

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Romanian Americans

Personal Experience

O H 953

ANDREW MUNTEAN

Interviewed

by

John Muntean

on

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JM. This is an interview with Andrew Muntean for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Romanian Culture in Mahoning County, by John Muntean, at 815 Detroit Avenue, on June 1, 1975 at 2.00 pm

Could you tell me what part of Romania your parents came from?

AM My father came from Moartes and my mother was born in Covasna, Romania

JM Is that in Transylvania, do you know?

AM That was in that part of the country, yes

JM. Could you tell me about when they came to the United States, about what year?

AM. I would say they came to this country about 1909 I was born in 1911

JM Do you know what motivated them to come to the United States? Was it to get a country that had more to offer, or what was their reason for coming?

AM Well, most of the people that came to this country at that time, came here with the intentions of getting a job and staying for a period of time and then go back with money They more or less said, "This country's money grew on trees " Most of them stayed here from one year to another, and they just happened to stay here for the rest of time Some did go back Some of the people that did go back, they went back with money, and they were well established over there in Romania then

JM Could you tell me then when they came to this country? What part of the United States did they first come to? Where did they go in the United States?

AM They were all throughout the whole country They more or less tried to find out where their relatives were They would go to that state or city, just like it is now There are people all over the country that you would not think there would be any Romanians there, but they are now Possibly they were at that time too, but more or less they all knew where certain people, relatives or cousins or uncles or some people like that were They would go in that area, and they would end up in that area for years

JM: When your parents came here, what part of the United States did they

come to?

AM: Well, they came to Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. There were not many people there in Coraopolis, but I would say about 20 miles away was Woodland which is now Aliquippa. Why, there were quite a few Romanians in Aliquippa.

JM: What kind of industry did they have over there at that time? Was it steel mills?

AM: Steel mills were in Aliquippa, but not in Coraopolis. My father worked in Aliquippa.

JM: Did he have an automobile or something that he would go over to the steel mills or a horse?

AM: Well, no they had a train that would go there. Most of the time he used to get on the freight train and ride in the boxcars. I can remember several times that he came home late from work because the freight train did not slow down enough so that he could get off the car and would end up ten miles away.

JM: Could you tell how your parents coped with the change of the American way of life? Did they ever mention to you if they had any difficulty in learning the English language or anything like that?

AM: No, that was never mentioned that I can recall.

JM: Well, do you know how they went about learning it?

AM: Just from one person to another, the neighbors and different people. He spoke Romanian in the house. They did not have any education, they did not go to school, but they learned.

JM: Where were you born in this country?

AM: I was born in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

JM: How old were you when you moved to Youngstown with your parents?

AM: I would say about seven years old.

JM: So you went to early schooling in Coraopolis then?

AM Yes, I was in the first grade there I was sick for about six months. I was behind in school

JM Was the school an old type of building?

AM Yes Well, it was more or less new at the time, but it was a brick building, a brick school

JM Did you have to walk to school?

AM Yes, it was not very far. I would say it was about seven blocks away

JM Then you came over here after you were about seven years old When you came to Youngstown, did you settle in a Romanian area of Youngstown?

AM Yes More or less Poland Avenue A block away was Powersdale, Parnell, Alexander, there were all Romanian people living in those streets there

JM: Did your parents know some of those Romanian people maybe from the old country themselves?

AM No

JM: Or did they have to become friends with them?

AM They did not know them, they were not from that part of Romania, but more or less he got to know them all They were not in that section of Romania

JM When you were a child of about seven years old, did you speak Romanian in the house or did you speak English?

AM Just Romanian.

JM Did you learn your English from other children?

AM Yes, from them and school

JM What did your father do for a living when he came to Youngstown? Where did he work?

AM He worked in Aliquippa in the steel mill. It was J & L which is Jones and Laughlin.

JM How about when he came to Youngstown? Did he still work there?

AM He worked at Republic Steel He started Republic Steel That is why we came to Youngstown Work was a little slow there in Aliquippa, so he came to Youngstown and did get this job there. So we moved over there then.

JM Do you remember is Romanian church in Coraopolis or anything at all over there? Do you recall?

AM No, there was not any at all over there In Aliquippa there was

JM. When you came to Youngstown, you enrolled at school What school did you go to in Youngstown?

AM The first one I went to was Poland Avenue School and that was near Center Street. The other school from there I went to up on the hill was Adams School, which is still there

JM. How did the children over there treat each other in regards to different nationality groups? Did they hold anything against different nationalities?

AM No, most of them were in the same fix as I was They were foreign people, too

JM So in other words the mingling between children was fairly good then?

AM Oh yes

JM What about in the neighborhood? Did some of the Romanian families get together in the neighborhood and maybe have like a picnic or something or a little party or something to entertain each other? What did they do?

AM They would just more or less visit each other They would want people that would have parties Nobody had parties at that time. When they did associate together, it would be at the Romanian hall with different kinds of plays

JM Was there a Romanian hall at that time?

AM Yes, there was a Romanian hall at Poland Avenue there at 645 Poland

Avenue where the expressway is now They tore that building down It was a large hall.

JM What kind of plays did they have in there? You mentioned about plays

AM Romanian plays Maybe they would have a dance after the play, Romanian program. Several people there, a man and a woman, they would go from one city to another, and they would be there It was a main attraction in those plays that they would have

JM So in other words, it was like a traveling group that would go and present these plays for the people?

AM Well, this man and his wife were, yes The rest were just ordinary people from here Ourselves would hold a play

JM Was it spoken in Romanian or English?

