

KM-015

NICK (MYKOLA) CAPP

BIRTH DATE: DECEMBER 9, 1911

INTERVIEW DATE: JANUARY 5, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 1:09:20

INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE

RECORDING ENGINEER: DR. KRISTA VARANTOLA

INTERVIEW LOCATION: YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 11/1994

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 3/1995

POLAND, 1921

AGE 9

PASSAGE ON A CUNARD LINE SHIP, EXACT NAME NOT RECALLED

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Capp's speech is greatly affected by his medical condition, the same condition for which he was detained at Ellis Island at age nine. Mr. Capp's wife was also present during the interview and makes significant contributions. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of Oral History, 3/31/1995.

MOORE: Today is the 5th of January 1994, and I'm in Youngstown, Ohio at the home of Nick Capp who came from Poland in 1921 when he was nine years old. Why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth, please?

CAPP: All right, I'm Nick Capp, and December 9, December 9, 1911.

MOORE: Okay. And, do you have a middle name?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Nick Capp, okay. And where were you born?

CAPP: (?)

MOORE: How do you spell that?

CAPP: Oh, you ask too many questions.

MOORE: All right. What size town was that town? Do you remember?

CAPP: A village.

MOORE: It was a village.

CAPP: A village.

MOORE: Yes. And do you know how big a village it was?

CAPP: A hundred families, one hundred families.

MOORE: A hundred families. And what was, what did the town look like?  
Do you remember anything about that town?

CAPP: Yeah. One road.

MOORE: One road.

CAPP: Yeah, one road.

MOORE: Uh-huh. And do you remember a church, or . . .

CAPP: It was about a thousand yards from where I was born.

MOORE: About a thousand yards from where you were born was a church.  
And what was the major industry? What was the town known for?

CAPP: Farming.

MOORE: Farming. Okay.

CAPP: Not a town. It was a village.

MOORE: It was a village, sorry, yeah. Okay. Now, what was your  
father's name?

CAPP: Wasyl.

MOORE: What?

CAPP: Wasyl.

MOORE: Wasyl?

CAPP: W-A-S-Y-L.

MOORE: W-A-S-Y-L. And what did he do, his occupation?

CAPP: Well, in Europe he was a taxi driver.

MOORE: He was a taxi driver.

CAPP: In Europe.

MOORE: In Europe, okay. And what did your father look like? What was he looking?

CAPP: Describe him. Over there.

MOORE: Oh, you have a picture. Was he a big man?

CAPP: About five-five, about five-five.

MOORE: About five-five.

CAPP: Maybe a hundred and sixty pounds.

MOORE: Uh-hmm. And did he have blue eyes, blonde?

CAPP: I forgot about his eyes.

MOORE: You forget about his eyes. What about his personality? What was he like as a person?

CAPP: Oh, he was a happy-go-lucky guy.

MOORE: A happy-go-lucky guy. And was he, what kind of, do you have any stories about your father? What do you remember about him when you were little?

CAPP: Uh, nothing much. (?) He came to America. That was in November, he came to America, and during Christmas he was a shepherd.

MOORE: He was a shepherd at Christmas.

CAPP: Yeah. No, it was altogether different then. There were carolers. You know what's carolers?

MOORE: Yeah, there were carolers at that time, right.

CAPP: Yes, three kings, three shepherds. I (?). And (?).

MOORE: And this is here in the States?

CAPP: Yeah, right in our town.

MOORE: And your father was a shepherd.

CAPP: A shepherd.

MOORE: Yeah. And what was your mother's name?

CAPP: Katherine.

MOORE: Katherine.

CAPP: Katerina.

MOORE: Katerina, okay. And what was her maiden name? Do you remember?

CAPP: Ludetsky.

MOORE: Ludensky?

CAPP: Loo.

MOORE: Rudensky?

CAPP: Ludensky.

MOORE: Luzetsky.

CAPP: L-U-D-E-T-S-K-Y.

MOORE: Okay, good. And what was her occupation? What did she do?

CAPP: Housewife.

MOORE: She was a housewife. And what did she look like?

CAPP: A good-looking woman.

MOORE: A good-looking woman. ( she laughs ) What do you remember about her? Like, what kind of, how did she look?

CAPP: Oh, my God. (?) She, in Europe, a common, ordinary woman. Over here with a hair-do.

MOORE: So in Europe she was a common ordinary woman, but here she had a new hair-do?

CAPP: No. They have, uh, what the heck do you call that? Like a, you have a big size stuffed cabbage made out of hair, and wore that to make more on top.

MOORE: Okay. That's kind of unusual.

CAPP: You missed (?).

MOORE: And so what would you say her personality, what was she like?

CAPP: Happy-go-lucky.

MOORE: She, too, was happy-go-lucky.

CAPP: (?) She tells you a story and if you don't know her you believe everything she says.

MOORE: So your, she was the type of person when she tells you a story you believe everything she says?

CAPP: Yeah. Even if it's true or not.

MOORE: Even if it's true or not.

CAPP: It's up to you to know. (?)

MOORE: That's true. And what did she do? What were her chores that she did around the house? What type of work did she do?

CAPP: Oh, like what women do, run the house, clean, wash and cook.

MRS. CAPP: She was a very good cook.

MOORE: A very good cook? And do you have a story about your mother that

you remember?

CAPP: ( referring to Mrs. Capp ) You want me to include her?

MOORE: Pretty soon, yeah, we'll get to her. I need to know about your brothers and sisters. Did you have brothers and sisters?

CAPP: I got one sister in Warren.

MOORE: He has one sister?

MRS. CAPP: One sister in Warren.

CAPP: In Warren.

MOORE: One sister in Warren. And what's her name?

CAPP: Mary.

MOORE: Mary. And is she older or younger?

CAPP: Younger.

MOORE: Younger, okay. And do you remember your house in Poland or the Ukraine before you came? Do you remember it?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: What was it like?

CAPP: One room.

MOORE: One room.

CAPP: One room. And you have an oven, stove or oven, where you can make  
ten . . .

