

- E. GEROGEOGE: Oral history collection on the experience of Greek American women in America. My name is **[unintelligible - 00:00:08]** George. I am in the home of Christine **[unintelligible - 00:00:11]**, 721 East 2nd Street, Duluth, Minnesota. It is December 29th, 1987. What is your name?
- C. KONTINAKOS; Christine **[unintelligible - 00:00:21]**.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. Where were you born?
- C. KONTINAKOS; In Greece.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. What year?
- C. KONTINAKOS; 1904.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. What was your maiden name? What was your name before **[unintelligible - 00:00:34]**?
- C. KONTINAKOS; Christine **[unintelligible - 00:00:35]**.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. What was your father's name?
- C. KONTINAKOS; Arthur.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Arthur **[unintelligible - 00:00:39]**. When was he born? Do you remember when he was born? No? Okay. Where was he born?
- C. KONTINAKOS; In Greece.
- E. GEROGEOGE: In Greece. How long ago did he die?
- C. KONTINAKOS; About 40 years now.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Forty years. What did your farther do for a living?
- C. KONTINAKOS; In America?
- E. GEROGEOGE: In Greece and then in America.
- C. KONTINAKOS; In Greece, well, he was in the lumber business.
- E. GEROGEOGE: In Greece? And what did he do in America?
- C. KONTINAKOS; The hat factory.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Okay, hat factory?
- C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.
- E. GEROGEOGE: All right. Did your father have a nickname or as they say in Greek **[unintelligible - 00:01:14]**?
- C. KONTINAKOS; No. No, he didn't.
- E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. What was your mother's maiden name?

C. KONTINAKOS; [Unintelligible - 00:01:21].

E. GEROGEOGE: No, before she got married. Was it [unintelligible - 00:01:23]?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah, before she got married.

E. GEROGEOGE: [Unintelligible - 00:01:25]?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. And do you remember when she was born? No? Okay.
And do you remember when she died?

C. KONTINAKOS; She died in 1939.

E. GEROGEOGE: 1939. Okay. What was the name of your mother's hometown in
Greece?

C. KONTINAKOS; [Unintelligible - 00:01:41].

E. GEROGEOGE: [Unintelligible - 00:01:42]. Where are your parents buried?

C. KONTINAKOS; They're buried in Kankakee, Illinois.

E. GEROGEOGE: Kankakee, Illinois. All right. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. What are their names or what were their names? I know
some have died since but what are they all? Can you remember them?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, the first Helen and then Mary and then Teddy and John.

E. GEROGEOGE: All right. Did they all get married?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Except... was Theodore married?

C. KONTINAKOS; No. One.

E. GEROGEOGE: One, okay. Can you tell me anything about your [unintelligible -
00:02:20]?

C. KONTINAKOS; Well, I don't remember but I remember my grandmother.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay.

C. KONTINAKOS; She was a wonderful lady.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. What did she do... she loved you, huh? Do you remember
who... what kind of a person was she? Was she outgoing? You used to
say she was so outgoing.

C. KONTINAKOS; She was a politician.

E. GEROGEOGE: She loved to go and...

C. KONTINAKOS; A politician.

E. GEROGEOGE: Wonderful. Yeah. She loved to go on debates and going to courts and things like that.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. And anybody have problems, she used to go in the court.

SPEAKER 3: Like [Crisanti].

E. GEROGEOGE: [Laughs].

C. KONTINAKOS; I don't know. But she was a wonderful woman.

E. GEROGEOGE: Do you remember who your nuno and nuna were?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, I remember.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. Who were they? Can you remember names?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. One is Helen. And nuno, it's George.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. Are they from Greece?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh. From **[unintelligible - 00:03:16]**, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: You don't remember their last name, do you?

C. KONTINAKOS; No, I don't remember their last name. They had a funny name.

E. GEROGEOGE: When were you married?

C. KONTINAKOS; We married in 1932.

E. GEROGEOGE: June 2nd, to be exact. And where were you married?

C. KONTINAKOS; In Kankakee, Illinois.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. Was your marriage arranged? Did you get married by **[unintelligible - 00:03:40]** or...?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, my mother and my father.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. Did you have a prika?

C. KONTINAKOS; Well, only for the house.

E. GEROGEOGE: Furniture. That was your...

C. KONTINAKOS; Not furniture but embroidery and things like that.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, you made your own pillowcases and linens and things like that.

C. KONTINAKOS; Not true in America.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, not like America.

C. KONTINAKOS; That's all right in Greece but not in America.

SPEAKER 3: No grapevines or anything like that?

E. GEROGEOGE: Or farms or columns or confetti?

SPEAKER 3: Or farms or columns like some of the...?

