

**KM-0060**

**MARY HARRIS**

**BIRTHDATE: NOVEMBER 20, 1910**

**INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 6, 1994**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 83**

**RUNNING TIME: 51:02**

**INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: VARANTOLA**

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: MELISSA PERLZWEIG**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**SLOVENIA, 1912**

**AGE: 2**

**SHIP:**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES:**

**SLOVENIA: SKOFA LOKA**

**UNITED STATES: PITTSBURGH, PA; RELIANCE, WY; GRASS  
CREEK, UT, BLAIRTOWN, WY; GUN, WY**

MOORE: Good morning. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service. Today is the sixth of July, 1994 and I'm in Rock Springs, Wyoming at the home of Mary Berlogar Harris who came from Slovenia in 1912 when she was two years old. Why don't you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth please?

HARRIS: Mary Berlogar Harris and I was born November the twentieth, 1910.

MOORE: How do you spell your maiden name, Berlogar?

HARRIS: B-E-R-L-O-G-A-R.

MOORE: And what was it before you came here?

HARRIS: B-R-L-G-A-R.

MOORE: And where were you born?

HARRIS: In Skofa Loka.

MOORE: Could you spell that please?

HARRIS: S-K-O-F-A L-O-K-A

MOORE: Alright. And what size town was Skofa Loka that your family came from?

HARRIS: It was a mining town.

MOORE: Mhmm. Um, what did the town look like? Do you know? Do you r—you were so small when you came. Did they ever describe it to you?

HARRIS: [interposed] No. They just said there – it was lot of vegetation, really beautiful place.

MOORE: Mhmm. What was your father's name?

HARRIS: Frank.

MOORE: Frank. What was his occupation?

HARRIS: A miner.

MOORE: And what did your father look like?

HARRIS: To me he was a good looking man. He had – he was on the blonde side – had big blue eyes, and he had a voice that he could really sing. It really carried.

MOORE: What about his personality and temperament?

HARRIS: He was strict.

MOORE: And – and how tall was he about? You said –

HARRIS: [interposed] H—he was – must've been five eleven.

MOORE: He was a strict with the children?

HARRIS: Yes.

MOORE: Was he strict in general?

HARRIS: Strict – oh he was the boss. He – we -- everything had to be in his way – done his way.

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

HARRIS: Uh, I know he was good to me. I don't remember getting any – I never was in trouble, I guess. But my brothers were (laughs).

MOORE: What was your mother's name?

HARRIS: Mary.

MOORE: Mary.

HARRIS: It's P-A—it's P-A- and – and over the A is a hyphen like ya know – like ya know – C-H-A-R.

MOORE: Alright, and what was her occupation if any?

HARRIS: Just a housewife.

MOORE: What did your mom look like?

HARRIS: She was on the heavy side – real heavy.

I

MOORE: How tall, about?

HARRIS: Short.

MOORE: How short?

HARRIS: Maybe – I don't know, let's see. She must've been five four maybe.

MOORE: What – what features did she have? What color hair and eyes?

HARRIS: She had nice features, I thought. Blue eyes and just fat – you know, just a fat face – round face.

MOORE: And what about her personality and temperament – your mom?

HARRIS: She was little strict too.

MOORE: And did she – was she social at all or--?

HARRIS: Yes, they were. She was more social than my dad. When my dad served wine – you know, we always had wine. They always made their own wine. Momma made the wine. He'd bring it out and people – we had company there -- he never drank with the people. He'd always go to the cellar and get his little drink of wine and then [recording skips]. I thought that was strange (laughs). Yeah.

MOORE: And would your mother drink wine with people?

HARRIS: No.

MOORE: No.

HARRIS: I have never seen her drink yet. Not with the company – we had it at the table. It was second wine, ya know.

MOORE: What about brothers and sisters? How many brothers and sisters?

HARRIS: I had two brothers.

MOORE: And were they younger?

HARRIS: Yeah I was the oldest and Harry was a year old when -- he came here with us, you know. And then I had a brother who lived in – I mean born in [not understood], Wyoming after we were here for a while.

MOORE: What were their names?

HARRIS: Frank and Harry.

MOORE: Frank and Harry.

HARRIS: Mhmm.

MOORE: What about – did they tell you anything about your house that you lived in – in Slovenia? No. [not understood].

HARRIS: [superposed] They – they never – uh uh.

MOORE: Alright um, what about religious life in the old country? Did they talk about that at all?

HARRIS: Yes, they did. They – see my dad had to work on the farm and he wasn't able – the priest would come and have like catechism, teach him religion. And if he didn't know his catechism they really – the priest really got s—you know, mean with him or slapped him around and --.

MOORE: And you said um – you mentioned earlier that your mother did farm work as well.

HARRIS: She did what?

MOORE: Farm work.

HARRIS: Yes, she did.

MOORE: In the fields?

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: So both your parents did agricultural work?

HARRIS: Yes see she – she helped the – the parents because they had no other help.

MOORE: So your grandparents on your mother's side—

HARRIS: [interposed] Uh huh – on the father's side.

