

**EI-939**

**MICHAEL JOSEPH ANTHONY BRODERICK**

**BIRTHDATE: APRIL 10, 1921**

**INTERVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 1997**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 76**

**RUNNING TIME: 50:00**

**INTERVIEWER: ROGER HERZ**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.**

**INTERVIEW LOCATION: BROOKLYN, NEW YORK**

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**IRELAND (BORN U.S.), 1927**

**AGE: 6**

**SHIP:**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES:**

HERZ: Good morning. This is Roger Herz—

BRODERICK: Good morning.

HERZ: —for the National Park Service. Today is September 18, 1997 and I'm in Brooklyn at the Bishop Maguvero [PH] Home with Michael Broderick, who came from Ireland when he was seven years old.

BRODERICK: Right.

HERZ: And with me in the room is Paul Sigrist, and there is also an air conditioner unit that's on and might be providing some background noise. Michael, why don't we begin by you giving me your full name and your date of birth?

BRODERICK: Michael Joseph Anthony Broderick. I took Anthony at confirmation and it pleased my mother greatly, her favorite saying. And date of birth, 4/10/21, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1921.

HERZ: And you were born where?

BRODERICK: I was born on Butler Street, 398. I went to visit the place and they had torn the house down. I was very discouraged. They put up a new apartment house.

HERZ: And that was—

BRODERICK: On my territory.

HERZ: And that was here in New York.

BRODERICK: Right here. A few blocks away.

HERZ: And what was the process that brought you to Ireland?

BRODERICK: My mother was visiting her mother and her sisters to show off the new baby, which was me. And—

HERZ: How old were you at the time?

BRODERICK: Not quite 10 months, I believe. You could get all the definite information from my sister, Alice. She has a great memory. But I was less than a year old when my mother took me on that trip. And while there, I developed double pneumonia. I can still remember them taking me to different doctors. This wasn't exactly when I was 10 months. They were there a good while, you know, staying maybe a year or so with her people. But the doctor told me the ocean voyage would be detrimental to my health, so my mother's mother, my grandmother, and her sister, my mother's sister, said, "Oh, let him stay here with us. We'll take good care of him." So they did. They spoiled me.

HERZ: And where in Ireland was this?

BRODERICK: County Limerick; Knocknagorna was the small village.

HERZ: Can you spell Knocknagorna for us?

BRODERICK: K-N-O-C-K-N-A-G-O-R-N-A. It has a meaning, "the hill of blood" because—

HERZ: Hill of—

BRODERICK: Blood, because there was a battle fought there between the Irish and the British.

HERZ: And—and was this a big factor in the town? Do you remember—

BRODERICK: Yes.

HERZ: —any [unclear]?

BRODERICK: Yes, yeah. Well, I remember the Irish were proud because that's where they fought off the British and they lost a great many men. Naturally, you didn't call it the hill of blood for nothing. And it was at County Limerick.

HERZ: And a—how long did you stay in—

BRODERICK: Until I was about seven years old. I came back here to start school. I wasn't—I wasn't quite seven.

HERZ: But your mother, did she stay there?

BRODERICK: No, my mother had to come back because she had—my father had to come back for his job. That's the main thing. He didn't want to lose his job. [chuckles]

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: And they came back and my mother had the other children. She had Alice and Jack and Nancy and Patrick. I don't think she was too lonely. [chuckles]

HERZ: What was your aunt's name?

BRODERICK: Nora. Aunt Nora Broderick. My mother's maiden name was also Broderick. It's unusual because I always had to explain that to the nuns in school. I said, "No, that is right. My mother never changed her name." But there was no relationship. It was very—there are a lot of Brodericks in Ireland and there are a lot of them, their names on that Ellis Island thing too, because I was looking for my father and I thought there—one or two and there was more. [chuckles]

HERZ: Let us just mention here that you visited Ellis Island.

BRODERICK: Oh, I did.

HERZ: The museum.

BRODERICK: I loved it. I—

HERZ: Several weeks ago.

BRODERICK: Yeah, I did. I really enjoyed it. It's historic, especially when you realize what a wonderful place it is for someone to land and realize they're finally in America.

HERZ: Let's go back to that little town. You said that a lot of people in Ireland are named Broderick.

BRODERICK: Right.

HERZ: Is that specifically from that one area?

BRODERICK: Yes. Yeah, we took over.

HERZ: [chuckles]

BRODERICK: [laughs]

HERZ: Can you give us a little bit of the history of that?

BRODERICK: Hmm, my sister could but I can't. I'm not—not actually, but there were battles fought in that area for freedom, the Irish freedom. And there was a beautiful little church there. We had to go quite a ways to get to mass. And if I was a good boy during the week they would let me ride on the back of the donkey, who pulled the sidecar. You know what a sidecar is? The seats are sideways and they sort of balance it off. They have somebody on one side and somebody on the other.

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: And I was small enough to fit on the asses' [chuckles] ass.

HERZ: Can you tell us [chuckles] a little bit more about the town?

BRODERICK: [clears throat]

HERZ: Can you describe it for us a little bit?

