

KM-056

ANNA CORRADIN PIZZATO

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ITALY, 1921

AGE 23

PASSAGE ON "THE ARGENTINA"

MOORE:Good afternoon. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service, and today is the second of July, 1994, and I'm in Rock Springs, Wyoming, at the home of Anna Pizzato, who came from Italy to the United States in 1921 at the age of twenty-three years old. Would you please begin by giving us your full name and date of birth?

PIZZATO:My name is Anna Pizzato. I was born the 26th of February in 1889, uh, '98.

MOORE:1898. Okay. What is your maiden name?

PIZZATO:Corradin.

MOORE:How do you spell that? Do you know?

PIZZATO:C-O-R-R-A-D-I-N.

MOORE:And where were you born?

PIZZATO:Luciana, San Giacomo de Luciana.

MOORE:Can you spell that for us? Or later on we'll do that, okay?

No problem, okay. What size town was that? How big was it.

PIZZATO:I don't know the population, because it was the, a small village, I mean, a group of, a house here, a group there.

It wasn't that big, like a city or something, you know.

MOORE:And what did the town look like? What was it like, the town that you came from?

PIZZATO:It was nice. Especially when you're young, everything is nice.

MOORE:(she laughs) And did it, how did it look? Like, what type of terrain, what type of area was it?

PIZZATO:It was mountains, it was hills, but there was vegetation, you know. People had the garden.

MOORE:And what was the nearest big city?

PIZZATO:The nearest, Bassano.

MOORE:Bassano?

PIZZATO:Bassano.

MOORE:Uh-huh. Okay. And what was the major industry of your town?
What did people do for a living, mostly?

PIZZATO:That time, when I grew up what we were doing was making the
braid with the straw of the wheat, and they made a hat,
kind of a hat. They made all kinds of things.

MOORE:So you braided.

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:You braided straw.

PIZZATO:Uh-huh.

MOORE:To make products.

PIZZATO:Yes. And then the, you know, so many yards that you bring
it into the store and sell it, and then they send it to
the factory, I guess, or someplace, where they made the
straw hats, they made many things out of straw, out of

the braids that we made.

MOORE:And what was your father's name?

PIZZATO:Antonio.

MOORE:Antonio. And what was his occupation?

PIZZATO:Farmer.

MOORE:He was a farmer. What did he look like, your father? How could you describe him?

PIZZATO:Oh, jolly.

MOORE:A jolly fellow.

PIZZATO:Yes, a jolly fellow. We were ten brothers and sisters. And then sometimes no matter what we had for dinner, if he, my father and mother started singing, we all sing together.

MOORE:Do you remember any songs that you sang together?

PIZZATO:Oh, yes.

MOORE:Could you sing one? (Mrs. Pizzato laughs) Any songs at all? No? How about, what about your father's looks? How did he look?

PIZZATO:Nice.

MOORE:Was he, how tall was he about?

PIZZATO:Close to six feet, for sure, you know.

MOORE:What color hair did he have?

PIZZATO:Dark.

MOORE:Dark hair. Eyes?

PIZZATO:Brown.

MOORE:Uh-huh. And you said he was jolly. What else about his
personality? He liked to sing?

PIZZATO:Yes, very much. My mother, too.

MOORE:And is there a story about your father that you associate with
your childhood at all?

PIZZATO:Always jolly, always happy, always, you know, doing
something. When he call us he could whistle, and we have
to call her name, and we always go to her.

MOORE:And what about your mother? What was her name?

PIZZATO:Paola, Paola.

MOORE:And what was her maiden name, your mother?

PIZZATO:Pizzato.

MOORE:Okay. And her maiden name, it was Pizzato.

PIZZATO:Pizzato.

MOORE:The same as your father's name?

PIZZATO:No. He was Corradin.

MOORE:Okay. And what was your mother's occupation?

PIZZATO:Just doing house, you know, housework, and working on the farm, because help us cut the hay, help us dig, planting, dig potatoes or whatever, everything that comes on the farm.

MOORE:Just to check again, your mother's maiden name, your mother was what?

PIZZATO:Pizzato.

MOORE:It was Pizzato, okay.

PIZZATO:I married a cousin.

MOORE:Oh, you married a cousin.

PIZZATO:A relation, a relation, yeah. That's why it's the same.

MOORE:All right. And what did your mom look like, again?

PIZZATO:Well, nice.

MOORE:Color hair?

PIZZATO:Dark.

MOORE:Dark hair. How tall was she?

PIZZATO>About my size, about 5'5".

MOORE:5'5".

PIZZATO:Maybe now I'm 4'4".

MOORE:And what was her personality and temperament, your mother's?

PIZZATO:Good.

MOORE:Good personality?

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:Did she like people?

PIZZATO:Yes, and everybody liked her, too.

MOORE:And what were her chores around the house?

PIZZATO:A little bit of everything.

MOORE:Did she work also making, braiding?

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:She braided.

PIZZATO:Uh-huh.

MOORE:And is there a story about your mother that you associate with your childhood? How about discipline?

PIZZATO:Yes, she was always strict, especially during the First World War. We were a bunch of sisters, she was watching us like a hawk. And I remember one time, you know, that I said to her, I said, "Mama," I said, "if I want to do something wrong, I'll watch you. You don't have to watch me." And she answered me, she said, "Ahh," she said, "your tongue is too long." (they laugh)

MOORE:What about your brothers and sisters? Could you name them in order of birth?

PIZZATO:Domenica, Giovanni, Francesco, three brothers.

MOORE:How much older were they?

PIZZATO:One was older, a couple of years older than me. The other

was all younger. I had four sisters, four sisters older than me.

MOORE:All right. What, were you a middle child or youngest or . . .

PIZZATO:I'm in the middle.

MOORE:You're in the middle.

