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Interview with Dr. George Boines, M.D., who immigrated from Greece in 1914,
March 28, 1968, by Irene Long.

Q Dr. Boines, where were you born?

A In Sparta, Greece.

Q In Sparta? What was . . .

A The southern part of Greece.

Q What was the name of the village? Or were you born in the city?

A No, we were right in the city of Sparta.

Q Right in the city of Sparta. What year?

A 1901.

Q In 1901.

A January 18th.

Q You know your birthday then.

A Yes. But that's not for publication.

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

A Oh, no, no, no, we knew the birthdays. My mother kept all the birthdays for seven children of us. She had a little book. [Inaudible] kept accurate figures of the birthdays and sicknesses and marriage and so forth.

Q Had she not kept this, would it have been recorded at anyplace?

A Well, it would have been recorded, but I don't think it is at the present time. Usually they were recorded in the church. They had no . . . through baptism, mostly. They had no records as far as Board of Health records the way we have here, or vital statistics. So most of the people who try to get information, if they know any of the oldtimers and so forth . . . most of the records in churches have been burned through the wars and . . . so you didn't get accurate records.

Q I see. What did your father do?

A My father was a restaurant man and had 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 there . . . more like a lunchroom affair, like you would have here, plus the wine

part. No hard liquors. Those were expensive in those days, anyway.

Q I see. Did you go to school at all in Greece?

A Oh, yes, I went to school up to the grammar school, what would consist here, that is 1914, so I was about 13 years old . . . 1914 we came to this country. 13 years old.

Q You were 13 years old. How many years did you go to school then there?

A From six, so it'd be seven.

Q You started when you were six or seven?

A Six. I started at six.

Q At six. And you went approximately seven years, which would have been the end of grammar school.

A It would have been oh, about the second year of grammar.

Q Oh, I see.

A They call it the [Greek word] there. I don't know if you know any Greek . . .

Q I went to Greek school here.

A Yes. That corresponds to the grammar school.

Q It does.

A 'Cause when I came here, I started with the first year of grammar school. When I came to this country, that is.

Q Junior high?

A Junior high. That would be . . .

Q About 7th grade?

A Seventh . . . ninth . . . yeah, seventh. That was school Number 28 at 8th and Adams, it's torn down now.

Q Oh, is it?

A The highway goes through there.

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

A Oh, yes. There were seven children, four boys and three girls.

Q Uh huh. Did your sisters go to school, too?

A Yes.

Q Your sisters went also?

A We all went to school. School was supposed to be compulsory in those days.

Q Um hmm. In the city?

A In the city.

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

A Yeah, I think in the country you wouldn't have to go to school. If you had transportation facilities . . . they had school at the primary grades, grammar, but not high school. But in the cities they had high school. We had no college in Sparta. If you had to go to college, you had to go to Athens.

Q Oh, really? There wasn't anything closer.

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

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

A 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, education was out of the question, because you had no such thing as scholarships or help, you know. So you went to school through the primary grades, or the elementary grades, and then you went to work. And my brother next to me went to work in shoemaking, shoemaker, shoe repairing. And my other brother, the older brother, did the same thing, because that was a very good trade and easy to learn with lower education. So it was a matter of going to work. Later, before we left, there was a school which was called a polytechnic school, it would be similar to Brown Vocational here. And you could go in and learn a trade.

Q This was brand new?

A Yes, that was brand new . . . trade, that is carpenter or any of the trades.

Q Well, previous to this you would have to go and serve an apprenticeship? Was that the method?

A Yeah, or work somewhere and you learned the trade. Now, my sister worked as a . . . 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 everybody knew who the families are because Sparta, even though it

sounds big, was a small city, four or five thousand people.

Q Oh, is that all?

A 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 weren't . . . wasn't considered a proper thing to do for the girls. Of course, you know, today it's a little different.

Q Even there it's different?

A Well, it's a little different now here. Girls work now. They go to the offices and so forth. But in those days you couldn't. So the work was brought in, usually the boys went out and got the work, or a sister went out with one of us to the store and got the material, already cut, and bring the material home and she'd sew the coat and vest and trousers and so forth.

Q Was your sister older than you?

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

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

A 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. They came first. And 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 a Greek-kitchen restaurant because there were quite a few Greeks in Washington. And my brother . . . have him come over to 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 selected to come with my father because he was a . . . well, you wouldn't call it delinquent, but he was a rough type of a boy. If anybody'd bother him, he'd fight back, and he always seemed to get into trouble with boys, no such thing as [inaudible] . . .

Q How old was he then?

A He was . . . well, 1907, let's see . . . he wasn't more than 11.

Q Eleven.

A Yeah. So he wasn't very old. He had to go to school here. So then they collected enough money, or raised enough money . . . 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, or he didn't like it, he came back to Greece. Then in 1907 he came over with my brother, and then he stayed, and my brother stayed. And then we came in 1914, that was seven years later. It took seven years to send enough money for us to get along with food, he'd send us so much a month to buy flour and odds and ends, you know. Then my brother and sister were working, making enough money to just get along. Because there were six children at home. My

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

Q Um hmm. There wasn't anything left over.

A No, there was nothing left. And my father was supposed, of course, to get enough money then, bringing us over in 1914, around April. And it took 31 days on the boat to get across. And we . . . of course we had to go from Sparta, we had to go to Athens, and you had to go by coach.