BRODERICK: It wasn't that large. It was a—the main thing, the center, naturally, was a church. And there were stores there and the main store I was interested in, naturally, was the candy store. And everything tastes

so good. The food was good and on the road, as you would be going, you'd be passing the berries. And we'd stop and pick berries to take home, blackberries. Blackberries were the big item that I remember and I imagine other berries too. And then the—the neighbors were always kind. If you—if their potatoes were ready, you'd go in and help yourself to their potatoes. And then when we had something they wanted, they would help themselves. You know, it was everybody owned everything, the food especially, because no one's going to miss a few potatoes on a big farm that's acres, probably.

HERZ: Was—was the farm part of the town? Did each person have their own farm?

BRODERICK: Yeah. Yes, yes, they did. Yeah.

HERZ: Each person had their own?

BRODERICK: Had their own farm, yeah. And usually, it was on hilly ground so it wasn't that easy to cultivate. But it was—I don't have to tell you how green Ireland was and still is. But—and we were poor people. We weren't wealthy. My mother came from fairly—not—I wouldn't say wealthy—better off. My father came from poorer people, lower class of people, because we had, oh, I don't know how many cows. But my mother's people had a dairy farm and that was the big item. Limerick was the center of the dairy product industry in Ireland at one time. I imagine it still is because of the grazing and other things. And we had pigs. I can remember killing off a pig and then the little piglets running after the mother and screaming and—

HERZ: Tell us [unclear]—

BRODERICK: Oh, these Irish were really cruel [chuckles] but we had to eat.

HERZ: Can you tell us a little bit about that experience? You were fairly young.

BRODERICK: I was—yeah, I was very young. Yeah. And I used to tell everybody that I had to walk five miles to school every day. Boy, did I lay it on thick, and I was a real hero. [chuckles] And when I went back to Ireland, I asked my Aunt Nora. I said, "Will you show me where this schoolhouse is?" She says, "Come over here and look out the window. You just go down to the bottom of the hill and you walk a couple of yards and there it is." [chuckles]

HERZ: Did you go to school?

BRODERICK: I did go to s—I started school in Ireland.

HERZ: How many years?

BRODERICK: And they had just one big room and one teacher who was teaching everything. And I went, actually, oh, it was like the kindergarten. And I went just because somebody else was going, and I guess they wanted to get me out of the house. [chuckles] So I enjoyed it and the teachers there were so respected, you know. You'd go out of your way to greet a teacher, as you would to greet a priest, the same respect.

HERZ: Men teachers? W—

BRODERICK: Men, men.

HERZ: All men teachers?

BRODERICK: To my knowledge, yes, at that time, mostly men. Yeah. And it was an honorary—honorable profession. They were esteemed, highly esteemed.

HERZ: In the town.

BRODERICK: In the town, yes. They'd say, "Here comes the master." I think that's what they called him, the master.

HERZ: Let's talk a little bit about the language. Did you grow up speaking—

BRODERICK: English, you know, with a heavy brogue, and Gaelic was used in singing, mostly. And primarily English.

HERZ: So Gaelic was not spoken in school?

BRODERICK: No. No. In certain areas, they held onto it more so than others. And some of the elderly people used to take great pride in singing a Gaelic song. And naturally, you had to clap whether you liked it or not. [chuckles]

HERZ: But—but the school was in [unclear]. [sentence unclear]. Okay. So school was taught in English.

BRODERICK: Oh, yes. Definitely, yeah.

HERZ: And the children spoke pretty much—

BRODERICK: Oh, yeah.

HERZ: —all—

BRODERICK: Yes.

HERZ: Did you know any Gaelic?

BRODERICK: I could say my prayers in Gaelic but don't ask me to say any now because I don't remember 'em. But—and that was [several words unclear] in Gaelic. We always blessed ourselves in Gaelic.

HERZ: Now, you mentioned the church. Was there only one church in—in the town?

BRODERICK: Yes, one—one little chapel. We have a chapel downstairs and it is [unclear] or maybe a little larger. But it was always open in the back, and if they were a big crowd they were outside the church and they were still at mass, spiritually, if not physically.

HERZ: Was it a very religious town? Did you come from—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —a very religious—

BRODERICK: Yes, I did. Yeah, everybody went to mass. That was without even thinking you went. And it was—Sunday was a special day. We enjoyed Sunday. That's when we got our candy bars and we got everything else. Everything happened on a Sunday and when we could go riding around the country. No one worked on Sunday. We observed that, even—only if it was essential and had to be done. The cows had to be milked so that was done. But farming, anything else, no way.

HERZ: Were there some special events that you remember from Sunday, especially [unclear]?

BRODERICK: I remember at the crossroads—now, this I can remember from what others have told me about it—they used to meet there, and anyone who could play a musical instrument would be playing there and there would be dancing, because the crossroads were level and it was a nice—so from the different areas, that's where they used to come and congregate and enjoy themselves. I love Irish music. I still do. My mother was a musician. She played—

HERZ: [unclear]—

BRODERICK: She played the concertina, the squeezebox [unclear]. And I play the harmonica, but not well, and my father played, and my sister plays the violin a little. But we got away from that and it's a shame because it really is a beautiful heritage, the music. I—I'm trying to think, this fellow that was on television, the guy who had that spectacular dance program with the Irish music. It was on Channel 13.