MOORE: On the father's side—

HARRIS: [interposed] Uh huh.

MOORE: Not the mother's side.

HARRIS: No. My mother was born in what they call Tr—Trbovlje.

MOORE: And your father's family had a farm?

HARRIS: Mhmm.

MOORE: And that your father and your mother did work on that farm.

HARRIS: Yes and then of course when – after they were married my dad went to work in the mines, you know. And – but she would walk. I think she said it took her two or three hours to get there and then she'd spend – I don't know how many hours working and then come back to Skofa Loka have the meal – evening meal ready for my dad.

MOORE: Um, what about uh – did your parents tell any stories about the old country? You came at two years old so were there any s—[recording skips] about that?

HARRIS: Well I don't know. I – I don't think I was ever interested in any – their stories. You know but I wish I had've been.

MOORE: Well why did they come to the United States?

HARRIS: Just for a better life.

MOORE: Did they tell you ever that they were—

HARRIS: [interposed] Oh they said there was a free country and I think they took [recording skips] and the streets were lined with gold. Have you heard that?

MOORE: Mhmm, yeah. So they thought that before they came?

HARRIS: That's what they thought.

MOORE: And who told them this? Do you know?

HARRIS: I don't know, they didn't say.

MOORE: So they heard that this was a gla—land of plenty.

HARRIS: Yeah, that's right.

MOORE: And w—did they – your parents ever go hungry? Do you know – in the old country?

HARRIS: Oh yeah, my dad did. I – I heard my dad say that. And they would slaughter their animals in the fall, you know. And the best part of the meat would go to the priest – really.

MOORE: So they gave the best part to the priest?

HARRIS: And at Easter time when they did lot of baking, it went to the priest too.

MOORE: Mhmm. So who came first to the country [not understood]?

HARRIS: My dad.

MOORE: Did he come before your mom?

HARRIS: Yeah.

MOORE: And do you remember them saying what – how they came or when he came? What year?

HARRIS: Uh uh.

MOORE: So he came first—

HARRIS: [interposed] He—he was here about a year, I think.

MOORE: Mhmm. And where did he go?

HARRIS: He went to Pittsburgh.

MOORE: To Pittsburgh. To do what?

HARRIS: To mine – coal mine – coal, uh huh. Work in the mines.

MOORE: Do you know who his contact was in this country?

HARRIS: No, I sure don't know. I wonder sometimes if it was John Mrack[ph].

MOORE: Who's he?

HARRIS: 'Cause – he was um – he was their banker. 'Cause they didn't know their money, these men -- you know, that came. And my dad used to say I know I was cheated but what could I do?

MOORE: So he went to Pittsburgh and he had an American banker?

HARRIS: No is – John Mrack was the banker. He – he just t—took their money and said he's gonna put it in the bank for him and – and – but they didn't have what they thought they should've had.

MOORE: Did your father speak any English before he came here?

HARRIS: No.

MOORE: Did your mother speak any English?

HARRIS: No, uh uh.

MOORE: So he came for a year to Pittsburgh.

HARRIS: Mhmm.

MOORE: So when – what happened after that? Tell me how the [not understood].

HARRIS: [superposed] And – a—John Usey[ph] came with him. The two of them came together. You know they knew each other back there and they were buddy-buddies here. So – I don't know – they met John Mrack and he told

'em I'll be your banker n— so they give him n-- their whole paycheck and [not understood] keep some whatever they needed maybe. I don't – I don't know. And – and then when he – they got enough money to send for us you know, well then we came.

MOORE: And what – does your mother talk about leaving – anything about leaving – how she felt about leaving home? Did she want to come to the United States?

HARRIS: Well sure she did. She did – she wanted to be with my dad.

MOORE: Yeah.

HARRIS: And um, my grandmother (clears throat) – I guess she got attached to me and she begged him to leave me there and then later on you know they – if anything happened to her then they could send for me. And my dad says nope to bring – bring them both.

MOORE: And your brother was alive then?

HARRIS: Oh yeah. He was a year old when he came.

MOORE: So your mother came with two little ones.

HARRIS: Uh huh, me and my brother.

MOORE: Frank.

HARRIS: Mhmm – no he was Harry.

MOORE: Harry – Harry was older. Ok. So you and Harry came on the boat with her.

HARRIS: Yeah.

MOORE: Did she talk about getting ready to leave at all? Ever tell you any stories about leaving home?

HARRIS: Well um, it did break her heart to leave. You know, 'cause she hated to leave her – her folks back there. And she had two brothers and they were in the 1918 war. Both lost their lives. And my dad's brother – he had to go into the service and he was killed. But it was just lately that I found out that he was married and had a – a son. I'll show – I'll show you the pictures of him. I've got pictures of him. And he wrote me this letter and I wish I could have it Americanized but I don't know where to go from here.

MOORE: You can't have people here – you mean put it in English, you mean.

HARRIS: Yeah huh that's what I want.

