my lap and I'm admiring the pictures on my mother's wall and those curtains just, they just fascinate me. And I'm eating my cookies and admiring, and my mother peeked in my bedroom and she said, "Oh, my God!" And I was so embarrassed that I had these cookies in my lap and eating that she told me to do it. And I was so hungry for cookies that I just, and she said, "Oh, how good". She said, "Don't be embarrassed. Just eat it and eat all you want." You know.

SIGRIST: You were in heaven.

KLARICH: I was in heaven. I was in heaven. So I stayed with my mother for two weeks.

SIGRIST: Can you describe her apartment for me?

KLARICH She had two, two rooms. She had two, the room I was sleeping was like a living room and I had a day bed, you know, and then they had their bedroom and a kitchen. It was a three-room apartment. And then the next day, she takes me to get some clothes. Oh, because the clothes that I brought, we had lice on the boat. It was an army ship and it was really filthy, you know. And so she burned my new dress. The dress that I save it for America, she was afraid that I was going to bring something in.

SIGRIST: Oh, no. The dress that you were so careful with!

KLARICH: Yes, yeah. So anyway, she said, "Tomorrow we're going to go to the store and I'll buy you all the clothes you need and all the clothes you want." So the next day she takes me to the store and I try on the clothes and then my mother was talking to that lady and here, I said, "Oh, my God! I'll never learn this language, you know." And my mother said, "You will. If I learned, you will learn it, too." So little by little. But my uncle was a good philosopher. He said, "If you learn one word a day, 365 days you'll learn 365 words." And that's how I managed to do it.

SIGRIST Because you were a young woman when you came to America, say the first month or so, did you feel very out of place?

KLARICH: I want to go to work because I know, I know I couldn't stay with my mother, you know. But she said, "You don't have to be in any hurry." But I said, so what we did, then we visit with my cousins, you know, because they were homesick, too. So they felt so good when we would meet.

SIGRIST: The cousins that finally got off of Ellis Island.

KLARICH: Yes. They got off the Ellis Island. So we stayed with my, and then we visit my two aunts. And then visit my uncle. And then my mother showed me some of her friends. We went to visit the friends, so the time went very, you know, pretty good. Then I said I want to get a job. So my step-dad got me a job in that orphanage, that Jewish orphanage. I was the waitress for the Jewish teachers. We had four tables. We had eighteen teachers, you know. They had their own teachers. They were wonderful people. And this one Russian teacher, he was so good. He helped me because Russian and Slovenian is familiar. And he was teaching me how to say different words, you know. And then he, so I got a job over there as a waitress. And I said, "How I'm going to do it?" to my mother. My mother said, "Don't be afraid. If you're not going to be able to serve them right, they're going to come and help themselves", and that's what they did. And this Russian teacher, he was so wonderful. Once he asked me, he said, "I want catsup." God, catsup! I gave him fork. I gave him knife. I gave him napkin. He said, "No. Catsup." Oh, God! Catsup! I gave him salt. I gave him everything except catsup. And I had catsup on every table but on his table I didn't have it. I don't know how I missed to put the catsup, bottle catsup on. Then he got up and he pick up the catsup. He said, "This is catsup." I'll never forget that word after! So he got the catsup. And then, then when I was serving them, and then he said, he told me in Russian that he wants white meat. He said, "I want bielo." He want white meat. Okay, so he was that much advanced of the other teachers because he could pick out his own piece of chicken that he want, you know. So he helped me a lot.

SIGRIST: So you learned.

KLARICH: learned, I did. And then, then the girls that, the girls in orphanage, the used to help me wash the dishes, you know, because I used to do my own

dishes from the eighteen teachers. And they helped me, and whatever food I had left, I give it to the girls, you know, I had cookies left or cake or even some food, I had chicken, whatever. I mean, I didn't turn it back to the kitchen. They told me, if there's anything left, if the girls want it, the ones that helped me wash the dishes, I should share it with them. So I did. So they helped me dry the dishes and I give them the towels to dry it. And then the girls would say, "Annie, wet. Towel is wet. I want dry towel." And boy, did I remember that. When the towel was wet, they said, "This is wet. We want dry towel." So I remember that and I did it. So I worked there nine months and I learned quite a bit, and they were all very fascinated about me learning as good as I did, you know, and pronouncing the, I did better than I do almost now, you know.

SIGRIST: You had to, in a way. I mean you were really thrown into a situation where, sink or swim, you had to do it.

KLARICH: Yeah, right. Yeah. Then I said to my mother, I said, "I like this place, but I would like to learn more advanced. If I go and work for private people, I would learn different things, you know." So I did. So I got a job as a maid in a private homes. Then I learned, I did the cooking, you know. And they liked the way, because I know how to cook from Europe.

SIGRIST: Your grandmother had taught you.

KLARICH: Yeah, my grandmother taught me.

SIGRIST: What you knew how to cook was probably different than what they were used to eating.

KLARICH: Yes, that's it. But they like, I used to make apple strudel and they really

like that. And I made homemade noodles in the soup and they like that, you know. So that I really got along very well. So I work housework for a couple of years. Then I came to Michigan. A friend of mine was here in Michigan. She said, "Come on over."

SIGRIST: What year was that?

