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**ALICE MAHEDY GALVIN**

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EMPLOYEE IN THE LAW DIVISION AT ELLIS ISLAND 1931-1936

DIXON: Today is May 10, 1979, and my name is Harvey Dixon. I am at Federal Hall which is at 26 Wall Street, in lower Manhattan. I am going to talk with Mrs. Alice Galvin who worked at Ellis Island with the Law Division from 1931 to 1936. We are going to start. Mrs Galvin is going to tell us what a typical day was like from the start of the day with the ferry boat ride (?).

GALVIN: Well, the ferry boat left at 8:45.

DIXON: From, left from?

GALVIN: From South Ferry, from the Barge Office. And if you were not on the boat at 8:45, you waited until the next one and it was at your own expense in regard to time, you lost an hour. And then, of course, the boat returned in the afternoon at 4:45. Now, if it was a nice clear day it was a nice sail, but in the summer, and other times of the year, it could be very foggy, but the boat only sailed at the discretion of the district director, who would be on it, or who acted in his place. So if it was foggy and he decided it was alright to go, the boat went. And if you wanted to wait till the next one, that was your privilege. So, one Saturday morning in the summer we started out, and it was very thick indeed. You could hear all--you know, in the fog sound carries on the water. Well, all of a sudden

we came to, we were right under the Conte Bianco Mono.

DIXON: Which is?

GALVIN: It was right over us.

DIXON: What is this now?

GALVIN: The Conte Bianco Mono, that was one of the Italian liners.

DIXON: Oh.

GALVIN: And you could look up and read the name. Well, I don't know how they got out of it, but there was a lot of prayers said. We were really terrified. And that's the only thing I remember being frightened on the bait.

DIXON: Do you remember the name of the boat? What was the boat?

GALVIN: It was the Ellis Island, I think it was called. It was a good substantial ferry and it was a shame to see the hulk of it there.

DIXON: That is the same boat that you were on?

GALVIN: That's the same boat. Oh, yes.

DIXON: Okay, and when you

GALVIN: And all the transportation was, you see, at that time that followed the Immigration Act of 1924, so no aliens were brought, came through Ellis Island. They only went to Ellis Island after they had been detained on shipboard. They would be brought down from the dock to the ferry, at South Ferry, and taken over and detained on Ellis Island until their admissibility was determined.

DIXON: So about how many people a day like that came to Ellis Island?

GALVIN: Oh, I don't think maybe there would be twenty in a week, maybe.

DIXON: So how many people actually worked on Ellis now, at this time I mean?

GALVIN: Oh, you mean help?

DIXON: Right.

GALVIN: Oh, there must have been more than a hundred, maybe two hundred because you have to consider guards, and then there was all the personnel. You see, the Immigration Station was on First Island.

DIXON: First Island is, do you know that--

GALVIN: That's where the Red building is. That's First Island. Second Island and Third Island were taken up by the Public Health facilities, the hospital, that was under the jurisdiction of the Public Health.

DIXON: Right, so that was different. But did they--

GALVIN: But they had a full complement of help too, doctors, nurses.

DIXON: But who used the hospital, just anyone who used--

GALVIN: No, no, the hospital was used by like seamen, and then it was used by the Immigration too, but the Immigration would have to pay, I presume, the Public Health, for whatever service they gave. But they were two distinct operations, we had no contact with them. Now, well, then we start at 9:00 in the morning when we got there. I worked for Ed Burns, he was the Inspector-in-Chief of the Law Division. Well, one of the first things he might say would be, "See if you can get hold of Grover Bushman and ask him, will he go out to La Guardia and check that plane that is coming in?" This was the beginning of international travel.

DIXON: Right.

GALVIN: So, you would have to sort of jolly Grover along because he wouldn't be crazy about the assignment because it was simply time consuming, but I just mentioned that. Now, when you think of Kennedy and the operation that is there, but that is the way it started.

DIXON: When you, well, go on with the day.

GALVIN: Well, there would be correspondence or handling calls. Now, I was working for Mr. Barnes, would get all the calls coming in, the complaints. And, of course, the first thing they would want to know was, what the reward was.

DIXON: For what?

GALVIN: For reporting illegal aliens. And you would have to tell them that there was no reward, only the gratification of having done what they thought was proper. Well, most of the time they changed their mind at that point. But, it was interesting to see that most of these complaints came from people of the alien's own circle, inspired by jealousy most of the time.

DIXON: When the aliens actually came to Ellis, did they come on the ferry boat Ellis Island?

GALVIN: That's right, but they were always under guard. You see, on Ellis Island, talking of the number of people that worked here, there were the administrative help, there were the guards, there were the inspectors, there were the kitchen help, all these things, you only saw them in segments, but added up they made quite a sizable number.

DIXON: Did the fact it was during the depression years have any effect on Ellis? The operation?

GALVIN: Well, the staff might be cut down, you know, they would weed out the staff, the people who didn't have long-term service, or they could find various reasons for dispensing with. But, at that time the staff, I thought, was good, and they worked hard because--now, I went over there as a stenographer and you would be sent to take whatever this person said and in time you were very good. Now, you would be called, well, a reporter, and that is what we were doing, but we were just doing it because we were told to do it. Now they would elevate your grade. That grade for work like this would be very, very high.