MOORE: You can't ask somebody in the community here like Mary or Fred or somebody to translate it for you?

HARRIS: I don't know if Fred could do it.

MOORE: Yeah.

HARRIS: I could ask him, maybe – 'cause I see him all the time.

MOORE: Yeah. Well, ok so – so you came with your mom and – and with Harry.

HARRIS: Mhmm.

MOORE: Um, did -- your mom said it broke her heart because she was leaving behind her family.

HARRIS: Yeah.

MOORE: [superposed] Did she talk about the voyage at all? What it was like?

HARRIS: Yeah she -- we came steerage.

MOORE: Mhmm.

HARRIS: And um, she said that they brought food -- she thought it was what was left from ups--on top of the boat -- you know from the elite people, maybe.

MOORE: Mhmm. So leftover food?

HARRIS: That's what she thinks it was. She thought it could -- could've been, you know. 'Cause lot of times there wasn't meat. It was just vegetables and potatoes but -- but we made it I guess so I guess it was alright.

MOORE: [superposed] Did she mention it being a -- voyage conditions like what the seas were? Did she say anything about [not understood]?

HARRIS: Yeah, seasick.

MOORE: She was seasick -- did she say it was rough?

HARRIS: [superposed] Uh huh she -- she was seasick, yeah. And she counted the days on her fingers I guess (laughs). When she left, you know.

MOORE: Did she bring with her anything – did she take with her anything that was valuable—

HARRIS: [interposed] Trunks – she had trunks, uh huh. I – I still have one here.

MOORE: And what did she put in those trunks, do you know?

HARRIS: She put scarves, some linens, you know. And clothing mostly, I guess. I don't know.

MOORE: Do you have anything left from the family now? Do you have a bible or any religious artifacts?

HARRIS: Uh uh.

MOORE: No – just the trunk itself.

HARRIS: I have – I did have a rosary of hers.

MOORE: That she brought with her?

HARRIS: Uh huh. And I don't know if I have that yet or not. I think I do but [recording skips] it's in Slovenian so – but it's just a keepsake, you know.

MOORE: Now you – where was your mother bound for? Where were you – three of you going to at that point when you came off the boat?

HARRIS: Well we – we were detained there for customs, you know.

MOORE: At Ellis Island?

HARRIS: [superposed] For three – [not understood] three days.

MOORE: Did your mother ever talk about Ellis Island?

HARRIS: Well she just an island and she remembers seeing the Statue of Liberty, you know. She said that everybody hollered and were so glad that we were here – got here, you know.

MOORE: But then she got into Ellis Island and she was detained – for what reason?

HARRIS: Well they had – we had to have shots and everything, you know – before we could go into New York. But I don't know what boat we came on. I – I noticed some of them have mentioned the boat that they sailed here, you know. And then she was standing in line there like I seen on – on TV, you know. That's the way maybe we'd look too, you know. And a fellow went down with a cart of oranges and on an impulse she ran out there and lifted her apron up and start filling her apron with oranges and the man finally made her understand that she's gotta pay for it. She just dropped that apron and the oranges run down the incline you know like -- and the man after them (laughs) to retrieve them. I thought that was cute.

MOORE: And – and did she mention the inability to speak English was a problem at all?

HARRIS: Well later on for years after you know – I think in the late twenties she tried to – 'cause all the ladies she associated with spoke the Slovenian language, you know.

MOORE: So you were detained at Ellis Island. Did they feed you? Did she say anything about how you –

HARRIS: [interposed] Uh uh. She never said but I know she was hungry 'cause she run out for these oranges.

MOORE: Yeah. And um, did anybody come to the boat to get you or how did you get--  
?

HARRIS: We must've went on a – what kind of boat that they take you to the – to New York Harbor – I don't know.

MOORE: [superposed] Small boat, yeah, ok.

HARRIS: Just so many people, you know. For the – try to keep the families together.

MOORE: And you were bound for what city then by train? You went by train?

HARRIS: Just – uh huh. No, I don't know how we got to Phila—to Philadelphia.

MOORE: You went to Philadelphia?

HARRIS: Mhmm.

MOORE: And then what happened?

HARRIS: Well then we went into a building, she said. It was – I don't know how many stories and I don't know if she had to climb stairs or did they have elevators? I don't know. And when we got up to the room where my dad [not understood], you know – lived – the windows were facing another building that was real close together so she couldn't see. As she said – she swears we were up over top of the smoke stacks, you know (laughs) – that high up there.

MOORE: [superposed] Now what was your father doing in Philadelphia then?

HARRIS: He was working in the mines.

MOORE: But Pittsburgh and Philadelphia are far – they're far away.

HARRIS: Well, ok Pitts—isn't Pittsburgh in Philadelphia?

MOORE: No, no, no, no – they're two different cities.

HARRIS: Oh is it?

MOORE: Yeah.

HARRIS: How stupid of me, I didn't—

MOORE: [interposed] No, no, no – but it's ok so you think it was –

HARRIS: Pittsburgh.

MOORE: Pittsburgh was the name of the town. Ok so it was in Pittsburgh.