MOORE: A big oven.

CAPP: Ten loaves of bread. I mean ten.

MOORE: Oh, you mean ten big loaves.

CAPP: Ten big loaves.

MOORE: And how was it, what was the house made of?

CAPP: Outside it was made out of split lumber.

MOORE: Split lumber.

CAPP: Inside it was nothing but dirt.

MOORE: It was dirt. So it was a dirt floor?

CAPP: Dirt floor and dirt walls.

MOORE: Dirt walls. So it was made of split lumber with dirt floors,  
with a big oven.

CAPP: A big oven in there.

MOORE: And a fireplace.

CAPP: A big oven, enough to sleep about four people, like me, him and her,  
all four, (?) all four of them on top of the stove.

MOORE: I see. Well, what about, how was, it was heated by the  
fireplace, was it?

CAPP: No, it was heated by that stove.

MOORE: By the stove, right.

CAPP: Heated by the stove, and baking (?) oven. It was that big.  
( he gestures ) And when you burn in the (?) about two hours and  
have something to begin, that stove keep warm the house all day  
into evening.

MOORE: All the evening. Well, did you have any animals?

CAPP: Cow.

MOORE: You had a cow.

CAPP: And chickens.

MOORE: And chickens. And did you have a garden?

CAPP: A garden, and a garden under the house, and a then the regular farm,  
farming out. (?) Never mind, I (?), cow pasture.

MOORE: You passed the cow pasture, right. What, so how lived in that building? Your mother and your father?

CAPP: My grandma.

MOORE: And your grandmother?

CAPP: My little sister, and cousins.

MOORE: And cousins too?

CAPP: One.

MOORE: One cousin. Did your father live there?

CAPP: He (?). He was no farmer. He was a taxi driver. Not a taxi driver, what they used to call a carriage driver.

MOORE: A carriage driver.

CAPP: He came around, too much work on the farm. I'm not making it up.

After that he got married in November, about two days after, two days after I got married with her, November 21st, about the middle of March my father left.

MOORE: Oh, so he left. Your father left the family.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay. And so, and so when, who did the cooking in the family?

Do you remember? Who did that?

CAPP: Both Mom and Grandpa.

MOORE: Your mother and your grandmother did. What was your favorite food?

CAPP: I don't know. (?) My favorite food was potatoes with poppyseed in it and milk. Mashed potatoes with poppyseeds and milk.

MRS. CAPP: Poppy seed. I never heard that.

MOORE: Mashed potatoes with poppyseeds and milk?

CAPP: Milk.

MRS. FABRIZI: And what about furniture? Did you have any furniture in the house?

CAPP: Oh, we had a big table (?) into the wall, about that wide and this table long. ( he gestures ) And one board on top of the, I don't know what, on top of the box, that thing. But I remember it was big, big. You can seat about twenty at one table.

MOORE: Very big, twenty people sitting. Wow, and what about meal time? Did you eat together, or did you eat apart? How did you eat meals?

CAPP: In the evening, we ate one meal in the evening, about (?). Grabbed

here, grabbed there.

MOORE: So you grabbed food down?

CAPP: And off you go.

MOORE: And off you went, okay. But in the evening did you eat meals together?

CAPP: We eat cabbage or beet soup or . . .

MOORE: Cabbage or what?

CAPP: Beet.

MOORE: Oh, beet soup, or beet soup, yeah.

MRS. CAPP: Borscht. Did you ever hear of borscht?

MOORE: Borscht, yeah.

CAPP: Borscht. Did you ever eat that?

MOORE: I like that.

CAPP: (?) No, maybe, what town you come from?

MOORE: Uh, Michigan.

CAPP: I mean, from Europe?

MOORE: From England.

CAPP: Oh, Johnny Bull. ( he laughs )

MOORE: Well, what about your family members? Your whole family lived in the same village?

CAPP: Yeah. What do you mean?

MOORE: Did you have cousins that lived in the same village?

CAPP: We had cousins here and cousins there.

MOORE: In Poland, you mean.

CAPP: Yeah, in the village.

MOORE: In the village, okay. And who were you closest to in your life? Who was the most close person to you?

CAPP: My cousin Steve.

MOORE: Your cousin Steve.

CAPP: Yeah. Uncle Harry's son.

MOORE: Uncle Harry's son Steve was your closest relative. All right. And what was he like?

CAPP: Oh, that was seventy years ago.

MOORE: That's right. Well, maybe you remember, seventy years ago. Did he come to the United States, Steve?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Oh. So he was your best friend back in Poland.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: I see. Okay. What about church? Did you go to, did you have religious life at all?

CAPP: I didn't go to church. My mom and grandma, they, I don't remember going there.

MOORE: And what denomination, what were they? Were they . . .

CAPP: Greek Catholic.

MOORE: Greek Catholic, okay.

CAPP: Where they come is Byzantine.

MOORE: Byzantine, right.

CAPP: What's the difference between Greek Catholic and Byzantine?

MOORE: I don't know.

CAPP: Neither do I.

MOORE: ( she laughs ) Well, was, you said the church was near by? Was that the Catholic . . .

CAPP: Like from here to the bridge over here.

MOORE: So about four hundred yards or so?

CAPP: About, anywhere between five and ten thousand yards.

MOORE: Okay. And how big was the church? Was the church very big?

CAPP: I don't remember.

MOORE: You don't remember that, okay. Did your family ever have any time of persecution for being religious? Did anybody ever hurt for being religious at all?

CAPP: Not to my knowledge.

MOORE: Okay. And what about holidays? What were your most favorite holidays?

CAPP: Oh, Christmas.

MOORE: Christmas. And why did you like Christmas?

CAPP: There was the cow in the house.

MOORE: There what?

CAPP: There was a cow in the house.

MOORE: There was the cow in the house?

CAPP: Oh, yeah. ( he laughs )

MOORE: There was a cow in the house?

CAPP: Oh, yeah.

MOORE: The cow came in the house?

CAPP: They brought her in in the morning, then took it out.

