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CATHERINE CARLOZZI
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DIXON: Today is May 4, 1978, and I am talking with Miss Catherine Carlozzi, who worked at Ellis Island from 1941 to 1954. Could you tell us Miss Carlozzi, what your title was or did it change often?

CARLOZZI: It did change. When I went in I was what they called a matron at that time, that was security officer. We were in charge of the detainees, the aliens that they detained there, and we had to maintain discipline and guard them, and make reports and so forth. We worked around the clock. They had three shifts for matrons, and then a short time later they changed the title to security officer and they continued with that

title during the war. Now, right after Pearl Harbor, the FBI started to bring in the enemy aliens, the Germans, the Italians, and Japanese, the (?) and we had quite a heavy population on Ellis Island. These people were detained there and then were given a hearing before the Enemy Alien Hearing Board, so that one in Brooklyn and one in New York. And the Hearing Board determined whether they were to interned for the duration of the war or whether they would be kept at Ellis Island. What the basis for their decision was, we don't know. If they had families, children and so forth, perhaps that was a consideration where they would be kept in New York. There were internment camps in Missoula, Montana, and n Texas, and these people who were ordered interned for the war were transferred to those places, to those camps. Generally, the men went to Missoula, Montana, and the families went to Texas.

DIXON: But, there were children in these groups as well, not just adults, there were children.

CARLOZZI: Yes, there were children. Now before they were transferred, they were given an opportunity to dispose of their possessions, their apartments, cars if they had them. We as security officers escorted them to their homes, to the banks, all that they had to cover to dispose of their personal possessions before being transferred to the internment camps. Now, the Department of Justice and the Immigration Service was very strict as to what they could or could not do while they were out on these details. And we had to comply with every regulation, otherwise the officer would get

into trouble on his way back. These people were very hostile towards us because naturally, they were enemy aliens and they certainly had no love for the American people, regardless of what their status was. Now, our government bent over backwards to comply with every item in the Geneva Convention insofar as food and diet and living quarters, and space and so forth was concerned. And each group had it's own spokesman. The German had his spokesman, the Italians and the Japanese and so forth. And if they had any complaints they were given access to the officer on the Island, Ellis Island, so that they could voice their complaint, and if there was a legitimate reason to change the cause of the complaint they would certainly do so. At that time our central office was in Philadelphia, and we used to have officials from Philadelphia come up periodically to check on everything to be sure that all the terms of the Geneva Convention were being adhered to. They were very, very good to these people. Perhaps they didn't appreciate it, and I am sure they didn't because being interned or being detained wasn't something that they liked. But, for the women, I, of course, as a female officer, was assigned to what they called the ORF, the Old Registry Floor. At one time that was used to process the immigrants coming in.

DIXON: Which floor?

CARLOZZI: It was when you come into Ellis Island, you go up a large flight of stairs and it is a very huge room with a surrounding balcony. It had all rooms

there. And the women and their children were detained in those rooms, and that was their sleeping quarters. They had access to the main floor during the day and then they had outdoor recreation where they could go out, and during the day from morning until about five or six o'clock during the summer. (?) as long as it was day out and we could see what they were doing they were allowed to go out. Sometimes they had families, in some cases they had families together, but most of the time they separated the men at night and they were allowed to stay with their families during the day, so that is on this ORF floor, the Old registry Floor, we had men and women during the day. They had their meals together, not on the floor, we had a dining room for them, and they were allowed to have their meals together, they would go down. Besides the enemy aliens, we also had seamen, a great many seamen on Ellis Island. We also had a Coast Guard training station there. So we had at one time, we had a population of over three thousand people on Ellis Island between the detainees and the seamen and the Coast Guard. Now, they had a project on Ellis Island where the seamen from Italy most of all, were assigned ships to go back to Europe. Maybe their ship was torpedoed and then they were brought to Ellis Island until they could be reassigned to another ship.

That was not done with the Germans, that was not done with the Japanese. We had Japanese men mostly, very, very few women. And we had very few Italian women. Most of our female detainees were of German extraction, and they stayed until the end of the war. Those that were retained at Ellis Island stayed until the end of the war and then there was a disposition made for them whether they wanted to remain in the United States or whether they would be returned to Germany. I don't know of very many that went back, they all stayed, even though they hated us, they still stayed here. It was much better for them.

DIXON: Did people actually have a dislike for the United States or did they--

CARLOZZI: oh, yes. They told us that one day we would be where they were and they would be the leader. That's how they thought about it. They were very, very hostile. And I remember one particular woman going before me on the Hearing Board, and we had, I don't quite remember the full number, maybe they had seven or eight people on the Board, and she got finished with her hearing and she went out to the end of the table and said, "Heil Hitler."

DIXON: They kept some people on Ellis Island from 1941 to 1945?

CARLOZZI: Oh, yes.

DIXON: The whole period of the war?

CARLOZZI: Yes, yes.

