

KECK-127

MARY DUNN

BIRTH DATE: MARCH 3, 1905

INTERVIEW DATE: JANUARY 23, 1986

RUNNING TIME: 44:00

INTERVIEWER: DANA GUMB

RECORDING ENGINEER: W. SHERWOOD

INTERVIEW LOCATION: PORT RICHEY, FL

TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 1986

TRANSCRIPT RECONCEIVED BY: CHICK LEMONICK, 9/1995

TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

SCOTLAND, 1923

AGE 18

PASSAGE ON "THE ASSYRIA"

GUMB: This is Dana Gumb and I'm speaking with Mrs. Mary Dunn on the 23rd day of January, 1986. We're beginning this interview at 11:00 AM and we're about to interview Mrs. Dunn about her immigration experience from Scotland in the year 1923. Okay, Mrs. Dunn, if we could begin with, where and when were you born?

DUNN: I was born in Stirling, Scotland on the 3rd day of March, 1905.

GUMB: Okay. Could you spell Stirling?

DUNN: S-T-I-R-L-I-N-G. Stirling.

GUMB: What was life like there?

DUNN: Well, we had a very happy life, but when the war broke out in 1914 my father was a service man and had to go. Was wounded in France and came back home with, was gassed in the war and only lived nine years after that. It ate away all his lungs and everything. But we had a very happy life.

GUMB: You went to school there?

DUNN: Went to school, and I went as high as I could in grade school. When I was twelve years old I couldn't go any higher but I had to stay in school until I was fourteen because at that time you weren't allowed to leave school until you were fourteen years old. So I was, what my sister used to say, I was the teacher's pet. (She laughs.) But anyway, I was very fond of school. Never missed going to school.

GUMB: At what point did you decide to come to this country?

DUNN: Well I had relatives here. And when I was out of school there wasn't much, really, for, I lived in an industrial town and there wasn't much for young ladies or young women to go to.

GUMB: Okay, you were talking about the opportunities.

DUNN: So I had two aunts who lived in Pennsylvania. One was married and one was a widow. And they were sisters of my mother. So they said, "Come to America, the land of opportunity," you know. Not much that I did, from when I was fourteen till I was eighteen I worked in a little millinery shop, a ladies shop that sold hats and blouses and all that kind of stuff. I was a kind of a message girl. I used to get on the bus and carry boxes of things to people's homes for approbation so they could try them on at home and all this kind of stuff. And then the next day go back and pick it up. And there wasn't much money in it. My aunts were very anxious for me to come to America. So that was why I came.

GUMB: Why were they anxious for you to come?

DUNN: Well, they thought there was better opportunities for the young women, young people. But actually the only thing really that I was, what would you say, qualified for, was either doing housework or getting into a little shop like that. Well I got into a shop when I came here and it was in the basement of a big store sell yard goods. Ten dollars a week. And out of that I had to pay my room and board and my carfare, even to my relatives, because I was living with my aunts. So that didn't last very

long. I decided that if I could get a job in a home, a big home, doing housework, I would get my room and board free and then my money would be my own, which I did. I started out at seven dollars and fifty cents a wee and I lived in and did housework. Cooking, I learned to cook, and I didn't keep that very long because the couple that I worked for, the man was an eye doctor and he died. And his widow went to live with her family so I got another job doing housework. And I got elevated to nine dollars a week. Well, that lasted for, oh, I'd say about two years. And then I came in, got in contact with some of my Scottish friends that lived in Youngstown, Ohio and they said come over to Youngstown because there were a lot of wealthy people that, wealthy people that had big houses and you got more. So I got a job there at fifteen dollars a week. So I kept the job until 1928 and I was going back and forth to Youngstown, to Scottish gatherings and dances and that was when I met my husband. And, ah, that, I kept that job until I was married. And then the depression came and in the thirties so I had to go back to work. Fortunately we didn't have any children for four years after we were married. So we got a little bit of an advantage. And he worked in a steel mill and of course every couple of years the steel mills were going on strike, you know, and all this kind of stuff. So my husband got a job for very wealthy people, the Wicks in Youngstown. He got a job as, like a houseman. A valet, you know. He waited the table and did all the heavy work in the house and all that kind of stuff. And we had a little cottage of our own on the estate. So we were separated from the family.

