

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Ethnic Groups of Youngstown

Personal Experience

O.H. 1193

ERNEST C. TOSKAS

Interviewed

by

Molly A. McNamara

on

August 11, 1988

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: ERNEST C. TOSKAS
INTERVIEWER: Molly A. McNamara
SUBJECT: Cities of Greece, customs & traditions
DATE: August 11, 1988

M: This is an interview with Ernest C. Toskas for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Ethnic Groups in Youngstown, by Molly McNamara, at 111 East Philadelphia Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio 44507, on August 11, 1988, at 3:30 p.m.

Okay, Mr. Toskas can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Tell me about your family? Your brothers and your sisters?

T: I have no brothers, but I do have three sisters and we grew up in a very happy home. My father was a good provider and I had a gracious mother with a minimal education but a home-body, who didn't work out of the house. We lived in an ethnic neighborhood called Plum Alley of the Flats area in Warren, Ohio, where I grew up initially. Then we moved to a better neighborhood which was Clinton Street.

M: Now, are you the oldest?

T: I am the oldest child of the family.

M: And what year were you born?

T: I was born in 1914.

M: Okay.

T: We left Nebraska and came East to Ohio.

M: Okay.

T: Because you have to remember we left the western areas and came here so when we talk about where the family really got together...

M: Okay, that is fine.

T: And we lived as I said in this ethnic group on Plum Alley; it does not exist anymore; it was in Warren, Ohio. No one kept doors shut then. There was an interchange and an interaction everyday. I mean the homes were open always. The women were always in the kitchen. I remember pots and pans boiling and good smells; food all/the time, laughter all the time. Everyone had a small plot of ground to tend. They had tomatoes, lettuce, onions, and the usual items that you put in a garden. My dad as head of the family would be in front, my mother right behind him and those of us were the ducks, the rest of the children. That is how we went to church every Sunday.

M: What church did you attend at this time?

T: We went to St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Warren, Ohio.

M: Okay.

T: We went to Greek plays, there were church festivals and picnics. That is where all of the activities centered, and where you met the entire Greek community. Everyone's ethnicity, depending on what part of Greece, depended on what kinds of food that they made. So you always had a variety, everything was different. Now we are Corinthian Greeks. I happened to marry a girl whose parents were Asia Minor Greeks and they were fabulous. My mother-in-law and my mother were great ladies and I might add fantastic cooks.

M: Now the neighborhood you said was ethnic and these were all Greeks that you...

T: They were all Greeks up and down. When we moved to Clinton Street, then, of course, there was interchanging. There were Italians, we had Slovaks, Russians, Serbians, etc. We had the first Arab family on the street.

M: Really?

T: For the first time, they were at the lower end and they kept to themselves. They felt like outcasts even then. Then growing up was pleasant. I mean the usual hop, skip, and the jacks that we would see the girls playing with, and the fellows would be playing tag or kick the ball.

M: No.

T: We went swimming at the old Mahoning River under the trestle.

M: Really?

T: We wore no bathing suits so I don't have to tell you that we went skinny dipping and there were never girls, never. That was just a no-no. In our day, the just the fellows went, you stripped; nobody was around. It was next to the railroad track and you swam in the Mahoning River. It was a lot cleaner than it is presently.

M: Sure.

T: You wouldn't dare dive into the Mahoning River presently.

M: Tell me a little bit about what your father did? You were describing it to me.

T: Well, my dad was a grocer in Warren.

M: Okay.

T: He was a railroader before he became a grocer, but he hated the grocery business. We went to Florida and he was a road builder for all of those years. Subsequently, coming back in 1929 after the crash and low and behold he got back in the grocery game and then after the grocery game. Then in 1933 or 1934 when he just couldn't keep the grocery store anymore, there were just so many debts, that he closed it and went to work for the county and finished his career with the county Highway Department, and this is what he did. He was a foreman.

M: I see.

T: He retired at seventy-five and enjoyed life. He lasted another four more years and died of pneumonia. He didn't suffer at all. I was in the restaurant business.

M: Okay, let me take you back a little bit further.