Q Oh, you went . . . not by train but by coach.

A No. Well, trains, there were no trains from my house . . . 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. And automobiles were, now. As a matter of fact, the first car I saw was when the king visited Greece in those days, for some reason or other, I don't know what. And all the children had to go out and line up along the streets to see the king. He came in with a limousine, probably it was a Rolls Royce or some English automobile, that's the first time we saw an automobile.

Q For heaven's sakes. And it took you 31 days then to sail over.

A 31 days to come over and we came over through New York.

Q Did you stop at Ellis Island?

A Oh, yeah, we stopped at Ellis Island and went through the line for a checkup and examination, and the health records. And from there we were sent . . . we were tagged--we spoke no English, mind, nobody spoke any English.

Q There were six of you now, or . . .

A Yeah, there were five. My brother remained behind, because when he was examined in Sparta, it was found that his eyes wasn't quite so good. So they kept him behind. As a matter of fact, it was in Athens. So he was old enough and he was working, but then a year later he came, because actually there wasn't very much wrong with the eyes.

Q Was he examined by Greek officials or by American?

A Well, I couldn't tell you if it was a Greek or American, but it was in Athens before you get on board.

Q You did have to have some sort of papers at this time, though, to leave.

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

Q Oh, you did.

A Yes. So then my brother came later without any difficulty.

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

A No, just Athens. No, just Athens and I think we stopped in either Spain or Portugal, but we didn't get out there.

Q You didn't.

A No.

Q Were there other nationalities aboard, other than Greek?

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

Q They were. Was it a luxurious boat?

A It was very luxurious. We came by 3rd class, which is tourist, and this was next to the bottom of the boat, I think. And the bunks, they were bunks like you have in the Army, in layers, and the separation of the bunks was just the rail. You know, like they have in the hospital beds, a rail on each side? And you climbed up with a ladder on the second row of bunks and 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, and eating and so forth, and sometimes we'd be eating things and drop on the first layer. People would complain, "Stop dropping those crumbs down here." But you know how that goes.

Q Were you separated in large compartments of men and women, or could you stay within a family group?

A No, they were in a family group, because we were children, of course, and my mother was there with us, it was five children and my mother.

Q Could you go to a dining room to eat, or did . . .

A Yeah . . . no, you had to go to the dining room, oh, there was no service. There was only one dining room, and the food was excellent. I even remember from those days. There was plenty to eat, there was no question about the food.

Q Was it a Greek line?

A Yeah, a Greek line and all Greek food with the Greek macaronis, you know, and Greek cooking.

Q Was this a great adventure for you, had you . . .

A Yes, it was, for the children. And we weren't sick, as I remember, we got along all right. But the older people used to get sick . . .

Q On the boat . . . um hmm.

A But we had no difficulty.

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

A No. Well, there were other Greek people, as I remember, 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.

Q He spoke English, maybe, a little bit?

A Yeah, he spoke English because he was in this country before.

Q When you arrived at Ellis Island and later on into New York, can you remember your first impression of . . .

A Yeah, well, it was all fascination and mystery, you know, you see great big buildings, we'd never seen before, and then seeing the ocean when we came over, we'd never seen the ocean before. We'd seen a river, we had a river in Sparta, but no ocean, great bodies of water, and no buildings, automobiles and trolley cars, that was . . . oh, it was all exciting.

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

A Yes. There's one thing, talking about present days and the old days. When we were in Athens, the main ship was out, not near the board . . . you couldn't walk on the boat. So we had to go by rowboat. And we'd get all our things in the rowboat, and then we'd go near the boat and a man . . . you have 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.

Q Oh, I never heard that.

A Pulled it up on the boat, yes. And that was quite an excitement of . . .

Q The women, too?

A Yeah, everybody. You could walk up the side steps on the boat, you know, but your bags and baggage, you couldn't carry it up, 'cause right under these steps that they usually put on the sides, it was quite narrow and you only had enough room to hold and walk. It's nothing like today when they have the walking planks and from the pier you walk right onto the boat.

Q This wasn't uncommon, then, this is what was done all the time?

A Well, that's what was done all the time. And then everybody was rushing

and the men that were helping with the rowboat, they kept on yelling and getting to get there first and so forth. So that was a lot of excitement to try to see who gets there and who gets in. Everybody was afraid he may not get there on time to get on the boat. So that was a little bit off the modern . . .

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

A No, we went straight to Washington.

Q Oh, did you.

A That was another thing. In New York, we were all tagged, where we were going, and somebody saw to it that they put us in the proper train. So we got in the train and we got in Washington, in the main station at 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 would arrive at that particular time, because the boat didn't come on time. The boat was supposed to take three weeks, it took 31 days. So my father didn't know we were coming. So there we waited and waited and of course we couldn't speak English. Finally a Greek florist, who had a flower shop there in the place, saw us and he came over and talked to us in Greek and told us what we're doing, where we're going. So we showed him the names, you know, he said, "Oh, that's not far from here. You get out and take the trolley car and get off at a certain street." So he wrote down the street. So we got on the trolley car all right. So the trolley man wanted money. So my mother--we didn't have any American money--she gave him the Greek money and he said no. Gave him Greek paper money, no. So what'd he do, stops the trolley and puts us all out. So then we were stuck again on oh, four or five blocks away from the station. So an American came along who was . . . turned out to be a detective and he saw us, and he realized, you know, that we were lost. So he looked at the card and he realized that we were Greek. So he said, "Oh, there's a Greek store, restaurant, not far away." So he took there and the Greek store was operated by a cousin of ours. So he met us, of course, and knew who we were and called the name, and he knew that we were expected. And then he told us where my father was and he called him up and the world settled. So you see, communications were a little poor, too, yes. So after that we were O.K. We were settled in our home and went to school . . .

