

KECK-139

ANNA SCHILLER GRIASCH

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AGE 14

PASSAGE ON "THE KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE"

ALLEE: This is Debra Allee. I am speaking with Anna Griasch on Thursday, February 6, 1986. We're beginning out interview at 2:22. At least by my watch. Well, let me just finish. Uh, we're about to interview Mrs. Griasch about her immigration experience from Hungary in 1909. I hope it's 1909. (They laugh.) Okay. Why don't we start, uh, where you were born?

GRIASCH: I was born in Nagykikinda, uh, in, uh, it was Hungary at that time but after the war it, Yugoslavia took that over. So it is Yugoslavia now, but I still say I was born in Hungary because it was Hungary at that time. And, uh, my folks came to America in 1907. Do I have to tell their names?

ALLEE: Only if you want to.

GRIASCH: George and Elizabeth Schiller was their, my folks' names.

And I had a brother and he was ten years old when they left and I was twelve years old. And then they left us with my grandparents. We were staying by my grandparents, uh, when they left and I went to work, house work. And my brother went to school. And then, uh, they were earning money here to pay their fare for to come, they had borrowed money to come here. And then after they had paid their fare they sent for us children to come to America. And in 1909 we came here then in august. And, uh, first we had to get the woman to, uh, be our guide because we didn't have no, I mean we were too young to go alone. And then they, uh, got, there was a woman in, uh, Kikinda, we say Kikinda, you know, Kikinda, who, uh, was a visitor. And then she was, uh, coming back again to America. And to Canada, she was from Quebec, Canada. And my grandmother asked if she could take us children, uh, be our guide, you know, and on the train and on the ship until we got here. And, uh, on the train after we left, then she started to sell me.

I think, you know, because she always want me, uh, to get off with some man. And I said I have no business to go with no man I am going to America to my folks, I said.

I had no business to get off with no other man on the train. And, uh, when we got to the border of, uh, Hungary and then the Border Patrol came aboard the train and we had to show our papers, you know, wherever you're going and when they looked at our papers I was crying and I told him that, this lady is always asking me to go off with some man, you know, to get off the train and go with some man. And I don't want to go, and, uh, then he, uh, told us to come with him and we went like to a ga, to a police station and, uh, over there, uh, I told what she was trying to do with me, you know, that she wants me to get off the train with some man, I don't know who he was.

And the police there, must have been the captain, I guess, he said, "If it wasn't for the children," he says, "I put you in jail here," he says. "But I feel sorry for the children, I don't want to send them back again." So, uh, he says, "I'll let you go." So, we went on then again, you know, we went on to Germany from there. And on the way we want to go along all of a sudden she wants, again she wants me to get off with a man. And she told

me the city where she was going but I, now I've forgotten the place where she told me where I should go with him. And that, that was good, in ah, remembering the places, you know. And I said we never, that is no place, I am going to America. I said I'm not going any place else, you know. So she, uh, uh, wasn't, didn't like it, you know. Well then we got to Bremen and there we took the ship to america. Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse. In seven days we landed already in New York Harbor. And on the way we were, before we landed we saw the Statue of Liberty and that was so beautiful.

ALLEE: When you were, I was going to ask you about the trip itself, uh, what was it like on the boat? Had you ever been on a boat before?

GRIASCH: Oh. No, I'd never been on a boat, not even on a train.
(She laughs.)

ALLEE: The train ride was new also.

GRIASCH: The train was even a new thing for us. And, uh, the boat was, I wasn't seasick. It was a great big boat,

you know, one of these, uh, I think it had about three thousand people on there. And we were in third class, you know, down below. But, uh, the other people, they were very sick. My brother got sick too, but, he got over it and I was kind of worried when he was so sick but he got, he wanted to smoke. (She laughs.) He was spoiled, my grandpa used to buy him cigarettes already, and he was only twelve years old. He wanted him to be grown up already. And, uh, he missed his smoke. And there were some fellows that gave him some chewing tobacco. That's what made him so sick. And, uh, well then when we had to get off the ship, then, uh, she asked me for our money. And she said, uh, she has to have it because we have to exchange it for American dollars. And, uh, so I gave it to her. And, uh, she took the money and the passengers were all getting off the ship, you know, and, uh, all of a sudden we were there all alone, the steward took us down, off the boat, you know, and he said he'll wait with us to see if he can find her but we could never find her no more, she just disappeared with out money. Thank you. And then we, uh, stood there all alone, you know, that great big ship, I can still it, you know, like this, and we were standing there and

everybody was going away. They went on a, uh, a barge.
What do you call that?