HARRIS: [superposed] Uh huh, Pittsburgh, yeah.

MOORE: Oh so he lived in – he had his own little room in that house [not understood].

HARRIS: [superposed] Uh huh, yeah, uh huh. And I guess he waited till we had more money to come into Wyoming.

MOORE: Mhmm. And so at what age did you – do you remember – you were so young. Do you remember any of this time at all in Pittsburgh?

HARRIS: [superposed] Yeah I – no. I don't – no I don't remember anything about Pittsburgh.

MOORE: Right.

HARRIS: And I don't remember anything about um – Reliance.

MOORE: And that's where you came to?

HARRIS: Yes, we came to reliance and she said there were two or three houses and some um – uh – places – [not understood] places where people lived. And tents – and she said no trees, no nothing. And the water was [not understood]. You know? And she said and the sand – the wind blew terrible up there. Ok then –

MOORE: So your father then went from Pittsburgh, took the family out to Reliance, Wyoming.

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: Because he was going to work where?

HARRIS: He worked in the Reliance Mines.

MOORE: The Reliance Mines. And where did you live then in Reliance? Did you have a house or--?

HARRIS: I don't know how we lived there. I don't know. And then – I know in the fall – I don't know what year – if we were out there a whole year or not – but in the fall we went to Grass Creek, Utah.

MOORE: For what reason?

HARRIS: To work in the mines.

MOORE: So you moved from Reliance to Grass Creek, Utah.

HARRIS: Mhmm. And we were there all winter – we were snowed in. Momma said that the snow must've been like five, six feet. And my dad had to shovel a path you know into the outhouse and the coal house. And I don't know – maybe somebody had to deliver groceries. We had no car or nothing. Somebody brought us groceries.

MOORE: How – what's your first memory – yourself, without your mother telling you – what do you remember first?

HARRIS: Well, first thing I remember is going to Grass Creek. And – but I don't remember um – the train ride but I do remember the sleigh ride.

MOORE: What sleigh ride?

HARRIS: [superposed] From the depot to the house where we were gonna live. I remember that.

MOORE: [not understood] sleigh ride and it was pulled by what?

HARRIS: Hor—horses.

MOORE: Horses.

HARRIS: And they gave – ‘cause it was cold, I remember. And they give us a robe and we covered up with the robe.

MOORE: How old could you have been then?

HARRIS: I must’ve been uh – four.

MOORE: And was Frank born yet?

HARRIS: No.

MOORE: No.

HARRIS: No. Just Harry and I were there.

MOORE: Uh huh.

HARRIS: And um – I don’t know how she entertained us but she said that she did roll a -- a throw rug in a ball – in a – wrapped it up and that was my doll. And then she said there’s a stray kitten that I was crazy about and she let the kitten stay with us.

MOORE: So where – do you remember the house in Grass Creek?

HARRIS: Uh huh. I just remember we couldn’t see out of the windows because of the snow – was covered up so – you know.

MOORE: And then from there where’d you go?

HARRIS: Well then we stayed there till that spring and momma says she can't take another winter there so we come back to Reliance. And that's where I started school.

MOORE: How did your mom react to these moves every time?

HARRIS: She cried – I don't know how many times – she cried day and night (laughs). My dad really was disgusted with her I think.

MOORE: Was she h—ever homesick?

HARRIS: Yes, she wanted to go home.

MOORE: And did your father want to go home?

HARRIS: No, he said you're stuck here now. He said you gotta stay (laughs). No money, he says -- to send you back. And they argued she said – 'bout what would she do, you know – if – or how could she exist there or something.

MOORE: Where, back home?

HARRIS: In – yeah – in – Yugoslavia – in Skofa Loka, yeah.

MOORE: And so – is there any point at which she got used to l—life here? Your mother?

HARRIS: Yeah. See after – years after she – after we moved to Blairtown -- from Reliance we went to Gun.

MOORE: What years was that? How old were you then?

HARRIS: That – well I don't know, it must've been – maybe in the twenties.

MOORE: You went to Gun, Wyoming?

HARRIS: Uh huh. And I'd already started school in Reliance.

MOORE: Back up a little bit. When you went to school in Reliance what language did you speak at home?

HARRIS: Slovenian.

MOORE: Did you know any English before you went to school?

HARRIS: No.

MOORE: And did – at school were there other kids in the same boat as you?

HARRIS: Yes. We all spoke Slovenian – every one of us.

MOORE: In Reliance. And how big was the school in Reliance – do you remember?

HARRIS: I don't know that either.

MOORE: Alright so, do you remember learning English?

HARRIS: Not – not that year that I started school. I had a friend there – Fannie Cobarch – that took me back and forth and I do remember when we had recess we went out – I was told this after – I didn't know at the time – I went home. I thought school was out (laughs).

MOORE: And do you remember – did anyone ever call you any names for being Slovenian as a child? Any bad names?

HARRIS: If they did I didn't know they were calling me names (laughs).