DIXON: The people, the aliens, you know, the people who came to Ellis Island, they were called aliens?

GALVIN: The people who were there under proceedings. Well, an alien, that is not the term of approprium, that identified them, it put them in a class where you knew exactly who he

was.

DIXON: How were the people who came, the aliens, what was their, they were nervous or they were tense or they were afraid, or they were--

GALVIN: No, they were pretty self-possessed as a rule. You see, an alien, an incoming alien, whose admissibility had to be determined would not go before the Law Division, they would go before the Board of Special Inquiry upstairs. Then and there it would be determined whether they could come in or not.

DIXON: The Law Division did what?

GALVIN: The Law Division determined, investigated status.

DIXON: Which means?

GALVIN: Which means, well, suppose you are a young girl who came here five years ago, and you have just been found to have tuberculosis and you are sent out to one of the state hospitals. Your immigration status would be in question then.

DIXON: So it was different from dealing with the aliens who came to Ellis Island?

GALVIN: No, you were not dealing with any of them coming in. You were dealing with the ones whose right to stay here was in question. Then too, you would have students, students come on student visas, and then they would abandon their status. And then they would be in question.

DIXON: Okay, what was the physical state of Ellis Island at the time?

GALVIN: It was in very fairly good condition. Now, it's astonishing. It's really horrifying to think that it's this way just simply through neglect.

DIXON: Right, that's what I was--

GALVIN: Because it wasn't a wreck when it was left. It certainly wasn't, of course, it was no paradise either, but it was clean and the maintenance was good.

DIXON: Well, what was the--well, on with what--

GALVIN: Alright. Now, there were, I'd say there were about six inspectors who were hearing inspectors. Their function was to hold hearings under warrants of arrest. And, of course, that meant that the alien had been picked up and was on Ellis Island. And he would be brought down and the inspector would serve the warrant, assure himself that the alien understood the nature of the proceedings and his rights. Now, he could be represented by counsel, or like a friend of the court, say. And you couldn't tell him not to get counsel nor could you try to influence his selection. Many times it would be a sore temptation not to because there were a lot of ambulance chasers and they would take them for about all they could get sometimes.

DIXON: You are talking about now the people--

GALVIN: I am talking about lawyers.

DIXON: The aliens, but the aliens were represented.

GALVIN: The aliens, you know, somebody would say so and so he's a (?), a paisano, but they could be just as well represented by a social service representative who would be thoroughly conversant with the immigration law and what the man's rights were, but you couldn't make that suggestion, you had to keep quiet.

DIXON: So how did they ever find that out, the aliens I mean?

GALVIN: Well, when they went to pay the bill sometimes, and when they were being deported.

DIXON: Did you ever participate yourself in any of the trials?

GALVIN: Oh, yes, I took hearings, oh, yes.

DIXON: So tell us what that means.

GALVIN: Well, he would serve the warrant. And the alien had the right to an interpreter. And they had interpreters, well, Italian and Spanish, they were standard, and then the Greek interpreter, I am trying to think of that woman's name, she was a lovely little woman, she also did French. Now, we

didn't have much French. And you had very few Scandinavians, very few Scandinavian seamen because those people are so law-abiding, never any difficulty, very seldom you had difficulty. But the majority were Spaniards, Spanish and Greek. And the Greek seamen were the most ill-treated of all. When you read of these Greek millionaires, they certainly were not troubled by conscience because the conditions

DIXON: You mean, not on Ellis, but where they come from?

GALVIN: No, I mean on the boats, the seamen were treated like little better than animals, worked to death and I don't think they were too well fed.

DIXON: Okay, where was the Law Division on Ellis?

GALVIN: The Law Division, you are coming toward Ellis Island and you see the big red building, and there was like a glass canopy on the side, and the Law Division was in there, and the Registry Division was in there.

DIXON: You mean in the back of the building?

GALVIN: On the side of the building.

DIXON: The side of the building.

GALVIN: On one side is the entrance now, this is in the back, on the other side.

DIXON: Right, okay.

GALVIN: That's where it was.

DIXON: Where were the trials?

GALVIN: The detention quarters? No, they had regular hearing rooms.

DIXON: Oh, I see.

GALVIN: That was right in the Law Division.

DIXON: Okay.

GALVIN: There was Corgner, he was an (?).

DIXON: Corgner?

GALVIN: Corgner. He was wonderful at cross-examination. I have worked for lawyers too because after I went to Florida I was a court reporter on McDill Air Force Base. And nobody ever could cross-examine the way he did.

DIXON: This gentleman's title

GALVIN: This Corgner, he was an inspector.

DIXON: He's just his title

GALVIN: Just an inspector, but he was a man, if I say he was a man of little education I would imply that he was illiterate, that was not the case, but he didn't have a college background, but he was a very shrewd cross-examiner and he could really them down. You know, quietly, just asking simple questions, and the first thing you know, the fellow would have hung himself.

DIXON: Right, and Board of Inquiry functioned as a judge, right?

GALVIN: No, no, it was not the Board of Inquiry, it was a single inspector.

DIXON: Oh, he did it.

GALVIN: He did it.

DIXON: Well. who determined--

GALVIN: He had a routine, he had a specific objective and he wanted this man to admit that he was here illegally or that he had violated in someway and, of course, the man was there to protect himself as much as he could. And, of course, he had an attorney or you have counsel. If he didn't have counsel, but they didn't take advantage of these people, you know, everybody always feels so sorry for the poor aliens. He was not doing the right thing either.

