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Special Collections, University of Delaware Library
181 South College Avenue
Newark, DE 19717-5267
302.831.2229 / 302.831.1046 (fax)
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askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

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GEORGE BOINES, M.D.
413 N. Broom Street
Wilmington, Delaware

GREEK IMMIGRANT

Born: 1901

Immigrated: 1914

Interview and Transcription
by Irene H. Long
March - Sept., 1968

In direct contrast to the gleaming, sterile, and streamline decor of the modern day medical office, Dr. Boines waiting room is uncarpeted, dim, and scantily furnished. Dr. Boines himself is a small man with a trace of an accent, at times mistakeable for a slight lisp. A pioneer in the diagnosis and treatment of polio and now a trustee of the University, at sixty-seven he is still active in his profession. His vitality emerges as a key factor in his success as he relates his story.

Armed with determination and a Spartan capacity for hard work, he conquered every obstacle which stood in the way of his dream. Unusual for the immigrant, Dr. Boines continued his education through American schools, beginning in the primary grades and progressing well because of obvious mathematical ability. His strength of character and determination won him the respect of teachers who gladly spent extra hours with the little Greek boy who wanted to become a doctor.

With insight and understanding, he also generalizes in regard to the motives and desires of the Greek immigrant, who he states, loves his adopted land with a fervor of which no native born is capable. Of interest, too, is Dr. Boines' vivid description of his residency and early days of practice which he acridly compares to present day situations.

A story of rags to riches is not completely exemplified by Dr. Boines, who compares himself to his very wealthy brother Jim, who with no education surpassed him in material possessions; however, Dr. Boines' fulfillment of his desire and his continuing devotion to medicine are to him rewards of uncountable personal satisfaction.

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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH DR. GEORGE BOINES

"Dr. Boines, where were you born?"

"In Sparta, Greece."

"In Sparta."

"Southern part of Greece."

"What was the name of the village or were you born right in the city?"

"Right in the city of Sparta."

"What year?"

"1901"

"In 1901."

"January 18."

"You know your birthday then?"

"Yes, but that's not for publication." (Laughter)

"You never had any trouble knowing your date of birth? You didn't celebrate your name's day?"

"Oh no, no, no.. We knew the birthdays.. My mother kept all the birthdays.. There was seven children of us.. She had a little book.. Actually my father kept accurate figures of the birthdays and christenings and marriages and so forth."

"Had she not kept this would it have been recorded in any place?"

"Well, it would have been recorded but I don't think up to the present time.. Usually they were recorded in the church. They had no true ----- amongst us.. They had no records to furnish. They had no board of health the way we have here, no vital statistics.. Most of the people who tried to get information if they know any of the old timers and so forth. Most of the records of the churches

have been burned through the wars. You didn't get accurate records."

"I see. What did your father do?"

"My father was a restaurant man - in a tavern. You know in Greece that was the favorite work. There was so much wine to sell and most of the men worked in having taverns, selling wine and lunch. More like a lunch room affair - like we have here plus the wine part - no hard liquor."

"No?"

"No, it was very expensive in those days anyway."

"Did you go to school at all in Greece?"

"Oh, yes. I went to school up to the Grammar School. What would consist. That is 1914 so I was about thirteen years old. 1914 we came to this country. Thirteen years old."

"You were thirteen years old. How many years did you go to school then there?"

"From six through seven."

"You started when you were six or seven?"

"No, six, I started at six."

"At six and you went approximately seven years which would have been the end of Grammar School there. Oh, I see."

"No, about the second year of Grammar. We called it the ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΟ. You know the Greek?"

"I went to Greek school here."

"Yes, that corresponds to Grammar School."

"It does?"

"Because when I came here I started with the first year Grammar School. When I came to this country, that is."

"Junior High?"

"Junior High - that would be."

"About the seventh grade?"

"Seventh, yes, seventh. That was School Number 28, Eighth and Adams. Torn down now."

"Oh, is it?"

"Yes, the highway goes through there."

"Oh, I see. Did you have brothers and sisters who went to school there, too?"

"Oh yes, there were seven - four boys and three girls."

"Did your sisters go to school too?"

"Oh yes, all went to school. School was supposed to been compulsory in those days."

"In the cities?"

"In the cities."

"Did it make a difference that you lived in the city rather than living in the country?"

"Yeh, I think in the country you wouldn't have to go to school if you had (no) transportation facilities. They had set up to primary grades and grammar but not high school, but in the cities they had high school. We had no college in Sparta. You had to go to college; you had to go to Athens."

"Oh really. There wasn't anything closer?"

"Not to my knowledge unless it was Tripoli, or some city which was between Athens and Sparta."

"What would you have done had you stayed in Greece?"

"Probably worked. There are no chances of higher education in those days. Now maybe it's a little better, but in those days if you came from a poor family, no money, an education was out of the question because you had no such things as scholarships or help, you know. So you went to school through the

primary grades, the elementary grades, and then you went to work. Now my brother next to me went to work in shoe making- shoe maker, shoe repair man - and my other brother, the older brother, did the same thing. of course, it was a very good trade and easy to learn with lower education.. Later, before we left there was a school which was called a polytechnical school which was something similar to Brown Vocational here and you could go in and learn a trade."

"That was brand new?"

"Yes, that was brand new; a trade, that is a carpenter, or any other trade."

"Previous to this you would have to go and serve an apprenticeship?"

"Yes, work somewhere till you learned the trade. Now my sister was, I suppose, seamstress for male clothes. That is for suits and so forth. And the work was always brought to the home. In those days girls were not allowed to walk the streets even though everyone knew who the families are. Because Sparta, even though it sounds big, Sparta was a small city, three or four thousand people."

"Oh, is that all it was?"

"Oh, that's all. Everybody knew everybody else. But to have a young lady go out by herself to a store and get the material and bring it home.. She had to work at home. They wouldn't work in the stores because girls wouldn't. It wasn't considered a proper thing to do for a girl. Course you know today it's a little different..

"Even there it's different?"

"Well, it's a little different now. Girls work now.

