

KM-061

MARIA PETRA MENDIOLA LOISATE
BIRTH DATE: DECEMBER 19, 1903
INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 6, 1994
RUNNING TIME: 1:02:00
INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE
RECORDING ENGINEER: DR. KRISTA VARANTOLA
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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 11/1994
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 12/1994

SPAIN (BASQUE), 1920
AGE 17
PASSAGE ON "THE FRANCE"

Oral Historian's Note: A ticking clock is prominently heard throughout this recording. Mrs. Loisate's daughter is also present and occasionally interjects. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of the Oral History Project, 2/2/1994.

MOORE: Good afternoon. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service, and today is the 6th of July, 1994. I'm in Rock Springs, Wyoming at the home of Maria Petra Loisate, who came to the United States in 1920 when she was seventeen years old. Why don't you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth, please?

LOISATE: I am Maria Mendiola Loisate. I was born in 1903, on December 19th.

MOORE:December 19th.

LOISATE:1903.

MOORE:1903. And how do you spell your last name?

LOISATE:(?)

MOORE:M-E-N-D-I-O-L-A.

LOISATE:Yeah, Mendiola. (she places an accent on the last syllable)

MOORE:Mendiola. Okay. And where were you born?

LOISATE:Beraromda. It's a little village.

MOORE:And how do you spell that? (a clock is heard ticking and chiming in the background on the tape)

VOICE OFF MIKE: B-E-R-O-M-D-A.

LOISATE:Bera, R, Bera, Rom. You've got an R in it.

VOICE OFF MIKE:You don't want the R in it?

LOISATE:Yes.

MOORE:B-E . . .

LOISATE:Beraromda. Let's see how you . . .

MOORE:R-N . . .

VOICE OFF MIKE:D-O-A, D-A, D-A.

MOORE:D-A. Okay. And, a small village. What was the largest town nearby?

LOISATE:Ea.

MOORE:Ea. And how do you . . .

VOICE OFF MIKE:E-A.

MOORE:E-A, okay. And what region is that?

LOISATE:Well . . .

VOICE OFF MIKE:Is it Biscaya?

LOISATE:Biscaya.

MOORE:Biscaya, okay. And what did your small village look like?
Could you describe it?

LOISATE:Oh, gosh. (she laughs) It's something like Farson,
Wyoming.

MOORE:Like Farson. Why, was it very, was it . . .

LOISATE:More greenery and more, oh, I would say, not much better

activities for a little town.

MOORE:It was a little town. What was the main industry?

LOISATE:Yeah, one church.

MOORE:One church. And where was the main industry?

LOISATE:Industry, no industry, just the farms.

MOORE:Just agriculture, farming.

LOISATE:Agriculture.

MOORE:And the church, how big was the church?

LOISATE:Oh, a pretty good-sized church, yes, but I don't know how big.

MOORE:I mean, how many people do you think could fit in there?

LOISATE:Oh, well. That's all I can say. (she laughs) That's like regular size, but I can't say how many people there were there at that time.

MOORE:And you don't know the size in terms of the population of your town, do you?

LOISATE:No, no, no. I was too young to do that.

MOORE:That's okay. And what was your father's name?

LOISATE:Juan Pedro, John P.

MOORE:Yeah, Juan Pedro. Okay. And what was his occupation?

LOISATE:Rancher, or whatever.

MOORE:Rancher or farmer?

LOISATE:Yeah, farmer.

MOORE:And what did he look like? Could you describe his looks?

LOISATE:What he looked, did he look like? It's just like him.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Uh, bald.

LOISATE:He was kind of a small fellow with a moustache, bald head
(she laughs)

MOORE:Yeah. How tall would you say?

LOISATE:Oh, I would say, how tall you think Pete is?

VOICE OFF MIKE:Five-ten, five-eleven. About five-ten.

MOORE:Five foot ten, huh?

LOISATE:Yeah, no more than that. Five-nine, something like that.

MOORE:And about his personality and temperament?

LOISATE:Oh, well, a very good, nice man. I never seen him mad.

My father has been in the United States. She heard, and she three times Boise, Idaho.

MOORE:Boise, Idaho.

LOISATE:That area. Not like there, but in that area. So my (?), it was my mother.

MOORE:Yeah, yeah.

LOISATE:So, I was like ten years old, really, when I knew my father, really.

MOORE:I see.

LOISATE:Until I was seventeen.

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

LOISATE:Brigida, and her last name . . .

MOORE:Brigida.

LOISATE:Yeah. A Basque name.

MOORE:How does one spell that? B-R-Y . . .

LOISATE:Basque is Brigida, but they say it's Brigida in English.

MOORE:Okay, Brigida. And what was her maiden name, your mother's
maiden name?

LOISATE:Ikaran.

MOORE:What is that?

LOISATE:Ikaran.

MOORE:Ikara.

LOISATE:Ikaran. (she places an accent on the last syllable)

VOICE OFF MIKE:I-K-A-R-A-N.

MOORE:I-K-A-R-A-N. Ikaran. Okay. And what was your mother's
occupation?

LOISATE:Farmer.

MOORE:Farmer. And what were her chores around the house?

LOISATE:Oh, (she laughs) everything.

MOORE:She did the cooking?

LOISATE:Yeah. And take care of the animals.

MOORE:What did your mother look like?

LOISATE:Something like me.

MOORE:So she was, how tall was she about?

LOISATE:Little, like me.

MOORE:Little, meaning . . .

VOICE OFF MIKE:Five foot one.

MOORE:Five one or so.

LOISATE:I don't know if I'm five one, but I know she was my size.

MOORE:Okay, your size. And brown eyes.

LOISATE:A little chubby, yeah.

MOORE:A little chubby?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Yeah. And . . .

LOISATE:Pink cheeks, red cheeks, a farm woman, you know.

MOORE:And what color hair did she have?

LOISATE:Blondish.

MOORE:Blondish hair?

LOISATE:Well, brown, light brown.

MOORE:Light brown, okay.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Blondish brown.

MOORE:Blondish brown hair, okay. And what about your mom's
personality and temperament?