AM All Romanian

JM And were the people all dressed up as Romanians were in Romania, or did they have clothes like in the United States at that time?

AM No, we had clothes like we have now, but certain plays or parts of the plays in the program would be in Romanian costume but the rest would not The rest were the same as we are present time

JM In other words, only certain characters in the play would have Romanian costumes on

AM That is right, yes

JM Did most of their dances use Romanian music and songs, or was it a blender?

AM. Most of them were Romanian dances Occasionally they would have an American dance in between The orchestra itself was composed of saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, drum, and a violin They were all Romanians that played Naturally they would know all the Romanian songs They played American dances too, but not very many During the whole evening there were five or six dances, and the rest were all Romanian

JM Did the people who played in the band have to depend upon notes, or did they usually have their songs memorized?

AM: They had them memorized I never see anybody with any musical notes for it to dance. It sounded good though They were very loud with no microphones or anything like that I remember that they used to be awful loud When they would play, you were unable to speak to anybody until they would quit playing

JM Did the people already know how to dance those different Romanian dances Of course, I did not know, but I learned from them Whether I was doing it the right way or half right, nobody cared and neither did I

JM. Did the parents teach their children how to do the dances or did you learn from other children how to do them?

AM. Just watching the rest, that is all You would have to learn from the other person, the other party, or the other dance group The girl would learn your way, or you would learn her way I never danced with my parents.

JM No, I mean if they showed you some of the steps or something like that?

AM No

JM Could you tell me what Youngstown was like when you were a child of about seven or eight years old? What do you remember about Youngstown that sticks in your head?

AM About the climate or what?

JM. The climate, the buildings, or anything. Was that not around the Depression time or the start of it?

AM. No, 1922 when we came to Youngstown, there were a lot of people working I remember the streetcars going up Poland Avenue. You would have possibly four or five automobiles an hour going passed down Poland Avenue There would be horse had buggies and streetcars People would go to work and go home from work They would be walking on the sidewalks Sometime it would look like a whole army of people walking and going home after work was done There were not many automobiles The people went by foot mostly to work.

JM Did you have a job at that time as newspaper boy, or was later on that you got one?

- AM. No, I did not work on it until 1928. I did sell some papers in Youngstown in town I worked at Isaly's for a little while and worked at McKelvey's worked at a bottling company, a soft drink company
- JM So jobs at that time were not that hard to come by as they were later on
- AM I worked for the Moyer Company too on Wong Street Jobs were not too hard to get at that time until later on in 1929 and 1930; then work was hard to find
- JM About how much were you paid at some of those jobs when you worked?
- AM Well, when I sold papers, the first day I made \$ 14 for the whole day The second day I made less The third day I made more The fourth day I made more I remember going in on East Federal Street in the tavern A man I imagine had been drinking quite a bit bought all the papers I had I had about eight, and he bought them all He gave me extra money for the papers I just thought how could he read a newspaper, and here he buys them all
- JM Were there a lot of stores for people to go shopping at in downtown Youngstown at that time?
- AM Yes, there were stores all over the place, food stores, and they sold chicken Fish markets on East Federal Street, all over the place there were all kinds of stores As the time went on, one would close and another would close The last few years before the buildings were torn down, they were all empty But at that time when I was young, why, there were stores all over on East Federal Street, food stores, clothing stores, furniture, jewelry stores, but they all are gone
- JM Regarding the Romanian culture at that time even later on could you describe what maybe a day was like? For instance, I understand they used to have Romanian Day at Idora Park What did they do at such a place for such an event?
- AM It was mostly the people from out of town and out of state that you have not seen for years, they would get all together, and they would have that Romanian Day which they still have now It is held at different places, but at that time years ago it used to be held at Idora Park Idora Park would give the Romanian Society a certain percentage of the day's of whatever the people spent. They would get that in return I guess that was not enough



- JM Did they have plays like you mentioned they had at the Romanian hall at Idora Park, or was it just like you mentioned as a social gathering?
- AM At the very beginning they used to have it at High Bow Gardens. Then after that they did not have it any more, just Romanian Day alone with no other program I think for the first few years they used to have Romanian dances right there in the dance hall. As far as programs, Idora Park did have a theater That was situated across from where the wildcat ride is There was a theater over there, and they had a program in there I recall once or twice, but then they tore that theater down All they had after that was just Romanian dances in the dance hall Then it turned out that they had it in Heidelberg Gardens; that is about all that they had then.
- JM In other words, then later on it just became a social gathering place, Romanians, who wanted to come from other areas?
- AM. Yes, they used to come from Michigan, Pennsylvania One year they had people here from Canada Coming in from California they would come to Pennsylvania for visiting, and then from there they would come to Romanian Day
- JM Could you tell me whether or not at your house when you were a little child you had some traditional Romanian food or meals that carried through this Romanian culture from the old country?
- AM Oh, yes, we used to have different kinds of soups or zama
- JM What is in that zama?
- AM Zama would be more or less bean soup Soup would be like chicken soup Trocana would be like we are eating at the present time, beef stew Mamaliga would be corn meal You eat that with maybe navy beans smashed We would have sausage, and we called that carnat That would be homemade which I still make some occasionally now
- JM That chicken soup that you referred to, is it traditionally the Romanian one that has like what the Romanians call galuste in it, which is farina put inside and salt?
- AM That would be homemade noodles too They make it with rice in it The farina would be galuste Of course, as far as Romanian food some of that bake goods my parents used to make why, there would be scouarzi and there would be doughnuts and vigu That would be with sour cream and cottage cheese on top

JM Cozonac would be something like that too

AM Cozonac, yes, just ground up nuts mixed with egg and sugar

JM That would be put in the dough and bakes?

AM Yes

JM: When sometimes people would come over your house to visit, would your mom sometimes have this assortment of Romanian dishes or baked goods to give to them to eat?

AM: Oh, yes, she would have some of that, and sometimes she would make placinte clatite That would be flour with egg. It would be something like a pancake mixture Then another kind would be torchita . . . Well, in layers more or less in a layer That would take about a half hour to 45 minutes to make It would be more or less fried right in the skillet In fact that one is fried

JM. Also could you tell me a little bit regarding what changes you have seen that occurred as the years progressed on towards maybe the Depression and after the Depression? Was there any changes that you saw that occurred regarding the Romanian culture itself in the neighborhoods, the way they visit each other and like that? Did it continue even as such, or did it change?

AM Well, most of the people always visit each other As the people grew older and they passed away, why the younger set were moving to different sections of the city There would be just that many people less to visit each other They more or less kept close together. They all knew each other, their habits, and their different ways of life Now the different groups are thinning out and moving away

JM Do you remember the Romanian Orthodox Church on Wilson Avenue?

AM Yes, I remember I remember when they first went to the church, why, they have no seats There were just seats around the edge of the wall just for one person You had to be a member, and you had to pay for that seat for the whole year The rest of the church people at the beginning there were so many folding chairs and that was it Then you would have to stand up if you did not get there soon enough to have one of those folding chairs. You would have to stand up, and those side seats, well, just like a small bench was attached to the wall Those were for the members that paid for that seat for the whole year

JM. Did the people when they would go to that church, did they drive or did they take

buses?

AM: Well, most of them went by streetcars. There used to be cars called jetnies. Right at the beginning as far as I can remember I did not see any buses. There were jetnies or oversized automobiles. Most of them were touring cars. People rode streetcars, and, of course, if somebody was fortunate enough to have a car, why, they would take possibly one of the neighbors with them. They would mainly travel by streetcars.

JM: At that time that there was the church on Wilson Avenue, the Orthodox church for Romanians, did the Romanian Catholics have their own church at that time? Do you know, or did they also go to this same church?

AM: No, the Catholics had the church which is still there now on Prospect Street. It is off Wilson Avenue. It was only a block and a half away from the Orthodox church which was on Wilson Avenue.

JM: Were you ever inside that church?

AM: The Catholic Church?

JM: Yes.

AM: Yes, many times.

JM: Did they have seats to sit down?

AM: Yes, long benches.

JM: The inside of that church where they have the altar, did it at that time resemble what Holy Trinity on Wick Avenue has now?

AM: It is about the same, yes.

JM: In other words pictures and like that?

AM: Pictures, frames on the wall, nothing like a statue or anything like that. It was just pictures on the wall.

JM: Did that church also have their services at that time in Romanian, or was it in Italian?

AM: The Catholics?

JM Yes

AM Oh, that was all Romanian

JM All Romanian, oh, I see But it was the Catholic faith that was being preached then?

AM Yes

JM Did both churches get together sometimes and sponsor different events as co-sponsors?

AM Well, no, not exactly get together and sponsor anything like that, no, but when one church would have an event of some kind, the other church would mention that they were having such an event, or program, or dance, or the theater play Why, they would ask the people to attend it, and likewise, the other church would say to its people to attend when the other church would have it They more or less cooperated like that

JM Is the Catholic Church big inside, or was it a smaller type of church?

AM No, it is smaller, it is a smaller church Normally there were not as many and there still are not only I would say one third of the members that the Catholic Church and that the Orthodox church has at least two thirds more than the Catholic

JM So their church enrollment is lower

AM Orthodox has a bigger membership, very much bigger than the Catholic

JM Could you tell me regarding this church on Wilson Avenue a little bit about what the building looked like? Was it brick? Was it a wooden building?

AM On Wilson Avenue it was a framed building, and they had the basement remodeled that they held banquets down in the basement It was really remodeled to a beautiful state to I would say one or two years before they sold it. They sold the church, and they moved to Wick Avenue

JM Did anybody at that time mention why they moved to Wick Avenue?

AM Well, it was the church committee, I guess, who decided that they wanted something better than Wilson Avenue The priest's home on Wilson Avenue, the church itself?

AM Oh, it was smaller

JM Oh, smaller So maybe the increase enrollment in the Orthodox probably wanted them to get something bigger then

AM I guess they had some money, and they wanted something better That building on Wick Avenue there at 626 Wick Avenue I believed belonged to an Arms There was a mansion there that was vacant They bought it and remodeled it They just remodeled in into a church Most of that woodwork in the church at the present time belonged to that house in the different sections of that house, and that moved it around

JM. Oh, do you mean some of that cherry and like that is part of the original Arms' house?

AM Yes

JM And they carved it into different things by the altar?

AM. They moved it, and some of that wood in there is from the house that was there before

JM Do you know if they brought any of those pictures that they have at the altar, those icons, from the Wilson Avenue church over there, or did they put new ones there? Do you know?

AM I think they are more or less new ones. Of course, on the wall it was painted by an artist That is the same that has been on that church I believe since 1946

JM Do you recall then whether that church at Wilson Avenue had any choir or any place especially made for them as the one on Wick has?

AM. Yes, they had a place for the choir to sing.

JM. As they have it at Wick?

AM. Yes

JM. Who was the minister when the church at Wilson Avenue moved to the present place on Wick Avenue? Do you recall who the minister was at that time?

AM The only one I can remember is Father Stanila Father Stanila is the one I remember

JM The church itself during that time I think that they moved to Wick Avenue if I am not mistaken around in 1945 or something like that Did they have their services still in Romanian at that time?

AM They were all Romanian at that time At the present time it is divided to American language and Romanian, but at that time it was all Romanian, everything

JM. Do you have any idea what priest it was that started with this mixture of English and Romanian services?

AM Well, I would say that Father Stanila did start it He did put pressure on just having it done just divide it half and half But he was not a very good American speaker so he kept away from most of that and just used more or less most of it in Romanian

JM So it would be the one then who followed him who more or less lead into half and half

AM Yes, I would say so, yes

JM Who was the priest who followed Father Stanila?

AM Father Lazar He started with that A lot of Romanian people were divided in marriage Some of the Romanian people had a different nationality wife. Most of the time she would go to her church, and he would go to our church Being that they changed to having the services in American too Why, now the wives come to the church with their husbands

JM Was Father Lazar not at one time a member of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church?

AM Yes, he used to be the altar boy He was an altar boy at Wilson Avenue church

JM So he knew English as well as he knew Romanian language then, too

AM Yes

JM So that probably was a major factor in the sense that there was somewhat of a switch from all Romanian services with just a little sprinkling of English in it to half and half because he knew such a variety of languages What changes would you like to see occur regarding Romanian church on Wick Avenue? Would you like to see this continuation of languages of English and Romanian continuing of half and half, or would you like to see the service entirely in English or go back to

entirely in Romanian?

AM No, I think divided up and have it half in Romanian and half in the English language is about the best. I would not want to see it completely changed from divided like that into one because it is best that you divide it up into half and half.

JM A lot of the children do not understand Romanian at all. They cannot speak it or understand it at all, and many of the parents do not teach the children Romanian at home. Do you think that the Sunday School should teach them a few words of Romanian so that they could pick out a few of those words?

AM I think so. Why not? The more language a person knows the better off he is in all respects. You have that much advantage over one that just understands one language. It may come in handy for him sometime during life that he knows different languages. In fact to understand and read the different languages other than just two. I would like to have about six or seven or eight languages. It is easier to get a job if you know more languages than if you just know one.

JM Right. Could you tell me basically a few words in Romanian? For instance, how would you say good morning in Romanian?

AM Good morning would be buna dimineata.

JM What about good night or good evening?

AM Good night would be sara buna and you would say it as you enter. When you would leave, you would say sara buna.

JM I was told by some other people whom I have interviewed previously that in Romanian they have some customs of when you enter a building, you take off your hat and sometimes if you see a woman, you kiss her hand. Did any of your parents or anybody ever tell you any of those customs that they had in Romania like that?

AM No, no. Of course, it might be up in the high dignitaries who might do that. As far as taking off a hat when you enter a building, I think it is polite whether you are Romanian or not to take off your hat when you enter somebody's house or building. As far as kissing somebody's hand, no, unless she is queen or something, you have the pleasure of doing it. But I have not seen anybody doing it.

JM: Did they tell you any type of Romanian customs that they had in the old country at that time, refer to anything like that?

AM Nobody ever said anything to me about anything like that

JM No, I mean any other kind of customs Did they ever bring any other kind of customs up that they had in Romania?

AM Oh, you mean as you enter?

JM Yes, or any kind at all In other words that were customary customs of politeness or anything like that to etiquette as you call it now?

AM No, I do not recall anything like that No, I cannot say that I do know anything

JM. Regarding customs itself, were there any kind of customs that the Romanian people brought from the old country with them, or did they take up the American way of life for custom instead of continuing their own?

AM As far as custom brought over to this country would be normally the language and the food

JM Yes, but what about church referring to church, do not the Romanian people of the Orthodox follow a different pattern for church regarding Easter? Do they not still carry over their old country custom of celebrating Easter?

AM Yes, I think they do follow it The church does follow the old custom for Easter, yes, and Lent and all that

JM. I mean also not only following it too, but I mean even the church itself tries to teach the people who attend it some of the customs that have been handed down from generation to generation As the word Orthodoxy means unchanged, do they not try to still follow some of the old methods in which you take for instance what we call "pasti" That is supposed to resemble blood and body and so forth

AM That is wine and bread, holy bread and holy wine We still take that The custom as far as taking on that you do not drink any water or anything during that day until you take the offering Then after that, why, then the day is free to go ahead and eat and drink water or anything

JM. But that pasti is holy bread that has been blessed and mixed up with wine then?

AM. Yes.

JM So there is still some customs then that have been followed from the old country



too then?

AM Yes, but not too much

JM What changes would you like to see occur in relation to today's Romanian community in Mahoning County? Are there any changes, or would you like to see it continue as it has been and more Americanized?

AM I do not think they have to make any changes The changes will occur automatically by themselves It just seems to me like the Romanians will dwindle down to just a handful in years to come. It is just like we are here at home. Your mother and I could speak Romanian, and you understand us, but Jimmy does not understand

JM. That is my brother

AM. Yes, Jimmy Your mother and I do not speak it because it just does not occur to us that we should, and we are getting away There are a lot of words that I do not even recall how to pronounce

JM Now I want to ask you regarding Romania You were in Romania about two summers ago, I believe, with my mother. What were your impressions of Romania at that time? Can you tell us a little bit of what you saw?

AM. Well, we went to Bucharest, and we went on the outskirts of Bucharest to your mother's uncle. It was more like a village there. The houses are all congregated together, and the houses are old

JM Are they mud-brick houses, or are they stone?

AM. Stone, mostly stone and brick most of them They dress like we are here I did not see anybody with Romanian costume Of course, possibly in the small village they might be dressed that way yet As far as the streets, the streets are in terrible shape The only place the streets are nice and clean and good roads is right in the heart of Bucharest But as far as on the outskirts of Bucharest, there are cobble stone roads and broken down sidewalks They had some sidewalks there We went to the police station there to register that we were visitors The officers there said that we did not have to register and that it was okay So then we did not register We went to the market there. They had an open market The farmers would pick like they would something in their garden like I saw a man carry a watermelon, one watermelon.

JM They grow watermelons there?

AM They have a watermelon at that time He was going to the market there to sell it with one watermelon Some people had squash, two squash, and they were going to the market to sell it It was raining that morning So we just walked We walked about 11 blocks one way and 11 back As far as the houses, brick houses, stone houses, but inside they do not have the proper water

JM Facilities in other words

AM Everything seems to be way out of date

JM Do they have any air conditioning or anything at all or screens or anything on the windows?

AM No, the only place that has air conditioning as far as I understand it is in Bucharest at the Hilton Hotel. We did not stay there because I heard the rates were \$38 and up per day We stayed at the Lido Hotel which was \$22,35 a night

JM Did they have running water?

AM They had running water, but they had no air conditioning, no screens on the windows, and it was awfully warm That is about it, no fan, no electric fan, no anything

JM Did the people drink water over there?

AM I did not drink; your mother did not drink water We bought the water They call it bobic It was some kind of mineral water, B-O-S-I-C We bought two bottles of that.

JM You mean they advise you people not to drink the water over there?

AM No, nobody advised us over there We understood that from home not to drink it So we did not drink any water there. We drank some beer instead of the water for liquid

JM Oh, you mean, they have a lot of beer there?

AM Well, they have a lot of beer, but they are very big beer drinkers Towards evening around 9 00 or 10 00, every beer establishment would run out of beer There would not be any beer left

JM Where do they get that beer from communist countries or from the west?

AM Well, they got that from their own place

JM Oh, there is a distillery in Romania?

AM. They have breweries, yes

JM Could you tell me a little bit about the transportation they have in Romania? Do they use buses or cars or what?

AM To me I do not understand how they can get on the bus and get off the bus They had buses with trailers on them The bus itself had a second with folding doors between the bus and the trailer It is a really big bus They do have trolley buses too, electrical buses right in Bucharest As far as automobiles, they had these small cars Once in a while we saw a car from Michigan, we saw a car from Illinois, and two cars from Ohio They were parked in the street, and the people You would wonder if something was wrong. There were a group of people possibly 10 or 15 out around the car To me at first I thought there was something wrong They were there just looking at the car It was made in this country, and it was taken there by the visitors from here

JM Where did most of those cars that they have in Romania come from? Did they not have any dealer showrooms or something like that?

AM Yes, I saw one showroom over there that was near the American Embassy It had Volvo cars for sale, and that price in the window was \$35,550 lei, and I figured that out to about \$3400 or \$3500 in American money

JM What country makes the car? Do you have any idea the Volvo?

AM. The Volvo -- I thought it was a Swedish car, I am not sure They do have Italian cars there, Fiats and .

JM Did you see anything made from the iron curtain countries like Czechoslovakia or Poland or anything like that or East Germany?

AM There could be, but it is hard to tell what they are Most of the cars there are new cars, one or two years old, and they travel awful fast on that road in Bucharest Well, you try to establish where the end of that main road there in Bucharest is When one light turns green, they all turn green, and they start out of there. By the time they get to the other traffic light they are going 50 and 60 miles per hour To me it seems as though those small cars over there -- If they save money on gasoline on account of being a small car, they sure wear the tires out They save on gasoline, but they use more rubber because I never saw cars

go that fast through a main street like I did over there

JM. Did you see any police like they have in Youngstown with the cars or anything?

AM No, no Now I saw that the police over there are all soldiers If you see a soldier, he is a policeman They do have young women, I would say about 20, 25, to 30 years old, with blue skirts, white blouses, and they have a white sleeve on their right arm. They walk right into the center of the road. The cars just whiz right passed them, both sides of the road They watch for jaywalkers If you try to cross the street and it is not an intersection, why, you are chased back These girls blow their whistles, and you just better go back because if you do not go back some car is liable to hit you anyhow

JM. Were you at any of the stores over there in Romania?

AM Yes, all the stores there, I believe, are controlled by the government They all carry flag at the entrance, a Romanian flag and a Russian flag There are more flags, and if the flag is not high enough, it just brushes your hair and possibly hits your eyes as the wind blows the flags around They seem to be in good shape though because when the flag gets worn out or loses its color, why, I think the owner of the establishment has to have the stores are all under government supervision and the ones who work in the store do not own it But I heard differently that store belongs to the individual, but everything he sells over there the profit goes to the government.

JM. Could you tell us what you saw in some of those stores? Were you in a bakery at all?

AM Well, we stopped at a place where they were selling material on a roll He possibly had 200 or 300 rolls of material People go there, they take the material that he unravels off the roll They wrap it around there if they are going to make a skirt or something like a dress, and that is how she knows how much she wants to buy

JM So in other words they make a lot of their own clothing?

AM Oh, yes, and the material is very high I saw a lady over there who was measuring herself for a skirt, and it cost her five pounds or something for a yard for the material \$5 worth in American money Well, there are different prices. Now you take a place as far as food When we went into the store over there and bought some of that mineral water, we stopped over at the counter and bought some chocolate squares, cake They told us the cost of it Of course, naturally I had paper money You give them paper money, and they gave you

coins back. But they try not to. You have to have the right amount of change. They are afraid that you are going to take the money and coins and keep the coins. You are not allowed to bring any back from that. If you take money from here, they want our money but they do not want us to bring their money back.

JM: If you buy eggs or something in a store over there, do they usually have them in cartons and stuff like that?

AM: They have them in cartons, but they take the cartons. They give you the eggs, but they want the cartons back. I saw a lady there with a shopping bag. She had the eggs, she bought a dozen eggs, and she had the eggs in the shopping bag with different packages in between because they want the cartons back. At another place they were lined up. I said to my wife, "That is pescarie. That is where they sell fish. Let us take a walk over." We walked over to where they were selling the fish, and they were selling carp. They are short, they are not very long like they are in this country, but they are awful fat. This man was taking the fish from a big tank.

JM: Oh, you mean it was still alive?

AM: They were swimming around. He must have had around 200 or 300 in that big tank.

JM: That tank must have been huge.

AM: Then the person who would want to buy a fish, one or two, why, this other man that had a small tank would tell you that man, "Uno." That is one. He would catch a fish, and he would throw it in the small tank. In the small tank this man would take with the net and put it in paper. Then they would weigh it. They would have the fish tight in the paper so it would not wobble around. They put him on the scale and sold the fish that way, alive.

JM: Well, this man had a long handle, and he had a net that I would say was two feet wide -- it was almost square. I would say two by two. He would catch one or two, whatever this person wanted, and then he would throw it in the small tank and this man would catch the fish. They would not put more in there than what the customer wanted because then this man with the one net would have to go all around through the whole tank to get it.

JM: Well, carp grow to be real big -- I know that. But how big was this? Was it about a foot or two feet long, most of these carp?

AM: No, about 14 inches. They were shorter than they are in this country. They were

real short and stubby I would say they averaged about two and a half to three pounds a piece

JM So then they would put them in the paper, and the person would walk with the paper with them in there still wiggling around?

AM Well, there was one man who stopped in and had a beer He walked in with a plastic bag, and he had a fish in the plastic bag with some water in the plastic bag He laid it down by his foot, and the fish was trying to swim in the water in the plastic while he was drinking his beer He wobbled against his leg, and he turned around and looked at the fish and told him to keep quiet. He picked the bag up, and this fish was trying to swim in the amount of water it had. It did not have very much water They carry the bread The shortage of paper Anybody who buys bread there they would put it under their arm and carry the bread walking down the street with the bread with no paper on it We tried to get some hard rolls in the place. That girl said that we would have taken that the way they were I did not want to put any hard rolls in my coat pocket We just did not buy any The shortage of paper

JM Did they have Coca Cola and ice cream and that kind of stuff in Romania?

AM. Ice cream in paper cups, they have that They have Pepsi Cola

JM Like in the United States?

AM In small bottles, yes Most of the people did not drink that all them I saw Coca Cola there and Pepsi Cola

JM But they do not drink so much of that stuff as they do here?

AM No, they drink mostly beer

JM Could you tell me a little bit about the arts, for instance, radio and television? What do they have on radio and television if they have any?

AM Well, they have television The program starts at a certain time in the evening possibly 7 00 and at 11.00 it is canceled.

JM It is all black and white television?

AM Well, at that time that is all that we saw, black and white They possibly have color now, but they did not. I did not see any color television in this hotel that we stayed in Their program is all Romanian

JM Is it singing, dancing, or what?

AM Singing, dancing and you know At 11:00 there just is not any more, the stations go off

JM So in other words their television is almost like how you were when you were a child You went to see them sing and dance Romanian style at different events and put on plays They are using television to do it now

AM Yes, and they have speakers on there on television, which is communistic and probably advises people what to do during the coming weeks or something like that It is like a news commentator, but I was not interested in what he had to say

JM Those people there, their radios, we have transistors that fit in our pockets and even smaller than our pocket Did you notice if they ever made it? Do Romanian people have things as far as this?

AM. Well, they have transistor radios, but the smallest one -- the one I took over there -- was a little larger than a pack of cigarettes, and it played awful good there on their wave Their transistor radios -- I did not see any small ones. They are all bulky like approximately ten inches long and eight inches tall. When they saw this radio that I took over there, they could not figure out how something like that could work I just turned it on, and I turned it down on there and just like that, Romanian music.

JM Did the people in Romanian, those that you spoke to even on the street or any place or at a store, did they seem to have a little knowledge of the English language, or was it mostly purely Romanian that you have to speak to them?

AM Well, I tell you, we spoke Romanian a lot of times over there when we went into places, but it is best not to It is best to speak English language

JM. Why?

AM. Because they know that if you are a stranger, they will treat you better If you speak Romanian to them, they will think that you belong there and that you are just a rich person there with money, they will not cater to you. They just think that you are just one of them If you speak the American language, they know you are a visitor there Well, they just go out of this world to treat you the best that they could possibly maybe in return for a little extra cash maybe We do not know, but we found that out It is best to speak in American They will understand a little. It was funny to see little boys there on the street walking

together and speaking Romanian, you know We saw two colored people over there They spoke in Romanian They were students from a different country I guess, but they had an American automobile In the small villages it may be different, I do not know, but in Bucharest it is best to . Of course, a lot of times you can speak American language over there and no one will know what you are saying. That you do not know, but if you speak Romanian, they do not think that you came from here Those people there dress the same we do Girls have short dresses and high heel shoes at that time with their hair fixed real nice. You could not tell whether they were Romanian or not.

JM The people in the United States, a lot of the people here have pets, dogs, cats, you name it, they have it Did you notice if the people in Romania had quite a few pets, dogs running around in the streets as around over here?

AM No, not running around We went to your mother's uncle's, and there were dogs tied up It seems to me just like your uncle said. "Oh, you do not have to worry about locking the window or locking the door because nobody will come in Nobody will bother you " They are afraid because if they get caught stealing something, they will send them away People go about their work

JM And they mind their own business?

AM. That chance we did not know, you know, so we were careful We had the doors locked because there is always somebody who is liable to take what you do have

JM Now, at that airport that you landed and took off from in Bucharest, was that a modern type of airport, or did you have to go some place else to get the big jets?

AM No, this airport just opened about three years ago I imagine that airport is about five to seven years old at the present time So when we were there, it just opened The airport, when Nixon went there, was only one year or two years old. So when we went there, it was approximately four or five years Since then it has been two years So I would say the airport is about seven years old It is not very large, but it is modern I do not think the airport is big enough for four motor jets because they all had only two motors or three motors The real large airplanes, I have not seen them land over there Now I could be wrong because Nixon's plane had four motors, but I do not know if he went around with his

JM Is the airport real close to the city, or is it like in Youngstown? Vienna is called Youngstown

AM It is like here I would say it is 10 or 15 miles away from the heart of Bucharest



JM So that you would have to take a bus or taxi to it?

AM Yes

JM Are there a lot of taxis around?

AM Yes, a lot of taxis every place in Bucharest Broken down cars There are taxis There are some good ones. I noticed the gasoline was \$1 25 or \$1 23 for a liter That is a little more than a gallon of gasoline \$1 23 or \$1 25 was so high for a gallon -- well, we called it a gallon, but actually it is a little more than a gallon of gasoline. I know from where we left the uncle's with the taxis too You call a taxi and you are going to a certain part of Bucharest, the taxis half raise when they get the call. They charge you from where you are getting off They charge you from going from there to pick you up to take you back You are paying for both trips

JM: Oh, so it is wherever they are notified, and you have to pay them from when they are notified to go to you?

AM. Yes, but supposing like we went to the Lida Hotel We had to pay the taxi from Lida Hotel to pick us up to take us back We had to pay for both ways. I do not think that is right It was not too expensive though About five miles we paid \$2 for it You are only allowed three people in the taxi

JM: Is that right?

AM Yes, two people in the back and one with the driver If there is an extra person, they will not carry you

JM: So if there are four or so on, they

AM. Well, there were four at the time and your mother's niece, her boyfriend had to go back with us We went with the taxi He just would not carry three in the back and one in the front. Just two in the back and one in the front, he would not allow that

JM. The buildings in the downtown are of the large cities, are they modern now as the airport, or are they still old?

AM There are a lot of old buildings there. There are a lot of old buildings, and they are empty They are empty; there is nothing in them As far as clothing stores in the window, they advertise this clothing in the window You go in the store you do not find it

JM You do not?

AM No, it is in the window. If you want that garment from in the window and it is your size and you want it, then you have to pay a lot more than it is advertised for. Then they only sell it to you if you hand them a little extra money on the side.

JM What about theaters? Did they have movie theaters in Romania?

AM They had one across the street from the Lida Hotel that we saw. We were going to go to it, but the theater gets filled, then the picture starts. When the picture is over, everybody goes out. I said to your mother, "I am not going in there. It is warm over here in that theater with all those people congregating."

JM: There is no air conditioning in there at all.

AM I do not know if they have any or not, but every time somebody came out of the theater, they were wiping their forehead, they were perspiring. So it could be. The big restaurant across the street from where we stayed had Romanian music on going until way late at night, but they had no screens on the windows. There were no screens any where that we saw that has a screen to keep the flies out.

JM Do they have any curfews in that city over there so that everybody has to be off the street at a certain time of night?

AM No, no, but from 2:00 in the morning until about 4:00 they have trucks with big tanks on. There were women -- not men -- with big, heavy, push brooms sweeping the street and scrubbing the road with water hose. Approximately for each truck there are six women ahead pushing the paper and behind wetting the street and wetting the sidewalks. If there is anybody drunk on there, he just gets soaked because they squirt the hose. I would say that the stream of water from that hose would go about 50 to 100 feet away. There is a lot of pressure from that tank. There is one truck going in one direction and one truck going another direction. Where they know they are going to run out of water, there is another truck waiting to start where this one stops while he gets a supply of water. I did not see any fire plugs out on the street. I do not know where they get the water from. But they do have on the posts, lights for evening, and they trolley buses go through, not gasoline or diesel.

JM: Do they run almost continuously?

AM I said to your mother, "It seems to me like there are more buses here than I saw in all my life. One after another."

JM Do they run during the night time?

AM Well, they run until about 2 00 in the morning Then at 4 00 they start again At 4:30 in the morning there are people all over in town again For two hours there seems to be maybe one or two people walking the street, two drunks in one place and another drunk at another place. There are no women, they are just men walking. You can hear them walking around, and they are not carrying nothing They are not buying anything Once in a while you see people with bread under their arm that they bought Sometimes you see a person with two breads, one under each arm and his hands in his pockets As far as clothing I did not see anybody

JM Could you tell me something about where you worked, dad, and what you job is like?

AM I work for Republic Steel For the last 16 years sharpening tools, gutters, and dyes for the machine instruments that pertain to cutting pipe and threading pipe It is hard carbon steel. It is hard to be sharpened at certain degrees. They use these tools to produce pipe for customer, for oil lines, gasoline lines That s the main job that I have now Years ago I cut pipe myself and tested pipe on the tester with water pressure

JM How long have you worked at Republic Steel?