They go to work now. They go to the offices and so forth, but in those days you couldn't. So the work was brought in or the boys went out and got the work or my sister went out with one of us to the store and got the material already cut. Then she'd bring the material home and she'd sew the coat, and dress, and trousers and so forth."

"Was your sister older than you?"

"Yes, she was the oldest one in the family."

"Was she? Was there an object to provide a dowry for her?"

"Well that was, well, the dowry is one of the things, of course, and in those days my father and brother Jim were in this country since 1907."

"Oh."

"They came first. My father, of course, came here because his brother; that is my uncle, my father's brother; was in Washington, D.C. and he had a restaurant. It was the Greek Kitchen Restaurant because there were quite a few Greeks in Washington. And my father had him work in the kitchen in the restaurant. Then it was a matter of raising enough money to send to bring us over. So my brother Jim was elected to come with my father because he was, well, you wouldn't call him delinquent, but he was a rough type of boy. If anybody bothered him, he'd fight back and always seemed to get into trouble. But it was boy - no such thing as stealing."

"How old was he then?"

"He was - well, 1907. Let's see. He wasn't more than eleven."

"Eleven?"

"Yeh, so he wasn't very old. He had to go to school here."

"Uh huh"

"So then they collected enough money, raised enough money. As a matter of fact I think my father came back the first time. He came in 1904 (to) this country and he didn't do well. He didn't like it, came back to Greece. Then in 1907 he came over with my brother. Then he stayed and my brother stayed. And then we came in 1914. So that was seven years later. So it took seven years to send enough of money for us to get along with food. They sent us so much a month to buy flour and odds and ends, you know. And then my brother and sister were working making enough money just to get along because there were six children."

"Left at home?"

"Yes, at home. So my sister and two brothers were working. The one brother had just begun to work, but the two - the sister and the one brother - were working steady. So they were bringing in a little money. But the idea of the dowry - you couldn't save money from that amount of work to save for that. because it was enough to keep us for clothes and shoes."

"So there wasn't anything left over."

"No, there was nothing left. And my father, of course, was supposed to get enough money to bring us over. So in 1914 around April. And it took thirty-one days on the boat to get across."

"My goodness!"

"And then we had to go from Sparta, we had to go to Athens and we had to go by coach."

"You went - not by train?"

"Trains, no, there were no trains from that part of Sparta to Tripoli. So we had to go by coach from Sparta to Tripoli and then get a train to go to Athens. Planes weren't invented yet. (laughter) And then automobiles weren't out. As a matter of fact, the first car I saw was when the King visited Greece in those days for some reason, I don't know why. All I know was that the children had to go out and line up along the streets to see the King. He came here with a limousine, probably it was a Rolls Royce, an English automobile. That's the first time I saw the car."

"For Heaven's Sake! It took you thirty-one days then to sail over."

"Thirty-one days to come over and we came over through New York."

"Did you stop at Ellis Island?"

"Yes, oh yes, we stopped at Ellis Island and went through the line for a check-up and examinations and health records and from there we were sent; we were tagged; we spoke no English, mind; nobody spoke."

"There were six of you now?"

"Yes, there were five. My brother remained behind because when he was examined in Sparta it was found that his eyes weren't quite so good. They kept him behind. As a matter of fact it was in Athens. So he was old enough and he was working. Then a year later he came because actually there wasn't much trouble with the eyes."

"Was he examined by Greek officials or by American?"

"Yes, well, I couldn't tell you whether it was Greek or American but it was in Athens before you get on board."

"You did have to have some papers at this time then to leave?"

"Yes, you had to have papers and all the papers were in order, and the health examinations, and you had to have a small amount of cash to come over with you."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes, then my brother came later without any difficulty."

"Did you stop at other ports on your way over?"

"No, just Athens and I think it was stopped in either Spain or Portugal, but we didn't get out though."

"You didn't?"

"No."

"Were there other nationalities aboard other than Greek?"

"I think so, yes. The majority were Greek."

"They were?"

"Yes."

"Was it a luxurious boat?"

"It was very luxurious. We came third class which was tourist which was next to the bottom of the boat, I think. And the bunks - there were bunks like you have in the army in layers and the separation of the bunks was just a rail. You know like they have in hospital beds, just the rail inside. You climb up with the ladder on the second row bunks and the people underneath, of course, was the first layer and we were on the second layer. And you know how kids are playing on the second layer - fooling around, eating and so forth and sometimes you'd be eating things dropping on the first layer. People would com-

plain, 'Stop dropping those crumbs down here.' But you know how that is ----- to take."

"Were you separated into large compartments, men and women, or could you stay within a family group?"

"No, we were in a family group because we were children, of course, and our mother was there with us."

"Oh, I see."

"There was five children and my mother."

"Could you go to a dining room to eat?"

"Oh yes, you had to go to the dining room. Oh it was not served. There was only one dining room and the food was excellent. Even remember from those days. Splendid eat, no question about that."

"Was it a Greek line?"

"Yes, Greek line and all Greek food with Greek macaroni and Greek cooking."

"Was this a great adventure for you?"

"Yes, it was and we weren't sick as I remember. We got along very well. The older people used to get sick on the boat. So we had no difficulty."

"Especially since you were all together, I guess there was no fear involved."

"No, course there was other Greek people. There was a cousin of ours from near Sparta who came on the same boat, and he went to Lowell, Massachusetts, and I think he was sort of supervising us."

"He spoke English?"

"Yes, he spoke English because he had been in this country before."

"When you arrived in Ellis Island and later on into New York, can you remember your first impressions?"

"Yes, there was all fascination and mystery. You see these great big buildings we had never seen before. And then seeing the ocean when we came over. We had never seen the ocean before. We'd seen a river. We had a river in Sparta but no ocean or big bodies of water. No building, automobiles, trolley cars."

"There was so much, there was nothing specific I imagine."

"Yes, there was one thing when talking about present days and the old days - when we were in Athens the main ship was parked not near the wharf. You couldn't walk on the boat so we had to go by rowboat. We'd get all our things in a rowboat and then we'd go near the boat and the men. And the men, you had to send somebody up on the first deck and drop ropes down to tie up your baggage and pull it upstairs because you couldn't carry it.. Pull it up on the boat and that was quite an excitement."

"The women, too?"