LOISATE:Oh, pretty good. She was a little bit (she laughs), that's
my (?), more stiffer than my dad, of course, with us, you
know.

MOORE:More strict, huh?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And what, is there a story about your mother that you associate
with your childhood? What do you remember about your
mother?

LOISATE:Oh, nothing special, just like any mothers.

MOORE:What about brothers and sisters?

LOISATE:Well, we were, I had one brother that grew up with me.

MOORE:What was his name?

LOISATE:Lucas.

MOORE:Lucas.

LOISATE:He died young, yeah. And we have a chores to do. With him we did all the chores we could, you know, young kids, no father around.

MOORE:And what about, any other brothers and sisters?

LOISATE:Well, they come later.

MOORE:When you came to this country, or . . .

LOISATE:No, I still got back there. I was ten years old. After that, I babysat.

MOORE:What about your younger brothers and sisters? What are their names?

LOISATE:Oh, let's see. My oldest sister is Miren. The other one is Julie, and my brother is Yosevio.

MOORE:Yosevio?

LOISATE:Yosevio.

MOORE:Yosevio, okay.

LOISATE:And my youngest sister, she passed away. Jacoba, that's
a Basque name, too. So I don't know . . .

MOORE:How do you say it?

VOICE OFF MIKE:Jacoba.

MOORE:Jacoba.

VOICE OFF MIKE:J-A-C-O-B-A.

MOORE:J-A-C-O-B-A. Jacoba.

LOISATE:That's supposed to Basque name, that is a Basque name.
(she laughs)

MOORE:Describe your house. What was your house like?

LOISATE:(she laughs) Well, my house is half is mission.

MOORE:Half of a mission.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Half of it was a church.

MOORE:Half of it was a church.

LOISATE:Yeah. And the other half was the living quarters.

MOORE:I see. How big was your, so what was it made of, the building
that you lived in? (a telephone rings)

LOISATE:Oh, you know.

MOORE:Hold on.

LOISATE:Old-timer's houses are rock.

MOORE:A rock?

LOISATE:I don't know what you would call.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Would it be asbestos? I don't mean asbestos. I mean,
uh . . .

LOISATE:Not asbestos, but plaster.

MOORE:Stucco.

LOISATE:Yeah, stucco houses.

MOORE:Yeah. And so, how many rooms were inside?

LOISATE:Only I think about four.

MOORE:Four rooms. And how was it heated?

LOISATE:Oh, dear, we didn't have no heat.

MOORE:No heat, okay. And what kind of lights did you have?

LOISATE:Oh, candles. Now it's modern electricity, but at that time
there wasn't any.

MOORE:Uh-huh. And what about water? Where did you get water?

LOISATE:We hauled it.

MOORE:You hauled the water. From where?

LOISATE:From the river. What do you call it?

MOORE:A well?

LOISATE:A well. And they had a special place for drinking water.
I don't know where you called it.

MOORE:How far was that from . . .

LOISATE:A spring.

MOORE:A spring. Yeah, how far was that from the house?

LOISATE:Oh, quite a ways. Maybe from here to the church.

MOORE:Uh-huh. I see. And so the church would be how far?

VOICE OFF MIKE:Two blocks, about.

MOORE:Two blocks, okay. And how about plumbing? Did you have
toilets inside or outside?

LOISATE:Outside, outside the house.

MOORE:Outside, okay. What kind of furniture did you have inside your house?

LOISATE:Oh, we had like this, oak.

MOORE:Oak? Table and chairs?

LOISATE:Okay. Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:Were they home-bought or were they made? Were they bought or were they home-made?

LOISATE:Well, I imagine they'd been bought, I suppose, I don't know. I couldn't say.

MOORE:What did you have in, did, you had four rooms. So you had a kitchen?

LOISATE:Yeah, a kitchen. We didn't have a dining room then. We just had bedrooms.

MOORE:Bedrooms, yeah. And so you had beds in the bedrooms.

LOISATE:Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:And it was oak, the type of furniture?

LOISATE:Yeah, yeah, dark oak.

MOORE:Dark oak. How about a garden? Did you have a garden?

LOISATE:Oh, yeah, yeah.

MOORE:And what did you grow? Do you remember?

LOISATE:Everything.

MOORE:Like, for example . . .

LOISATE:Everything, potatoes, tomatoes and beans, whatever come around.

MOORE:Did you keep animals?

LOISATE:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:What did you have as animals?

LOISATE:We had a (?) inside the house barn.

MOORE:The barn was inside . . .

LOISATE:Over there the animals used to be inside the house, and people lived upstairs.

MOORE:Right. So they were underneath the house, right. So part of your house was a mission church . . .

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And part was for the animals.

LOISATE:Yeah. We only had two cows, uh, two cows.

MOORE:Anything else?

LOISATE:No. Chickens, Mother had a few chickens. That's about all the animals.

MOORE:Now, who did the cooking? Did anyone else live in the building? Sorry. Did your grandparents live with you?

LOISATE:No, I never knew my grandparents.

MOORE:Okay. And who did the cooking in the family?

LOISATE:Well, whoever was handy, I guess. (she laughs) My mother, mother, mother. I helped her with the dishes, yes. We had to go to the pond and do the dishes.

MOORE:To the pond?

LOISATE:Uh-huh.

MOORE:So you did your dishes out in the pond?

LOISATE:Yeah. And clean water, you know. So we can use water, bring in the bucket so we can use for certain things in the house, so that we won't use it all up. So many trips to the pond, it's quite a ways to the pond, too.

MOORE:Where was that pond? Let's say, how far?

LOISATE:Oh, maybe like about that park, but uphill.

MOORE:Say three hundred meters, or three hundred yards or something?

LOISATE:I don't know how long, but I think . . .

VOICE OFF MIKE:Like the park, Mom.

LOISATE:This park over there.

VOICE OFF MIKE:To the back door.

LOISATE:Yeah. But that wasn't level. We had to go up.

MOORE:Up hill to the pond, yeah. But it's good when you come back.

LOISATE:So that's why we like to take the dirty dishes, put it in
the bucket and go over there and take the water out.

