

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Romanian Culture Project

Romanian Culture in the Mahoning County

O. H. 441

ELI MOGA

Interviewed

by

John Muntean

on

September 3, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: ELI MOGA

INTERVIEWER: John Muntean

SUBJECT: Romanian Culture, Heritage, Church, Trip to
Romania

DATE: September 3, 1975

MU: This is an interview with Eli Moga for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program regarding Romanian Culture in Mahoning County, by John Muntean, at 251 Roseview Drive, Hubbard, Ohio, on September 3, 1975, at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Moga, what part of Romania did your parents come from?

MO: In the region of Transylvania near a city called Sibiu.

MU: Did your parents ever mention to you what a typical day in Romania was like when they were in Romania?

MO: Yes, in particular, my father, his typical day was to get up at sunrise--this is in the summertime--and take their animals--cattle or sheep or whatever--to the fields. They would have their gardens in the agriculture area, which was away from the community. They would be there all day long.

MU: In other words, their fields were really connected to the farmhouse as it is in the United States?

MO: No, it was an area--we would say two or three kilometers--which was probably about a mile or two miles away from where the community actually existed.

MU: When your parents were in Romania did they ever mention anything to you about how church was like then? Did they ever mention it to you? Was it modern or did they have a church in the village?

MO: They had two churches in the village at the time. The youngsters, the school they went to was connected with the church. Every child had to go to church. This was one thing that was practically like going to school. They had to go to church every Sunday.

MU: When did your parents come to the United States?

MO: My father came in November of 1906, and my mother came sometime in 1908.

MU: What motivated them to come to the United States?

MO: Well, my father, probably more for economical reasons, because of the fact that there were fourteen children at the time in his family. He could only see a better life by coming to this country.

My mother came from a very small family with two children. She was an orphan so this was more or less a country where she could start a new life.

MU: When they came here to the United States did they come to the Youngstown area or did they go elsewhere?

MO: Both my mother and dad came to the city of Hubbard, which was a small community in those days.

MU: Did they know somebody here?

MO: Yes, the community of Hubbard had one hundred and fifty young men from the same community my dad came from in Romania.

MU: So, in other words, they probably had heard about Romania from these people and that was why they came here?

MO: Yes, they all came from the same community and that is why Hubbard was the community that they picked.

MU: When they came did they find jobs working in the mill or something? What did they do?

MO: The job my dad had, he worked for a plant called Hitchcock, which was a blast furnace. It later on became a part of Youngstown's Sheet & Tube.

MU: Did they have any real difficulty in coping with the American way of life? Did they ever mention anything about it?

MO: Well, they had that language barrier. They were also very fortunate, as far as their purchasing and all that; they were able to go to the stores where most of the Jewish people were able to speak their language and particularly

on East Federal Street in Youngstown.

MU: Also, when they came over here to the United States, did they have a difficult time to find somewhere to live or did they go to a boarding house or something until they found a place to live?

MO: My father claimed that the first place he came to was a boarding house with about thirty or forty men living in it. The beds were used on a twenty-four hour basis. They worked around the clock and when one got out of bed, the other one got into bed. That's how crowded it was.

MU: This was in Hubbard?

MO: This was in Hubbard, yes.

MU: Were they boarding houses usually run by Romanians, do you know?

MO: Yes, they were run by Romanians.

MU: Did they have Romanian food over there and so forth?

MO: Yes, they had. It was typical of the old country as far as food and as far as the relationship with other people, because they knew one another.

MU: So, they really had their friends over here?

MO: Yes, it was like transplanting the community from Romania over to this country.

MU: What else do you remember about your parents and family? For instance, job and school or anything like that, did they ever mention it?

MO: Do you mean in this country or in the old country?

MU: Either one.

MO: Well, my dad was a blacksmith in the old country; he became a blacksmith here. He was very good. When he worked for Hitchcock it was his training that gave him a better job than the average. Later on when he worked with steel, he was able to take a foreman's job because he understood metals.

MU: The houses that they lived in in Romania, did they ever describe them to you; in other words, what they looked like in structure, the architecture or anything like that?

MO: Yes, their homes were made out of brick. Usually as a

youngster, the older people lived in the house, and it wasn't an uncommon thing for the youngsters to stay out in the stable with the animals. They also have an outside like they have right now. They have an outside kitchen; the kitchen is usually separated from the main part of the house.

MU: The floors in the house, did they mention if they were made out of wood?

MO: Yes, they had wooden floors and they had spaces beneath where they would put vegetables. In the attic they kept their fruits that they would dry and even some of their wheat or corn that they had to dry.