MOORE: Later in life did anybody ever –

HARRIS: [interposed] Well then Fannie start telling – giv—telling me s—a few words, you know. So I kind of remember those or grasped them you know and --.

MOORE: Do you remember what the first words were?

HARRIS: No, I don't know.

MOORE: How 'bout religious life in th—in this country? Did you – your parents go to church?

HARRIS: Um, my mother did but not my dad. Um, I had to go -- when we lived here in Blairtown we went to catechism. And Father Shiffler was the priest.

MOORE: Now did Father Shiffler help your family come to the United States at all?

HARRIS: Not that I know of. I don't remember the – them ever saying that.

MOORE: What do you know about Father Shiffler?

HARRIS: Well I don't know, I liked him.

MOORE: He was well – was he well-liked?

HARRIS: Yeah he was – he loved kids, you know. He really took to the children.

MOORE: We have heard that he helped a lot of families – Skofa Loka, for example.

HARRIS: Well maybe he did, I don't know. I don't know.

MOORE: Um, ok so you went to school in Reliance—

HARRIS: [interposed] Uh huh.

MOORE: And w—do you remember any teachers? Were teachers nice to you there?

HARRIS: Well I couldn't um – I didn't know how to tell 'em that – when nature called, you know. And momma says to Fannie -- she said there's got to be some way um -- that she should understand -- the teacher could understand that I had to leave, you know. So she told Fannie – she said for me to raise my hand and if she went this way I can't go but if sh—I just wet myself a lot, you know.

MOORE: Oh 'cause you –

HARRIS: [interposed] But it didn't – it didn't take long for me to – when Fannie told her – you know that I needed help that way.

MOORE: How did Fannie know English?

HARRIS: Well they lived here before.

MOORE: Ok so th—

HARRIS: [interposed] They were – th—they were one of the—

MOORE: [superposed] [not understood] couldn't even go to the bathroom because you didn't know how to tell the teacher.

HARRIS: Yeah I couldn't tell her, you know. So momma says well there's gotta be a way that we could communicate so Fannie told – asked her how and she says well just tell her to raise her hand – just put her elbow on the table, she said, and raise her hand and if she says that I can go well then I'd get out and go but I came back, you know. But when the first recess we had I thought that was over with – school was over – and I went home (laughs). Oh, isn't that awful?

MOORE: No it's—

HARRIS: (laughs)

MOORE: No, um – were your parents friends with -- you said – social with other Slovenians?

HARRIS: Mhmm.

MOORE: Were – did you have non-Slovenian friends?

HARRIS: I don't know that.

MOORE: Now what did your parents speak to each other?

HARRIS: They spoke Ame—Slovenian.

MOORE: Did they ever switch to American?

HARRIS: Not till – see my dad decided he would uh – Americanize all of us, you know. Go to um, what is it? He had to go to Green River I know. But there must've been an interpreter there to tell him what to study or –

MOORE: For citizenship you mean?

HARRIS: Yeah for citizenship. And that was in '24 – 1924, I remember that.

MOORE: Now when did your mother's attitude sort of change little bit. You said she cried day and night a lot and they – she wanted to go home.

HARRIS: She cried from – she cried when we got to Ellis Island 'cause she didn't see my dad no place. She didn't know that – I don't know what she thought or where she was going from Ellis Island, you know. But she thought her – my dad should – should've been there.

MOORE: Uh huh.

HARRIS: And then when we got to Pittsburgh she cried to live in that apartment house or whatever it was, you know. She couldn't see nothing. All she seen was the – the smokestacks, you know. And it was a dirty place, she said. It's – had I don't know – sm—it smelled bad too I guess. And then when we moved to Reliance she cried. And then when the – we went to Grass Creek, Utah it was in the fall and it was still little bit green. She liked it there but not the way that it snowed. Then we went back to Reliance – she said – and she cried again (laughs). Oh dear, my dad said something about her crying all the time. He said you're just gonna have to stop it (laughs).

MOORE: And how did that effect you as a child at all?

HARRIS: Diddn't bother me – I didn't know any better, you know. I was just with them and (laughs).

MOORE: Um, now tell me where you finally settled down. Was it in Blair?

HARRIS: In Blairtown.

MOORE: Blairtown.

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: And where is that in relation to Rocks Springs?

HARRIS: It's west of town.

MOORE: And – and what was that like there? What house did you live in?

HARRIS: Oh that was – that was nice for me, you know. I liked it 'cause I could talk American then. And can you believe it, I lost the language.

MOORE: You lost Slovenian?

HARRIS: I cannot s—I cannot carry on a conversation.

MOORE: When did that happen?

HARRIS: After I got married. See my mother died in '36 – 1936.

MOORE: What'd she die of? She was young.

HARRIS: Uh, high blood pressure and – and diabetes.

MOORE: And when did your dad die?

HARRIS: My dad died in -- seventy.

MOORE: Did he remarry?

HARRIS: No he was seventy one when he died but let's see, when did he die? I'm confused (laughs).

MOORE: That's alright but did he remarry?