DIXON: Right. Well, who decided whether or not the alien stayed?

GALVIN: Well, the stenographer would be there, if it was a regular

seaman it would go through very quickly because it was routine questioning and they didn't have to beat about the bush to prove their point, but sometimes it might be a fellow like for instance, was married here and his family in Italy, something like that. Well, there could be any number of angles involved. And the questioning would lead innocently up to what the inspector had in mind, but he was so adept at it that the person under examination was not aware of the direction that the thing was taking. Of course, if he had an attorney the attorney might catch on fast and object.

DIXON: Well, when the hearing was concluded what happened?

GALVIN: When the hearing was concluded, now sometimes the hearing could go maybe twenty pages or something like that. And when the hearing was written up then the inspector would write a summary and would put his recommendations in that. Now, the counsel had right to a copy of the hearing and he would, of course, have to sign a receipt, a regular form, and then he would submit his brief. Well, the case was held until the brief was submitted, so all the allied papers were ready and then it was forwarded to Washington and that's where the decision was made. In the meantime, if there was bond, and the alien was capable of furnishing it, he could be released on bond.

DIXON: If he was kept on ellis though, where was he kept?

GALVIN: Upstairs in the detention quarters.

DIXON: There were actual like cells?

GALVIN: No, not cells. Detention quarters and they had the freedom of the room, the big room. And, well, they had any number of social workers, and there was, well, they had (?) library there. Well, when the radio came in they could have a radio.

DIXON: How about the--

GALVIN: Television came much later.

DIXON: Right. Were there other people? How many other people would there be in--

GALVIN: Oh, there could be all told, maybe a hundred or more. Of course, in the days when it was heavy, you know how many people were there.

DIXON: There was more, right.

GALVIN: Later on, you know, they would, if you were convicted of a felony within five years, or even, there was even like twice in the courts since you came, whether you came as an infant or not, you were subject to deportation. And those people, when their terms, they would be given a hearing wherever they were detained, wherever they were incarcerated, and the whole thing would be wrapped up and sent to Washington, and if the warrant of deportation issued, a copy of it was filed with the warden of the institution where the person was. And when his sentence was concluded he was released to the federal authorities for deportation, and he would be brought down to Ellis Island, then detained there. Sometimes I think they had maybe, well, I hardly think they would have ten of those people. I don't remember. Now, I can't speak with authority, but at any rate, some of the other people who were detained objected to being exposed to these kinds of people. I think they made some arrangement where they segregated them, I don't know, but that's the only thing I remember of that.

DIXON: Okay.

GALVIN: Well, then during the course of the morning, attorneys would come in to see the Chief, to plead their, to see what could be done about the people that they were representing, and he would listen and he would advise. They all knew each other, you know, because it was a little world where they all worked together. And then there would be, then some of the shipping men might come in. His desk had a lot of paper work on it.

DIXON: The shipping man did what (?).

GALVIN: I beg your pardon?

DIXON: The shipping man you called him, what is he, what did he--

GALVIN: Yes, well, all the lines were represented and they all had offices, or representatives on the Island. And like, for instance, if they were going to be fined, this office

handled steamship fines too.

DIXON: What were some of the names of the lines, the ship lines, do you remember any of them?

GALVIN: Oh, the Cunard.

DIXON: Any of the other ones?

GALVIN: And the Holland-American, I should imagine, all the big lines. They tried to see what could be done about steamship fines.

DIXON: The ships had to pay a fine if they did, why were they fined?

GALVIN: Well, I never handled fines. I never had anything to do with them, but we had one girl, Ada Fresna, Ada handled all the fines. I mean, she was the clerk, she didn't impose them or anything, but it was almost routine what the imposition would be. It depended on like, for a seaman, a deserting seaman, they could be fined for that. And then they could be fined for bringing in an alien that was not admissible.

DIXON: Even if they didn't know?

GALVIN: It was presumed that they should inform themselves. I don't know, of course, it had ramifications, but I couldn't talk about that because I don't know anything about it. Then writs, they would get a writ of habeas corpus from the Southern District here, the Federal Court, and that would initiate proceedings and they would have to go and appear in court.

DIXON: The people that worked on Ellis, did they enjoy working on Ellis at large?

GALVIN: Loved it.

DIXON: Almost all loved it?

GALVIN: Loved it, we had a good time. It was very pleasant. There was camaraderie amount the help, but, of course, you never fraternized with the aliens, but never, no that would be entirely out of order.

DIXON: Did the staff have a dining room?

GALVIN: No, they had a cafeteria down near the dock and anybody could use it. The aliens were kept segregated, if the were detained they were detained upstairs. They were under guard, but the people coming over on business or the help, they ate in the cafeteria.

DIXON: You say near the dock, where near the dock, in the building?

GALVIN: No, in the building, yes. But, you know, where the hulk lies, that's where the boat used to go in. And like in the morning there would be all the people from public health, from the hospital, and all the people from the Immigration.

DIXON: Ellis staff.

GALVIN: Well, when you got off the boat the hospital people would go to the left and you would go to the right, and on the way up the corridor there was the entrance to the cafeteria. And then they had, down near the, they had one downstairs, I am trying to think where that was, a counter, like where people waiting for the boat could go. Nothing deluxe, it was alright though, it was clean and the food wasn't bad.

