

EI-924

THERESA ZAZULA

BIRTH DATE: FEBRUARY 8, 1906

INTERVIEWING DATE: AUGUST 5, 1997

RUNNING TIME:

INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST, JR.

RECORDING ENGINEER: NONE

INTERVIEW LOCATION: UNION, NEW JERSEY

ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: MICHELE NEVENKA LARIMER

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

CROATIA, 1923

PORT: FROM CHERBOURG, FRANCE ON "THE MAJESTIC" TO NEW YORK

RESIDENCES: LIPOLJANI, CROATIA (1906-1923)

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

UNION, NEW JERSEY

SIGRIST: Good afternoon, this is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday August 5, 1997. I'm in Union, New Jersey and I am here with Mrs. Theresa Zazula.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Mrs. Zazula came from what was Croatia . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: when she left. She came to the United States in 1923 and she was 17 years old when she came.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Um, I also want to say that in the room is her son, John, who is videotaping this also. Thank you very much for letting me come out. Can we begin by you giving me your birth date? When you were born. What is your birth date?

ZAZULA: 1906. February 8<sup>th</sup>.

SIGRIST: February 8, 1906.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Great. Can you tell me where you were born?

ZAZULA: I was born in Lipoljani. Lipoljani.

SIGRIST: That's the name of the town.

ZAZULA: That's the name of the town.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

ZAZULA: Yes. L-I-P-O-L-J-A-N-I.

SIGRIST: Thank you. (pause) Did your mother or father ever tell you a story,=, about the day you were born?

ZAZULA: No.

SIGRIST: Do you know anything about the day you were born?

ZAZULA: The day (laugh) that I was born. Ah, I don' t know anything much. I know that my mother said they had some kind of celebration in town, ah, but the masquerade, ah, celebration, when I was born. And she said the masquerade came to the house when she (laughing) when she was in bed.

SIGRIST: The whole party came . . .

ZAZULA: Yeah, they marched in and they marched out. (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laugh). What was your name when you were born?

ZAZULA: Ah, my name . . .

SIGRIST: Yes

ZAZULA: when I was born . . .

SIGRIST: Yes.

ZAZULA: Alright. In Croatia, my, ah, ah, baptism name Terezija.

SIGRIST: T-H-E-R . . .

ZAZULA: No, no.

SIGRIST: No.

ZAZULA: No H. T-E-R-E-Z-I-J-A.

SIGRIST: Uh, huh.

ZAZULA: Fricki. F-R-I-C-K-I.

SIGRIST: Ah, that's your maiden name?

ZAZULA: That's my maiden name.

SIGRIST: Say it one more time for me. Fr. . . Fristzski.

ZAZULA: Fricki. Fricki. See the C that's "ts". They call it over there.

SIGRIST: I see.

EI-924/ZAZULA

ZAZULA: Ah, and over here, when I was coming to this country, they call me, (laugh), on the boat, you know, they call your name . . . they call Fricki and I didn't go on the boat because that wasn't my name and I didn't know that they spell different over here, so they left me there by the boat. And I stayed there ten days until I come back.

SIGRIST: Got on another boat?

ZAZULA: Til the boat came back and I went. Then a lady that was traveling with me, there was a couple of ladies that was traveling with me that they speak my language and they told me, oh, ah, "Why didn't you go on the boat?" I says, "Well they didn't call my name" and (mumbling) they say yeah, they, they, that's your name. (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laugh)

ZAZULA: So, next time they call me I know it already that . . . and I had to stay ten days over there waiting for boat.

SIGRIST: Um, do you know what the name of the boat was?

ZAZULA: Ah, Majestic.

SIGRIST: You came on the Majestic.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Well, let's um, let's talk a little bit about Croatia first before we get to on the boat.

ZAZULA: Oh.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about the town that you grew up in? What are some of the memories you have of the actual town itself?

ZAZULA: I don't know. All people were nice, friendly, we all, we were all . . . like family. Especially on the, on the, ah, the street where all lived. We, we all we all like family.

SIGRIST: Was this a big town or a small town?

ZAZULA: Small houses. They were all small houses. It's on, it's a farm. Ah, (?) on a farm, you know. There were, they had streets, but not . . . ah, ma, cob, co-ble, of, I guess, co-ble streets.

SIGRIST: Cobble streets.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Uh, uh. What, you say small houses. Can you describe for me the house you lived in?

ZAZULA: Oh, (laughing). The house I lived in, we had t-two room house and then ah, they added extra room, they, ah, kept different things in.

SIGRIST: What was the house made out of?

ZAZULA: Wood.

SIGRIST: What kind of a roof did the house have on it?

ZAZULA: They had that, ah, red ah, what do you call that, ah.

SIGRIST: Like tile? Red?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Red tile?

ZAZULA: Yes, red tile, yes.

SIGRIST: Ah, huh. I can tell by the way your motioning . . .

ZAZULA: Yes, yes it was like that, yes.

SIGRIST: And what was inside the house, you said there were two rooms and then you added a third . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: even later. What kind of furniture did you have in the house?