MRS. CAPP: I'll be darned. In Europe.

MOORE: Well, what about, did you have a big Christmas dinner?

CAPP: Yeah. (?)

MOORE: And did you have any special foods at Christmas?

CAPP: You are asking something. I don't remember.

MOORE: A lot of people don't remember. That's okay. And what about school? Did you go to school at all?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Do you remember anything about school at all?

CAPP: I had to walk like from here to under what bridge did you come into town, as to which way, there's another bridge down by (?).

MOORE: How far from the school that is?

CAPP: About a mile.

MOORE: So you walked a mile to school.

MRS. CAPP: Grade school.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: What language did you speak at home then?

CAPP: Ukrainian.

MOORE: You spoke Ukrainian, okay. And was your school crowded? Did you have a lot of children in the school?

CAPP: Two grades.

MOORE: Two grades.

CAPP: First and second.

MOORE: First and second grade. That's where you went.

CAPP: I made it to Ukranian class, second would have been to Pollack, Polish.

( he laughs ) (?)

MOORE: And do you remember any teachers you had in school ever?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: And do you remember what you liked in school as a subject to study?

MRS. CAPP: He was very good in arithmetic, I'll tell you that.

MOORE: In arithmetic you're good.

MRS. CAPP: Very!

CAPP: I was.

MRS. CAPP: Very, very. Nobody could fool him with anything. when it comes to arithmetic.

MOORE: Interesting. Did you learn any English before coming here?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Didn't know a word.

CAPP: I'll tell you one thing, to tell you the truth (?) over here about a mile over, north of here, and we go down where they call River Bend, I went to a school.

MOORE: That's when you came to America. We're still back in Poland now. Hold on for a second, okay? Now, what did you do for

entertainment as a child? Do you remember? What, how did you play, games? Or . . .

CAPP: There's no games on the farm.

MOORE: You played games on the farm.

CAPP: There weren't, there's no games on the farm.

MRS. CAPP: It was a working day.

CAPP: There weren't no games on the farm!

MOORE: So you worked, basically, as a child. Yeah. Well, all right.  
When you decided, who decided to come to America? Who decided?

CAPP: I have to tell you the truth. Mom got tired of working on the farm.

MOORE: She got tired of working on the farm.

CAPP: And Das was here, having a good time. And his brother-in-law as a better off, and good, educated man. Was a couple blocks like, over here, a couple blocks.

MOORE: Her brother?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Whose brother was educated?

CAPP: That was, Dad's brother-in-law.

MOORE: Dad's brother-in-law lived a couple of blocks away.

CAPP: He was the one to write the priest to help for us. (?) had to send the money, and we went.

MOORE: So he, the money, let me get this right. So in order to come to here, you, they borrowed money from . . .

CAPP: No. Dad had to send the money.

MOORE: So your dad sent the money.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Oh, I see, okay. Your father . . .

CAPP: He bought the, what the heck is it, he paid with the money. He paid for the trip.

MOORE: He paid for the trip, your father.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: And he was driving, what was he working at here?

CAPP: I don't know. He been here working, and he'd been working in (?), and he was working in Pittsburgh. He did all right. I mean, when we came home, came up, he was without job.

MOORE: So when you got here . . .

CAPP: He was without a job.

MOORE: He was without a job, okay. So he had been working in different cities in the area.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay. Well, do you remember just before you left for America, when you were about nine, do you remember how you packed things with your mother? Did you . . .

CAPP: She packed.

MOORE: She packed everything.

CAPP: She packed.

MOORE: What did she pack? Do you remember what she packed?

CAPP: I don't know what she packed.

MOORE: And did you bring anything of your own with you?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Do you have anything now from Poland?

CAPP: No. Well, to tell you the truth, I have a whiskey glass from Poland.

MOORE: You have a glass from Poland.

CAPP: A whiskey glass.

MOORE: A whiskey glass.

CAPP: I (?), I should have mentioned that. A whiskey glass.

MOORE: And whose glass was that? Who's glass was that?

CAPP: Mom's.

MOORE: Mom's glass.

CAPP: (?) on top of it. Not like that. They have a (?).

MOORE: Yeah.

CAPP: And that was about that big, ( he gestures ) (?).

MOORE: Now, do you remember the boat trip at all?

CAPP: Oh, yeah.

MOORE: First of all, how did you get to the boat? What boat, how did you get to the boat from your village?

CAPP: Oh. It took us about two months.

MOORE: It took you two months to get to the boat? Well, how did you get

there?

CAPP: First wagon.

MOORE: First you walked?

CAPP: First we walked, and then wagon to the station, and from the station to railroad. We had to stop in Warsaw. Then we (?).

MOORE: Okay. So, wait a minute. You walked to the station, and then . . .

CAPP: No. We took our own, our own farm wagon.

MOORE: Your own farm wagon.

CAPP: To the station, and on the train to Warsaw, we had to stay about a month down there.

MOORE: In Warsaw?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Where did you stay?

CAPP: Some (?) house.

MOORE: Whose house was that, do you know?

CAPP: I imagine some Pollack, some Polish. ( Ms. Moore laughs ) Why do you

laugh? A Polish woman.

MOORE: A Polish woman's house, okay.

CAPP: And she had a kid, we stayed on the first floor. I don't know why they kept us there. Then we were in Rotterdam or Antwerp.

MOORE: Rotterdam or Antwerp.

CAPP: Or Antwerp. We stayed there for about ten days. It's not like now. They do everything on airplanes. But the thing is, you came doing (?). And then over there, that was nice, ten days' stay there.

MOORE: Okay. Ten days you stayed where, in Rotterdam?

CAPP: Rotterdam or Antwerp. I don't remember.

MOORE: Or Amsterdam. Now, where . . .

CAPP: And here's the point, plenty of people coming here, come from different places in Europe. If you have nice hair they put something in there that you won't carry lice far, to get the hair clean.

MOORE: So they made your, they looked at your hair.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: They checked for lice.

CAPP: They checked for lice.