DIXON: Do you know how many? Was it a large--

CARLOZZI: Well, I would say that it was, the women, maybe seventy-five to a hundred. And the, of course, we had a great many German men that were detained there. They were in a separate area. We had the Japanese that were detained there until the war ended and, of course, the seamen were transient, so to speak. They would be brought in there until assignments could be made for them to man ships and then went out. And, of course, after Italy joined the Allied side, before they joined the Allied side we never got them, but once they did they were brought to Ellis Island where they were used to man ships, Liberty ships, and to take them back to Italy so that they would find a fleet with which to continue the war. And then after the war these people were either released or returned to Germany. Then we started to get the displaced persons, the Jewish people, that had been liberated. And we had those coming in from all around. They came in big families with children and so forth. One thing that was noticeable was

that the women were all married to much older men because Hitler had killed off the younger ones, I guess. And all of these families that came in, the girls, the mothers were young, but the husbands were very, very old, very old, I mean in relation to the girls. Much, much older. We had some good people, we also had some sick people. A few, I would call them mental cases. After what they had been through in Europe it wasn't surprising that they were mental cases. Of course, regardless of what their condition was, once they came here, there was no way that the government could dispose of them. They had to send them back because they had no place to go, they were absolutely homeless. But in order to come here the Social Services of various denominations had workers, Social Workers getting these people homes, they would have sponsors, and the sponsor had to guarantee a home, had to guarantee work for them, and pay their passage over. And they had to guarantee work and home for at least two years for these people. Of course, most of them went either to farms or as domestics, and they stayed. They were treated very nicely by the immigration officials, they were given everything possible. They even used to get a basket of food besides the normal diet and meals in the dining room. Where they had children they used to get a basket of food each week containing oranges, and they always got as much as they wanted, oranges and apples, fruit and celery and butter. A little extra special for the children, which they kept in their own quarters because we had a kitchen in that area, up on the balcony, with refrigeration, so that each mother could out in that refrigerator her own particular items of food that were perishable. And they stayed there, of course, they were very anxious to get out and they didn't--some of them

stayed longer than others. But most of them went on to their sponsors after being processed and being assigned to different areas of the United States they would be taken by the Social Service and put on trains and continued on to their destination. That continued for a long time. Each one that came in had their number tattooed on their arm from the concentration camp. This something that they will never get rid of because whatever the Germans used it was indelible ink that will never be erased. Then we had another--when we had those--immigration, of course, during the war stopped completely. After the war, it was only a trickle, there weren't many people coming in. Then we had refugees from the Hungarian Revolution, we had a lot of them that came in, '55. '56, I think it was. We had those coming in where they had managed to escape, and they came to the United States. And again, it was the same thing. We found sponsors for them where they could continue to work and have a home. And their status, they had no status at that time, they were just flown over as refugees, like the Jewish people were displaced persons, these people were political refugees who had escaped from Hungary and had come to the United States, not themselves, but the various Social Agencies had Commissions on either side. And there were also high commissions for political refugees stationed, I think it was Austria, I am not quite sure, I have forgotten, and they used to process these cases on the other side. When they escaped from Hungary they used to go these various refugee camps. They would be processed there and then when they were ready to come to the United States all they had to do was be boarded on the plane and come. All the paper work was done on the other side. But then we kept them. They weren't allowed to just proceed on their own. We

kept them on Ellis Island until they were ready to go on to their sponsors. Some of them, it was a strange thing, these people allegedly had escaped from Hungary and they claimed that they couldn't go back, they would be persecuted. And a few years later, the Immigration Service, or I should say Congress passed a law and the Immigration Service implemented it, where these people could get a re-entry permit to back and visit various countries and then return to the United States. By that time, Congress had passed a law legalizing their status. They weren't citizens, but they did become permanent residents of the United States after their hearing. It was strange, they had allegedly had escaped from political persecution, but the first country they returned to when they got their re-entry permits was Hungary, and apparently they were safe there. But then the Immigration Service stopped that. They could go to visit any country except their, the country from which they had escaped because then that was an indication that they were really phonies. And also the Immigration Service was very generous with them in this respect, they came here and then if they didn't like it the government would pay their fare back and they would return to their country from which they had escaped. And when they got here, Social Services just piled clothing and everything on them. They came in with maybe a duffle bag, and they went back with dozens and dozens of boxes and suitcases and what not. And the United States government, the Immigration Service was paying for all that excess baggage. Well, they finally put a stop to it because I remember taking a group, a family to the airport, that was part of our duties too, to escort them and see that they went on board the plane. And they had excess baggage exceeding $160.00, besides their

fare, which was a lot of money. But the government realized that they couldn't do it. And then they limited the amount of baggage that they could take back. Some of them stayed, some of them didn't want to stay, and they returned to Hungary, but the bulk of them did stay here. That was Ellis Island. Then Ellis Island closed in '54. We did have other facilities at 641 Washington Street, where they detained them, but the detainees there were very few. Once Ellis Island closed, they did not detain women. And unless they were unusual cases, and then it was just a handful, there was no (?). But they did have--the men, of course, were detained, even after Ellis Island closed, at 641 Washington Street. They altered one of the floors because that is a very huge building, they altered one of the floors to detain men and the handful of women that they had. Of course, and they didn't have outdoor recreation the way they had at Ellis Island because they didn't have the facilities for it, but it was good for the number of people that they had there. And then the Immigration Service moved to 20 West Broadway, and they had facilities there for detention, and they had an outdoor recreation area on the roof of the building. Again, the women detained were very few, maybe half a dozen, at the outside six or eight, as the case may be. But the bilk of them were at Ellis Island during those years, but by the time the war broke out, of course, Immigration had stopped, but prior to that they had huge groups of immigrants coming in, and especially the beginning of the century, they had people coming into Ellis Island at the rate of about five thousand a day. It was very, very heavy. And they would process them, they had inspectors assigned to, they called them immigrant inspectors, hearing officers, they had them interview these