ZAZULA: Ah, we didn't have much furniture. We had beds. (laughing) I don't know what kind of beds, if my, if my father made the beds. I, he, must have made the beds. And uh, oh, maybe couple of closets made out of wood.

SIGRIST: How did you do the cooking in the house?

ZAZULA: Oh, they had, they had ah, ah, what do you call that, ah. Stove, I don't know. I don't know how, uh, how to describe that. Ah, you have to store, ah, where they put the wood in, you . . . just cooked with the wood.

SIGRIST: Who did the cooking?

ZAZULA: My mother.

SIGRIST: And what was your favorite food when you were a little girl?

ZAZULA: Oh, I was a very poor eater. I never wanna eat anything. (laughing) My mother always worried about me . . . because I didn't eat. And I was going to school, I had to take a lun-lunch with me so I don't have to (?) in winter time. I don't have to go back home. I didn't even eat that, what they gave me.

SIGRIST: Why didn't you like . . .

ZAZULA: And I was so skinny. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Why didn't you like to eat?

ZAZULA: I just didn't have no appetite. And my mother, she ask another lady there that was close to school, ah, and her daughter was coming to same school, I should go to her house, maybe I could eat in her house better. (laughing) But, I didn't even, I didn't care for eat. I just didn't want to eat, that's all.

SIGRIST: Did your family keep animals?

ZAZULA: They what?

SIGRIST: Did your family keep any animals?

ZAZULA: Oh yes, we did. We had cows . . .pigs, horses, we had . . .

SIGRIST: Who's job was it take care of the animals?

ZAZULA: My father, my brothers. I had older brother. And they, they were taking care the animals.

SIGRIST: What did you do with the animals?

ZAZULA: What?

SIGRIST: Why did you have the animals?

ZAZULA: Well, the cows that we had for milk, (laughing) we had, ah, oh I don't know, I'm-I'm guessing we had about six cows. They had plenty milk. They, we, made, was selling milk.

SIGRIST: Who did the milking?

ZAZULA: My mother. Yeah, my mother had to do all the milking. And, the horses, horses we, they had, ah, for working on the farm. There was no machines to re-there. Just with the horses.

SIGRIST: Were you, were you planting things on the farm?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did you plant?

ZAZULA: Oh, we had all kinds of things. . . wheat, rye, oh, oats. We had all kinds of, potatoes, a corn, all, all um, different kind a things.

SIGRIST: Did you have a job that was yours here on the farm?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: What did you do?

ZAZULA: I had a, go, uh, watch the cows so they don't go eat other things that they not supposed to. That was my job.

SIGRIST: Did the cows ever go and eat the neighbor's food?

ZAZULA: Sometimes, they did. Sometimes, they did, if they uh, had to get up early in the morning sometimes I fell asleep and the cows went and I, I, uh, I jump up and there they are, ha ha ha, eating somebody else's stuff.

SIGRIST: Did the cows have names?

ZAZULA: Oh yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the names of the cows?

ZAZULA: (laughing) No, I can't remember that.

SIGRIST: Let's talk a little about your father. What was your father's name?

ZAZULA: Vasil.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

ZAZULA: V-A-S-I-L.

SIGRIST: And what did he, he was a farmer . . . right?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Yes. What do you know about his childhood and his growing up?

ZAZULA: I don't know nothing about his childhood, but he came from different country.

SIGRIST: Where did he come from?

ZAZULA: Him and my mother, they come from Galicia. And, that's all I know, that they, that they came from there, but I don't know where that place is. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Were they married before they came?

ZAZULA: Oh yeah, they had three children.

SIGRIST: When they lived in Galicia.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: And why did they move to Croatia?

ZAZULA: Well, my father, my father, ah, was in this country twice. He came and he worked in the mines and he saved little money, went back. My mother lived with, ah, his parents . . . and the children. Ah, he came back and well he had far, he had four brothers and the brothers were always complaining that he's going here and there and they have to work on the farm. (laughing) So, he stayed for a while there and then he came back again to this country, made a little more money . . . because when he was all alone, he didn't have to feed the family, an-and, and ah, he, he was working hard, you know, a coal mine.

SIGRIST: Where was the coal mine?

ZAZULA: I didn't, he must have been working in a soft coal mine, uh where uh, by Pittsburgh over there someplace.

SIGRIST: Soft coal.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Uh, huh. Do you, um, do you know how he met your mother?

ZAZULA: I don't know how he met her, but he came back and he had a little money and he going, he's gonna to leave, to leave the, ah, place, leave the home, he said, "Go on his own". And he says, "You could have your farm, I'll go on my own". They bought a little, ah, piece of ground and a little house, and he stayed there.

SIGRIST: What was your father's personality like?

ZAZULA: Oh. I don't know, I know he always was yelling. (laughing) He was always yelling at some-somethings. (laughing)

SIGRIST: What were the things that your father enjoyed doing for his own pleasure? Things he enjoyed doing for himself?