MU: Could you tell us something about your childhood and early adult life in regards to your past association with the Romanian community and the Romanian church? I understand that the church you attended when you were a youngster was in Farrell.

MO: We attended the Farrell church and going to church there meant that we would have to stand all during the service. There were no pews to sit on. The women were on one side of the church and the men on the other.

MU: Did the church in Farrell somewhat resemble the church on Wick Avenue, look similar with the altar and so forth?

MO: Everything would be the same except the pews.

MU: Did they have a choir?

MO: They had a choir.

MU: What about a Sunday school?

MO: That was one area that they were not very well advanced in, Sunday school programs. And religion you learned by going to church every Sunday and listening, or if we were fortunate during the summer the local parish priest would have school with us. They had school with a combination of a little history and a little religion giving us more of our Romanian heritage.

MU: What language did they speak in the church at that time?

MO: At that time, they spoke only Romanian.

MU: Then most of the people spoke Romanian and were able to understand?

MO: Yes, they understood Romanian through the facilities of

the Romanian school that we had to have had during the summer.

MU: Did your parents speak Romanian at home?

MO: Yes.

MU: So you had knowledge from them too, and not only from the Romanian school?

MO: Right.

MU: Did they continue with some of this Romanian heritage from the old country, in the sense of food and maybe even some customs?

MO: Yes, our food was mostly Romanian, and as far as the customs-- talking about the religious end of it--there were some of the other customs that we had. For example, they had during that time the Great Church, which is a religious holiday. As youngsters we would gather in one of the local homes and they had a festival; they had good food, and they had games for the children. The older people, their way of doing that, they would get buckets of water and they would try to throw water on one another. When it was all over they would go home and get dressed up and have a social event after that, but for St. George everybody had to get wet.

MU: Did they have any kind of theater groups also?

MO: Yes, at that time as a youngster, I can remember the most famous in this area. In fact it was very famous in all Romanian communities in this country. They would perform in Youngstown, Farrell, and other communities that would demand that. These groups usually performed either around Easter or at Christmas or any large holiday. This method was a great family affair because the whole family attended this. If the theatrical group would perform first, after they were finished there would be a dance. After the dance, the families would proceed to go home. It was always a family affair where the children would participate, and they would be able to hear . . . It was all Romanians, the theatrical group, nothing in English. The theatrical groups were Romanian and all the music was Romanian.

MU: Was it played by Romanians too?

MO: Yes, played by Romanian groups.

MU: Did the children, at that time, know any of those Romanian dances?

MO: Yes, they did. It was through their parents and through

those other groups, the church group, that they were encouraged to dance these Romanian dances.

MU: From other interviews I understand that they had sports. Do you know if Farrell had any?

MO: Are you talking about sports, baseball and that?

MU: Yes, sponsored stuff.

MO: The church sponsored a baseball team and basketball team.

MU: Were they comprised of Romanians?

MO: Only Romanians would participate.

MU: Then you would go and play other churches of the area?

MO: Yes.

MU: Romanian churches?

MO: That's right. You normally played with Romanians. It would not only be the Romanian church, it would be Romanian organizations such as societies or any other Romanian group that was strictly associated with Romanians.

MU: Do you have any idea when they stopped such a thing in the Youngstown area?

MO: I would say during the time of the Second World War things slacked off because of the lack of participation with the men all gone to the service. There were some small groups until later on, I would say at least twenty years later, before they started getting activated again.

MU: Now, at your church in Farrell, could you tell me who the priest was? We've already spoke in other interviews of some of the priests we had in Youngstown.

MO: The one I remember best is father Ogilby, who came here in 1934. He is still with that parish.

MU: He, likewise, did his services in Romanian too?

MO: Yes.

MU: The choir's responses were . . .

MO: The choir's responses were in Romanian.

MU: Yet, even at that time did they still permit people from other religious groups to come to the church, or was it

not as liberal as today?

MO: I would say it wasn't as liberal because I can't recall any other ethnic people ever coming to that church. At that time all I can remember were Romanians. I wouldn't say they encouraged it, and I won't say they discouraged it; it was just an area where nobody even thought about it.

MU: In other words, at that time there was not that much marriage outside of the Romanian clan?

MO: That's true; it's like the old cliché, Romanian boy meets Romanian girl--Romanian wedding.

MU: Talking about the Romanian weddings, at the Romanian weddings themselves did they have Romanian food, Romanian music and so forth, or did they have it Americanized?

MO: Their food was typical, in those days, as you would find in Romania today. The main course is pigs-in-the-blanket, as we refer to it, and chicken. They were the same delicacies that were typical of all the Romanian weddings that you will find right now.