GUMB: Getting back to Scotland, how old were you when you left?

DUNN: Eighteen. I was eighteen in March and I came here in, I left in July.

GUMB: Were you still living at home at that time?

DUNN: Oh yes, oh yes.

GUMB: And working in the --

DUNN: Working in the little millinery shop. Right, yeah.

GUMB: How did your family feel about your leaving?

DUNN: Well, in the meantime my father was very ill at that time and it was a kind of a hardship to leave, you know. But my mother felt that there was opportunities and you come out with, always with the hope that you'll be back and visit, but I didn't go back for, I was here thirty-two years before I went back for the first time.

GUMB: How was it a hardship?

DUNN: Well, leaving your family, you now, and I knew that my mother, I knew my mother, if she was left wouldn't be able to come because I had a brother who was a cripple. And this country wouldn't allow them into the country unless you put up a big bond and to make sure that they would not be a burden to the country or anything like that.

GUMB: You were helping to support the family?

DUNN: Yes. I sent money back.

GUMB: No, I mean while you were in Scotland.

DUNN: Oh, yes, uh-huh, yeah.

GUMB: So the fact that you were leaving meant--

DUNN: Well, it wasn't really, my people weren't that poor, you know, they were, I didn't really need to send anything back but I used to send back a ten dollar bill every once in a while, you know. Because you're making fifteen dollars a week, you don't have much to give to somebody else, you know.

GUMB: Um, okay. So when you left, did you have any sense that, you didn't have any sense that you were going to come back, that this was a short term stay in this country?

DUNN: Well, I wouldn't say that because I was emigrating really to better myself. I mean that would be a proper explanation.

GUMB: Okay. So once you decided to go, once you decided to come to this country, what sort of procedure did you have to go through in Scotland to come here?

DUNN: Well, you know, you have to, we had to go to Glasgow to go through all this passport stuff and visa and all that kind of stuff. And then you had to wait until a number came up for you, for your time to come. And mine didn't come up until it was, I think it was, I'm sure it was the last week in July, Because I arrived in this country when President Harding died. And all the public buildings in the country were closed down until he was buried. And we arrived in New York, it was on a Tuesday because we were ten days on the ship. And I think I was sick every day. It was a very small ship. And ah, but when we arrived in New York we were allowed to float around the ship but not to go off the ship. And, but I had a friend who worked the ships back and forth from New York to Scotland and he had an

apartment in New York where he lived, it was a friend of my mother's, actually. And so he came on the ship everyday while we were in New York from Tuesday until the Saturday when the ship was going back to Scotland. And he would bring on, the first time I ever saw a peach. He brought on a great big bag of peaches and he brought ice cream. Everyday he came, he was allowed to get on the ship. I mean the relatives of the people that were on the ship were allowed to get on the ship but we couldn't leave the ship. And--

GUMB: Well, getting back to Scotland for a minute. How long did you have to wait before your number came up?

DUNN: Well, from when I got the visa until the number, well, I got the visa, I think from April until August, July.

GUMB: How did you get word that your number was up?

DUNN: Well, they notified us. We were notified through the British Consul.

GUMB: Okay. While you were in Scotland what sort of things did you hear about America? What kind of stories did you hear?

DUNN: Well, having relatives over hear, you know, my one aunt was married but (she laughs) my grandmother, my grandparents were still living at that time and this one aunt that had come out in 1918, right after the war was over in 1918, and she was a telephone operator. And she met this fellow and his parents had come from Germany. Well my grandmother, oh, when she found out she was going to married to somebody that was German, oh, I think my grandmother almost raised the roof on the house she was so angry. but--

GUMB: This was after World War One.

DUNN: After World War One, yeah. The very idea that anyone belonging to here would marry somebody that was, whose people had come from Germany, you know, but however it was a very happy marriage. They had four children.

GUMB: What kind of expectations did you have about this country before you came? What did you expect to see here and find here? Do you remember?

DUNN: I don't remember really, that I just felt I was going to be much better off, you know. But not really, I had to make my own life, you know. I was young.

GUMB: So you were traveling alone?