MOORE:And what was your favorite food?

LOISATE:(she laughs) Well, I don't know if you can say bacalao.

MOORE:Bacalao.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Bacalao is B-A-C-A-L-A-O.

MOORE:B-A-C-A-L-A-O. What is it?

LOISATE:Codfish.

MOORE:Catfish?

LOISATE:Codfish.

MOORE:Oh, codfish, codfish.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Dried and salted.

MOORE:Dried and salted codfish.

LOISATE:Yes, yes.

MOORE:Oh. And tell me about the kitchen. What was in that kitchen that you had? What do you remember?

LOISATE:We had an open fire. And they had a hood like that.

MOORE:Had a hood over the fire.

LOISATE:Made of I don't know what, I can't tell you. And then they had shelves to put things you needed for cooking, salt and stuff like that, on top of there. And then they had an open cupboard for the dishes. We didn't have no linoleum, no.

MOORE:What type of flooring did you have?

LOISATE:You know how Indians have it?

MOORE:Yes.

LOISATE:That's it.

MOORE:Uh-huh. And then you had, okay, so you had an open stove,
but you had this table.

LOISATE:Yeah, we had a table, yeah, an oak table. I can remember
that.

MOORE:And how did you eat your meals when you were a child? Did
you eat them . . .

LOISATE:No, we had a little casserole type of things.

MOORE:And did you all eat together, or separately?

LOISATE:Yeah, we all ate together.

MOORE:How many times a day did you eat?

LOISATE:Oh, usually (she laughs) two times, I know. I don't know
about a third time, we can eat breakfast.

MOORE:As a child, did you ever go hungry at home?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:No, because you had . . .

LOISATE:I never knew what was hungry, I never knew what was poor.
That's one thing I don't know. We all had what we needed,
very much so.

MOORE:And what about, where was the church?

LOISATE:Oh, the church was quite a ways, too.

MOORE:But the church that you were attached to, what church was that?

LOISATE:Oh, that's, only once a year they would have festivities
in there.

MOORE:Oh, I see.

LOISATE:And that's on August 24th. They call it San Bartolome.

MOORE:Uh-huh.

VOICE OFF MIKE:S-A-N, that's one word.

MOORE:San, S-A-N.

VOICE OFF MIKE:B-A-R-T-O-M-E. San Bartolome.

MOORE:San Bartolome. St. Bartholomew's.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Yeah. On August 24th. And what happened then?

LOISATE:Big festivities. They had a place where they can do their dances and serve the beverage. And they had a Mass, about like ten o'clock in the morning. The people come from everywhere.

MOORE:So it was a big feast.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And what type of food did they eat there?

LOISATE:Oh, I imagine they had a lot of kind of foods. Mostly fish over there, you know. Not much, in my time there wasn't too much with the meat, because the lands is pretty small, you know.

MOORE:What about dances? What dances did they dance?

LOISATE:The box dances.

MOORE:The box dances. What name of box dance?

LOISATE:Jota.

MOORE:Jota.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Jota. J-O-T-A.

MOORE:J-O-T-A.

LOISATE:And the waltz.

MOORE:The waltz.

LOISATE:Yeah. And foxtrot, that time. That's what I know about
it.

MOORE:Were you very, was your family religious?

LOISATE:Oh, yes. My folks, they were very religious people.

MOORE:How often did they attend church?

LOISATE:Well, farmers usually Sundays.

MOORE:Sundays.

LOISATE:Other days there worked, you know, they don't have the time
to go to church, but Sundays everybody, you don't work
Sundays everybody goes to church, you know. They take
the day off for whatever they want to do.

MOORE:And did you have a prayer before your meals? Did you say grace?

LOISATE:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:And did you say prayers before you went to sleep?

LOISATE:Oh, we had to say our prayers all right, you even if we (?)
to. (they laugh)

MOORE:And how far was the church from your house?

LOISATE:Oh, gosh, how far? Well, it was quite a ways, but I could
not . . .

MOORE:If you walked, how long in minutes?

LOISATE:Probably well, like five miles?

MOORE:Five . . .

LOISATE:A little further than five miles. Do you know where
Formido[ph] is? Maybe you . . .

VOICE OFF MIKE:Do you know where Formido[ph] is? How far is
Formido[ph] from here?

LOISATE:Like the Holiday Inn, I guess, far as Holiday Inn.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Maybe two miles.

MOORE:Two miles, okay. So two miles to the church.

LOISATE:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:That's quite a walk, huh?

LOISATE:Oh, yes. It doesn't matter shine or rainy.

MOORE:Uh-huh. Okay. So you said that you didn't know your

grandparents.

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:Neither your father's nor your mother's.

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:Okay. Who are you particularly close to in the family? What family member or person . . .

LOISATE:My aunt.

MOORE:Which aunt?

LOISATE:My mother's sister.

MOORE:And what was her name?

LOISATE:She lived far away, too. I don't know how far.

(she laughs) From us to (?). I don't know how far.

VOICE OFF MIKE:I don't know either.

MOORE:So what was your aunt's name?

LOISATE:Uh, Maryanne.

MOORE:Maryanne. And you were closest to her?

LOISATE:Yeah. I would go visit her a lot walking. It would take

me about two or three hours.

MOORE:To go and see her.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And did she favor you, too?

LOISATE:Yeah. Yeah, we were a very close family.

MOORE:Any other family members that your, how about your brother?
Who was he close to?

LOISATE:Oh, I don't know. (she laughs) My brother, I don't know
if he was close to anybody at all. (she laughs)

MOORE:Do you have any stories about any of your family members or
anything of your childhood that you remember that you could
tell?

LOISATE:I had two cousins, they were bicyclers. And they died very
young because they got this disease tuberculosis.

MOORE:Pardon?

VOICE OFF MIKE:Tuberculosis.

MOORE:Tuberculosis, oh.

LOISATE:They were my age, one of them, and the other a little younger.

Both of them died right after I started to come to the United States.

MOORE: So there was an epidemic of tuberculosis.