MU: In other words, they had a little bit of the American customs, but they still clung, at that time, to some of the Romanian heritage that they brought over?

MO: I would say that the customs at the weddings were held to very strong. They had a person who is like the master of ceremonies. His job was to try and get as much money for the young married couple as possible. He would encourage the best man to give as much to this young couple to get them started. Then he would ask what the girl's parents are going to give. Naturally if the girl's parents gave a certain amount of money he would turn over to the boy's parents and hope that they would give more. They would announce, for example, how much the immediate family gave. It was always in money, by the way. At the Romanian weddings they never gave gifts, just in forms of money. The music and everything was Romanian.

MU: When your parents married, were they dressed up as brides and grooms are dressed now, or were they dressed up in Romanian?

MO: They were dressed Americanized except the fact that they wore the veils. The men wore American custom suits, not tuxedos, but nice suits.

MU: In other words, they had become Americanized when they came here too?

MO: Yes.

MU: Talking about the church, again, do you recall anything about the church on Wilson Avenue? This is pre-World War II now that we're talking about. Do you recall anything about the church on Wilson Avenue?

MO: I barely recall the location of it. It was a smaller church than the present church is.

MU: Was it bigger than the one in Farrell?

MO: No, it was about the same size. For some reason, it seems that every Romanian church that we would attend, at that time, was built with the same sides, practically. It was like one architect designed every one. They were always wooden churches. If you would look at any Romanian church built at that time, it was always built out of wood and they were gray.

MU: Did they have candles in the front, at the altar, at that time too?

MO: Yes, everything was just candles in front.

MU: During that time when you were in Farrell, when you would go for confession, during Easter time, did you carry candles?

MO: Not during confession, but during taking of the communion.

MU: That custom, I have noticed, in a couple years past, has diminished a little bit. Do you think that was one of the Romanian customs that was brought over from the old country or would that be more or less part of their religious services?

MO: I would believe that it was part of their religious services.

MU: The church on Wick Avenue, after it was completed around about 1945 or 1946, I believe Father Stabilon was the minister over there. Have you seen any changes that have transpired since the 1940's through 1975?

MO: Well, the change I've seen in church is the fact that nobody has to stand anymore. Everybody has an opportunity to sit. They have installed an organ in the church which they didn't have in previous years. I would say the one big change that I have noticed is that they are not using the cantor. I have served in the church also in the choir, and in the frontal as an attendant. In fact they're not using the cantor at all, at times. They're using the choir only. This is a tremendous change.

- MU: For the benefit of those people who are going to be listening to the tape and reading it and so forth, could you explain, for them, what the role of a cantor is?
- MO: The cantor is one individual or more than one individual who responds to all the services of the priest. During the course of the liturgy he is simply called the leader, or the cantor. He must know the services on the same basis as the priest does.
- MU: He has a certain part that he must follow then, the response?
- MO: That's right. He responds to all the priests, whether they're requesting certain prayers, certain . . . In other words, he actually would be an assistant to the priest.
- MU: These cantors, when they would respond, did they respond in English or Romanian?
- MO: Always in Romanian in the past.
- MU: The choir, originally you mentioned they had sung in Romanian?
- MO: The trend now is if we have the music, we can sing in English; the words have been changed; everything has been converted. It's at the choir's disposal to have all the English facilities that they need if they want to change over. We have changed over. Normally we sing the first half of the liturgy in Romanian and the second half in English. The Requiem Mass for the dead is sung half in Romanian and half in English because our liturgy books have been translated, which has only been done the last ten or fifteen years. It has been changed into English.
- MU: We were talking about different masses and so forth for the dead that you would have like that. Could you tell us, basically, what the purpose is of such a mass? I understand that some people who don't attend our church, or who are not Orthodox, don't have such masses. Do you have any idea of what is the purpose of such a mass?
- MO: The purpose of this Requiem Mass is that you're honoring the person that passed away. You usually do this the first six weeks after the person has passed away. Then you will also have a Requiem Mass a year later. Also, it recognizes the fact you are honoring this dead person. You are showing some compassion or some feeling towards recognizing him as a person even though he is no longer alive.
- MU: Also, during the past several years since churches were

built on Wick Avenue, have you seen any change in that previously most of the Romanians tried to marry within the Romanian family?

MO: I would say there has been a tremendous change because I would be willing to say that one out of three, or one out of four, are Romanian weddings. The other two or three are not Romanian weddings; either one party or the other party is not Romanian.

MU: Now the Romanian weddings today, are they still basically the same as the Romanian weddings in the past? Have they changed? In other words, do they still have that man who announces and so forth or have they done away with it?