ZAZULA: I don't know, I don't know if he had anything. He was al-always working hard.

SIGRIST: What did he look like? Can you describe for me what he looked like, in words?

ZAZULA: Well, wha-what, how could I say. Wa-was white, he had blue eyes, he had, ah, he had a brownish hair. Whe-when he's and he's a big, the hair turn brown. The (?) must have been blond when he was a small.

SIGRIST: What about your mother, what was your mother's name?

ZAZULA: My mother's name was . . . Anastasia.

SIGRIST: And do you know what her maiden name was?

ZAZULA: Yes. Skwir.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that please?

ZAZULA: Spell that. Well, If I was spelling it, I would spell, S-K-W-I-R, but I have a, my mother had sister over here, see I came to my aunt, to my mother's sister, and she spell Polish way. Svkwir. Ah huh. So, everybody spell different. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about your mother. What was your mother like as a person?

ZAZULA: My mother was a good lady.

SIGRIST: Do you remember some of the things she had to do around the farm?

ZAZULA: Oh, she had to go and help my father all the time and then come home and cook something to eat. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever have a job outside of the home . . .

ZAZULA: No. not outside the home. Always with us.

SIGRIST: Did you have other brothers and sisters?

ZAZULA: Who?

SIGRIST: You. Did you have other brothers and sisters?

ZAZULA: Oh, yes, yes I have. I had . . . let's see, how many. I had two brothers and I had . . . four, four sisters.

SIGRIST: That's a big family.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Now . . .

ZAZULA: I was the fifth one.

SIGRIST: Are you the youngest of everybody? Are you the youngest child?

ZAZULA: Oh no, no. My youngest sister was killed, during the se—World War II.

SIGRIST: During World War II.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: So she, she stayed in Europe.

ZAZULA: All my sisters stayed there, and my brothers. My two brothers, two in the World War II, I don't know what kind of, ah, people they were there had come and took all the young men and put them all on one train and killed them. My youngest sister, when they were taking her husband, she had two children, she came out with them and they killed her and the children. They were all killed.

SIGRIST: Were your parents still living at the time?

ZAZULA: No.

SIGRIST: No. Did you have grandparents when you were growing up in Croatia?

ZAZULA: No. I never knew my grandparents.

SIGRIST: What about, um, was there a, which child were you the closest to? Which brother or sister were you the closest?

ZAZULA: Oh, my sister that was older, a little older than me. We used to go to school together . . . well, one day we were going to school and we were a little bit late, we heard the bell already and we had to run. And she bumped her big toe on the rock. . . because when it's hot like this, we used to go bare feet. And she hit her toe on the rock and ah, it got sore like and it was going on all the time. She was sick for a long time, after that and she died.

SIGRIST: She died because of that.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: How old were you when that happened?

ZAZULA: When we were going to school?

SIGRIST: When you, when she died how old were you?

ZAZULA: Oh when she died, oh. Oh, I guess I must have been about nine. Yeah.

SIGRIST: How did that make you feel when that happened?

ZAZULA: Well, it make me feel sick.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me what games you played when you were a little girl?

ZAZULA: (laughing) We used to (laughing) we used to play hide and seek. (laughing) We hide, we, we would go hide in a corn when it was big (laughing) or in a wheat someplace. (laughing) We always used to play that.

SIGRIST: Did you have a toy that was yours that . . .

ZAZULA: No.

SIGRIST: that you remember?

ZAZULA: We didn't have no toys. (laughing)

SIGRIST: What about religious life? What religion were you when you were growing up?

ZAZULA: Well, over there, we were Greek Catholics.

SIGRIST: And what do you remember about how you practiced your religion, back then?

ZAZULA: Ah, you see I didn't learn too much about my religion there because during the war they used to take priests to the war.

SIGRIST: This is the first World War?

ZAZULA: First . . .

SIGRIST: First World War.

ZAZULA: Yes. And, uh, they took the priests, uh, they were just, we just started to learn things and they took him because he was young. And then, we just had a visiting priest. He didn't have time to teach us. So, I didn't learn much over there.

SIGRIST: What about at home? Were there ways that you practiced the religion in the house?

ZAZULA: Oh, my father, he always made us pray. Every morning and every night.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the prayers that he taught you . . .

ZAZULA: Oh yeah . . .

SIGRIST: Can you . . .

ZAZULA: I was prayed the prayers.

SIGRIST: can you, can you say them for me on tape?

ZAZULA: Oh, I can't tell you they are all in Russian language.

SIGRIST: That's ok. Can you, if you can say it, I'd, I'd love to have you say it for me on tape.

ZAZULA: Oh yeah?

SIGRIST: Sure. Go ahead. Tell me which prayer this is.

ZAZULA: I'll say, um, Lord's prayer.

SIGRIST: Ok.