Q In Washington?

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

Q I can imagine.

A And in those days the teachers . . . they had two classes in each school, A and B, in other words, for the year. And the way you were promoted, they'll have a multiplication table, you know, 2x2 and 3x4, so the teacher would go through all the kids, and I always, of course, I knew enough

about multiplication to be excellent in it. I'd be the last one up. So I was promoted to the next grade. And . . .

Q Although you could not speak the language, you got . . .

A No, I could not speak much. But the teachers realized in those days, when they asked me, "What are you gonna be?" And so . . . through interpreters, you know . . . "Well, I want to be a doctor." "You want to be a doctor? Well, you don't know any English." "Well, I don't know, but that's what I want to be." "Well, then, we'll have to jump you ahead." Because I was older for the . . . they started me in the primary grades because of English. So I kept on jumping until I came up to the last grade in the elementary school. And the teachers were so good then that they would keep me after school, keep some of the students, and 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 . . . oh, from the first grade . . . French was the main . . .

Q Oh, I didn't realize that. Even in those days.

A Yes. Today they teach English mostly and French. But French you had to know as well as . . .

Q It was the universal language then.

A Well, it was 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 through the help of the teachers, I did pretty well. So then in the meantime, my sister got married to a Greek man, Pappas, if you know the name, from Wilmington, who my uncle knew this man and he knew he was single and my sister was of marriageable age and he came over and saw my sister, and it wasn't a question of falling in love, it was the question of closing the bargain, in those days. Because girls didn't have much choice of picking the husband. But he was a very nice man, had a good reputation, had a business and so my sister said, "Well, guess I'll marry him." Father and Mother said it's all right, it's all right with her. Quite a difference now, today. And then after they got married, we all moved to Wilmington.

Q All of you.

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

Q Oh, so you were a good labor market.

A And I was the youngest, so he said, "Now, you can all work in the restaurant. In the first place, we'll get some pay, and in the second place, we'll have something to eat." You know, food was very important in those days.

Q What did your father do in Washington, then, it wasn't a restaurant?

A Well, he was in a restaurant, yeah. Oh, we had enough to eat, there was no trouble there, but . . . so we came here, then my father was working in the restaurant and the rest of us . . . and the pay those days was very low compared to today. In other words, you worked . . . it was a 12-hour shift, 12 to 12, there were two shifts in the restaurant . . . and you got . . . first you started with \$5 or \$6.00 a month and then when you were experienced, you got \$10.00 a month. Well, four of us working there, and of course I didn't get paid because I was too young.

Q You didn't get paid at all even though you worked?

A No, I just got my meals. But I was washing the dishes. I was . . . you graduate from the dishwashing department to a waiter and then a . . . so my other brother Tom and I were in the kitchen because washing dishes didn't require anything special, you know, special knowledge. And in those days the dishwashing department was two wooden tubs. I don't know if you know what wooden tubs are. Something like washtubs, metal tubs, but they were made out of wood. And one tub was for the dirty dishes and the other tub was for the rinsing the clean dishes. And in the meantime there was a shuttle from the outside, the dishes came in through the openings, you know, right near the tubs. So I was too short to get 'em to the tub, so I had to have a empty milk case, you know in those days there were cases of milk for bottles, so I'd be on that and I'd be doing my washing. And the dishes, one of the things that I remember, once in a while, I'd get splinters in my fingers, because the bowl or the side of the tubs were all worn out, so you had to be very careful not to get splinters. So we did pretty well.

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

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

Q Front and Scott.

A Um hmm. So in those days . . . we're talking about the houses . . . you remind me, I'll tell you about the houses later, in those days. In the restaurant, then, before long . . . of course, I went to school. And my brother-in-law had a nephew, Charlie Tarabicos, he's still here, so he took me around to see where he was gonna place me to school. So he took me to a school we had on Bayard Avenue, which was an elementary school. And the principal was there and he talked to me and said, "Well, what are you gonna be when you grow up?" I said I wanted to be a doctor. So Charlie says, "He wants to be a doctor." "A doctor? He can't speak any English?" He says, "Does he have any money?" I said, "No, we have no money." "And you're gonna be a doctor." I say, "Yes, ma'am." "Well, then you better start with the grammar school."

Q Oh, again.

A "You're already 14 years old," and I was sent to the other . . . instead of the elementary school, that's why I went to school to Number 28, which

was . . . the grammar school is a junior high.

Q Oh, I see what you mean, uh huh.