DIXON: When you were there do you ever remember hearing anyone speak of a gentleman named Augustus Sherman?

GALVIN: No.

DIXON: He took some photographs (?), no.

GALVIN: No, I wouldn't have anything to do with that. I don't remember that we had anything that corresponded to public relations, but if anybody was taking photographs he would work, I imagine, through the office of the District Director because after all, nothing went on on the Island that the District Director didn't know about.

DIXON: Who was the District Director?

GALVIN: Byron Ewell was the District Director when I was there. And there was one man who preceded him, I mean, for a short

time after I went there he was there, but I can't recall his name now. I think he was well connected.

DIXON: By any chance do you know Abraham Glaberman, or he was--

GALVIN: No.

DIXON: I did an interview with him also.

GALVIN: The man who had been his clerk stayed on the Island. I can't think of--you know, the other day when I found that picture, I couldn't remember most of the names at first, so I was packing to come up here and every once in a while a name would come in and I would run and write it down. So that's how I got most of them.

DIXON: You mentioned the TV programs on Ellis during--

GALVIN: Not TV.

DIXON: Not Tv, well

GALVIN: Radio.

DIXON: Radio.

GALVIN: Now, at Christmas time they had, you know, that was the height of the radio programs. All the big stars would come over. They were very generous with their time.

DIXON: They came over for what?

GALVIN: They came over to put a Christmas program on in the big room.

DIXON: For the

GALVIN: For the aliens in detention. And as I told you the other day, there was a very popular Japanese xylophonist at the time, and there would be about twenty Chinese who were in detention brought down and they would sit there like graven images when the Japanese would perform. They simply didn't even see him. But, one Christmas Giovanni Martinelli came over and he sang Adeste Fideles and I have never forgotten it. It was really thrilling.

DIXON: Do you remember any of the others, were there any others

GALVIN: And Lucrezia Bori was another one. And then they had a very popular announcer and I have been trying to remember his name, but (?) as national, well, these people were all national (?), and he told how he could remember when he landed at Ellis Island, his mother holding him up so his father could see him through the grating.

DIXON: Oh, the announcer?

GALVIN: Yes, the announcer would tell that, and, you know, in a way it amused us a little because all the people that he was talking to weren't coming in. they were on their way out, or hoping that they wouldn't be on their way out.

DIXON: Did Ellis Island have other visitors during the year or people coming to visit?

GALVIN: Yes, I remember Mrs. Roosevelt bring over her class from, I thin it was Todd Hunter School. She used to do that as a regular thing.

DIXON: But I mean as an historic sight even then people--

GALVIN: No, it wasn't, no. The interest that your museum had generated was not apparent then. And besides, the generation that is getting so much out of it were being born then, they had not achieved maturity. Let me see, something else, of you know, the type of people that would be coming. Oh, I remember one case we had, When Mr. Roosevelt was first elected there was somebody, I think there was a picture of him, a picture relating to him on display some place, and somebody went to attack it, you know, like throw paint or something, and this alien was there and he was so patriotic that he stepped in and stopped the man. Well unfortunately, he was here illegally, so he winds up on Ellis Island, but he gets a very glib lawyer who says, "Here is a man who is willing to take his life in his hands" and before the lawyer was finished the fellow had entre to the United States.

DIXON: Did most of the aliens who were on Ellis Island get deported or did most of them--

GALVIN: No, most of them were deported.

DIXON: Most of them were deported.

GALVIN: Yes, most of them. If they were under warrant proceedings and the warrant of deportation had been issued, but when they would be, like if they had been out on bond, they would be notified to surrender because by that time they would have obtained a passport facilities and steamship accommodations and everything. They would be ready to have them go. Now, if it was a case where there was merit, say maybe he had married, well, the way they used to handle some of these cases, if his wife, if you were married to a citizen, if you had married a citizen in the interim since your illegal entry, you might be given permission to depart voluntarily, like to Canada, where you would go to the Consul of your country and apply for a visa as the spouse of an American citizen. And then you would reenter here and your status would be corrected.

DIXON: How did the people depart first, do you remember any well known people that were deported or did they-

GALVIN: Well, I remember we had the Woman in Red there. If you remember, the Woman in Red was the woman who was involved with Dillinger, the bandit, the time that he was murdered. I don't know whether she had turned him in or what, they seem to feel that she got rather a rough deal.

DIXON: What happened to her?

GALVIN: She was deported.

DIXON: Do you remember to where?

GALVIN: To some country in middle Europe, like Germany or Lithuania or someplace like that. She was a middle European.

DIXON: Anyone else?

GALVIN: I didn't see her there, I remember when she was there. Well, I remember when they had Prince Romanov there.

DIXON: Prince Romanov, tell us who Prince Romanov was?

GALVIN: Well, Prince Romanov had delusions of grandeur, but he was a real, he had charisma. They all liked him, everybody

like him over there. I had no contact with him because he was in the Deporting Division. He was being for deportation. It developed he was really a smart little Jewish boy from Brooklyn, but he was very glib.

DIXON: But he wasn't deported was he?