people that were brought to Ellis Island. And they were kept until their sponsor or some member of the family came for them, if they were really alone, if they were families, of course, they had a relative or a friend that would take them in. But women were never let out by themselves. They just made sure that they had, either Social Service took them and put them in their own facilities or a relative or friend came to sponsor them. We did have a small group of what was known as warrant cases. These were aliens that were picked up because of the illegal work in which they were involved. Most of them were prostitutes and, of course, we kept them there until they had their hearings and then they were ordered deported. You couldn't just take a person and put them on a plane and send them back, you had to apply to their Consul for a passport. And some countries like Russia and the satellites, they never took anybody back. You could just apply until you were green in the face and they never issued a passport. Very, very rarely did they take anyone back. But the other countries did if they were satisfied that they were their own nationals, they would take them back. Especially Italy, they took back almost everybody that we sent, they really got stuck with a bad group, but they went back and they took them. And it took a long, long time because after the initial hearing they were ordered deported, they had the right of appeal and they could appeal perhaps three or four times the Immigration Hearing, rather the Immigration Appeals Board, the Board of Immigration Appeals in Washington, and then if that was opposed to their decision they would go to the courts. It was very, very frustrating in some of these cases. Of course, the ones that made most of the money were the attorneys because they got the fees for all of these

appeals. But if they didn't have money for an attorney, the various religious denominations used to assign a person, a representative to represent the alien at these different hearings. And they were good. They knew the immigration rules, they had been doing that for many, many years, and they gave these people excellent representation without cost. They never charged anything for it. They took very good care of them, gave them religious--I won't call it instruction, but religious services. Each denomination had their own Minister come in, including the Jewish people with their Rabbi. They had one central room where they conducted all the services. And the Catholics had their Mass, and the Protestants had theirs, the Jewish people had their Torah. They even had facilities for the Muslims to pray each morning. They had the privilege of praying, they had to pray at sunup and they had to face the East, so they were given this place in which to pray two hours in the morning. They had a school for the children on Ellis Island, and they had a teacher, Miss Pratt, who was the most dedicated Social Worker I have ever known. She used to have classes for the children every morning. And her organization, she belonged to the Church World Services, they supplied books, and they supplied all kinds of games and what not for the children. And Miss Pratt, in addition to the school, used to even take care of some of the adults. Anything you wanted from Miss Pratt was never too much for her. She was the most marvelous person that I have ever known. HIAS had their representatives there. They took care of the Jewish people. Catholics had an (?) and the Protestants has a Miss, what's her name, it started with a P, I'll think of it in a minute, in a few minutes, but each one just took care of their own. The Lutherans and the

Estonians, they had their own representatives. And everyone did everything they could to make those people comfortable. So that the stay at Ellis Island, while they didn't like it, it was not bad considering that it was a detention facility, it was very good. They had outdoor recreation not only for the women and children, but for the men. They could play ball and (?) and everything. They were war years, they had guard towers in the different corners, so that the officers assigned to those towers would be able to keep their eye on the detainees while they were out. And. of course, as soon as we opened the doors to the outdoor recreation, an officer had to be stationed on the lawn until they came in. Some of those German people were a little cruel. During those cold winter months they used to go out one or two at a time, as soon as one came in the officer would think well, now I can go in and get warm. The next moment a German would come out. And they used to continue that all day long. And as long as they were out we had to be there, you just couldn't let them go out by themselves, even though the area was fenced in they still wouldn't let them out without supervision. They used to have a Commissary, the Germans were the cooks during the war. They used to have work for the various men. And the kitchen was a great place for these detained aliens because those Germans were excellent cooks. They had dishwashers and they had men preparing vegetables and what not. They used to serve very, very good food because we had to comply with the terms of the Geneva Convention. And even during the war years where they had ration stamps, I was at that time, I was working in the Commissary, I was the fiscal accounting clerk there. I no longer stayed with the aliens, but we used to get our allotment of ration stamps from Washington. And I

remember I had six accounts with National City Bank for the various types of food stamps. There were food stamps for meats and for dairy products, such as butter and sugar and coffee and so forth, but we never ran short because they made sure that they were allotted us enough stamps to take care of the needs of the alien population. And at the end of the quarter, we used to get our allotment every quarter, and every quarter we had to submit a report to the central office showing the disposition of the allotted stamps what was left and so forth. And I must say, that we were very highly praised because not one stamp went astray. We could account for every one of them. With each reporting period, and at the end of the war, when rationing went out of business, we returned what we had and there was no discrepancy, which was remarkable, considering what we had to deal with over all those months. We used to do our own purchasing of foods. We always kept at least a month's supply on hand. We had a huge refrigerator and vegetables, we had all kinds of canned vegetables, and (?) fresh produce, fish once a week for them. We also had a kosher kitchen for the Jewish people, with a kosher cook. The kosher cook was supplied by HIAS, the Hebrew International Aid Society, but we supplied the food. But they used to prepare it, they had their own little kitchen, their own pots, their own tables, and dishes and what not, so that all of the items prepared in the kosher kitchen was under the supervision of the kosher people so that these Jewish refugees that came in, this was after the war, during the war we didn't have that, these Jewish refugees did not have to worry about not meeting their dietary standards. And they used to feed them before the other groups because the kosher kitchen was in line with the passage to the dining room for the other groups