AM. Well, this month on the 15th, it will be 41 years, or have a lot of the machinery and things like that remained the same? I know there have been changes in men and procedures.

AM Well, the machinery, yes In 41 years they changed three theaters used for testing pipes That involved around \$500,000 for each change The welder welds the plates for pipe in tubular form was changed, and that cost about \$8,000,000 when they installed it. That is installed now, let us say, 14 years It is not considered new any more, but it is still one of the most modern ones in the country Of course, there are some other ones that produce smaller pipe This new welder we have produces from 6 5/8 diameter to 16 inches in diameter. They are made from coil Sometimes if the pipe is a lighter gage, they can get at least 12 to 14 pipe from one coil The coil are not welded together One coil, say, makes 12 to 14 pipe, and then they start another coil Nevertheless it is faster. They can make 16 inch diameter pipe as fast as they can make 6 5/8 Sometimes they have gotten as many as 600 to 700 inch of pipe in eight hours That is 65 feet of pipe, that is 6,500 feet of pipe for 100 pipe It is considered around eight or nine miles for eight hours That is a lot of pipe

- JM Could you tell me when you started to work there, did the men and their bosses wear these safety helmets that they wear today?
- AM No, the safety helmets just came into existence. It is in between five and 10 years. Goggles, safety goggles, were only required for the last 15 years. Up until then you did not need any safety goggles. It is not that you did not need them; it is that you were not required to wear them. Now you are required to wear those safety goggles at all times and your helmet at all times and your helmet at all times. That is a good safety procedure because a lot of men fall off a car or something. Three weeks ago a man fell off a pile of pipe in a car, and his helmet cracked. If he did not have his helmet, his head would have cracked. It still was a loss-time accident because he broke his shoulder. With goggles, there are less eye injuries now than there ever was. There are always those cutting their fingers or something like that. Last year was the best year there ever was. But now with eight minor injuries in one day, like cutting fingers and things like that.
- JM Would you consider the amount of layoffs now to be almost as bad as it was almost before the Depression back in the latter part of the 1920's and the early 1930's?
- AM Well, you are asking me something that I can say, "No, it is better now." There is a big demand for pipe, so our place is working. People from other departments fill in for people who are sick or on vacation. At our place now at the present time they are working seven days a week up at our place. But the old tube mill where they make smaller pipe, that is really slow. Well, in fact, next week it will be down completely.
- JM So in other words if a place is down completely, the people who have seniority have the choice of going and working some place else like your department that is still functioning?
- AM Yes, they are sent to our department to fill in. Then some of our men that are younger. They are still working as far as it goes because the older men from different departments come and work at our place, but they have to be transferred before they can push a younger man out. They have to be transferred, and nobody gets transferred unless the department is completely shut down forever. Then they get a transfer to our place.
- JM. Do they go by department of seniority or overall mill seniority?
- AM It is all mill now, it used to be department seniority but that has been canceled since last fall.

JM Is there anything else that you can think of that is important regarding Romania, the mill, or Romanian culture that you would like to add that we did not think about?

AM There are probably a lot of things that I could talk about, but I do not know if it would be important or not. As far as Romanian people, a lot of them passed away, the old-timers and

JM Did a lot of them work in the mills, some of them?

AM Romanian people?

JM Yes

AM That was about the only place that they ever did work. Some were fortunate enough to open their own business. There used to be different stores run by Romanians, yes. There were circles that had a meat market on Watt Street there in Youngstown. Clecklin had a tavern on Market Street, and he had a grocery store out on Alexander Street back in 1930. Muntean had a grocery store on Alexander. They bought that from Clecklin. Mr. Taceau was always connected with the restaurants and taverns, and Mr. Dibricleu had a tavern on Midlothian. There were a number of people who had businesses, but mostly the ones that came from Europe -- years ago I am talking about -- why, they worked directly in the mill. Some of them made and saved money at that time. After so many years they went back to Romania but most of them stayed here because they liked the country. Back in 1920, 1922, the most person was making an hour was \$ 17, \$ 18 an hour, and you worked 10 hours, you made \$1 80 a day. Then the pay went up. When I started down at work, I was making \$ 37 an hour back in 1934. Then it came to \$3 54 a day later and so forth. But it was hard to save money. Of course, everything else was reasonable. Now you make a lot more but then you spend a lot more.

JM You also were and still are a World War II veteran. Does the Romanian society or group or anything have any organizations?

AM Yes, they had one here in Youngstown for volunteers. I belonged to that society.

JM What is the name of the group that you belonged to?

AM American volunteers.

JM. Oh, and that was World War I and World War II?

AM Well, mostly, yes The old-timers that were in World War I, there were only a handful left The rest are the ones who were in World War II

JM And this was only for the Romanian people, or was this for any nationality?

AM It is supposed to be Romanian only, but as far as I know I do not know whether there were others in there or not, but I think it is only Romanian. There are not too many in there that belong to it They have money in the bank

JM Well, if they have different functions, probably, you get together

AM Yes, they had meetings twice a year and a party in the fall

JM I have a closing comment then. You would say then that it is more or less up to the parents and the family and the church and the present day generation to keep the Romanian culture alive for the future then?

AM Oh, it is definitely the people that should try to preserve it

JM What about those who have intermarried? Do you think then it should be up to the church to try to get them to send their children to church to try to show them some of the Romanian words and customs and like that and tell them a little bit about it?

AM Well, I do not know To get the people to go there is one thing and for the children it is another thing I do not think some of them are interested in whether their children can speak a different language or not

JM Well, dad, thank you very much for this interview I appreciate it

End of Interview