MO: They have done away with that. The best man and maid of honor do not play the important part that they played years ago. Plus the fact, for example, the food, itself, has changed. They're not serving the identical food. Years ago you never had a buffet served at a wedding. It was always a sit down; never, never was there a buffet.

MU: Mr. Moga, could you tell us how the Romanian Club was during the time when you belonged to it? Father Stabillon was minister of that church? What was his function?

MO: Basically he would group with the young people to bring them back into the church, make them active so they could understand their church and their religion. Most of them were people that were in the choir also. The people that were in the choir were also club members. Of course, there were some members that weren't in the choir that were still club members. They made these young people get together. They had social events, which would bring them closer as far as their church was concerned. They were able to go to their national meetings. At those meetings they set goals. For example, they had scholarship funds for any young person who wanted to become a parish priest. This scholarship fund would pay all this tuition for any of the schools that they attended. Basically, they were trying to promote religious education within the church itself. They were the ones that started the new liturgy books which you'll find in all of our churches in English and Romanian. What they did was, they were able to bring these young people together. This is why they had all these social events, it was all spun together. They were able to promote these programs. In other words, they were bringing youth into the church who maybe would not want to come; eventually they would move away from the church.

MU: In the process of doing that they kept their Romanian heritage alive and this helped it to grow.

- MO: They used to have these camps up in Michigan, for example, that not only taught the children religion but they were able to teach some children who never saw a Romanian dance to dance so that they were able to participate in the Romanian dances. They even put a little theatrical group on. They actually brought these youngsters together.
- MU: I understand that you also worked in Romania. Looking back, a little bit, after your visit to Romania and how the Romanian people live over here, can you tell a little bit about what you saw, such as similarities, and some differences between the cultures of the Romanian people in the United States and the Romanian people in Romania?
- MO: The way we lived here, our Romanian culture as it was as a youngster, exists in Romania today. We were fortunate when we were there because we went to a Romanian wedding. I went to a baptism, which is a very large social event among the people. It's quite a social thing. Plus we went to a funeral, which was identical as it would have been years ago in this country. The person that died was always kept in his home, which existed in this country years ago, instead of taking him to a funeral home. All of these customs I can barely remember. Years ago in this country, when a person died, they carried the casket; it wasn't taken by horse or taken by a motor vehicle. It was carried and a band played in front of that procession. The band played in front of the procession and took them to the cemetery. Some of the changes that are there now as far as the culture is concerned, are through the American influences.
- MU: When you were there did people ever ask any questions about America? Were they inquisitive about America as when your parents, probably, were living in Romania? Did they want to know about America? Did they really shy away from the question?
- MO: No. They were very inquisitive, but then you might have to remember the fact that several people who are living there now lived in America. They were able to bring back the ways of life. Those people who lived here and went back were inquisitive about the changes. They were surprised at the changes. They were surprised at the fact that we had modernized ourselves as far as the language and the church is concerned. They still believe the church had always existed as it did back in the early 1900's. We had to explain that there were changes made and there will be more.
- MU: You mentioned and described to me how your parents described to you their living quarters in Romania. Did you find such situations still existed or did they modernize also?

- MO: The little village that I stayed in . . . I'll talk to you about the village. In the large cities there are changes, very Americanized. In the small villages, they are very provincial. When I stayed there I lived the same as my father and mother lived when they were there. I'm talking about the sleeping facilities. I'm talking about the cooking facilities; they still use little branches and wood as the only things they cook with. They had this little potbelly stove. As far as heating in the winter time is concerned, there was one main room where they have a little fireplace, a little stove. That is used to heat the whole house. As far as the house itself is concerned, I was surprised that without the modern air conditioning the house was very cool. The reason for that was on account of the walls were probably about ten inches thick, which prevented the heat from entering, plus the fact that the eaves on the overhang were wide open where the air could circulate through the attic of the house. It kept the air circulating continuously. Sleeping facilities were very cool. The bed that I slept on was actually made out of straw. The mattress was not the modern mattress that you would find in this country. Every yard had their own little well. There were no modern pump facilities, and also the toilet facilities were all in the back of the house. There were no indoor plumbing facilities, no water inside. You still used the old crank type of well with a chain. Every one of them is in the courtyard.
- MU: What about the roads? Were any of the roads paved at all?
- MO: The main street in this community was paved. The roads are mostly unpaved. I didn't see any roads that were out of concrete. I did see roads out of cobblestones, but nothing out of concrete.
- MU: What about the church? Did you see any churches over there at all?
- MO: Yes, the churches still exist.
- MU: Did they resemble any of the churches, for instance, like the one in Farrell? Did it resemble that early one or the early one on Wilson Avenue at all?
- MO: Yes, there were some that resembled that. In fact, the community that we stayed in, the one church was out of wood, which was four hundred years old. It was all out of logs; it was a very beautiful church. Although, how it was standing up after all those years, I don't understand. The other church was a more modern church. It was out of stucco, but the inside facilities were all the same. They had the women standing on one side, and the men on the other.