HARRIS: (sighs) No.

MOORE: No. Ok so um, in Blairtown, tell me about the house you lived in there.

HARRIS: See the highway used to go through there. And going into Blairtown we lived on the right hand side of the road, third house.

MOORE: What was the address?

HARRIS: I don't know what the address would've been.

MOORE: Is the house still standing?

HARRIS: Yes.

MOORE: And what was the house made of?

HARRIS: Wood. And my dad was a -- pretty good with a hammer, you know.

MOORE: Ok hold on we'll take a break right here just for the tape. So what about the con—the house that you lived in – how big was it?

HARRIS: It was – it had high ceilings in – I remember. Just a kitchen and two bedrooms, I think. That's all – three room house.

MOORE: And did you have – where did you get the water in the house?

HARRIS: It was in the house but I don't know.

MOORE: [superposed] So you had indoor – indoor plumbing?

HARRIS: Yeah just – just water.

MOORE: Did you – how 'bout in terms of toilet facilities?

HARRIS: No, we had outhouse. Everybody had an outhouse.

MOORE: And what about lighting?

HARRIS: Well just one ceiling light with a forty what globe.

MOORE: So there was electricity?

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: How was your house heated?

HARRIS: With the stoves.

MOORE: What type of stoves were they?

HARRIS: Cold stoves.

MOORE: Cold stoves.

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: Um, did your parents ever try to learn English formally?

HARRIS: No.

MOORE: Did your brother learn Slovenian?

HARRIS: I – I don't think so. I think he must've – cause he – he was just a year younger than I and when he started get out with the kids you know I think he just picked up the American language.

MOORE: H—when was Har—um – was um – Frank born?

HARRIS: He was born – let's see I – I'm seven years older than he is – nineteen (pause). He was born in the twenties I know. I think we came to Blairtown in 1922.

MOORE: Was he born yet?

HARRIS: Yeah he was born. He was maybe a year old or two then.

MOORE: Mhmm. Um, what about church life? You went to catechism.

HARRIS: Mhmm.

MOORE: Did you go to church when you were in Blairtown?

HARRIS: [superposed] Yeah we went to a mass, too.

MOORE: Every Sunday?

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: Did your father go?

HARRIS: Sometimes, but he usually worked a lot, too, you know.

MOORE: W—what about before meals? Did you say any prayers before meals?

HARRIS: No, we didn't say that.

MOORE: How 'bout at night?

HARRIS: Yeah we had to say our prayers at night.

MOORE: Mhmm. Um, now did your parents ever discuss how they felt about coming to this country, later in life?

HARRIS: Well they were disappointed at first because of what they left behind. Because the – where they'd lived, you know, was so beautiful.

MOORE: And did they slowly come to feel that it was [not understood]?

HARRIS: [superposed] Yeah they – my dad bought a vineyard through the mail to one of the Slovenian papers. And it was up in the mountains and he thought, you know – when he got enough money or on retirement I guess – that they

would go back there and my mother said no she'd n—she has no desire to go. 'Cause her folks were gone, all her family was gone, you know.

MOORE: So your father had an idea about eventually going back?

HARRIS: Uh huh, he did have.

MOORE: And he bought a vineyard?

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: And what happened to that vineyard?

HARRIS: Well Hitler overran the place and he lost it.

MOORE: He lost it in the second world war.

HARRIS: Yeah.

MOORE: Finally when your father made a move to be able to go back, your mother didn't want to anymore.

HARRIS: Yeah that's right. She was – you know, used to being here then. 'Cause she – she did have a garden, they had water in the house, and everything you know. And she was good at that.

MOORE: W—did your mother cook any sp—particularly Slovenian foods?

HARRIS: Yes, she – she made petitsas and she made strudels – just what everybody else did, you know. Donuts – babka, she called 'em (laughs).

MOORE: And what was your favorite food as a child?

HARRIS: All of those. I had lettuce and potatoes (laughs) – pickled lettuce and potatoes. And – oh she had – my dad built a oven – outside oven. I can still see her – that beautiful bread she made. She had it raising on a – on a slab, you know and with a handle on it. And she'd throw the flour in the oven to test it and if it browned in such a time then it was ready to put the bread in there. And she had a big knife and she'd cut three slits through it. You know, round loaves of bread. And then when there was an epidemic –

MOORE: [interposed] Of what?

HARRIS: Well like, whooping cough or measles or whatever, you know. Um, then she would put garlic on it (laughs). And we had sausage all the time, you know.

MOORE: Homemade?

HARRIS: Yeah, homemade sausage. Homemade – home-cured hams. But they were –oh they were so salty, I didn't like 'em. And – and she had a few chickens she really made real good chicken soup which you can't today. I don't care how you doctor up that soup, it never tastes right, you know. With bouillon cubes and stuff, you know. And—

MOORE: Did she have any other animals? Where did you get the – the sausage from?

HARRIS: Well she – they would buy – there was a slaughterhouse up – up – up from us where we lived, you know way up, down the road somewhere. I don't know, about a mile maybe. And she got all her meat there.