C. KONTINAKOS; No, not in my country, not in my place, in my hometown. They never get to us.

SPEAKER 3: They didn't... yeah, some of them did though and some of those...

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah, but lately but not in my age, before.

SPEAKER 3: Not at your time. Yeah. See, that's interesting. I didn't know that.

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yeah. That's why they give **[unintelligible - 00:04:33]** nobody wants it and that's why. In my hometown, really, they don't, no. Not **[unintelligible - 00:04:39]**.

SPEAKER 3: Well, that's good, good to hear.

E. GEROGEOGE: What is your husband's name?

C. KONTINAKOS; **[Unintelligible - 00:04:48]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: She said I don't know. Come on, you do, too.

C. KONTINAKOS; **[Unintelligible - 00:04:48]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: Where was he born?

C. KONTINAKOS; He was born in my neighborhood in **[unintelligible - 00:04:53]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: Do you remember the year? Was it 1898 or something like that?

C. KONTINAKOS; **[00:05:00]** Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: All right. He's about 94, 95 years old now. Who was your koumbaro?

C. KONTINAKOS; Koumbaro? **[Unintelligible - 00:05:07]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, **[unintelligible - 00:05:08]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: Yeah. Did you have a big wedding?

C. KONTINAKOS; No, **[unintelligible - 00:05:13]** wedding. It was a small town and we invited everybody in Kankakee, Illinois but a small town.

E. GEROGEOGE: Did they have a church at the time in Kankakee when you got married?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: All right. Did you get married in church or did you get married...?

C. KONTINAKOS; In church.

E. GEROGEOGE: Got married in church. Okay. Do you know anything about your in-laws, your petheriká?

C. KONTINAKOS; I know them very well. They are both nice people. They're a good family.

E. GEROGEOGE: From Kankakee?

C. KONTINAKOS; No. My in-laws, that's in Greece.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, your in-laws are in Greece.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah.

E. GEROGEOGE: From **[unintelligible - 00:05:47]**, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; **[Unintelligible - 00:05:48]**. We're neighbors. That's why my father and my mother, they wanted me to marry Steve because they come from a very good family, too. In those days, they look at the family that's going to be healthy and have a good name.

E. GEROGEOGE: That's not such a bad idea.

C. KONTINAKOS; Not really. When you get married, that's the way they do it now.

E. GEROGEOGE: I think some of them lasted much longer than they do now, for sure.

SPEAKER 3: Yeah, that's for sure.

C. KONTINAKOS; **[Unintelligible - 00:06:22]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: No. Tell me your children's names?

C. KONTINAKOS; **[Unintelligible - 00:06:30]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: No, don't say that. You know your children.

C. KONTINAKOS; Evelyn **[unintelligible - 00:06:34]**.

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. And when was she born?

C. KONTINAKOS; I don't know.

E. GEROGEOGE: May 23rd, 1935 in Duluth, Minnesota.

C. KONTINAKOS; That's it.

E. GEROGEOGE: And who was her godfather?

C. KONTINAKOS; Paul.

E. GEROGEOGE: Paul [unintelligible - 00:06:50].

SPEAKER 3: Paul, too, eh?

E. GEROGEOGE: Yeah, Paul [unintelligible - 00:06:54].

C. KONTINAKOS; Well, that's...

SPEAKER 3: That was a custom, yeah.

C. KONTINAKOS; A custom.

E. GEROGEOGE: Have you baptized any children?

C. KONTINAKOS; I baptized four.

E. GEROGEOGE: Do you happen to remember their names?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. First Helen, Mary, and now Bill, and the other one.

E. GEROGEOGE: Amanda?

C. KONTINAKOS; Another Mary, the one [unintelligible - 00:07:21].

E. GEROGEOGE: Okay. Was there another little girl, Mary Kennedy, or was her name Amanda?

C. KONTINAKOS; Amanda.

E. GEROGEOGE: So that's five, right, with Amanda. Do you have contact with any of them now? Do they...?

C. KONTINAKOS; No. Once in a while, they send Christmas cards. That's all.

E. GEROGEOGE: What year did you come to the United States?

C. KONTINAKOS; 1918.

E. GEROGEOGE: 1918. Do you remember the ship you came on?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, my goodness. It was at least, I'll never forget, one month.

E. GEROGEOGE: One month it took to get here?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, one month.

E. GEROGEOGE: What kind of a trip did you have?

C. KONTINAKOS; For me, it was wonderful. For my family, they were all sick. No, really.

E. GEROGEOGE: You were lucky then that you didn't get sick.

C. KONTINAKOS; No. I helped everybody over there. I was young and running. The ladies, they feel so sick for the whole month.