"Yes, everybody got in. You could walk up the side, the steps of the boat, you know. But your bags and baggage you couldn't carry it up because right under this steps, usually put on the side, it was quite narrow and you hardly had enough room to hold and walk. It's nothing like today where they have the walking planks from the ----- you (go) right into the boat."

"Then this wasn't uncommon; this was done all the time."

"Oh, this was done all the time and then everyone was rushing and the men that were helping you with the rowboats

kept on yelling getting to get there first and so forth. So there was a lot of excitement trying to see who gets there and gets things, but everybody was afraid you may not get there in time to get on the boat. So that was a little bit off the modern."

"Conveniences, huh? When you arrived in New York, did your father meet you?"

"No, we went straight to Washington."

"Oh, did you?"

"That was another thing. In New York we were all tagged as to where we were going. And then somebody saw to it that they put us on the proper train. So we got in the train and we got in Washington, in the main station in Washington, D.C., and there we parked in the waiting room, thinking of course waiting for my father to come for us. Well as it was, somebody somewhere down the line was supposed to send a telegram from Ellis Island to my father that we were going to arrive at that particular time. The boat was supposed to take three weeks, took thirty-one days. So my father didn't know we were coming. So there we waited and, of course, we didn't speak English. Finally a Greek florist, who had a flower shop there in the place, saw us and came over to talk to us in Greek. And told us what we're doing, where we're going. So we showed him the names, you know, and he said oh, that's not far from here. You get out and take the trolley car and get out at certain streets. So he wrote down the streets. So we got in the trolley car all right; so the trolley car man wanted money. So my mother, we didn't have any American money, so we gave him the Greek money. He said no; gave him Greek paper money. He said no, no. So what's he do but stops

the trolley and puts us all out. So there we were stuck again, oh, four or five blocks away from the station. So an American came along who was an off-duty detective; so he realized that we were lost; so he looked at the cards and he realized we were Greek. 'Oh, there's a little Greek store, a restaurant, not far away.' So he took us there and the Greek store was operated by a cousin of ours. So he met us; of course, he knew who we were, saw the name, and he knew that we were expected and then he told us where our father was and he called him up. And we were all settled. So you see communications were a little poor, too. But after that we were O.K. We were settled in our home and went to schools."

"In Washington?"

"In Washington the first year, which was quite an experience."

"I can imagine."

"And in these days, the teacher, they had they had two classes in each school, 'A' and 'B' in other words for the year. And the way you were promoted, they had the multiplication tables. You know 2×2 and 2×4 ."

"Uh huh."

"And the teacher would go through all the kids. And but, of course, I always knew enough about multiplication to be excellent in it. And I was always the last one up. So I was promoted to the next grade."

"Although you could not speak the language?"

"No, I could not speak much but the teachers realized from those days when they asked me, 'What are you going to be?' Instead -----, you know. 'I want to be a doctor.'"

'You want to be a doctor? Well, you don't have any English.'

'Well, I don't know, that's what I want to be.' 'Well, we have to jump you ahead.' So I kept on jumping because I was older than my age for the size of primary grades because of my English so I kept on jumping till I came to the last grade in the elementary school. And the teachers were so good then that they would keep me after school to keep the other students to show me the English language and how to speak and so forth. And I knew some French.. You know in Greece they taught French from an early - often first grade. French was the main -.

"Oh, I didn't realize that."

"Yes, today they teach English mostly and French but French was -

"The universal language then."

"The universal language. So that helped me quite a bit because I could understand some of the words and some of the American letters. And then the help of the teachers, I did pretty well. So then in the meantime my sister got married to a Greek man from - Pappas, I don't know if you know the name -from Wilmington through my uncle, knew this man and he knew he was single and my sister was of marriageable age. So he came over and saw my sister. It wasn't a question of falling in love; it was a question of closing the bargain. (Laughter) In those days because girls didn't have much choice in picking a husband, but he was a very nice man, had a good reputation, a business, and so my sister said, 'Let's marry. If my father and mother say it's all right, it's all right with her.' Quite a difference now from today, huh? So then after they got married, we all moved to Wilmington. We all moved to Wilmington."

"All of you?"

"All of us because this man had two restaurants here and there were four, three boys and in the meantime my other brother had come... There were four boys."

"Oh, you were a good labor market."

"And I was the youngest and they said you can all work in the restaurant. In the first place we'd get some pay and in the second place we'd get something to eat. And, you know, food was very important in those days."

"But what did your father do in Washington then?"

"In a restaurant. Oh, we had enough to eat; there was no trouble there. So we came here and my father was working in the restaurant and the rest of us.. And the pay in those days was very low in comparison to today. In other words if you worked, it was a twelve hour shift, twelve to twelve. There were two shifts in the restaurant and you got - first you started at five or six dollars.. Then we were experienced, you got ten dollars a month. Well, four of us working there. But of course I didn't get paid, I was too young."

"You didn't get paid even though you worked?"

"No, I just got my meals. I was washing the dishes. You graduate from the dishwashing department to a waiter and then up. So my other brother Tom and I were in the kitchen because washing dishes didn't require any specialty - any special knowledge and in those days the dishwashing department was two wooden tubs. I guess you know what wooden tubs are, Something like wash tubs."

"Yes, uh huh."

"Metal tubs, but they were made out of wood and one tub was for the dirty dishes and the other tub was for the rinse

and the clean dishes. And in the meantime there was a shuttle from the outside. The other dishes came in from the opening right near the tub. So I was too short to get into the tub so I had to have an empty milk case. You know in those days they had cases for the bottles."

"The wooden ones, yes."

"So I'd be on that and I'd be doing my washing and the dishes. One of the things I remember is that once in a while I'd get splinters in my fingers because the walls, the sides of the tub were all worn out. So you had to be very careful not to get hooked with a splinter. So we did pretty well."

"Did you have a house? Did your father rent a house?"

"Yes, we rented a house. We lived on Scott Street, here. 112 Scott Street, Front and Scott."

"Front and Scott."