ZAZULA: Ótče naš, súščij na nebesách: da svjatítsja ímja tvojë. Da prijdjët cárstvie tvojë. Da búdet vólja tvojá i jest kak na nébesách, jest na zemlé. Chleb naš nasúščnyj daj nam sěj děn'. I prostí namdolgi naši, kak i my proščaëm dolžnikam našim. I ně vvědi nas v iskušěnič, no izbáv', nas ot lukavogo. Ibo tyjoë jest' carstvo i sila i slava (?) vo věki amen.

SIGRIST: Thank you. What, which, you, you said that in Russian . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Correct? When you were a little girl in Croatia, what language did you speak?

ZAZULA: Well, home we speak our language

SIGRIST: Croatian?

ZAZULA: No. (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laughing) What was it?

ZAZULA: Russian language.

SIGRIST: Russian?

ZAZULA: Yes. At home. And out, just like over here, everybody speak English. Over there everybody speak English. Over there everybody speak Croatian. And in school, same thing.

SIGRIST: Did you parents, when they lived in Galicia . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: is that where they spoke Russian?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: That, I see.

ZAZULA: I was three, theres ah, there was a lot of different words in a different Russian. Some Ukrainians are the same words different. High Russians say different. We were, ah, I guess, our language must have been mixed with Polish, so it was different Russian again. (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laughing) Is there a, were you musical, when you were a little girl, did you like to sing?

ZAZULA: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you sing?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Yes. Is there a song that you can sing for me in Russian or Uk-, or uh, Croatian, that you learned when you were a little girl?

ZAZULA: Oh, I couldn't . . .

SIGRIST: A Christmas song or something?

ZAZULA: I couldn't sing for you, no. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Oh ok. (laughing) Um, how did you celebrate holidays back then? Which, what holidays do you remember celebrating as a child?

ZAZULA: Oh, over there, we, uh, in our, in a, Russian church, we celebrated lot of holidays. Especially on the farm.

SIGRIST: Can you, can you tell me about one of them? Which holiday did you enjoy the most?

ZAZULA: Well, the highest was uh, Christmas and Easter.

SIGRIST: Explain to me how you celebrated Easter back in Croatia.

ZAZULA: Well, it's in Croatian I don't know, but, but in Russian I know we had, we made a paska, you know it's a bread, a round bread. And, uh, we made, we had eggs. We used to write pisanka, you know, Easter eggs you write what the wax and put it in the dye and uh, then . . .

SIGRIST: And what did you call that?

ZAZULA: Piska.

SIGRIST: Piska.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

ZAZULA: (laughing) Spell that? P-I-S-N-K-A

SIGRIST: Say it for me slowly, one more time.

ZAZULA: Piska.

SIGRIST: And you write in the wax . . . describe the process. You write . . .

ZAZULA: You, you, you see you have a, ah, a like, a you cut the little stick. You stick a pin and that's and that stick. That you have like a handle, and that little head on the, uh, pin, you know the little pins, skinny pins? You dip it in the hot wax and you write, make flowers on the, on the egg. And then, you put that egg in the dye in what color you want. And after it dry you scrap the wax off and it's a white flower. Yeah, and you can make all different kinds. You could put a different, put it in a different color again, and that color would be the flower. You could make all ,all different kind of flowers on the egg. And um . . .

SIGRIST: And what else would you do for Easter?

ZAZULA: And ah, and ah, we had kobasi. You know what kobasi is?

SIGRIST: Describe me, for me what it is?

ZAZULA: (laughing) Kobasi is a, is a, ah big ah, you know hot dogs (laughing) a hot dog is sh-s-sh-short, this is long and big, kobasi. And ah, ham and, ah, oh bacon, horseradish, all these things.

SIGRIST: And who . . .

ZAZULA: You put that in a basket and take it to church, and then everybody is there what, with their baskets and um, paska, and the priest comes and he blesses all the, all the um, co, all the um, food. And then, everybody goes home and eat. (laughing).

SIGRIST: Um, so the priest blessed all the food . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: and then you took the food home . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: with you. Right, you brought it to church, he blessed it. Did the priest ever come to your house for any reason?

ZAZULA: Oh, yeah. For Christmas he comes to bless the house.

SIGRIST: How does he do that?

ZAZULA: Well, he comes, he comes in our house and, and uh . . . uh, ya when he comes in the house, he says, "Christ is born" and in Russian, "Kristos rozhdaetsya". That means Christ is born. And then, he and he says, "Peace in the home", and then he goes and sings, uh, Christmas songs and goes, keeps blessing all the homes.

SIGRIST: And then do you feed him after he's finished, or . . .

ZAZULA: Oh, we don't feed him. We give him something (laughing). We give him some, maybe money. Yeah.

SIGRIST: You mentioned earlier about the priest being taken away during World War I. You mentioned that a little bit earlier . . .

ZAZULA: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: What are your personal memories about World War I? And what happened at that time? 1914, 1915, 16

ZAZULA: You see, ah, whe, uh, in our town, it, it wasn't, it wasn't war, and I was young. I was maybe about nine years old. Maybe 10, I don't know, but, but it was, um, quiet, but we heard the lou, the uh, noise someplace faraway. That's all I ever remember. I never know, no soliders or anything in our town. They took all the all the, uh, the young man to the war. And they took all the, uh, food. They just let you so much, they took it all for the soldiers.