of aliens coming in. So the Jewish people used to eat first so that they had the privacy of their own dining room without having anyone else go in. And they used to feed (?) one at a time. They used to feed the (?) with the women and the children, any family man that was there, and then the seamen, and they fed the German men and so forth, used to be fed separately. Together the dining room could seat a certain number, maybe one hundred or a hundred and fifty. And if the room contained more than that then they would eat in shifts. That was more than enough for our group because they could accommodate all women and children we had. It was surprising to see the children (?) and then they went down to the dining room, they would come up with a slice of white bread, and two in their hands. Of course, they weren't supposed to bring food up from the dining room, outside of it, but I could never take it away from the children. Even though I wasn't following regulations I couldn't do it. I thought that was real cruel to take a slice of bread out of a child's hand. I never did that. But they had never seen white bread. Everything they ate over there, I guess, was black or brown or wheat. I don't know what it was, but to them it was like cake. The mothers used to say, "The bread is like a cake, the bread is like cake," they didn't speak English. Well, maybe they picked up a word here and there, but they had some nourishing meals, very good meals. Maybe it wasn't to their liking because it was American meal, American cooked, and they liked the flavor of Germans or Italians or Japanese, they had their own native type of cooking, which they liked. But nutritionally, it was everything that was expected to maintain a good diet for them. And when they left, of course, that was always (?) the only thing is they didn't have to comply with the terms of

the Geneva Convention where each article stated how many ounces of meat they had to have a day, how many ounces of dairy products, and leafy green vegetables, and the (?) and so forth. It was amazing how the menus were made up to take into consideration the minimum amounts that they needed of these items. So it was very good. I am sure that when our people were interned in Germany or Japan, they weren't given anything like that. But the United States complied with every term of the Geneva Convention. And even space, they were allowed a certain number of cubic feet per person, and they made sure they had it. They had a German spokesman, who apparently knew everything. And he would measure, and if he thought that anybody didn't have that many cubic feet, he was right there with his complaint. He was so articulate, he spoke English well, and he wasn't the least bit bashful about making any complaint at all. But they listened and if there was any legitimacy to the complaint of any of these groups, they immediately rectified it, and we were periodically inspected by the officials in the Central Office, which at that time was Philadelphia. There was a lady in charge of the detention facilities, and she used to come up and speak to those people. She didn't rely on what the officers or the officials or the immigration staff said. She used to talk to the spokesman, talk to the people themselves, so that she had first-hand rapport of what was going on. If they had any complaint she (?) and she did it. But we did very well though, aside from, naturally you can't run a facility like that without some complaints, but on the whole it was run very, very well, and they were satisfied. If they wanted anything changed, they would send up memorandums and tell us exactly what it was. We had a German matron, she was cute, she

was a tiny little lady. She was Swiss German, and every time we would get a new report, she would always come out very upset and she would say, "It never used to be like that." But, we had to comply, and we did. We never violated any instruction that we had, and especially those relating to details of these people. And we took them out and we made sure that we did nothing that wasn't supposed to be done. And they were told where they were going. If they wanted to make any other stop before we took them off Ellis Island, we would tell them, "You are scheduled to go here, here, and here for this purpose. Do you want to and where else?" And if they said, "Yes, I want to go to the bank or I want to go to something," we had to get permission. And that was put in our official detail before we went out because if you did not comply with the instructions, then you, as the officer, were in trouble when you got back. But these people had no qualms of taking favors and reporting the officer, so anybody that did not get permission before time, would get into trouble. So we got that straightened out and they took care of all their business before they went on. Either they stayed on Ellis Island or they went on to the internment camps. And they were allowed visitors every day except Sunday. Sunday they did not have visitors because they had the religious services scheduled throughout the day. They had Mass, and they had the Protestant services and, of course, the Jewish people had their service on Sabbath. They had Christian Science, we had Salvation Army. I used to like the Salvation Army because of the music. But, we had to change our schedule, I should say adjust our schedule, to the time that the different clergymen could come. So sometimes they would have Mass in the morning, sometimes early in the afternoon, and

the same with the Protestant, Christian Science, whatever they would be. The german, of course, went to school Monday through Friday, every day. They did not miss any day. In the end they learned to read, and they learned to speak English, and write a little bit, so it was very interesting for them. But they had visitors, as I said, every day except Sunday. Now the ones on the ORF, the women and children, they could visit with their relatives and friends right on the floor there. The seamen or those that were detained, the men that were detained, they had a special area downstairs on the ground floor, with screening around, so that no contraband could go through. We used to examine visitors to make sure that they didn't bring in anything that they weren't supposed to. They could bring in items of food, fruit, candy, cookies, and so forth. They were more lenient with the women than they were with the men. The men would make sure that the screen they had took care of any contraband. And, of course,those who had families there could visit with the visitors and their families on the Island. Then at night, they used to go upstairs about eight o'clock, eight-thirty, each room had it's own shower, stall and toilet facility so that they did not have to go out. If they went to their room, they took their own showers or baths, whatever they wanted to do, and when they were finished we took a count. And at the beginning we used to lock them in their rooms because we had officers stationed on the balcony, that was the duty station for the officers after the aliens left the floor. We always had, during the day the officers were assigned on the main floor, but then they used to tour the area upstairs because the women had access to their rooms all day long. If they wanted to rest, they wanted to lie down, so