MOORE: And so they made you put something in your hair?

CAPP: They put a good amount, they put it. Mom, they put, Mom checked, and  
(?) lice, and put it in her hair. (?) And she (?). There were,  
was a woman, older one, nice woman, big head, big hair. You had  
to bathe the others to comb the hair out nice.

MOORE: Who was the woman who was very beautiful with the big head?

CAPP: Who knows?

MOORE: So some woman had everybody, combed the lice out and deliced  
their hair.

CAPP: She had to bathe, she had, I remember she had a big head, she got nice,  
big hair.

MOORE: Well, what, where did you leave from? We'll go back to this  
later. Did you have any other medical examinations? Do you  
remember doctors looking at you, or anything?

CAPP: No, uh, I don't remember till I came to Ellis Island.

MOORE: All right. So before Ellis Island you didn't have any doctor's  
examinations. But they did your hair.

CAPP: Nobody done my hair. They did my mother's.

MOORE: Your mother's hair, but not your hair.

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Okay. Where did you leave from, the boat? Was that Rotterdam or Amsterdam? One or the other.

CAPP: It was Amsterdam, I think. England.

MOORE: So you left from England. So you took a boat from Holland . . .

CAPP: To England.

MOORE: To England. I see. And how long did that trip take, then?

CAPP: I don't know. Don't ask me that because I don't remember.

MOORE: Okay. I'm just testing.

CAPP: Don't worry.

MOORE: Okay. So you went from England to Europe. Okay. Now, what do you remember about the journey . . .

CAPP: The journey?

MOORE: From England, to New York?

CAPP: To tell you the truth, there was a couple of boys there, and we horsed around like kids.

MOORE: So you horsed around.

CAPP: Like kids. They invited me. Portholes were closed. We came over the,  
you cannot go up and down. You had to stay there.

MOORE: So what they did, was they sealed?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: They didn't let you play any more on the boat.

CAPP: Yeah. But a couple of (?) and there was a storm.

MOORE: So there was a big storm at that time, right? And was it scary,  
the storm?

CAPP: (?)

MOORE: Oh, you were in a storm. And that's why they put you downstairs?

CAPP: No. (?) on the floor, whatever you were there. (?) near the water.

MOORE: So you were down near water level. What kind of a combination,  
what kind of bed did you sleep in? Who were you with?

CAPP: I was there with Mom.

MOORE: Did you have your own cabin?

CAPP: I think two of us in the cabin.

MOORE: There were two of you in that cabin.

CAPP: Yeah, me and Mom. Two of (?), but there were more than us.

MOORE: Okay. Let's go back a little bit. Do you remember waiting for that boat in England? When you got to England from Holland, do you remember waiting for the boat to take you?

CAPP: I don't remember that.

MOORE: Okay. So what you remember is, do you remember getting on the boat?

CAPP: I don't remember . . .

MOORE: You remember the storm, you remember the storm.

CAPP: I don't remember the storm, only what they said to me, after the storm they told us the ship was (?).

MOORE: Had been in a storm, okay.

CAPP: A hundred and fifty miles off the course. ( he laughs )

MOORE: Yeah. So it went off course.

MRS. CAPP: A hundred and fifty miles.

MOORE: A hundred and fifty miles off course during the storm.

CAPP: Yeah. That's what we were told.

MOORE: All right. And what about eating on the ship? Do you remember what you ate, or if the food was any good?

CAPP: The food was (?). I wasn't sick. Mom was.

MOORE: You were sick?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: You were not sick, but your mother was. Did you eat?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: How long did the trip take? Do you remember?

CAPP: I don't know. I was just a boy. About eight days.

MOORE: Eight days.

CAPP: Ten days.

MOORE: Eight or ten days, okay. And after the storm, did you play up on the deck?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay. So everything, what did you see and hear when you saw land? Do you remember seeing land?

CAPP: No, I don't.

MOORE: Were you sleeping, or . . .

CAPP: I don't know. But everybody said we saw the Statue of Liberty. I don't even remember.

MOORE: Oh, yeah. So maybe it was the night.

CAPP: (?) We used to go, we embarked, we embarked about October 31st, but the ship came in in the evening of October 30th. We embarked the 31st.

MOORE: Uh-huh. Okay. And, okay. So you didn't remember seeing land. Do you remember everybody getting out?

CAPP: Getting out, and going to the stables. ( he laughs )

MOORE: Uh-huh. And do you remember Ellis Island? How did you get from the boat to Ellis Island? Do you remember?

CAPP: I don't know. There was a (?).

MOORE: Okay.

CAPP: But when we came to Ellis Island, it was like coming to the stables.

MOORE: It was like a carpenter's stables?

CAPP: Coming to the stables.

MOORE: Coming to the stables.

CAPP: Because there was a part here, part there, and part here.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

MOORE: You mean you were, you were put in, like, where lots of people were?

CAPP: Yeah, yeah. People over here. Like in pens people were there. We were those, oh, Mom went to the desk. (?) Something I, after a while Mom got us through. I heard her tell (?).

MOORE: Uh-huh. There we go. Don't worry about it.

CAPP: I'm not worried about anything!

MOORE: There we go. ( referring to the microphone )

CAPP: You can do better than that.

MOORE: ( she laughs ) All right. Now, we're back at Ellis Island, we're at Ellis Island.

CAPP: Mom was at the table, at the table. A woman came and said something. I didn't pay no attention. (?) And then she said, "Nick Capp!" She took me to the hospital.

MOORE:       What?  What?

CAPP: She took me to the hospital.

MOORE:       Oh, I see.  So they took you to the hospital.

CAPP: Yeah, for eight days.

MOORE:       For eight days.  And why did they put you in the hospital?

CAPP: For my condition.

MOORE:       Do you remember what that condition was?

CAPP: Aren't you looking at me?

MRS. CAPP: I'll tell you one thing.  The way his mother told me.  His mother  
                  told me that . . .

CAPP: Wait a minute.  I'll tell you why.  They look at me, I'm walking like a  
                  drunk.  Oh, yeah.  People were trying to send me, hey, half of  
                  the time.  You don't understand me either, do you?