HERZ: Oh, Riverdance?

BRODERICK: Yeah, Riverdance. We were very proud of that. I watched that every time it was on. I was only wishing I had a copy of it.

HERZ: On Sundays, when everybody got together, after church, I'm assuming—

BRODERICK: Yeah, yeah.

HERZ: How many people, about?

BRODERICK: A couple of families; that's all. Maybe a dozen or so.

HERZ: Just—

BRODERICK: Well, the—the teapot was always on. That was the custom. When you came in, the first thing you would do, you'd sit at the table and have a cup of tea. And I've never tasted a decent cup of tea in this country. [chuckles]

HERZ: Now, you mentioned you lived with your aunt.

BRODERICK: My Aunt Nora, my mother's sister.

HERZ: And—

BRODERICK: And then for a while, my grandmother had lived—my grandmother died when I was young, maybe about three or so.

HERZ: And your father—

BRODERICK: And I was her pet and I still remember that. I was spoiled. Anytime, go to Grandma. I—grandmas are special, anyway. I see [unclear]

women here. Anyway, say, "Well, she is somebody's grandma. She must be special."

HERZ: Do you remember anything specific about your grandmother?

BRODERICK: I remember she gave me a watch for Christmas, one of these, like an Ingersoll [PH] pocket watch. Must have cost her a fortune. I think it was made in USA. [chuckles] Imported, you know. Nothing but the best. And I can remember falling asleep, just listening to a tick, was such a—we weren't that spoiled. I mean, you didn't get a watch every Christmas. [chuckles]

HERZ: Were there other children around? Or you were the only—

BRODERICK: Yes, yes. Yeah. Oh, yeah. I had cousins. Yeah.

HERZ: And your uncle?

BRODERICK: Yes, yeah.

HERZ: He was there too.

BRODERICK: Yes, yeah. Yeah.

HERZ: And he was a farmer.

BRODERICK: My—yes, he was. Yeah. It was on his farm. His wife was the daughter of my grandmother.

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: Nan. Nance, her name was. Nancy.

HERZ: Was there any other industry or business in this, other than the stores?

BRODERICK: No, not that I can recall. Mostly, it was farming. Yeah, dairy farming.

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: I can remember them getting the milk ready to be picked up.

HERZ: For sale?

BRODERICK: Well, to—to the main area, I guess, where they processed it or whatever. But we made sure we got ours first. The cream came off the top. [chuckles]

HERZ: Take us inside the house that you grew up in in [unclear].

BRODERICK: Well, wait till I tell you about—I went back to visit it. [chuckles] It was a humble little cottage, thatched roof, and in the meantime, my cousins were—they built a new home with a window that overlooked the most beautiful scenery. What do you call these fancy, big windows?

HERZ: Picture window.

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: Bay window.

BRODERICK: Yeah, bay window, that's what it was. So I said, "Will you show me where my room was?" "Come on in." [chuckles] They gave my room to the chickens [chuckles] because there was the house that was st—was so well built that all they had was an extension. And then they put up the main house for the new generation. And they had a beautiful home. But the old one was so well built that they weren't going to let it go to waste, so they used it for the animals, mainly, the chicken—[unclear] chicken coop. I say, "Move over. That's my bed." [chuckles]

HERZ: Can you remember what some of the rooms looked like? The parlor and the kitchen?

BRODERICK: Yes, I can. The main room, I believe, was the kitchen because that's where everything happened. [unclear]—[clears throat] excuse me. That big stove was there. And usually, there was something hanging over it that was being kept warm. And—

HERZ: Who did most of the cooking?

BRODERICK: My—what's her—my grandmother was superior and then women, my Aunt Nance—my cousin, not my aunt. My cousin, Nance. First cousin. We had a visit from her. She came here and I was so glad that she came. At the time, she had cancer and I didn't know it. So it was her visit, last time I saw her. She loved everything about New York. And I took my Uncle Pat up to Vermont and I said, "You don't have anything this large in Ireland, now, do you?" [chuckles]

HERZ: [unclear]

BRODERICK: [chuckles] Anyway, [several words unclear] and he stayed with me when he came [unclear]. I had a [clears throat] little apartment of my own. I was—I still am a bachelor. I had my own little [unclear] and he stayed with me. We didn't get any rest that night. All we did was go out and we had so much fun.

HERZ: Do you remember some dishes that your grandmother, or maybe your aunt, made?

BRODERICK: Oatmeal was a standby. And I was talking to my cousin about it, that—he came here. [unclear] said, "Did you have oatmeal?" And he said, "Mike, they call it gruel over there." And I said, "Well, over here we call it cruel. Cruel gruel. [chuckles] So [unclear] because it was very thick but nourishing. I mean, the stuff we have here is—everything good in it is refined out.

