

KECK-179
ANNA VISLOCKY
BIRTH DATE: DECEMBER 29, 1895
INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 2, 1986
RUNNING TIME: 1:00:00
INTERVIEWER: NANCY DALLETT
RECORDING ENGINEER: JILL RICHARD
INTERVIEW LOCATION: NEW YORK CITY, NY
TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 1986
TRANSCRIPT RECONCEIVED BY: CHICK LEMONICK, 12/1994
TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

CZECHOSLOVAKIA (AUSTRIA-HUNGARY), 1912
AGE 16
SHIP NAME NOT RECALLED

DALLETT: My name is Nancy Dallett and I'm speaking with
Mrs. Anna Vislocky on Monday, June 2nd, 1986. We are
beginning this interview at 10:55 AM and we are about to talk
to Mrs. Vislocky about her immigration experience from Czechoslovakia
in 1912. This is interview number 179. Can we start back at the
beginning of your story, and could you tell me when you were born?

VISLOCKY: I was born 1895.

DALLETT: Eighteen ninety-five.

VISLOCKY: December 29th.

DALLETT: And where were you born?

VISLOCKY: In Czechoslovakia, Austro-Hungary at that time was.

DALLETT: Okay. Could you tell me a bit about your family?

VISLOCKY: Well, my father come here first time. I did not know him. Second time he come back to the village and he pregnated my mother and she have another boy. Then he go back to United States and he gave ticket to my sister. When he was here second time he brought my sister to the United States. And I was left home with mother, take care of cow and sheep and everything that was in the village (she laughs). And they have another sister but she was sick and she died at that time. And when my sister go to the United States I was by myself with my mother. Take care of everything that was in the village.

DALLETT: Tell me about the village.

VISLOCKY: The village was everybody have cows and a bull. But they

had special place for the summer, cabin they have. And
in the summertime most of the time they go for a couple of
months to the cabin and take care of the bulls and whatever
they have, cows and sheep, even ducks (she laughs). They
have somebody take care of them.

DALLETT: Would you go with them to the cabin with your mother?

VISLOCKY: Yes. I was with cows and sheep all the time. And every
family had a cabin in the mountains so you go over there,
take care of everything that was over there. You have to
bring the milk to the village on you back. You have to
carry. And one time mother was sick. No, my father come
back from the United States, second time. And when he was
here that time he make my mother pregnant and she had a boy.
And when he went back to the United States my father didn't see that
boy because he died from sickness. I don't know what kind of sickness
he had. And I was left by myself because my sister went to United
States.

DALLETT: What was the name of the village?

VISLOCKY: Litmanova.

DALLETT: Could you help me spell that?

VISLOCKY: (She laughs) I could write it for you.

DALLETT: Okay, maybe you could write it for us, maybe afterwards I'll ask you to do that.

VISLOCKY: And that village was over there and there were neighboring villages, see, like here many boroughs we have in New York. So they have villages. Next village they call the name Yarembina, Litmanova. All kinds of names.

DALLETT: And would you travel to different villages or did you stay--

VISLOCKY: Yeah, you could travel because they didn't have trains, only one train, to reach a couple of villages. You have to go on your feet. No transportation, nobody take you, you had to walk.

DALLETT: So when you would, was the village in the valley and then

in the summer you would go into the mountains?

VISLOCKY: Yeah.

DALLETT: And you would walk up the mountain for the stay for the summer?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, you would walk up the mountain with the cows and bulls and everything, you stay there through the summer, couple of months. So, see, when you come back to the village for wintertime you don't learn much of anything (she laughs) because you lost everything that you learned for three months you learned in the village. Then you don't know anything. And when I come to this country I don't know, only to write the name or whatever it is I learned.

DALLETT: So you would go to school when you were in the village but not in the summer.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, wintertime. Wintertime was for school, so I go there. And when summertime you have to go the mountain, take care of the cows and you forget what you learned in the winter. But

good thing I learned now, to write my name.

DALLETT: And was the house or cabin that you lived in, in the mountains different from where you lived in the village?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. In the village we had a house, brick, I have a picture of the village here. So a brick house, not brick, stone. Stone house where I was born. Some people have wood cabin. My husband had like a wood house.

DALLETT: And up in the mountains, what would that be like?

VISLOCKY: Up in the mountains we had same thing as what I have. Because we were working in different places, my father had different and my husband's father had different place.

DALLETT: And do you know what year it was that your father first came to this country?