PIZZATO:Oh, excuse me. (referring to the microphone) I meant not to do it.

MOORE:That's okay, that's okay. Okay, so you were a middle child. So who was the first child?

PIZZATO:Domenica, a sister.

MOORE:A sister?

PIZZATO:Yeah, one sister. My older sister.

MOORE:The oldest child?

PIZZATO:Domenica was her name.

MOORE:Okay. And then what was next?

PIZZATO:Maria.

MOORE:Maria. And who else?

PIZZATO:Caterina.

MOORE:Caterina was next.

PIZZATO:Nicolina.

MOORE:Nicolina, uh-huh.

PIZZATO:Then my brothers, Domenico.

MOORE:Domenico.

PIZZATO:And then it was me.

MOORE:Then you.

PIZZATO:Then I got four younger.

MOORE:Who were they?

PIZZATO:Giovanni.

MOORE:Giovanni.

PIZZATO:Angela.

MOORE:Angela.

PIZZATO:Francesco.

MOORE:Francesco.

PIZZATO:And Elisa.

MOORE:Elisa. Okay, good. All right. Now, what about your house that you lived in in Italy? What do you remember?

PIZZATO:It was an old, old house, but it was big.

MOORE:How big was it?

PIZZATO:How big, you know, for so many people it's got to be big.

MOORE:Was it it's own house?

PIZZATO:Huh?

MOORE:It was your own house?

PIZZATO:Yeah. I know that we had a four bedroom. I remember that for sure.

MOORE:You had four bedrooms. And what was your house made of? What was it?

PIZZATO:Rock.

MOORE:Rock, right. How many rooms all together were in that house, do you think?

PIZZATO:Oh, I know. They were upstairs, downstairs. All the bedroom was upstairs.

MOORE:Four bedrooms upstairs.

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:And then you had a kitchen? Did you have a living room?

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:What else did you have?

PIZZATO:Then we had, well, you would say the barn, it was all attached together, that we stayed during the wintertime.

MOORE:Were the animals in the house?

PIZZATO:The animals, yes. Not in the house, in the barn. But, I mean, it's a building like it's going to be an extra room, because they had a place for the animals, and they put the bed, you know, with the straw and everything. And there was a place where if they mess, and then you covered it up. I don't know what you call it. It got in it. Then you put some straw to cover, then every day they clean it.

MOORE:It was attached to the house.

PIZZATO:Yeah, attached to the house.

MOORE:And what animals did you keep?

PIZZATO:A cow.

MOORE:A cow? What else? Anything else?

PIZZATO:Then we had a chicken, we had pigs. Not in the same room,
you know what I mean.

MOORE:And was there a garden?

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:How big was the garden?

PIZZATO:Quite a bit.

MOORE:And did it feed the family, the garden?

PIZZATO:For vegetables, stuff like that, yeah.

MOORE:And what did you grow in that garden, and what exactly . . .

PIZZATO:Beans, celery, potatoes. But not potatoes we had in the
field, you know, potatoes. Chicory, lettuce. That's
already vegetables now, at that time, that we had.

MOORE:Now, how was your house heated in Italy?

PIZZATO:The heat? Just a fireplace.

MOORE:A fireplace. In the main room, or in each room? How many fireplaces did you have?

PIZZATO:Just the one in the kitchen.

MOORE:The one in the kitchen.

PIZZATO:But, you know, the houses, they're so thick, the building, the wall is about a yard, pretty close, something, those old houses, you know. And for the heat, for the warmth, that's where we stay in the place where the animal was. That was for our heat.

MOORE:All right. What kind of furniture did you have?

PIZZATO:All furniture.

MOORE:Was it made by yourselves, or did you buy it? (a telephone rings) All right. After the telephone call, we start again. Who else lived in your building besides your family? Did your grandparents live with you?

PIZZATO:My grandmother.

MOORE:Whose mother was that?

PIZZATO:My dad.

MOORE>Your dad's mother lived with you. Okay. How was your house

lit? What type of lighting did you have?

PIZZATO:Just the coal oil, lamp.

MOORE:Lamp? Oil lamps. All right. And what about plumbing?
Where did, did you have toilets?

PIZZATO:You take care of, no toilet, it was outside.

MOORE:The toilet was outside. What about water supply? Where did
you get your water?

PIZZATO:Carry. We had to carry to go on the fountain where there
was the running water.

MOORE:And how far was that fountain?

PIZZATO:Oh, quite a walk.

MOORE:Quite a walk?

PIZZATO:Down on the hills, and have to get it up hills.

MOORE:And who did that?

PIZZATO:Everybody. Anyone who was able, you know, to carry it.
And was this house in town or out of town?

MOORE:Out of town. How far was the nearest village, then?

PIZZATO:Oh, about a couple of kilometers, yeah, from the town.

MOORE:And where, were your other grandparents nearby? Did you have any family members?

PIZZATO:Yes. My father and mother was living there too across, you know. It was just a little hill, there was another bunch of houses.

MOORE:And your grandparents lived there.

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:That was your mother's parents?

PIZZATO:My mother's father and mother, yeah. And then uncles and cousins.

MOORE:So your family lived pretty close.

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:Who were you closest to in the family? Who?

PIZZATO:I don't know. We all liked, we all liked each other.

MOORE:So there wasn't a brother or sister that you were the closest to.

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:All right. You said your mother's parents lived in the village. What did that look like? Was that . . .

PIZZATO:Just a group of houses, a bunch of houses.

MOORE:And were they as big as your house?

PIZZATO:No. I think my grandfather's house was smaller than ours.

MOORE:And do you have any stories about any of your brothers or sisters when you were a kid, things they did?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:What about religious life, then?

PIZZATO:Catholic.

MOORE:You were Catholic. And were you religious, your family? Were you very religious?