LOISATE: Well, they must have had something, or they bicycle all around the world. At that time they was famous for bicycling, you know. So, I don't have too much because (she laughs) like I said, we were young people living down around by themselves, not parts of the country that time.

MOORE: Uh-huh. Now, tell me about what language did you speak at home?

LOISATE: Basque.

MOORE: Did you speak any other language anywhere else?

LOISATE: Spanish.

MOORE: Spanish. To whom did you speak?

LOISATE: Oh, to friends.

MOORE: To friends. Where, did you ever suffer any persecution for speaking Basque.

LOISATE: No. By that time we were free. I went to Basque school.

MOORE:You went to Basque school.

LOISATE:Yes, when I was a kid. When my father come on Spain from this country, he didn't like the idea of me going to Basque school, so he put me this town Ea, which I had to walk a couple hours also to go to school to learn Spanish.

MOORE:Now, was there any difference between Spanish and Basque for prestige or . . .

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:At that time, no.

LOISATE:No, at that time there wasn't anything like that.

MOORE:Did both parents speak Spanish, too?

LOISATE:No. My mother didn't.

MOORE:Your father did.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:What about school life now? What was the Basque school like? Where was that school that you went to?

LOISATE:Well, I went to the same town I was going to school, the Basque school. There was a man teacher. We didn't know

any better at that time.

MOORE:How big was the school? How many . . .

LOISATE:Not very big. I don't know. It might have had a hundred people, probably. Not very much.

MOORE:And how far from home was the Basque school?

LOISATE:Oh, maybe an hour, an hour walk.

MOORE:An hour walk.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And what was your favorite subject?

LOISATE:Oh, God, I don't know. (she laughs) I didn't have any favorites at all. I just didn't want to go to school. That was it. (they laugh)

MOORE:And did you learn any English prior to coming to the United States?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:Okay. What was your favorite holiday?

LOISATE:Well, the end of this month was San Ignasio.

MOORE:St. Ignatius.

LOISATE:So there was this festivities in some other town. You know, we like to go to that festivities, a bunch of us. But that was my (?), because we get out of the house and go somewhere else. (she laughs)

MOORE:And what did you do at the festivities?

LOISATE:Dance, and tango. We learned how to waltz.

MOORE:How old were you then?

LOISATE:Oh, maybe like fifteen.

MOORE:As a little girl what did you do for fun and for entertainment?

LOISATE:We didn't have any fun, God. (they laugh) I never knew I had any fun at all. (they laugh) I worked bringing (?) in, and washing dishes. I used to work taking care of kids. (she laughs)

MOORE:Yeah, you had a lot of work to do.

LOISATE:Yes. Because my mom and dad go to the fields and work, and I was supposed to hold this, you know, take care of the kids and do the chores besides.

MOORE:Now, what was the difference between the Basque school that

you went to and the one to learn Spanish.

LOISATE:Not very much, only language.

MOORE:Only language. The same size?

LOISATE:Also they teach you how to do the handwork to the girls.

MOORE:Where?

LOISATE:In the Spanish school.

MOORE:Teach handwork to girls.

LOISATE:Uh-huh.

MOORE:Were you taught by . . .

LOISATE:A woman.

MOORE:A woman in the Spanish school, and a man in the Basque school?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Were they nuns in the Spanish school?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:No.

LOISATE:I didn't go nun's school. That's special, if you go to nun's

school.

MOORE:There's a special school if you went to the, yeah, convent,
yeah, okay.

LOISATE:But there wasn't many in that area. But I went to Spanish
school and they teach you how to embroidery, to sew, and
things like that, for the womans. For the mens, it was
math and stuff like that. Because that time of womans,
there were no work in any offices or anything like that.
So house things, the woman has to know.

MOORE:Yes, uh-huh.

LOISATE:That's what I was taught.

MOORE:And how long did you go, then, to that school?

LOISATE:(she laughs) Not very long, until the little ones started
coming around.

MOORE:So how old were you when your next brother or sister came?

LOISATE:Oh, I think I was twelve.

MOORE:So at twelve you stayed at home to take care of the children.

LOISATE:In (?), no more school for me.

MOORE:And tell me, how is it that you came to this country? Who came first?

LOISATE:My sister. My dad's brother, his son and daughter. We were, we went in back home. So my step-sister, my dad was married twice. The first women died, so he came America three times. I don't know how many times each year, what year did he bring each time. But, anyway, this last trip he brought my brother, big brother, and step-sister to the United States, to Boise, Idaho. Well, he was shepherd, you see. He herded sheep. (a kitten or cat can be heard mewng throughtout)

MOORE:He was a shepherd here.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:In Boise, Idaho.

LOISATE:But he put my sister in some house to learn English. And my brother also he sent him to the school.

MOORE:That's the brother that you lived with at home?

LOISATE:Yeah. Well, he was older than me. So he went to America.

MOORE:And what did your, your father was a shepherd, and what did your brother do?

LOISATE:My brother, in here I don't know. For a while I guess he went to school.

MOORE:Well, how did your father get here? Who paid for his trip?

LOISATE:Oh, he, I guess they sent for the shepherders, you know.

MOORE:They recruited them?

LOISATE:Recruited them, so many. That's how I imagine he came.

MOORE:Now, do you remember your father leaving for the first time?

LOISATE:No, no.

MOORE:What did your mother tell you about your father when he was gone?

LOISATE:Oh, well. (she laughs) I don't think she had any chance to tell us too much. We had to keep it up with the work. I don't remember her telling me anything.

MOORE:Now, how did you get here and your mother get here?

LOISATE:Well, my stepsister finally got married for her old age.

She, from that house she got put in, she didn't like it because she came, I guess she got, I don't know, money, or what, but she moved to some Basque upperly house. And

she was my sister, my step-sister was like thirty something years old when she got married, so they moved, her and her husband moved to Rock Springs, Wyoming, and they put a motel. No dinners, just bedrooms.

VOICE OFF MIKE:A hotel.

MOORE:Yeah, a hotel, yeah. They started a hotel.

LOISATE:Yeah. So she needed a babysitter. She was going to have a child. She needed a babysitter, I guess. Like that, I didn't know nothing about it. I feel like a cow that goes to the market, you know. (she laughs)

MOORE:Like a cattle that goes to the market?