GALVIN: Well, they couldn't deport him anyplace because nobody would take him, but he was held in detention there for a while. I don't know what they were going to do with him, but eventually they had to let him go. But he was in with the jet set, they liked him. And eventually, he had a restaurant in Hollywood, and I don't know if he is still alive or not, but he has had a real, he made a good life for himself without a lot of labor attached to it. One time he got off the Island, he must have bribed somebody, they took him over to New York, I think, and they did the rounds. But, eventually they had to, I don't think they could deport him because there was no country that would take him.

DIXON: How about anyone else there that was famous, do you remember?

GALVIN: No, I can't remember, right off I can't remember. But, this is something, the League of Abandoned Wives. Now, you know that among the Jewish people if a girl achieves maturity, I mean, real mature, maturity, and she is not married, that's a very serious matter. So, this was before the Second World War, and finally they had--and with the introduction of the quota system, that cut-down, that severely limited immigration from middle Europe.

DIXON: Right.

GALVIN: The English did not suffer so much because they had never had a big--no, I don't think the Scandinavian people hurt, but these people like Poland and those, they really felt it. So, they would take a trip to Europe, and they would go back to their village. And there were many young men there who were dying to get to the United States, but the quota system was something that was pretty hard to get around. So, they would look the situation, they would see this girl coming from the United States and she has got a lot of money and, of course, the Rudolph Valentino of the village would get right to work and they would be married

and they would come back here. Well, as soon as he got settled here and looked around, he would feel that he had been had. So he would start to circulate and the first thing you know, he would be fading out. So, she would be down on horseback to Ellis Island to make a complaint because he was a thief, he was a liar, he was a "ganov," he was a no goodnik, and she wanted him out. Well, after a while, the authorities on Ellis Island got a little tired of this routine because if they took her complaint right there and then, and requested a warrant and went out and served it, she would be on the same boat with him coming to Ellis Island crying and tearing her hair and with the money for a bond. So it got to the point when they would come down, the man I was working for, would listen very politely, he was a very patient man, very smart, and well, he would say, "Now madam, we don't think that is proper for you to make this complaint, we will take the complaint, but you will change your mind, and that is wasting our time and your time and the government's money." Well, she would, I remember one woman, oh, she nearly drove him bananas, she wouldn't give up till he said, "Very well, we will get a warrant," and exactly as he said, happened. Well, it was she who told us that--there was so many of these women, and this situation was growing to such that they formed the League of Abandoned Wives, but where they functioned or how they made out, I don't know.

DIXON: They commiserated with one another.

GALVIN: Well, or maybe, they took legal action, but the League of Abandoned Wives. And that really was a regular organization.

DIXON: That's very interesting to hear. Did you ever hear of any of the aliens who were on Ellis Island escaping, or that you know of?

GALVIN: No, I never knew of any, although I think that if somebody was really determined, I don't see why they couldn't have swam to Jersey.

DIXON: Right, I was wondering if you had heard anyone (?).

GALVIN: No, I never heard of any. Coming in, as I said, we didn't have much contact with them.

DIXON: Right, I was going to ask, the people, the aliens you had contact with, they were dressed as normal--

GALVIN: They wore their clothes. There was no convict garb, oh, no.

DIXON: I meant even ,or like immigrant dress, they didn't wear that?

GALVIN: Oh, no, they were past that then.

DIXON: They wore the (?).

GALVIN: They were pretty, they were modernized.

DIXON: Let's see.

GALVIN: The sad thing was going, now, you speak of the hearing inspectors. There would be a hearing inspector who worked the prisons, now he wouldn't work much on the Island. The information that would be furnished by the prisons would be referred to him for action to determine if there was any action necessary or what could be done, or the insane people, there was one inspector who went to the Islip Creedmore, and the various places. Now no matter what state for mental derangement or stability the alien might be in, the warrant had to be read to him, it had to be served to him. I remember one time, we went over to, there was a seaman picked up, and I had to go with the inspector, he just wanted to serve the warrant. And he was over in the hospital on Second Island and, you know, they got involved in these brawls on the Bowery like, and there was a way of hitting them here that would blacken both eyes. So he had two beautiful shiners and he had the DTs, he was in a strait jacket, and he was in a room that had been recently painted (?), and he was, oh, he was raving like mad, but the warrant was served to him.

DIXON: Did Ellis have any contact with Liberty Island at the time?

GALVIN: No, no, the only time was when our ferry would break down maybe, Liberty Island, no they didn't have a regular ferry, yes they did, no it was Governors Island that would lend us, or if the ferry broke down, and it did more than once, they would get a cutter and they would out it by the sea wall, you know, right in front of where you go in now, and

they would have two able-bodied seamen, and each one would have a foot on the wall and the other foot on the cutter, and they would lift you down on the cutter. And when you got over to New York they would lift you back. One time the Daily News had photographers down there and took pictures.

DIXON: There was regular ferry to Liberty Island was there?

GALVIN: No, we had no ferry, no there was no connection.

DIXON: But I mean, even for people going to Liberty Island,

GALVIN: Oh, yes. You mean from Ellis Island?

DIXON: Well, either one.

GALVIN: Oh, from the Battery, no, there was a regular ferry to, it was called Bedloe's Island then.

DIXON: Right. The captain of the boat, for example, do you remember his name or was there a (?)

GALVIN: No, we had no contact with them. They maintained a strict segregation, they kept us in our place. They didn't encourage any familiarity.

