KECK-112
KALMAN BORKO
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YUGOSLAVIA, 1921 AND 1926
AGE 11 (FIRST TIME)
PASSAGE ON "THE BERENGARIA" (FIRST TIME)

DALLETT: My name is Nancy Dallett, and I'm speaking with Kalman Borko on Wednesday, December 18, 1985. We are beginning this interview at 3:40 PM and we are about to interview Mr. Borko about his immigration experience from Yugoslavia in 1921 and then again coming through Ellis Island in 1926. And this is the beginning of side one of Interview Number 112. Uh, can you take me back to the beginning of your story, and would you tell me where and when you were born?

BORKO: Well, I was born in Yugoslavia, at that time it was Hungary, in 1910, August the 25th, in a village called Suza, S-U-Z-A, which is about ten miles south of the Hungarian border. In that area, mostly Hungarian people live.

DALLETT: Okay. Tell me about your family in Yugoslavia.

BORKO: Well, my father was a farmer. He had this couple of acres of land and an acre of vineyard. But he found that the living from that property wasn't exactly, you know, fine, so he was seeking something to, uh, get out of the situation. Fortunately, there was our neighbor who was in the United States for about ten years, returned from the United States and, uh, concerning the United States, this man told my father about the living here is much better, and more possibilities. And they teamed up together in 1920 and came over to New York.

DALLETT: Now, where had this man been living while he was in the United States?

BORKO: He was in New York, but exactly the street I don't know.

DALLETT: What had he, do you know what he had told your father, or had he ever told you anything about--

BORKO: Well, he told that, you know, you work, five and half days and you get paid every week. And, uh, about the living situation, you live more, uh, modern way than living in a village where, you know, you can't shower every hour. And the job that he, my father worked in a, with this man in a slaughterhouse where, nearby, where

the United Nations building is today. Until we, with my mother, came over in 1921. Then he got another job.

DALLETT: Okay. What was the, what did your father raise on his acres of land while, while you were still in Yugoslavia?

BORKO: Wheat, corn, mostly. And potatoes, you know. Then, of course, in the garden, onions and that kind of stuff, you know.

DALLETT: Did you help him on the, on the farm?

BORKO: Well, I at that time, you know, I didn't help him because I was only eleven years old. Actually I was nine years old because in 1920 then I was ten years old. So I didn't help too much. My mother, you know, gave him a hand and, uh, those things. But, uh--

DALLETT: Do you remember much about life as a, as a young boy in Yugoslavia? Do you remember what the village looked like?

BORKO: Well, I went to public school. I can't recall, you know, much about life. I know that after my father left, you know, the only hope was, you know, that, coming after him and see something else besides living in a village.

DALLETT: Did your father have to go through a whole series of examinations, or anything like that, in order to get papers to be able to come to the United States?

BORKO: Well, I wouldn't, I couldn't, uh, you know, exactly aswer that because I was too young to follow all the procedure, you know, uh, getting passports and papers. So, but I, I don't think he had any problems coming over to the United States because I don't believe that, at that time, there was a quota system. I think the quota system came a little bit later.

DALLETT: Right. And do you remember when he left for the United States?

BORKO: Well, I remember we went out to the railroad station with my mother, you know, for a goodbye. (He laughs.) But otherwise I don't, uh, in details, remember more about his leaving.

DALLETT: Okay. How about your own leaving when, when it came time that you were, and your mother, were going to--

BORKO: Yes. My father wrote to us and he sent us the ship card coming over and I remember that my mother, you know, uh, she was packing up all the documents, papers, that were needed for the passport, and that we had passport pictures taken, you know. And,

I remember one day we packed up and took the train and came to Belgium, Antwerp, Antwerp. And here we were, I don't know, I think it was the agent's philosophy. He held us there for a couple of weeks, which he shouldn't, you know, because we had a ticket for the ship on the Cunard Line and he wanted us to spend some more money, you know, staying in his hotel, you know. Meanwhile, after a couple of weeks with my mother, we went to the Cunard Line office and complain, you know. And they right away, you know, called this agent and inside of two days we left for London. And in London we stayed a couple of days until, uh, with this, uh, Cunard Line ship, we were shipped over, you know.

DALLETT: Do you remember what the name of the Cunard Line ship was?

BORKO: Berengaria.