"Uh huh. So in those days, while we're talking about that you remind me and I'll tell you about those houses later in those days.. In the restaurant then - before long suppose I went to school. My brother-in-law had a nephew Charles Tarabicos - you know him, he's still here. He took me around to see where he was going to ---- me to school.. So he took me to a school way out on Bayard Avenue which was an elementary school and the principal was there and she talked to me and said 'Well, what are you going to be when you grow up?' And I said a doctor. So Charlie said, 'He wants to be a doctor.' 'A doctor, he can't speak any English! Does he have any money?' I said no we have no money. 'Then how are you going to be a doctor? If you ask me, then you'd better start with the grammar school.'"

"Again?"

"Here I was already fourteen years old and we (were) sent to the other - instead of the elementary school - that's where I went to school. The Number 28 which was the grammar school is the junior high."

"Oh, I see what you mean."

"Yes, so the principal there was Miss Mary Turner. She is gone now. She was a lovely person.. And so she went through the same routine, 'What are you going to be?' 'I am going to be a doctor.' She said, 'Oh my, if you're going to be a doctor we have to work at more English.' So their criterion for whether I was capable to be in the grammar school was the arithmetic. So she showed me how to do division. So I did long division the Greek way. We put the figures in the opposite from what we do in English. So she gave me a number to divide and I did them. Multiply and I was an expert and fraction. So she said, 'That's fine. We'll keep him here and we'll teach him English as we go along.' So I stayed there and the teachers there did the same thing.. They had students stay at the end of the class and teach me more English. And I was quite attentive in classes. As a matter of fact I was making better grades in classes by just understanding what the teacher wanted than some of the usual students because they were fooling around. And gradually I did pretty well. I got through the grammar school and then I went to the high school. And in those days in the high school you could finish in June and you could also finish in the middle of the year.. They didn't have a whole year. So, you know, to go to college because I had to go to college, I was going to finish in February. Well, you couldn't go till Septemer. So I said well, we're going to have to push until we get lessons

in three and one-half years. So they gave me extra subjects like English the last year, senior, third and fourth year English. And double up on the subjects and then in the summer I took two courses. I remember one was civics and the other history."

"Was this Wilmington High School?"

"Yes, Wilmington High. That's the one that's torn down. And then I passed those and in the meantime I was working in the restaurant. Then I graduated from the kitchen to being a waiter. (Chuckle) And I did pretty well as a waiter. Then you talk to people you pick up more English. And I'd work my twelve hours, go to school, and come back and work. I had my books under the counter. You know how restaurants have a counter. The present day does have a little better than that. So I'd have my books under the counter; so I'd wait on a person then I'd look, then come back again. And we did fine. And then, of course, I finished the high school."

"How old were you then when you finished high school?"

"Finished high school in '22."

"Then you were twenty-one when you finished high school."

"Yes."

"Did any of your older brothers do anything?"

"No, I was the only one."

"The others didn't go to school at all."

"No, because they had to go to work. Tom worked full time. Then we went to college it was a matter of again finishing a little earlier to save the year."

"For money?"

"No, to finish college instead of four years, I wanted to finish in three years to save the year to go to medical school."

"Oh, I see."

"So I took extra subjects again every year and I finished in three years.. In the meantime money was a problem. Is this too much to tell you about this?"

"No!"

"So money was a problem. There was a real depression.. I don't think you know what a depression is."

"No, I don't."

"Frankly you just don't have money. If you want to take the trolley from Sixth and Shipley to Sixth and Rodney, which was fifteen blocks, we walked it for the trolley was a nickel. Well, a nickel you could save it. I was given a nickel to go but I would rather walk it and save two nickels both ways. So that's ten cents; so with ten cents you could buy things in those days, more than you can buy now. So to have money the question was again: 'How are you going to college?' My brother-in-law ----- was saying, 'You're foolish to go to college and be a doctor. You got to go four years in college, four years medical school, intern; and there are so many doctors around you are only wasting your time. And if you work in the restaurant and you'd make some money.' I said, 'Look, I want to be a doctor, so that's it!' 'So all right, so you be a doctor.' So high school didn't cost any money. But going to college, it took a little money. The tuition wasn't much, maybe a couple hundred dollars. So there was a restaurant in town and, you know, I was an expert restaurateur. (Laughter)

"Is this in Newark now?"

"In Newark, across the B&O. So I went in and saw the boss and said, 'Look can I work here as a waiter and get my meals and maybe a little change?' He said, 'Sure.' Well, he saw that I knew the business. Besides I took him some business. So I worked there and made enough to stay in the dormitory."

"Oh, you lived on campus."

"Yes, the first six months, but then the dormitory was so doggone noisy that I couldn't do enough of studying. So after that I took a room next to the restaurant. There was a home there - a lady had a home - and I got a room on the third floor, and then I had plenty of time to study and also be in the restaurant. So before long, a year or so later, the man wanted-

"Who was that man?"

"Who had the restaurant?"

"Uh huh."

"Hmm - He was an American man."

"He wasn't a Greek man?"

"No."

"Oh, I thought he was Greek. Oh, I see, all right."

"I can remember his first name - I can't think of his last name. Well, anyway he didn't like the restaurant business; he wanted to sell the place. So he said, 'George, you think you want to buy the place and maybe your brothers will help you?' So I said, 'Yeh, maybe we will.' So my other brothers had the restaurant here in town, but as I say money was very scarce but the way of buying a restaurant was so easy that I said, 'Yeh, we'll buy it.' You had to pay one hundred dollars a month. So I figured we could make a hundred dollars a month. So we bought

the restaurant on that condition - pay one hundred dollars a month including the rent and all - buy the place and pay one hundred dollars a month."

"Forever? For how long?"

"Yes, until you pay it off. So we got the restaurant and I was running the restaurant and going to college and finished up and by the time I finished in three years, we sold the restaurant to somebody else and we were all right. So I went to medical school. Then - medical school. Uh, Jefferson, you know where that is. I couldn't stay in medical school because it took a lot of money to stay in Philadelphia. So we commuted."

"From Newark?"

"From Wilmington, from Sixth and Rodney - that's where we lived. So I commuted from there. We had to take a trolley six o'clock in the morning, go to the station, and take a train and be in Philadelphia, had to be there eight o'clock. It was seven dollars a month round trip on the train. It was different the rate. There from Fifteenth and Broad Street Station, you know Fifteenth and Market. We had to most of the time run to Tenth and Walnut."

"Run?"

"Yes. ----- didn't operate fully."

"Was there someone else doing this with you?"

"Yes, all the boys: Dr. Levy, Dr. Shaapiro from here, Dr. Kapool, me here in Wilmington, Dr. Horowitz, all on the same train, back and forth."

"Were these sons of immigrants too?"

"I think so, yes."

"From the Jewish community?"

"Yes, the Jewish community. So we didn't mind it. It was no problem at all. When school was over at 4:30, you had to run to catch the five o'clock train to come home and study. And I had a room on the third floor again at home which was my office. Nobody could bother me up there in the attic, that was. And I did very well. Didn't have any trouble."

"Did you have to work, too?"

"No, that I didn't have to. My brothers then were helping me with the tuition."

"When they saw that you could make it that far, they decided - "

"Yes, they saw I had made up my mind to stay. In those days the tuition was three hundred dollars a year. But now it's twelve hundred, I think, or fifteen hundred. But then three hundred dollars in those days was a fortune. You couldn't if you tried to go to the bank to borrow three hundred dollars, which we did one time. You had to have two or three people to sign the notes even though they knew you were worth it because three hundred dollars was a lot of money. But now kids want that for spending money. But we did fine. After I got through, went for residency in Reading, Pennsylvania one year and they didn't pay you anything then."

"Nothing?"

"All they do is give you the uniform. So you worked and you worked full time. Every third Sunday off. In comparison today the residents we have in hospitals in Wilmington get one thousand dollars a month, room and board, and eight hours a day. Don't you wish you were an intern?"(Laughter)

"I didn't realize they made a thousand a month."

"Oh yes, they're very hard to get and not all of them are American residents. They're imported from Cuba and Phillipines and South America and they speak English, of course."

"They have to pass a certain -"

"Yes, they pass certain examinations in this country for foreigners to visit."

"Did you have to take a test for citizenship?"

"Oh yes, I got my citizenship papers here in Wilmington."

"What year?"

"19 - 23. Twenty something."

"There was no question? I mean you knew the language well enough?"

"Oh yes, I knew the language, yes."

"Did all your brothers have to do this?"

"Had to take citizenship."

"And your father and mother?"

"Yes, - no, my father didn't; my mother did."

"He didn't?"

"No, my father died in 1925."

"He died in 1925?"

"Yes, and my mother died last September."

"Just recently, and how old was she?"

"One hundred and one."

"One hundred and one!"

"And my mother wasn't a citizen. I can tell you an interesting point about my mother. When Medicare came, of course, and she was of age - over sixty-five of course. So the man - we went to the office and she had to have Medicare because she

was reported being older, and he said now you have to have certificate from Greece to prove that she's sixty-five. I said, 'Are you kidding? (Laughter) All the children are over sixty-five.' (Laughter) So he said, 'Well, that's the law.' I said, 'I don't care what the law is. If you don't believe she's sixty-five, there's something wrong with the books or the law.' 'Well, you have to fill out these papers. So send them to Philadelphia and go to the immigration office here and testify and sign the paper under oath that she's sixty-five, as long as you have it on paper.' I said, 'Look's silly to me. I'd rather drop the whole business cause I don't have time to chase around different offices.' 'No sir, you can't have sickness because she's over sixty-five and she's an alien. Didn't she every fill an alien card?' 'An alien card? So what?' 'To prove she's an alien. How do we know she came here to live for good.' I said, 'She lived here pretty doggone long. (I said something else.) She's been here since 1914, man. This is '67 and that's fifty some years and if she's just a guest here, ' I said, 'that's a long visit.'

"Long visit!"

"I said, 'She didn't come here for a visit, she's always lived here.' 'Well, that's the law.' He was a ----- followed the law. Well, anyway I filled the papers and paid the five dollars and sent the papers to Philadelphia. So when the Philadelphia office saw it, they realized what a joke it was, and they didn't require that."

"They didn't accept her passport or didn't you have that?"

"Well, we didn't have that."

"You didn't have passports even?"

"No, we told him when she came, the boat and all that but that wasn't enough, but the man from Philadelphia had a little more sense. He sent a nice letter addressed to my mother and it said, 'Dear Mrs. Boines, now don't worry about anything. We're sending your five dollars back and here's your Medicare card and we hope you live longer than you have this day and you're welcome to stay here.'" (Laughter)

"But she was in her nineties then, wasn't she?"

"Oh yes, she was ninety-seven or ninety-eight. So she got the card anyway. So I called the man up and said, 'Look, you better tend to your attitude with the older people.' So anyway she got her Medicare and didn't have any trouble, but that's part of the immigration system and laws which we have to have but laws are made and there are also rules which can be bypassed if you use a little judgment."

"You told me to remind you about the houses."

"Oh yes, of course that was in 1914 - 1915 when we came here. So we lived - the houses had no central heating and no modern stoves and so forth that I'm sure you probably had so the stove was a coal stove. You had to heat it with coal that is to burn, that is to cook in the kitchen and the central heater was a little belly - uh - "

"Pot belly?"

"Pot belly stove in the center of the living room downstairs and that heated the whole downstairs or it was supposed to. And in the winter time that little belly got red hot. So all of us sat around and you tried to read with the light in the center of the table. And the bedrooms, of course, there was no heat; there was another little belly stove upstairs in the hall

way and that was supposed to save heat. There was no electricity in those days either, you know, here in the city."

"Oh?"

"Not in the home, no, we only had gas and the gas had a little special arrangement - they used to call it a mantle - to get the gas light. And one gas light in the dining room was enough to sit down until you've studied. No bright lights. So we were there up till 1925."

"This is on Scott Street?"

"Scott Street, till we moved and from there going to school, of course. Buses, they didn't have buses to send to take you to school. You had to use your two little legs. (Laughter) You got up early enough and you run yourself to the high school or go to Eighth and Adams and after classes are over you go back and you didn't go back home for lunch. You didn't have no cafeterias, of course, in those days so you had a couple sandwiches. We had enough to eat but you used your legs. Now you have to do a health program to walk two or three blocks."