MOORE:       I think most of the time I do, yeah.  I think most of the time I  
                  do.

CAPP: Maybe you got used to it.

MOORE:       Yeah.

CAPP: But ninety percent of the people don't understand.

MRS. CAPP: It's as if he's drunk, you know . . .

MOORE: So then they saw you lacking in your speech, and they thought something was wrong, so they took you and put you in the hospital. Now, could you speak? Did your mother speak English at all?

CAPP: No!

MOORE: So they just took you, I see, they took you.

CAPP: (?) right now I speak French. Can you . . .

MOORE: I understand. Okay. So they thought that you had something wrong with you, but it was just what you had since you were a kid. It was nothing different.

CAPP: No.

MOORE: I see. And they put you in, and what happened then, in the hospital?

CAPP: That's what I want to know, what happened then.

MOORE: Yeah. And so was that, were you frightened?

CAPP: No!

MOORE: When you were there, when you were nine years old. You weren't frightened.

CAPP: No, I remember. Only one day, I remember twice they done to me, they had a red, wooden table. And I . . .

MOORE: Were in what?

CAPP: A red, wooden table.

MOORE: It was a red, wooden table, okay.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay.

CAPP: Bigger than this. ( he gestures ) They led me on naked.

MOORE: Naked on the table.

CAPP: Yeah.

MRS. CAPP: An operating table.

MOORE: That's all right. The table, they put you on this red table, okay.

CAPP: They were like a big box, about that size, big bag over me, (?) and then two guys, two men come in and they, and I remember they were, I don't know what they did, but it made a heck of a big

noise.

MOORE: A heck of a big . . .

CAPP: A big noise.

MOORE: A big nose?

CAPP: Noise.

MOORE: Noise.

CAPP: I told you that you don't understand me! ( they laugh )

MOORE: No, I do, I do, I do!

MRS. CAPP: But some parts, some parts . . .

CAPP: I remember the noise, they give me a wooden pillow.

MOORE: A wooden pillow . . .

CAPP: Pillow. Yeah.

MRS. CAPP: A wooden pillow?

MOORE: I do understand you, but I don't believe you. ( voices garbled )

They gave you a wooden pillow.

CAPP: Yeah. A wooden (?), like a red wooden (?) for my head.

MRS. CAPP: Under your head.

CAPP: Now I can say this. Maybe they had old-fashioned x-ray or whatever it is, because (?) . . . ( he accidentally pulls off his microphone ) ( break in tape )

MOORE: All right. Sit a little closer, then you won't worry about it.

CAPP: Thank you.

MOORE: Okay. So they gave you a wooden block for your pillow.

CAPP: And I had a box (?) and they did some thing with the box, and they made a heck of a big noise, twice, that's all.

MOORE: Hmm.

CAPP: Bam, bam, bam. Hey, here's the point. ( he addresses Mrs. Capp ) (?)  
Give me a spoon and a knife, a big knife. Any one!  
( he laughs ) (?) I'm sorry.

MOORE: Don't do anything with that knife. ( break in tape )

CAPP: There were spoons over here. Me, I ate, I ate like this. ( he demonstrates )

MOORE: Oh, yeah, yeah.

CAPP: I mean, I ate with one hand.

MOORE: You ate with one hand?

CAPP: Yeah, after being there. What the heck did they do to me?

MRS. CAPP: See, that's what he was wondering. Why?

MOORE: Why.

MRS. CAPP: When he ate, before, he ate like, you know, like he couldn't, you know, take the food and, you know, like ordinary people.

CAPP: I had to eat with two hands.

MOORE: So they told you you had to eat with one hand. That's because of the American way of eating with one hand.

MRS. CAPP: No, you see . . .

CAPP: No! No, after I came out of the hospital, but before my hands were able to eat.

MOORE: I see. So, okay. What did your mother do during all of this time.

CAPP: I don't know. I don't know what she was doing. I was in the hospital. I was in one place, and she was in another place.

MOORE: And did she know what was happening to you?

CAPP: No, I don't think so.

MOORE: Uh-huh. And was, how, what did she say about all this? What did she say?

CAPP: Nothing.

MOORE: Was she scared?

CAPP: I don't know if she was scared of that.

MOORE: Yeah. Well, uh . . .

CAPP: Because plenty of people were (?) rejected.

MOORE: Were there other children, were you with other children at that time? Did you see other children in the hospital?

CAPP: Yeah. There were plenty of them, other kids and older persons.

MOORE: And what was it like, were you able to play at all there?

CAPP: No. I don't remember that much.

MOORE: You don't remember that much, okay. Well, at what point did they let you out of the hospital?

CAPP: They let me out of the hospital and first thing I was at the station, and I know that I came here on the B&O train.

MOORE: The what? ( voice off mike )

MRS. CAPP: B & O, I believe . . .

CAPP: Baltimore and Ohio Station Railroad.

MOORE: Oh, the B.O. Railroad. They put you on the B.O. train, okay.  
You went with your mother to the B.O. train.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay, yeah.

CAPP: I came here in, there was a woman or somebody, (?) talking to a man,  
then she's talking to Mom, and both of us went to our old address  
down what they call now, River Bend. There were four houses  
there.

MOORE: So you came from the B.O. Railroad, you took that from New York  
and took it out here.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: And you came to this town, Youngstown? And you came to  
Youngstown, and who came to the train to see you?

CAPP: Nobody.

MOORE: Nobody did.

CAPP: Nobody.

MOORE: Okay. And where did you go when you came?

CAPP: ( he coughs ) The old address, and the old address was the storekeeper  
of Ukrainian nationality.

MOORE: So you came to an address of a storekeeper of Ukrainian  
nationality.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay. So you knew somebody here.

CAPP: I didn't know nobody here.

MOORE: Your father arranged this, did he?

CAPP: Before we got over here, he was on that side of the river.

MOORE: Oh, I see. Your father was over on that side of the river.