that the officers used to make periodic checks on the balcony off the day rooms. And then the kitchen was there, the refrigeration, tables, and so forth, the stove, for the aliens if they wanted to prepare special food for their children or give them bottles, as the case may be. So that officers were up and down all day long. But once they went to their rooms at night, then the officers stayed on the balcony until the next morning when they would awaken them to get dressed and go down for their breakfast. Then they stayed down on the main floor or they went to the outdoor recreation area. They were free to do that. As long as we had the outdoor area open they could go in and out, if they wanted to stay there all day long we didn't stop them, but we had to have someone on duty out there. We had a library available for them. They could be taken to the library where they would select whatever books they wanted. They had books in different languages, and they could take them. They had people coming in with magazines. And sometimes they used to sell candy and things like that, but not too much of that. And they did have, at the beginning, we used to have the American Express, where these people, the immigrants, that was for the immigrants, they could go on to their destination, buy their tickets there and so forth. They also furnished bonds for these, not for the enemy aliens, but the immigrants, if they were released on bond, this American Express would furnish the bond. But then. after the war started, these warrant cases that we called these prostitutes, and so forth, if they were out on bond then they had to get, their lawyers would have to get their bond from a place on the landside. Perough was great one for furnishing them. That was a, what would you call it, it wasn't a brokerage house, no. It was more or less a

money exchange, and they would furnish bonds to whoever had funds when coming over. But in those days, the biggest feat that an attorney could perform was to get his client out on bond. They weren't that generous. Later on, when there were very few detained, as far as the women were concerned, that let them out on their own recognizance, they didn't detain them. But, after the Island closed, then we did go to 641 Washington Street. Ellis Island closed November 14, 1954, and then we went to 641 Washington Street, and we stayed there until 1957, fall of 1957. Then we moved up to 60 Columbus Avenue, and they detained the aliens in the house of detention, men's house of detention or the women's house of detention downtown, but that wasn't very feasible because they had to go and pick them up and bring them to the office for their hearings and take them back. So they set up detention facilities at 20 West Broadway, it was a brand new building, and they moved in there in December of 1959. And they stayed there until this year and they moved up to 26 Federal Plaza. And about three or four years ago, the men were transferred to the Navy Yard, they set up facilities there. They altered one part, not the whole thing. They altered one building to take care of the detainees, and they are still being detained there, but that is also only a temporary thing. Women were not detained, they had to be put into the, I guess it is that place, they closed that place on 37th Street. The women now, are really a problem, I guess they have to put them up at some private place because the Women's House of Detention, they still have the Women's House of Detention, I don't know if they closed that or not. They used to keep them at that Alimony place on 37th Street, where they had civilian prisoners, but they closed that down,

so now if they have women perhaps they keep them at the Navy Yard too, I am not too sure, but they so rarely detain the women. Passengers, immigrants, are never detained. If they are, it's for some medical reason and they go to a hospital. But, the airline or the steamship companies charged with the responsibility of producing them when they have to come in for any hearings, if they have because of their passport is not valid or there may be some question about their visas, the responsibility of the airline or the steamship company. But it is not greatly implemented because they don't detain. It's a very, very rare thing, unless they have a lookout for somebody and they feel that they are involved in some kind of international illegal traffic, they don't detain women. The men too, immigrants themselves are not detained to any great extent. They still have the seamen that jump ship, they will never get rid of them, they will always have them. And, of course, the warrant cases, when I say warrant cases, these are men who have done something illegal in the United States, and then the inspectors pick them up. Sometimes they got here, sneaked in and have been in the United States for several months or several years, and they are working. They could be picked up as a prisoner, if the investigators perform any kind of raid and they pick them up because they don't have proper documents, then they would be detained. Because if you let these people out, they never come back anymore. They have nothing to lose by disappearing.

DIXON: When they closed Ellis Island, how did they close Ellis Island, did they, I mean--

CARLOZZI: Well, we knew ahead of time that it was going to close. They had set this target date of November 14. And then the aliens that were still there, the men were transferred to the Federal House of Detention on West Street, and the women went, at that time, went to either the Women's House of Detention if they were warrant cases. If they were immigrants, if they could possibly release them, they did. If they had to keep them for any reason, they either put them in that civilian jail, where the alimony men are kept, or if it was for a medical reason they were hospitalized. But when it closed they had very, very few, I don't think that they kept any immigrants, the warrant cases yes, they kept those because we used to get a lot of Cubans and Dominican Republicans, and so forth. Haitians. Those kept in the Women's House of Detention, but not to any great number. But the men all went to the Federal Detention facility on West Street. And, of course, once the last alien was gone, then that was the end of the Ellis Island. They had to move furniture and so forth, but that took time afterwards. There are no more trips made to that, except to pick up, they had packed all of the paper work and files, and so forth. And all the office files and all the office equipment was moved to

60, 70 Columbus Avenue. That's where the Immigration was, from 1943 most of the offices were up there. And then when we closed Ellis Island, the rest of us who were working on Ellis Island, were transferred to 70 Columbus Avenue, and we stayed there until they opened the building at 20 West Broadway, then we moved down there. Of course, the aliens were kept also at 641 Washington Street, they were there from '54 to '57, '57. Then they closed the few (?) quarters there, they didn't bother anymore. They kept the men for a while and then they had this detention facility at 20 West Broadway for many years, and then finally about three years ago, they moved into the Navy Yard. And that's where the men still are, temporarily. They are going to find different quarters for them. They are going to build something, when that will be done, I didn't know. But they did remodel this building in the Navy Yard to house the detainees.