DIXON: And the gentleman's name that you worked for, did you mention it?

GALVIN: Barnes, I put it down on the picture if you have the picture.

DIXON: Barnes, his first name was?

GALVIN: Edward Barnes, he was Massachusetts. He was a good officer. There was one other thing I thought of. Are we pretty well out of tape?

DIXON: No, we have got plenty of the tape left. We have got another side. How about stories of, stories that you remember or things that happened.

GALVIN: Well, now all the social workers were represented there.

DIXON: Okay, tell us about that.

GALVIN: The HIAS has, I can't think of his name now, but he was a fine gentleman and a good social worker. The Episcopalians had Alice Palmer, she was a fine woman. And Hadassah, I don't remember the name of, it was a woman represented Hadassah. But the Women's Christian Temperance Union had a woman who, of course, was strictly temperance, and she would try to sell the idea of temperance to these seamen. They just looked at her as if she was bananas, they just let her rave on and didn't get to first base.

DIXON: Seamen., most of the people, the aliens were seamen?

GALVIN: Most of them were seamen, most of them were deserting seamen.

DIXON: Most of them were seamen.

GALVIN: As I say, the Greeks were the most ill treated by their people.

DIXON: Well, this something that I guessed on. The Law Division functioned on Ellis Island, could it have been, as easily been performed somewhere else as on Ellis?

GALVIN: Well, the only advantage was there was easy detention facilities. Now, if you were in New York you would have to arrange with the Federal House of Detention or something like that and then you would be faced with the problem of transporting them from one place to another. The criminal alien squad worked closely with Ellis Island. They were on Center Street, and they would call up for a warrant and it would be, there was one girl that handled all of that, and the warrant would be obtained right away on their say so.

DIXON: Was there medical inspections done at Ellis Island because you mentioned some of the people like had tuberculosis?

GALVIN: Well, that would be on the strength of the state. These people would be patients of the state.

DIXON: Right, I see.

GALVIN: And the insane, it was very pathetic, those cases. We didn't have any direct contact, but the pictures of them, oh, and you would think, oh, dear God, what are they going

back to. But, on the other hand, you cannot deport an alien if it endangers his life. And by that, suppose he is a political refugee, you can't deport him. You can get his passport facilities for him with no difficulty because they are not probably, very anxious to get their hands on him, his government, but he can plead that it would endanger his life and that is considered a sound reason to hold his-- they might not cancel the warrant, but they could put it in a (?).

DIXON: Were the ever children on Ellis Island?

GALVIN: Oh, yes. They had children.

DIXON: Children being deported?

GALVIN: Yes, one time we brought in a family of eight from New Jersey, they were English people and rather feckless, you know, they were all public charges so they were subject to deportation.

DIXON: The children with family groups, not children as--

GALVIN: Oh, you mean take a child away from, oh, no, no, there was never anything like that.

DIXON: But there were children who were deported?

GALVIN: Oh, yes, but they would be deported as part of a family group. And when we had, now for instance, we had all of the standard reporters, interpreters, as I said before, we had Mr. Andriacio, he was the Italian and he was, I think he ruled Jersey City. And he was the Italian interpreter. Now, you would get many of these Italian seamen from Sicily and he would say, "(?) la mama?" And the fellow would make the sign of the cross and do that, and that meant that mama was no longer with us. And they had a regular sign language, these people. Wasn't because he couldn't talk, but the man he was talking to would understand what he meant.

DIXON: Were they repeaters?

GALVIN: Oh, yes.

DIXON: People that were done over and over again?

GALVIN: Yes, (?) well, I wouldn't say over and over.

DIXON: More than once.

GALVIN: More than once. Oh, yes. Now, we got some of these people that came from forbidden areas of the world. Areas where immigration was never permitted. Then you would have to go up to the International House at Columbia to get an interpreter. And invariably these people would have worked at Ford, for Ford in Michigan. Sometime or other they would have worked there.

DIXON: You mean the interpreter that the people would talk--

GALVIN: The people that they were talking to.

DIXON: (?) that was.

GALVIN: Well, they employed so many people, I guess, and they didn't bother asking where they came from. Then we had a man who was, he did something in the Brooklyn Museum I think, but he spoke East Indian dialects, from that area.

DIXON: So you had just about every nationality represented?

GALVIN: Oh, yes. So, when we would have somebody from Borneo say, we would have to get this guy. It was Borneo, that's right because he would come in and he would bring this scimitar with him that he said the Sultan of Borneo gave him, and it was made out of a meteor and it had great religious significance for anybody from Borneo. And he would say, "You wait, I will show it to the alien." Well, I don't know how many hearings I took with him, not many, but three or four, and anytime he ever showed it to the alien the alien just looked at it and wasn't a bit impressed. This fellow said they would fall on their knees, but I never one of them do it.

DIXON: Let's see, what else could we discuss? Sometimes it's hard to think of what--

GALVIN: Well, I haven't thought of this stuff in years.

DIXON: Why don't we take a break for a minute or two.

GALVIN: Okay, but I don't think I--

DIXON: Well, thank you very much Mrs. Galvin.

GALVIN: Do you have a degree in Library Science?

DIXON: Right, I do.

GALVIN: I have many friends, librarians, that's why I asked. I have one friend, when we lived in New York.