A So the principal there was Miss Mary Turner, she's gone now. She was a lovely person. And so she went through the same routine, "What are you gonna be?" I said I was gonna be a doctor. She said, "Oh, my. If you're gonna be a doctor, we have to work, get some more English." So the criterion for whether I was capable to be in the grammar school was the arithmetic, so she showed me how to do . . . she said, "Do a division." So I did long division the Greek way, we put the figures in the opposite direction that what we do in English. So she gave me a number to divide and I did it, I multiplied, and I was an expert in that . . . fractions. She says, "That's fine. We'll keep him here and then 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 class. 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 foolin' around and . . . and gradually I did pretty well. I got through the grammar school, then I went to high school. In those days, in the high school, you could finish in June and you could also finish in the middle of the year, didn't have a whole year. So in order to go to college, which I had to go to college, I was gonna finish in February, well, you couldn't go to college, you had to go in September. So they said, "Well, we'll have to push him until we get through with the lessons in $3\frac{1}{2}$ years." So they gave me extra subjects like English, the last year I had senior and third and fourth year English and doubled up on subjects, and then in the summer I took two courses, I remember one was civics and the other was history.

Q Was this Wilmington High School?

A Yeah, Wilmington High. [Inaudible] . . . there. And then I passed those. And in the meantime I was working in the restaurant. Well, then I graduated from the kitchen to being a waiter. And I did pretty well as a waiter. Then you talk to people, you pick up more English. And I'd work my 12 hours, go to school and come back and work. Then I'd have my books under the counter . . . you know how restaurants have a counter? The present-day restaurants are a little better than that. But I had the books under the counter and I'd wait on the person and I'd look and come back again. And we did fine. And then of course I finished the high school . . .

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

A I finished high school in '22.

Q You . . . well, then, you were 21.

A 21, um hmm.

Q When you finished high school . . . did any of your other brothers do the same thing?

A No, no.

Q You were the only one?

A Yeah, I was the only one, yeah.

Q That went to school at all?

A Yes.

Q The others didn't go at all.

A Tom went . . . no, didn't go because he had to go to work; Tom worked full time. So then when I went to college, it was a matter again of finishing a little earlier to save a year.

Q For money?

A No, to finish college, instead of four years, I wanted to finish it in three years, to save a year to go to medical school.

Q Oh, I see.

A 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, what this . . .

Q No.

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

Q No, I don't, but that was . . .

A Well, a depression, you just don't have money. If you want to take the trolley from 6th and Shipley to 6th and Rodney, which is 15 blocks, we walked it, 'cause the trolley was a nickel. For a nickel you could save it. I mean, I was given a nickel to go, but I would rather walk it and save two nickels both ways, so that's 10¢. With 10¢ we could buy things in those days, more than you could buy now. So to have money, the question was again, "How you going to college?" My brother-in-law and the others were saying, "You're foolish to go to college and be a doctor. You gotta go four years in college, four years in medical school, intern, and there's so many doctors around," they said, "you're only wasting your time. And if you work in the restaurant, at least you make some money." I said, "Look, I want to be a doctor, so that's it." "All right, so you be a doctor." So high school, of course, didn't cost any money. But going to college 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 restaurant worker . . .

Q Is this Newark, now?

A In Newark, yeah. Across from the B&O station. So I went in and I saw

the boss, I said, "Look, can I work here as a waiter and get my meals and maybe a little change?" He said sure. Why he saw that I knew the business. And besides I took him some business there from the other students. So I worked there and made enough money to stay in the dormitory.

Q Oh, you lived on campus.

A Yeah, the first six months. Then the dormitory was so god-darned noisy, I couldn't do enough 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 3rd 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 to . . .

Q Who was that man?

A Who had the restaurant? Let's see . . . it was an American man, he wasn't Greek.

Q Oh, it wasn't a Greek man. Oh, I thought he was a Greek. No. Oh, I see, all right.

A I 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?" He said, "Maybe your brothers would help you?" I said, "Yeah, maybe we will." So my other brothers, they had two restaurants here in town. As I say, money was very scarce. But the way of buying the restaurant was so easy that I said, "Yeah, we'll buy it." You had to pay \$100 a month. So I figured, we can make \$100 a month. So we bought the restaurant on that condition, pay \$100 a month, including rent and [inaudible], buy the place and pay \$100 a month.

Q Forever? For how long?

A Yeah, until you pay it off. Pay the . . . 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, Jefferson, you know where that is, I couldn't stay there at medical school, because it took a lot of money to stay in Philadelphia. So we commuted.

Q From Newark?

A Commuted from Wilmington. From Wilmington . . . from 6th and Rodney, that's where we lived. So I commuted from there, we had to take a trolley, 6:00 in the morning, go to the station and take a train and be in Philadelphia . . . I had to be there at 8:00. It was 7:00 a month, round trip, for the train.

Q On the train?

- A Yeah, so you see the difference in rates. Then from 15th . . . Broad Street station, you know 15th and Market, we had to most of the time run to 10th and Walnut . . .
- Q Run!
- A To get there on time for 8:30.
- Q Was there another one . . . someone else doing this with you?
- A Yes, all of the boys, Dr. Levy and Dr. Shapiro from here and Dr. Caple [sp], they're still living. Dr. Horowitz . . . we were all on the same train. So back and forth.
- Q Were these sons of immigrants, too? Were they . . .
- A I think so. Yes, uh huh.
- Q Yeah, from the Jewish community.
- A Jewish community, uh huh.
- Q But we didn't mind it. It was no problem at all. Then when school was over about 4:30, you had to run to catch the 5:00 train to come home and study. And I had a room on the 3rd floor again at home which was my office at home. Nobody could bother me up there . . . in the attic, it was. And I did very well, didn't have any trouble.
- Q Did you have to work, too, along?
- A No, that I didn't have to. My brothers then were helping me with the tuition and . . .
- Q When they saw that you could make it that far they decided to . . .
- A Yes, they saw I'd made up my mind to stay. In those days the tuition was \$300 a year in medical school. Why, now it's . . . I don't know, it's \$1200 or \$1500. So but then \$300 in those days was a fortune. You couldn't . . . if you tried to go to the bank to borrow \$300, as we did one time, you had to have two or three people to sign the note. Even though they knew you were worth it. 'Cause \$300 was a lot of money. Why now, kids want that for spending money, you know how it is. So we did fine. After I got through, then I went for a residency in Reading one year, and they didn't pay you then. All they'd do was give us the uniforms. So you work and you work full time, every third Sunday off. In comparison today, residents in hospitals, we have it in Wilmington, get \$1,000 a month, room and board, and eight hours a day. Don't you wish you were a resident?
- Q I didn't realize it was \$1,000 a month.
- A Oh, yes, they're very hard to get. And all of them are not American residents. They're imported from Cuba, the Philippines and South America. They speak English, of course.