PIZZATO:Not fanatic, but pretty good.

MOORE:Did you go to church . . .

PIZZATO:Every Sunday.

MOORE:Every Sunday you went.

PIZZATO:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:Did you say prayers before you ate? Grace?

PIZZATO:No, not before we ate. But we always said the rosary every night before we go to bed, the whole family.

MOORE:Did you say it together?

PIZZATO:Yes. Brother and sisters, father and mother, grandmothers, every one.

MOORE:Where was the church that you attended?

PIZZATO:It was a couple, that I said, a couple of kilometers.

MOORE:How did you get to church?

PIZZATO:Walking.

MOORE:Walked. Did everyone go to church?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:The whole family together? Did you walk together on Sundays?

PIZZATO:Well, that depended which, sometimes not everyone can go to the same mass, you know. But we managed to all go. Nobody missed it. If we don't go one, we go to the other.

MOORE:What about holiday celebrations? What were your favorites?

PIZZATO:Uh, Christmas.

MOORE:Why?

PIZZATO:I don't know. I guess all the, you know, the things to do,
the Nativity and, you know.

MOORE:Can you describe what you did in Italy for Christmas?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:What about eating? Did you have a special meal?

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:What type of food did you eat at Christmas? Was it different?

PIZZATO:Well, it was more, a little different, a little special like,
you know, if you have a, some dessert or something special,
there was always more.

MOORE:And did you go to church at Christmas?

PIZZATO:At night.

MOORE:Midnight Mass?

PIZZATO:Midnight Mass.

MOORE:On Christmas Eve, yeah. Now, did you give gifts at Christmas?

PIZZATO:No. When I grow up, there was, you know.

MOORE:What about school life? What do you remember about school life in Italy?

PIZZATO:For the school that I had, it went only to the third grade.

MOORE:And where was that?

PIZZATO:But that's closer. That's equivalent to eighth grade here, because I have to have, what's that, a diploma?

MOORE:A diploma, right.

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:And what was your favorite subject in school?

PIZZATO:I liked school.

MOORE:How big was your school that you had there?

PIZZATO:Not too big.

MOORE:How many students per class, approximately?

PIZZATO:I don't, because there was only one teacher, and she was teaching all three grades, first, second and third.

MOORE:Do you remember the name of the teacher?

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:Who was it?

PIZZATO:Montini, Louisa Montini.

MOORE:Louisa Montini. Uh-huh. And did you learn any English prior to coming to the United States?

PIZZATO:The only thing that I could remember was, "I don't know. I don't understand."

MOORE:And who did you learn that from?

PIZZATO:From the English soldiers that were there during the war. And it was funny because when I came in this country I was on the train, and the porter come, want to give me some fruit, he want to give me the paper and this and that, and he was talking to me, and I only said, "I don't understand." That was the only words that I know.

MOORE:Well, okay. So what about entertainment? How did you amuse yourself as children? What did you do? What type of games did you play?

PIZZATO:My specialty was to have a group of friends and go under a tree with a guitar or mandolin and singing songs, and I was, I enjoyed that. Still today I enjoyed everything.

MOORE:Why don't you sing any song, any song you remember. Do you have any song that your remember, your favorite?

PIZZATO:There's a long of songs, but you don't know.

MOORE:Are you shy?

PIZZATO:Oh, no. (she laughs)

MOORE:Would you sing one?

PIZZATO:I don't know if I know all the words.

MOORE:But try, try. Any song.

PIZZATO:And maybe my voice don't come out the way I want it to.

MOORE:We don't care. But just for the record, what type of songs did you sing?

PIZZATO:(she sings in Italian)

MOORE:Good! Oh, that's wonderful. Do you remember any others?

PIZZATO:Oh, I know a lot of others.

MOORE:(she laughs) That's good. All right. What about a childhood story about you? Do you have any story that they told about you?

PIZZATO:No. You know, life was simple, you know.

MOORE:Very simple.

PIZZATO:Yeah. After that I went to school, you know. I got my diploma, I was not even eleven years old. And there, if you don't pass, you know, that the teacher is supposed to keep you till you're twelve years old. And so my mother let me go to school after that, you know, after I had the diploma, and it was to help the teacher, who was a young one. So after she said, "Learn something at home to do." Rather than do that for nothing, because I didn't improve anything. I didn't learn more than that.

MOORE:Well, what did you do between eleven and the time that you came to the United States? What did you . . .

PIZZATO:I went, then I went to school to learn how to sew, you know. And then I learned, and I was a dressmaker for the neighbors, the people.

MOORE:So you went to school to sew, and you did that as a profession. You were paid by people.

PIZZATO:Yes, uh-huh, yes.

MOORE:And what was life like then? You mentioned soldiers and the

war. What was it like then before you left?

PIZZATO:(she sighs) It was just, not too long after the war.

MOORE:Do you remember the war?

PIZZATO:I'll never forget that, for sure.

MOORE:What don't you forget? What . . .

PIZZATO:Everything.

MOORE:What happened? Tell me.

PIZZATO:Because we were to the place where our home was, there was like it was the first time, because the First Aid hospital was right in our yard. When the battle finished, and the Red Cross go to pick up the wounded, and that's where they had the First Aid. It was right there.

MOORE:So they brought all the bodies to your house.

PIZZATO:Not to my house. I mean, they had a building that they built, you know. Then from there they bring them to the hospital. We see the soldier when they go up, when they were called to fight, and we seen them, what was left of them when they come back.

MOORE:And what was that like?

PIZZATO:It was not very pleasant.

MOORE:And how old were you then?

PIZZATO:Sixteen, seventeen. Well, the war started in '14 till the '18, so in '14 I was sixteen years old.

MOORE:And did you see very gruesome things? (Mrs. Pizzato nods) You did. And do you still remember them now? Is that the worst that you saw?