T: Certainly.

M: You said that your father came over here by himself from Greece?

T: Yes, he did.

M: Where did he come from in Greece?

T: He came from Corinth, Greece. He was a Corinthian Greek. Now, who recruited him I don't know. I should have probably asked him all of those questions, but I know that he came into New York.

M: Into Ellis Island?

T: Into Ellis Island and from there I know that they put a little strap with a little card and a little sign in front of his chest with his destination because they put him on a railroad car and they took him out to either Nebraska or Colorado.

M: I see.

T: He was a single man. So, he worked all of those years between all of these states-Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, and Colorado as a single man.

Now a war is declared in Greece against the Turks and the Bulgarians in 1911 and my father a patriot, still single, went back with his own money and was in the Greek army, and fought the Turks and the Bulgarian's in 1914. Luckily, that his period was over and he came back to the village, married my mom, got her on a boat and then came back to America. Evidently, when they came back they did not come into Ellis Island, they must have come into Country Garden.

M: What year was this when they came back?

T: It had to be 1914.

M: So, Ellis Island was still opened then?

T: I know but I think that in their coming back they came back through Country Garden. They could have come back through Ellis Island, but I never heard him say anything about it. I know that he came initially to Ellis Island. That was his debarkation point and of course he was a good, fit, disciplinarian...My father was a very strong human being. He was a strict father he didn't put up with any disobedience. He said to you, "I want this done." I mean he didn't tell you a second time. He was that kind of a man. Now, my mom was a different kind of person. She was a mild lady who as a young girl and worked in my grandfather's vineyards. Because in the villages one of the problems in Greece was that they

had a lot of children and of course my grandpa on my mother's side had grape arbors and my mother's job as a young girl was to go out and cut the tendrils to get more grapes on the vines. She died in Warren, Ohio, buried in Warren. The doctor looked at her and then came out and said, "What did your mother do as a young girl?" And I said, "Why are you asking me doctor?" He said, "I never saw feet like your mom's." You know from the hard work. They probably didn't have shoes.

M: Yes.

T: And there she is out there cutting those tendrils.

M: How about that.

T: Yes, other than that she was a good homemaker, she was a good mother.

M: Okay, can you describe for me the Depression? Do you remember much of the Depression?

T: Yes, I do.

M: Tell me a little bit about that?

T: We closed our business during the Depression because those that owed my father couldn't pay him. And there was nothing that he could get from them. I will never forget my sister, Ann. When we closed the store I had a red wagon, we loaded the canned goods and we took them all home. We must have had canned goods for a year and a half from the store. At least we got everything in canned goods to out home.

A lot of families had hard times. Now, we didn't suffer. My father worked during the Depression. He didn't make a lot of money. I remember him saying \$17.00 a week, sometimes \$15.00 a week. But rent was only \$17.00 a month.

M: Well, what did he do then during the Depression?

T: He worked for the county or the city one of the two. He had gotten a civil job of some sort at that time. We now lived on Griswold Street. We had moved from Franklin to Griswold Street. We never had our water cut off, we had a telephone. We had our utilities. They used to deliver coal. We had a coal furnace that my mother fired, my dad wouldn't do that, my mother did that. Of course when I was a little older I helped her with the ashes. I imagine that you never even heard of one that had grates that moved back and forth; your dust and cinders would fall down and then you took them outside and spread them in the garden because after all that is

phosphate and it helps the soil.

M: Did you attend a Greek school at all when you were a child?

T: Yes, I did.

M: Tell me about it then.

T: I attended Greek school. My dad was making a good living we had a tutor in our home, who tutored myself and my sister Ann, who is eighteen months younger than myself, right in our home. Subsequently, we went to Greek school in warren and I also went to greek school in Florida and I finished five years in Greek. I still have the diplomas upstairs.

M: So, what was the purpose of the Greek school? Your parents...

T: One of the main reasons I went to Greek school to learn fluency in Greek and not to forget the customs, or where our roots began.

M: I have seen that the Greeks are so wonderful in passing this on. I don't see this in any other culture, where did they impress upon their children to learn the language. I primarily thought that it was for the language. Is it because your parents didn't have time though to teach you themselves?