CAPP: He didn't even know it.

MOORE: He didn't even know. What did you, what did you do? You came to  
live at that address, the old address.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: What did your mother do then?

CAPP: Talking to the woman of the house, like you're talking to me. What

would you do if you were in Mom's shoes? And you got a, you know what a crock, a crock pot is? Not a crock pot but a bowl, a crock bowl?

MOORE: Yes, the crock, yeah?

CAPP: Did you ever see a quart-size. Quart size.

MOORE: Yeah.

CAPP: Would you like to have that full of coffee?

MOORE: Full of cow pee?

CAPP: Coffee!

MOORE: Oh, coffee. I thought you said cow pee! ( she laughs ) Coffee.

CAPP: The woman of the house gave us a big quart-size crock to drink coffee, and she gave it to me.

MRS. CAPP: Instead of a cup she used a crock.

MOORE: Yeah. Well, what did your, who worked? Did she have to work, your mother, then?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Who supported you?

CAPP: When I came her and Dad were living with his sister, living with his sister. Mom, (?) my dad would be moved in the, in River Bend. Papa got a job on Crescent Street, working for thirty-five cents an hour for twelve hours.

MOORE: Working for what?

CAPP: Working thirty-five cents an hour.

MOORE: Thirty-five cents an hour, yeah.

CAPP: For twelve hours a day.

MOORE: Twelve hours a day. All right. What happened? Did you go to school here, then?

CAPP: I went to school.

MOORE: Which school did you go to?

CAPP: Caldwell.

MOORE: Caldwell?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: And how, did you know any English when you started school?

CAPP: ( he laughs ) (?) If I told you something in my language, would you understand?

MOORE: No.

CAPP: Well, I didn't.

MOORE: So you started, and you learned English. What grade did you start in here?

CAPP: There was no grade in that room when I started. A mixed up crowd.

MOORE: A mixed up crowd, right.

CAPP: On the blackboard, in a small alphabet and a large alphabet. All right. You say, "A-B-C," and I pronounced it, "Ah, Bay, Sah." You pronounce it over here, "B," I pronounced B. You pronounced G, I pronounced a D. The V, I pronounced (?). It's Chinese to me.

MOORE: ( she laughs ) And did anybody make fun of you at all in school?

CAPP: Not that I knew of.

MOORE: Did they say when you were foreign, for being foreign, any of them?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: No. They didn't make any . . .

CAPP: After they graduated they probably forgot about it. ( voice off mike )

MOORE: Yeah. So you leaned, did you learn English pretty quickly then?

CAPP: Oh, it took me seven years. I started school in '22. I quit in '29 in ninth grade. Seven years, it took me seven years to get through ninth grade.

MOORE: So you learned, all right. And, um . . .

CAPP: But I'll tell you something else. I got a job over in Reimen's [ph] Broom Factory. (?) And I didn't know what the hell they were talking about!

MOORE: So your first, you got out in ninth grade. In ninth grade you left school.

CAPP: Uh-huh.

MOORE: And what did you do after that? ( a telephone rings )

CAPP: What did I do? I was looking for a job.

MOORE: You were looking for a job.

CAPP: In 1929.

MOORE: Oh, in 1929.

MRS. CAPP: ( answering the telephone ) No, you must have the wrong number!

CAPP: My dad, my dad was making fifty cents an hour. And I wanted to know what the heck they done to me in the hospital, because I tell you, I was eating with both hands with him. What I was making? You know, nowadays, you know what the Goodwill Industries is? Goodwill?

MOORE: Goodwill, yeah.

CAPP: I was making one dollar a day.

MOORE: At Goodwill.

CAPP: At Goodwill. Then I (?) and then they give me a dollar twenty-five a day.

MOORE: So you first started working . . .

CAPP: What are you going to do with that?

MOORE: So that's the first job you had, at Goowill?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: What did you do at Goodwill there, then?

CAPP: Bailing, bailing. I bailed. ( a telephone rings )

MOORE: You bailed?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: And what about . . .

CAPP: I was bailing paper, scrap paper.

MOORE: I see. So you were bailing scrap paper at Goodwill. Now, how long did you stay at Goodwill?

CAPP: Three months.

MOORE: Three months. And then what did you do?

CAPP: I went to work in the broom factory.

MOORE: And what did you do there?

CAPP: Everything. It's a, to supply the men, what they need. They need broomsticks, it was up to me. If they need the filler, it was up to me. If they (?), it was up to me.

MOORE: How long did you stay at the broom factory?

CAPP: Until (?), about a month. Not a month, about a year.

MOORE: A year.

CAPP: Then the government took over.

MOORE: Oh, I see. And where else . . .

CAPP: Then, what the heck, the recession, not recession, uh . . .

MOORE: The Depression.

CAPP: The Depression.

MOORE: Yeah, the Depression.

CAPP: I worked one day a week. My dad worked two week pay, two days or three days a week. That's what we had to live on.

MOORE: What was the Depression like then, for you?

CAPP: Ah! Good, good, I had fun. I went downtown, walking, going to (?) town.

MOORE: Yeah.

CAPP: There's a, two more blocks up the street to the cemetery. And then two more blocks we (?), twenty-two blocks to town. We went downtown. They had alcohol, whiskey, you know, whiskey for sale. There was nothing there like from here, two blocks long.

MOORE: During the Depression, you mean.

CAPP: The Depression, big. And then we got in the where they were selling, or (?), we go downtown. But (?). ( he laughs ) Or you . . .

MOORE: How did your mother adjust to life in the States? Did she adjust

well?

CAPP: (?) Because before that, for about a year, she said, "I'm going back home."

MOORE: For about a year. Did she ever learn English?

CAPP: A little bit.

MOORE: And how did she get around knowing limited English? How did she get used to that?

CAPP: They had to adjust.

MOORE: Yeah, you had to adjust.

CAPP: Because here's the point. You had to adjust because if you had only one thing to do, if you go downtown in the street car. Transportation was ten cents for the street car, you go down there.

MOORE: In a what car?