PIZZATO:Well, a lot of, you know, a lot of them you throw it off. You don't want to remember everything. But it wasn't very pleasant.

MOORE:And what about conditions of food and getting products and things during that time? What was life like during the first World War in Italy then?

PIZZATO:Pretty hard. I have to tell you one thing that I'll never forget, and I'm ashamed to say. When there was the Italian, the American soldiers there, that they bring it in, all the food, every day they got the different food. And sometimes they had two, three, four, five loaf of bread that they put, don't pick it up, you throw it. And my mother pick it up, and we put it in the attic. And

any time we cut the moldy off and eat the other part, because we cannot eat it all at once. And another thing, sometime, you know the yellow American cheese? In the piece, sometimes there was a big piece, they throw it in the slop for the pig, and I remember seeing my mother go in and take it out, and wipe it off and cut the four sides, and then we ate the other part, because the cheese don't penetrate, you know, when you cut the pieces. That's a lot of memories that you want to forget, but you don't.

MOORE:So it was difficult getting food.

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:And did you ever go hungry?

PIZZATO:No, no, because we had, you know, we raised our own potatoes and beans and stuff like that, and we had a chicken, and make the noodles and all. No, not hungry. I never could say that I was hungry. We measured, but not hungry.

MOORE:So you rationed your food, yes.

PIZZATO:Well, be sure that we have some for tomorrow, not eat everything today.

MOORE:Now, what was the attitude toward the American soldiers, too?

PIZZATO:I don't have nothing against, no.

MOORE:And . . .

PIZZATO:I remember the first time that they made some jello. We never seen jello before. And many things at that time that wasn't there. Now you find everything all over, but, yeah.

MOORE:Okay. So how did you get to the United States? What happened? How did you come to come here to this country.

PIZZATO:To get married.

MOORE:To get married. And how did you get married to somebody here?

PIZZATO:Because it was (she laughs) my cousin. We were in school together, we raised together, before he come in this country.

MOORE:Oh. And what were . . .

PIZZATO:He was here, he was here.

MOORE:Okay. So you were brought up with your cousin, and what year did your cousin come to the United States?

PIZZATO:1913.

MOORE:Before the war, he came here.

PIZZATO:He was only seventeen years old.

MOORE:And did he write you?

PIZZATO:Yeah. Not the first, it was quite a few years that he was,
you know, at the time, you know. Then we started writing,
started corresponding.

MOORE:What year did you start corresponding? When?

PIZZATO>About a couple of years before that I come.

MOORE:Uh-huh. So you wrote letters?

PIZZATO:Uh-huh.

MOORE:And he asked you to marry him?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:Through the letters?

PIZZATO:Yeah. And I accepted.

MOORE:And was he, who else was in this country from your family?
He was here, who else?

PIZZATO:I had a sister that we were supposed to come together through

France, but she got the pass, but they closed the time that I was supposed to come with her, and I had to wait the next, four or five months after. So I had to go through Trieste.

MOORE:All right. So he wrote to you. How did you get the money to come to the United States?

PIZZATO:He sent it to me.

MOORE:He sent you, he sent the money. And what was your family's reaction to this?

PIZZATO:They liked him, because they liked the boy, especially my mother. It was one of her relations. She was glad.

MOORE:And what was he doing in this country then?

PIZZATO:At that time he was working on a farm.

MOORE:On a farm where?

PIZZATO:In Colorado.

MOORE:In Colorado.

PIZZATO:With a cousin.

MOORE:With another cousin.

PIZZATO:With another cousin.

MOORE:Whose cousin was that? I mean, whose relation was that?

PIZZATO:It was his cousin and my relative, too. She married a different relative, you know. And he had a ranch, a farm, you know. And he was working the months, you know, so many months of the year, when they raised the crop. Then after, yeah.

MOORE:What city in Colorado was that?

PIZZATO:Sterling.

MOORE:Sterling?

PIZZATO:Uh-huh.

MOORE:Sterling, Colorado. So you were bound to go to Sterling, Colorado. Was that where you were going to meet your husband?

PIZZATO:Uh-huh.

MOORE:So you got, you wrote to him, he proposed to you. Did you ever think of not accepting?

PIZZATO:No. I had, some of them said that I shouldn't do that, because how did you find out that he was good. And my

answer was, I said, "We're going to marry on trust. If he trusts me, I trust him." We were married for fifty-five years. We didn't do too bad.

MOORE:(she laughs) Okay. So do you remember packing?

PIZZATO:Just a suitcase.

MOORE:And what did you put in that suitcase?

PIZZATO:Just my own clothes.

MOORE:Nothing personal for the, a Bible?

PIZZATO:Oh, yeah, I had the prayer book.

MOORE:A prayer book. Did you bring beads?

PIZZATO:I don't have any.

MOORE:How about, did you pack any food?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:Did they have a party for you before you left?

PIZZATO:I don't even remember.

MOORE:You can think of all the (?). (she laughs) Okay. So how did you get from home? How did you, tell me about the

trip, how you did it. Okay, you got the tickets. What did you have to do to get to Colorado?

PIZZATO:I had to go to Venice to sign up for the papers through the consul, the Italian-American Consul and everything to get to Venice, the passport.

MOORE:How did you get to Venice?

PIZZATO:Oh, with the train.

MOORE:So you went to Venice, you got the papers. Did you have a medical examination?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:What did they check? How thorough was that?

PIZZATO:It would be, like, I remember they give you a shot for the, oh, what is it? I still have the mark, but I don't remember what for. We got the shot before we come in this country.

MOORE:And did they check, give you a physical?

PIZZATO:Yes, eyes and everything.

MOORE:Okay. So what day did you leave home? Do you remember when you left home?

PIZZATO:Uh, February the 21st.

MOORE:19 . . .