E. GEROGEOGE: Was that a Greek ship?

C. KONTINAKOS; Greeks. But when I come to the Ellis Island, oh boy, that's three ships that pass through there and my ship was supposed to... we came Thursday and we stayed over there out from the Ellis Island for Sunday, all the people over there but they take my mother, three doctors. They take her in the room for an exam and I started hollering, "Leave my mother alone." I run around. My mother stays in that room and they talk in Greek. And one was a wonderful young man. He worked in America and had a vacation in Greece and he come back. And he says, "Little one, don't worry, don't worry. Your mother is going to come out." And I say, "Why are they taking my mother there?" And my youngest brother and my sister came together. They don't care. And then another lady says, "Take the little one away." She doesn't like the way I act. And I say in Greek, "Mind your own business. My mother there." And this man, he come and talk to me in Greek and he says, "Don't worry. She's going to come out." And I'll never forget those hands put on me and saying, "Don't worry."

SPEAKER 3: To have a friend then.

C. KONTINAKOS; To have a friend.

SPEAKER 3: How old were you at that time?

C. KONTINAKOS; I was...

E. GEROGEOGE: Fourteen?

C. KONTINAKOS; ... 14. I adored my mother. I had a wonderful mother, one in a million, and my father, too. [00:10:00] Nice, nice people, very nice.

SPEAKER 3: Wonderful. You see, the [unintelligible - 00:10:04] people always were close.

C. KONTINAKOS; I don't know but I adore my mother.

E. GEROGEOGE: Wonderful.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Why did the family decide to come to the United States?

C. KONTINAKOS; You see, my uncle came first, my mother's brother, and then that's... he write a letter to my father and say, "You come over." He take my oldest brother and my oldest sister and he came. And after that... they came in 1912. In 1918, we came, the whole family in Massachusetts.

SPEAKER 3: Fall River, right?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: How long were you there then, in Massachusetts?

C. KONTINAKOS; In Massachusetts? All my life until I married.

E. GEROGEOGE: Did you go to Kankakee, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah, I went to Kankakee but a few years. But I was in Massachusetts the first years of my life, it seems to me, the first home.

E. GEROGEOGE: So how was it there when you first went there?

C. KONTINAKOS; Very good. I have been all over, Providence, Rhode Island, and Boston, and all over there in Massachusetts. We used to travel, get together, the families. There's lots of Greeks over there and they quite enjoy there and we have no church. Every Sunday, we go to New Bedford, Massachusetts. They have a church over there. The streetcar will go every Sunday and then some Sundays, we'll go to Providence, Rhode Island, the big church over there. We were travelling by the train. Nice. And then I worked in the factory.

E. GEROGEOGE: What factory was that?

C. KONTINAKOS; Mill.

SPEAKER 3: What did you make there?

C. KONTINAKOS; They make [unintelligible - 0:11:54]. But because I have to go at night school... I went at night school and then the teacher... I give the teacher the card and she put her name and then I go to the boss and see the card. I was in school every night, and I worked until Saturday noon.

E. GEROGEOGE: Long hours.

C. KONTINAKOS; I get up 3 o'clock in the morning, get the streetcar. It will run for an hour to go in the factory. And one day, they have a strike and we don't

know about the strike. And I run to go in the stairs and work and one of the fellows grabbed me from the back and say, “Hey, little one, sit down here.” And I kind of motioned. I said, “No, no, no, no, no. I have to go upstairs.” “Sit down.” And we don’t know what they’re doing over there.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, yeah.

SPEAKER 3: The company had a strike?

C. KONTINAKOS; The people had a strike.

SPEAKER 3: The people that worked in the company.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: That was a new experience for you then?

C. KONTINAKOS; Experience. But in Greece, I learned French and I talked to the boss. He was French. Lots of French people over there. I get along all right. But in night school, I have a wonderful teacher, Miss **[unintelligible - 00:13:06]**. I’ll never forget. She was a wonderful teacher. She brings stuff from her house. She bring dishes and everything. She says, “This is this. This is this.” And then she says, “When you go in the store, you have to go in the looking glass and put something on. If you don’t like it, say...” What I learned, I can talk very good from her.

E. GEROGEOGE: Wonderful.

C. KONTINAKOS; Miss **[unintelligible - 00:13:32]**. I’ll never forget.

SPEAKER 3: And you were just about 15 years old then, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah.

SPEAKER 3: Is that how old you were when you were working in that factory, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; I start from 14, as soon as I come in the United States.

E. GEROGEOGE: As soon as you came. That is very young.

C. KONTINAKOS; And then I come home and I have the embroidery and make everything, my mother, too. We never go out. My father going to bring some... every Sunday, going to bring the treat for us, a box of chocolate and ice cream at home. We never go out like they are doing now. Never. We stay and help at home.