DUNN: Yes, I traveled alone. There was one girl that traveled from the same town as I did, but she wasn't as fortunate on Ellis Island as I was because in the first place they weren't going to let her in because she had, you know, they go through your whole body, they go through your hair. And she had lice in her hair and they weren't going to let her in. So they kept her. The ship landed on a Tuesday, we had to go through a medical thing when we landed in the ship, even before we went to Ellis Island. So she was kept in her room all the time until we were ready to go to Ellis Island which was Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Four days she wasn't allowed out of her room. So, but she was one of the, I don't know how many other unfortunate ones there were, but she was, but she finally got in and she went to Loraine, Ohio which is a suburb of Cleveland.

GUMB: I'm wondering, there wasn't any problem with a single woman, you know, a young woman traveling unaccompanied?

DUNN: Well, we traveled in care of the Traveler's Aid, you know the Traveler's Aid, they have them when you arrive in the country and they kind of give you advice and tell you what you should say and what you shouldn't say. (She laughs.)

GUMB: What was the name of the ship you were on?

DUNN: It was the Assyria. A-S-S-Y-R-I-A. And it was only about a twelve thousand ton ship. It was a very small ship.

GUMB: What was the voyage like? What do you recall about the voyage?

DUNN: Well (she laughs), I don't remember too much about the outside of the voyage because I was sick most of the time, really. You passed by the dining room and you were ready to get up and throw over the rails. (She laughs.)

GUMB: What class were you traveling?

DUNN: I was (?), steerage really, it was steerage, you know, because it was the cheapest way to come at that time.

GUMB: What were the accommodations like?

DUNN: Well, the accommodations were alright. It was four beds in a room. Well, this girl was one of my roommates, but I don't remember much about the other two.

GUMB: What sort of food did they give you? You probably don't remember. (He laughs.)

DUNN: Well, the only thing I remember, the first time I ever saw corn on the cob and I said, "My God, I wouldn't eat that stuff, we feed that to the cows at home." Which was true, you know. And I never, I never cared too much for corn on the cob. And we just got, on cob would be cut in about three pieces, you know. Just a little bit. That was one of the things I remember that I didn't like. I wouldn't even eat it.

GUMB: Do you remember anything about what you brought? What possessions you had with you?

DUNN: Oh, God.

GUMB: Any kind of special things that you brought to the new country?

DUNN: Just clothes. Warm clothes. We were told to bring warm clothes for the winter time. But when we went on, the three days that we were on the ship we almost went naked because it was ninety degrees up on the deck, you know, in

New York. And we had the least amount of clothes we could wear, really. I remember I had a dress and it was made of tussah silk, remember the tussah silk? It was real silk but we called it tussah silk. I thought I was dressed for (?).

I did have a coat with a fur collar, I remember that. And we all wore hats at that time.

GUMB: How long did the voyage take?

DUNN: Ten days. We were on the ship from Saturday to a week from the following Tuesday, ten days.

GUMB: When the vessel first approached land, what were your impressions? Do you remember?

DUNN: Well, same as everybody's impression when you see the Statue of Liberty. You know, you think, "Well I've come to a free country." Of course we had, we lived in a free country, you know. But other than that, why, the only thing I was wishing I was at my destination, actually. And then when we found out when we arrived in New York that the president had died, then we were told that we were going to be on the ship until Saturday morning. And they had us at

five o'clock in the morning because the ship was going to sail back at noon time, back to Scotland.

GUMB: Who told you that there was going to be a problem, that you had to stay on the ship? Do you remember?

DUNN: Oh, I suppose probably the stewards or whoever were in charge.

GUMB: Okay. You don't remember any officials coming on board the ship or making an announcement or anything?

DUNN: Well, they came on to check our papers and all that kind of stuff.

GUMB: Yeah, and you mentioned there was medical exam on board the ship before you landed on Ellis?

DUNN: Yeah, before, that's where they found out this girl had contracted the lice in her hair.

GUMB: Do you remember who performed those exams? Was that the shipping company or the--

DUNN: No, I don't think it was the shipping company, I think it was probably the medical man from the State of New York where the ship had come in.

GUMB: Do you remember anything about that exam? What they were looking, what they looked at or looked for?

DUNN: Well, we got stripped to the waist, I know that. And they went through your hair and plugged in your ears and up your nose and in your mouth.

GUMB: Did nurses do this?

DUNN: Nurses did that, yeah.