PIZZATO:'21.

MOORE:'21. And how did you leave home? How did you get to the train?

PIZZATO:With a horse and buggy to the train, you know.

MOORE:And what was the train waiting? What city was the train in?

PIZZATO:Pisano. I can never remember which one, which was the first.

MOORE:Pisano. Okay. And from there you are going to where?

PIZZATO:To Trieste.

MOORE:To Trieste. Okay. All right. So . . .

PIZZATO:And then there, that's when we found out that they were in
quarantine, and the ship don't leave until the
twenty-sixth.

MOORE:So what did you do?

PIZZATO:Just wait there.

MOORE:Where did you wait? Where did you sleep those nights?

PIZZATO:Other place. The company, they have a place.

MOORE:Oh, the company had a place for you to go. Okay. What was your impression of this boat when you saw it?

PIZZATO:I guess nothing. That was the first time that I seen them anyway. I never see Trieste before. And I was just thinking where I wanted to go, and I'm going, regardless of how.

MOORE:Had you ever been on a boat in the ocean before?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:The first time.

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:Had you ever seen the ocean before?

PIZZATO:Venice.

MOORE:You'd seen, okay. All right. So you waited. And what were the, what was the place like that you stayed in? Do you remember that?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:Okay.

PIZZATO:Because there was a lot of people, you know, a lot of others.

MOORE:Okay. So the boat was in quarantine for what? What was the problem that you couldn't go?

PIZZATO:I don't know if it was measles. I don't know. There was something. I don't know for sure.

MOORE:Okay. All right. So you got on the boat. Now, what accommodations did you have? What class did you come on?

PIZZATO:Third.

MOORE:Third class. What was it like, your accommodations? Describe them.

PIZZATO:Well, you know what, they give you those bank to sleep.

MOORE:Bunk beds?

PIZZATO:Yeah, the bunk bed. One on the bottom, one on top.

MOORE:Hold on a second.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

MOORE:Did any family members come to say goodbye, to the boat, with you?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:Did they come to the train?

PIZZATO:They're too far. No, they're too far away. When I left the home, that's where I left it, all there.

MOORE:And what did they, what was that like? What was the scene like when you first left home?

PIZZATO:They were crying, especially my brothers and my mother and father, you know. Because it's so far, you never know if you see again.

MOORE:Yeah, yeah.

PIZZATO:And I was lucky that I see my father and mother after twenty-seven years, and that was the only time that I seen them alive, because after I went back a couple of more times, but they were gone.

MOORE:Okay. So you're going from Trieste on the boat, third class, with bunk beds. What about the food?

PIZZATO:It was good.

MOORE:It was good.

PIZZATO:The only thing, that I got seasick, that I couldn't eat.

MOORE:Why? Was it rough?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:Were other people sick too?

PIZZATO:Some, not every one of them.

MOORE:How long were you seasick?

PIZZATO:Almost all the time.

MOORE:And did you, were you able to eat?

PIZZATO:Not too much. But, you know, I was young and strong. I
hold . . .

MOORE:And what date did the boat depart? And what date did the boat
leave?

PIZZATO:The 26th of February.

MOORE:The 26th of February.

PIZZATO:My birthday.

MOORE:Your birthday!

PIZZATO:Yeah, I remember that.

MOORE:So you set sail on your birthday. Now, how long was the trip

across the ocean.

PIZZATO:Eighteen days, for sure.

MOORE:And what do you remember about that boat trip most vividly?
What's in your mind about that trip?

PIZZATO:There was, there was something. There was all Italian, there were all Italian people, and there were some of them that, one boy asked me to dance, which they have a lot of dance, you know, singing and dancing. And I said that I don't know how to dance. He said, "If you don't dance with me, you're not going to dance with nobody else." And I said, "I'm not on your city now, in your town where you come from. We are free here to do as we please."

MOORE:Good for you. (they laugh) And so you danced with whomever you wanted to.

PIZZATO:Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:And anything, that's a good story. Anything else you remember on the boat?

PIZZATO:I remember there was a boy that he wanted me to give the address where I go. And I said, "To give the address of another young boy that was going to get married?" Would

you? (she laughs) I am dummy now, but I wasn't too dummy then. (they laugh)

MOORE:All right. So did you make any friends on the boat besides these boys?

PIZZATO:We were all friends.

MOORE:And you sang a lot?

PIZZATO:Yes, I always liked to sing.

MOORE:And what was the atmosphere on the boat? Was it fun?

PIZZATO:Well, you don't have no other place to go. You have to make the best out of it.

MOORE:And you were sick too.

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:And were lots of people sick?

PIZZATO:Not too many.

MOORE:And so . . .

PIZZATO:But the funny part, the only thing that my stomach would hold, it was a glass of beer. Could you believe it? And, you know, the money wasn't too much, because I know that

I had money because I had left over more than I needed, but I wasn't splurging. And we made a deal with the three girls, all young, and we washed the clothes by hand for the cook, and they gave us a glass of beer. That was the pay that we got. But we, that was good for us, and it was good for them. Yeah.

MOORE:So you drank beer?

PIZZATO:Not too much, but one, yeah. That one hold in the stomach, and the other one, once she eat something everything goes.

MOORE:What was the voyage like? Was it a rough trip? Were there any storms or anything?

PIZZATO:Yeah. A lot of times we had to go down because all the water was coming. Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:At any point did you, were you frightened?

PIZZATO:Kind of. Especially one time we heard the foghorn, and it was another, we put close to one another. And in the other it was one that he married a cousin of mine in Colorado, that he was coming from old country, too. Then when we talk after, you know, and he said that ship was where I was in.

MOORE:So you almost crashed into a ship with your cousin in it.

PIZZATO:Pretty close. (they laugh)

MOORE:So, okay. That you remember. When it was stormy, were people praying?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:No. So it wasn't that bad.