LOISATE:Yeah, I didn't know what I was going to see. I knew I was coming to my sister, but that's all I know. So she was going to have a baby, she needed a babysitter. And, of course, domestic work in her house, so that's how I got here.

MOORE:Did you come alone?

LOISATE:Well, to Rock Spring, yes.

MOORE:Did your mother come with you?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:You came, then, and . . .

LOISATE:There was men, there were, came to Spain from Boise, from Boise, Idaho. So we were (?) also, but he were, what you call those guys there?

MOORE:An agent?

LOISATE:An agent, or something like that. And he's been here before, so like that he put him to look after me. So that's how, that's how I got to Rock Spring. I was the first one to step down. They made it three days on the train from New York.

MOORE:Let's back up. Where did you leave from, the boat?

LOISATE:Oh, France.

MOORE:From France. How did you get from home to France?

LOISATE:Oh, train.

MOORE:How did you get from home to the train?

LOISATE:In a carriage.

MOORE:In a carriage?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Horse and carriage?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:What did you carry with you? Do you remember packing?

LOISATE:I had a little suitcase.

MOORE:And what did you put in the suitcase?

LOISATE:(she laughs) Clothes.

MOORE:Clothes?

LOISATE:Few clothes, yeah.

MOORE:Anything special from home?

LOISATE:No, nothing.

MOORE:Any food?

LOISATE:No. Lemons, in case you get carsick or something to chew
on. That's about all I had.

MOORE:And so did they, do you remember leaving home, then?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:What was your mother's reaction to this?

LOISATE:Any mother, you know how she feels.

MOORE:Okay. So you went by horse and carriage to the train, huh?

LOISATE:Yes.

MOORE:And what about the train trip? How long was that?

LOISATE:Oh, it was quite long, a couple days, I think, we did, from
about, we take a train, it was the name of Bilbao.

MOORE:Bilbao, yeah.

LOISATE:You see it there.

MOORE:Yeah, I know about Bilbao. Just hold on for a second. We're
going to switch the tape now on the other machine. Hold
on for a second. You're doing a good job. Is this hard?
No. (Mrs. Loisate laughs)

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

MOORE:We were talking about your trip here from about Bilbao. The
question I had, did you have a medical examination before
you came?

LOISATE:Yes. Oh, yes, I had to be vaccinated.

MOORE:You were vaccinated in your home town?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Before you came?

LOISATE:Uh-huh.

MOORE:What else did they do? Did they give you a full examination?

LOISATE:Yes.

MOORE:So you had those papers with you.

LOISATE:I imagine, I guess. I had a passport.

MOORE:How did you get that passport? Where did you get it?

LOISATE:Bilbao, at consul.

MOORE:So you had gone, did you go to get it?

LOISATE:Yeah, me and my father.

MOORE:You went with your father to get the passport. All right.

LOISATE:My father was (?) an educated man.

MOORE:Uh-huh.

LOISATE:He could talk English. He could talk Basque. He could talk

Spanish.

MOORE:So you went by your, so you're on the train to Bilbao.

LOISATE:From Bilbao, Hendaye, and we entered in France. Hendaye is the line. So we went to Burguouse[ph] and I take a boat. Uh, what do you call? My boat is Havre. No, I got into that boat in Havre, but the boat's name was Le France.

MOORE:Le France.

LOISATE:Le France.

MOORE:Le France. Okay. And where did you leave? What was the port you left from? What do they call it?

LOISATE:Havre, Havre.

MOORE:Havre?

VOICE OFF MIKE:Le Havre.

MOORE:Oh, yeah, Havre, that's right. Yes, good, I know where it is, okay. So you went, you got on the boat. Did you have to wait for the boat when you went?

LOISATE:Uh, a little bit, not very much.

MOORE:And what was your impression about the train? Well, how was

the train trip. It's a long one.

LOISATE:Yeah, it was long, but being a bunch of crazy kids together,
I never thought very much about it. (she laughs)

MOORE:Did you sleep in a sleeping berth, then, overnight, or did
you . . .

LOISATE:In our seats.

MOORE:You were in the seats the whole time. Okay. Now, the boat,
Le France, the boat that you went on, what class were you
on?

LOISATE:Second class.

MOORE:You were second class.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Did you have your own cabin?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Who did you share, whom did you share a cabin with?

LOISATE:Some other woman.

MOORE:Uh-huh.

LOISATE:But I don't remember, I imagine it was some friends, I don't have no idea who it was.

MOORE:And what was the food like on the boat?

LOISATE:Oh, pretty good, yeah.

MOORE:And was it a rough or a smooth voyage? How was the voyage going across the ocean?

LOISATE:It wasn't very bad. I never got sick. A lot of people did, but I didn't.

MOORE:Was there anything on the boat that you saw for the first time?

LOISATE:Well, I seen, well, water going up and they were telling us there were whales.

MOORE:There were whales.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Did you see a whale?

LOISATE:I didn't see it, but I see water going out of the ocean.

MOORE:Oh, on the spout.

LOISATE:The spout.

MOORE:Yeah, so you saw the whales . . .

LOISATE:And the fellows used to say at the dinner table, there were whales. That I remember.

MOORE:And anything else about the boat trip you remember?

LOISATE:No. Well, I got a really good boat trip. I never got sick or anything. (she laughs) Alas, it was a very long trip. Take us almost two weeks, I think.

MOORE:Yeah. Do you remember seeing, what's the first thing you saw as you came in, then, to New York?

LOISATE:Well, I, well, when they come to New, I think we got into them late in the evening, and I couldn't say too much about it because I was just like that, you know, like sheep goes in the chute. The doctors are waiting for people to examine, you know.

MOORE:So do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And what was the atmosphere on the boat, then?

LOISATE:I didn't know what that was.

MOORE:You didn't know what the Statue . . .

LOISATE:Oops! (referring to the microphone)

MOORE:Hold on, it's okay. We'll fix this up here. (referring to the microphone) You didn't know what the Statue of Liberty was?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:How about, do you remember seeing the New York skyline?