DIXON: How long did they plan to close Ellis Island? I mean, was it a long term thing or did they just decide--

CARLOZZI: No. The reason they really closed it, at one time Public Health Service had their hospital there for the seamen, during the war they were very busy

because all of the seamen who were injured were brought to Ellis Island. They were hospitalized there and, of course, we had the facilities too for our aliens. If they got sick we used to take them over to the clinic, and if they had to be hospitalized they went there. Coast Guard was on Ellis Island, and they also used the Public Health Service for their men, if they were sick or if they just needed treatment. But then the Coast Guard closed their training facility, and that left only Public Health and Immigration. And the Public Health closed, and for that reason it was too expensive for the Immigration Service to stay at Ellis Island because in those days it used to cost over a million dollars a year just for the ferry. They had a crew of about forty or forty-five men because they had to have three shifts, even though they didn't run it all around the clock. The midnight shift used the crew men in repair, and so forth. And they still had to have a crew on board that used to dock at Ellis Island overnight, no, I take that back, used to make the eleven-thirty trip back to the mainland with the four to twelve group and then it used to stay on the barge off the side until morning when it took the first group of officers and workers to Ellis Island, then it continued all day. But, it got too expensive. A million dollars in those days was a lot of

money, today it doesn't mean anything, but they felt that the boat was also deteriorating, to replace it and continue, they didn't feel it was feasible, and they decided to close Ellis Island. When it closed they did have guards stationed there for a while, but it was vandalized something terrible. They ripped up everything that could be taken away, I don't know how they got there, probably from the Jersey side, it was much nearer. But they had men, one or two men, stationed there, but they couldn't take care of the vandals. There are too many buildings. They knew where all the men, the guards were, and I guess they could just go into another building because even if the guards went through, the area was so large you could never, never keep track of everything. So they took everything that wasn't, something, but let me say, they took everything that was moveable, they took it out. And they really left the Island a shambles. And then time took it's toll. I went there with Mr. Hendrickson and a couple of men about a year and a half, two years ago, and it was appalling. The ceilings were coming down and these great big casement windows had just come off the floor, off the wall and were lying down on the ground, everything plaster and what not. And then we went back last year and it was really beautiful because they had

fixed up a certain area that was open to the public. And they had cleaned that up and plastered and did painting and what not, and there was such a difference from the time we had originally been there. We had to have hard hats the first time we went because it was dangerous to walk through. You didn't know what was going to fall down. They used to have their own generating plant. They had a big engineering staff there. They used to generate their own electricity. And they had these water towers on Ellis Island, the water, I guess, came from Jersey. I don't know whether we had three or five thousand gallons of water in each tank. It was huge. Fortunately, during all the years we were there, they never broke because I think we would have floated right out of the harbor, had they broken. But you couldn't have water from the mainland unless you stored it in tanks, but there was no shortage of water, they always had it. And, of course, the generating plants there gave them plenty of steam and hot water. The Coast Guard had no longer a training station to Ellis Island, so it had that brig on Ellis Island where they used to keep the boys that were being disciplined for some reason. Public Health had a large staff, they had their clinics and they had all facilities, medical and surgical, and neurological, and psychiatric, and so

forth. It was a very big branch. Then after they closed, everyone had to go to the Public Health Service on Staten Island. They took you. We even had to take our aliens there if they needed any examination. If they just needed X-rays we could take them to the Public Health Service at Hudson Street, Hudson and Varik Street. That has brought--

DIXON: Well, did any of the enemy aliens, is that what they were called?

CARLOZZI: During the war, yes.

DIXON: Right.

CARLOZZI: Those were the three groups.

DIXON: Did they try to escape, some of the people?

CARLOZZI: No, no, they didn't. But the seamen, the seamen would all be, not during the war so much because they really had no place to go, but these warrant cases that we called, they, of course, did, but there was no place for them to go. The nearest shoreline would have been Jersey, and they would have been spotted, but they did

try. And, of course, if you took them out on detail, if the officer took them out on detail, there was always a possibility that they could break away because we couldn't handcuff them. It would have to be a very unusual case to take them out and escort them around in handcuffs. In fact, at one time the airlines would not take anyone that was brought there in handcuffs because that would frighten the other passengers, and when you are going through a crowded place, it is very possible that they could escape. They tried, and some did succeed if they were taken to their place of business or their home where they knew the facilities, and they knew the escape routes, and the officer did not. They could break away from him and get away. Sometimes they were picked up, sometimes they were not, and they were loose for a long, long time. Whether they made their way home or just got lost in the crowd nobody ever knew. That was most of the time when they could make an attempt and have it succeed, and it was always not so much in the street, although they did try in the street, but at their homes or their place of business. Especially, if they worked in a restaurant. They knew where the exits were and the officer did not. He would go in with them and then perhaps be in the kitchen, and they may know that this door would lead out into an alley, and they