T: They didn't have the education or background to be able to teach. My father was probably a third grader. My mom had gone just to the first grade in the Greek school, and then had to go to the fields to help my grandfather and grandmother.

M: I see.

T: She couldn't teach us. Common sense yes, but as far as book learning that was from the teacher that we brought into the house and subsequently through the Greek schools that we attended. It was mandatory. When I used to finish grade school down at the Portables, as they call them, On South Park Avenue I went right to Greek school, right at the Greek-Orthodox church. There were three classes, first, second, and third grade depending on your age. Then of course when we moved to Florida I went to third, fourth, and fifth, grade.

M: I see.

T: I would leave American grade school and walk across the street to Greek school until 6:00 p.m.

M: Now, would you say that your upbringing was rather strict?

T: Yes.

M: Do you think that your parents were? Strict?

T: Yes. It was expected of you and you respected everybody. I don't care who the human being was there was a built - in respect; self respect which you were taught came first and there is a Greek word for that and it is called Esthima. That is self respect anybody else.

M: Now, tell me a little bit about high school. Where did you end up going to high school?

T: Well, I went to Central Junior High School and to Warren G. Harding High School and Warren, Ohio. I was a good student. I was a National Honor Society student of Warren G. Harding. I was good in languages. I was the president of the Spanish Club. I did a debate in Spanish with a fellow American-Greek and we won.

M: That is interesting.

T: I studied German in college because I was going to be a metallurgist but that didn't happen. Then I studied Italian at Mount Carmel in my later years.

M: Oh, wow.

T: It is a musical language and very nice. Pat was taking courses at Youngstown State University. She took courses in guidance and counseling. While Pat was at Youngstown State University I went to Mount Carmel and took Italian classes.

M: That is wonderful.

T: Yes.

M: So, right after high school then did you go into the service?

T: No, when I finished high school I went to North Dakota State. There a fellow Greek that came through Warren, sponsored my first year and payed my first years tuition and I finished a full year of college at North Dakota State University at Fargo, North Dakota and then I subsequently came back and started working.

M: Then what did you do when you came back here? What kind of job?

T: Since there were few jobs available here, I went up to Buffalo, New York. I had an uncle there that had cigarette machines. I helped him a little bit. I also worked in a restaurant there. Then I left there and I came back to Warren. Now this is 1937, things were awful.

M: In Youngstown?

T: Youngstown, Warren, and this entire area. Here I am a young man, hair cuts were a quarter and I didn't have \$.25 for a hair cut. I didn't want to go to my father even for a quarter. I had a good education. I will never forget Judge Dewey B. McVictor, a judge from the Warren, Ohio. The WPA had come into the area and I asked him to help me get a job with the W.P.A. I went down and applied and they called me the next day. I became the timekeeper and I stayed with them until I met Pat on October 31, 1937 at a Halloween dance at her church, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Youngstown, and I stayed with them until 1938 when I got my first break. I had another friend who was a classmate of mine by the name of Dorothy Dobbins; her father was a doctor. I called her on the phone and I said, "I need a job." She said she would talk to her father. She was also a National Honor Society member as I was. Sure enough the next day, Dorothy called me and asked me to see her father, Dr. Dobbins, who was the company doctor of Youngstown Press Steel Corporation in Warren, Ohio.

M: Oh, I see.

T: I was called by Youngstown Press Steel Corporation., Dr. Dobbins examined me and I got the job. We made panels for kitchen cabinets.

M: I see.

T: Yes, and I worked there for nine months until we made one hundred thousand cabinets and they closed the whole plant. So, then I was out looking for work. I called the superintendent of schools at the time. It was a gentleman by the name of H.B. Turner. One of the most respected men in all of Trumbull County. When he asked me what I wanted to do, I said, "I'll do anything." He mentioned he had a friend and as it turned out, it was Frank Flynn, a resident of Youngstown, who was the general manager of Republic Steel Corporation of Warren. I got a job at Republic Steel and I stayed with them until I was drafted in 1942.