SIGRIST: Do you remember having food shortages of some sort?

ZAZULA: Oh, the, there was, there wasn't too much sh-shortage then. Everybody had how much they needed. But uh, otherwise it was . . .it was alright. It wasn't bad, first World War. My sister, she lived all her life, and she lived her, uh , uh, now, uh, the second World War. And she said that she didn't have much because they took her husband, they, she had to do everything herself and she had, she had small children. But she said she only had a little bit of wheat (?) and she was worrying how they gonna live? They don't have nothing to eat there. So, my father says to her, "don't worry, God will take care you" And she said, "It was a miracle. Every day I went up there to get some and there was always the same amount. It never went down."

SIGRIST: Tell me about when you were a little bit older, what did you know about America?

ZAZULA: I didn't know nothing.

SIGRIST: Cause your father had been here . . .

ZAZULA: My father when he, ah, what, you see, him, he used, there was a some old man over there that used to be in this country and came to save like him. And then always used to get together and talk about it. You know, Ellis Island, they used to call (?)  
(laughing)

SIGRIST: That's right. You're right.

ZAZULA: And I never knew that was Ellis Island. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Did, did your father ever tell you stories about (?) in America?

ZAZULA: Never told. Never told me any story but, uh, and, and, my father never wanted, ah, children to listen to the older people. What they talking. The children should be away. Never wanted us to hear anything. (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laughing) So well, how was it that you decided to go to America?

ZAZULA: Well, uh, my father made up his mind. He was the boss. (laughing) My mother didn't want me to go, but my father says I should go.

SIGRIST: Were you the only child who went to America?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Why was your father so, so intent on you going to America?

ZAZULA: I guess he trusted me. (laughing) Ah, my mother didn't want it, but I guess he thought I would do the same thing what he did, come back. But I never did go back.

SIGRIST: Did you want to go in the first place?

ZAZULA: Yes. Yes. I wanted to go someplace. (laughing) I went, I went, I was going, like I was going home, I, I wasn't even afraid or anything. But I, I would be afraid to go by myself but there was, there, uh was an agent there that as taking more people, with him. And he was bringing them to the boat.

SIGRIST: So you traveled in a group of people . . .

ZAZULA: In a group, yeah.

SIGRIST: What did you have to do before you left your town? What, what did you have to do get ready to leave?

ZAZULA: Whoah, I had, well I had to get a passport and I had to have it signed what day I'm leaving . . . and I don't know what else.

SIGRIST: Did you have to see a doctor?

ZAZULA: No. No, no I don't think so.

SIGRIST: Where did you go to get the passport?

ZAZULA: why, I had to go, uh, to the city, Zagreb.

SIGRIST: You had to go to Zagreb to do it.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about going to Zagreb?

ZAZULA: Oh, (laughing). I had to go there few times. I had to go to Polish Council to have it signed because my parents came from that part of the, it was Poland then already.

SIGRIST: That's right, Galicia later became Poland.

ZAZULA: Yes. Yes.

SIGRIST: It must have been, it must have been Austria-Hungary, right, when your parents . . .

ZAZULA: I don't know.

SIGRIST: Was it part of the empire when your parents?

ZAZULA: I don't know what it was, uh, uh. (laughing). My daughter always argues with me, I say "it was Galicia, that's all", I tell. And she says, "must have been a Hungary", I say "no". I didn't hear my father talk about Hungary. (laughing). All he talk is Galicia, so I so I know. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Now when you got your passport, did you have to be photographed?

ZAZULA: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Was that the first time you had ever been photographed?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: What, tell me what that was like.

ZAZULA: (laughing) Well, I gotta a little picture, ah, that, that size. A little picture and . . .well, (laughing) ah, . . . I had . . . I guess it was, uh, my, everybody, everybody was looking at it, they said, "Oh, how nice that looks". (laughing)

SIGRIST: Did your, did your, what did you take with you, what did you pack to take to America?

ZAZULA: Oh, that (laughing). You see, uh, my mother made me brea, loaf of bread. So, I wouldn't be hungry. And I had a suitcase made, uh, like that table wha, what do you call that?

SIGRIST: Wicker?

ZAZULA: The table on the porch.

SIGRIST: Made out of wicker?

ZAZULA: Ah, wick, yeah made out of wick.

SIGRIST: wicker, a wicker suitcase.

ZAZULA: I had suitcase that kind, for my clothes. And then, I had a big bag of feathers. My mother said "at least if you won't have no place to lay down you got, you got thing, you get feathers here to put your head on." (laughing) Always worried about me. (laughing) So, I had the feathers packed in that bag and when I came to Ellis Island, they had to inspect everything there. I had to open up the suitcase, they inspected everything. I didn't have that bread there no more because in France, I came through

France they took the bread. (laughing) So I didn't know what kind of bread it was, uh, how it tasted. (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laughing) Didn't even get to eat it.