HERZ: What about on special holidays? Christmas—

BRODERICK: Oh, Christmas. That's when we killed the fatted calf. [chuckles] No, when we had—we ate well. [unclear] we had a garden at the time. I can—I don't remember anything about the famine but it must have been terrible. And everybody had to come—but that was in God's plan to send all the Irish children over here to America to build it up.

HERZ: Do they still speak about the famine in the town?

BRODERICK: No, no. No, only when they—maybe on special occasions when it's called for. You know, to remind us of our heritage, what our forefathers went through.

HERZ: And what about some of the political things that were taking place at the time?

BRODERICK: Yes.

HERZ: It was in your childhood but—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —do you remember?

BRODERICK: I remember vaguely. They were Irish. They called them turncoats if they went over toward the British side, or if they worked in any way for the British. I remember, I was telling you I was being locked up

for fishing in the River Shannon. Well, I'm quite sure the guy who arrested me was a turncoat.

HERZ: Excuse me. I have to pause just—[tape off/on] now resuming.

BRODERICK: Did we miss anything? [chuckles]

HERZ: When—when you were small and living in the town, did you travel at all throughout Ireland? Did you get up to Dublin? Do you remember that?

BRODERICK: I—yes, I went to County Cork [PH], was one of the biggest cities nearby. And I don't remember going to Dublin. I went—when I went back for the visit, I went back to Dublin and my thrill then was riding on the double-decker bus. Oh, was that a fabulous experience. And I loved shopping in Dublin. My sister thought I was flipping my wig when I went shopping. But when I got back with all the goodies, she wanted half of 'em.

HERZ: What did you hear from your family in America? Did you write?

BRODERICK: They—my—they wrote faithfully. I mean, that was a big event when a letter came from America. And it was mostly my mother writing to her sister and then finding out how I was. And my mother always got a report on me. I started school in Ireland—

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: —where you would consider the kindergarten here. So I tell everybody I was educated in the other side. [chuckles] So I—I told—they threw me out of the kindergarten when the ship was leaving for America. [chuckles]

HERZ: You—you mentioned that your mother wrote to see how you were doing. Do you remember—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —going to doctors?

BRODERICK: Oh, yes. They sent me to quite a few doctors. And I can remember having the hot mustard plasters put on me when I had pneumonia, double pneumonia. I was quite ill. And I was anointed; I can still remember that. So I must have [unclear]. But I flew the mooreland [PH]. I am now 76 and I'm still here.

HERZ: And when—when the letter came from America, what was that like? Was it—did other people in the town—

BRODERICK: Oh, yes. Yeah, everybody. I—I don't ever remember going to any post office but I know you had to go into town. And it was a big event. Yeah.

HERZ: Did you have a—any special status in the town because of that?

BRODERICK: Well, any—when I went back, all people had to say, “This is Molly Broder's [PH] boy,” and they treated me like I was Prince Michael the Great. [chuckles]

HERZ: And what—what were your thoughts about America?

BRODERICK: Ah—

HERZ: Did you have any dreams or—

BRODERICK: I w—I was always—every Irishman wanted to come to America. That was fulfillment of a dream. Yeah. And Ireland supplied, I believe, the greatest amount of priests to America, because vocations were very heavy. Every mother wanted a priest in her family. And I had cousins who were priests. I have a cousin who's a bishop and it's God first, then country and then self, or whatever way it should be.

HERZ: You—you—

BRODERICK: But they were a very religious people but not stoic. Is that that the word I'm looking for? Not stoic. I mean, we enjoyed life. I mean, religion didn't take the enjoyment out of life. It added to it because any time there was a special function, a dance or anything, usually it was sponsored by the parish, or a feast, a festival. It has something to do with the church. And if a priest visited your home, that was an honor.

HERZ: So the priest and the teachers were sort of—

BRODERICK: Right.

HERZ: —a hierarchy [unclear].

BRODERICK: Right. That's it. Yeah. Uh-hmm.

HERZ: Well, let's begin the journey to America. How old were you when you—

BRODERICK: I—going on seven, I believe. I was six, going on seven.

HERZ: And how did you—

BRODERICK: And I had—I was seasick all the way over, homesick and seasick. And I can still remember my father dragging me down the stone road. I still have a few pebbles. [chuckles]

HERZ: They came over to get you?

BRODERICK: Yeah, my father came over—

HERZ: Your father came over?

BRODERICK: Yeah. My mother had to stay with—he took his vacation and a little—maybe a little extra time. And he did take me away. “Don't take me away from my mother.” I can still remember that. And then when I got here to America I wouldn't recognize my own mother as my mother for a good while. I said, “No, my mother's in Ireland.”

HERZ: That was the first time, other than when you were still an infant, that you had seen your father?

BRODERICK: Yes, right. Yeah, I hadn't [unclear].

HERZ: Tell us—

BRODERICK: He—he was a total stranger to me. He was one tough cookie father too. [chuckles]

HERZ: What was that like?