DIXON: Well, let me finish and then--we enjoyed talking to you and we learned a lot from your tape and thank you very much.

GALVIN: Well, I think you are very kind and it was my pleasure.

DIXON: This is going to be a post-scriptum to the tape of Mrs. Alice Galvin. The first thing that she wants to do is she wants to add a few names of people she remembered. And so we will let her go ahead and add the names in.

GALVIN: Well, the first name is Ed Zucker. Mr. Zucker, he had long time service. And he was inspector in charge of the Registry Division, which was next to the Law Division. And he was associated with the Inspector's Association. I think he was head of it at one time. Then there was another man named Zucker, he was a younger man, Bill Zucker, they were no relation, and he was inspector in charge of the Chinese Division. Then there was a Mr. Tuttle, he was very well thought of, very popular, and I am pretty sure he was in charge of the Deporting Division, but he had to resign when there was an investigation in Naturalization Records and he had to resign.

DIXON: This is the gentleman you mentioned the other day.

GALVIN: And then--but he was replaced by Phil Foreman. And Phil Foreman was in charge of the Deporting Division when I was there. But Phil Foreman had a clerk, Molly Bree, and Molly Bree was the power behind the (?). She was very capable and could do most anything, handled all the work. And those are the only names that I remember.

DIXON: Okay, you mentioned Fiorello La Guardia.

GALVIN: Fiorello La Guardia, of course, he came long before me, but

he was a clerk, and he acted as an interpreter too.

DIXON: But you never met him?

GALVIN: No, no, I never met him, but his fame still lingered there, they thought he was quite a wheeler-dealer. So what's the next one?

DIXON: The other thing you mentioned, the story about the window washers.

GALVIN: Oh, yes. When they would go--if they were looking for a Croatian, maybe around Washington Street, but there was neighborhood which is thick with Croatians, and all the Croatians were window washers on the big buildings. And most of them came from Luzon Picolo which is a small island in the Adriatic off the the Croatian Coast, but the Croatians had the window washing business tied up and if you were looking for one, that was a good place to start.

DIXON: Right. And you also mentioned the story about the butler.

GALVIN: Oh, we had, Mike Brophy was one of the older inspectors and he was a man of considerable dignity and a very capable officer. And he did not take any nonsense. So this man, this Englishman, he was an English seaman, I don't mean to say he hauled ropes on deck, he was probably a purser or something, but at any rate, he had come here by deserting the vessel. He had been here for several years I would say, and he had an excellent job, he was a butler on a Long Island estate. And somebody must have known about him. at any rate, they reported him, and he was picked up and he was under warrant proceedings, so at the conclusion of the hearing he was permitted a few remarks and he said, "Why, I would even become an American citizen to stay here," and using even, that didn't impress the inspector. He didn't like it at all, of course, he didn't make any comment, but the hearing was concluded then.

DIXON: And the outcome of it was?

GALVIN: Oh, yes. I don't recall the actual outcome, but I would say offhand that maybe this man had sufficient influence in back of him. The deportation proceedings would not be cancelled, they couldn't be cancelled because he was here illegally, but they probably could arrange for him to make

a voluntary departure to Canada where he would go to the American Consul and make application for a visa.

DIXON: Right. Also you mentioned Diego Rivera.

GALVIN: One time we had Diego Rivera on the Island. The real interest in him was his Communist activities, but they could not substantiate that claim. But he did have a young Mexican girl with him, and it was on that strength that he was picked up.

DIXON: But he was not deported or anything like that?

GALVIN: He was allowed to go.

DIXON: He was allowed to go.

GALVIN: Oh, yes.

DIXON: And you mentioned also, other activities with the Communists.

GALVIN: Well, if you took, a Communist hearing was a long laborious task because you had to copy the Communist Constitution into the record. Xerox had not been heard of at that time. And that was a long task.

DIXON: Did you have many of those hearings?

GALVIN: Yes, we had quite a few Communists. Of course, you see, you would say, "Are you a Communist?" He was not going to say yes. See, he would have a membership card in this organization and then this organization tied to, another organization would be established and they would go along the line till they got to the Communist Party.

DIXON: Also

GALVIN: Oh, this is--

DIXON: Go ahead, I'm sorry.

GALVIN: Well, we will finish that now. Got any more? Are you familiar with Taylor Caldwell, the novelist? Well, she worked in Immigration.

DIXON: Oh, well that's (?).

GALVIN: She was a clerk in Immigration, and she married an immigrant inspector, Marcus Reback.

DIXON: That's when you were hear?

GALVIN: Yes, I knew Reback, I didn't know her because they worked in the Buffalo Office. And this naturalization investigation that I spoke of, they brought in their best examiners throughout the country to work on this because the thing became so big that they had to have good people, you know, competent. So they brought Marcus Reback down from Buffalo because he was very good in examining Jewish people, he spoke Yiddish, that was his language, and he was a very cultivated man. And his wife, whom he had met in Buffalo, was typist. She worked in Immigration too. So, this was 1937, I think, she was a writer, but of no success, when she made her first success, Where Eagles Gather and she was gone like wildfire since, but I worked with Marcus Reback, he was a good inspector, fine gentleman, well-educated man.

DIXON: And also you mentioned your husband's story about Cardinal Mensinti.

GALVIN: Well, one time my husband was working Sunday duty.

DIXON: He worked at Ellis, right?

GALVIN: At Kennedy.

DIXON: Right, at Kennedy.

GALVIN: He detailed for Kennedy. and two clergymen came in from Europe and they had no papers. So, my husband spoke to them and, of course, he could recognize that they were men of importance. And one of them was Cardinal Mensinti and the other man was his secretary. And Cardinal Mensinti was on his way to Canada, he was in transient to Canada to attend a meeting. and he had left in such haste that he had no papers. So, of course, the Diocesan authorities were contacted and they sent a man over and he was admitted, there was no question about it. But what impressed my husband was, that he went on to Canada, but he returned to his country when he knew that nothing awaited

him there but trouble.

DIXON: Right. And the one last thing that I was going to add on is, the other day you mentioned that there was an immigration scandal when you were at Ellis.

GALVIN: Yes.

DIXON: Leaving the names out could you just tell kind of a little summary?

GALVIN: Well, I'll tell you what happened. It developed into a, well, I don't want--

DIXON: Do you want me to stop?

GALVIN: Yes. Do you have anything else for me, other than to say good-bye.

DIXON: No, just the concluding thing about the, just tell us what the scandal was about, what was occurring?

GALVIN: Well, during the height of the immigration, when they were coming in here in great volume, some of these names would be garbled in the records. And a ship's manifest is about the size of this table, as you probably know.

DIXON: Very large.

GALVIN: And every ship that was admitted, that went through the process here in New York, the manifest was filed at Ellis Island. So they had the records going back, I think, to the '50s or the '60s.

DIXON: You mean, the 1850s?

GALVIN: Yes, but certainly from the '70s. For instance, in Brooklyn, there were many aliens who were here illegally, coming over the Canadian border, come in by various means, but they did not have any legal status. And it was not so important then as it is now, I mean, like you couldn't maybe get welfare or anything like that, but then there was no question about it then. Well, some smart persons who had access to these records, I don't how this came about, but say you were Mr. Tomashefsky, you came in, and you remembered that you came on the Kaiser Wilhelm and it was

in the spring of 1907. And you were with your brother, your uncle, or whatever. Well, these people would go through the records and they would find a name that could be construed as a (?) to Tomashefsky, about your age, and coming from the same place, the personal history could be adjusted. So for a small fee that you would pay to the manager of a political club in Brooklyn, this information would be passed on to you. And then you would go down to Naturalization and you would say, "I don't have any record to show that I came, but I remember that I came on this boat and we arrived here in March, it was cold, it was windy, and we came from Hamburg, and I was with my uncle and we were admitted. So they would take that down and they would go look up the manifest and sure enough there it was.

DIXON: So these people got in illegally.

GALVIN: So that was presumed to be--that was the basis for the application of naturalization. Of course, they never sold them anything that had already been used because they in turn would go here and verify it, you see. But that is basically how it was done. Well, the political club, the man who ran that and who was handling this, he was really a good guy. He has no sense of doing anything really terribly wrong, he was just helping out people. However, word got around, and he was picked up. I don't remember what the charge was, but he was charged with state law violation and a federal violation and he was convicted on both of them. But the sentences were not concurrent, they were consecutive. And they said, "Now look, you are a good fellow, we won't forget you, we will take care of you. You take the rap and everything is going to be just fine." So he took the rap and found himself all by himself. And nobody came near him up there, and he had a wife and children. Nobody broke their necks to taking care of them either. So he was about to conclude, he did conclude his sentence at Sing Sing and he was going to be transported down here to go to Lewisburg to start his Federal sentence. And he decided that he had had it and he was going to talk. So one day at Ellis Island, I was called up to the District Directors office and I was told to accompany this inspector whom I had never seen before who came from Philadelphia over to the United States District Attorney's office, in the old Post Office building in City Hall, and to stay and work with this inspector as long as he needed

me. If it was a week or if it was a month or whatever. And, of course, it was highly confidential and I was to be governed accordingly. So we went over and there he was, and he was a real friendly guy. And he talked, and pretty soon I was horrified. Everybody was in the act. and this was the basis of it.

DIXON: You mean co-workers at Ellis Island were involved in it?

GALVIN: That's right, that's right. And it grew to such proportions that there was a special assistant to the United States Attorney General for the prosecution of Immigration fraud appointed. And at first the office was in the Naturalization Building on Christopher Street. and then they moved it up to Ninth Avenue. and it went into court. Oh, the chief naturalization examiner was one of the very heavily involved, and when they had the record, they gave him the choice of talking or facing indictment, so he talked.

DIXON: So it was a big scandal at the time?

GALVIN: It was.

DIXON: Okay.

GALVIN: It lasted, oh, it lasted four or five years.

DIXON: Okay.

GALVIN: Because they had three or four attorneys, men of substance in the office on Ninth Avenue.

DIXON: Well, is there anything else that you want to add?

GALVIN: No, well, I would like to say if I haven't mentioned Mr. Mulholland.

DIXON: Okay.

GALVIN: Thomas Mulholland, he was the National Counsel of Catholic Men's representative for the Port of New York. And he had been a professor in the Fordham University School of Social Science. And he did great work on Ellis Island, was highly regarded. That's it.

DIXON: Okay. Thank you very much again.

GALVIN: You are very welcome.