"To use your legs. Did you ever feel any bias or prejudice from - "

"No, never! We were satisfied. We were poor, but we were contented. In other words we were better off here than we were in Greece. Sometimes people ask me, 'Well, why did you come over?' I say, 'We needed a change of atmosphere, a chance travel and see the rest of the world.' (Laughter) He says, 'Is that right?' I say, 'We came here because we didn't have enough to eat there at home in Greece. You know what I mean. No education, no ----.' So we didn't come over here for pastime, the way people travel now to go to ----- just to see the country."

"So there was never any regret on your part or

your parents?"

"No, never! No! We were poor but we were satisfied. We kept to ourselves. So there was no such thing as going to the Welfare or demanding somebody to keep us or anything else. We were there. We were told, 'Now you have to work.' And we were told what to do as children. 'Now you mind your own business, you work; you study if you want to educate yourself.. That's it! You don't want to do it, don't do it; but you get to work and make your own expenses.' And you did! And you studied at night. There was no fooling around, going to movies."

"You had no recreation whatsoever?"

"No, the only recreation was - a movie once in awhile. There were nickel movies in those days. If you saved a nickel, you could go to the movies, mostly westerns - movies. There was no radio, no television, of course, in those days."

"But that was it?"

"That was it. Then you went to church. Of course we didn't have a church."

"What did you do about a church?"

"A priest used to come here from other places out of town and we all congregated in one of the halls and had services. That went on till we built the church which was in the forties. We built this building in '52."

"But before that they used the garage."

"Before that they used the hall."

"Did you ever have an advantage for being Greek?"

"Not in those days - Well, I had an advantage in English and I had an advantage in medical school because in medical school I did better than some of the American boys because in osteology, in bones, you know, all those names are Greek; bacteri-

ology, they're Greek. So the boys would say, 'How can you remember those big words?' I'd say, 'I remember; they're Greek.' Same thing with college. You know today boys would apply to about a dozen schools. So I applied to one because all the professors in the university said, 'Look, just apply to Jefferson.' because I asked them because I didn't know anything about schools. 'Apply to Jefferson and you'll get there.' So they sent me excellent recommendations and I was the second student accepted. So when we were in school, the first one was from Harvard and he had extra studies and so forth and he was saying, 'George, how were you ever accepted second student in the school?' I said, 'I don't know. Better ask the Dean. All I know is I'm here, boy.'"

"Did you take a test for entrance?"

"No, no test."

"It was just on merit?"

"Your grades and your record from school and the grades, of course, were good and of course you know in going to college I didn't spend any time going to ball games and dances because you didn't have time. You had to work!"

"You did marry. When did you meet your wife?"

"Well, I didn't marry till 1936. And the reason I didn't marry sooner because I didn't have any money because in 1930 there was another depression. And when I got out of school I went one year in Reading which was with no money and the second year at St. Francis as a second year resident and I was getting paid one hundred dollars a month for a steady job, day and night. Every third Sunday - there were two of us that worked at the hospital then, Dr. Stuart and I - and every third Sunday one of us would take off. But in the other days we were

there day and night. The histories, physicals- I don't know if you know what that is, when they ask you about sickness- taking care of all the patients, notifying the doctors, watching for symptoms and it was an all day job and night for asking too. Now it's different. Now the staff that is the residents do no histories or physicals. We, as staff physicians, have to write them, our own physicals, our own orders, call in, see how the patient is, visit."

"So you're still doing the same thing essentially."

"Still doing the same thing and the residents, as I said before at one thousand dollars, think of. But the difference is they can't get the help. There is a tremendous change from those days to these days as far as medicine and everything else of course. But medicine is a good field, in my opinion, one of the best professions there is for satisfaction. You make money but you don't make the money business men make or engineers with big fees or pay in comparison. But in medicine we had to work during the Depression back in - I got out in practice in '31 and the Depression was so bad that money was scarce. I was working two offices and the first month I collected one hundred five dollars."

"And that's all?"

"Yes, and then we worked in clinics. There was a lot of free work. I worked in hospitals and free clinics and used to work for the Board of Health. Used to do work there for a very small amount, but it took me five years to pay for the car and the equipment in the office and I had the office in my, our home."

"In your parents' home?"

"Yes, Sixth and Rodney. I had the living room con-

verted into an office. And the dining room - no the hallway was the waiting room and the living room was the office.. So it was the equipment - the equipment and the car cost five thousand dollars."

"And it took you five years to pay that five thousand off?"

"Yes, to make-the automobile, the cars -let's see- was about nine hundred dollars and it was supposed to have been a good car. And you pay so much a month - twenty-five dollars a month. And the contractor who fixed the office, and the remodeling, and all the equipment. It took about five years till it was all paid. Then when it was all paid, things were a little better and I could afford to get married."

"Did you start looking then?"

"Well, I looked around for a rich wife but I couldn't find one. (Laughter) So I figured I'd find a girl. (Laughter) So, of course, I knew the family in Chester, you know, My wife lived in Chester - knew the -----and so forth. And that was it. So we've been happy ever after."

"Very good.. Did you ever return to Greece?"

"Yes, we were back in '56."

"Oh, that late."

"Yes, well, we couldn't afford to go before that. (Laughter) It costs money you know to go back. So we went back to Sparta and the place hasn't changed much at all."

"It hasn't?"

"No, the only difference I saw was some few new buildings."

"For Heaven's Sake!"

"But outside of that, they had a hotel, of course, which they didn't have then. That is in my days, there was no such thing as a hotel. And this hotel was on the antique side. They had one bathroom for males or females. Of course you were lucky to have a bathroom and wash stand. (Laughter) Of course, when I was there, you know the type of bathrooms we had -- outdoor bathrooms. (Laughter) I could describe - I don't know if you know the type."

"Well, I lived in Europe for a year."

"Did you? But strangely enough, there wasn't much disease. Of course the population was scarce. There was no communication with outsiders. And those who developed any type of disease, died off young."

"I see."

"The mortality in children was very high from diptheria and typhoid. So if you missed those things; the immunizations weren't available in those days either, you know, for diptheria and all the things we have now. And typhoid. So if you lived, you lived. If you didn't - it was a matter of the preservation of the -"

"Fittest?"