ZAZULA: Well, then uh, the inspector said, "Open up". To me, "Open up that bag". I said, uh, I didn't know what he was saying but the lady, uh, that was next to me there, she said, "He tells you to open that up". And I said to her, "If I open that thing, the feathers will fly all over the place", and so she says to him, "She can't open that, there's feathers in there", uh, and he went. He came and says, "Open up". She said, "There's feathers in that bag. There's nothing in there but feathers". Well, he went away, he didn't come back no more. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Well, let's, let's get you back before you leaving here. Did your, did your family give you some kind of a good-bye dinner or some, some kind of a gathering to say good-bye to you?

ZAZULA: No. They didn't have no pictures or nothing. (laughing)

SIGRIST: What did you do the night before you left? From, wha, leaving your home?

ZAZULA: Not-nothing.

SIGRIST: Did your parents give you any advice before you left?

ZAZULA: Never.

SIGRIST: Do you remember saying good-bye to your parents?

ZAZULA: Yeah, well I said good-bye to everybody. My father took me to the city, to that, uh, uh, place where that they give boat. And then, ah, left me there.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how you felt, leaving your parents?

ZAZULA: (laughing) You know, I was young. I didn't feel anything. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Where did you have to go, you said you had to go through France . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: to get to the ship. Where did the ship leave from?

ZAZULA: Uh, Cherbourg.

SIGRIST: You left from Cherbourg?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about the journey getting there, to Cherbourg?

ZAZULA: Oh. We were traveling on a train for lot, a lot of places, so we, we saw houses like in a, in a, in a rocks, lot a places. I think that a must have been in, I don' t know if it was Sweden we went through or what, I forgot already.

SIGRIST: But it looked unusual to you.

ZAZULA: Yes. Yes.

SIGRIST: Uh, huh. You said that they, um when you were in France, they took the bread away that your mother had made. Where did they do that? Wha-what happened that, that they would take it away?

ZAZULA: Well, we had a, we had a leave all our stuff, uh, we had to take a shower everyday and leave our stuff out.

SIGRIST: This was in Cherbourg.

ZAZULA: Yeah. Yeah.

SIGRIST: How long were you in Cherbourg before the boat . . .

ZAZULA: ten . . .

SIGRIST: Oh, that's right because you missed . . .

ZAZULA: Yeah. Yeah

SIGRIST: you missed the first time that the boat went. You told

ZAZULA: Yeah

SIGRIST: us that story in the beginning. Did anything happen in the time that you were, um . . .

ZAZULA: No.

SIGRIST: staying in Cherbourg, that sticks out in your mind.

ZAZULA: Nothing. No. Uh, people were there, lot of people were there staying same like me, waiting for their boat. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Well you missed the first, you missed the boat when it left the first time. (laughing)

ZAZULA: Yes. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Tell me, tell me, um, when you first saw the ship . . .

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: what did you think? Wha- what does a young lady think when she sees a great big ship that she's going to have to get on?

ZAZULA: Well, I saw the picture on uh, on uh, when I was home yet. I saw the picture, so I expected the boat like that.

SIGRIST: Had you ever been on a big boat before?

ZAZULA: No, never.

SIGRIST: Where did you sleep on the boat?

ZAZULA: Well, they had, uh, they had two, ah two uh, bed on the bottom, bed on the top, you know. I was on the top. Wha, they said, they said to me if you get a, could get a bed on the top, ah, be better because if somebody is on the top they a get sick. (laughing) You don't want to be on the bottom. (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laughing) And the Majestic is a nice boat, too.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

ZAZULA: Was a nice boat.

SIGRIST: Did you get sick?

ZAZULA: Oh, I was so sick. Oh, I never want to go on a boat again. (laughing) You know, ah, oh, we waited for that boat. We didn't, uh, I didn't even have a supper because I waited for the boat. I didn't go there to eat, and I was so hungry and at, midnight we got on a boat and got food. I ate and that was the worst thing to do. I ate and I was

so sick. And I was sick all the way to, until maybe, oh, about, I don't know, was it one or two days before we landed here.

SIGRIST: How long did it take?

ZAZULA: 6 days.

SIGRIST: 6 days. Did you ever have an opportunity to go up on the deck of the ship?

ZAZULA: Yes, I was up on the deck.

SIGRIST: What could you see on the deck of the ship?

ZAZULA: Water. (laughing) That's all I saw.

SIGRIST: Did you see anything on the ship, that you had never seen before?

ZAZULA: No. I didn't see anything there.

SIGRIST: Were there other nationalities of people on the boat . . .

ZAZULA: Oh yeah, there were all different nationalities there. But and, that was room, way I was, there was four beds, one on each, two on each side. Well, there were people over there, they ah, I think one was Slavish. The other ones, I don't know what they were, but that Slavish woman, she was talking to me all the time. Yeah. I could speak Slavish that time, just like her. There was, there was a Czech lady, I speak Czech language just like her, and uh, when we got off the boat and my aunt came for me there, that Czech lady was there and was talking to my aunt. And my aunt says, "Can you tell me what she saying?" (laughing) And, uh, and that lady says to me, "You not Czech?" (laughing) I says, "no". (laughing) So, I went explain it to my aunt, what she was saying.