MOORE: Now did you finish – w—what schooling did you have?

HARRIS: I went to the – I went about three months in the ninth grade.

MOORE: Mhmm. Then what'd you do?

HARRIS: Well see my mother believed in the men getting an education but not the girls. 'Cause I was gonna be married anyhow – that's what she said. I didn't need it, but I needed a job. I wished I had had some education.

MOORE: What job did you get then?

HARRIS: Just housework. Nanny – being a nanny, you know. Taking care of kids.

MOORE: And how did you meet your husband?

HARRIS: Uh, we – my – me and – my friend and I were walking down the road to go home to get ready for the um – Labor Day dance, and my husband and his friend – his friend knew my friend – so they were gonna give us a ride home but they didn't – they took us [not understood] (laughs) and then never got to the dance, either (laughs).

MOORE: Great story.

HARRIS: Yeah, that's the way it happened.

MOORE: And was he Slovenian?

HARRIS: No, he was American. And when – when I was going with him too an – I went with him about a year, you know and – and momma says one day she said is he gonna marry you? I said momma we don't talk about getting

married. She said I'm gonna tell him tonight. You either marry you or leave you alone (laughs).

MOORE: How old were you then?

HARRIS: Fifteen or sixteen (laughs). I was working – I went out to work when I was twelve.

MOORE: So you were working from twelve and sixteen already?

HARRIS: Yeah. See I was working for Grandma O'Donnell and going to school. And then in the summer she went to live with her family and then I was out of work.

MOORE: What was your favorite subject when you did study? What'd you like best?

HARRIS: Writing, and reading. I'm still a bookworm – I still like to read. And – I don't know I just used to love to write.

MOORE: W—well um – what happened then? Did your mom say that to the boy?

HARRIS: No, w--I met him on the highway. I – I wouldn't – I was afraid she might say something to him so (laughs).

MOORE: And so how long did you go with him before you got married?

HARRIS: About a year and a half or something like that.

MOORE: So how old were you when you were married?

HARRIS: Nineteen.

MOORE: Nineteen.

HARRIS: Uh huh.

MOORE: And his family [not understood]—

HARRIS: [interposed] But we fought. We—we had – you know we'd break up and then we'd go back together again (laughs). But where I worked for Jule[ph], you know – they were sheep people. (clears throat) And I worked in the winter for them but in the summer they would go up on their ranch, you know. So the year before I married I'd go in on the ranch with them. She said I could have a friend and we did go out there and it was really nice. And (clears throat) – well when George would come for me he would toot, you know -- and she said – and I would run out. She says that's poor etiquette, you can't do that.

MOORE: Who said that?

HARRIS: Mrs. Jule[ph]. She said the gentleman should come in and, you know and meet them and take me out. So couple of times he did that he wasn't used to that either.

MOORE: Now what background did he have?

HARRIS: Oh he come from a poor background.

MOORE: What about his ethnic background? You said he wasn't Slovenian. What background did he come from?

HARRIS: He was Welsh-Irish. His father was a – a policeman and he was killed. Th— this happened in 1915 and George was ten years old then. And – no five. He was – he was born in nineteen five, George was. And his dad died – yeah, ten years old. He was ten years old when his dad died. And his mother was left with five children to raise and she said a hundred and fifty dollars to her name. So she had to go out and make a living.

MOORE: Now did – did you have children? You and your husband?

HARRIS: Yes, we had seven.

MOORE: Seven kids?

HARRIS: Seven children.

MOORE: And could you name 'em all (laughs)?

HARRIS: Sure. Yeah George William was the first one – I don't know why I said William because William went good with George. I should've had him named George Coleman. That was his full name. Well he – he was premature and we had to keep him in a basket and not handle him any – you know, now today they'd had him in a incubator. And then we couldn't get nothing to agree with him. I wanted to nurse him and I couldn't. And we couldn't find anything to agree with him so Doctor Roe was the doctor and he said why don't you go up to this lady Mrs. Mrack – she had cows. It was up in – over the hill here, you know. And save the – let her save the m—milk from one jersey cow and he come out of it. That agreed with him. And his resistance was still low and here we had a whooping epidemic and he come runnin' over here and he says don't take your baby out, don't let nobody near it. How did he get it? He got whooping cough and it took him six – six and a half month old.

MOORE: So you lost your first baby?

HARRIS: Uh huh. Then we had Bob – Robert. He was Robert Coleman (laughs).  
Then we had Dick – Richard Wayne. And then I had uh – caesarean -- the  
next one. And then—

MOORE: what was the baby's name?.

HARRIS: Jim. George named him. He just named him Jimmy. And then I had  
Marilyn. She was born in '41 and then I had Ronnie in '43 and then I had  
Jeanie in '51.

MOORE: That's seven?

HARRIS: Uh huh. Ok then we lost Bob with cancer in '88. He was fifty six years old.

MOORE: Uh huh.

HARRIS: And then George was ailing too you know and he died in '90.

MOORE: Of what?