"The fittest, yes."

"When you opened practice, did you find that a great many of your patients were Greek?"

"Yes, in the beginning they were."

"Was there another Greek doctor around?"

"No, I was the only one. Only one. And I was doing pretty well. Of course in those days the fee was fifty cents or one dollar if you could get it. If you couldn't get it, you just forgot it and you were given ----- down."

"Had these people been to other doctors or did they come to you exclusively?"

"Yes, well, usually. Well, it's this way. Most of the people didn't pay doctors. So when a young one, a new one, came around, that was a fresh one to start with because we were looking for business. Now in those days in maternity, now this is interesting, maternity care, deliveries were done at home because we didn't have any ----- in those days. Today these days people are kind of spoiled. Modern individuals. You didn't worry about infection because we had penicillin and the antibiotics and stuff. Those days we didn't have any. If you got an infection, if you were strong enough to stand the infection, you were all right. If you didn't, you just visited the undertaker, you see. So maternities you had to deliver at home because the mortality and morbidity which means the sickness of people who went to the hospitals was very high. They developed infection that is in maternity - proprofections(?) - Do you know what that means? Proprosections, well, propro refers to maternity or delivery and fectious means to be an infection. And in those times if one patient came in with infection, say with a strep infection, everybody in the hospital got it, too, because the techniques of sanitation weren't good. They used to use the same bed pan. And we didn't know sanitation as we do today. Today most of the expenses in a hospital is observing sanitation rules, which people don't realize of course because they take everything for granted. So the mortality home was very little. So the fee in the beginning in 1931 was fifteen dollars, taking care of the patient for the nine months and delivering the patient, and of course taking care of the baby during the ----- for the first ten days and then after that you could charge the fee if you

could collect it one dollar or two dollars. So that fifteen dollars also included staying in the home during the night of delivery."

"Oh, you spent the night?"

"We had to. If the patient went into labor - you know what that is?"

"Oh yes, I know about that."

"Went into labor, you wouldn't know just when the baby would be born. And by the time you went from home, of course we had a car, but from the time you went from home to the, from our house to deliver the baby, the uh - You may not be there on time. Well, a lot of times we didn't get there on time but we always wised up the husband what to do. In case a baby is born, you wait till the after birth is born, you pick him up in a clean blanket if they had one and put him aside from the mother because we were afraid the mother might with the pains might kick the baby and so forth. And so that happened a lot of times if you were late, especially in the multifarious - you know, ladies who had more than one baby. Well, if you have four or five, if you have more than one you are multifarious."

"Oh, I see what you mean."

"Yeh, so many of our patients had seven, eight, or nine. But if they had that many, you could never be there on time because they have two or three pains and they'd call you up, 'Run!' So we'd run. 'Where's the baby?' 'Over there on the couch.' So the baby was there with the after birth. And then we'd tie the after birth and we carried gloves with us and knife and scissors, you know. So we'd fix that and we'd say how about sterile things around the mother. It was just bed sheets. And she'd have bed bugs, and uh - do you know what bed bugs are?"

"No, I hope not."

"Oh, well you come out with me tomorrow. (Laughter)

There were more bed bugs in those days than were roaches. Of course roaches were plentiful, too, but nothing happened. Well you say how about infection. Those people, the mother and so forth, were immune to the bugs and to the infection so they never got infected. It go so, toward the end, we never used sterile packs. When we got out of school we were told we have sterile packs, sterile sheets and pillow cases and everything for the baby - all sterile. So we carried those around with us, you see. So then after many times we couldn't even catch, be there on time for the baby, we figured phooey with the sterile packs. We'd get a sterile cord and tie the cord band, you know, and the scissors and that's all you need and the gloves and that was plenty. And no infections at all. So we always wised up the husbands to have a pan of warm water for the doctor to wash his hands."

"Oh, is that what that's for?"

"Oh yes, we always washed our hands and put the gloves. In fact sometimes we didn't even put gloves on because part of the baby would be delivered and you'd have to deliver the rest of it. And we had no trouble but more than once I had to sleep in the same - there with - every time the mother would groan, then you'd wake up and you lost it, go back to bed, groan again. But we never minded. So as I say, some of those babies haven't been paid yet. In those days you didn't mind. If you got paid all right, if you didn't get paid, you just forget it because you knew people were poor."

"I see."

"So where would you get it. You couldn't charge it to Medicare and you couldn't charge it to Democrats because they

weren't around. (Laughter) They didn't have the millions they have today, you know."

"I see. In any of the years you were here making money did you send money home or did you bring any relatives over?"

"Yes. Quite. We have a young lady now. She goes to the University of Delaware."

"Oh, do you?"

"She was a small child in '56. She's nineteen now. We sent her to Friends School for two years and she goes to the University of Delaware this year."

"This is a child you sponsored from Greece?"

"Yes, uh huh. She's a relative of my wife's."

"I see."

"And she is a niece like. That is, this girl's grandfather and my father-in-law were brothers. So at any rate she's taking secondary education."

"Oh, is she?"

"But she knew very little English. She took some English in Greece but when she came here, she couldn't talk. She could read but in Friends School she did very well. She became - her vocabulary increased quite a bit. She did well. She got very good marks. Very good student. Studious and she's done very well in Delaware. This semester she got 'B' in English, 'B' in math, 'A' in Spanish."

"Oh, very good."

"And 'C' in chemistry. So that's not bad."

"No, that's good."

"For a beginner."

"Certainly is."

"So uh then, of course, we had to send money to the

"Oh, did you, in those early years?"

"Oh yes. What we saw there! Well, we knew their conditions. See money is scarce over there. You can't find money. You can work but you get so little. If you can get enough to get your bread - not butter, no such thing as butter - you just say bread. To get your bread and get along to live, it was all right. So what we saw these people went through. Tortures during the occupation by Italy and Germany, especially by Germany. Then back in '46 with the Communists. Because Germany was quite rough because any time anybody would be killed from the Germans in town, they'd line up a bunch of men and shoot them for a lesson. They were very reckless. They were killing old people, old women for no reason at all - for the sake of shooting. They'd burn the whole town. These people I'm telling you about is Volos - they have a town in the top of the mountain where they lived in the summer and a town in the valley where they lived in the winter and because - "

"The townspeople themselves?"