MU: Did they sit?

MO: No, they were still standing. The children were always in the back.

MU: Did they have a choir?

MO: They did not have a choir.

MU: What about Sunday school, did you ever notice if they had any?

MO: No, they did not have a Sunday school, but in their schools they are taught a certain amount of religion, which is not encouraged anymore as it was in the past. They are still taught a certain amount of religion. In order to keep the children away from school they have a lot of festivities. I'm talking about the Romanian government there in order for the children not to go to the church on Sunday.

MU: Oh, I see, to discourage them.

Did you notice whether the people started to eat, more or less, western types of food? Are the people in Romania becoming westernized in food, or are they still clinging to their Romanian heritage?

MO: In the cities they are becoming Americanized. In the country and the back areas, in the small communities, they are living the same as they did years ago because everything that they raise is what they eat. They're not going to the local store and purchasing food like we do in this country. They only eat exactly what they've raised.

MU: The stores that they had in their village, did they resemble any of the stores of our generation now, in the 1970's in the United States?

MO: They would remind you of the old country store in the early 1800's in this country. What I did not see there was anything that was, for example, frozen. It was strictly a country store where you would buy the salt, pepper, dry goods, and everything you wanted, pots and pans.

MU: Electricity?

MO: Yes, they had electricity. They had every general store article there except anything that was frozen or in that category. They had canned goods, but nothing in the frozen area.

MU: Is there anything else that you can think of regarding Romania itself when you were there that you would want to share with us?

MO: The only thing that I could say was the fact that the most memorable day for me was climbing up into the mountains. It was an area where they have sheep. The sheep herders take care of the sheep. We left the village early in the morning and along the way we made stops at these little springs coming from the mountains. It was an awfully hot day, and I was told not to get out of my horse and buggy under any circumstances; stay in the buggy. I found out later on why this was a good policy to follow. There were dogs roaming through that area. They were dogs owned by the sheep herders. These dogs were extremely vicious. They have an iron ring with nails sticking out around their neck. The reason they have that is so that in case wolves are attacking the herd they are able to protect him. The dog is protected because the wolf will always go for the neck; he will not be able to bite it. It took us about three hours to get to the top. When you got to the top you were able to overlook maybe four or five villages. It was one of the most beautiful inspiring sights that you can see. The air is clean, no smoke, nothing along the way. By the way, you don't see any debris along the road. You don't see any cans; it is very clean. That's one thing that we can look forward to. Plus we were able to sit down with this family. It was a man and his wife. They were taking care of all their sheep and they were cooking over a little tripod. They were making stew; it was the most delicious smell. Without the facilities of the modern home we ate with that family. It was one of the most delicious meals and one of the most inspiring sites that you could possibly see. It was strictly in a rural area not in the big city. There are many beautiful sites in the big city, but you can see the same thing here.

MU: That sounds pretty enticing?

MO: Visiting another area we went to reminds you of visiting Florida. It's like Miami Beach on the Black Sea.

MU: What about the beaches, were they clean?

MO: The beaches were the cleanest beaches that you could ever possibly visit. One thing they had there was the fact that you were not permitted to drop anything on the beach. Whether it was a bottle cap or a cigarette, if you were caught you were arrested. This kept the beaches clear. Another thing, on one area there they had a solarium, and we didn't quite understand what it was. We found out later that this was for the people who wanted to sunbathe. For one side they had the men and the other side they had the women in the nude. Most people came from Germany and Scotland. There were quite a few from Scotland.

MU: Is that in Romania?

MO: They were going on tours there. There were supposed to be about two hundred thousand people in that beach area and most of them were from Germany, like I said, West Germany and Scotland because the ones in Scotland claimed that they couldn't get enough sun there. They found out that this was a very inexpensive trip and there was a lot of sun. All the water was very beautiful.

MU: The water's not polluted, like it is here?

MO: No, you don't find any pollution and the towns are just as modern as you would find at Miami Beach.

MU: What about their radio and television, do they play any Romanian music, or theatre groups? Did you ever see anything like that on radio or television?