KLARICH: That was in 1923. And I came to Michigan and I got a job over there. My mother said, I said, "I don't know what to do." I said, "Mary wants me to come." She said, "Just go and you'll see different world. You're young. You can go." So I went and I got myself a job as a cook in a private home again. And then I met, I had some friends here and we used to go to dances and I met my husband and then...

SIGRIST: wanted to ask you, how did you like your step-father?

KLARICH: Oh, my step-father was wonderful. He was, my father couldn't be any better than he was. He was so wonderful. He was so good to us, and my sister, she is fifteen years younger than I am, you know, and we got along really nice. Oh, and my brother came here after I...

SIGRIST: Yes, I was going to ask you if any of your other siblings came over.

KLARICH: Yes, um-hmm. Just my brother. My sister, one of my sister was dead already, and my other sister got married and then my brother came here after I did.

SIGRIST: Who paid for his passage?

KLARICH: My step-dad and my mother. My step-dad, he made the application for him just like he did for me. And then he paid for his, you know, his fare, and then they send my brother to school and he went to school for, from

November to June.

SIGRIST: Now he's quite a bit younger than you, yes?

KLARICH: Six years.

SIGRIST: So he was how old when he came? Twelve, thirteen?

KLARICH: He was, wait. He came in 1921. He was twelve. About twelve.

SIGRIST: Did he come by himself over here?

KLARICH: Yes, by himself. Uh-huh. Yeah. Because see, he was in apprenticeship when I left. So, let's see. He was born in 1909. He was about twelve, twelve years old, yes. Yes, twelve years. Then he went to school. And then in the summer time, my mother, superintendent from the printing shop, uh, live in the same apartment. And my mother said, "Maybe you have some kind of job for my son." He said, "Oh, yes." So he got a job for my brother, you know. Then my brother work in a printing shop all his remaining years.

SIGRIST: Did you like being an American, being in America?

KLARICH: I, for a couple of years, I was kind of homesick. You know, you're homesick about your friends. It was a different life. But once I got used to America, and my mother, oh, my mother took me to the store and buy me clothes, and I was able to get dressed and then, in American way, you know, and then with my cousins, my two cousins, and then friend of mine from the same village came the year after. She came same time my brother did. And then I had more feeling like at home. And then we used

to go to dance and that was more like my own village in Banyalola, you know.

SIGRIST: You're talking about once you got to Michigan, or...

KLARICH: That was in New York. Yeah. And then when I came to Michigan, it was the same thing. I had a friend in Michigan, and then we used to go to dances and then I joined a singing club. And I got so used to it. I was happy.

SIGRIST And, I would think that Michigan would be much more of a community than living in New York was.

KLARICH Yes. It was nice. And then after I got married I had the children, you know. And so it was my life. And I was, I, somehow I was very lucky. I mean, I had a hard beginning, but I had a good life.

SIGRIST: Did you ever want to seriously go back to Yugoslavia to live?

KLARICH: Not to live, but we did, my husband and I went back in '61 to visit Yugoslavia. We went back in '69 the second time. And then in 1983, my daughter, my older daughter, the one that wrote you a letter, my daughter and her husband and my sister, Sophie, that was born here, four of us went to Yugoslavia and we stopped in Vienna. I want to see the Schoenburg Palace. All my life I live over there and I was born under Austrian dynasty, but I was never able to see because we didn't have money to travel to Vienna. So we did go to Schoenburg Palace and I saw Franz Joseph and Empress Elizabeth in the Schoenburg Palace. It was beautiful, wonderful experience.

SIGRIST: And each time you went did you go back to visit the town that you grew up

in?

KLARICH: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: What was that like going back to such a different world?

KLARICH: It was so different because the people, the young people, are going in the city now. And they work in the city and they go to high school and they go to university which we didn't have the opportunity to go. We had the ability but no opportunity. And now it's empty. The young people are all in the cities and they're working, they're educated. There's just not too many people but they still have, they still have church, but not the school. The school is in another village. Our school they made a co-op store in the school, but our church is still operating and still working.

SIGRIST: And you said your house is still standing.

KLARICH: My house is still, it is still beautiful. It's about three hundred years old now. Well, my sister did take care of it. She took good care of that house. And she kept it well because she loved that house. So everything is okay over there now.

SIGRIST: Well, it sounds to me like America was good to you then. You had a good life here.

KLARICH: It was good to me. I was very lucky. I've got two daughters that are wonderful and I've got best son-in-law. He is very good, and two grandchildren. And now I'm happy. I'm really lucky that I've got good family and a lot of good friends. A lot of good friends. So I'm really happy here. But my husband passed away nine years ago which is sad, but that's life. That's life. One has got to go and one has got to try to live the

way you do the best you can.

SIGRIST: Indeed.

KLARICH: Yeah, so this is my life, and this is, I hope that I said everything the right way. I mean, this is my story.

SIGRIST: I'm very, very pleased. I want to thank you for coming out here, you know, giving us your time. It is a wonderful interview. You've had a very, very interesting, dramatic life.

KLARICH: Well, this is my life and that's how I lived and that's how I came here, and that's it.

SIGRIST: Thank you very much.

KLARICH: You're welcome.

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist signing off for the National Park Service.