"Yes, and the whole town moved. Well, there would be about four or five hundred people would be a town. And it's a beautiful place. Oh, it's a marvelous place. From what we know from Zuri (?) it would make an ideal place. So we went there. So the town up in the mountain was burnt completely - church and homes and so forth by the Germans because English and sympathizers of the English were there. So they destroyed the whole town. So they lived in the valley. So by doing that, they kept pretty healthy. In other words, in the summer they go up from the town. In the summer they'd be on the mountains. In the winter in the town which was warmer. And they will white-wash. In those days it was white-wash since paint was too ex-

pensive. To white-wash the houses and to clean and so forth. In the winter there'd be so much snow all the houses would be covered with snow and then that sort of destroyed infections and germs."

"Oh, I see. Where was this?"

"Volos, it's called."

"What part of Greece is that?"

"Volos is north of Athens."

"Oh, I see, all right."

"It's between Athens and Salonika, on the coast."

"All right, on the sea coast."

Yes, Volos is a big city and is eleven miles from Volos. It's a small town, a beautiful town. Well, these people during the day, during the occupation of Germany had to go in caves and hide and they had ----- (child's name). This little girl was born here and another older boy they had. The ----- . They picked the three families, husbands, wives, and older children. They take them and hide in the caves during the day and at night they'd come out and try to see if they can get something, some food somewhere where they knew Germans weren't around. Then they'd have to hide again until the Germans left. So they had nothing; everything was destroyed. So naturally we were sending them money enough to get along. As a matter of fact we still do. They work but they can't make much money. They work very hard but there isn't enough work - "

"To gain advantage."

"To gain advantage."

"I see. What's the meaning of your name Dr. Boines?"

"Boines?"

"Yes, is that the Greek?"

"Yes, the Greek name is *Bo-ee-nis* and here we're told to make it 'Boines' because it's easier to pronounce. That was a name after - a generation back there was our forefathers, my father's father and so forth, were working with leather, with hides and hide, the word referring, tanning hide for shoes and so forth and the hide was called *vo-ē-thi-a*. After they were prepared and made into leather - *vo-ē-thi-a*. And so my father, my grandfather, they were called *Vo-ē-nis* because he made the *Vo-ē-thi-a* and then from then from *Vo-ē-thi-a* it was made to *Bo-ēns* 'Boines.' Actually our name was Soumakis, originally."

"Oh, really."

"Yes, then it was handed down to my father and he took his father's name ."

"I see. That's interesting. In fact many of the Greek names are interesting, the changes which have occurred in it."

"Yes, the names from where they lived, from what they did. Now my father-in-law - his father was a general in the army, and in those days against the Turks. *τάγμα* means a group of soldiers. *Ταγμα* is a division and *τάκης* means manager, in other words, general."

"Oh, I see."

"So his name was left *Ταγματάκης* because my father-in-law was *Ταγματάκης*' son so he was *Ταγματάκης*."

"So they just kept the appellation after the job."

"Yes, after the general so apparently that's how they had the names down and then the son or the children - you always use your father's name as a middle name."

"Yes, I have as a middle name my own father's name, Michael."

"Well, that's the same principle. My father's name

was Daniel but here it was converted to James. (Laughter) So I am George J. Boines. I am the son of James Boines."

"It's easy to line you up then."

"Yes."

"Did you have any experience with wars or did any of your brothers have to serve?"

"No, the - I missed the second war in '42 here because I was in charge of the poliomyelitis center of the St. Francis Hospital. And right before me at that time anyway in '42, I was forty-one and they were taking younger doctors. Then the order came that they needed more doctors. So we went in and signed up to take me even my age and older. So they asked you, 'Well, what are you doing?' I told them what work I was doing. Then when the hospital heard that I went in and signed up, they were quite upset because there were very few doctors left to begin with; and they put my name down on the essential list. So then they wouldn't take me. They left me behind to do the work and there was a lot of work, of course."

"Certainly!"

"Then later on - that was about the first time. Then I was deferred the first time. Later they started again the possibility of taking doctors, but the war then was over and I didn't serve."

"Back in 1912 or 13 were any of your brothers old enough to have served in the Balkan War?"

"No, that Balkan War started when - that boat we came over in was the last boat that came."

"Really?"

"Carried load of immigrants because in '14 the war

started.. Then after the war started nobody came any more."

"The First World War?"

"Yes, in 1912, 1914. The was the First World War in 1914."

"Right, but that was - "

"You know it started in Europe first."

"Yes."

"Then the United States didn't get in until 1917."

"When did Greece get in?"

"They got in afterwards - around '15 or '16, thereabouts, maybe '17."

"But yours was the last boat? Because of the First World War or the Balkan War?"

"No, the Balkan War is 1912. Oh there was always a war (Laughter). There was always a war.. We were celebrating wars and patriotisms. But if there wasn't a war with Turkey, there was a war with Bulgaria.. In 1912 I think it was with Turkey."

"Yes, the Balkan War was with Turkey and then again with Bulgaria."

"There was another war in 1921 with Turkey and Greece. Greece was being supported by England and Russia."

"None of your brothers went back for any of these?"

"No, no."

"Did you hear any propaganda that - "

"Oh, there was a lot of propaganda and quite a few in this country did go.. Yes, that's true.. It shows the strength of patriotism to your motherland. Even though we were patriotic and we'd do anything for this country, still you don't forget

your country of your birth. See what I mean.. Once Greek you have a certain amount of attachment to the country where you were born, but at the same time you're patriotic, you do anything there is to be done for your country over here."

"Your adopted country, yes."

"And I think you'll find that the immigrants are more loyal to this country and government and are very upset about these people who live in this country and are going to Canada these days and so forth to evade the draft or tearing draft cards. To us that's a sacrilege to go back on your loyalty to your own country which is our own country and our own flag here."

"Is this because you feel this is inborn in you from your motherland stronger than -"

"Yes, I think so."

(TAPE RUNS OUT, INTERVIEW IS ENDED)