GUMB: Um, okay. Do you remember where, when you finally were able to get off the vessel, how did you get to Ellis Island? Do you remember?

DUNN: Well, the vessel, it was like those boats that go from, what do you call them today, Cathy?

GUMB: Ferries?

DUNN: Ferries. They took us in two ferries. Yeah and we got right off the ferry on Ellis Island.

GUMB: Okay. So once you arrived at Ellis Island, what was the first thing that happened? Do you remember?

DUNN: Well, we were separated. I know the men and women were separated. I know that. And we were taken to different sections of the island. And I think we were on the island maybe an hour before we were put in front of these people, you know, and of course the first thing they looked at was your passport. And all together I was on the island from, I would say, seven o'clock in the morning, because it doesn't take long in the ferry, until they put me on the train that went, I was saying through the Holland Tunnel, but it wasn't through the Holland Tunnel. But we went on a train where it was all dark underneath. And we were taken to the Erie Railroad and we were bunched there for a long time because we were on a train all night. I know we were on the train all night. And we came into Buffalo, it wasn't dark, it must have been about six o'clock in the morning. And in the meantime I had met a fellow who was coming to Youngstown, Ohio. And we got to be quite friendly and we were supposed to, they were going through all your, this is where they took my birth certificate away from me,

in Buffalo. And we were allowed an hour in Buffalo and we were in the station, the railroad station. So this fellow said, "Oh, I wonder if there is any place we could go and get a cup of tea?" So we were allowed into a restaurant in that station and I can remember the first time I had a jelly donut (she laughs). A jelly donut and a cup of tea. And then we had to go back on the ship, on the train again. And in the meantime my relatives in Pennsylvania had been calling, I don't know where they were calling but they were calling to find out, because I had to notify them what time the train was going to leave Ellis Island or wherever, New York. And what time it would arrive in Sharon, Pennsylvania. Well, there was all this stop over in Buffalo, New York because we were, that was the customs, where all the customs men came on. And they had met two different trains in Sharon, Pennsylvania. I finally arrived when the church was coming out at twelve o'clock because kattycorner from the station there was a Catholic Church and my family went to that church and they were waiting but there was an old uncle of one of my relatives, not a close relative, but he worked at the railroad station and he was, I can remember him sitting on the bench when the train pulled in and he was there ahead of my relatives. Because they were coming out of church. I don't know just the exact time, but it was around noon time.

GUMB: So you arrived at Ellis Island at seven AM.

DUNN: In the morning.

GUMB: And when did you leave Ellis Island?

DUNN: Well, it had to be, I think I would say after it got dark.
It would be between seven and eight o'clock at night.

GUMB: So--

DUNN: And then we had to wait in New York for the train because I
remember the train left at something around nine o'clock.

GUMB: Okay, so you remember that there was a medical exam on
Ellis?

DUNN: Oh, yes.

GUMB: Do you remember anything, you mentioned about the medical
exam on the ship, but do you remember anything about the medical exam on
Ellis Island? What they looked for and what they were?

DUNN: Well, they did the same thing on Ellis Island as they did on
the ship. Going through your hair and all that

kind of stuff.

GUMB: How long did it take? Do you have any recollection?

DUNN: Well, we went from one room, it seemed to me we went from one room to another, but all the english speaking people were kept by themselves. I mean it was like a segregation. But I don't remember seeing any colored people.

GUMB: Did the medical examiners ask you questions?

DUNN: Oh, yes.

GUMB: What kind of questions?

DUNN: Well, they asked you how long you were planning to stay, for one thing. And I said, "Well, I was planning to stay as long as I could." In fact, before I got off Ellis Island I was wishing I was on the ship going back to Scotland because they asked you so many questions. I don't remember all of the questions they asked me.

GUMB: Do you remember any of the other questions?

DUNN: Well, they asked me who I was going to, of course. And I said I was going to relatives. Of course, you have to tell them all that before you even get a chance to emigrate. You have to have somebody over here to claim you when you come. When you come as an immigrant.

GUMB: Did they ask you if you had a job?

DUNN: Well, I don't remember if they asked me if I had a job, no, because I would have had to say no because I didn't have a job.

GUMB: Did they question you, did they ask you to read anything or any kind of test or anything?