ALLEE; Ferry?

GRIASCH: Ferry. Yeah, on a ferry. They went on a ferry and, uh, everybody was going on that ferry that couldn't go through, you know, only the Americans they could go on the train and the immigrants they had to go on the ferry and go to Ellis Island. So, everybody, all of us, then this, uh, steward went up on deck to the ship and he asked the captain what to do with us. He didn't know what to do with us so he says, "Well just put them on they ferry and they go to Ellis Island." And when we got to Ellis Island and people all were going through, uh, examination like, you know, and I had to get my, I gave my papers there I took my papers, I had them in my blouse, here, you know, and I bent down and took them out and I handed my papers over and the man took them just like this here and, uh, pushed them off the desk. He wouldn't even look at them. Because I think, because the children were not supposed to, you know, have anything like that, it's the grown ups that take care of the things like that. So, we were, then we were just pushed along with the crowd and we went upstairs on the roof. And when we got up there in a little while we had to go downstairs and eat supper. And then after supper we were going back up to the roof again. It was real hot. It was August. Real hot weather. And then, uh, then a man came and he

gathered all the children to go to bed. And, uh, he took, uh, my brother away from me, you know. We, I was holding on to him always. And, uh, because, you know, there was so many people over there. And, uh, I was afraid he'd get lost so we held on together. And then he took my brother away from me and I held on to him like this here and I wouldn't let go when he tried to pull away from me, and then he had a whip and he whipped me and I screamed and then the people came around to us to see what the commotion is. And when they saw us there they were, a lady came and she could speak German. Then she said--I'm sorry.

ALLEE; That's alright, take your time.

GRIASCH: I don't know why I get so emotional now. And then she could speak German and she held me and she says, "You can leave your brother go," she says, "He has to go to sleep with the boys." She says, "They don't allow the boys to sleep with the girls, you know." And you'll see him tomorrow morning. So they let him go. And there was boy there and he had two little girls. One was about five years old and the other one seven, I figure. And he was from our country, too. And, uh, then the kids were hanging on him and crying, you know, too. And they didn't know what to do, you know? So I took those two little girls with me and, uh, we were walking down with the crowd and then, uh, crying, and then this girl came along and she said to me, "Oh, don't cry." And she said it in Slavinian. And I never

heard that language before but I could speak Serbian. And the Serbian and Slavinian and Polish and that all has that Slavic language. So I, uh, said, she says, "Don't cry." She says, "You follow me." We go to girls like in a dormitory, you know. And there's beds and you sleep in there with the girls. And then I took the girls and I put them and she said, "Don't go down below go up it's better, you know, for you." So we went and this, bunk beds, you know, so we went on the top and we slept up there. The next morning I took the girls and went to a place where we could wash ourselves, you know? Comb our hair. And I washed and cleaned the girls and we combed their hair and cleaned them up and then I cleaned up and then we went for breakfast and we had nice rolls and, uh, coffee. And oh those rolls, they were so good that we even stole some and we (she laughs) put them in our bosom, you know. And after a while, you know, so, we could eat more. And then we were going up on the roof again. And after we got up on the roof around nine, ten o'clock, I don't know, I didn't have no watch or anything, I didn't know except what I figure it must have been around that time. And then, uh, they came and, uh, called the names of all the people that were over there, you know, that were released and, uh, we were sitting there and waiting for them to call our name. Nobody called our name, you know. We weren't called. So, well, but these kids, they were called. And they could go on. And, uh, we were going--then I followed that man who called the names and I said to that man, uh, "We, we --" but in German, see I couldn't speak English and I took the papers again and I said to him, "We're not