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:Okay. So tell me what else happened. What did you?

PIZZATO:The only thing that happened that I was so constipated that I stayed seven days without going to the bathroom.

MOORE:But it was okay after a while.

PIZZATO:And they, that day that I was supposed to go to the doctor to check up, it was a storm that we can't get out and stay down, down below, you know. And I was lucky, I never was scared or what. I had to go to the bathroom, and there was no toilet there. And there was a lady with two little kids, and she had what you call a pot, and she said, "Come on." She said, "Here, use this one, honey." And I said, "Who's going to carry it out?" She said, "I do." And

that helped. And to me it was like a blessing. Those things you don't forget.

MOORE:Yeah, yeah. What else on the trip, though? What else do you remember? These are great stories. What else?

PIZZATO:I don't know.

MOORE:Do you remember seeing land for the first time, the New York Harbor?

PIZZATO:I remember when we see that, what is that kind of birds?

MOORE:Seagulls?

PIZZATO:Huh?

MOORE:Seagulls?

PIZZATO:Yeah, seagulls. When we see that, we knew that there was, the land wasn't very far. And then when we see the Statue of Liberty, we thought we see an apparition, I don't know if it was a god or who.

MOORE:Did you know what the Statue of Liberty was?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:And what was the reaction of people to see the Statue of

Liberty?

PIZZATO:Oh, happy. Happy to be close to land.

MOORE:Did people sing or cheer?

PIZZATO:I don't remember. The only thing that they wanted us to get out the boat and go to another one, and that's when we refused and we made a song that we don't want it, to go on the other boat, until we, what is this, disembark?

MOORE:Yeah, disembark, right. Why did they want you to go onto another boat?

PIZZATO:Probably because they had, they wanted to return the other one. You know, not to stay there quarantined. So four or five days more.

MOORE:What was quarantine? Why were you quarantined?

PIZZATO:They found lice. Somebody had lice.

MOORE:Uh-huh.

PIZZATO:And we had to give them all our clothes fumigated. And that was the worst thing that I remember. They give, fifteen other times we had to give all our clothes, and they give a robe, you know. We had to hold our passport and all

valuables that we had, everyone. That was your trouble if you lose it or what, you know. And go and have our hair washed in coal oil and everything. When I see that, you see a five, six years old little one, a twenty, a big woman, you know. From here, go over here, here, go over there, now I look one of them. And, you know, when you're raised with a bunch of . . . (she gasps) Oh, excuse me! (referring to)

MOORE:That's all right.

PIZZATO:With a bunch of brothers and sisters that you never undress. We were seven sisters. I swear to God, and my mother, we never undressed one in front of the other, none of them. And that was a big shock.

MOORE:So you the people were asked to undress in front of each other.

PIZZATO:Why sure. They put us in in a little room fifteen at a time. You, and they have to give you clothes.

MOORE:I see.

PIZZATO:They give you a robe to put on, then they wash your hair. And I remember left all my passport and everything on the windowsill. I sure went back fast. If you lose your passport, who knows how long you have to stay there before

they, yeah. (she gestures)

MOORE:Put you in, yeah. So this quarantine lasted how long, then?

PIZZATO:Not too long, you know.

MOORE:How many days?

PIZZATO:(she sighs) I can't figure. You know, I don't remember the exact date we got there. I know that we got to, I got to sterling the third. I made a mistake?

MOORE:Oh, no. Not at all. You got there the twenty-third?

PIZZATO:I got there the third of April in 1921.

MOORE:The third of April, 1921. Yeah. What about the song that you sang when you didn't want to go off the boat. What was it?

PIZZATO:That's, we sing (Italian). It means, you know, that was the song, "We don't want to get off." That one, that was all the song, all the words that I remember.

MOORE:And the name of this boat that you were on?

PIZZATO:Argentina.

MOORE:Argentina, Argentina. And so that you didn't want to get off,

the song you sang, all right. And did the whole boat sing that?

PIZZATO:Yes, the whole, neither one of us wants to go off.

MOORE:Yeah. Okay. So from there what happened then? Finally you got off the boat?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:And you went to where?

PIZZATO:To have a, that was quarantine, to have all our clothes fumigated and, you know, and everything.

MOORE:Where was that fumigation? Where did that take place? On the boat or off the boat?

PIZZATO:On Ellis Island.

MOORE:At Ellis Island? Okay. So you were quarantined at Ellis Island.

PIZZATO:Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:What about, where did you sleep, then? Do you remember very much?

PIZZATO:Probably was a bunk bed, you know. I don't remember.

MOORE:And what about the food on Ellis Island? Do you remember that?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:Was there anything new?

PIZZATO:No, there was nothing that I could say that I refused or got sick, so maybe those things you would remember, but there was nothing.

MOORE:Yeah. What do you remember about Ellis Island as a place? Do you remember anything physically about the building or anything?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:Did people speak to you in English or Italian? Did anyone speak to you in Italian at Ellis Island?

PIZZATO:They have to. Otherwise how can we communicate.

MOORE:So people did speak to you in Italian?

PIZZATO:Well, sure.

MOORE:Yeah. Were . . .

PIZZATO:There must have been a lot of interpreters, because I remember, you know . . .

MOORE: People spoke in Italian. What about the conditions in Ellis Island? Was it a very, was it crowded?

PIZZATO: You know, with a big bunch like that it's crowded no matter where you are.

MOORE: Yeah. What about, was it clean, Ellis Island?

PIZZATO: I couldn't, you know, I couldn't say if it was or it wasn't. To me it was like a place, you know, a new place you never see before, or something.

MOORE: And did they give you another medical examination on Ellis Island? Did you see a doctor?

PIZZATO: I don't remember that either, because you had all, your paper was all, everything there, you know.