DUNN: Oh I imagine maybe they did. I know one thing we had to repeat the Constitution because we learned that, you know, about the Constitution. Something about the Constitution, something about the country, I'm not, my mind doesn't go back that far for that.

GUMB: How about the medical, the people that were doing the medical exams, were they nurses that did these exams?

DUNN: Well. the nurses of course took the women and the doctors

the men, I now that.

GUMB: Do you remember what kind of questions they asked you, what they were looking for?

DUNN: Well, they asked me why, of course again they asked me why, again, why I wanted to come to the United States. And--

GUMB: Oh, the nurses did, okay, not just the people looking at the passport.

DUNN: No, the people looking at the passport, "Why did you want to come to this country?" And, like I said, for better opportunities.

GUMB: Did you get an overall impression of the attitude of these people? The nurses and the people who were asking the questions. Were they, what was their, do you, did you get any sense of what their attitude was? How they treated you?

DUNN: Well, they just treated you like immigrants. Some of them, I think, felt you should always stay in your own country. What do you want to come here for?

GUMB: That's interesting. How did you get that impression?

DUNN: Well, I just, the attitude of some of them, the way they kind of pushed you around, you know. I cried many times, you know, wishing I had never come. (She laughs.)

GUMB: While you were on Ellis?

DUNN: Yeah, while I was going through all this, I was, I'm saying to myself, "If I'd ever known I had to go through all this I would never have come." But--

GUMB: By "all of this" what do you mean? You know.

DUNN: Well, I don't know. We had heard so many things about the United States, come to America and the gold and money grows on the trees and all this kind of stuff. And the land of opportunity. And I'm saying to myself, "If this is the land of opportunity, is this the way they treat everybody when they come in?" You know. They really treated you like they didn't want you. These people that were examining you, you know. But I couldn't say that about people now because I've
had a wonderful life in this country.

GUMB: Okay. Um, yeah, I'm wondering, you got there at seven o'clock and you left in the evening--

DUNN: Well, we got fed (she laughs). I'm trying to remember what we got fed. Oh, God, it wasn't very much, I know.

GUMB: Do you remember what sort of, was it a cafeteria kind of place?

DUNN: Yeah, we were set up like you see (she laughs) I don't know how to say that, like you see the prisoners getting fed in the prisons at long tables and benches. Right. (She laughs.)

GUMB: I'm wondering--

DUNN: But I don't remember too much about the food, I know that we, I know about the corn on the cob but I don't remember much about the food.

GUMB: I'm wondering why, why you had to stay there, you know, for that full day, you know. Do you, did it take long, did the processing take long?

DUNN: I think the reason we had to stay there that long was, maybe everybody didn't have to stay that long, it all depended on where they were going from New York, from the station, you know. But I know that, that the train I assigned to was not leaving till nine o'clock at night and they couldn't send me any place else. They had to keep me on the island until it was time. Not only me, a lot of people, because a lot of people went on that train.

GUMB: Um, okay. Did you have to exchange any money on Ellis Island?

DUNN: Mm.

GUMB: Do you remember?

DUNN: I don't remember. I had British money. I know I had British money. But this fellow, like I said, this fellow that came on in New York on the ship had given me some American dollars. I don't remember how much. I had a little bit of American money but because that's what we bought the tea and the donuts with. They wouldn't take British money.

GUMB: Do you remember if any of the officials asked you how much money you had?

DUNN: Yeah, you had to have, I think fifty dollars landing money I think it was at that time.

GUMB: Okay. Do you remember if you had to show it? Did you have to show that money?

DUNN: Oh, yes, you had to show it. I had that, I remember now, I didn't remember that before, but I remember that we had to have fifty dollars landing money. That was to get you to your destination.

GUMB: This is the end of side one.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

GUMB: This is the beginning of side two. What was your overall impression of Ellis?

DUNN: Going back to the health problems.

GUMB: Oh yeah, right, okay.

DUNN: I had one problem. I only have a sort of a thumb, you know.