Q That have to pass a certain . . .

A Yeah, they pass certain examinations in this country for finding a position.

Q Did you have to take a test for citizenship, or . . .

A Oh, yes, I got my citizen papers here in Wilmington.

Q What year?

A 1927.

Q There was no question, I mean, you knew the language well enough that you could pass.

A Oh, yeah, I knew the language, yeah.

Q Did all your brothers have to do this?

A They had to take their citizenship.

Q And your father and mother, or . . .

A Yes. No, my father didn't, and my mother didn't.

Q He didn't.

A No. No, my father died in '25 . . .

Q He died in '25?

A Yes. And my mother died last September.

Q Just died recently. And how old was she?

A She was 101.

Q 101!

A And my mother wasn't a citizen. So I can tell you an interesting point about my mother. When Medicare came, of course, and she was of age, over 65 of course, so the man, we went to the office and you had to have Medicare, 'cause she was reported being over, he said, "Now you have to have a certificate from Greece to prove . . ." a birth to prove that she's 65. I said, "Are you kiddin'?" I said, "All the children are over 65." So he said, "Well, that's the law." I said, "I don't care what the law is. If you don't think she's 65," I said, "there's something wrong with the books or the law." "Well, you have to fill out this paper and send it to Philadelphia, and go to the Immigration Office here and testify and sign the paper you're under oath that she's 65, as long as you have no papers." I said, "It looks silly to me, I'd rather drop the whole business, 'cause I don't have time to chase around here for

those things." "No," he says; "she's got to have it because she's over 65. And she's an alien," he said, "didn't you ever fill an alien card?" "An alien card?" I said, "what?" He says, "To prove she's an alien. How did we know that she came here to live for good?" I said, "She lived here pretty dog-gone long," I said something else instead of how long, I says, "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 pretty long . . . fifty years, that's a long visit." I says, "She didn't come here for a visit," I said, "all of us are here." Well, that's the law. He was an amateur, you know, he was told to follow the law. Well, anyway, I filled the papers and paid \$5.00 and sent the papers to Philadelphia. So when the Philadelphia office saw it, they realized what a joke it was, you know, to even require that.

Q They wouldn't accept her passport, or didn't you have that?

A Well, we didn't have passports [inaudible] . . .

Q You didn't have passports, even.

A No. So we told them when she came in 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 he said, "Dear Mrs. Boines: Now, don't worry about the papers and about everything." He said, "We're sending your \$5.00 back and here is your Medicare card and we hope you live longer than you have [inaudible] and you're welcome to stay here."

Q Well, she was in her 90's then, wasn't she?

A Oh, yes, she was 97. Or 98. So she got the card, anyway. So I called the man up, I said, "Look, you'd better change your attitude with these older people." So anyway, she got Medicare and we didn't have any trouble. But that's part of the immigration system and the laws, which we have to have but, you know, laws are made and there are also rules that can be bypassed, if you use a little judgement.

Q You told me to remind you about the houses.

A Oh, yes. Of course that was in 1914 and 1915 when we came here. So we lived . . . houses had no central heating. And there was no modern stoves and so forth that I'm sure you probably have. So the stove was a coal stove, you had to heat it with coal, that is, burn . . . that is, to cook in the kitchen. And the central heater was a little belly affair, pot-bellied stove in the center of the living room downstairs and that heated the whole downstairs, it was supposed to. And in wintertime, that little belly got red-hot, so all of us sat around and you would try to read and study on the table. And the bedrooms, of course, there was no heat. There was another little belly . . . belly stove upstairs in the hallway, and that was supposed to create heat. And there was no electricity in those days, either, you know, here in the city. Not in the homes, no. They had gas and the gas had a special arrangement that they used to call it mantle type of an affair that you could get the gas light. And one gas light in the dining room was

enough for . . . you could sit down and do your studying. No bright lights. So we were there until . . . oh, up to 1925 when we moved to . . .

Q This is on Scott Street?

A Scott Street 'til we moved. And from there, going to school, of course, buses, they didn't have buses to take you to school. You have to use your two little legs. And you got up early enough and you run yourself to the high school or to 8th and Adams and after classes, of course, you'd go back. And you didn't go back home for lunch, they didn't have any cafeterias, of course, in those days, so you had a couple of sandwiches and we had enough to eat. But you used the legs. Now you have to do the health program to get the people to walk two or three blocks.

Q Did you ever feel any bias or prejudice because . . .

A 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 said, "Well, we needed a change of atmosphere, we wanted to travel and to see the rest of the world." He says, "Is that right?" I said, "We came over because we couldn't get enough to eat there at home in Greece," you know what I mean? No education, no . . . I said, "We didn't come over here for pastime," because the way people travel now, they go to Canada or they go . . . just to see the country.

Q So there was never any regret on your part or your parents?

A No, never. No, we were poor, but we were satisfied. We kept to ourselves. 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, "You mind your own business, you work, you study, if you want to educate yourself, that's it. If you don't want to do it, don't do it. But you gotta work and make your expenses." And you did. And you studied at night, there was no fooling around and going to the movies or going . . .

Q You had no recreation whatsoever?

A No, your only recreation was . . . well, the movie once in a while. There were nickel movies in those days. If you saved a nickel, you could go to the movies, mostly western movies. There were no radios or television, of course, in those days.

Q But that was it.

A That was it. And then you went to church. Of course, we didn't have a church here.

Q What did you do about church?

A A priest used to come here from a place out of town and we all congregated

in one of the halls and would have services. That went on 'til we built this church, which was . . . oh, in the '40s. And this church was built in '52.

Q Um hmm. But they used a garage . . .

A Before that they used the halls, yes.

Q Did you ever have any advantage for being Greek? Did you ever find it to be . . .

A 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. Bacteriology they're Greek. So the boys would say, "How can you remember those big words?" I said, "What do you mean I remember? They're all Greek." So the same thing with college, you know. In three years . . . I applied in one college. You know, today, boys will apply to five dozen schools. So I applied to one because all the professors at the university said, "Look, just apply to Jefferson," 'cause I asked 'em, 'cause I don't know anything about schools, "Apply to Jefferson and you'll get there." 'Cause they all sent 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 the second student in the school?" I said, "I don't know, go ask the dean," I said. "All I know, I'm here, boy."

Q Did you take a test for an entrance . . .

A No, no test.

Q It was just on . . .

A No, just the grades . . .

Q Your records.

A And your records from school. My 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 and . . . well, you didn't have time. You had to work and study.

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

A Well, I didn't marry until 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 no money, and the second year at St. Francis as a second-year resident. And I was getting paid \$100 a month for this steady job, day and night, every third Sunday . . . there were two of us that worked at the hospital there. Dr. Stat and I and every third Sunday one of us would take off. But the other days, we were there day and night, doing

all the work in the hospital, histories, physicals, I don't know if you know what that is, but they ask you if you've had sickness, taking care of all the patients, notifying the doctors, watching for sickness . . . so it was an all-day job. And night for accidents. Now, it's different. Now the staff, that is the residents, do no histories and physicals. We as staff physicians have to write our own histories and physicals, our own orders, go in and see how the patient is, visit the patient . . .

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

A Still doing the same thing, and the resident, as I said before, \$1,000-- of course things are different today, you can't get the help. But there's a tremendous change from those days to these days, as far as . . . well, medicine and everything else, of course. But medicine is a good field. In my opinion, it's one of the best professions there is for satisfaction. You make money, but you don't make the money that businessmen make or engineers and so forth, some of them, 'cause they start out with big fees, or big 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 in two offices and the first month I collected \$105.00.

Q From both offices.

A Yes. And then we worked in clinics. There was a lot of free work. I worked in the hospitals and in the free clinics. And I used to work for the Board of Health doing free 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 home . . . in our home.

Q In your parents' house?

A Yeah, 6th and Rodney. Had the living room converted into an office. And the living room and the dining room was the . . . no, the hallway was the waiting room and the living room was the office, so . . . and the equipment. So the equipment and the car cost about \$5,000 in those days.

Q And it took you five years to pay off \$5,000.

A You had to make the . . . yes . . . you had to make . . . the automobiles were . . . that car I bought then was about \$900 and it was supposed to have been a good car. And you pay so much money, \$25.00 a month. And the contractor, fixing the office and remodeling and all the equipment, that took about five years, that was all paid. Then when I was all paid, things were a little better, I could afford to get married.

Q Did you start looking then, or . . .

A Well, I looked around for a rich wife, but I couldn't find one. So I figured, I'll find a girl that's [laughter] . . . so of course I knew the family in Chester, you know, my wife lived in Chester and I would

meet her at dances and so forth, and that was it. So I've been happy ever after.

Q Very good. Did you ever return to Greece?

A Yes, we were back in '56.

Q That late.

A Yeah. Well, we couldn't afford to go before that. It cost money, you know, to go back. So we went back to Sparta and the place hasn't changed much at all.

Q It hasn't?

A No. The only difference that I saw was some few new buildings. But outside of that, and they had a hotel, of course, they didn't have that, that is in my days there was no such thing as a hotel. And this hotel was a little bit on the antique side. They had one bathroom for males and females and . . . of course, you were lucky to have a bathroom and washstand. 'Cause in days when I was there, you know the type of bathrooms we had, outdoor bathrooms, without describing . . . I don't know if you know the type.

Q Well, I've lived in Europe for a year, so I . . .

A Yeah. So strangely enough there wasn't much disease . . . of course the population was scarce, there was no communication with outsiders. Those that developed any type of disease died off young. 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's a matter of preservation of the species, more or less, or the fittest, yes.

Q When you opened practice, did you find that a great many of your patients were Greek, that they . . .