supposed to be in here. I have papers here from America from my people," I said to him. But he just pushed me away again, you know, and the papers flew on the ground and I gathered them up and I cried and I went on, you know, my brother too, we were walking and crying, and so we stayed there for ten days. And out folks, they were waiting for us. And in, years ago in Chicago they printed the German paper when the boat, uh, ships arrived, in the paper. And, uh, the folks were always looking in the paper. They knew what ship we were on and they were watching. And then they saw the ship arrived and we didn't come. Uh, they didn't hear from us so they, they, uh, went to the agent where they bought our tickets, you know. And the agent said, "Well we have to send a telegram over there." So they sent a telegram over there and they said from the ship that the kids were on the ship, and they got off here in New York, but from there on we don't know what happened to them. So you can imagine how my folks felt over here. And then they, uh, uh, sent again a telegram to Ellis Island, but in the meantime that was already ten days there, you see. So on the tenth day, they finally located us. And then we were going release, to be released. And when we got to the train there was, a man there, my mother wrote to me, "When they come and, uh, ask you to send a telegram you just let tell him, give him the address," she said. And he'd tell you how much to pay, now I don't remember how much I paid, but then he sends a telegram to us. She wrote that to us, you know. So I did that, gave him the address from my folks and I paid him whatever it was and he wrote, the telegram was sent to them and it said we will

arrive on the station, uh, I got even a picture of the station here, I'll show you after. And, uh, then, at 1:30 AM in the night, you know. And, of course, then we were on, we were given a box with some, uh, food in it, you know. A ham sandwich and I don't know what, a banana and some, a little lemon cream pie. What we never had before and an apple, the apple we knew, and the ham sandwich we could eat. But the banana, we ate it with the skin on. And that tasted so bad we took and threw it out the window. (She laughs.) That lemon cream pie, we had never had a lemon cream pie in our lives, either. And it was pretty gooey-looking and funny. So we took that and threw it out too. (She laughs.) But then the next day we had nothing to eat. And it was lucky that some people, they had some ham and bread, yet from the old country. They had their supplies with them yet, and then, they couldn't eat, they were sick on the boat and they couldn't eat, so they had some left over and then they gave us some, you know, a piece of bread and little ham to eat. So we were supplied until we got to Chicago. And when we arrived in Chicago everybody got off the train and, uh, we did too, you know, and we were looking for our folks and they weren't there. All of a sudden everybody was gone and we're standing there alone. And we had a real little trunk about this size, like this, about this high and it had a handle on each end. You know they have them now again, those reed things, uh, trunks.

ALLEE: It looks like it's about three feet by two feet about a

foot and a half high.

GRIASCH: Something like that, yeah. Not that high. Only this high.

ALLEE: Yeah, uh-huh. About a foot and half high.

GRIASCH: And then we each got a hold of each end, you know, my brother on one end and I on the other. And then we were crying and we thought well, maybe our folks didn't know us because, uh, we hadn't , they hadn't seen us in two years, you know, and we didn't recognize them either because we didn't see them for so long, you know, children, we, that's how you talk. And then, uh, the, uh, we took this trunk and walked out. We were out on the street. And mother wrote to us. In case if you're not there and the police take you don't be frightened because they'll call us and we'll come and pick you up. But no policeman came to us, nobody, except a man came, all of a sudden, and he was an expressman. See years ago they didn't have no trucks like, it was 1909. They didn't have trucks, you know, to, uh, take your luggage and things. So he took us on his wagon and he had the whip in his hand and I got, at first I got scared when I saw him. But it was for the horse, you know. Horse and wagon. And then he, uh, put the trunk up on the wagon and set us on top of it and he says, "Have you got something else yet?" And I said, "Yes, we have a crate over here, yet, that

my grandmother sent for my folks."

ALLEE: He spoke a language you could speak.

GRIASCH: Yes, uh, he was a nice man, you know, and he could speak, he was Jewish, see, and he could speak German, then. And then, uh, he was real nice, because he, he didn't have to take, wait for that crate, but he wanted to help my folks, you know, because he knew they were poor people. They've come here, you know, and we waited until they unloaded the crate and then at that time it was daylight already. And we were sitting there and looking at the big tall buildings, you know, and wondering what happened to the man, you know. (She laughs.) We didn't know what was going on. Finally he, uh, came back and then he took us, we went to pick up that crate and then he took us home. And after we got home to the house, he took the address, it was, I'll never forget it, 112 Spruce Street. And, uh, so he took us over there and he went to the cellar, you know, the door, a basement, you know, and he knocked. And I looked and I thought, oh my folks wouldn't be living in the cellar. And I went and in the rear there was a house and

I ran over there and I knocked on the door and there was a lady that came out in her kimono and she says, I ask her, "Doesn't Mrs. Schiller live here?" And she said, uh, "No, in the front in the basement." And the basement sounded so nice I thought that's not the cellar, you know, that's a better place, so, (she laughs) I yelled to the expressman, "In the front in the basement." Then he says, "Yah, yah." In the meantime my mother came out. And then she was happy to see us, you know. And we, uh, the expressman, my brother helped him bring the stuff in and first she asked where's Adam? And I says, "He's outside, no he's out." Out, in German but rouse, you know. And then she thought he didn't come along. And when he come in, she thought he was the expressman's little boy, at first. And then he stood there and looked at her and then she says, "That's Adam." (She laughs.) She was so glad that, he never wanted to come. So she was glad he was here too. And that, uh, that was when we arrived there, you know, then it was, she had to go to work the next day. And, uh, she said to me, she worked at Marshall Field's at that time, uh, scrubbing stairs. My father worked in Schurtz's Piano Factory and he only earned six dollars a week. That was six days a week too,

no Saturdays off. And, uh, she made fifteen cents an hour, uh, cleaning, uh, working there. Later she went to, did some cleaning and washing and things like that. And then, uh, she told me I should put on--. She went, she bought meat, and then she told me I should put on a pot of soup, you know. And she showed me how to fix it.

How I should light the stove. We didn't even had gas for our, uh, to cook on. So she had gasoline, a two burner gasoline, camping, uh, thing, you know, a stove. And, uh, then she showed me how to light it and then I should put the soup on, and I did that. Then I went to clean the vegetables to put in the soup and by that time I, uh, went to, when I got through with the vegetables and I went to put it in the soup and I saw the fire was out on the soup. And then, uh, I went and took a match, I put a match on, and it exploded because the gasoline was seeping out, you know, when it was not burning, see.

And then that exploded. And I burnt my face and my eyebrows and my hair and they were standing like bristles, like this here, you know, and when my mother came home, I was crying and she says, "What happened? My God. What's the matter with you, you look terrible." And I says, "Well, the stove exploded." (She laughs.)

She says, "My God, child it is a good thing that you didn't get burned more in the face." I was all red and burnt. I just had a few blisters but it wasn't so bad. And it could have been worse, you know? So, uh, in a few days later, we had a great big cloudburst in Chicago, you know, a rain. And that was, uh, we woke up in the morning and everything was swimming in the room. (She laughs.) The chair and the table and everything. And we had to bail out the water, you know, out of the basement. And then my brother cried and he wanted to go back to, uh, grandpa. He didn't want to stay here. (She laughs.) I cried too. But then after that, they went and they got a better place, you know, where we had, uh, higher up, you know, where they didn't have to be in the basement.

ALLEE: End of side one.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

ALLEE: Beginning of side two.

GRIASCH: Oh, my brother went to school. He could, he was only twelve years old and he had to go to school here, see. But he only went one year. And he didn't go until he was fourteen. He went to work for the post, the telegraph company, uh, and I had to go and work, house work, although I was only fourteen. And I earned around three dollars a week over there, you know, for doing housework. And, uh, I wanted to go to school so bad but my mother says, "You have to go and work and pay for the fare, you know," They borrowed the money and we had to pay that back and that was hard times, so, they didn't earn so much. So I had to work, housework. And then at, uh, I was over sixteen years old then I got married. And, uh, then I had these two daughters and, uh, now I have, they each have three children. And I have now, uh, uh twelve great grandchildren. (She laughs.)

ALLEE: That's impressive.

GRIASCH: Yeah. And, uh, I guess that this is the, then I want to tell you about my brother. This, I think this is all I can tell about myself.

ALLEE: Can I ask you some questions?

GRIASCH: Yeah.

ALLEE: Back in Hungary, uh, I thought of this question when you, when you said you and your brother didn't like living in the basement. Back in Hungary, what kind of house did you live in?

GRIASCH: Oh we had just one room too, you know. But, anyway, it was a house, you know, we had a kitchen and one room only. And in that room there were two beds on each side and the table in the center, you know, and chairs around and we had an oven. A big oven, big, you know, that was built in. And where we baked bread and things, heated the place and everything. But we had the kitchen yet and a pantry. And, uh, then mostly in the summertime we used to eat out, we had like a patio and we were mostly eating on the patio.

ALLEE: Were you in the town or were you out of the town?

GRIASCH: In town.

ALLEE: You were in town.

GRIASCH: Yeah. But then, uh, when my folks went to America I went to work, housework, you know. And I earned only

three, uh, gulden. And that is only seventy-five cents in American money. For a month.

ALLEE: A month.

GRIASCH: Yeah. And with the first money I earned I bought myself an apron. I got it here yet. And then, uh, uh, then we were happy when we heard that we could come to America, you know, to our parents.

ALLEE: What made your parents decide to come to America?

GRIASCH: Because of hard times. My father was brick layer. And he only had work in the summer time, in the winter he didn't. And my mother had to go out washing all this and cleaning and working, you know, all winter so we could make a living. It was awful hard.

ALLEE: And so, uh, they thought they would do better here.

GRIASCH: Yeah, because some of their cousins and friends were here and they wrote to them how nice it is here. Although it wasn't much wages, still more than what they had over there. See like I got only three crowns, you

know, for a whole, uh, uh, month. And here you get that in, I had three dollars a week. In no time I had more. But when I could speak English, but at first it was hard, I had to, you know, learn, first how to speak.

ALLEE: Uh, when you went on the boat, uh, with your brother and the woman, well the woman who was supposed to, to take you, uh, did you all stay together in third class or did they separate the boys from the girls?

GRIASCH: No, we were together. Of course he was in one bunk and I was in the other one, you know, we didn't sleep in one bed. But the woman was in another bunk, you know, that was with us.

ALLEE: Was everybody from Germany and Hungary on the boat or were there--

GRIASCH: No, there were all kinds of people from all over. But a lot of Germans. Very, you know, it seems they put them like more together, you know, or maybe people went like this, you know, I don't know because I was too young to realize that, but, uh, maybe the people just went together like that, the other relations they went together and things like that. I don't know. But I can tell about my brother, you know?

ALLEE: Sure.

GRIASCH: He was, uh, he got married when he was nineteen years old. And, uh, he had a wife and two children. And then he enlisted in the First World War. And he stayed there, he was in the army. And he was in the, now see this is what I can't say now, you know, with the, the last page.

ALLEE: The U.S. Transport, overseas.

GRIASCH: Yeah. And then, uh, after his, they were married twenty-five years and then his, uh, wife passed away and, uh, his son graduated from high school and he went to the Northwestern University and he was taking up this in the books too. And he, uh, he was, uh, George, his son George he was in the University of Illinois.

ALLEE; Northwestern.

GRIASCH: Northwestern University. Taking up some D888 was it, or, 18, it's in there, what he took up in the, for the navy. and then, uh, my brother decided he was, he wanted to go to the navy, too, and he enlisted again in the

navy. And he went in to the Seabees. And he was, uh, cons, for construction, uh, engineer or something like that. And, uh, he was in the, uh, the Pacific War.

ALLEE: This is the Second World War.

GRIASCH: The second war, yeah up to the end. In both wars he served until the end. So I thought I should mention him because he really, he did this.

ALLEE; He really became an American. A Patriot.

GRIASCH: Yeah. So, this is all I can tell now.

ALLEE: Okay. I would like to ask a question or two, if I can.
Uh, when you commented, you told me that when you came on the ship and saw the Statue of Liberty it was very beautiful. Did your boat arrive in the morning or the afternoon, was--

GRIASCH: It must have been toward evening because, uh, see we arrived in Ellis Island just before supper time. So maybe around four o'clock or so, I don't know.

ALLEE: And you knew what the Statue of Liberty was?

GRIASCH: Well everybody was, you know, excited and we all were running through the top, you know, to see, the rail to see it, you know. Was real exciting.

ALLEE: And then when you were on Ellis Island for ten days, uh, well the first thing I wanted to ask was about the dining room because that's one of the first things you did. You went to the dining room. I understand it was a very large room.

GRIASCH: Uh-huh. There's a picture of it.

ALLEE: Yes. Uh, were you impressed by the size of the room and all the people in it or did you have--

GRIASCH: Yeah. But, I don't know, we were more scared than anything.

ALLEE: The first day you were there. Did you eat the food?

GRIASCH: Oh yeah, we were hungry.

ALLEE: Was it different from what you were used to?

GRIASCH: Well, I think we had stew or something like that, you know.

ALLEE: Well that's not so different.

GRIASCH: Yeah.

ALLEE: Uh, and well you were there for ten days, uh, waiting, but, what did you do during the day? You were a child.

GRIASCH: Nothing, we sit up on the roof all the time, you know. And, well we were, I guess, I don't remember no more. Just kids, you know. I read in this paper they have a school there, they have a church there and everything. I didn't see nothing out there.

ALLEE: When you were on the roof could you see, uh, could you see New York? Could you see, or, you just saw--

GRIASCH: No. See, it got dark when it got to, it was about, uh, not quite dark, we were too excited, see that big ship was in front of us.

We couldn't see nothing. (She laughs.) All we saw was the big ship and all the people going in and we just followed, we didn't see nothing else.

ALLEE: And so, when you were there during the day you didn't do much for ten days, sit around and have the meals. Did you become friendly with anybody, other girls or boys?

GRIASCH: Yeah we did. But see sometimes these people only stayed a day or two and they left again and you always had to make new friends. But not, not, see, we were just kids, if we were grown up maybe it would be different, but, uh, we walked around, like in our, it's our first time, colored people. And I liked those, uh, Jewish people with beards and everything, you know. They were sitting all in the rooms there in the big room. They were scratching. (She laughs.) They were all full of lice. When I got home, I had lice too.

ALLEE: You got it at Ellis Island. The lice.

GRIASCH: Yeah.

ALLEE: What did you think about the colored people?

GRIASCH: First we, (she laughs) kids, we all gathered and looked

at them and then they were crying and then one of them said, "Look, they got white tears." (She laughs.) She thought they should have black tears too.

ALLEE: Were they kids also or were they grown ups?

GRIASCH: They were dressed real nice. They must have been wealthy people. The girls had really beautiful red dresses on, And, uh, the, people, the, like the folks too, you know, they must have been wealthy people. They must have been from some island or some place you know. They were not the ordinary, you know, dark people. What you, would, you know, like when they would come from Africa. I don't know where they went or who they were but it was the first ones we ever saw. (She laughs.)

ALLEE: And when, when you were finally released, when the telegram came, how did you get to the train? Did somebody bring you there?

GRIASCH: No. The whole, the, all the people that were going to the train get shoved like a bunch of sheep, you know. (She laughs.) We got on that, uh, I would say barge.

ALLEE: Ferry.

GRIASCH: Yeah. Ferry, again, and then they bring us to the trains, you see. And, uh, it wasn't far from Ellis Island, see.

ALLEE: The train.

GRIASCH: Yeah. I think a mile, it said it was in this paper. And, uh, we got to the train.

ALLEE: And then the train went to Chicago.

GRIASCH: Yeah, uh-huh.

ALLEE: And your folks had gone to Chicago because that's where your relatives were?

GRIASCH: Yeah. They helped them to come here. They borrowed the money to come here. And, uh, then they again borrowed money, when they paid for their fare. Then they borrowed money to bring us kids. That's why when we come here, I had to go to work and help earn money to pay the fare back and that woman, she got one hundred dollars out of us, you see. And we never heard from her. And

whether, she never even wrote and asked if we got home or nothing . But my folks, they couldn't afford to get a lawyer, you know. That would cost a lot of money and go to New York or Quebec, you know, where she was from. It didn't pay to do that. But they could have prosecuted her. Because she left us there. But they didn't have the means to do it.

ALLEE: You got married at nineteen, sixteen. Oh that's right, it's your brother that got married at nineteen.

GRIASCH: Yeah. Uh-huh. (Inaudible off-mike) Yeah I got married, and my first husband died, their father died when we came to California.

ALLEE: Was he also Hungarian?

GRIASCH: Yeah. I met him in Chicago, though, and he got married and uh, he was nineteen and I was sixteen. (She laughs.) But I had a very happy marriage.

ALLEE: And what made you come to California?

GRIASCH: My folks came, my father had, uh, uh, asthma so bad and bronchitis and they came out here. I had a sister living out here. And they wrote how nice it is here. So they sold their property in Chicago and they came out here. And here they settled in Highland Park and they, uh, uh, were some of the first settlers, not the first but some, uh, there were lot of new ones just settling here, in Highland Park in that vicinity where they built the house. And they built two houses. First they built a two bedroom house and then that was too expensive for them, I guess, to live in. So they went and built another one in the rear because it was a big lot and they built another house in the rear with one bedroom. And they lived in that one. And then, uh, my father always wanted to live up on a hill. See there's so many hills around here and so they found a place to live up on the hill. And then they, uh, in lots, they bought lots and they built a house up on the hill. Up here in Highland Park. And, uh, they were very happy. He felt good and he always said, he was sorry he couldn't come here sooner. Because he felt good from the, uh, up on the hill. The air was more clean. And he didn't feel so sick like he was down below. And they worked in the brewery in the, the, here, in the, east side brewery. And my mother still went cleaning and washing until she was sixty years old, wasn't it, Betty? Yeah, she worked in Occidental College, too. Oh, I forgot that, see.

ALLEE: Oh, I'd love to hear it.

GRIASCH: My first job, you know, they took me out there the night before to see the people, you know, they were engaging me for work, you know. They had the store. And then, uh, they, uh, uh, showed me, they take the street car, you know, my mother told me to take, where to take, went with me and showed me where I could get the streetcar to get to the destination where I worked. So I, the next morning I had to get there alone, see, and, so the next morning I got up and I gathered my clothes and we put it in a newspaper. We didn't have no suitcase. So we just wrapped it up in newspaper. And I had, she bought me a sailor hat with a flower on top like this here. And then she, uh, uh, I took an umbrella, you know, because in case it rains, you know. I had my umbrella and my bundle here and, uh, the, and I got on the streetcar and then when I got to the destination the streetcar went across the street and I thought I had to get off here but the, you know, as soon as the street started, you know, not at, I thought this go now and he won't stop here. And I jumped off and the conductor said, "These dumb greenhorns." (She laughs.) He was cussing me. And I. when I got up, my stocking was all torn and my knees were all sore and bleeding, you know, and because I fell hard, see the car was going fast, I was jumping off. And then my hat flew off and my bundle was all broke, you know, the paper, and I had to gather it all up. And a woman was just going, that, they had a delicatessen store where I worked, you know, and she was just going to this store and she was Jewish and she said, "Oy vey,

somebody fell off the bus, the streetcar." And the lady from the store came up and looked and said, "That's my maid." (They laugh.)

ALLEE: Did you, did you like it? Did you like America, finally?
It's very different.

GRIASCH: Not at first. Because it, this place was dirty and the baby had lice too, you know, and, uh, I had to take it because I couldn't speak English. And this person couldn't even speak English, you know. I worked there and I couldn't learn nothing from them, you know, they were Jewish and they could speak German, you see. So, uh, I didn't stay there long. Just a few weeks, maybe, six weeks and then I went to another place to work. And they had a girl, she was maybe eleven years old then. With here I learned how to read a little bit, you know, and speak English too. And then I got a job with, uh, when I was about not quite fifteen years old. I wasn't quite fourteen when I came here, see. And then I wasn't quite fifteen when I got the job for, again Jewish people, but they were very, very wonderful people. And, uh, I worked for them until I got married. And after I got married they always, they kept me like I was one of the family. When I was, uh, for thirty-two years we were always in contact together, you know, they always loved me. And they even had the girls come over and she had parties, you know. They had to come, they went over there to help, uh, serving. And then, uh, after, that was during the depression, too, it

helped. She helped us a lot. And, and then when she came to California once, after I was married the second time after my husband passed away. And then she says, "Anna I have to find out and let them home, let them all know at home how you are. Whether you've got a good husband and a good home again." And, uh, then, uh, she, I invited them over for dinner one day. Mr. and Mrs. Truck (?). And after that they took us out for dinner to, to Hollywood. And we were, they always thought of me like one of the family. And I says, "How come, Mrs. Trucky (?), you had so many maids and you always--." And she said, "There was none like you. You were my, like a friend. Like one of the family," she said.

ALLEE: That's nice. Did you, uh, when you came here, uh, were the clothes that people wore different from the ones you had worn in your country?

GRIASCH: Yeah. We wore, I got pictures--

ALLEE: You want to describe it for the tape? Say it in words.

GRIASCH: Well, the style is almost like what we have now. (She laughs.) Yeah, you should see it.

ALLEE: With the high collars and the--

GRIASCH: Some with high collar, and they had this ruffles on the blouse like and the blouse was hanging out and we had skirts. Of course, we always wore aprons, you know. Uh, could you, would you want to see the pictures?

ALLEE: Yes, after we finish the tape, I'd like to see it. Well, the question is if--

GRIASCH: I own, there is pictures, you've got to see them.

ALLEE: I'll see them.

GRIASCH: I got, I was, my mother took a picture of my brother and I, had a picture taken of my brother and I on my fourteenth birthday and, uh, I got a great big hat on, (she laughs) and a princess style dress. She had made for me, that was made for me and, uh, then, uh, my brother he had to wear knickers and he didn't like that. He was already wearing long pants, you know. And he didn't want to wear knickers. He cried and he didn't want to wear them.. (She laughs.) But he had to wear them to go to school. So, but then, otherwise, you know, I come not from a small town, I come from a city and the people dress almost, it was--

ALLEE: It was similar.

GRIASCH: Yeah. The people could afford it, the rich people I mean, you know. And they were dressed nice. Always, Years ago on Sundays in our main street and the Serbian girls would be walking down every Sunday in brocade dresses and they had gold ducats. You know, gold chains with ducats, money, gold money. And the more ducats they had, the richer they were, you know. And we used to go every Sunday just to watch them parading on the main street. So. (Inaudible discussion off-mike about the depot)

ALLEE: Oh yes. Why was it that they weren't there?

GRIASCH: Because they didn't understand that Am and Pm yet. And they thought we were coming like the next day, see. Yeah. One thirty, like we arrived in the night they thought e would like be here in the afternoon. They didn't understand it, see. They were only here two years and they didn't speak English, yet, good. And this was really AM. PM, you know, they, that was a word you don't use much, you know, among people (inaudible conversation off-mike). That was in Ellis Island. Every night I took my blouse off because it was, I was perspiring so much it was so hot, you know. And then I would take my blouse off at night and I would wash it and I would hand it on my bunkbed, you know, and in the morning it was dry. I had a white blouse, you know. And, uh, then it was dry. Then when we went, uh,

when we had to go for our passage, you know, like when they examine you again before you go on the train, you know, and then the man said, "Do you think your folks can support you?" And I said, "Oh yes. I know my mother made some dresses for me already." She fixed me some dresses and things and he says, no first he says, "You don't look like it." I had a patent leather belt on, you know, and that was all, uh, you know how patent leather peels, peeled then, worn off, you know. And he said, "You don't look like it." And the blouse wasn't ironed, you know. Years ago when you washed out the blouse that was not, like now you hang it up and it always looks nice but then at that time, you had to iron it first before you wore it. So, oh, when I first did it, the ironing. Uh, when I first learned how to iron, you know, they had these iron that was all iron. Even the handle was iron on top, you know. And I'd put the iron on the stove to heat it, the lady told me I should iron some things, you know, she didn't tell me that this is hot, you know. And, uh, and then I went and I grabbed it in my hands the skin stuck to the iron handle. That, it is not so easy to remember everything.

ALLEE: You've remembered everything. You've remembered an awful lot. And I can't think of another question so, uh, this is the end of Interview Number 139 with Mrs. Anna Griasch, uh, the time is now 3:25.