BRODERICK: And I lived with my father longer than any other member of my family. But I was a little afraid of him, always obedient to him. I think the only time I ever answered him back was when he had me down in the basement over here doing little things, and he said, “I want you to go over to the horse stables,” [clears throat] “get some fresh manure for my roses and no straw,” [chuckles] were the instructions, and do something else, and then he said, “Now, I want you to make the small fire,” that—we had a special fire for the hot water because that uses a peak [PH] hole, you know, the small ones. The big ones would get stuck in the grating. So he did that and then he had another chore for me. I don't know where I got the

courage. I said, "What's the matter? Didn't God give you any other children?" [chuckles] First time I answered him back in my life and the last time. He looked at me and he was stunned. "Get out of my sight." [chuckles] So I went out and I played with the gang. And I can imagine him going up and saying to Mother, "Do you know what your son said to me?" [chuckles] "Didn't God give you any other children?" [chuckles]

HERZ: When you were—when you were still back in Ireland and he came to get you—

BRODERICK: Yeah. I didn't acknowledge or recognize him. He was just a stranger.

HERZ: Do you remember hearing that he was going to come and get you?

BRODERICK: No, no.

HERZ: He just—

BRODERICK: Because my grandmother and my aunt put it off. "Oh, why don't you let him stay another while? He's doing so well," and all that. So I did stay. I didn't have any idea of ever leaving. But then when I got here and I got to like Brooklyn, I said, "This place ain't so bad."

HERZ: Well, tell us a little bit about what you remember about, first, leaving your little town and going. Where did you—to the ship—where was that?

BRODERICK: I had to go to Cork.

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: Cobh, I think he—C-O-B-H was the name of it. And that was the one port. You always hit that on the way to Europe.

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: It was the approach. It was in the southernmost spot along the coast of Ireland. And I can remember there, and my father was buying me little things to keep me, you know, amused.

HERZ: Did [unclear] have any—

BRODERICK: Toys and the like.

HERZ: —any sendoff at—

BRODERICK: Ah, sort of. I—I don't re—recall a big sendoff but I remember crying. Am I still playing with that? [chuckles] Oh, well.

HERZ: Did you take anything with you? Toys or any personal [unclear]?

BRODERICK: I had one Irish toy that I brought with me. It was a—a squeaky toy, a head of a—an animal—

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

BRODERICK: —made out of maybe lead or whatever. And that was my toy for a while. By then I was maybe too old to play with toys but it was one of my favorite things.

HERZ: So you and your father arrived in Cork and there—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —was the ship.

BRODERICK: And there it was, waiting.

HERZ: Do you remember—

BRODERICK: And I remember getting seasick and being lonely all the way home. I wasn't eating at all and I had seasickness besides. And then—and I remember when I landed here in this country, my mother and the lady next door, Mrs. O'Brien [PH]—and Mrs. O'Brien was much more Irish looking than my mother. So I went to her and I ignored my mother. [chuckles]

HERZ: Do you remember the name of the ship?

BRODERICK: Um, if I heard it—my sister knows it. I know it was—I don't—

HERZ: Or the—the date?

BRODERICK: Hmm, '27.

HERZ: 1927.

BRODERICK: '28—'27, '28. That time, yeah. Maybe—yeah, the end of '27. Probably closer to '28. Luc—not—no, Lusitania. That was the one that was sunk. [chuckles] You know? Had a "tania" on it, I think.

HERZ: Had a “tania” on it.

BRODERICK: I think so. Yeah. Well, that’s not important; the main thing is I got here.

HERZ: And what were the arrangements like on the ship? Do you remember sleeping? Were you—

BRODERICK: Yeah. We were—we were in first class; that, I remember. We were down below and we had that porthole window; you could look out and see what was going—and most of that time you’d be up on deck anyway.

HERZ: I see.

BRODERICK: The room was used mostly for sleeping. And I can remember other people enjoying the food but I didn’t. When you’re lonesome, food doesn’t go down.

HERZ: Were there other children on the ship that maybe you played with?

BRODERICK: No. N—no. Not that I—not that I palled around with. We didn’t run around, playing games, like they do nowadays. I just—most of the time, I was over the railing. [chuckles]

HERZ: Was it crowded? The ship?

BRODERICK: Yes, I believe it was. Yeah. Yeah.

HERZ: And—and do you have any remembrances of the people that were on the ship?

BRODERICK: I do. They were all feeling sorry for me and sort of, you know, being kind.

HERZ: I see.

BRODERICK: Yeah. But that’s about all I can remember. I—

HERZ: How—how many days before your seasickness ended?

BRODERICK: Most of the time, all the way over. I—I couldn’t eat. I couldn’t hold it down. And my—I can—I loved oranges because that was a treat. But I would eat a nice Sunkist orange (I imagine it was Sunkist) and I couldn’t hold it down. Eventually, it would heave-ho. [chuckles]

HERZ: How many days was the voyage?

BRODERICK: Oh, six, I think. Five, going on six.

HERZ: And do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time?

BRODERICK: I—yes, I do. Of course, it didn't mean as much to me then as it does now, because I—I still get a thrill now when I see it. I honestly do. Yeah, even when I'm riding on a train and the train is up high and you can look out and you can see it in the distance. And I was listening to a story once on the radio about the fellow who was the custodian at the Statue of Liberty. And he lived up on the top of it. He was always there on guard and doing little things and—and how he was talking about he wouldn't give up that job for a million dollars.

HERZ: And when you—when you reached New York, you went to Ellis Island—

BRODERICK: Yes.

HERZ: —with your father.

BRODERICK: Right, yeah.

HERZ: Could tell us a little bit how you got from the ship to Ellis Island?

BRODERICK: I think there was a, like a small tugboat that you had to go on to go into the shallower waters; I believe that's what it was. I don't recall the ship pulling in and then the gangplank and all, like you see these days. But I think there was some sort of a smaller transport vessel.

HERZ: Hmm.

BRODERICK: That's—that's what I sort of remember.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

HERZ: Can you remember coming into Ellis Island, what it—visually, what it looked like?

BRODERICK: No. I remember the Statue of Liberty and just seeing land but I can't [unclear] have any real recollection of what it looked like.

HERZ: Well, what your feelings were at the time.

BRODERICK: Yeah. No, I was, oh, I don't know, bewildered, I guess, more than anything else.

HERZ: You mentioned before that everybody was excited to come to America.

BRODERICK: Oh, yeah.

HERZ: And so I assume—

BRODERICK: Yeah, yeah.

HERZ: —y—you were too.

BRODERICK: Oh, just little; I guess it rubbed off. Not thrilled, but [chuckles]—

HERZ: Were you able to share some of that with your father?

BRODERICK: No, no. I wasn't.

HERZ: Then how long did you stay on Ellis Island?

BRODERICK: I can—hours, I imagine. Not—not too long, because I—

HERZ: Not [unclear].

BRODERICK: No, because I—they had all the health papers ready because—it worked out. I don't remember going through any difficult times.

HERZ: Were you examined?

BRODERICK: Oh, yes. Yeah. Fully. Yeah.

HERZ: Did your father have to go through that too?

BRODERICK: No, no. I don't—no, I don't recall him going through it.

HERZ: Were you given any food?

BRODERICK: They were always trying to feed me. [chuckles] Yes, some—

HERZ: What—what were you given?

BRODERICK: I—I don't recall. All I know is [unclear]. And I imagine the food coming over must have been delicious. It's just that I didn't enjoy it. I remember the seasickness more than anything else.

HERZ: And then y—your mother came to Ellis Island to meet you and your father or—

BRODERICK: I—yes, I think she came with the lady next door, Mrs. O'Brien. Matter of fact, when they got back to my own home, my mother—I used to eat at O'Briens half the time. [chuckles] Say—"What"—I had my choice—"What is she having?"

HERZ: And where in—was it in New York City?

BRODERICK: In—in Brooklyn, yeah.

HERZ: In Brooklyn.

BRODERICK: Yeah. Mrs. O'Brien was next door to us, my mother's best friend. They were—they went everywhere together. Mrs. O'Brien was big and heavy and my mother was tiny.

HERZ: Can you remember some of the—the apartment where you live in Brooklyn?

BRODERICK: Well, when—I can remember everything about coming back to East Eighth Street. I mean, that's—I went to school at Immaculate [unclear] and I can remember everybody had to see what an Irishman looked like when they came back from Ireland, or an Irish American. Am I still fooling with that? [chuckles]

HERZ: [sentence unclear].

BRODERICK: [laughs]

HERZ: We're just discussing the—

BRODERICK: Uh-hmm, yeah.

HERZ: —microphone.

BRODERICK: Uh-hmm.

HERZ: So you—you talked about being in—in Catholic school?

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: What was it—what are your remembrances?

BRODERICK: I remember having—I believe an Italian nun, Sister Pascali [PH]. She didn't understand me and I didn't understand her. [chuckles]

HERZ: Because of your brogue?

BRODERICK: Because of my brogue, yeah. And I imagine that was it. But then once—I was left back and then I didn't want to be promoted. [chuckles] Because I was her pet.

HERZ: Oh, I see. Tell us a little bit about the language that you—you say you had a very difficult brogue. Was it—

BRODERICK: Hmm.

HERZ: —hard to make friends?

BRODERICK: No, no. No, not once we got established. No. But I believe the students were predominantly Irish and Italian extraction, you know, so I was accepted.

HERZ: What was your father doing?

BRODERICK: My father worked for the New York Stock Exchange.

HERZ: Yeah.

BRODERICK: Yeah, he did. By the time he retired, he was superintendent.

HERZ: Of the New York Stock Exchange. And your mom? Your mom?

BRODERICK: My mother just raised us. She—

HERZ: She didn't—

BRODERICK: —worked at home all the time. There was enough there to raise us. In those days, a mother did everything, your clothes, scrubbed, cooking, the works. And my mother helped me with my homework because my teacher in school asked me who was helping me. She took an interest in it. Because when I pronounced some of the names from history, I gave them the Irish name. [chuckles] One of them was King Nebukenezer [PH], king of Babylon. So Brother Patrick [several words unclear]. And Nebukedanesser [PH] and—“What? How'd you say that?” “Nebukedanesser, the king of

Babylon and that, the three guys in the fiery furnace, I think it was.” So everybody is laughing. And Brother Patrick, says, “Say that again, Broderick.” “Nebukedanesser.” And the class was laughing and he says, “Shut up. He’s right.” [chuckles] Ah, I still remember that like it was yesterday. But my mother—my mother was very much into education. She wanted us to get an education and my mother was quite intellectual herself. She was a musician and she spoke well. I guess my father worked well because he always held down more than one job to keep us supplied. Yeah.

HERZ: Do you remember what the community was like that you lived in when you—when you came over?

BRODERICK: It was great. Everybody knew everybody on the block and there was great friendship, camaraderie, if that’s what you call it. And my father was very strict about, you know, us being in the house at a certain time. But then when my father would go to work, my mother would come out and sit on the stoop and watch us and we’d be playing. As long as we didn’t leave her sight, you know, were always within view, we had a certain amount of freedom. And we’d play ringalivio [PH] and tag and “buck, buck, how many horns are up?” Did you—how to play that one?

HERZ: [unclear]. [laughter]

BRODERICK: You would—everybody’d be [unclear] and you’d jump on their back. And somebody in the front would put up so many fingers and then, if they didn’t guess the fingers, they had to stay there until the next jump. [chuckles]

HERZ: What would you think are the major differences between your life in Ireland as a six- or seven-year-old—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —and then your life in America as a seven- or eight-year-old?

BRODERICK: Well, there was more variety in the food here. And the first thing I did when I got here, I became friendly with the corner grocer and I became a delivery boy.

HERZ: So you went to work right away?

BRODERICK: Yeah, I worked for Bohank [PH] and then I became a clerk, and then I became a manager and it was a good life. I can—there was always work here for someone who was anxious to work. And I was

an eager beaver when it came to earning a dollar, would never ride along. If I wasn't doing something at home, I was doing it somewhere else. And the neighbors were delightful, [unclear]. Everybody was—there was no such thing as discrimination in those days. I remember one time I said something unkind about an Italian neighbor, and my mother slapped me across the face and that's the last time I ever said anything unkind about anyone. Because I hurt her. She was so disappointed in me; she didn't expect me to say anything unkind. We were getting a good education. So—

HERZ: Was there a great mix—social mixture in the neighborhood also among the adults—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —between the Italians and the Irish?

BRODERICK: Oh, yeah. Yeah, there were quite a few. I worked for a Jewish dairy, my first job, and they treated me like one of their own, and I celebrated the Jewish holidays—I had to—with them. I mean, they'd be working. No. I said, "I'm going to take care"—"Oh, no. You're not. You're coming in the back and we're going to have this"—all I knew, it was a—very sticky with a lot of honey on it. [chuckles]

HERZ: So you actually celebrated a holiday with—with a Jewish family.

BRODERICK: Uh-hmm, yeah. And then, la—the candy storeowner was Jewish and I was teaching her English. And she would be sending me ice cream sodas home for my mother, not for me. [chuckles] For my mother.

HERZ: I imagine that the church might have been a source of continuity. Is that—

BRODERICK: Oh, yeah. The main influence on our lives was our schooling, our education. I was always very chummy with the priest in the parish and I always went out of my way to make their friendship. And if a new priest came in, eventually he got to meet me. And even in my later life now, if someone comes, especially if he's a priest from Ireland, I have the privilege of showing him around St. Patrick's Cathedral. And my Uncle Pat, I still remember when we were going over the Brooklyn Bridge by car. I was driving. And he's looking up and he says, "Glory be to God. Will you look at what they've done?" [chuckles] Ah.

HERZ: Did—did any of your friends go into the church?

BRODERICK: You mean—

HERZ: Become priests?

BRODERICK: Yes, a few; my best friend in—in school, Father Meticroft [PH], he became a priest, quite a few of them. And I had a very good friend who became a nun. And I'm on first name basis with my pastor right now, [unclear]. I call him Father. And I—I can go in and see him any time I want, if I have a problem. I'm downstairs and I'll say, "Is Father home?" And he never fails but to come down, even if he's busy. And then I say to him, "I don't want to take you away from anything." But, no, he'll sit there and solve my problems. I was supposed to go see him the other day but he was away.

HERZ: D—did you or any of your brothers and sisters ever think about going into the church?

BRODERICK: I did. I [unclear].

HERZ: Can you tell us a little bit about that?

BRODERICK: No, I'd rather not dwell on it because was a—the one disappointment, I guess, in my mother's life because she was always so proud of me when I brought home a medal, if it had anything to do with religious training. And I can't remember ever getting everything less than a hundred on the test, because she was helping me, naturally. And—and I liked that. I was very good in history too. I won an award from the American Legion in school. And I honestly can say I was proud more for what I did to please my mother than for myself. And my mother was—was a good mother.

HERZ: So your mom was a pretty [unclear] influence in your life, even though when you came back, she was sort of a stranger.

BRODERICK: Oh, when I got to fall in love with her, I was lost. [chuckles] Didn't take me too long because it was funny. My sister—I'd say, "Tell your mother I'm hungry," and says, "She's your mother too." "No, she's not. My mother is in Ireland." [chuckles]

HERZ: What was it like coming back and—and being with all your brothers and sisters?

BRODERICK: They accepted me, not as an equal. No. We—I got over it. I didn't—I couldn't—I couldn't be bitter too long. But I never got along too well with my father for a good while, because I felt he was the

one who was dragging me down the road away from the people I loved. I didn't realize I was his to begin with.

HERZ: I'm interested a little bit in the changes and the differences between the community that you lived in in Ireland, and then—

BRODERICK: Hmm.

HERZ: —a much larger community—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —you lived in here and how that affected you as a—

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: —a young child.

BRODERICK: I wasn't afraid. I mean, for one thing, I fit in. I had my good friends in school. And then getting to school and getting to be with people, that was the main influence on my adapting to this land. And my mother was more than kind and more than understanding, because I think when I—I can still remember when I'd be going to school and I could always go in and sit on the edge of the bed and talk to my mother.

HERZ: Did they tell you stories—did your mother and father tell you stories about how it was when they came over?

BRODERICK: My mother, occasionally. They didn't go into it too deeply. But—but my father was ambitious, always. He worked on the side too. Anytime—there was a painter across the street and anytime he needed an extra man, my father was the one who did the painting and decorating. And he was a perfectionist, and I try to follow in his footsteps because I do a nice job too when I'm painting. And I have a niece who's an artist and she's fabulous. I have a painting by her, oil painting in my room that I wouldn't give away for any amount. And dancing and singing—I was a good singer when I came from Ireland too. Anytime they had a—a show, I was in it.

HERZ: What was the music like in the community?

BRODERICK: Mostly American. Or over here? [chuckles] Mostly American. No, they had these plays at least once a year. And it was singing and dancing, whatever. So—

HERZ: No [unclear] though?

BRODERICK: No, no, no. We used to have them. Well, I was in the church choir all my life. I can remember, that's the first thing. And my mother was so proud if I did something well, if I sang well, and she was going to listen to her son sing. I sang in St. Patrick's Cathedral. I was looking up at the [unclear] and I said, "Mama, this is your little boy."

HERZ: Do you ever think—

BRODERICK: I was in the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Glee Club. That's a very distinguished group.

HERZ: And you sang—

BRODERICK: I'm—I'm still in it.

HERZ: And you sang in St. Patrick?

BRODERICK: Yes, we did. We sang at mass and then we sang at concert after the mass.

HERZ: Do you ever think what your life—how your life would have been different if you had stayed in Ireland?

BRODERICK: I wouldn't have been a big success. [chuckles] I'd still be farming. No, that never entered my mind. But—

HERZ: Are you happy that you came here?

BRODERICK: Oh, definitely. I could never live in Ireland now. It's a nice place to visit but I love Manhattan. Oh, boy. I'm always—anyone comes that has to be shown around Manhattan, I'm their boy. And we have double-decker buses in Manhattan now too, you know. [chuckles]

HERZ: That's right. Did you—do you think that America met your expectations that you had when you were a child?

BRODERICK: I don't think I had any expectations. I was—I was always amazed at New York, the skyscrapers, Empire State Building. That was the first place I would head for when we had guests from out of town. I still think it is the most beautiful. The others don't measure up, architecturally and, oh, in every way. The others are too cold; might be large but they're—the charm isn't there. The beauty is in the Empire State.

HERZ: And you kept in touch with—with your family in Ireland.

BRODERICK: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. I had a cousin, first cousin visit not too long ago. He stayed with me so I gave him my room. And I—at the time, I had the car and we went all over. So he inherited the house that I was born in. And he said, “Oh, anytime you want to come, just pay your fare and drop in and everything else is taken care of.”

HERZ: Sleep with the chicken.

BRODERICK: Yeah, right. Yeah.

HERZ: Are there any other experiences or remembrances that you’d like to share with us about growing up in Ireland, or coming over and your experiences?

BRODERICK: I remember going to school once and falling in the ditch on the way down, and somebody had to come and dig me out. I was glubberin’ in the mud [chuckles] because the rain was quite heavy.

HERZ: Would you like to give us one more sample of your Irish brogue before we—

BRODERICK: Oh, I don’t—now, I would be putting it on. It wouldn’t be natural.

HERZ: Well, we’d like to thank you very much.

BRODERICK: Yeah.

HERZ: We’ve be speaking—

BRODERICK: Yeah, you’ve been very pleasant. I enjoyed every moment.

HERZ: We’ve been speaking with Michael Broderick at the Bishop Maguvero Home in Brooklyn. My name is Roger Herz. This is September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1997 and this interview was done for the Oral History Project at Ellis Island. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]