LOISATE:Well, I seen a lot of lights and everything, but (she laughs) we were glad to get it in the land, somewhere.

MOORE:Yeah. And so what do you remember from this? Where did the boat go that you were on?

LOISATE:Well, it stopped and berthed there. I don't know what you call it, the place.

MOORE:Ellis Island?

LOISATE:Ellis Island, yeah.

MOORE:Did you get, how did you get from the boat to Ellis Island, then? Do you remember? You said you were like sheep.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:But, like, how were you like sheep?

LOISATE:Well, they bring you into the house like this,
(she gestures) in the building, and they got chutes and
everything, you know.

MOORE:Oh, the chutes inside.

LOISATE:Yeah, inside.

MOORE:Do you remember if a little boat come and take you from the
big boat? Do you remember?

LOISATE:I don't remember that.

MOORE:Okay. So you may have come right into Ellis Island.

LOISATE:A bridge, I think, was the thing.

MOORE:A bridge, okay. And at any time did you think you might be
sent back?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:No. So you had no fear.

LOISATE:No. I never had any fear whatsoever.

MOORE:All right. Now, what about not speaking English? How did
you communicate?

LOISATE:With a man, a man that was in charge of me.

MOORE:Okay. So he spoke English and he interpreted for you.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And did, how long were you on Ellis Island?

LOISATE:Not very long.

MOORE:You had an examination.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:What did they look for?

LOISATE:Doctors, the doctor was waiting for you. You can't get out
nowhere unless you see that doctor.

MOORE:Uh-huh. And what did, was the doctor looking for?

LOISATE:The first thing he looked at me is eyes.

MOORE:Yeah, the eyes. And did they do, what did they do to your
eyes?

LOISATE:Nothing.

MOORE:Nothing. Okay.

LOISATE:Just look there.

MOORE:And what else did they do?

LOISATE:They take my pulse. That's it.

MOORE:And then you just went through.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:You didn't stay overnight.

LOISATE:No, nothing.

MOORE:Very quick, okay. So you were going there, to . . .

LOISATE:They had the Basque man, they call him Valentin Ayeri. He
had a little hotel that he put up all the Basque people
come through there, and that's where I went.

MOORE:You went to the Basque hotel.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Do you remember where that Basque hotel was?

LOISATE:No. I wish I knew, but I don't.

MOORE:That's okay. So you stayed overnight in the hotel.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And what was the hotel like? Do you remember?

LOISATE:The hotel was really nice. Got to the hotel, I went to the second, well, the room was on the second floor.

MOORE:Yeah.

LOISATE:And all I could see is the room was pretty good. We had a water to you wash your face right in the room.

MOORE:Running water?

LOISATE:Yeah. And they have a bathroom on the side.

MOORE:Uh-huh. And what about the food? Do you remember the food in the hotel?

LOISATE:They had us put in a big dining room, a lot of people.

MOORE:Now, you stayed one night, or how long in that?

LOISATE:Just one night.

MOORE:One night. And then what happened?

LOISATE:Each one of us, we had to, they fixed a little basket for us for the road.

MOORE:Uh-huh.

LOISATE:We made about three, three days.

MOORE:From New York to . . .

LOISATE:New York to, for me three days trips.

MOORE:And did you stop, did you have to change trains anywhere?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:You went straight.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:Was there anything on that train that you never seen before?

LOISATE:No, I never did. (she laughs) Anywhere, from my seat
to the bathroom. That's about all I knew.

MOORE:And you sat up for three days and three nights.

LOISATE:Yes.

MOORE:Did you speak back to other people?

LOISATE:Oh, ourselves, yes.

MOORE:But when the porter came by, what did you do?

LOISATE:I didn't say nothing. That man, he did all the talking.

MOORE:Oh, the man that was the interpreter did all the talking.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And what about the scenery and things? What was your . . .

LOISATE:Oh, I liked the scenery, yeah.

MOORE:How about when you got to Rock Springs?

LOISATE:Oh, well, gracious, I thought. I come to end of the world.

MOORE:(she laughs) Why?

LOISATE:Because I was used to all greenery and everything, and I
get here, nothing. Today it looks day and night
difference.

MOORE:Then, what was it then like?

LOISATE:Oh, all dry and no trees and nothing, no paved sidewalks
or main streets, and stuff like that.

MOORE:And was it mostly sandy, then?

LOISATE:(she laughs) I don't know if it was sandy, but I didn't
like the looks of it.

MOORE:So what was, your first impression was negative about . . .

LOISATE:Yeah, very negative.

MOORE:When you got to the train station, what did you do then?

LOISATE:Well . . .

MOORE:Where was your sister?

LOISATE:My sister, she didn't expect me till the next day. So something got all mixed up. So I was in the depot, and here comes an Italian man. I can just see it today, too. He was a little bit crippled up, but he could talk Spanish. I don't know how he thought I was a Spanish, mind you, but the first thing he says to me, if I was lost. And I says, so the next question it was where I was supposed to go. So I told him the place. So he says, "Okay. Follow me. I'll take you." And we, it wasn't very far from the depot to my sister's place. She had it there, a motel. So we just crossed the tracks. There was an underpass there. We just walked, and my sister was all shook up. I mean, because she didn't expect me to . . .

MOORE:All shook up, she was surprised.

LOISATE:Yeah. She didn't expect me yet. And then I changed, well, I was smaller when she left, and when I was grown up I changed looks, I guess. So she didn't believe me I was

the same person.

MOORE:Now, what was the house like that you went to? What was her, she ran a hotel, but what was her house, where she lived, like?

LOISATE:She lives in bottom part.

MOORE:The bottom part. How big?

LOISATE:She rent rooms on the second.

MOORE:And how big was her living quarters then?

LOISATE:Oh, we had three bedrooms and a kitchen and dining room.

MOORE:And what did, was it difficult to adjust to life here?

LOISATE:Oh, yes.

MOORE:What was the hardest part?

LOISATE:For me? Not able to speak.

MOORE:How did you learn English then?