would try to escape. Sometimes the officer caught them, sometimes they didn't. It would depend on how young the detainee was, and how old the officer was. And then when you don't know the facility, and if you have more than one alien, you are handicapped because you can't very well run. They did try at airports, they did attempt to escape, sometimes they succeeded. Sometimes the officer caught them coming in. But it was always a danger, there was always the possibility that they could go away, they could run away when the officer took them out on detail, and he had to be very, very careful. Because at one time they were very strict, if an officer lost an alien they really disciplined the officer, then later on, like everything else, I don't say that they became lenient, but they were more understanding that these things would happen. If people can get away from the FBI and the police, certainly a detention officer is not any better qualified than those law enforcement officers. But it was tension all the time the officer was out with these aliens because they had nothing to lose. If they did escape and they were picked up it wasn't that they added sentence was put on their record, they just continued from where they left off. So they knew that and any attempt they made was to their health and to their aid and not anyone else.

DIXON: Did you ever hear from--when they were bringing the people during the war, did they ever say how they decided which people to bring?

CARLOZZI: Apparently, the FBI had a list of all these enemy aliens who were active in the various organizations. The Germans had the Nazi organizations, they had the Bund and so forth. So apparently, the FBI had prepared and knew just who they were going to bring in because two or three days after Pearl Harbor, they started to bring in these enemy aliens. And they brought them in at night, they made their raids during the evening hours, most of them worked, and they brought them in maybe two or three o'clock in the morning. And, of course, when they brought them in we had to search them, we had to process them, assign them to their rooms, and so forth. Take the necessary data concerning their case because that would go on to the Enemy Alien Hearing Board and the Immigration Service. But the FBI was very, very efficient in that matter, and they must have had all of these lists prepared to go out and pick them up immediately. I think the first week after Pearl Harbor the bulk of them were brought to Ellis Island. That's how fast the FBI worked. There was one

interesting group. During the war, these Jewish refugees were in Shanghai, and they had to leave Shanghai. So they came, allegedly in transit through the United States, but, of course, they were hoping to stay there. And they boarded a train, they came in by ship, and they boarded a train on the West coast, but they were brought in steel cars all the way to New York and then we had them for a few days at Ellis Island so arrangements could be made to transport them to Europe. To the countries to which they were going. The most interesting part of that group was they had so much jewelry with them, gold. And, of course, that we had to take every piece from them and itemize it and put it in a secure place, and then when they went it was returned to them, but they managed to escape with this jewelry from Shanghai and take it with them wherever they were going. I think that these people were more the wealthy, it wasn't the poor ghetto Jew because he never got a chance to go anyplace until after the war when the allied troops liberated these different internment camps or concentration camps, and let them free and then the process went from there on with this high commissioner for the refugees. But this group from Shanghai must have been wealthy to come in with all that. They would have liked to have stayed, but they wouldn't let them.

DIXON: To where did they go in Europe?

CARLOZZI: Various countries, England, France, not the Nazi or the Italian group, what did the call those during the , I'm trying to think.

DIXON: The (?).

CARLOZZI: No, no. The enemy alien countries. They had a name for them. I'm trying to think of it. They referred to Italy, and Germany, and Japan--

DIXON: World War II you mean?

CARLOZZI: World War II. It amy come to me later on. But other than that group, that was the only ones that came in who were not interned by the United States. But the FBI did a magnificent job during that war. There was no delay, they pounced on them and brought them in.

DIXON: Right. The other thing I was going to ask was, you mentioned the Hungarian refugees from (?), after '54 they didn't go through Ellis Island, did they?

CARLOZZI: No.

DIXON: They didn't.

CARLOZZI: No. We had them, let me see now, they came in, the displaced persons came to Ellis Island, but the Hungarian refugees came in in '56, and we them at 641 Washington Street. That's where they were processed. And then, of course, we had them at 20 West Broadway, they had facilities for women too up there, not too many though, they kept it to a minimum because it was only the ones that they couldn't let out that they detained. But with the refugees, with the refugees from the concentration camp, those were the really big groups of people that were retained on Ellis Island until they were completely processed. We had a trick, of course, we always had immigrants (?). As long as Ellis Island was operated we always had people detained there, but once they closed, then they had to be very selective as to who they detained because of the lack of facilities. Even for the men, while they always had facilities to house them, the number had to be limited, they could not just crowd them in. They had to watch who they picked up and the bad cases were detained, or if they were persons who were likely to escape, or had bad criminal records then they used to take them to the Federal House of Detention on West Street. Of course, that place has had a few escapes too, not of immigrants, but of criminals themselves.

DIXON: Do you have anything in a particular else about Ellis

Island you would like to say?

CARLOZZI: I am trying to think back now.

DIXON: Interesting people or famous people or special events?