M: And what did you do for them?

T: Well, I was a chipper initially.

M: What was a chipper?

T: That was a terrible job. That was taking the burrs, depressions and faults out of steel bars. There were fault lines that had to be removed out of steel before they could go into the furnace to be rolled into coils. But, another gentlemen, Mr. Blyholder, looked at my resume and said, "You have an excellent education, what are you doing out there?" When I told him Mr. McCauey had assigned me to the job, he said, "that is ridiculous. We are bringing you into the office." I was filthy; when you work with an air-gun and a chisel, the result from the spray of the gun is a mixture of dirt and oil. I told him I would be in the next day, all cleaned up. Anyway, I got a new job and I was the recorder and worked in the office.

M: I see.

T: I worked at Republic Steel Corporation from 1939 to 1942 when I was drafted. I had a very decent job. I had worked on the open-hearth floor, the blooming mill and finally the strip mills where i finished out as a recorder. I did the head work and the writing. The war years came along and my father called me at work to tell me I had been drafted. My draft number was 777; that tells you how fast in 1942 I was in. that may 1st, I was inducted at Camp Perry. They took us down to Fort Knox and that is where I did my training, and other training at Cumberland and went through the manuevers at Camp Campbell, Kentucky area. From there, we were stationed at Camp Myles Standish, and then over on the USS Brazil to Europe. We came by the shores of England and then right into the estatuary of LeHarve and then to Rouen and Nancy into the southern part of Germany and then right Julich, Germany. We were the assault troops for Munich; we went through Belgium also. Our unit was assigned to General Patton's third army. We made the thrust into the Black Forest in those areas and then we were in Dachau, Nuremburg, and from there to Schladming, Austria.

M: And you were in a tank division is that right?

T: Yes, I was.

M: Okay.

T: Then, when we finished the war, we were pulled back from Schladming, Austria, into Germany, right on the outskirts of Munich.

M: Now, were you one of the first ones to get into Dachau?

T: No, I belonged to the 413th armored artillery battalion; we were maybe two days after the initial assault

of the 414th armored artillery battalion, of the 20th armored division units.

M: So, it had already been liberated?

T: Yes, what they had already done was they had made roads safe for travel. There were a lot of Americans, of course, hurt, maimed, and killed in this action. We got to see the infamy. It was unbelievable treatment of human beings of other human beings. It was just awful. A lot of our men couldn't eat. We had mess at a specific time; that particular night, I don't think anybody ate from the horrors that they saw from the German nationals.

M: Yes.

T: Our command marched the entire population of the little village of Dauch, three to four thousand German nationals, with the Mayor of Dachau in front, through the crematories in order for them to see the horrors of Dachau. They could not believe what they saw, or perhaps, did not want to believe the atrocities perpetrated right in their own village. The mounds of dead were still on the grounds on the first day and were sprayed with lime so that there wasn't any smell. You have to understand, of course, that they didn't stop the ones that were putting the bodies in the furnaces there was nothing to do with them so they just kept burning them and then used them for compost later on. That is exactly what happened there. We, then came back to Camp Lucky Strike in France. We were one of the divisions of maybe eight or so divisions that were going to be the assault troops of the Island of Honshu of Japan. We had the training, the experience, the finesse, the kind of officer personnel, the kind of enlisted personnel that would have made that very viable. We came back to the states to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. They allowed us all passes to come home; twenty days of so. Then we went to Camp Atterbury in Indiana and got different staging instructions and from Camp Atterbury, we went to Camp Cook, California for the future assault of Japan.

M: Yes, right.

T: I could be wrong but August the 5th or 6th, one of those two days, they dropped that first bomb.

M: Right.

T: Then we knew that the war was going to be over. God Bless Truman. I was a Mater Sargent. Our men were ecstatic; they were throwing their helmets and their mess kits and everything else in the sea. As you probably know, the army is very funny; you can die for them,

you can die for your country, you can have your things blown up but you can't lose them and you can't destroy them. Since soldiers are accountable for Army issue, they had to pay for the items they threw into the sea.