CAPP: Street cars.

MOORE: Street cars. Oh, they had street cars here then.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: That I didn't know.

CAPP: Where are you from?

MOORE: Michigan.

CAPP: Don't you have street cars there?

MOORE: I never knew any street cars, no. Not in Michigan.

CAPP: Too bad.

MOORE: They did, originally, before my time is what it was, I guess.

CAPP: How about tram buses? Tram buses. Street car had one, and tram buses had two.

MOORE: Tram baskets, they call it?

CAPP: Tram bus, tram bus. T-R-A-M B-U-S.

MOORE: Tram buses.

MRS. CAPP: Tram bus. I don't know what he means by that.

MOORE: Interesting.

CAPP: Yes.

MRS. CAPP: I'd heard of trolley cars, but I never heard of tram buses.

CAPP: Trolleys, yeah.

MRS. CAPP: Oh, trolley buses.

CAPP: That's the same thing!

MOORE: Trolley buses, yeah.

MRS. CAPP: Is that the same thing?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: What about, why don't we go back to your mom, your mom and dad.  
Did they go to church here afterwards?

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: They became religious here.

CAPP: We went to what do you call Byzantine.

MOORE: The Byzantine church here.

CAPP: Yeah.

MOORE: Did you go every week?

CAPP: Every Sunday.

MOORE: Every Sunday.

CAPP: Even the holidays. Now we go over here to the orthodox.

MOORE: To the orthodox church, okay. And . . .

CAPP: It was different for (?) years.

MOORE: Who was more religious, your mother or father?

CAPP: I think Dad.

MOORE: Your dad.

CAPP: Because (?) I don't know why, he would always would go about a half an hour before the church opened. And then my mom would ask him, "Hey, have you got a key?"

MOORE: Hey did you what?

MRS. CAPP: I heard you got a key.

MOORE: You got a key to the church.

MRS. CAPP: Because his father always, always went early. I don't know why.

CAPP: He was religious.

MOORE: So when you grew up, then, how did you meet your wife? Tell me about your life after when you were a grown man, a little bit. Tell me what happened.

CAPP: Well, it's the same thing as you, you go here, you go there. (?)

( he laughs )

MRS. CAPP: No, he has been . . .

CAPP: I've been married five times.

MRS. CAPP: No!

MOORE: Now, watch out. You were married before, then? No.

( they laugh )

MRS. CAPP: No, no. He's kidding. He only married one. He and I have been  
married forty-one years now.

MOORE: You've been married forty-one years?

MRS. CAPP: Forty-one years.

MOORE: Wow!

MRS. CAPP: Yeah.

CAPP: Why, what's wrong?

MRS. CAPP: We were married in 1952.

MOORE: And he was married before that once?

CAPP: No!

MRS. CAPP: No, he just had his gal friends. He used to tease me all the  
time. But he had other gal friends.

MOORE: ( she laughs ) And how did you meet?

CAPP: Oh, I don't know how we'd meet. She came to work where I was working,  
at a laundry.

MRS. CAPP: That's right, at Thornton's.

MOORE: And where was that?

CAPP: Thornton's Laundry.

MRS. CAPP: Thornton's Laundry.

MOORE: Thornton's Laundry. And you guys were working together, then?

CAPP: She was in the front, I was in the washroom.

MRS. CAPP: He was a washer, he was a washer for twenty-five years, washing  
clothes at Thornton's Laundry.

MOORE: Thornton's?

CAPP: It says it right on here. ( gesturing to a watch )

MOORE: It says here on the watch. Hold on. Here, it says . . .

MRS. CAPP: Can you make it out?

MOORE: "Nicholas Capp, twenty-five years of service, Thorntons, 1946 to '71." So you met at Thornton's Laundry. And then, was it long before you got married? Love at first sight?

CAPP: I knew at first sight!

MRS. CAPP: No, we was arguing and fighting all the time.

MOORE: Arguing. ( she laughs )

MRS. CAPP: Oh, yeah. That's how it started out. But then . . .

CAPP: We still do that.

MOORE: ( she laughs ) And so . . .

CAPP: And we're still fighting. ( they laugh )

MOORE: And so what happened after that? You stayed in town, obviously, right?

CAPP: I had to. You know, a (?) doesn't pay very much.

MOORE: Yeah. Yeah, so . . .

CAPP: I went to, during the war ( he coughs ) into the factory. None, I (?), to tell you the truth, they look at me, nothing. "We don't hire." My sister was working there was rubber, a rubber company over here. And (?) started working up there, and (?) papers.

And through the paper there was, by (?), private improvements. There was outside of town limits. Looking for a (?) man. (?) ten days ago. "Here, I give you papers, you're hired." He hired me. Twenty-five years I was there. It took me half a year to quit the job. Not really quit the job. I had to quit because I had spurs on my feet, on my heels.

MOORE: You had bone spurs.

CAPP: Bone spurs.

MOORE: On your heels, yeah.

CAPP: Do you know what they are?

MOORE: I had one.

CAPP: You had one. What did you do?

MOORE: Just fixed them with inserts in the shoes.

CAPP: No. I went to the doctor for two months. He soaked my feet, and then he had a big, bigger than my toaster, an electrical machine and he had another thing I think he was scraping my heel.

MOORE: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, that's one possibility. You, uh . . .

CAPP: And since then my corn don't bother me. After that, nothing in my shoe. My (?) in my shoe.

MOORE: But you guys, okay. You guys got married how long after you met?

How long were you . . .

CAPP: We were off and on for about a half a year.

MRS. CAPP: Yeah, after that . . .

MOORE: Yeah. About a half a year. And you came, and you continued to worked together, then?

CAPP: No.

MRS. CAPP: No, no. Just . . .

CAPP: She didn't work very much.

MRS. CAPP: No, I didn't work too much.

CAPP: She worked three years off and on, and that's because she went into  
(?).

MOORE: And did you have kids after that or did you . . .

CAPP: Three of them.

MRS. CAPP: I have three kids.

CAPP: All living.