CARLOZZI: Well, I remember, let me see, we had one detainee there. She was a German, she had two children. Her husband was an American and he was a surgeon stationed at DeRoy Hospital in there, and he used to come to see her, that was an unusual case because he was an American,the children were American, but she was a rabid Nazi, oh, she was such a dyed-in-the-wool German Nazi. She was very uncooperative, very hostile, but it was hard for her, and I am sure, not for her so much, but for the husband and the children to have her there, but they didn't release her because of her background. They kept her there. We had several, there was a whole group with this woman, w a whole group that came in, the FBI brought in, that were really rabid Nazis. Oh, they were so hostile to us. They had to be civil, but not to the point where they would even give you the time of day if they didn't have to. And then we had one woman there, her husband, she was detained at Ellis Island, her husband was one of those Nazis that had landed somewhere

in Chicago I think, around the lakes in a rubber raft, so you recall that? You don't. There was a group, I think there were seven or eight of them came in on this rubber raft. They were all saboteurs, what they wanted to do we don't know because they were apprehended before they could do any damage. But the wife of one of them was on Ellis Island. He was not brought to Ellis Island, they went to jail because they were very, very dangerous, they couldn't let them stay. And then after the war, of course, they were deported, sent back to Germany because they were Germans. Germany took back the people that wanted to go back. They didn't make any bones about it. They took them back as long as they could prove that they were German citizens. As I said, the Russians and her satellites wouldn't take back, well, it wasn't the satellites so much, Russia wouldn't permit the satellites to take back anybody. Finland took back some because she maintained a certain semblance of independence from Russia, but that wasn't very many. But the other countries like Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, they couldn't take anybody back because Russia wouldn't let them. They were no use to them and they wanted no part of them, so they just wouldn't take them. I don't remember in all the years that I worked for Immigration, I don't ever

remember a Russian being sent back, except a spy, where they changed. And this man Able, he was a Russian spy, had been in jail in this country for maybe five or seven years and then they exchanged him for, I think it was Powers, the U-2 pilot, they exchanged Able for Powers, and, of course, he went back to Russia. But other than that I don't know of anyone that was ever taken back by the Communists. What their policy is now, I don't know because I don't handle records anymore.

DIXON: Well, we appreciate very much speaking with you.

CARLOZZI: Alright.

DIXON: Enjoyed it.

CARLOZZI: Why I was glad to do it. I don't know if you are interested, I don't think you are interested in anymore of the jobs that I had during the time I was on Ellis Island because they wouldn't have any bearing on--

DIXON: Sure.

CARLOZZI: Would you?

DIXON: Sure.

CARLOZZI: Well, from being a matron our position was changed to security officer, then I became Fiscal Accounting clerk in the Commissary, and then I became the Admitting Clerk at Ellis Island, and from there I went to Personnel, then from there to the Administrative Office back to Detention deportation. I went to Information Unit as an Information Receptionist, and then I became Supervisor down there, Assistant Supervisor, then I went to Assistant Chief records Information, and then I went to records and Information Specialist for the New York District for the Immigration Service, and then from that position I retired in 1973. So I had quite a few jobs and that is why I had access to all of these records.

DIXON: People who worked at Ellis Island, did they stay there? I mean, was there a rapid turnover, did the people who worked there stay?

CARLOZZI: No, no, no, they stayed. In fact, the old-timers stayed until they retired. After the war we got a lot of veterans in because certain jobs were restricted to veterans. And, of course, when Ellis Island closed a great many people lost their jobs because they weren't

veterans. The maintenance section under the engineers, all the people in that section were laid off. The Detention and Deportation, they had about two hundred and ten officers and supervisors and they went down to twenty-two. They all went. Some of them had eligibility to be transferred to clerical positions depending upon their background and if that was the case, and they could bump someone else, they were transferred to a clerical position. Some were not eligible and they had to leave the Service which was very hard. Some of them had been there maybe fifteen or twenty years, it was very difficult, but the Civil Service still runs the same way. The veterans have preference and regardless of how many years of service you may have, if you are not a veteran and there is any riff, the veteran can bump you, providing he is eligible to take over your job. So that was quite a bad period for the employees when Ellis Island closed. A great, great many lost their jobs. And whether they went to other agencies, I don't know. But most of them that worked on Ellis Island, the jobs were selected. The Detention Deportation officers, well, the detention officers at the time, that was one of the title too, they were skilled in guarding these aliens, escorting them, and so forth. Not many agencies in New York had

need for that type of men. You could be a guard, guarding the a building with the General Services Administration, but they certainly couldn't absorb that many people. Public Health had some guards assigned to their facilities, especially in their psychiatric wards and their entrances, and so forth, Admitting Office, but it wasn't enough to absorb. So many of those men and women had to go out into private industry again. I was fortunate that I was eligible because I had been a grade 4, in those days that was a very high position, as a fiscal accounting clerk. So that qualified me for other clerical positions because I was not a veteran. And we did have some women who had served in the WACs and WAVEs, and we had a couple of widows, veteran's widows, who also had preference over anybody else, but because of my background, the positions that I had worked in, they couldn't move me around where I was not at any time let go. Even when they closed Ellis Island, I was reassigned to the Personnel Office, and then when they closed 641 Washington Street, I went back uptown in the Detention Department Office, so that I did have a position that was steady all along. While I was riffed, I bumped, and I was able to be kept on.

DIXON: Right. Which was your last position on Ellis Island?

CARLOZZI: Records and Information, oh, on Ellis Island, that was the, let me see, oh, I was with the Admitting Office, that was it. We used to keep records, it was part of the Admitting Office. We used to keep all the statistics and the records for Ellis Island. And that was my last position. And then that same job was transferred uptown, and we went up there.

DIXON: Again, we have enjoyed talking with you.

CARLOZZI: Thank you very much. I was glad to come.

DIXON: It was very informative.

Carlozzi: I'm glad you enjoyed it.