VISLOCKY: He came here before me, so he was here one year before me, I think 1912, 1911, or 1910. My sister came here 1910.

DALLETT: And that was the first time he came here, your father?

VISLOCKY: Second time, yeah.

DALLETT: How about the first time?

VISLOCKY: First time he came I don't know, but he was here for a couple of years, probably 1908, 1909, I don't know.

DALLETT: Do you remember your father as a young girl before he
came to this country?

VISLOCKY: Oh, yes, I remember. I was working with him for a while
and then he come second time to village and I worked a
couple of times with him. In the summer and winter.

DALLETT: And why did he come to this country?

VISLOCKY: He had to make money. He digged coal in Pennsylvania.
And the second time he come with his brother, they were
partners somehow. And the second time there was Depression
here. Somehow they closed the mines and they dig the coal

out, they closed the mine. And no work. So you have to go
back where you belong. So my father done that. And he come second time
home and didn't go back no more.

DALLETT: Oh, he stayed there.

VISLOCKY: He stayed in the village and he worked in the village
till the day he died, same place. And I have a brother who
was with me over there in the village. I asked my father to
give me money because he married, when my mother died he
married other lady. And I didn't like how he treated me
and how he treated the other lady (she laughs). So I
said, "Daddy give me a ticket to the United States. And that
is all I ask of you."

DALLETT: How old were you then when you asked for that ticket?

VISLOCKY: Fifteen or sixteen, I was about that age. And somehow he
got a ticket from a girl that was working here already in
Pittsburgh. And he bought the ticket for me from that
girl. And when I come here I had to come through Ellis
Island. There they investigated and everything and they send

me to Pittsburgh. And I go to Pittsburgh to the Mellon Bank, I have ticket. And I come there and I have to see my sister. My sister was sick. She had an operation on her leg. And the other friend covered for her, took me from the bank and the agent and brought me to her place. The she took me to the agent lady where they give you work. So I was working in Pittsburgh for \$9 a month, for a year.

DALLETT: How much was it for?

VISLOCKY: Nine dollars for the whole month.

DALLETT: Nine dollars for a whole month of work. And what kind of work did you do?

Ellis VISLOCKY: Housework. And take care of the children, whatever have to be done. And when I come here, when I go through Island I didn't have money. And I borrowed money (she laughs) \$9 from a friend. Because we were separated on the Polish border when we come here.

DALLETT: Take me back a little bit to the time when you're about

to leave home. Your father gave you the tickets.

VISLOCKY: When I leave home a lot come from the village. A lot of men come from the same village to United States.

DALLETT: At the same time, you traveled together?

VISLOCKY: And on the Polish border we were separated. One party goes to Bremen and the other party goes to Hamburg. Well, I had to go to Hamburg because I had a ticket from Hamburg and the lady, she was working someplace here, had to go through Hamburg. And the other party go to Bremen. Bremen was more fast to go here. They arrived a week before Hamburg.

DALLETT: How did you travel to Hamburg? Was it on a train?

VISLOCKY: On a train. From the Polish border to Hamburg. And from Hamburg I got on a boat. It was an American boat at that time. I don't know the name. I have it on the citizen papers, the name of the boat.

DALLETT: Okay. And what did you travel with? What did you bring

with you from home when you left?

VISLOCKY: A bag with clothes and that's all (she laughs).

DALLETT: Just clothes.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, no money. He didn't give me enough money, my
father. So I had to borrow from friends that traveled with me.
And it took me a year to pay her back. Nine dollars. Yeah.

DALLETT: So you said goodbye to your father then, in the village
before you got on the train?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, yeah. He take me from the village to the train
where the train goes to the Polish border.

DALLETT: And what did he tell you? Did you have any idea what it
was going to be like for you in Pittsburgh?

VISLOCKY: I didn't know anything about it. Nothing. I just went
and that's all. A one-way ticket.

DALLETT: So when you went to him to ask for the ticket, you said
you didn't really want to stay there with him--

VISLOCKY: No, I didn't want to stay there.

DALLETT: So you didn't have any idea what life was like for your
sister in Pittsburgh?

VISLOCKY: No, I didn't know anything about it.

DALLETT: Did she write to you at all?

VISLOCKY: She write, yeah. She write to me. But when I come here
she was no help to me at all. Only the friend from whom
I had a ticket.

DALLETT: Did she send you postcards ever? Did you ever see a
picture of anything?