MOORE: Okay. And where, now, where, what happened when you got off Ellis Island? How long were you on Ellis Island, do you think? How long were you there?

PIZZATO: It couldn't be more than four or five days.

MOORE: Okay. Was there any entertainment there at all for you?

PIZZATO: I don't remember. And then, you know, after, when we leave, everybody to go to the station, they give us a package

of food, you know, cookies, crackers, meat, you know, on the train. Yeah.

MOORE:All right. And where did you go after Ellis Island?

PIZZATO:To Sterling.

MOORE:To Sterling. How did you get there from Ellis Island?

PIZZATO:With a train.

MOORE:And how did you get from Ellis Island to the train? Did someone take you?

PIZZATO:It must have been because I, you know, probably everything is together with the passport, with the ticket that you get, you know.

MOORE:What was the address in Sterling? Do you remember it still? Okay. Now, what about that train trip? Explain to me what happened on the train coming.

PIZZATO:That's what I told you before, that there was a porter there and he tried to talk to me and everything, and I always say, "I don't understand." There was, the train, it has a seat that you could turn it, you know, that time. If you want to look this way, or even you turn it the other way. When I see him come, I turn the seat the other way.

(they laugh)

MOORE:And how did you eat on the train? Where did you get the food?

PIZZATO:The Ellis Island, you know.

MOORE:You ate that food.

PIZZATO:Big company. Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:And how long was that train trip?

PIZZATO:You know how the train is there? It takes quite a bit.
From New York . . .

MOORE:You had to change?

PIZZATO:No. I don't remember changing any of them. I think
straight, yeah. The funny part, when I got to Sterling,
well, it was not very warm but, and my future husband
(she laughs) he took me to have ice cream, and I thought
it was so funny. Ice cream when it's cold weather?
Because in our country we don't have ice cream at that
time, yeah, you know.

MOORE:Yeah. So he came to see you at the train. How did he recognize
you?

PIZZATO:We grew up together, see.

MOORE:But it was years later.

PIZZATO:We got quite a few, yeah. Well, he sent a picture, you know,
he sent me some and I sent him some.

MOORE:And so you went from there . . .

PIZZATO:But you know what? I got one thing to tell you. He told
me that after. He said that when he saw me he thought
that I would say no, (she laughs) because he said that
I was prettier than I was. (she laughs)

MOORE:That what? That what?

PIZZATO:That I was pretty, that I probably won't like him.
(she laughs) Oh, I laughed so many times.

MOORE:So he thought you were real pretty when he saw you.

PIZZATO:Maybe he thought, yes.

MOORE:And so you went to an ice cream place.

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:And then where did you go?

PIZZATO:Then I went on the ranch where he was, already was working,
and I stay with a family that they tell me that he was

working, and he had a place, you know, he had a room for himself, and I stayed with my cousins for a week. I got there the third, and we got married the tenth.

MOORE:Where did you get married?

PIZZATO:Sterling.

MOORE:In what church?

PIZZATO:St. Patrick.

MOORE:St. Patrick's Church in Sterling. And who came to the wedding?

PIZZATO:A lot of people. It was on Sunday. The church was full.

MOORE:And what about a wedding dress? Did you have a wedding dress?

PIZZATO:Uh-huh.

MOORE:Where did you get that dress?

PIZZATO:Right there.

MOORE:In Sterling?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:So you got married in ten days? You got married in ten days?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:Fast workers.

PIZZATO:Not ten days, seven.

MOORE:Seven.

PIZZATO:I got there the third.

MOORE:Oh, that's right. All right. And, so where did you live after that?

PIZZATO:Then I stayed on the ranch, because he was working there. They had a room for us.

MOORE:And what was your impression of that ranch when you first got there? What did you think, coming from Italy?

PIZZATO:When I see the houses I thought they were chicken coops, compared with the house that I was born. That is the truth. (she laughs) It was nice inside and everything, probably better furniture than I have. But I said, "Oh, my God, those look like chicken coop." (they laugh)

MOORE:And what else? What, what about the food? What did that look like to you?

PIZZATO:Well, you know, she was Italian girl, so she cooked the food

that we were used to eating.

MOORE:Was there anything else, like bananas, or anything you'd never seen?

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:Okay. Well, tell me what happened in your life then. What happened? Did you stay out in Colorado? How did you get out here in Wyoming?

PIZZATO:I had a sister in Wyoming, and the same year, before the year end, we come to Quealy. Oakland, not Quealy. Now it's, the mine camp is not there no more. And since then we stayed from, that still was twenty-one. And he went to work in the mines. My husband went to work in the mines. And he worked about seven, eight years. Then he got hurt, you know, in the mines.

MOORE:How hurt was he?

PIZZATO:Well, some, I don't know what they said, some coal hit on his face, you know, and everything. And he had trouble with his eyes. And he had an operation, from a tooth that he had pulled it made an infection for I don't know how long, and the doctor told him to get out of the mine, so we went back on the farm, back to Sterling, you know.

MOORE:Ah. So he was seven or eight years in the mines, and then he went back.

PIZZATO:Yeah. He went back to Sterling until 1943. And then we come back still in the mines.

MOORE:What year was that? '43?

PIZZATO:'43?

MOORE:Which mine did he, was he in? Which one?

PIZZATO:In 1943 he was working at the Quealy mine. Then he worked for Union Pacific. You know, worked whatever was work to be done.

MOORE:Let's go back a bit. Back in Sterling, that's right. Back in Sterling, what was the house like? How was it heated, in Sterling, the house that your cousin had? What type of heating?

PIZZATO:I don't even remember.

MOORE:How about lights? What type of lighting? Do you remember that house very much, back in Sterling? When you moved . . .

PIZZATO:It was electric.

MOORE:It was electric, probably.

PIZZATO:That's electric.