MO: I saw the television that they had there. In fact, that was during the time that the astronauts were landing on the moon, and the whole country was excited. They did show it on the television. Their music is getting more modernized than it was as we remember it as youngsters. The records that we were actually looking forward to buying, we couldn't find them. You could find more of those old records in the United States than you could in Romania. They were going for more modern music.

MU: In other words, rock and roll?

MO: That's right. Well, it was the twist at the time. The youngsters would always ask about jeans. Every one of them looked to America to set their style for jeans.

MU: They probably heard about jeans and things like that from movies and so forth.

MO: It was very popular.

MU: Getting back to television, did they have any ballet or anything like that?

MO: I didn't have too much time to watch television because they only see it in the big cities. In a small, provincial place, I didn't see any television. In a little community that we're talking about, the population is about three or four thousand. I inquired what the population was of this little town and he didn't tell me in numbers as far as people are concerned. He told me that they had so many smokestacks.

MU: When you inquire in any community what the population is, they'll tell you how many smokestacks they have, not people

and numbers?

What about transportation? You mentioned the horse and buggy, were there any automobiles?

MO: In the town that we were in, nobody owned an automobile. We were fortunate that my friend that we were with--his cousin who lived in the city of Sibiu which is like the county seat--had an automobile; it was the same design like a Fiat. It was a Romanian built automobile. It's not a very comfortable automobile.

MU: Do you have any idea where they make them? Do they make them in Romania?

MO: They make them in Romania. Most of them are made, I would say, in Bucharest. That would be the only one that I can remember that they said that was made. The thing about buying an automobile there is that you pay for it before you actually get the automobile. In other words, you make an application for an automobile and you have to pay that money in advance. You may have to wait a year or two before you get that automobile. It's not like here where actually an automobile is worn out before you actually pay for it.

The other form of transportation which impressed me very much was the rail transportation. They have different types of trains. They have one they would call Accelera, which means an accelerated train. This is a very speedy train. One thing about the government there, you may not like it in some area, but in that area you have to admire it. When they say a train leaves at nine o'clock there's no other way about it. It really travels on schedule. Most of the people travel by train; there isn't a train empty there. All the trains are filled with people because what has happened, like in the little towns, they make these people work. Everybody works and they usually send them to the larger cities. My cousins would have to get up at three to four o'clock in the morning in order to get to work at seven o'clock, because of the distance. They had to make sure that they caught that train. They have very good bus transportation. The most impressive thing there was in transportation would be their train system. They do still have streetcars, by the way.

MU: I wanted to ask you about the Romanian language. The language that you learned in the United States and spoke over there, was it really the same as Romanian is in Romania? For instance, we're English people and our English is different than if you would talk to a person from England. Did you notice any difference?

MO: There was a difference. When I got there I spoke with my

cousin. I used a word and he laughed at me; I asked him what he was laughing at, and he said, "Well, those are words that we do not use anymore." My parents brought those words with them when they arrived in the early 1900's and I still use those words.

MU: They were outdated?

MO: They were outdated; they were obsolete words, but they were still words that were acceptable. I know in Bucharest while I was there, when I started talking to the person they said, "You weren't born here?" I said, "No, I was born in America." They said, "Well, your parents came from . . ." They actually pinpointed the county that they came from because they said the dialect and the way you use your words is good Romanian, but it is Romanian that is outdated.

MU: In regards to Romania, we spoke about the language, transportation, and so forth. The people, you mentioned, are dressing in western clothes and so forth. Did you see something striking that made you look a second time that you never anticipated that you would see in Romania, in other words, other than scenery and the like, in regards to the culture?

MO: Well, we're talking about, for example, the dress, and I was very disappointed that I didn't see the people wearing their native costumes, which I had visualized. The first Sunday that I went to this church in this little community I was impressed with the fact these people were wearing their native costumes.

MU: To church?

MO: To church, and this is the one opportunity they have to wear them.

MU: What about the children?

MO: The children did not wear the costumes that I thought they would wear, you know, the native costumes. They had them, but it seems as though they were saving them for really special times. Also, I noticed they wore them at one of the funerals. These people wore their native costumes. In fact, this one woman had died and they had her in a costume that she must have saved; they buried her in this Romanian costume. It was completely Romanian, nothing western.

MU: Do they have the cemeteries outside of the city or . . .

MO: No, the cemeteries are always right next to the church.

You will notice that the churches are always on a high hill and the cemetery surrounds them on the side of the hill there, the same as you would find in this country. Years ago the cemeteries were always on a hill on account of water you need when you dig a grave. There would be an awful chance of water filling the grave up. There's less chance of flooding. When the people died, they laid the coffin right there. They would make it up out of ordinary wood, and in church what they do is they nail the coffin shut right after the services are over with. It's a very, very sad occasion but they drive the last nail in the church. It's just a plain coffin out of wood that you may have seen in the western pictures years ago, but that still exists in the little community.