VISLOCKY: No. I didn't see anything. I come here and I look
around and I said, "It's so bad home, but here I don't think I
like it here." But I had to stay because I had no other

place to go. So I have to stay and work. I had to work.

DALLETT: So, let's see, you told me about the train to Hamburg, and then you got on this boat.

VISLOCKY: I get on this boat, an American boat it was. That I remember very well. And in Bremen they have different boats and they come here with some people from my village. They come on the Bremen, one week sooner than those on the Hamburg boat.

DALLETT: And when you were in Hamburg did you have to go through any kind of medical examination?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. They take you through the medical examination.

DALLETT: It was with an American doctor?

VISLOCKY: American doctor, yes.

DALLETT: So you were hearing English then?

VISLOCKY: Yeah (she laughs) they give you somebody to talk to you.

DALLETT: They help interpret?

VISLOCKY: Yeah.

DALLETT: And what language did you speak then?

VISLOCKY: Slovak. That's what I was speaking. I know a little bit Hungarian but I forgot it.

DALLETT: But you did speak some Hungarian then.

VISLOCKY: No.

DALLETT: No, just Slovak. And do you remember the boat trip
itself? Traveling on the boat?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. A lot of people on the boat. And it was a very
dirty boat. There was lice on the boat, (she laughs) itchy.
It was a dirty boat.

DALLETT: Was it crowded?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, crowded.

DALLETT: And where did you sleep on the boat?

VISLOCKY: They had beds like you see, triple layer beds. And I slept on the bottom. On the top they have lice and they throw it down on you (she laughs). There was a lot of lice.

DALLETT: Was there food on the boat? Do you remember eating on the boat?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, they served food. Served a lot of food like they made in the village, that kind of stuff, they make it. And they have drink on the boat, who wants to drink, they drink.

DALLETT: And what time of year was it, what month was it? What year?

VISLOCKY: 1912. Nineteen twelve I came to the United States and I left the village October. And I docked in New York in

November. They hollered to stay on the boat. When we come
to here in New York we stayed on the boat for the holiday
and they hollered "Turkey, turkey, turkey."

DALLETT: Why, why did they holler, "turkey?"

VISLOCKY: Because it was Thanksgiving Day (she laughs).

DALLETT: You actually arrived on Thanksgiving Day?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, yeah. I arrived Thanksgiving Day. And from here I
go to Pittsburgh to the Mellon Bank. I have a ticket
from Mellon Bank. From there they bring me to the friend who
bought the ticket. And from that friend I had to go to
the agent lady, speak Polish, and she gives you a job. Gives
you house cleaning and take care of the children.

DALLETT: Take me back again, again to coming into Ellis Island on
Thanksgiving Day.

VISLOCKY: (She laughs) They hollered, "Turkey, turkey, turkey." I
looked around and words stuck in my head. I didn't know

what they were talking about, but somebody explained that it's Thanksgiving Day.

DALLETT: So you were fed turkey at Ellis Island then? Did you have a turkey dinner?

VISLOCKY: No. I didn't like to eat there. I eat mostly prunes on the boat and stuff like that so I could be sure of what I ate.

DALLETT: You never had turkey before.

VISLOCKY: No. I had chicken before because in the village I had chickens and I had meat -- lamb or stuff like that we had in village. You prepare it for winter, so we make it in a barrel. Pickled meat. So we had it for winter

DALLETT: Not turkey though.

VISLOCKY: No turkey, chicken, yeah, no turkey. We have goose, no turkey. Turkey, I don't understand what's turkey, till I see on the picture what's a turkey.

DALLETT: Tell me what else you remember about Ellis Island itself, when you came off the boat.

VISLOCKY: Well, off the boat I was here someplace in New York.

DALLETT: At Ellis Island, do you remember what happened there?

VISLOCKY: No. No. Only that time when I go through.

DALLETT: What happened when you came through, did you speak to a doctor at Ellis Island?

VISLOCKY: No, doctor was there. You go on a line and they examine you. You don't speak to him.

DALLETT: You were examined.

VISLOCKY: Yeah.

DALLETT: What did they look at?

VISLOCKY: Everything. Your teeth, your eyes, feel your bones and feel your stomach, everything.

DALLETT: But there was no problem with you?

VISLOCKY: No. I don't have. But there was talk about my husband. You know, he came before me and they always talk about the man that come with him because my husband had something found in him not right. They put the cross on his back and the other friend rubbed it off. And he passed.