MOORE:Yeah. And how did you, what transportation did you use in Sterling when you wanted to go someplace? How far from home?

PIZZATO:Horse. There was a horse and buggy. There was no car then.

MOORE:Okay. Did you have children, your husband and you?

PIZZATO:Yeah.

MOORE:How many children did you have?

PIZZATO:Four.

MOORE:Four children. Could you name them?

PIZZATO:Yes. Eva, Lydia, Ellen, Ellen Mae and Robert, John Robert.

MOORE:So three girls and a boy.

PIZZATO:The girls, yeah.

MOORE:And what do they do now?

PIZZATO:Uh, the boy, he's working at the bank. One girl is a widow. Another one passed away in '85. And the youngest of the

daughters, she was working for the government for many, many years. Now she's retired, and they live in Washington State.

MOORE:Where do the other children live?

PIZZATO:Two is in Kemmerer, yeah.

MOORE:And so you lived, you said you were married fifty-five years.

PIZZATO:Yeah. He passed away in '76, my husband.

MOORE:In '76, yeah. When you look back at your life, did you ever want to go back to Italy?

PIZZATO:(she sighs) No.

MOORE:Did you think of your original decision? How do you think about your original decision? Was it good?

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:Were you homesick?

PIZZATO:You know, there's up and down in every, no matter where you are. You mean, homesick? No, because I made up my mind I, you know, I am that kind of person that I make the best of, that I know how, whatever, in what condition that I am in. I even got some of my friend here that they said,

"Every time that we come see you, we go home happy."

Because I always joke a little bit or something. And I always said, "If I can help anybody, I'm not going to hurt them." That's my, you know. So if a lot of them, they say how could you be that way, you're in this position, you know. I said, "I got my up and down just the same."

But, you know, I mean, but if I cry with you or tell you all my troubles, I still got it. You don't take it away. Why complaining all the time.

MOORE:Well, did you go back to Italy? You mentioned before that you had gone back to see your parents.

PIZZATO:Yes.

MOORE:And what was that like? How old were you when you went back for the first time?

PIZZATO:Forty-nine years old.

MOORE:And had things changed?

PIZZATO:At that time, not too much at that time, but after a lot changed, yeah. When I went back, I still went in in the house where I was born. When I went back the second time, my brother built a new home, which is beautiful and everything. But I'd rather see the other one, not for

him, you know, but because I was raised and everything.

Well, you know, at that time we don't have no water in the house, no bathrooms, no nothing. But you're raised that way, you get used to it. Yeah. You sure enjoy the difference, but yeah.

MOORE:Okay. So when you saw your mother and father, how did they think of you being in the United States?

PIZZATO:Oh, they were happy.

MOORE:They were happy. Did you ever send money back to your family to help them?

PIZZATO:They didn't need it.

MOORE:They didn't need it.

PIZZATO:No.

MOORE:So times got better.

PIZZATO:Yeah. When I could get the sum out of my father and mother, I signed the paper to my brothers, I said, "I'm satisfied what I got." And I said, "And I don't want it."

MOORE:In the time that you lived here, did you speak Italian to your husband, or English?

PIZZATO:Both of them.

MOORE:Both. How about to your children? What did you speak to your children?

PIZZATO:Well, I have to speak Italian, because I don't know how to talk English when I started getting bigger. If I learn more out of them when they started going to school, then I tried to help them. Yeah. It was, it was hard, though.

MOORE:Do you think of yourself as Italian or American now?

PIZZATO:Both.

MOORE:You think of yourself as both.

PIZZATO:Still, you don't lose what you have. You know, I mean, but if you tell me would you like to go live back where you was born, I'd say no. You know, when I went back that I was a widow, my brother said to me, he said, "If you come back here with your social security and stuff like that, you'll make a good living here." And I said, "And have all my family there? All my kids?" I said, "Thank you."

MOORE:And even if you didn't have your children, would you be tempted to go?

PIZZATO:Visiting, but not stay. And it's much better, now it's much better. I think, you know what, what I told some of my niece, when they said, "Oh," one of them said, "In America you got everything." You know what my answer was? I said, "You got America here. We had to make it our home." And I say, today I don't care how people say, I know that I'm an old lady, but if all the people do the way that we started when we come from the old country, it won't be too many welfare. They would manage to help themselves and do something, not expect somebody else to feed them. I'm sorry to say this, maybe somebody don't like it.

MOORE:Well, that's all right. But now, you've lived, now you're in your nineties, and you've lived a long life. What type of advice would you give young people if you could?

PIZZATO:My advice would be not to be greedy, to take, to help or whatever you can help, you know, and to take life for the way it comes. Don't take it too hard or nothing. You used to manage your life, your mind to be clear. That would be the main thing anyway.

MOORE:Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for giving us this interview, and for the opportunity to talk with you.

PIZZATO:It's just the same as, I had my children here last week.

In the summer they said, "Well, there's something that could have been, buy, replace it." You know, something new, this one, something that. And I said, "I like everything." But I said, "Even I don't need anybody else.

You know, I got the possibility to do it, if I wanted to do something." If I wanted to change the table, if I want to change something. But I said, "Why, at my age, if I'm satisfied whatever that I got and I'm contended, why? Why?" My thing is, if I don't spend it, I don't use it to the end, then fine, they can do what they want.

That's' my philosophy. I'm not greedy. You know, like somebody said, "Oh, well, this is mine, and I'm going to spend it. I'm not going to leave you this, I'm not going to do nothing." No, I don't live that way. Maybe you think I'm funny, but that's it.

MOORE:(she laughs) No. I'd like to thank you. We'll send you a copy of this for your family as well, of this interview.

PIZZATO:You mean, all the words that I say? (she laughs)

MOORE:This is Kate Moore in Rock Springs Wyoming, July 2, 1994.