LOISATE:Well, I had a friend that was married to Basque. So she is the one who taught me the most. And then pretty soon when I got married, from my children.

MOORE:So you babysat for your sister. And then what happened in your life?

LOISATE:Oh, in my life I got married as a young girl.

MOORE:How did you meet him?

LOISATE:Over here in Rock Springs.

MOORE:Where?

LOISATE:In the rooming house.

MOORE:At the rooming house.

LOISATE:When they found out there was a Basque girl in town, everybody was coming like sheeps, you know.

MOORE:(she laughs) And tell me about your husband, then. What was his name, your husband?

LOISATE:Angel.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Angel.

LOISATE:Angel.

VOICE OFF MIKE:Angel. A-N-J-E-L.

MOORE:A-N-J-E-L. Uh-huh. And when you met him, did you think he

was going to be your husband right away?

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:No?

LOISATE:No. He was bartender. There were a lot of Basque around, my goodness. They all wanted to dance. My sister won't let me dance because I had work to do. (they laugh) And I had to do some sewing for the guys. The poor guys, you know, bachelors, they didn't have anybody to do anything. Oh, boy, I'll tell you.

MOORE:So how long before you . . .

LOISATE:Somebody pay me pass back, I would have go right away.

MOORE:You didn't like it here at the beginning.

LOISATE:No.

MOORE:Were you homesick?

LOISATE:I was homesick, and I didn't like the style of life. Because I was used to going out and having fun with the friends and everything.

MOORE:It was hard work here.

LOISATE:It was kind of hard work, yeah, more so than I did at home.

(she laughs)

MOORE:Did you see your father at that time at all? Where was your father, then?

LOISATE:Home, in Spain.

MOORE:Your father was home in Spain, okay. Okay. So, what happened with your husband? How long before you married him?

LOISATE:Oh, I don't know. Eighteen, nineteen months, probably.

MOORE:And you went out. What did you do for fun in those days?

LOISATE:Go to picture show.

MOORE:Picture show.

LOISATE:That's about all there is, there was.

MOORE:What was showing at that time?

LOISATE:But I couldn't understand in English, so there was just like not to go at all.

MOORE:(she laughs) So everything was in English.

LOISATE:Yeah, everything was in English, and you couldn't understand, so you used to go. I used to stay there a

lot. So I go visiting Basque people. That's what I did.

MOORE:Did anyone ever treat you badly or call you any names for being Basque here?

LOISATE:No. Oh, no.

MOORE:People were nice to you here?

LOISATE:Basque people?

MOORE:No, people who were not Basque, were they nice to you?

LOISATE:Oh, yeah. I never had no problems with anybody.

MOORE:Uh-huh. What about, so you stayed here. Now, at any moment were you serious about going back home?

LOISATE:Well, like I told you, if I had money I would have went.

MOORE:But what stopped you from leaving eventually?

LOISATE:Not having money.

MOORE:Yeah, not having money. (she laughs) And also getting married? Was that also something?

LOISATE:Well (she laughs) I got married, all right, because I thought I was working awfully hard, so I didn't want to work so hard.

MOORE:Uh-huh. And did your husband-to-be, your husband, then, was
he born in . . .

LOISATE:No, Basque, old country.

MOORE:He was an old country boy.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And did he ever want to go home?

LOISATE:No, he didn't care. I went to Spain twice, but not him.
He says he never lost nothing over there.

MOORE:Hmm. Okay. So tell me a little bit about what happened after
that? What was the address of that hotel of your sister's?
Is it still here?

LOISATE:It was on J Street.

MOORE:On J Street.

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:And then where did, when you married, where did you go live?

LOISATE:Right here.

MOORE:Right here, on K Street? So when you married, and what year

did you marry?

LOISATE:1921.

MOORE:1921. And you came here to live on K Street? And then what happened?

LOISATE:(she laughs) I had Basque boarders, and cook, and I didn't know how to cook. So it was through a friend, my husband, and she used to come and teach me how to do thing.

MOORE:Basque food?

LOISATE:Basque food.

MOORE:Yeah. And did you have children?

LOISATE:Oh, God, twelve of them.

MOORE:How many?

LOISATE:I had twelve kids.

MOORE:Twelve?

VOICE OFF MIKE:Twelve.

MOORE:I thought I heard her wrong. Twelve children?

LOISATE:Yes.

MOORE:How old? Could you name them in order?

LOISATE:Well, I've got Pilar, Ellen, Gloria, Joe.

MOORE:Is Joe a girl or a boy?

LOISATE:A boy.

MOORE:A boy.

LOISATE:I should have brought him in and introduced him. (voice
off mike) I heard him coming in, but, uh, anyway, Louise,
Pete and Louise . . .

MOORE:Louise or Luis?

LOISATE:Louisa.

MOORE:Louisa.

LOISATE:And then twins, I had twin girls.

MOORE:Twin girls?

LOISATE:Yeah, Anita and Angela. And then I had Albert.

MOORE:Albert.

LOISATE:And I got Evelyn. Then I got Billy, and I got Fred.

MOORE:And did you speak Basque to them?

LOISATE:The first time, first kids yeah, her, and my three girls.
I got three girls first.

MOORE:And the three oldest knew Basque?

LOISATE:A little bit, and Spanish more so.

MOORE:To whom did you speak Spanish? To your husband, what did you
speak?

LOISATE:Basque, strictly Basque.

MOORE:And how did they learn Spanish, then?

LOISATE:Well, he thought they should learn Spanish, because Spanish,
a lot in this country around, you know, so they can talk
to them. So they kept talking Spanish when they were
little. As soon as they start school, everything went
caput. They don't want to speak nothing else but English.
So we were forced to learn English ourselves.

MOORE:So you learned English from your children.

LOISATE:Yeah, mostly, yes. If you ask anything differently, this
friend of mine, she passed away now, she used to go with
me (?).

MOORE:In the course of this time, how did you feel about your

original, you know, you had twelve children, you lived in the city here, how did you feel about your original decision to come here?

LOISATE:Well, it wasn't my decision at all.

MOORE:The decision, meaning for you, yeah. Did you adjust, then, to it more and more?