DALLETT: That's how your husband came through?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. They were talking all the time about it.
(pause off record)

DALLETT: You were saying that when your husband came through Ellis Island they put a chalk mark, an X-mark on him?

VISLOCKY: On the back, yeah.

DALLETT: And a friend--

VISLOCKY: Friend rubbed it out and he passed.

DALLETT: He just rubbed it off.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, and he passed. And they were all the time making fun out of it, you know, talking with themselves about how he did it.

DALLETT: How about when you came through -- you went through the examination okay with the doctor -- was that the first thing that you did when you came onto the Island? You saw the doctor right away?

VISLOCKY: Not right away but you have to go on a line and the line came before you and they examined you.

DALLETT: How did you even know where to go?

VISLOCKY: Well, (she laughs) how did anybody go, they don't know nothing, they just tell you to go here. "To tay pani." (She laughs) and you have to go where they ask you to go and you go.

Many times I was thinking, "It was very bad at home but here it's not a picnic either."

DALLETT: But the people were speaking Slovak so you understood.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, they always gave you somebody there so you could talk.

DALLETT: Were you relieved to be off of the boat? Had you been ill on the boat from all that traveling?

VISLOCKY: I wasn't ill, no. I just was hungry sometimes, but I mostly ate prunes on the boat and some stuff that was prepared same as in my village. So I ate that. When I come here I didn't like that white bread. I wanted rye bread or something like that. And here what they served you was all white bread and it looked to me very funny. So I didn't like that. I wanted rye bread. And they served you white bread all the time. Special, nice, soft white bread, and I didn't like that at all.

DALLETT: Did you have that white bread at Ellis Island?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, they have.

DALLETT: Where did you go to have that food?

VISLOCKY: They had like a room, like a dining room. Everybody goes there and they serve you.

DALLETT: Big tables?

VISLOCKY: Big tables, table, big.

DALLETT: And which meal did you have there, was it early in the day when you came in?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, they give you breakfast, coffee, and I liked the coffee, it was alright. But I liked better milk because I was raised on milk (she laughs). So they give you coffee in the morning and lunchtime they gave you soup, some kind of soup. They give you soup, like bean soup, vegetable soup. So you eat like home.

DALLETT: And were there many more people at Ellis Island than were on your boat? Were other boats coming in?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. When the boat come in I don't know, they come more boat, but that boat was full, Ellis Island was full, and they examined everybody, examined and give you, what you call, yeah--

DALLETT: A shot, a needle.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, they give you a needle for every kind of sickness.

DALLETT: Like a vaccination?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, vaccination, they give you.

DALLETT: Okay, we just have to turn the tape over, okay? This is the end of side one of interview number 179 with Anna Vislocky.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

DALLETT: This is the beginning of side two of interview number

179. We were talking about Ellis Island. When you first saw
the building from the boat, let's say, do you remember how
you felt? Were you happy that the trip was over?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, I was happy I get out from the boat, yeah. I was
happy.

DALLETT: Did you know that you were going to have to go through
examinations at Ellis Island?

VISLOCKY: Yeah.

DALLETT: Your father had told you that?

VISLOCKY: Not father, but people that go with you. And they was
here before and they know it and they said you'll go there
because when they examine you, and they tell you all of these
things. So you just follow their orders.

DALLETT: Had they told you anything special about what to expect
there at Ellis Island, or just that it would happen.

VISLOCKY: (She laughs) You see Statue of Liberty.

DALLETT: You saw the Statue of Liberty?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. We passed by.

DALLETT: What did you think when you saw that?

VISLOCKY: It's like a monster there.

DALLETT: Did someone point it out and tell you what it was?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, yeah. They tell you about it. Dummy, dummy, you don't understand. You have to just make yourself think about how you're gonna do, how you're gonna do.

DALLETT: So you were nervous a little bit about Ellis Island.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, yes. What they gonna do with you next. I come to Pittsburgh. I don't have my sister because she was in the hospital. I know that lady from whom my father bought the ticket, so I know her. She was working the same place as

my sister.

DALLETT: So there was no one to meet you then, at Ellis Island.

VISLOCKY: No, nobody meet me over there. Just wait for train and I got there on the train, to go to Pittsburgh.

DALLETT: How, How did you get, first, before we leave Ellis Island, how long did you spend there? Were you there for the whole day?

VISLOCKY: I think so. I was whole day wait for the train, yes.

DALLETT: And how did you spend your time, you were in lines?

VISLOCKY: In the line and crying. Most time I was crying, (she laughs) yeah. I was crying. Where do I go, I'm here. Look at all these years, I'm still here.

DALLETT: And did anyone help you through it? You were just a young girl by yourself.

VISLOCKY: Yeah. Nobody. They just give you some help, talk to somebody and tell you your language, what to do, how to do, and you try to do it. And boss come around and look around, it's alright or not right, take you by the hand and do it this way, see? And, but you cry.

DALLETT: But no one held you aside, you just went through all the tests.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, you have to do it yourself. Think how you're gonna do. And remember how they told you do it this way or that do way. Make sure you remember because if not you have to do it over.

DALLETT: Did anyone ask you if you have any money? Did you have to show any money?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, you have to show money and a man was with me from the same place where I come from, he told me if you don't have money that lady will help me and she loaned me nine dollars. I had to show that. I didn't have money from the ticket that I got.

DALLETT: Did the man loan you nine American dollars ?

VISLOCKY: American dollars. Lady, a lady, name was Nancy. She loaned me. One year it took me to save it and give her back.

DALLETT: So it was a man who asked you, an official at Ellis Island, to show him the money?

VISLOCKY: A man that was traveling with us was here before and he know how they go through the Island. And he said that the lady go there. He say, "Here, Missy, here, Missy."

DALLETT: So you were taken care of a little bit there.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, you have to remember what they say to you, go this way or that way.

DALLETT: And then how did you get the ticket, you needed a train ticket then to go to Pittsburgh, didn't you?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, well it was something with the ticket that I have,

the everything was on the ticket when I go to Pittsburgh to Mellon Bank.

DALLETT: Oh, so you already had a train ticket. You didn't have to buy it at Ellis Island.

VISLOCKY: No, I didn't have to buy it.

DALLETT: Did you have to buy any food there at Ellis Island?

VISLOCKY: No, they give you food. They gave you white bread and I didn't like it, white bread.

DALLETT: Can you tell me anything about what the building looked like?

They VISLOCKY: Well, (she laughs) it looked like some kind of hall. give you breakfast there. Like a restaurant.

DALLETT: Were there places for you to sit while you waited for the next thing?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, you have place to wait till they come to you and
tell you, you have to go there or you have to go there, see.

DALLETT: And then finally someone said, "Okay, you can come in."

VISLOCKY: Yeah, somebody told you, "Here you go, this way." And
showed you how to take you. Like you train a dog, you had
to show the dog how to get there. So I have to go there.
They train you like an animal or anything. And you have to
listen.

DALLETT: But there wasn't an official there that gave you any
special help because you were so young traveling on your own
and sitting there crying?

VISLOCKY: They didn't have anything, no. Friends that you traveled
with, that's all that helped you. And they was over here
before, like my father was second time here, and he knows
a lot of things, how to handle things.

DALLETT: Because they had more experience they tried to help.

VISLOCKY: I didn't ask my father nothing. I just asked him for a ticket. So he gave me a ticket, one-way. And that's all.

DALLETT: A one-way ticket.

VISLOCKY: Yeah. And when I write him a letter and he just was angry because I didn't send him any money left over. And I didn't have money left over. Nancy, Nada, the girl, she had a lot of money left over because her father and her brother was here and they prepared her. They didn't prepare me. Just go ahead.

DALLETT: And then you came off Ellis Island. You must have been relieved when that was over?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. Yeah, well, I could see something outside. (She laughs). Not only boat, I could see. Dining room. Boy, what a dining room. Was I glad to get out of the boat.

DALLETT: The boat was pretty bad.

VISLOCKY: Bad, very bad. Very dirty and specially 'cause it was American boat. And it was dirty. That I remember. And I said

those Americans have dirty boats like that, and I couldn't believe it.

DALLETT: You said there were lice on the boat.

VISLOCKY: Yeah.

DALLETT: Did anyone at Ellis Island, did they give you a shower?

VISLOCKY: They give you shower and give you soap. Some kind of soap. And you wash it. You try to wash it. What can you wash?

DALLETT: Did that help? Did that make you feel better, because you said it was itchy?

VISLOCKY: Yes, it was itchy (she laughs).

DALLETT: Made you feel better though.

VISLOCKY: Yeah. (She laughs).

DALLETT: Did they shave some people's heads because people got lice on the boat?

VISLOCKY: I didn't see that, that I don't know. Because they
didn't shave my head, that's all. I wouldn't let them shave it
(she laughs). But I didn't see.

DALLETT: And did they look through the things that you were
bringing in?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, they looked through what you got, they looked. And
they looked at every pocket and every place. If you have
money, okay, if you don't, bad luck for you.

DALLETT: Did they send some people back on the same boat?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, not on same boat, but before me they sent one boy
back because his sponsors didn't accept him. And they sent
him back. And I was afraid of that. So, they didn't send
me back.

DALLETT: How did you them get to the train? You had your ticket
for the train to Pittsburgh. Did you have to go into New
York City to get the train?

VISLOCKY: No. You get there from the boat right to the train. I didn't go to New York City at all.

DALLETT: Do you remember at all the train ride?

VISLOCKY: Same as it was in Europe, train with the windows and everything.

DALLETT: And you traveled alone?

VISLOCKY: Yeah.

DALLETT: No one from that boat was going out to Pittsburgh with you?

VISLOCKY: No, I go by myself. Right to the Mellon Bank.

DALLETT: You went right to the Mellon Bank?

VISLOCKY: And from the Bank have agent and take me to girl from whom I got the ticket. And she didn't want me over there.

She worked and have a place for her, and she let me sleep
there at night and the next day she take me to the lady, she
give places for you, agent lady.

DALLETT: So you were only there one night and the next day you had
to go to the agent to get a job?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, yeah. And I get a job. She sent me where the
children were, three children and I have to go there and my
employer explained, "You'll do this, you'll do this, and that. You
work with the child here and you wash the diapers, whatever work is
needed in the house, you have to do." And I cry everyday.

DALLETT: Why did you cry?

VISLOCKY: I don't know. I just cried.

DALLETT: Were you homesick? Did you think you had made the wrong
decision?

VISLOCKY: I was thinking it, but I didn't think it straight.
Because it was not very good with my father. I couldn't get

along with his wife (she laughs), so when I see that and I can
not go along with it then I can see, I just want to get
out of there.

DALLETT: So when did you first see your sister, then? Was she in
the hospital?

VISLOCKY: She was in the hospital and two girls, her friends, took
me to the hospital and she was already operated and she
was supposed to recover. And they had a big home in the
Bellevue, called Bellevue, Pittsburgh. Big home for
people, for the girls that don't have homes, they don't have
nobody. So they go over to that home. And I visited my sister there.
When she got out from the hospital and she go there and she asked
those people over there to find me a job. So one year later I got a
job over there where my sister was working. She worked as a cook
and I got a job over there. And I cleaned over there,
everything, whole place. And stay with my sister.
When I got married, my sister was left alone over there and she
went to Cleveland, my sister, after that, to another
cousin. There was another cousin on my mother's side, girl,
and she went there. And she got a job over there in a factory, I

think.

DALLETT: Do you remember that first period where you were first working and you were living in Pittsburgh, was life very different then from your village?

VISLOCKY: Oh, yes. Different altogether.

DALLETT: How did you learn to speak English?

VISLOCKY: How do you ever learn? I hear you talking English and still remember in my heard. Next day I try it. I tried to write it.

DALLETT: You learned it all by yourself?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, I didn't have no school.

DALLETT: How long did it take you to be able to communicate with people?

VISLOCKY: I don't know how long. Long enough, you stay with the

people, remember, you have to remember things. My sister didn't know how to write either, and when I saw her over here and she speak and I couldn't, I didn't understand how she could learn. And I look at how she speak, how she do it. And she didn't know how to write before. And I look at her and I have to learn something. I have to think.

DALLETT: You did it for yourself?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. I wrote a letter to father, back, thanks for tickets, and he didn't like it because I didn't send money. How could I send money. I didn't have any.

DALLETT: Did you live in a community of people, were there other people who had come from where you had come from, in Pittsburgh?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, it was not far away. Belleview was on the below side, I was on the Allegheny side. And I could walk and visit her. I couldn't take the bus, it was a street car before. And I couldn't take it because I didn't know how to write. If I go on street car someplace I counted all number of streets.

And had to get off at the place that I had to get to.

DALLETT: So you memorized the route.

VISLOCKY: Yeah, otherwise you get lost.

DALLETT: It must have been so different from the life you had before in the village with the cows--

VISLOCKY; I didn't have life. I didn't have the life of a child. I just have to make it up somehow. (She laughs). See, when I was single, I thought that when I get married I'm gonna have a home and I didn't even have a chair to sit on when I married (she laughs). He didn't have anything either.