A Yes, in the beginning they were.

Q Is there another Greek doctor around?

A No. I was the only one. I was the only one, and doing pretty well. In those days the fees, of course, were 50¢ or a dollar if you could get it. If you couldn't get it, you just forgot it, didn't even write it down.

Q Had these people been to other doctors, or would they come to you exclusively?

A 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 doctor to start with, because they were looking for business. And in those days the maternity . . . now, this is interesting.

Maternity cases, deliveries, were done at home because we didn't have antibiotics, you know, in those days. Today people are kind of spoiled, modern individuals. You didn't worry about infections, because we had penicillin and all the antibiotics and stuff, but in those days we didn't have any. And if you got any infection, and 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 have to deliver at home because the mortality and morbidity, which means the sickness, of people who went to the hospital, was very high. They developed infections, that is, in maternity. Puerperasepsis [sp], you know what that means? Puerperasepsis? Well, puerpera refers to a maternity or delivery, and sepsis means a severe infection. And those times there'd be . . . if one patient came in and was infected say with a strep infection, everybody in the hospital got it, too, because the techniques of sanitation weren't so good. They used to use the same bedpan . . . and we didn't know sanitation as we do today. Today most of the expense in a hospital is observing sanitation rules. But people don't realize that because they take everything for granted. So the mortality at home was very little. So the fee in the beginning in 1931, was \$15.00, taking care of the patient for the nine months and delivering the patient and of course taking care of the baby during the first ten days, and after that you could charge a fee if you could collect it, \$1.00 or \$2.00. So that \$15.00 also included staying in the home during the night of delivery, especially if you had to . . .

Q Oh, you spent the night.

A Well, you had to if the patient went into labor, you know what that is.

Q Yes, I know what that is.

A Well, 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, by the time you went from home to the . . . from our house to the delivery of the baby, 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 the baby's born, you wait 'til the afterbirth is born, you pick him up in a clean blanket, if they had one, and put him aside from the mother, 'cause we were afraid that the mother might . . . with the pains might kick the baby and so forth. And that happened a lot of times. If you were late . . . especially in the multiperous [sp?] . . . you know, ladies who had more than one baby? What if you have four or five . . . if you have more than one, you're multiperous, you have now.

Q Oh, I see, like twins or something of that sort.

A 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 . . .

Q Oh, I see what you mean.

A Then they call you and run. So we run and "Where's the baby?" "Over there on the couch." So the baby was there with the afterbirth and

then we would tie the afterbirth and we'd take the gloves with us and knife and scissors, you know. So we fixed that and as they say, "Well, how about sterile things around the mother?" It was just the bedsheets. And if you had bedbugs and . . . you know what bedbugs are?

Q No, I hope not.

A Oh. Well, you look them up in entomology. There were more bedbugs in those days than there were roaches. Of course, roaches were plentiful too. But nothing happened. You say, "Well, how about infection?" Those people, the mothers and so forth, were immune to their bugs and their infections. So they never got infected. It got so towards the end we didn't use sterile packs. When we got out of school, we were told we have sterile packs, have sterile sheets and pillowcases 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 be there on time for the baby, so we figured phooey with the sterile packs. We'd get a sterile cord to tie the cord, sterile band, you know, and the scissors and that's all you needed, 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.

Q Is that what that's for?

A Yeah, we always washed our hands. And put the gloves, sometimes we didn't have time to even put the gloves on because part of the baby would be delivered, you know, and you had 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'd look and go back to bed. Groan again. But we never minded. 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. You didn't get paid, you'd just forget it, because you knew people were poor. So where would you get it? You couldn't charge it to Medicare and you couldn't charge it to the Democrats, because they weren't around then. They didn't have the millions that they have today, you know.

Q I see. In any of the years that you were hear making money, did you send any money home, or did you bring any relatives . . .

A Yes. Well, we have a young lady now, goes to the University of Delaware.

Q Oh, do you?

A She was quite a small child in '56, she's 19 now. And she's . . . we sent her to Friend's School here for two years and she's at the University of Delaware this year.

Q This is a child you sponsored from Greece?

A Yes. This is a relative of my wife. And she's 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. And of course she knew very

little English. She had 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 . . . [inaudible] her English quite a bit, and she did well, got very good marks. She's a very good student, studious. And she's done very well in Delaware. This first semester she had "B" in English, "B" in math, "A" in Spanish and "C" in chemistry. So that's not bad for a beginner.

Q No, that's good.

A And then of course we had to send money to the relatives.

Q Oh, did you?

A Yes.

Q In those early years?

A Oh, yes. What we saw there . . . well, we knew their conditions. See, money's scarce over there. You can't find money. You can work, well you get a little. So if you could get enough to get your bread, not butter, there's no such thing as butter, you just say bread, you get your bread and get along to live, it was all right. So what we saw, these people went through tortures during the occupations by Italy and Germany, especially Germany. And then back in '46 with the communists. But Germany was quite rough because any time anybody would be killed from the Germans in the town, they'll line up a bunch of men and shoot 'em for a lesson. And they were very reckless. They'd be killing old people, old women, for no reason at all, just for the sake of shooting. They burned the whole town. These people that I'm telling you about in [inaudible], they have . . . they have a town on top of the mountain where they lived in the summer and a town in the valley where they lived in the winter because . . .

Q The townspeople themselves?