M: To celebrate.

T: After the second bomb, the staging for discharge started, depending on how many service record points you had.

M: Now, where were you at the times that they dropped the bombs? Were you aware that they were doing this?

T: No, in fact we had no idea that they were going to drop the Atomic Bomb. We were at Camp Cook, California.

M: Okay.

T: Japan with the kind of sophistication that they had and with the kind of upbringing of their homeland, we would have lost about 500,000 Americans. That is a lot of men, but that is what it would have taken. But after the second bomb, it was...

M: It was over.

T: Curtains. That was it. Then I stayed in the service. They made me stay in the service until December 8th, 1945. it was exactly three years, six months and nineteen days to the day when I was discharged.

M: Were you already married by then?

T: Yes, I married Pat before I went overseas in 1943.

M: Now did you have to have permission from her family to marry her? Is that the way that you...

T: In our case not really. I had made up my mind. I told my parents, and my sisters that that was the girl I was going to marry. There was a little bit of flack because I was in the service but I put my foot down and said I was coming home in November and we were getting married. My parents were ecstatic. We had a beautiful, traditional wedding, and a honeymoon of five or six days.

M: Now when did you come back to Youngstown together after the war? Did you move back here?

T: No, Pat was in Youngstown while I was in the service. I was in California. After discharge, I came back to Youngstown. I lived in Pat's family home right on McGuffey Road. Pat was working for General Fireproofing

and I was working for Republic Steel Corporation in Warren. In the interim, Pat got pregnant, we moved to Warren and rented out first apartment. I stayed at Republic until 1947. Pat's brother didn't want me in the mills. He thought I had a little too much on the ball to stay in the mills. We found a home to rent on Elm Street, in Youngstown, and I got a job on Pyatt Street and that was the first advent into direct sales to the public. I became a floorman for Mr. Feldman of Feldman brothers Produce who was a magnificent human being. One of the best bosses I had ever worked for in my entire life and I stayed with him until 1950. Another Greek national saw me working and he wanted to know if I wanted to be in business with him. We found that the Youngstown Municipal Airport Restaurant was up for bid.

M: Right.

T: Under Mayor Henderson's tenure, we were the successful bidders at the time and we were successful operators of the Youngstown Municipal Airport Restaurant. A quality restaurant that they never duplicated in the interim years since we left them. We kept the restaurant from October, 1950 until October 1960. Jack Sulligan who was the Democratic Chairman at the time called and wanted us to keep the restaurant open. We refused because we weren't able to get the right lease. We needed a lease for ten years with an option for five in order to put the kind of money necessary to make it more viable for everybody, so we could make a comfortable living. We would work from 4:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m., seven days a week.

M: Yes.

T: So, then after that Pat's brother asked me to be a partner in his business which was called Ohio Food Brokerage Company. I became his partner and in 1985 I closed the business and retired.

M: I see.

T: I was in the Food Brokerage business all of that time. Now, of course I am a consultant for another brokerage firm.

M: It seems to me that there are a lot of Greeks that are involved in the food business.

T: Yes, they are.

M: Are they from the same area, or what in they in this food business?

T: Well, it was the one business that no one else wanted at the time.

M: Really?

T: It was hard work but they were willing to work hard; at the same time they had a love for the kitchen-culinary attitudes; and they do have good food, and they enjoy good food, and they enjoy the company and this is why most of them got into it. They provided a service that no one else wanted to get into.

M: It was a great idea. What about the paint business? I know that there a lot of Greeks involved with that too.

T: Yes, that is because the ones that come from the islands. The island Greeks, are riggers in boats and are used to terrible motions of the sea. They are the ones that pant the scaffolds and all high places; i.e, bridges, smokestacks, etc.

M: I see.

T: And this is why they got into that profession. Those immigrants that came from the mainland or from other areas of Greece were the one that went into the construction business or other endeavors.

M: I see.

T: They went into the theater business, the candy and chocolate business, laundry business and grocery business because the others wouldn't do it.

M: Okay, yes. Well, they sort of found there our nitch then.