DALLETT: How did you meet your husband?

VISLOCKY: From village. He knows me in the village.

DALLETT: But you saw him again here, right?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, yeah, he was on Kasbara. a section of Pittsburgh

you had to go on the streetcar. He was over there. A lot of people were stoking coal and they all were staying in one place. A lady had boarders and they stayed there. And sometimes I come to visit them there and they helped you that way. And my sister was sick, I visit my cousin, my mother's brother's son was working over there and I visited.

DALLETT: So when you would go to visit to this area, was it sort of like a home away from home and did people continue to cook the kind of food that you liked and speak your language?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, not all together was like that but when you're working for the house, was mostly Jewish people, you worked for and they understand what you like. And one Jewish girl was working, also housework like me. And she visited lady where I was working over there for her, and I have Sunday off, and I went to Church and I come back and that girl she scolded, the lady that I worked for because that lady, she left the dishes and everything piled up in the sink and tell me to wash it when I come back. And this girl was scolding her, she don't have to do that to me, ask me to wash the dishes when I come back from my off. I was off on Sunday. So that time I remember very

well, how she scolded.

DALLETT: She scolded you?

VISLOCKY: Not me, the other lady. She said you're not to leave the dishes for her. Because she was a houseworker too. So, that time I learned a little bit Jewish.

DALLETT: And you worked with the children in this family.

VISLOCKY: With the children. Take care of them, wash the diapers, take care of the children and house. So. Nine dollars a month.

DALLETT: Nine dollars a month?

VISLOCKY: Yeah. I remember nine dollars. Nine dollars I have to give to my friend, nine dollars to give her back what I borrowed. Because I couldn't save any. How are you gonna save it? At the house over there, to sleep and eat, the rest I can't save.

DALLETT: How did things change when you got married?

VISLOCKY: (She laughs) Oh, dear. Well, I thought that when I got married I was gonna give everything. And I didn't have, I said already, I didn't have a chair to sit on. And I had to buy my own chair (she laughs). So, I couldn't ask nobody. I married, I didn't find it any glory. I had to suffer and make it somehow. I stayed married for 34 years, till he died. You go married and you said, "Till death do us part." So I keep that part.

DALLETT: And did your husband then work in the coal mine?

VISLOCKY: Yeah, not the coal mine, you know those big ovens, they make steel. And hot coal they have in the big tank, burned, and go to the steel, they melt, make the steel, make the pipes, make the bullets for the soldiers and everything. Coal, what they digged from the mine. He stocked coal in steel mills.

DALLETT: So he worked during the war.

VISLOCKY: Yeah. Everyone was working during the War, and he was drafted but they didn't take him. Because I have a baby.

DALLETT: You had your daughter then, a son?

VISLOCKY: Son.

DALLETT: So then you started to have children?

VISLOCKY: (She laughs). Oh, yes. I started to have children. Oh
yes. I have children. Six children. (She laughs).
When I come to New York I brought six children.

DALLETT: What year was it that you came to New York? When did you
come here?

VISLOCKY: Nineteen Twenty-seven. July, 1927 I come to New York.

DALLETT: And what made you come to New York?

VISLOCKY: Because nothing was in Pittsburgh to work, nothing.
Everything was closed up. Everything. And there was
nothing to work there. My husband come to New York he had
to be a porter, clean the garbage every place.

DALLETT: So you came to New York and you had your family here.

VISLOCKY: No, I brought all my family here. Yeah, all around me.

DALLETT: And when did you become a citizen?

DALLETT: Thirty-eight. 1938. My husband got the citizen before 1920 but he don't have all children on his citizen papers.

Only he have his boys on his citizen papers. And I have only Dorothy and my other girl, Helen, on my citizen papers. Well, at that time I had learned to read a little bit and I know how to write. I got citizen.

DALLETT: So you got your own papers.

VISLOCKY: Yeah. I got my own papers and he got his own papers. And my son William, travel agent now, holds everything for me. Some time I try to think it may be right, may be wrong. He holds everything for me.

DALLETT: I don't think I have any other questions to ask you

unless there's just anything else you want to add. Anything you like, if you want to at all. No? Okay, I just thank you very much for telling us the story.

VISLOCKY: You're very welcome.

DALLETT: And that is the end of side two and the end of the interview number 179 with Anna Vislocky. It's 12:10 PM.