MU: Did they have pallbearers?

MO: Yes.

MU: Did you have any chance to view a Romanian activity, a dance, a wedding, or anything?

MO: The night we got to this little community we were invited to a wedding. It was held at a town hall. Just about all of the community was there. It was one of the largest weddings I have ever attended. The drinks were mostly wine; they had cognac.

MU: What is cognac?

MO: Cognac is sort of a brandy. It's made out of fruit. First, up until about twelve o'clock, they would serve what we would think of as cold cuts, cheeses, and sausage and that. Then right after twelve o'clock they served a typical Romanian meal. First, they served chicken soup, homemade chicken soup with noodles and everything. Then came the pigs-in-the-blanket and then came the chicken. They served it with mush. In the meantime, the band played continuously.

MU: Were they still gypsies?

MO: No, they were not gypsies because they were youngsters in this community. The gypsies are sort of drifting away from the music end. Every community has two or three gypsy families. There are certain things that they do that the other people don't do.

MU: Are they more or less outcasts from the area or are they accepted?

MO: The ones that have lived in that community for many years are accepted as part of the community. The one

family in particular that were probably the most well-to-do in this town, were gypsies. They had lived there for as long as anybody could remember. They had a little manufacturer there and they were making the covers for the tops of those wells. They looked like part of a septic tank. They had a very thriving business. The gypsies that were not accepted were the ones that were traveling. In other words, when they would go through a community everybody would nail down everything that could be nailed down because these people have a tendency to steal. Plus there were other gypsies whose particular work was brick making; they would make brick. For example, in that particular town we watched them. They make bricks from ordinary dirt.

MU: Mud dirt?

MO: Yes. It would usually be a gypsy family, a complete family. They would go from one community to the other making these bricks. This was their way of life. Of course, you still have the old covered wagon gypsy, but they're discouraged. They try to make the people settle down in one particular community.

What impressed me, we went to one, big department store in a big city. I was very curious looking at people, and they were looking at television sets. I had a nephew there and I inquired to him, "What are they looking at television sets for, can they afford them?" He said, "Well, they can afford them much better than the average Romanian because they can always find some way of making money." There are actually silversmiths; they still do their baking. Their baking is still one of their prime ways of getting an income. Also, gypsies are the most common musicians in Romania in all your big clubs.

MU: Getting back to the wedding, I want to ask one question about it. You mentioned that in the United States, in the beginning, you said they had these men that would announce. Do they still have them there?

MO: They still have the man. He still performs the same duties. In fact, he's a little harsher; he tried to get more out of both families. There they didn't give money like we did here. The families would give, for example, all the bedding, all the pillows, pieces of furniture for the home. When this young couple got married, not to get off the track, but if it was the first child of the family that got married, if it was a boy, he never left the family ground. There was always a place, one part of the house or somewhere where he would stay with his family because he was the one that would eventually inherit that ground. He never left the property. It was usually a small house attached to the

big house; it's only a matter of two rooms. He never left the grounds; if it was the first child or the only child he stayed on the property there.

MU: Is there anything else that you wanted to mention about Romania before we get back to the United States?

MO: I can't really add much more besides the fact the people were very hospitable.

The one thing that we laughed about was the fact that when we arrived in Romania at the new airport there, we had to go through customs, and my friend and I, who is from Hubbard also, started going through. We had a conversation with the head customs man and he inquired why we wanted to visit Romania. He inquired about my friend's camera; he happened to be a professional camera man. When customs came to go through our luggage, he prevented them from even looking in our luggage. He felt obligated not to allow them to look in our luggage. We went scot-free; we could have brought anything into this country. It was just a gesture on his part. He wanted to show us that we were acceptable. Normally, when the people come at the airport they always bring flowers right away. They come see you and they greet you with flowers. Another thing is, during your stay there, although you don't feel it, there's always someone who knows what you're doing and where you're going.

MU: How do you know this?

MO: Well, I found that to be true going from one airport to the other from Sibiu to Bucharest. When I got in the cab, the cab driver knew exactly where to take me without my telling him. He knew what hotel I was going to without my telling him; he took me right there. He asked me how I enjoyed Romania. Apparently, there were many people who knew where we were.

MU: Getting back to the United States, back to 1975, we already talked about changes that have been occurring in the United States in the church culture, and so forth, how you became Americanized and how the culture itself is more or less in a sense of seeking identity. Is there anything that you would like to see transpire regarding the Romanian church, Romanian culture, or anything that you would like to voice?