T: Very definitely.

M: They prospered with that though.

T: Well, the thing is that they worked very hard and put in long hours.

M: Good.

T: Of course we have a magnificent son who is presently teaching at Youngstown State university, who received his Masters Degree in Education from Harvard University and is presently working toward his doctorate from Harvard.

M: Now, tell me a little bit about the church that you belong to?

T: What?

M: Give me some background on that? It is an Orthodox church right?

T: Yes, as a young boy I was an altar boy.

M: Oh, really?

T: And my job was to ring the bell. I was taller than the other fellows and of course I loved it. Then I also assisted the priest in the altar with the candles when he came out in the front of the altar. Subsequently, from the years down in Florida then back I was in the choir and then I was one of the first original basses in a four-part quartet in Warren.

M: Wow.

T: Then of course I had very good musical background...I don't say that I have musical talent, but I love good music. And Charles Scheig, was a German, recognized the fact and I became part of the chorus at Warren Harding High School. Now, Lynn B. Dana Sr., who had the Dana School of Music, was world famous at the time right on North Park Avenue, they had students from all over the countries, I probably made a mistake not attending this music school and getting some more musical education either to sing or play an instrument of some sort, but I didn't.

M: Now, you both belong to the same church?

T: Yes, we do; St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Youngstown, Ohio.

M: And you did as children?

T: Yes, name days were an important part of our customs.

M: Yes, I have heard of that.

T: On name days your home was open and there was plenty to eat and drink.

M: They don't practice this anymore, name days?

T: No, they celebrate the birthdays.

M: Do you think that they got away from that and it is more Americanized?

T: Yes, this is what has happened.

M: Is that why? That is interesting.

T: Oh, our home was jammed all of the time because we had so many single Greek men that had not married. That was home to them.

M: Really?

T: I mean if we sat down to eat we always had...The godfather of the family who would always sit at our table. He was the second father of that family.

M: I see.

T: Then our Koumbari, these are people who have baptized children of the family and who also at times lived in the home. There was never ending fun and laughter and kettles boiling and you had all kinds of wonderful smells.

When we went to Florida, the three families who were in the construction business lived together. We had a big enough home that we all lived together, we came back to Warren and initially the three families lived together on Franklin Court and then we branched out and everybody finally bought a home.

M: So, they all compromised.

T: That is right.

M: Now, does your son speak Greek?

T: Yes, he does. Now up until Chuck was three or four years old because the grandparents were involved, Chuck spoke fluent Greek. No English.

M: Really?

T: But it isn't the question that he wasn't going to learn English because the moment he went to school that is it, but he still retains his Greek, he went to Greek school.

M: Oh, really?

T: Well, certainly. Chuck does know his Greek. Not as well as his father or mother. We don't talk to him because all of our associations are English. Now unless we get with the older people, most of them are gone now, there is just no Greek conversation. It is a crime.

M: Yes, it is. Okay, I have a couple more questions. You were telling me that you went to Greece. You visited Greece?

T: Yes, we did.

M: Tell me about your visit there?

M: Greece is a gracious country, open-hearted. Well, you know there are more American speaking Greeks there practically than over here. A small country of nine million people jammed into a small area not as big as the state of Florida, where a third of the population of the whole country sandwiched right into one city called Athens. Anyway we stayed at the St. George Lycabattus Hotel, which is on a promontory on a mountain. A magnificent place.

M: I bet it was beautiful?

T: Oh, the treatment and the food and the difference as first generation American-Greeks who spoke Greek, we were like long lost cousins.

M: Really?

T: And we took of course two cruises while we were there and made our hotel the base. We also flew to Istanbul to see the Patriarchate, which we did. And we saw the sarcophagus of the past Patriarchs.

M: Everybody has said this that I have talked to that has gone there you know how wonderful it is and how courtesy it is.