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty, when uh, when the ship came

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Did you know what that was?

ZAZULA: Well, they said that there is a big statue, they were telling us (?). There's a big statue there. Yeah.

SIGRIST: And you told me a little bit about when you were at Ellis Island. The ship came into New York and then what happened?

ZAZULA: And then we had to go on a little boat, and uh, the little boat took us to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: And uh, what happened at Ellis Island?

ZAZULA: Uh, when we got to Ellis Island, that's where they were inspecting everything. Well, and they, they, when we got on the boat, we all got examined.

SIGRIST: Before you got on the boat

ZAZULA: Before. Yeah. And, then when we got off the boat, we got examined, again. And, there was another young lady, like me, see I had a little acne on my face, not much, maybe a couple of pimples and that they all had it all over her body. So, when they examined us over here, uh, at Ellis Island, they were taking me for her. They were going to send me back. And, uh, this lady who was always by me, she says to him, "Not her. It's that lady, you could call her name and look." So he took her word and took the other one. They were going to send me back because I had a couple of pimples on my face. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Do you remember what it looked like on the inside? Ellis Island. What did it look like?

ZAZULA: Oh, when I went this time, it looked just like I, I remember.

SIGRIST: That's right, I should say, for the sake of the tape, you were, you were there a couple of years ago visiting.

ZAZULA: (laughing)

SIGRIST: What, what was it that you remembered about the inside of Ellis Island?

ZAZULA: I remember that big, long thing, um, uh, uh the hallway. I remember that, that thing and, and I remember that big place where they were inspecting all the things.  
(laughing)

SIGRIST: How long were you there?

ZAZULA: Ah . . .

SIGRIST: The first time. In 1923.

ZAZULA: When I came off the boat? Oh not long, maybe few hours, til my aunt came for me.

SIGRIST: Had you ever met this, this aunt before?

ZAZULA: Met what?

SIGRIST: The, your aunt that came to meet you. Had you ever met her before in your. . .

ZAZULA: Never. No, just a man came and he said, "This is your aunt."

SIGRIST: Where did she take you?

ZAZULA: She took me to New York. I had a cousin in New York living, and I stayed there overnight and then she took me to Yonkers.

SIGRIST: To Yonkers.

ZAZULA: Yes. And I had uncle over there. But they're all dead now.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about this aunt that met you at Ellis Island. Ah, how did she treat you when you first met her?

ZAZULA: Huh, just like everybody else. She didn't, she just told me to be good or I'll send you back. (laughing)

SIGRIST: This was your mother's sister?

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Yes. How long had she been in the United States?

ZAZULA: Oh, I guess she was a long time. She was long time in this country. She used to work for senator. Senator Harden

SIGRIST: What was her name?

ZAZULA: Her name was Eva.

SIGRIST: Eva.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: What was her last name?

ZAZULA: Skwir.

SIGRIST: Oh that's right, you told me that.

ZAZULA: (laughing)

SIGRIST: Right. Did you get a job when you first arrived?

ZAZULA: (laughing) Not right away. I got job (laughing), I, I didn't want to s-sit home, my uncle over there and my aunt, they went to work. What am I going to do home, I wanna do something. So, there was people across the street . . . and ah, they wanna, they wanna take me, ah, look for job, and (laughing) the lady, the ladies over there they took me. My uncle took me first at like night before this around, and he says, "This is factory where you could work in this" and then took me by this factory and he says, "Oh don't go in this factory because they dye, you gonna always be full of dye on your clothes. Go, go get yourself a job where, a cleaner job." Where do you think these ladies took me. To that factory where the dye (laughing) and uh, and the man gave me job over there.

SIGRIST: And this was a factory that made dye for fabric, like cloth dye?

ZAZULA: The, no. That was the, ah, ru-, ah carpet factory. They used to design all different kind a designs there. And they put me on a place, ah, a lady used to make all these designs. And ah, ah, (laughing) ah, I, ah, all I had to is when she called the number of the dye. Oh, a each dye had a different number, and she called the number I had to put it on that thing and then she was going this way and that way with that, with that dye and the making designs.

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

ZAZULA: Huh,ha.

SIGRIST: How much did you . . .

ZAZULA: \$18.00 a week.

SIGRIST: And what did you do with that money?

ZAZULA: Oh, you know, my aunt paid for the, the, bring me, bring me here. I owe her money.

SIGRIST: Do you know how much that cost?

ZAZULA: I forgot but, when you come to this country, they wouldn't let anybody come here without money. I had to have \$25.00, to least \$25.00. If you didn't have \$25.00, they don't want you. (laughing)

SIGRIST: Do you remember when you were coming over on the boat, where did you keep your \$25.00?

ZAZULA: Yeah. I ask my aunt to send me \$25.00 and I had it. I had a little bag and I put it inside, pinned it to my clothes. So nobody will know where they are and wouldn't steal it because the people used to steal. So . . .

SIGRIST: How, so how many days a week did you work in this carpet factory?

ZAZULA: Oh, I worked there maybe, oh . . well everyday, uh, uh Saturday I didn't work . . . and Sunday.

SIGRIST: And you were living with an uncle.

ZAZULA: Yes.

SIGRIST: Yes. And um, tell me how you learned English.

ZAZULA: The, see see, you had to have the numbers. Numbers, my father taught me in Europe yet—the numbers. And a few things, like, “table”, ah table, or we used to call “stol”. Ah, “stol” And, ah . . .

SIGRIST: Is that the Russian word?

ZAZULA: Yeah. But, like ah, stove “peh”. Well he used to, he used to tell me, “You see “peh”, you call it “stove”. You see “table”, and he taught me few things.

SIGRIST: Cause he knew English or some English, I guess.

ZAZULA: Some, yeah. Yeah, he learned when he was here. So I knew that much and that was easy for me to work there because the numbers, I knew the numbers, see. So, I worked there I think, I don’t know it was three weeks I think. And then ah, that lady that I was working with her, she says to me, they are gonna put you on a piece time or in polish she told me. I says, “Oh, I’m not going to work there. I don’t wanna work on the piece time because I don’t know nothing about it. All I did was numbers.” She didn’t show me anything wha- about the, because she had a card over there and all she had to do is, ah, look at the numbers on her card. But she didn’t show me.

SIGRIST: And, and piece, you mean, like doing like piece work, like you only get paid for what you do. But what, what is piece time?

ZAZULA: Piece time is a how much work you, how much work you did. Piece time. Ah, see they had, they had so many things for the , for the carpets. So many things, so many, ah, you know threads that go around, ah, so many bundles and that was the piece time. How many pieces you had.

SIGRIST: I see, and you didn’ t want to do that.

ZAZULA: I didn’t want to do that because I didn’t know. See if I could speak English then, I could speak for myself and I could tell them whats, what I, what I know, what I don’t know. I didn’t know nothing cause I didn’t, I couldn’t speak their language.

SIGRIST: Did they offer night classes to learn English? Like could you have taken a class at night?

ZAZULA: Oh.

SIGRIST: Like night school if you wanted to?

ZAZULA: No.

SIGRIST: No.

ZAZULA: So, I said to her, "Well, I'm not gonna work. I'll quit." So, her boss says, "Why she quitting?" Shes don't go job. (laughing) Ah, I don't know. I,I, don't, I don't know, I guess that lady didn't tell him.

SIGRIST: Well, did you get another job?

ZAZULA: No, my aunt came. See, she was on a vacation, my aunt, and she was in Massachusetts. Ah, on a vacation with her boss. She worked for, for the, a senator Harden and his wife. They was only two of them. They didn't have no children and ah, whenever they went on a vacation, she went with them. So, she was in Massachusetts that time, but she came from Massachusetts for me, and ah, ah, find a place for me to stay til she comes back. So, she came back and she took me. She lived in Brooklyn, she took me with her and ah . .

SIGRIST: What was the hardest thing for you to get adjusted to in the United States? The hardest thing to, to feel comfortable with?

ZAZULA: I don't know. Nothing was, the hardest thing was, is, to travel someplace and you can't ask anybody and you don't know where you going, ha, that was the hardest thing. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Were you communicating with your mother and father?

ZAZULA: Oh, by, by mail. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you ever see them again?

ZAZULA: No.

SIGRIST: What about any of your brothers or sisters?

ZAZULA: No. Nobody. I saw my sister, oh . . . about twenty-five years ago.

SIGRIST: What was that like?

ZAZULA: That, but, that was in England. Ah, um, ah, she had her daughter in England. They were, and ah, she stayed with her daughter for about a year. So when she was there, I went to see her.

SIGRIST: What did you think when you saw her after all those years?

ZAZULA: Well, I could recognize her, but she says that's not, that's not me. She says, "That's some old lady." (laughing)

SIGRIST: (laughing) Well when you think of yourself in terms of nationality, how do you think of yourself?

ZAZULA: I don't know.

SIGRIST: Did you become an American citizen?

ZAZULA: Oh yeah.

SIGRIST: Yes.

ZAZULA: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you ever want to go back to Croatia?

ZAZULA: No.

SIGRIST: to see. . . No.

ZAZULA: No. I came here and I stay here. This is my country.

SIGRIST: Great. Well that's a good place for us to end. Mrs. Zazula, thank you very much for letting me ask these questions. Unfortunately there's a lot, there's going to be a lot of traffic in the, in the last ten minutes, um, but you did a wonderful job and I am very pleased to ah, to be able, to , ah interviewed you.

ZAZULA: Ok.

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist signing up with Theresa Zazula on Tuesday August , 1997 in Union, New Jersey with Mrs. Zazula's son John in attendance, who has been filming us through this whole interview. Thank you very much.

ZAZULA: Your welcome.