MOORE: And all living. And what are their names?

CAPP: Uh . . .

MRS. CAPP: Bob.

CAPP: Robert, and Kathy, and . . .

MRS. CAPP: And John.

CAPP: John.

MOORE: Do you remember what years they were born?

MRS. CAPP: Oh, yeah.

CAPP: In the fifties.

MRS. CAPP: Bob was born in '55. Kathy was '57.

MOORE: Bob was '55, Kathy was '57.

MRS. CAPP: John was '58.

MOORE: John was '58, uh-huh. And do they live in the area, then?

CAPP: Kathy lives up the street about seven houses, and Bob lives about five blocks from here.

MOORE: So you see them often, do you?

CAPP: Hell no. ( Ms. Moore laughs )

MRS. CAPP: No, not much.

CAPP: Hey, are you married?

MOORE: No.

CAPP: No? How often do you see your parents?

MOORE: How old are my parents?

CAPP: I said how often do you see them?

MOORE: I try to see them as much as I can, but it's not that much.

CAPP: What do you mean "not that much."

MOORE: Well, I see them like once every two months, maybe.

CAPP: Do they live in the same town?

MOORE: No, they don't. They live out in New York.

CAPP: Oh, that's a different story. That's a different story. But here the kids are under your nose and they don't know you unless they want something. ( Ms. Moore laughs ) Why are you laughing?

MOORE: If they live close, they take you for granted, maybe.

CAPP: Hey, hey!

MRS. CAPP: No, that's true.

CAPP: Hey, no joke. Isn't that right?

MOORE: Yeah, that is right.

MRS. CAPP: The youngest one, John, he's lived in Cleveland, and his wife,  
and then he's got two children. Then Bob, like he said,  
Bob lives about five blocks from here.

CAPP: He's got three boys.

MRS. CAPP: He's got three boys.

CAPP: And Kathy has one daughter.

MRS. CAPP: She has one daughter.

MOORE: So you have grandchildren.

MRS. CAPP: Uh-huh. Kathy has . . .

CAPP: (?)

MOORE: Well, what about, there's one question to ask you, and that is  
did you have any tragedies since you came to the States, anything  
that happened in the family that was tragic?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: How do you feel . . .

MRS. CAPP: When he lost his parents, I'd say that was . . .

MOORE: His parents. When was that, your mother and father?

CAPP: Dad in 1957.

MRS. CAPP: '57, and his mother was what? '69?

CAPP: '69.

MRS. CAPP: 1969.

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

MOORE: If you look back on your life . . .

CAPP: I wish I knew then what I knew now.

MOORE: You wish you knew what you knew now, but are you happy, I mean,  
how do you feel about coming to the States? How do you feel now?  
Was it a good decision, do you think?

CAPP: Yeah. What the hell would I do in a Communistic country? Hey,  
hey . . .

MRS. CAPP: (?) He'd like to go back, I think, just to see the place.

CAPP: Hey, here's the point. I don't walk straight. I walk like I'm drunk.  
On the farm you got to do work from daylight to night time. I

couldn't do that.

MOORE: So you think it was a good decision.

CAPP: That's right.

MOORE: Did she feel the same way, your mother and your father? Did they feel the same way? Was it an okay decision, or did they want to go back?

CAPP: My mother wanted to go back the first year. After that, she was on her own. See what happened today (?). We (?).

MOORE: Hold on for a second.

CAPP: (?)

CAPP: Honey, one minute . . .

MOORE: One second.

CAPP: Let her go. (?) I got (?).

MOORE: No, I got it. That's all right.

CAPP: I got (?). ( break in tape )

MOORE: Okay. So you said that your mother and father, your mother wanted to come back after one year.

CAPP: After, about, that was if it was (?) my little sister. I bring her to her senses, (?) used to be. And Mama wanted to be, Mama wanted Dad to work somewhere, so we moved down, down this way, and he got a job in the concrete company, concrete sales. He got a job working where my uncle worked. Boy, I don't know, my mother had a sister over here, too. And church on Thursday evening for seven o'clock Mass. And we had a storm. See that crack over there? Behind it there was a chimney, and there was a piece of tin. Coming down the stovepipe, because, at that time. My uncle was sleeping like near the cabinet, the storm came in and hit the chimney, and he got up, thrown on (?).

MOORE: Now, who came in, you said? Who came in?

CAPP: No, my mother and her sister-in-law went to church on Thursday evening, on Good Thursday, and in the church for Good Thursday. Easter time, Good Thursday. All night they washed, everything ready for Easter, and the storm came around. He hid down in the chimney, like I said, and my uncle was right under it, all the soot came out over his face, over his face.

MOORE: Well, we're going to go back to the story about your parents. Did you think your, so what did you say about your parents? Did they ever talk about coming to America, whether they found it a good decision or not? Did they ever talk about that?

CAPP: No.

MOORE: Why not?

CAPP: Because they were used to it, when you get used to something, you've had a job at night, didn't you?

MOORE: Yeah.

CAPP: And didn't you like it?

MOORE: Yeah.

CAPP: Oh, my it's the same damn thing with foreign people.

MOORE: Well, so, do you know anybody in your family that ever went back to Poland, at the beginning?

CAPP: No, no. Well, I had, my uncle that, my father's brother was here in America about, around 1910 or something like that. And he went back to his wife. I don't now how long he stayed and he went back, and he's never been back.

MOORE: So that's the one person you know who didn't go back.

CAPP: Yeah, that's all.

MOORE: Well, we'd like to thank you very much for the Ellis Island Oral History Project for helping us.

CAPP: You can take that home.

MOORE: We'll take those and we'll put this in the record. We have a record there. We're going to take a picture of you. All your papers will be there. These medical records I can ask about. I don't know much about that system, but I can ask you. But we will also send you a tape at the end.

CAPP: (?)

MOORE: A copy of this. It will take through the summer. But, anyway, on behalf of the Ellis Island Oral History Project, this is Kate Moore in Youngstown, Ohio, on the 5th of January 1994.