MO: What I would like to see is . . . I would like to go back and see if these youngsters would participate more in Romanian culture. I'm talking about our dancing, singing, where we have a lot to be proud of. I think we have a tremendous culture. I don't think it has been publicized enough. We don't know that much about our heritage. Our history books are lacking in that. Our history, I think, has not

been brought up-to-date like it should be. We should be very proud of our Romanian heritage, our culture; we have a rich one, but we're not doing enough to bring it up-to-date where our children won't forget that they ever had that particular culture.

MU: How would you go about doing that?

MO: Well, it would have to be done, of course, by our organizations, by our churches, our service organizations.

MU: In other words, they would have to instill it upon their members and upon the parents and so forth to become a little more involved. Involvement then, probably, would be somewhat of a start towards aiding the development of progression and growth of the heritage.

MO: In the educational field, if you wanted it, how many universities in this country would be able to furnish you with it, a Romanian history course of our culture. They're limited; there are very few schools that feel that the people demand it. If our children and other children demand it, they are going to learn something about Romanian culture. They are going to be able to be proud of it.

MU: Do you think, maybe, the church could do something like that or do you think that it might not be the answer since there are many people of mixed marriages who might object to it?

MO: Well, I don't see any objections because in a mixed marriage, don't forget the children are going to part of ethnic background and so they would be able to come out in both particular ethnic backgrounds, not limited to one.

MU: Then do you think that maybe Sunday school class could initiate for some of the older children some of this in their programs of liturgy too?

MO: I would like to separate it from the church completely. The church could support it only in the fact that they can use their facilities. You're crossing over into religion, which is something I believe you cannot cross over into. The church would be helpful, their facilities. It could be a school that was held on Saturday that same as we had.

MU: I think they're also starting to teach Romanian language and the people are interested too.

MO: Which was something that we were able to participate in as youngsters.

MU: You see some things like that as being a way of helping

our growth in the Romanian heritage.

MO: I think so.

MU: Do you have any other ideas or things that you would like to add that we didn't cover during this interview?

MO: In regards to culture?

MU: Culture or anything that you want to say.

MO: The only thing that I would like to add is, Romanians are really new when compared to the other ethnic groups. Take my dad, when he first came here he couldn't speak the language. He did go to a night school where they were teaching these individuals English, or the American language, where they could get along in the world. The plant that we work in, the one department, they always inquired why it seemed to be nothing but a Romanian department there. The reason for it was the fact that my dad was the first foreman of the department and the people that came from Romania and they were hired in that plant. Naturally, they were put in the department where the communication was only with my dad, being able to speak the English language well enough that he could communicate with his supervisor plus he could communicate in Romanian with the people who worked underneath him. Most of those people who worked in that department were not only Romanian, but people from the same community as my dad. You will find this to be true in many other industries where one particular department was maybe all Slovak, Hungarian, or all German. The fact that these people worked together, their supervisor was of that ethnic background and that was the reason.

MU: Where do you work now?

MO: I work for the same company as back then. All of my relatives in my family worked for Youngstown Steel.

MU: In other words, there are a lot of Romanians there?

MO: At one time we estimated there were between thirty and forty percent of the people in that plant who were Romanian. Right now we probably only have about twenty-three. That was the only plant that I've worked in and the only plant my brothers worked in.

MU: What do they do in that plant?

MO: They are a steel fabricating plant and basically they make material and equipment. They're very well diversified. They make parts for Youngstown Steel Door which go into

boxcars. They make parts that the blast furnace uses. They make parts for General Motors.

MU: Do you work on an assembly line?

MO: No, I'm the personnel director. Well, I did work in the plant; that was my first job, working with my father. He worked there when the plant first started and my brother and I have both worked there since 1940.

MU: Sounds like it might be an interesting place to work. It's an organization which is cohesive.

MO: It's an unusual thing there because even though the fellows are not Romanian, they say words in Romanian because there is the Romanian influence there. These people that work with Romanians picked up some of the words. In fact, my best friend here would go to Romanian dances and through our influence this fellow learned all the Romanian songs that we wanted him to sing. We used to visit a lot of people that were Romanian and he spoke Romanian fairly well and he could convince people that he was Romanian. Here was the Romanian influence within the plant itself. The words are still used, Romanian words. In the plants you may hear a lot of Italian words by people who are not Italian, but there are a lot of non-Romanians that use the Romanian words.

MU: Do you have anything else that you would like to mention?

MO: No, I don't think so.

MU: Thank you very much for this interview.

END OF INTERVIEW