DALLETT: Berengaria. Do you remember that ship?

BORKO: Oh, yeah.

DALLETT: Tell me about that. What do you remember about it?

BORKO: Well, I remember that there were a lot of, a lot of us immigrants coming over. And it was a nice treat and, uh, service and everything, you know. It was kind of different from that old country which I had never experienced and I never was, you know, away from, uh, far away from, uh, the village, except going to the city and so on,

you know. And, of course, we're looking forward, arriving in New York, you know, where our, where my father was waiting for us, you know. That's about it.

DALLETT: Did you have mixed feeling about leaving? You must have had to say goodbye to some friends and family.

BORKO: No, no. I was happy. I was really happy, yeah. I was really happy coming over and seeing my father, you know, and, uh certain change in your life. And I remember we docked at New York and my father borrowed, or rented, a motorboat and came to the ship and we were at the rail, you know, and then, uh, we know that, you know, he's there. He received a letter in which we wrote that on, on the time of our arrival and also what ship we were arriving. And, of course, we were shipped to Ellis Island with my mother. But we didn't stay. Just about a couple of hours until, you know, we got through those, uh, those checks, or exams, or whatever they call it, you know.

DALLETT: Do you remember those exams?

BORKO: Yeah, yeah. I remember there was like a judge there and there were some uniformed men. And they asked me, you know, "Who's that man?" And I said, "My father." But in Hungarian, because the man, uh, he was bilingual, I believe. He spoke the language, and he asked me in Hungarian, "Who's that man?" I said, "My father." And then the judge said, "Okay, go ahead." So we took the ferry over back to New York and, uh, my father had that, uh, room, bedroom and another kitchen, something like that, you know, on

like 48th Street in New York. That was our first place where we lived, where the United Nations building is today, I mean the park. And then, of course, you know, they took me to school, a day or two. A girl who was Hungarian but she was born in the United States, and she took me to School 151 on 54th Street and First Avenue. But they don't, they didn't accept foreigners, immigrants, you know. "C" class, what they called it. So they took me to Public School 18, which is on 51st Street between Lexington and Park Avenue. But that building does not exist anymore. We were there two years ago and, uh, so they put me in school with other foreigners until we learned the language. And then, according to our knowledge they put me in a fourth class, I remember, you know. And, uh, that's where, you know, I, uh, learned more about, uh, the language and education. Things like that.

DALLETT: Before we go on and talk about what happened in New York, is there anything else you remember about what happened on Ellis Island? Was it crowded at that time with other people?

BORKO: Yeah. There were plenty of people in Ellis Island at that time. I remember, but in detail I can't because, you know, I was too young. I was eleven years old. And I didn't really pay much attention to the things, happenings, I mean. Uh, my, uh, point was to, you know, uh, get in touch with my father and go over. But in 1926, then I remember more about it.

DALLETT: Okay. Just one other thing about that. You mentioned that your father had rented a little boat. Now, was that in order to be able to come up and see you

on the big ship and--

BORKO: Yeah. To greet us. You know that he wanted, uh, to let us know that he was there waiting for us.

DALLETT: Right. Right. At the same time, had you seen the Statue of Liberty when you came in?

BORKO: Yeah. We did. Of course, you know, we heard a lot about it, and it was amazing, seeing something big, and a kid, eleven years old, you know, from a village where you didn't, (he laughs), you don't see things like that, not only that but other things, you know. And it occupies your mind, you know, something new. And it was really impressing.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. Anything else that you saw when you came in? Do you remember seeing the skyline, or anything else that was sort of different?

BORKO: Big, big buildings, you know, where, uh, in, where I came from there was not a story building, you know, one story building, you know, in the village. So seeing those big skyscrapers it was really something that impressed you. It impressed me.

DALLETT: Uh, then, you have an interesting story because you, you stayed in New York for how long when you first arrived?

BORKO: Well, we stayed in New York till 1925 and then my parents decided to go and visit in the, in Yugoslavia. So what happened, we went over in 1925, as far as I remember, 1925. At that time I was fifteen years old. And, uh, we had a return permit--

DALLETT: You hadn't already become citizens by then?

BORKO: No, no. We were only--

DALLETT: Not yet.

BORKO: No, no. Just three, four years altogether, there. And then we went over and my parents, this was, I think in the spring, if I can remember, in the spring, when we traveled to Yugoslavia. In the fall, my parents returned to the United States. And they left me there saying that, you know, coming over they had to find an apartment, they had to find a job. And, plus, being with them, you know, it would give them, you know, tie them down more. So they decided it would be more practical for me to stay and in the next year, in the spring, come over, when they had their own apartment and job and they settled down. So that's what happened. They came over, and I stayed in Yugoslavia until 1926, in the summer.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. And who did you stay with, then, in Yugoslavia?

BORKO: I had my grandmother there, and my uncle in the house, you know, they had a house. So I stayed with them. And then, in 1926, in the summer, I was ready to come over and I wrote a letter to my parents that I'm leaving and when I'm supposed to arrive. I already knew, you know, from the shipping agent, arriving with which ship. Unfortunately, my parents did not receive that letter. So I came over and the, the authorities, because nobody waited for me, when I arrived in New York they didn't let me off. Although I, I knew the language, I went to school, you know, he says, "No, no, we can't let you out because you're a teenager and too young and your parents didn't come for you. You have to go to Ellis Island." Which, you know, uh, of course, I didn't like, but I have to accept it, you know, the way it was.

DALLETT: So by this time you were already speaking English and you had already lived in New York. And you're--

BORKO: Yeah. I told him. He said, "I'm sorry son. We can't let you out." That was a smart decision from the authorities because can you imagine, later what happened. So I was taken to Ellis Island where I spent, I think, about more that a week or eight days, ten days, something like that. Now, this is the best part of my story. The employee at the, at the Ellis Island, he came and interviewed me the next day. All the details, okay, who's your father, mother, where do you live, where they lived and so on.

So I told him the story. This man went to the place where my parents lived on 55th Street between First and Second Avenue. And the man came back and he says, "There's nobody there." And he looked at me like I was lying, you know. And I wasn't, I said, but I should have, you know, kept my father's or mother's letter and had it with me so I could show them, you know. But who would think that they gonna, at the same time, when I arrived, they, maybe a week before, they moved from 55th Street to 92nd Street. And then, you know, I was always on the back of that man, you know. I said, "Please." And I was begging him, and so on. So he gave me another chance. He said, "Okay, okay," he says, "get off my back. I'm going to go and see again." Then he went there and he asked more tenants in that building. And somebody, I don't know who it was, told him that really there was a couple here, they didn't speak the language, although they did, but broken English, you know. But they moved away, and they didn't leave their forwarding address. So he came back and said, "Well, kid. I don't know what you're going to do. If we can't find your parents we're going to deport you." When I hear, you know, ooh, I was scared. And maybe, uh, it interests you that at that time there was a lot of Italian people at Ellis Island. There was some kind of a Catholic congress here in Chicago, as far as I remember, and there was a lot of Italians. And this agent or employee he told me a lot of them will be deported. There was some cripple children, or something like that, which the U.S. would not accept, or something like that.

DALLETT: At that point it was being used for a deportation center.

BORKO: Right. And Ellis Island wasn't a very pleasant place to

be, you know.

DALLETT: What was it like? What did you do all day?

BORKO: Well, as far as I remember it was a big, big, uh, not only the building, but inside, you know, like a, like a, in, uh, Chicago Stadium where they play basketball, you know, or hockey, you know, a big place. So I was asking this employee of Ellis Island what should I do, what does he suggest. He says, "Kid, I don't know what you're going to do. The situation doesn't look very bright for you." So I sat down and wrote another letter to the same address at 55th Street indicating that I'm here and I'm disgusted that, you know, I'm already here a week and nobody comes to pick me up, you know. My father, going, because he worked at the slaughterhouse on 45th Street and, on 57th Street and Second Avenue he got off the elevated and he walked to 55th Street. And that mailman was so smart. Although they took the name, the name tag off the mailbox, he knew that, you know, that was their mailbox. And he dropped my letter in that mailbox, and my father came and he found my letter there. Then he went to his place where he works and told them that I arrived and he wouldn't be working that day and called my mother and they came to Ellis Island and picked me up.(Mrs. Borko speaks off, mike.) Well, you know, you get ideas. (They laugh.) I was over fifteen and going on sixteen, you get ideas like, after a week, you know, I was thinking, "Damn it, I have got to get out of here." And I was thinking to swimming, swimming the Hudson River, coming out with wet clothes, of course, the cops wouldn't grab you. Because I was desperate. You know, being in Ellis Island, as I said, it's not a very pleasant place and, besides that, you know, being there

a wee and, from the employees saying that, you know, you might be deported. You get the creeps. And so did I.

DALLETT: Do you remember, like where they put you up for sleeping?

BORKO: You see, this is something, I don't know, I can't remember. The food, and the place where we slept. I know, as we were walking, that he was checking us. I remember that, you know. The number of, of immigrants, you know, like going, like checking that somebody didn't get away, or something. I remember he had some kind of a--

DALLETT: Clicker?

BORKO: Clicker, you know.

DALLETT: So he kept, they kept their eye on you.

BORKO: Yeah. And one of them went for dinner or, or lunch or something like that then, you know, they always use that, so-- That the same number who went in the dining room came out of the dining room, or I believe, you know, that must have happened.

DALLETT; Uh-huh. So finally your father got the letter and that very same day--

BORKO: Finally we anchored again in New York, thanks to the Lord. And then, uh, that was, you know, a very bad neighborhood, 92nd Street. One night, it was summer and, after I arrived, about a month or so, I was sleeping, and had my hands behind my back, my head, and I see somebody coming down from the, we lived on third floor, there was four floors, you know, coming down, and then a man came on the fire escape and the window was down, and he looked in. And I had that sink, sink leg in my hand, you know. So I thought, if he comes in I'm going to bop him. And then, I was thinking, really, what should I do. Then suddenly I thought, I'm going to scare him. Then I hollered, you know. This guy almost jumped off the third floor. He got scared, you know. You don't want a robber, you've got the creeps also. And one occasion, in that same place, the reason I'm telling this because a bad neighborhood, why we moved back to that neighborhood, 56th Street then, because of this that happened. And one night, and I heard somebody putting the key in the keyhole, you know. And he didn't fit in another one. And I went to the bedroom to my father and mother and told them, "Somebody--" Then my father came and he hit the door, you know, and we heard a couple of, not one, a couple of guys running down the stairway. So it was a bad experience, you know, 92nd Street, so we moved back in 56th Street, and we stayed there till 1929 in the fall when my father, you know, he was, uh, at that time I was working, you know. And over, as soon as we go over Long Island the first street, there was, uh, Chesterfield Furniture Company, I remember, I got a job there, sixteen years old. Because my parents asked me, "Do you want to go to school or what?" Well, of course, a kid, you know, I wanted to work, earn money, you know. And my father worked across from this company, a manufacturer where they made automobile bumpers, you know. And he was one with the machine, that he gave that form to that bumper. So, well,

well off, you know. I was working and my father was working and my mother was working. But, in 1929, later, I mean in the fall, the situation was getting worser and worser. And my father was two days, three days. And then, then he decided it would be the best thing for us to go over where my father had the property, he had a house, spend a year with the return permit, going over, and then, we'll see, maybe the situation will become better here and then we'll come over. Meanwhile, the situation got bad. And then, of course, next year I had to serve nine months in the Royal Yugoslavian Army which I didn't like, of course. But that was the law there, you know, you have to serve, like it or not, you know. And after getting out, because we had a return permit, although it expired because that was already two years behind. I went down to Belgrade, to the American Embassy and I talked to the counselor. I remember him, older man with a pipe. And I knew the language. You know, that was about two years since I left the United States, you know. And I told him the whole story, you know, that I came to the United States when I was eleven years old. I left the United States when I was nineteen. I inhaled everything that's American. I love America, and I just can't adjust myself to this Yugoslavian way of living. And I begged him, you know, if there's any possibility that he could give me the visa. And he was very understanding and reasonable, and he said, "Son, the situation--" That was in 1932 already, you know. "The situation in the United States is bad unless you have a well off, uh, let's say, uh, relatives, or some body, you know, who will sponsor and take care of you, because in the United States the situation isn't so good. There's a lot of people without work and I doubt that you'll be able to get a job. But if the situation becomes better you come to me and I will give you the visa because I see that you really like America, you want to go back." So, unfortunately, the situation didn't get better, it got

worse. Came the Second World War. And after the Second World War, I was one of the first ones to be registered to come to the United States. That, because I had no close relatives here and this, you know, gave me the chance to come over and I asked for immigration. But because of the ideology, you know, the difference between, you know, social country, Communist country, you can't get out that easy. So, we waited. After I was registered at the American Embassy, about seventeen years. Although in 1949 I got a letter from the American Embassy from Belgrade that if I have a valid passport I can get the visa. And I applied for passport. Of course, I couldn't get the, it was, you know, rejected. So what, what else could we do? We waited and waited . But after seventeen years, one of the big wheels in the government made a speech in a certain city and he said, "Whoever wants to go and leave, uh, Yugoslavia, the doors are open." So I told my wife, "Listen, let's go down to the American Embassy." We went down there and I talked to the receptionist. She was a Yugoslavian woman, you know, but of course, she knows, she knows English. And I told her. "Oh," she says, "forget it. No, there's no way. 1945 you were registered. Oh, it's all those records." And, at that same time, I said, "I want to see the counselor." At the same time the counselor came out. And, and he asked her, says, "What's the problem?" And then she says, "Well, the gentleman--" Then he started to talk to me in Yugoslavian. And I started to talk to him in English. "Oh," he says. I said, "Yeah, I know, I was raised in the States." And he says, "What's your problem?" Then I told him. And he says, "Get the records." Which she said, "Oh, there's no records." You know. She wanted something under the table, you see. And in a jiffy she got the records. And he said, "Okay, let me have one of the lists, you know, which you have to have." A passport, that you were never jailed, and all those

things that are necessary, you know, to get the visa. So he told me, he says, "Get these, and I'll give you the visa." And then we applied for emigration.

DALLETT: That's the end of side one of Interview Number 112 with Kalman Borko.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

DALLETT: This is the beginning of side two of Interview Number 112 with Kalman Borko. Okay.

BORKO: Yeah. As soon as we were told, you know, what kind of papers we need to have from the Yugoslav government, we applied for the passports and waiting for immigration to the United States. And, after two months od waiting, fortunately we received. And then, of course, we had to wait, we had to go through certain medical checkups, that's requested by the American consulate service and after we got the, how long? Something like two or three weeks we waited. And then we got the visa. With the ship we came over, and we had a friend in New York. He waited for us. He picked us up. And we spent two days in New York. Of course, I wanted to see the place where we lived before. You know, the house was still there at that time. But, uh three years ago, being on vacation in Florida, we were flying back. Uh, we had some friends in New York and

instead of flying back to Chicago we flew to New York and we went to see the place again. But there's a beautiful big apartment in the place where we lived, you know.

DALLETT: So all those years that you were waiting to come to this country, uh, did it, is that exactly what it felt like, that you were just waiting for that to happen, or did you just sort of pick up your life again in Yugoslavia?

BORKO: Well, we were hoping, you know, always, that some day it would turn better, you know. We didn't get involved in politics. So we openly applied for a passport, leave the, Yugoslavia. While, let's say, who are involved in politics, they don't dare apply for emigrating to another country. So, uh, free to apply and, uh, we succeeded getting a passport to come over.

DALLETT: So it was in the meantime that, that you met your, your wife, and had your daughter?

BORKO: Then we, uh, at first my wife, uh, she got employed at the Northwestern University as a dental assistant and then, uh, because she was there, she got in certain connection with some people, and then I started to work there. I worked as a janitor, in housekeeping, you know. And, uh, only for eight months. Then one day they called me up to the personnel department, the dental school, and they offered me another job as a mail clerk which until my retirement I worked.

DALLETT: When you first came through back in, I forget the year now. Was it 1921, the first time you came through?

BORKO: Yeah. The first time, yeah, 1921.

DALLETT: Okay. What was, what was your last name then? Was it always Borko, or was there, there never was a change?

BORKO: Borko. Borko. No, no, no.

DALLETT: Okay. You never had, never changed your name in any way. Uh, and while you were in Yugoslavia and waiting to come to this country, what were the kinds of things you tried to tell your wife and daughter about life in America was going to be like?

BORKO: Well, I was telling my wife that the life in the United States altogether different than living in Yugoslavia. There are a lot of possibilities and, uh, you can imagine how much I dreamed and loved America when I gave up twenty-three years of work there and left behind everything and, being fifty-four years old, I came over to start a new life here in the United States. And thanks to the God, thanks to the Lord, we made it. And we're happy. Our daughter finished dental hygiene school, my wife is working as a dental

assistant. She was a nurse there, you know. But she had to go two years to a school to get the papers here. And, uh, happy family. And then, uh, my son-in-law, he graduated at the dental school, Northwestern University, where my daughter went to dental hygiene school, and that's where they met and, uh, it's about four years now they got married. And he's in the Navy, as a dentist, and they're in San Francisco. He's stationed there now.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. And did you, did you help your wife and your daughter, uh, to pick up some English in anticipation of coming to the United States?

BORKO: Yeah. Well, you know, those mostly needed words. Although my wife already, in Yugoslavia, she's from Zagreb, which is about, eight hundred thousand or a million population. And, uh, I'm from a village where there's less than, uh, two thousand people, so which everybody knows everybody. And she went to night school in Zagreb, but she learned the language well. She did.

DALLETT: Spell Zagreb, it's Z-A-G-R-E-B.

BORKO: To fluently speak the language, of course, it's not so simple. But she got along, you know, although she had to pick up, you know, a lot of things, uh, concerning the job, uh, the name of instruments and things like that, that are necessary, for a dental assistant to know.

DALLETT: Yeah, yeah. And in this picture here, I see you have a picture of the time when the three of you were coming into New York.

BORKO: '64. Yeah.

DALLETT: So this was the first time your, your wife and daughter were coming in. Can you remember what that felt like back then on that day, when you were--

BORKO: This is the third time for me, can you imagine--

MRS. BORKO: I was crying. I was crying from happiness to see, because he was always talking, you know.

BORKO: Yeah. I was always dreaming, you know. I was telling them the stories about the United States. Everything I could remember, you know, even details, how it was, where we were, and how we enjoyed ourself and where we went to, and, uh, my wife already, you know, had certain visions concerning life here. And it became true.

DALLETT; Yeah. So all your expectations of what it would be like-

BORKO: Well, every beginning isn't that easy, you know. I was working in an income tax office there, you see. And, so I was an office worker. And here I started

out as a janitor. So I didn't mind, because once we started out from Yugoslavia we burned up all the bridges behind us. We never had our mind, you know, going back. No. Straight ahead, and whatever happens we'll roll our sleeves up and--

MRS. BORKO: I was forty years old.

BORKO: So, besides my regular job, seven years I worked Saturdays and Sundays as a security guard at the university. Then twelve and a half years I worked only on Saturdays, just to make up, because I was fifty-four when we came, so you have to, uh, assure yourself somehow for the old days, you know. So I retired when I was seventy-three. I'm seventy-five years old now. But, as you read it there, my muscles, are really just right. (They laugh.) Yeah. So thanks to the Lord i'm in good physical shape. I was never seriously sick. And I hope the Lord will give me a couple of more years to enjoy life.

DALLETT: Right. You deserve it now. I have just one other question, and that is do you have any of the original papers, uh, from when you first came into this country? You've showed me some of the photographs there.

BORKO: Oh, no. That's the only, uh, with my mother--

MRS. BORKO: The immigration, they have.

BORKO: What?

MRS. BORKO: Because they showed the picture to our daughter when we went for citizenship.

BORKO: What happened, you know, uh, when I applied for citizenship.

DALLETT: Oh, yes. When was that?

BORKO: That was in '60, wait a minute, '69. Yeah. And we turned in our application at the same time and she made it before I did. I was kind of, you know, surprised. How come, and you know what happened? The immigration asked the FBI in New York, because I was living in New York, you know, if I didn't have something bad on my record. And, uh, the immigration in Chicago had to wait till they got the papers from the FBI in New York because I saw them, you know. Then, then because she became a citizen, I became a citizen, out daughter, because she was only twelve, or how long ago, no eleven, eight, that's right, thirteen, automatically became an American citizen. So those papers were before that, uh--

MRS. BORKO: Judge.

BORKO: Counselor, you know. And I go in, and I looked at it, and said, "Oh, if you want it--" My picture, you know. And he gave her the picture from one of

those, uh, papers. So after, uh, as you read it here, uh, after five years, that was the first thing we done, to become Americans, and we're proud of it, and we love it.

MRS. BORKO: When we were five years here the next day we took our application to be citizen. Because you can't make the citizenship before five years.

BORKO: Yeah. They know that.