And they questioned me what happened to my thumb. And I said, "Well, when I was, I think I was about two and half years old, and my mother was doing her washing and I was playing around with the kids and I wandered away and there was a bank quite close to out home that had an iron fence around it. And a gate. And Mary goes through the gate. And I got through alright but coming back out the gate didn't stay put and I got that thumb caught in the gate. And it came clear off, that part of my thumb." It's not half way, it's just about the tip, you know. So I've been without that for two and a half years, since I was two and half years old. So they wanted to know all about this, how it happened. So evidently that had something to do with it, your health. (She laughs.)

GUMB: Did they, did they think you couldn't get a job because of that or, I mean did you have any idea why?

DUNN: Well, being on the left hand it wasn't so much of a problem

because it was on my left hand. I think maybe that was the idea of asking about it.

GUMB: But I imagine it would seem rather annoying to be questioned about a small thing like that, I mean--

DUNN: Yeah, yeah. I thought, "Well, why would they worry about somebody that only had a part of a thumb," you know. But it went over my head, it didn't, they didn't seem to think it was too much. But they wanted to know how it happened. And I was, really I was, I might have been nearer to three than to two and a half, but I can remember, I can remember when it came off.

GUMB: So that was one of the things that took more time?

DUNN: Yeah, because they wanted to know the history, you know, they wanted to know all about it and I had to explain how I wandered away from home while my mother was doing her washing. And, you know how kids do when they're little, swinging on a gate. But this gate didn't stay put.

GUMB: So your overall impression of Ellis Island wasn't too positive.

DUNN: No, not really. Well, I think in my own mind I wondered when I had gone through, because I'd gone through all these preliminary health things before I got a visa. And I'm saying to myself, "Why do I have to go through all this again?" But people had told me ahead of time, people that had come to this country in the earlier years had told me, 'You'll be sorry, you know, when you get to Ellis Island.'" But I wasn't really sorry. I was just maybe upset a little bit. What upset me the most was having to go through so many people's hands and take such a long time, you know.

GUMB: Did you feel like you were going out of the queue, you know, that there was the routine queue of people going through and you were sort of taken aside?

DUNN: No, I don't remember being taken aside, you just followed through the way they do when, the boys, when they join the service, you know, go through in a line.

GUMB: Do you think they treated you any differently because you spoke English?

DUNN: Well, that could be, I don't know, I don't think so, really.

GUMB: Okay. Um, okay.

DUNN: Although the Scottish language (she laughs) is a little bit harder to understand sometimes than the English language. You know, the English people talk differently.

GUMB: So, Mrs. Dunn, did you have to buy a railroad ticket on Ellis Island?

DUNN: Yes. They sold us, that was bought out the fifty dollars, that railroad ticket. But right now I couldn't even start to tell you how much it cost. It cost about a half of my fifty dollars, I'm sure.

GUMB: Do you have any recollection of where you bought the railroad ticket in relation?

DUNN: No, Traveler's aid took care of all that because they had women there in uniforms. They called them the Traveler's Aides, and they helped people that needed that kind of help. like with the railroad ticket.

GUMB: What kind of uniforms did they have?

DUNN: Well, I know they wore a little cap, little hats like nurses wear. Not nurses, could have been a grey uniform

like a visiting nurse wears and a little hat with a split down the middle. As far as I can recollect. I know they had a uniform on.

GUMB: During the questions that they asked you and every thing, was anybody with you or were you by yourself?

DUNN: No, they take you by yourself.

GUMB: You didn't have any help from Traveler's Aid or anything.

DUNN: No.

GUMB: Okay. All right. So do you remember, do you have any recollection of how you got off Ellis Island to the railroad, to get to the railroad?

DUNN: Hmm.

GUMB: How that worked? Do you have any memory of it?

DUNN: No, it seemed to me that, see there is a tunnel that goes under there, I don't know. I can't remember really how we got off the

island. Maybe they took us back in the ferry boats, I really don't remember that part.

GUMB: Okay. When you finally arrived in your final destination of Pennsylvania?

DUNN: Yeah, Sharon, Pennsylvania.

GUMB: What were your first impression of the new place? How was it different from Scotland?

DUNN: Oh, it was completely different because the home I went to live in with my, at the beginning I went to live with my grandfather's sister who had a three story house. I never saw such a big house. And I stayed there for about a week because my aunt happened to be ill at the time when I arrived. And then I went to my aunt's house. But I lived with this old uncle and aunt and the aunt was my, the old lady was my grandfather's sister. And they had three sons that lived at home and none of them were married and one of them eventually, well, one, I think, I don't know (?) or not, but one of my, I'd say the one, they wouldn't be my cousins. Anyway, one of the sons of my grandfather's sister had gone to war in 1914. And was a prisoner of war, actually. and never came home, in fact I think I have a picture of him someplace in American uniform and he was declared dead after

the war was over he had never come back. And he was declared dead and he had designated his insurance money to go to his sister. And the government paid his sister the insurance money and after about, oh, maybe nine months or so after the war was over in 1918 he showed up in a prisoner of war camp. And he'd been a prisoner of war all that time. Now he was actually the only one of the boys that got married. The other two never got married.

GUMB: As far as adjusting, you, as a new arrival--

DUNN: Oh, I adjusted alright because I went in to doing, when I got jobs doing housework, that was all I knew, you know, other than working in that little shop. That was, so I progressed from that and I've been doing housework ever since. (She laughs.)

GUMB: Okay. How did the life that you found here compare to your expectations of what you would find here?

DUNN: Well, I enjoyed it because I joined a church that had a youth, like a young people's group and it wasn't a Catholic Church it was an Episcopal Church. It was right kattycorner from the Catholic Church, but these people that I worked for, that I got the fifteen dollars a week, finally, they belonged to the Episcopal Church and this, it was called the Girls Friendly Society or something like that. And they got me to go into

that and we had teachers that taught cooking and handicrafts. All kinds of things. And that's where I actually learned how to cook American food.

GUMB: Did that take some adjusting to, the different food in this country?

DUNN: No, not really. The only thing, like I say, was the corn on the cob and other than any other kind of food.

GUMB: Do you have any idea what your life would have been like in Scotland if you had stayed there?

DUNN: Well, I had a boyfriend in Scotland and I might have married him (she laughs). But other than that, no, I don't know.

GUMB: Okay. Did you ever regret your decision coming here?

DUNN: Only when I was on Ellis Island (she laughs). No I didn't really regret it. And after I was married I had children of my own, why--

GUMB: How long did it take until you felt like an American?

DUNN: Well, I lived among American people. The first five years

really that I was in this country it took me five years, well from '23 till '28 till I got married with all these Scottish people I was living among American people. My aunt, my two aunts were Americanized and the one aunt that had the four children, that married the German, of course, that didn't go down very good with me either, but we got so that we got to like each other.

GUMB: What did you have to do to become a citizen?

DUNN: Well, see when I got married my husband worked in a steel mill. I was married in 1930 and in 1940 when the war broke out with Japan the men were not allowed to work on war work unless they were American citizens. So, but in the meantime when I first came I took out my first papers and I meant to take them out before you came, I think about 1929 I took out citizenship papers that you swear your allegiance to another country, you know, temporarily. But anyway, when my husband had to take out his citizenship papers and he had come in through Canada, and he had to wait in Canada for a quota to come to this country and he came in 1928. And so after he got his citizenship papers I only had to wait ninety days to get mine.

GUMB: Oh, so you was a wife, spouse of an american citizen.

DUNN: Yeah, right. And that was in 1941.

GUMB: Did it feel any different being a citizen?

DUNN: Well, I don;t know if my life felt any different but there was a lot more advantages because the men that worked in the coal mines, in the steel mills in Scotland didn't make the wages that a man made in this country. And then especially when they were working like twelve hours a day and six days a week when the war was going on with Japan.

GUMB: Okay. All right. Mrs. Dunn, do you continue to practice any customs here in this country?

DUNN: Yes, we've just come through, last Saturday night we went to a dinner dance honoring Robert Burns and that's his picture up there on the wall. And we're going to one next Wednesday night to honor Robert Burns who is the poet, Scottish poet who died very young. and then we dance all the Scottish dances and these things, you know. And I oodles of Scottish records. When I get homesick I put them on and play them. (She laughs.) I don't really get homesick because I don't have anybody at home now. Over there I have a sister-in-law, every two years I go back and

visit. Oh yeah, and I make all kinds of Scottish pastry. I'm a real Scottish baker. Sorry I don't have any here today. (They laugh.) Oh yeah, I have a little bit of shortbread.

GUMB: This is the end of the interview with Mary Dunn.