LOISATE:Well, I'll tell you, my father, they made a (?). I wasn't sure if I wanted to come here, myself, because I had to lose all my friends and everything. But my father tells me, he says, "American woman lives better than in Spain." And I wanted to see once more to tell him like what he told me. So, (she laughs) I didn't have no way to get out anyway, so I had (?) here. Figure they were real different, what that was. And I missed my friends. And when you come in a country, you don't know the language, it's very hard, and especially different style of living. Over there, you work all week probably like crazy, but some days you are free, and you go, whatever you want to go with a bunch of friends and have fun, but over here there was nothing like that. And it was pretty hard for me then, I said it.

MOORE:Did it get easier later for you?

LOISATE:No, never been easier for me.

MOORE:Never. And so many people say the same thing, it never gets easier. Okay. So you come now, at this point, it's 1994, and your children are grown, and you said you went back twice.

MOORE:Yes.

LOISATE:And what did you find when you went back?

LOISATE:'61 I went first time.

MOORE:What was that like?

LOISATE:It was a little change then, too. And it was very nice to be there.

MOORE:Who did you go, whom did you go with?

LOISATE:My brother.

MOORE:My brother. You two went together?

LOISATE:Yeah, because I didn't want to go by myself. First I wanted to be able to go see my parents. I didn't read it. So when I got a chance, with my brother, my husband by that time, he already had a stroke, and he was not very well,

and he wanted to (?). (she is moved) So my daughter came to stay, but I stayed a little too long over there because my sister, she won't let me leave. She was ill herself. But I find out a lot better in the United States for its own person or for anybody else.

MOORE:There?

LOISATE:There.

MOORE:So, and in '73, (?) from Boise, they hire a train and I have, I got, I had two brothers in the United States. One has passed away. So her, his granddaughter and husband, they were going, oh, '73, and they says to me I should go with them and make a trip. Just for a month, the plane, and they won't stay any longer. So, okay. I decided to go '73 with them to, from Boise. We went two hundred Basques in that plane. If you ever hear two hundred Basques talk Basque, you're crazy. (she laughs) We didn't sleep all night long. One single moment I missed, I never did, some of them, they never see each other for many years, you know. They used to be friends. (she laughs) So we belong together and all that, boy. I went a lady from Monte Carlo, and she was eighty years old, but she told her son, she was a widow, told her son she wants to make

another trip before she die. So her son told her, "All right." He helped her go back home. Me and her, we sit together, and these other people keeping back and forth and back and forth. So she tells me, well, she couldn't understand why these people could even take a half an hour rest to sleep a little bit or something so the rest of us could have a little rest also. I told them, "Why don't you tell them quiet, those guys?" How sleepy I was, until (she snores). Well, she complained a little bit. So there was still one also, have a man, he was crippled. He had a nurses, in Boise, Idaho. And they drive in, a wheelchair, they put him in the airplane. But when they brought him back from Spain, they brought him in a stretcher. He wanted to see Spain, too, bad as he was. And I said to myself that I am, too. Personally position, I don't know what you did over there, you cripple, how the devil will you cross the street, it's up and down. Have you ever been in San Francisco? Well, I'll tell you, those cities, some of them, they're just like that. You can't see nothing. You have to stay put, wherever you go. But that's what has happened to me now. All my nephews tells me, "Don't think that only America has cars. We got a car, too." And I, yes, I know that, but how about those streets up and down, and how about those

stairs. Two- or three- story houses, they're not level. And they all want (?) over there. But he says, "I'll carry you, you'll be fine." Oh, heavens, no. Yeah, I just can't see myself, someone carrying me.

MOORE:Well, when you think of yourself, wait a minute. Back in '73, how had it changed in 1973, then?

LOISATE:Oh, there are a lot of changes then, too. Oh, yes. Oh, my God. (she laughs) The food was a lot of different food. Like now, it's just like in America, my brother says.

MOORE:What did your brother say about the time when Franco . . .

LOISATE:Oh, he wasn't there.

MOORE:He wasn't there.

LOISATE:He was in the United States.

MOORE:He was in the United States during that time.

LOISATE:Yeah, several years ago he retired and go over there.

MOORE:Oh, so he went back over there to retire.

LOISATE:Yeah. His wife didn't want to live any more in the United States.

MOORE:Do you know, did many Basque people go back home?

LOISATE:Yeah.

MOORE:A good portion of them?

LOISATE:They liked to be retired home, yes.

MOORE:So when did they go? Did many people come over and try to
make money and leave, or did they . . .

LOISATE:Yeah, mostly that's what they did.

MOORE:They came here to make money.

LOISATE:But my brother, he himself, if he was single, I think he
would stay, because he already got to be an American
citizen and everything. But his wife wanted someplace
where he can talk his language, her language, I mean.

MOORE:Did you become American citizen?

LOISATE:No, I tried to, but I had to go to the school, different
place, and I had too many kids to go to school, so I
couldn't.

MOORE:How do you identify yourself now? Do you think of yourself
as American or as Basque?

LOISATE:Well, I think I'm American myself. I don't, my language was Basque, but . . .

MOORE:So you identify yourself as American.

LOISATE:Yeah. I mean, I'm here so many years. Well, all my life here, you could say.

MOORE:And why do you stay? Why did you stay, then, here, once your children get older?

LOISATE:I won't leave my children and go.

MOORE:Yes, because of children you stayed. Yeah.

LOISATE:Yeah. I won't think about going back ever, at all.

MOORE:Okay. If you were to give advice to young people, what would you give? Because you've lived a long life now. What would you say to young people?

LOISATE:(she laughs) These young people these days, they have their morals spoiled rotten. They have more things and everything. My age, kids didn't have hardly nothing. But then the years gone by, everything coming up in different ways. So (she laughs) last time I went to Spain, my sister had grandchildren. My sister tells me, "Don't think these kids are, they're raised like we were

raised." They have to have a special this and a special that. For the meals, you know.

MOORE:Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island Oral History Project for giving us this opportunity, and we'll send you a copy. This is Kate Moore signing off from Rock Springs, Wyoming on July 6, 1994.