HARRIS: Oh I'm sorry, why do I do that?

MOORE: So George in '90 of – of what – what did he—

HARRIS: [interposed] He had um – heart problem.

MOORE: Mhmm.

HARRIS: Yeah, he had a heart problem.

MOORE: Is your husband still living?

HARRIS: No that was George.

MOORE: Oh George! I was thinking [not understood].

HARRIS: [superposed] Yeah, my husband. No, my husband died in '90.

MOORE: Now did you speak Slovenian to your children at all?

HARRIS: Yes, I said things to them and they – I know when we went to visit Bob in Texas his daughter said Grandma I'd like to learn something in Slovenian. I thought let's see what'll I say? I just said kaj je ura – what time is it? And then Bob hollered something out and I thought – oh yeah, that too! Let's see what was it he said? I forgot what he said now (laughs).

MOORE: So did your – did your mother speak to your children?

HARRIS: Slovenian. She said they should learn the language first before the American. But see they didn't want to do that 'cause they were – they had friends and you know, played with them and they all talked American and --.

MOORE: Did any of your children marry Slovenians?

HARRIS: Uh huh. Well Jeanie's married to – he's not Slovenian, he's Croatian. [not understood] And the rest of 'em were all American.

MOORE: When you look back now on your life, you came over here at two years old and your parents decision, what's your attitude about coming to the United

States? Was it a – what type of decision would you think it was? Good, bad, or what?

HARRIS: I think it was good from what I heard about how they lived back there. I really do.

MOORE: Did you ever think yourself of going there to live?

HARRIS: Yes, I sure – when my dad said about going to the vineyard, you know to sell it – he was gonna sell it – and they were discussing it when I went down to the house and I said Pa -- I called him Pa -- I said I'll go with ya! I said it and then I looked at my mother – I said if you keep my baby – that was Bob. And my dad says you got this money to go? No, I don't have money to go (laughs).

MOORE: So at one point you were ready to go?

HARRIS: I would – I would've went with him if he'd 'a went, you know. And I did want to go with my nephew but see my husband was ailing then and I didn't want to leave him.

MOORE: How do you identify yourself nationality-wise? What do you think of yourself as?

HARRIS: I don't know (laughs).

MOORE: Do you see yourself as an American?

HARRIS: Yeah, really.

MOORE: Do you think of yourself as a hyphenated American or--?

HARRIS: Well I don't know. We were s—we got our citizenship through my dad, you know. Golly, that man really studied. He really – but you know, he had other men there. Some of 'em could speak American like John Mrack – he kinda helped him too.

MOORE: Do you think your f—family had any regrets at all about coming?

HARRIS: I don't think so.

MOORE: And do you personally have any?

HARRIS: No I don't, uh uh.

MOORE: So basically you're pretty content with—

HARRIS: [interposed] I'm contented here, uh huh.

MOORE: Alright I'd like to thank you on behalf of—

HARRIS: [interposed] But I just wish I had my husband too, you know.

MOORE: Yeah.

HARRIS: And my son. Oh that really – he really suffered.

MOORE: Your husband?

HARRIS: No my son.

MOORE: Oh your son, yeah.

HARRIS: With that – with that cancer. Yes see he was the – um – superintendent of some company. Builders, you know? Building? And he remodeled lot of the schools.

MOORE: And what was your husband's vocation?

HARRIS: Vocation? He was a miner.

MOORE: He was a miner, too. So your husband was a miner. Did any of your children become miners?

HARRIS: R—Ronnie is. Ronnie's – works out of Sweetwater.

MOORE: So mining has stayed in the family.

HARRIS: Yes, uh huh. Ok now a [not understood] Danny and all these other kids – not David so much – here I go again. David's a grandson. He's with the – works with the [not understood]. And his brother Billy – he works at one of these mines you know out – just surface mining. And Dick – and Danny works at FMC. That's outside, they're not mining. They're not in the mines, you know.

MOORE: Mhmm.

HARRIS: And uh—

MOORE: What about life as miner? How would you describe it in your father's time?

HARRIS: In my father's time? He walked to Sweetwater over the hill in the mines to work, you know.

MOORE: How far was that?

HARRIS: Golly I bet it was two miles. And he would sweat in the mine and then when he'd get out and come walking in my mother had to thaw his clothes off on him so he – she could get 'em off.

MOORE: And d—was your father ever involved in any accidents?

HARRIS: Uh uh – no.

MOORE: So none of your family have had that mining experience?

HARRIS: [superposed] No, uh uh, no.

MOORE: What would you give advice to young people now? You lived a long life so—

HARRIS: I don't know (laughs). To get along – to meet everybody halfway. I think that's what I would do.

MOORE: Well I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for helping us and for telling us your story.

HARRIS: (laughs) I don't know was thinking e—when I talked to you yesterday – gee I hope I tell it good. I hope I tell it right. I don't know how I did but –

MOORE: Alright this is Kate Moore signing off from – from Rock Springs, Wyoming on July 6, 1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

END OF INTERVIEW