A Yeah. And the whole town moved. Well, it 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, for a resort, 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. And so they lived in the valley. So by doing that, they kept pretty healthy. In other words, in the summer, they'd go up in the town . . . in the summer they'd be on the mountain, in the winter in the town, because it was warmer. And they would white-wash--in those days it was whitewash, not paint, it was too expensive--they'd whitewash the houses clean and so forth. In the wintertime there'd be so much snow all the homes would be covered with snow. So then that sort of destroyed infection and germs. So . . .

Q Where was this . . . where is this?

- A Volos, Carasa [sp] it's called, Carasa.
- Q What part of Greece is this?
- A Volos is north of Athens.
- Q Oh, I see, all right.
- A It's between Athens and Salonika, on the coast.
- Q All right. Yes. On the seacoast?
- A Yeah. Volos is a big city. And Carasa is 11 miles from Volos, it's a small town, beautiful town. Well, these people during the day, during the occupation with Germany, had to go in caves and hide. And they had picked this . . . this little girl wasn't born yet . . . another boy they have, they picked the three families, husbands and wives and all the children, they'll take 'em and hide in the caves during the day and at night they'd come out and try to see if they can get some food somewhere where they knew the Germans weren't around, then 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 you can't make much money. They work very hard. But there isn't enough work to . . .
- Q Um hmm, to gain advantage. I see. What's the meaning of your name, Dr. Boines? Is that the Greek?
- A Boines? Yeah, well the Greek name is Boinyes [sp] and here we're told to make it Boines because it's easier to pronounce. That was named after . . . a generation back, our forefather, or my father's father and so forth, were working with leather, with hide. And hides, they were preparing . . . tanning hides for shoes and so forth. And the hide was called boinye [sp] after they were prepared and made into leather, and boinye . . . so my grandfather, he was called "Boinye" because he made the boinye. And then from Boinye it was made to Boinyes. And actually our name was Rumaichas [sp] originally.
- Q Oh, really. And it changed in Greece. Well, for heaven's sakes.
- A And then when it came down to my father then he took his father's name, Boinyes, and so Boinyes.
- Q That's interesting. In fact, many of the Greek names are interesting, the changes that have occurred in 'em.
- A Yes. They have names from where they lived and where they came. Now, my father-in-law was . . . his father was a general in the army in those days, against the Turks, Talbatarkis [sp]. "Talba" means the group of soldiers, "talba" is the division. And "tarkis" would mean manager, so it would be a general, in other words. So his name was left "Talbatarkis." That was . . . my father-in-law was Talbatarkis's son, so he was Talbatarkis.

Q So they just kept the appellation of the job.

A After the general, yes. So apparently that's how they handed names down. And then the sons . . . or the children, you always use your father's name as a middle name.

Q As a middle name, yes. I have my own father's name.

A Yes. Well, that's the same principle. My father's name was Daniel, but here it was converted into James. So then I'm George J. Boines, I'm the son of James Boines, so that follows.

Q Uh huh. Easy to line you up that way. Did you have any experience with wars or did any of your brothers have to serve in any of . . .

A No. I missed the Second War in '42 here because I was in charge of the poliomyelitis center at the contagious hospital. And right before me . . . at that time anyway, in '42, I was 41. They were taking younger doctors. But then the order came that they needed more doctors. So we went in and signed up, to take in my age and all. So they ask you, "Well, what are you doing?" So I told them the work I was doing, and when the hospital heard that I went in and signed up, they were quite upset because there were very few doctors left then 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. It was a lot of work, of course.

Q Certainly.

A Then later on . . . well, that was up at the first time . . . then that was the first, the first time. And later they started again the possibility of taking doctors, but the war then was over and I didn't serve.

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

A No. That Balkan War started . . . the boat that we came over was the last load that came, whole load of immigrants, because in '14 the war started. Then after the war started, nobody came anymore.

Q The First World War.

A Yeah, in 1912 to '14. That was the First World War in 1914.

Q Right. But that was . . .

A It all started in Europe first, then the United States didn't get in until 1917.

Q When did Greece get in?

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

Q Um hmm. But yours was the last boat . . . because of the First World

War or the Balkan War?

A No, the Balkan War is 1912.

Q 1912, right.

A Well, there was always a war. There was always a war and we were always celebrating wars and patriotism . . . because if it wasn't a war with Turkey, it was a war with Bulgaria. In 1912 I think it was with Turkey, the war of 1912.

Q Yes, yes. The Balkan War, it was with Turkey and then again with Bulgaria, yes.

A Then there was another war in 1921 with Turkey and Greece and that's when Greece . . . Greece was being supported then by England and Russia.

Q None of your brothers went back for any of these things.

A No.

Q Did you hear any propaganda that . . .

A Oh, there was a lot of propaganda. Quite a few did leave this country to go. Yeah, that's true. It shows the strength of the patriotism to your motherland. Even though we were patriotic and we joined into this country, still you don't forget your country of your birth, you see what I mean? I mean, once Greek, you have a certain amount of attachment to the country you were born. But at the same time you're patriotic and you do anything there is to be done for your country here.

Q For your adopted country, yeah.

A And I think you'll find that the immigrants are more loyal to this country and the government and they're very much upset about these young people leaving this country and going to Canada and so forth to evade 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.

Q Is this because you felt that this was inborn in you from your motherland stronger than . . .

A Yes, I think so, I think that's . . .

[END OF TAPE AND INTERVIEW]