MRS. BORKO: So the next day we took everything and went to the immigration office.

DALLETT: Well, that's a really, really wonderful story. (They laugh.)

BORKO: But, you know, that being twice on Ellis Island, that's something. I don't think you could find, because--

DALLETT: I don't think so.

BORKO: Once is enough. (They laugh.) Because the person that comes to Ellis Island is, you know, either goes back or maybe you'll be allowed to enter the United States. So I was twice, you know. (he laughs.)

DALLETT: Were you sure, on the third time that you came back, that

you wouldn't have to, that Ellis Island wasn't even in operation?

BORKO: No, no. That was out of the question, Ellis island. I don't think it was functioning any more, Ellis Island. No.

DALLETT: No, no it wasn't but-- (they laugh). Okay, I think that I've asked you everything I need to, unless there's anything else you want to say.

BORKO: Is there anything else?

MRS. BORKO: We're so happy here to be in the United States.
That's all we can say, really. Honest.

BORKO: Yeah. She has a mother, she was eighty-six years old,
she came to visit.

MRS. BORKO: Today. I called Yugoslavia today and I congratulate
my mother, she was eighty-six.

BORKO: The last time I was, ten years ago. But I had no, my parents died, all my close relatives died, you know, I'm seventy-five, you know. And, uh, of course, I have nobody. So I didn't go, ten years ago I was there with my wife. My uncle was still alive then, but now, you know, I have nobody. So I said, "No, I'd rather stay, go down to

Florida, spend a couple of weeks there." (They laugh.) You agree with me. (He laughs.)

DALLETT: I agree, in this weather, right, okay.

BORKO: So, almost every year we go down to Florida, Sarasota, Key West, Siesta Keys. And we spend two or three weeks and, uh, of course, concerning my age it does me good, you know, for keeping in good shape.

MRS. BORKO: We celebrate the day that we arrived in 23 of March, 23rd of March, '64, we celebrate.

BORKO: That's ten years. Every year we have a big party.

MRS. BORKO: We have a big party.

BORKO: 23rd of March we arrived in New York in 1964.

SOUND ENGINEER: Okay. Now, I have to ask, with all this, the cooking that I smell, I'm sure some of this is Yugoslavian food, right?

MRS. BORKO: Yugoslavian food and Yugoslavian wine. You will see that in the wine cellar.

BORKO: It's American wine. (He laughs.)

DALLETT: So you continue with all that Yugoslavian baking and cooking and--

MRS. BORKO: You see, that's what we do. We live just exactly like two hundred years ago, in Europe.

BORKO: You know, we bake our own bread. We make our own sausage. In one of the pictures it was, did you see it? One of the guys, you know, those are doctors, one of them is Chairman of the Oral Surgery Department at Northwestern University.

MRS. BORKO: Make our own wine. Roast our coffee. Roast green coffee. Make sauerkraut. It's all preserved, you know, peppers from a garden. We just do like that.

BORKO: You know, they were, since we're here, at least, at least two hundred students from the Northwestern University were eating at our table. Let's say Thanksgiving, Christmas, they live let's say from, they live in New York, or in California, you know. And they didn't want to fly home, you know, expensive, and so on. So we invited. Our daughter, she was at Northwestern University, you know, a student. And then she invited and, uh, I worked there. You

know, when you worked in a place almost twenty years you get acquainted with everybody, you know. So, I says, "Okay, guys? You going--" "Oh, no. I'm not going home." I said, "okay, come over to my house." At least two hundred, at least, student, we fed. And we're happy, you know. Because they missed that homemade food, mother and father and the family. So this way, you know, we had good food, went down the cellar for a couple of drinks and they felt just like at home. (They laugh.)

MRS. BORKO: They should know how our generation lives. That's what we teach them, you know.

DALLETT: Yeah. Is your daughter going to carry that on?

MRS. BORKO: Sure, sure, sure. She called me from Lake Tahoe. "Ma, how do you make, how do you make pancakes?" You know, she cooks, and the strudel and everything just like me.

DALLETT: Yeah. I think for our next project we should come and, uh, get these recipes from people like you. That's next year. Okay. Thank you very, very much.

MRS. BORKO: Let's go down to the basement.

DALLETT: That is the end of side two and the end of Interview Number 112 with Kalman Borko, and the time is 4:35.