T: And everybody speaks English. Someone in Greece has two or three relatives that helped them over there make it better. They have an indolent kind of life, lazy because of the heat. We are not used to that you know. I can't get used to the fact that you come home at 3:00 p.m. and sleep till 6:00 p.m.. But there they do. I mean everything is closed. That isn't good for the national economy either. But anyway the people, the dress, and the mode is fantastic and it is party time from Monday through Sunday. We never saw anything like it in our lives. Now we didn't go to any of the beaches because we didn't have time; We had so many things to do. We went to Crete and saw the ruins. We went to Corinth this is where my parents came from. We hired a cab and said that we wanted to keep it for a day. We went over the Isthmus of Corinth, which is a magnificent model of engineering, thank the Lord for the Germans and the German technique that did it for them. They shortened that route between the Adriatic and the Aegean Sea. Fantastic. We stopped there and we had breakfast and then we went to this village where my mother and father were born. Pat said, "How are we going to find anybody in this little village?" I said,

"I don't know, but I do know one thing in listening to my father and my relatives, the Caferion, that is the coffee house, is the center of everything that happens there. I said, "we will get to the center of this little village up in the mountains and we are bought to find a coffee house. And is we find a coffee house, someone for sure will know something about the Ladad family." It was a gracious trip. I don't even think it took us a couple of hours. So, as we are coming in, I recognized the coffee house. At a young age, my dad used to take me by the hand and we would go to the coffee house. I knew what they were like. We went in and I said, "Is there anyone in here that knows the Ladas family?" A little short fellow with pretty blue eyes got up and said, "I am Anastasios (my name in Greek) Ladas," who turned out to be my mother's brother. Then, of course, they wouldn't let us get away. We had drinks, pasteries and coffee. We were then taken to my uncle's home and met the rest of the family whom we have never seen.

M: That is amazing huh?

T: The family consisted of my uncle, his wife, their daughter, her husband and their two children. of course we had dinner with them.

M: No kidding.

T: The local priest was notified and we had a memorial service for my parents at the village church. The interior of my uncle's home was all in marble.

M: It sounds beautiful.

T: Oh, they took us down in a room to show me where my father married my mother.

M: Really.

T: On our cruise to the Island, one of the highlights of course, was visiting Patmos. We saw the cave of st. John, the Theologian, where he wrote the Book of Revelations; awe inspiring.

M: Wow. That is amazing.

T: Yes, it is. One thing about Greece is that you walk. You don't put on any weight, you eat, you drink...

M: But you do walk?

T: You walk. Crete is magnificent; gracious people. We didn't have too much time because of the boat schedule as we did not have in Rhodes, but Rhodes is like a...is

as we did not have in Rhodes, but Rhodes is like a...is one of the most beautiful islands in the Aegean Sea and because of the Italians and their construction ability, their sewage and water system is a definite plus for the island. In Greece, the majority of people, speak several languages. The reservation girls in our hotel speak six languages -Italian, German, French, Spanish, Greek, of course, and English.

M: Now you think that is why your parents thought that is was necessary for you to speak? I mean was this just tradition that they speak different languages or why they passed it on?

T: There wasn't any question you spoke Greek in the home.

M: Well, did your parents ever speak English?

T: Oh, definitely, sure my father was a foreman he had to.

M: Yes, he would have had to.

T: And my mother, it was funny. My mother was not of course a citizen so in order for her to get her papers she had to learn the Declaration of Independence, right? Well, that was hilarious. She went to the first grade in Greek school and now she has to learn to write her name in English and then of course she had to be able to memorize the Preamble, and the Declaration of Independence. But they got through it and she became a citizen and I remember for instance she would sit at the table and we would say it sentence by sentence repetitiously "I am never going to learn." "Yes, you are mom."

M: And she did it huh?

T: We got her hand and this is a "v" and that is an "a" momma. "I can't" "Yes, you can." And again and again and sure enough she became a citizen and that was a crowning day. They got a little American flag and that was the highlight. Pat's mother had a better education than my mom. Pat's father worked the Panama Canal zone.

M: Oh, really?

T: Yes, as a Greek.

M: That is interesting.

T: He came to Lisbon...I don't know where he worked in Lisbon, he had never said. When he came to Youngstown, he worked for General Fireproofing and retired from there.

going to run our of tape soon. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW