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GEORGE MANOLAKIS

703 W. 37th Street

Wilmington, Delaware

GREEK IMMIGRANT

Born: 1898

Immigrated: 1910

Interview and Transcription

by Irene H. Long

March - Sept., 1968

Soft-spoken but deliberate was the manner in which Mr. Manolakis related his story. One of ten children he was almost adopted by an uncle who lived in Russia, but by a quirk of fate his journey was diverted to America. Thus at the age of twelve he arrived here and remained with his father until the latter's return a few years later. On his own at fourteen, George Manolakis had to work for his uncle for two years to pay the fare his father had taken as his advanced salary.

A smattering of Latin knowledge enabled him to comprehend English quicker than most immigrants and thus he attended school in a neighborhood where he was also required to take German as a subject. An interest in sign painting developed into a love of art and the decision to attend the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Art. There ensues a tale where hard work and love of art are entwined. Deciding finally more money could be made in business, Mr. Manolakis bought a taproom on Washington Street, still operated today by his son. In 1930 he visited Greece and there at his mother's suggestion married. Returning a year later, he found his stock market fortune of eighty thousand dollars had largely dissipated. But more hard work and determination were at his disposal and he considered himself fortunate to have retained his business.

Mr. Manolakis description of the rare art of Easter egg decoration is of great interest. So in demand was he at Easter time that he had to make a two-week circuit trip of all the confectioneries in a hundred mile or more radius. Associations with classmates and friends who later became artists of local and national fame are cherished memories of Mr. Manolakis. Thus at the age of seventy, although saddened by the death of his wife, he can now devote all his time to his second love - art.

TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE MANOLAKIS

"Mr. Manolakis, where were you born."

"I was born in Laconia, Greece. It's in Sparta, a small town right below Sparta."

"What was the name of the village?"

"Katavrotha"

"And how many people in that.....?"

"It was about nine hundred people."

"Nine hundred people. What year were you born?"

"1898"

"1898. Do you know your birth date?"

"Well, it was about July because I was baptized in August so I know that I was born thirty days before."

"Oh I see, by the custom."

"Yeh"

"Do you celebrate your name's day or your birthday?"

"The name's day."

"Your name's day. That's the custom."

"St. George's, you know. That's the time that."

"What did your parents do?"

"My father was a farmer. That's what everybody does in Greece."

"That was his substance."

"Yeh, just a farm."

"Uh - did you go to school in Greece?"

"I went to school in the, in the ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ, you know, the public school for four, for four years, and one year in the high school, what they call, you know, the high or a....."

"Was this in your town or....."

"No."

"Did you travel to get there."

"No, you had to go to another town Molai to go to that school."

"I see."

"I stayed there one year and then I came to America."

"Then how old were you when you came?"

"I was about twelve years old."

"About twelve years old."

"In fact I was slated to go to Russia because I had an uncle in Taganrog, Russia. But he had a ship detained in Constantinople and he had to leave and go there to see what was the matter and he went back to Taganrog. That was the town in Russia. And because he didn't come back that year, I found opportunity to come to this country where my father was here at the time."

"Your father had preceded you?"

"Yeh, a year before. He brought my older brother here."

"How many were in your family?"

"Uh....ten."

"Ten?"

"Ten."

"And were you the second oldest?"

"No, I was the fourth."

"The fourth?"

"The fourth."

"Why had your father...."

"There were six girls and four boys."

"Six girls, did this make your father a moderately poor man to have this many daughters?"

"No, no, they usually did; the families over there

are large."

"Uh huh"

"If you're going to have ten children, you're considered to have a family." (Laughter)

"Was he to provide doweries for these girls?"

"Usually."

"Usually?"

"That's the custom."

"Uh huh....uh....why did you come to America?"

"To bring my brother because he was young, too; and they would not accept you in this country unless you're at least sixteen years old. So because he was younger than sixteen like I was, he came with my father. I was twelve when I came and ..he stayed....I came to Wilmington, Delaware at the time and uh I was supposed to go to school for until I was sixteen years old. In fact I was detained in Ellis Island and I went through the court house there to - so my father would guarantee that I would go to school. Of course, John Govatos, who was a cousin of mine, did guarantee that I would go to school."

"Would they have sent you back had you not had this guarantee?"

"Yes, yes. If I had nobody that would guarantee that I went to school till sixteen, I would be sent back."

"I see. "Ah..going back to your trip, how - from what port did you leave?"

"Piraeus."

"You did leave from the port of Athens?"

"Piraeus, yes."

"How did you get from your home town to the port?"

"Well, there is usually a small steam boat that goes

from Monemvasia, the old town Monemvasia, that goes to Piraeus and from Piraeus you leave to America."

"Did you remember the trip over?"

"Very much. It took thirty days."

"Did it take thirty days?"

"For that -----. The name of the ship was Athens and I remember the ocean trip was soso much sea, you know, so much...."

"Rough?"

"Rough sea that I remember it very well."

"What were your accommodations like?"

"Well, in the steerage as usually everybody, you know, who usually did come in steerage - nothing to...."

"Were you all grouped - all the men together or did you, or were there three or four in a compartment?"

"No, in steerage there's about eighty or one hundred that live in rows, you know, there's two rows."

"Uh huh"

"And you just take a berth there?"

(MRS. FRANGIA - MR. MANOLAKIS' DAUGHTER) "From whatever's available."

"Just which one you come to first?"

"Well, they assign you one, but there's eighty or ninety there in a line there in that particular section."

"What was the food like?"

"Well, the food wasn't.....Of course, I wasn't...the sea did not make me sick and I, I could eat. In fact for two or three days I was the only one on board on top of the ship there, you know, that was allowed to walk on the promenade."

"Uh huh"

"Most of them were sick."

"Was your father with you?"

"No, no, I came by - me and another cousin of mine,
Jim Govatos."

"How old was he?"

"He was fourteen."

"Twelve and fourteen and you were taking this long
voyage?"

"That's right."

"Did you have any trouble with papers at that time?"

"No, no."

"Did you have to have a paper to leave?"

"Well, I had a letter from the mayor - ah, the mayor
at the time was...ah...I forget his name now but - ah - but - ah-
Spruance, Mayor Spruance. John Govatos asked him that to send me
a letter that would saying that he was known in Wilmington and he
was a manufacturer and that he will take care of me when I came over."

"Uh huh"

"And I had that letter from Mayor Spruance and a letter
from John Govatos which I showed to the steamship company, and they
make official they let me go."

"Was the passage costly? Do you remember?"

"No, it was only forty dollars for me."

"Do you remember it was forty dollars?"

"Forty dollars and I had forty of my own because you
had to have forty dollars otherwise you couldn't, you wouldn't be
allowed to come in. You had to have forty dollars."

"You had to have forty more?"

"Yeh"

"I see. Ah - did you earn this money or did your

father send it to you?"

"No, my father sent it to me."

"And the rest of -- your mother and the rest of your family was still at your home town?"

"Yes, they stayed."

"Now, when you came over and arrived at Ellis Island, do you remember any of your first impressions?"

"Well, the first impression was first of all we were quarantined at the outside of New York because an old lady died on board, and we were quarantined and all I remember is that - a white line which was snow. It was in November and it was snowing as anything. Of course we don't have snow over there in Greece, only we can see the mountain tops and I just wondered what kind of a land is it that, that it's all white. I didn't know that snow was something additional to the land."

"Uh huh"

"I just wondered all that white part - what, what kind of a land is it? New York wasn't seen. I mean from that part of the bay I could not see the city of New York, whether it was the weather I don't know; but we stayed there pretty near seven days."

"On boat?"

"On the boat outside of New York, there were the bay..."

"Were there mostly Greeks on board this boat or had you stopped?"

"Mostly Greeks and a few Italians from Palermo."

"You had stopped there and picked them up?"

"Yeh, stopped there at Palermo."

"Then after seven days did they just let you go en masse?"

"Yes, we were released to go into Ellis Island."

"Did anyone meet you there?"

"No, no,.....when I got out, my father was waiting for me at Ellis Island."

"He was waiting for you?"

"Cause I was taken - detained. Those who were of age, they went through the line. They showed their papers and were, you know, went out into New York. Those who were doubtful like I was - I waited in the in Ellis Island."

"Uh huh"

"You were put in a cage there with all kinds of people from all parts of the world, Portuguese and Italians and what not."

"Was this literally a cage?"

"There is a cage there where there is about maybe two or three hundred people; and when your time comes, they call your name to go to face the judge. And the judge asks the questions, 'Who is your guardian?' and whether you're goin' to go to school and examines you and....."

"This was in 1910; is that right?"

"Yeh, 1910, November, 1910."

(MRS. F.) "Were you speaking any English then?"

"No, I did not. I cannot speak English, but I could read cause I was reading Latin at the time and I could read but I couldn't understand what it meant."

(MRS. F.) "So who was answering the questions? Your father spoke English?"

"Well, they had a...a translator. They have somebody who translates, you know, what ever you say to the judge."

"Uh huh. Were there over night accommodations at that place? Where they kept you, did you have to sleep there?"

"I don't know.. Course we waited till morning or about

twelve o'clock. We were left out. Others stayed there though. But there's no accommodations. They seemed to be laying around, you know, and sleeping; others were sleeping, others were sitting; others - you know some people were, may be detained there maybe ten or fifteen days."

"Oh well, then they must have had some place to sleep."

"Yeh, but I didn't see them."

"But no apparent ones."

"Except people were sleeping there or others sitting or....."

(MR. F.) "Now we're coming to Wilmington."

"Your father had preceded you and had he.....?"

"Yeh, he was working for John Govatos at the time in the factory he had at Fourth and King, uh Fourth and French."

"What kind of a factory was that?"

"It was candy manufacturing."

"On a large scale?"

"Yeh"

"Did you say they were cousins? Was John Govatos...?"

"John Govatos' mother is my father's sister so we're cousins - related."

"Did you remember John Govatos from the other side?"
Did you know him?"

"No, I'd seen his photograph and that's the only way."

"Was he one of the first ones?"

"The first man that I think came to Wilmington, first or second. Anyhow he was among the first. And at that time he was employing -----chocolate quarters, and about ten other people in a candy factory. They were manufacturing chocolates to be sold wholesale."

"Wholesale?"

"Uh huh"

"And is this the trade that you learned then?"

"Well, no, I - as I said I went to school because at twelve years old I couldn't do much except to wash dishes at the fountain on Sunday and I went to school there from December, started school and stayed one year."

"Where did you go to school? Where? What school?"

"In a Mulberry Street school. I think it's on West, Fourth, Fifth, school there - Mulberrry Street. Either Mulberry or ...ah.... It's on that side of town. West, Fourth."

"Uh huh. I don't know . Did you you must have had some difficulty."

"No, I could read."

"You could read?"

"I could read and I began to understand right away what they were talking about. Of course, I could not answer. And then I stayed till - ah - July and I went to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I had an uncle there and in the meantime my father went back to Greece."

"To stay?"

"Yes"

"Oh"

"He went back to Greece so I went to Lancaster, Pennsylvania where my uncle was."

"Where was your older brother?"

"He was in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, too."

"Oh, he too was there."

"Yeh, and I went there to school. In fact in that school they were teaching German at the time cause it was a German

neighborhood and the children were learning German and I had to learn German as well as English."

"For Heaven's sake! Well, then with whom did you live in Lancaster?"

"My uncle."

"Your uncle, did he have a wife and a family or....?"

"Yes, he had a wife and uh...."

"So you lived as child in his home....is that....?"

"Yes, I lived there for two years."

"Two years."

"And then I left Lancaster, too."

"Did you just go to school or did you work?"

"I worked at the same time in the fountain."

(MRS. F.) "They also had a restaurant, candy fountain, and luncheonette."

"Were you paid?"

"Yes, seventy-five dollars a year."

"For the whole year?"

"Yes, and of course my board."

"Uh huh"

"But that was my wages. I know that because my father took two years in advance and went"

(MRS. F.) "And went back home."

"Oh, he took two years of your salary in advance to pay for his passage back."

"That's right."

"You worked there two years to pay off your father's passage and then you left?"

"I left. I came back to Wilmington."

"You liked Wilmington or.....?"

"I liked.....to me, Wilmington is more like home.. Wilmington and Lancaster is, you know, home because most of my relatives are here: Govatos brothers, four of them; and then the Leggos brothers, was two of them; and I had another uncle here.. So to me Wilmington was like home."

"What year was this now?"

"Well, that was four.....three years larer, which was 1914, I suppose."

"And you were fifteen years old?"

"Yeh, I worked at the time for Booker, Scott and Moore. He was a candy manufacturer at Fourth and French. Booker, Scott and Moore was the name of the company. They makin'....."

"He was not a Greek?"

"No, no, he was an American."

"Where did you live then?"

"I lived with other cousins of mine, you know, Greek boys."

"Young boys?"

"Yeh."

"Do you remember where?"

"It was on Eighth Street, right between French and King. There was a rooming house there."

"Were there - there were a lot of Greek boys? Were there boys of other nationalities?"

"There were about five."

"Five?"

"Five others, I believe."

"Did you have any spare time that you could find recreation?"

"No, nothing. We worked day time, you know, either at

Govatos. And then of course, I only worked from seven to five then. And then at night I went to work at the fountain. So there wasn't much spare time to read or do anything. We had no money to spend and naturally we....."

(MRS. F.) "When did you start up at the academy?"

"That was later."

(MRS. F.) "Where did you learn the decorating of the Easter eggs, in Lancaster?"

"No, I worked there until 1917. I had saved a thousand dollars and I felt I want to educate myself, to get some kind of an education. So I figured out - where could I go? There was no - nothing that I could go into a high school or what? Where could I go? So I thought I met an artist in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. His name was Charlie DeMuth, one of the first men who brought the new art to America from France. I met him in the store there; and because he saw that I was interested in art, he invited me to his studios and that's the first time that I saw what a painting was like and how it's made. So I asked him that how can I learn this. How can I get - how can I learn to paint. So he says, 'You have to go to an art school.' 'What art school would you recommend?' 'Well,' he said, 'the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, that's the school that I went.' Course that was a mistake for me because that school people go to finish whereas I went there to start."

"Oh, I see."

"But at the same time I stayed at the Academy of Fine Arts for a year and a half until my money run out and then I went out, too."

(MRS. F.) "And meanwhile he would walk from Philadelphia to Wilmington."

"Really?"

"Why I was, you know, I like to walk; and in order to sketch at the same time, I would on Sunday, when there was no school, I would start from Darby and walk Shepherd Park."

"For Heaven's sake."

"Shepherd Park and then on - in the meantime, I would stay on the way and sketch an old farm house or something that"

"Had you sketched as a child?"

"No!"

"No?"

"No, my only - I was, I got interested in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In fact what I wanted to do was to learn to paint show cards - show cards, you know, was the sign you use in windows."

"Uh huh"

"A man used to come into the store of my uncle to paint them, and I thought that was an easy way to make money - extra money. So I wanted to paint them, and that's where this Charlie DeMuth saw that I was interested in art. So I went to the Academy, and somehow they accepted me. I don't know why, but they accepted me."

"Did they - did they accept you the merit of your painting or.....?"

"I had made a drawing in the Y.M.C.A. in Lancaster. There was a class there and I went a couple nights and I made a drawing of an old man with a beard and I used that for entrance tobecause you had to have some kind of a work showing you are not proficient but interested in art. And they liked that drawing, and somehow or other I got in. In ----- class, what they call."

"Did you live with other Greek boys or.....?"

"No, I stayed in a rooming house on Vine Street, Fifteenth and Vine.. Course the rent was only three dollars a week, and I was eating lunch rooms or where ever."

"You didn't work while you were going to school?"

"Well, later I did find a job at the Broad Street Station. There was a restaurant right below the Broad Street Station there. Charlie Pappas was the owner and I got a job there at nights. That is to help out with my tuition and at the same time I would have something to do at nights, too. So I would work from eight to one and then the next morning I would go to the Academy again."

"This was about 1917 then?"

"1917."

"Were you affected by any of the wars at that time?"

"Well, at that time the Academy of Fine Arts was under government supervision. We were doing besides posters, camouflage work. Made scenes for training in camps; and if you did sign, you were - you were assigned as an officer like they do in the colleges now."

"Oh I see, uh huh."

"I wrote to my father then that what I intended to do. He told me not to join the army until they called me. If they called, go; but do not sign up. Well, that was a mistake that I made because the boys that did sign up, they stayed there all the time that I was there; and after the war, they went to Paris to study - free!"

"For Heaven's sake."

"On government expenses, whereas I not have signed
I"

"Lost out on that!"

"And then I had no more money so I came back to Wilmington again."

"Had you gotten your citizenship papers prior to

the time....?"

"Any what?"

"Citizenship papers."

"No, no, I was not a citizen."

"But they would have taken you in the army regardless?"

"They did! In fact after that, everybody was uh, was uh - not enlisted- but they were drafted and I was classified A-1. I was supposed to go to Camp Dix in November the 19th. But Armistice was signed November the 11th so I missed out again otherwise I would have been, you know, I was called to go to Camp Dix."

"You actually had the papers?"

"To report to Camp Dix on November the 19th but Armistice was signed on November 11 so we were not - we were stopped there."

"When you returned to Wilmington, what did you expect to do? What ...uh...?"

"Well, I found a job, work for Laskaris - Laskaris...."

"Which Laskaris?"

"Jim Laskaris and his brother Pete. They had a candy store across the street from Govatos's so I found a job there and I went to work there."

"And where did you live then?"

"In a rooming house again, just a rooming house."

"And you still had no time for recreational activities?"

"No."

"Did you go to movies?"

"Well, once in awhile might went to Nickelodeons then they were called at the time."

"Did you find that your associations were with Greek people or did you go into the American community?"

"No, mostly Greek people."

"Now after the First World War there was a feeling of nationalism and anti-foreign feeling. Did you have any of this reflected on you?"

"Well, for awhile I was even ashamed to admit that I was a Greek. In fact I ..uh... many times I thought of changing my name to something else. Not only the Ku Ku..Ku Klux Klan was acting, but the Greeks were the butt of ridicule."

"Really?"

"In this country whether you go to the movie or you went where, the people were makin' fun of you at the fountain. They would come in there and say, 'Give me apples pie and cups coffee.' It was so ridiculing that I was ashamed to admit that I was a Greek. And I felt many others were - uh - in the same - uh - category. Uh - about that time was the Ahepa. Ahepa was founded and that was the purpose that the Ahepa was founded in fact because they had some way to band together in order to make a protest or to be heard. Individually everybody had friends but he could do nothing. You had to have a unified, unified band in order to - uh - protest whether the movie makers, the Congress, or the courthouse, even the mayor or the judge, whoever that - uh"

"This was in Wilmington that you joined with the Ahepa or the people that founded the Ahepa."

"Yeh."

"You were one of the initiators? Were you among the the initial group?"

"Well, you might as well say that I wasn't among the first. The first was a group of about fifteen, but the next month or a couple months later I joined, too. But the purpose of the Ahepa was to - uh - protect the good name of the Greeks in America."

"I see. That was one of the prime motives in your joining together. Uh - did you at this time or any time previous to this go back to Greece or have any desire to go back?"

"Well, in 1924 I bought a little place of business at Washington Street, 1208 Washington Street. There was a little store there and I heard the owner, Mr. Heywood, was going to sell the place; and I came to terms with him to buy it and - uh - from that time I stayed up to - well, even today I still own the"

"The building there?"

"The building there and my son runs the business but I still (have) interest in - uh. I stayed till 1929 and then I decided to go back to Greece to see my people."

"Was your father still alive?"

"Yeh, my father and mother and...."

"Were you and your brother the only two that had come?"

"Well, my brother left. He got sick here a year later. After I came, a year later he got sick."

"About 1911?"

"And he went back to Greece and died."

"Oh, he had caught whatever he had....?"

"Well, he got pneumonia here and that pneumonia turned into T.B."

"Uh huh"

"And he went to Greece for better care in my father's home, of course, but he did not live. He lived about eight or nine months and died."

"Then no others of your family came."

"No, I had no others, no others."

"Did you send any money back or provide - uh - ?"

"Oh yes. I was the regular monthly or, you know, every two or three months, I would send part of my earnings."

"Uh - when you went back, did you have a desire to stay or had you gone for a visit?"

"No, no, I just went for a vacation for three or four months. I figure to stay there but my mother said, 'Don't you think it's time for you to get married?' I said, 'I'm too young to get married.' She said, 'You're thirty years old, you're too young?' 'Oh,' I said, 'I don't feel like I should get married.' But - uh - "

"This was not the purpose of your returning?"

"No, - uh -"

"To find a wife?"

"No, uh - I went there just to see my parents, but some how or other I kind of liked the idea when they suggested it. My sister said, 'I know a nice little girl that I used to go to school with and I think they would like her.' I said, 'What's her name? Where she lives?' 'She lives in Mali.' That was the town where I went to school and - uh - I saw her. Got introduced and the same month got engaged and a month later married."

"Married there?"

"Yeh, and came back in February 1930. That was the year the Depression was on in its high, in its height."

"Oh, that's right. And were you affected by this?"

"I was affected very much because I went over I had more than seventy five or eighty thousand dollars worth in the stock market; and when I came back, I was pretty near wiped out."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake."

"I only had my business, but I saw so many other people were in a worse fix than I was."

"Uh huh"

"At least I had a little business to come back to, whereas others who were considered well-to-do were selling apples on the street."

"But the fact remains that you came with forty dollars in your pocket and you had progressed to a point where you could say that at one point there was eighty thousand dollars."

"I could write my check - my name on a check that was worth seventy-five or eighty thousand dollars."

"For Heaven's sake. Did you have any trouble with papers at crossing or returning with your wife?"

"No, no, because I was a citizen then. I became a citizen in 1927."

"Did you have any - by that time you knew the language well enough and it was no ordeal?"

"Oh sure - no, it was no trouble whatever....I..."

"You had to answer questions?"

"No."

"No?"

"Just got a passport."

"No, I mean you....."

"Course I had to send back to get admittance for a wife because I didn't, you know, I could have at the ----- before I left, I could say that I would come back married, but I didn't do that. I didn't know."

"Oh, I see."

"So I had send papers certifying I was married and I would come back with a partner, my wife."

"Was she automatically a citizen at this point?"

"No, she was not."

"No, uh huh."

"She had to get citizenship papers after she came here."

"I see. Had she been educated over there, too?"

"Well, she was educated, yes."

"Were your - did your sisters go through school, too?"

"The what?"

"Your sisters, did they go to school there?"

"Yes, they go to school."

"In some families or in some remote districts, I'm saying, the women were not considered....."

"Well, later - in 1940 - a younger brother of mine came with a sister."

"Oh?"

"And before that another sister of mine got married to an American citizen and she came to this country with another sister of mine."

"Uh huh."

"Cause you know the dowry problem."

"Yes, I wondered about that."

"In this country it was easier to get married. So my sister took another sister and went to Athena, Michigan."

"That far away?"

"Athena, Michigan, that's where he lived of course. She went to Athena, Michigan with my other sister. Years later they came to Wilmington because the country was too cold up there."

"Uh huh"

"They moved to Wilmington afterwards a younger sister got married in Washington, D.C. So now I have four sisters here and a brother. Brother is in Milford, Delaware and the other one

sister in Corpus Christi, Texas. Two sisters in Washington, D.C. and another sister in Milford, Delaware."

"Then in 1940 this all came about. Up to that point they had not come."

"Yeh, that's right."

"Did you pursue your art?"

"No, I did not because when I came back in 1930 - of course, I stopped even before. I dec..... I realized to become an artist it takes years of practice, years of You have to have support from someone in order to get started in art unless you are a genius. Well, I am not a genius therefore I had to do the thing that I was easier for me to do; and when I got into business and of course it was easier for me to make a living in a fountain, in a little soda store and after I got into stock market, of course it was still easier. It was for difficult to get back to art but I did figure that later on in life I would go back to it, but I did enjoy in the meantime, the knowledge that I knew something more than being a manager of a candy store or a fountain."

"There was personal satisfaction."

"And to me knowledge is worth more than any amount of money that you might have on any account."

(MRS. F.) "The life sounds so difficult and yet you went to the Met; you used to eat in standing room, you had heard Caruso. You did have entertainment."

"Well, I was interested in all the arts."

(MRS. F.) "You had a sports car."

(MR. M.) "Painting."

(MRS. F.) "A flashy little Bentley."

(MR. M.) "Music."

(MRS. F.) "This was life was a fun life in your youth."

It wasn't so serious and"

(MR. M.) "No, I wasn't confined to the store only. I'd.... every exhibition of art that was in Philadelphia or New York I would attend. We'd go to the Metropolitan Opera House twice or three times a year, concerts in New York or Philadelphia in the Academy of Music. I was interested in the arts as well as in business."

"You pursued this as a hobby then?"

(MRS. F.) "Recreation."

(MR. M.) "And that was, of course, by going to the Academy and see the other side how mankind lives."

"Uh huh"

"You do not live by bread alone; you live by other things which enrich your knowledge, enrich your happiness in this world. Now this hobby of mine of decorating eggs that was in 1917 Booker, Scott, and Moore was making a few Easter eggs and he was worried who's going to do it. Said, 'Let me try it.' Said, 'Have you done any before?' Says, 'I didn't try but somebody can do it, I can do it too. Why's not better than I am.' So he was satisfied so from then on I began every year to go to different places like Govatos's or Reading, Pennsylvania; Phoenixville; Pottstown; Lancaster. In one month I would visit all these places and do the work that they had on hand."

"Oh for Heaven's they would wait for you to come so that you.....?"

"Yeh, they would tell me that I would wait - I would stay two or three days in each place and to me it was pretty good income, too."

"Were these Easter eggs - had you seen them decorated before? Did you have a pattern or did you.....?"

"No, no I did not. I saw at the beginning or before I started, I saw two, three of them, how they..... And then when I began to do it, I had no time to watch somebody else; so I don't know how others were doing it, but just the same mine were of equal beauty than the ones that I saw in other places except in New York I saw some better work than mine. Fifth Avenue there, Shrafts and places like that that I saw better decorations. Course mine - art did help me in that very much."

"And we can still see your art in Govatos. Just recently there was an article in the paper?"

"Well, yes, they thought that those things were machine made. They didn't know that they were made by hand. When the woman that wrote this article saw how quickly, how easily it was made, she was amazed."

"Is this the last remaining candy manufacturer that there is in town?"

"Yes"

"Would you say the last hand done?"

"Yes, that's right. Of course there's a lot of cake decorators."

"Uh huh"

"Birthday, wedding cake decorators but they do - they do a lot of flowers and roses, things like that; but they do not do the animals, the birds, and the rabbits, and things that I would do on Easter eggs."

"Uh huh. This was about 1917 - 18?"

"Well, from '17 on I began every year to visit these places. Course I still had my store. I still had my business, but during that month I would let somebody else stay in my place and I would visit these other stores to do the work. And it's pretty

hard to find a man. It was - maybe in this section, there was only one man from Baltimore that would make the rounds like Harrisburg, Lancaster, up in the coal regions. He would go, you know....."

"Were these all Greek places that you went to?"

"Yes."

(MR. F.) "Going back to 1940 - you had children. When was the first one born?"

"Thirty-two. Pete was born in '32. Then Diane in '33 and Bobby in '35."

"Uh - the one question I like to ask about one's name. Do you have any knowledge of your name, its derivation or meaning in Greek?"

"My name? The Manolakis, you mean? No, I have no family here. I don't remember of any, no recollection because when I left so young I did not inquire, I did not know in fact to find out exactly where the name came from or where the family...."

"It has no direct translation?"

"No there isn't any way that..... Course since then I came to this country I went back in 1960 and back again 1965. I made three trips. Course these last three times I went to visit historical places in Greece. In 1960 I went to Constantinople."

"Remembering your very first statement when you were to have gone with your uncle to Russia - what was the purpose of that trip? Were you again....?"

"No, he was going to adopt me as his child because he had no children and he was an importer, exporter rather of caviar. He was Taganrog, it's a big seaport and there is where caviar is prepared for export and he was an exporter and he had no children. He had a Russian wife and he wanted to adopt one of the children. He thought that I would be"

"Your father was willing to let you do this?"

"Oh yes, he had ten children." (Laughter)

(MRS. F.) "More than enough to go around."

"Was your uncle from the same town?"

"My uncle was my father's brother."

"Then of course he was from the same town."

"Yes, but he lived in Russia."

"Were the wealthy men, men who went out of Greece to make a living?"

"No, they were the poor men that went out, not the wealthy. The poor men went out."

"But did they become wealthy?"

"The wealthy stayed in Greece; the poor man went out to make their - to make a living."

"Oh, I see."

"And some went to Rumania, others to Constantinople. From Constantinople, next place is to go is further up - Russia. And my uncle went to Taganrog; that was the name of the town. That is about one hundred miles from Odessa."

"And he lived there."

"He lived there naturally."

"So you might have been a Russian citizen on the other side of the iron curtain."

"I would have been a Bolshevik or somebody or maybe dead by this time because my opinions do not conform with theirs, and as with my uncle finally he died in a camp, a prisoners' camp."

"Did he really?"

"Yeh"

"Because he was Greek?"

"Well, he was considered a capitalist. Being an ex-

porter, he was considered a capitalist. So although he had a Russian wife, that didn't - uh I know that he wrote me many times for money. And I did send him more than fifteen hundred dollars. In a letter I would put a ten or twenty dollar bill, or I would send money to a place in Greece where he knew people that were in that same town from that part of Greece so he could take the money. He told me not to send more than ten dollars in a letter because of they found out that he had someone in America who was sending him money, then he would force to make me send as much as I could over there."

"For Heaven's sake."

"As a ransom. So he said don't send any more than ten. And when you do, you know, do not send every ---- at such a time."

"Would this what period of time?"

"In '33, '31, '32, '33 - that was the years then."

"Of course, you didn't have much to spare at that time, did you?"

"Well, I could find cause as I said, you know, I didn't lose everything in the Market. I still had some money left. I had some stock. So I would - borrowed on it."

"Did you ever find advantage for being Greek? You found disadvantage in the period after the War."

"Advantage is that is having no family here, having no support from others, you depend on yourself; and when you depend on yourself, you are bound to make savings, work, and that's how a man succeeds - by saving and by working."

"Is there anything else you can add? Anything you can think of? Do you know of any story that you eluded in your tale that you could....."

"Well, as I said my life is not very colorful."

(MRS. F.) "It was colorful - your bootlegging experiences in Philadelphia, the different jobs that you worked while you were going to the Academy."

"I know that I met some of the famous people in this - in America for instance Joseph Pano, who was one of the great artist, was a man which I knew him well; John Singer Sargent, a man came to the Academy and spoke to us; Daniel Garber, the landscape painter of fame, fame of that period of 1930."

(MRS. F.) "Joseph Meltzer, who does scenic designs for most of the Broadway shows even today."

"Arthur Meltzer was a man we went together the same day in the Academy, And Julian Levy, who is a teacher in New York. We were friends, very (good) friends that is because of going into the Academy at the same day. We knew each other better than we went there a week later. And those people who have are..... top names in American art. Well, I knew them. And once you know them...."

(MR. F.) "You're friendly with Charlie Parks too, Pop."

"Well, Charlie Parks was a man who I met in Wilmington, at the Academy here I went."

"I remember seeing a picture in the paper of a sculpture design."

"Yeh, yeh, well, I do some sculpture and wood carving and painting."

(MRS. F.) "He still makes all the signs now for the church advertising or even a movie group or a dance."

(MR. F.) "Well, so between the art work and the church work he did, it occupies his mind."

"Oh, the church work. You had mentioned something previous to our recording about a church being built in Greece."

"Well, no."

(MRS. F.) "On his last trip he - uh ..."

"In my home town they wanted to build a new church and they asked me in what way I can help. I said the only way I can help is by raising some money, but I came back here and I approached - there's about fifteen from my home town, fifteen others, some live in New York, others in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, Mt. Carmel. So I approached them and altogether I collected about five thousand dollars and I sent it to them. So five thousand dollars is a big amount when it comes to ----- . But that was the cause that others - from Michigan and I wrote to others in all parts of the country that I knew and they had made contributions which - the church has been built now and finished. It cost thirty thousand dollars altogether."

"And funds were from this country?"

"Yes, money, all the money, went from this country."

"Very fine. You have been instrumental in a lot of beginnings."

"There's a few in Waco, Texas; Corpus Christi, Texas; Alabama. They're in-all over the country. Come from the same little town that I came from. They're spread in Long Beach, California. There's Jackson, Mississippi. There's boys from the neighborhood who had grown up in business and different parts of the country."

"Have you traveled much in this country?"

"I haven't been west, but I went to Texas."

(MRS. F.) "Mexico"

"St. Louis, you know, and places like that. I haven't done much traveling."

(MRS. F.) "Canada"

"Well, I went to Canada, yes."

(MRS. F.) "Mexico."

"When you were a child, had you ever been out of your home town before you came to this country?"

"No."

"Never been out of your home town?"

"In fact I never saw the water although it's not no more than ten miles - five miles away.. I never saw the sea except one time - the day before I left for United States."

"Did you come in the clothes that were hand sewn?"

"Yes, oh yes."

"Did you quickly change them when you came to this country or?"

"Oh yes. An uncle of mine took me to Mullins and he got me those baggy pants, you know, that they wear outside."

(MRS. F.) "Knickers"

"I hated them!" (Laughter)

"You wanted your old clothes back at that point."

"I wanted either long pants or - but them pants, you know, they were a ...longie..."

(MRS, F.) "Knickers"

"Knickers, what they call."

"I see. Anything else? Thank you very much, Mr. Manolakis."

"Thank you."