E. GEROGEOGE: Did a lot of the families get together there though?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes, every Sunday. Dancing and have a good time in every house. And then Sunday, we're going to Sunday beach they call them over there. We have entertainment there, out and we used to go... just like here in the park **[unintelligible - 00:14:35]** over there, lots of people over there out in the ocean.

E. GEROGEOGE: Did they celebrate their names days and things like that there, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: And people came to your homes and things?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes. We go and came all the time. We have lots of them.

E. GEROGEOGE: That's a custom. They don't do that much anymore, which was nice.

C. KONTINAKOS; Another thing, anytime we go in the store, the people were so good. **[00:15:00]** They try to please us, to talk to us and everything. They care so much. It's what I like, lots of people we can talk, meet other ladies. The old ladies from Greece don't talk English either. They say, "Come here, little one. Tell the man what I want." And then I went over there and I don't know myself, but they understand. We had a nice life.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, that's good.

C. KONTINAKOS; When I was single, I had beautiful... understanding and love each other, my family, too close, close, close, yes. And then when I married, the same thing. I wish everybody had a life like my husband and I.

E. GEROGEOGE: When did you come to Duluth then?

C. KONTINAKOS; Duluth? 1932.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, 1932.

C. KONTINAKOS; Married.

E. GEROGEOGE: When you were married, yeah.

C. KONTINAKOS; I have a nice life, a full life with enjoying and love and everything, understanding.

E. GEROGEOGE: Well, how was it here when you first came then? Did they have a church here when you first came?

C. KONTINAKOS; In Duluth? Oh, yes. I was in the choir, too.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, I believe that. I've heard you singing for years. I believe it.

You know how to sing it all. I know that.

C. KONTINAKOS; I don't know about singing, but I loved that. I loved...

E. GEROGEOGE: You could teach all of us a few of those.

C. KONTINAKOS; No, don't say that. You're pretty good, too. Yeah, I miss the church. I miss it. I miss it.

E. GEROGEOGE: Was it in the same place? The church, was it here in the same place that it is now?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, the same place. The same place, yeah. When they make new church, all the things they bring it in my house, the cross and everything, what they have in church in 1958, beginning of 1958.

SPEAKER 3: What was the first church? Was it a Jewish synagogue?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

SPEAKER 3: They bought it from the Jewish people.

C. KONTINAKOS; I enjoy especially when I go to church, especially when I was in the morning in the altars. And then the priest come and when the people start coming, I run home. And when the priest say, "Christine, why you go home?" I say, "The people come." "You don't have to pay attention to people." That was [unintelligible - 0:17:31]. He was a wonderful man. He is not educated but he was a wonderful man. "Say it, Christine. Say it because I can't say it myself."

SPEAKER 3: What did you do? [Unintelligible - 0:17:46]?

C. KONTINAKOS; To read in the morning.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, to read in the morning.

E. GEROGEOGE: For the altar service.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, the altars, all of them. I never missed one day. And now, I miss everything. That's the way it goes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Were there a lot of families here, a lot of Greek families when you first came?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes, lots of them. Now, there's only a few.

E. GEROGEOGE: Yeah, not that many.

SPEAKER 3: What was the biggest thing that they did in the church in those days?

What was the biggest holiday where you had the most people coming to the church?

C. KONTINAKOS; Easter, Special Friday, Good Friday, Easter. People come from out of town.

SPEAKER 3: Did you have a lot of doings at the church like dances and...?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, lots of them. People come from all over.

E. GEROGEOGE: What about Easter now? Sometimes, I remember some of them stayed up Thursday night, stayed in church all night. Did you use to do that, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, [unintelligible - 00:18:46] when they come. Nobody do that before. We stay all night until...

E. GEROGEOGE: Until the morning...

C. KONTINAKOS; ... Thursday.

E. GEROGEOGE: ... to celebrate.

C. KONTINAKOS; Pray all night, pray. But Friday, they bury Christ and that's why we can stay there.

SPEAKER 3: Did they use to take the [unintelligible - 00:19:11] off like they do now?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes. Oh, yes. They used to.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, that is such a beautiful service, the [unintelligible - 00:19:16] service.

SPEAKER 3: Did they ever bring bishops or archbishops to Duluth because you're so far away?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes, lots of them, especially when they bought the church, the new church.

SPEAKER 3: When they consecrated the church.

C. KONTINAKOS; Consecrate the church. Oh, yes.

SPEAKER 3: Did you ever get involved in any organizations? What organizations did you belong to in the church?

C. KONTINAKOS; Well, that's the ladies...

SPEAKER 3: The Philoptochos?

C. KONTINAKOS; The Philoptochos?

SPEAKER 3: Were you ever an officer there? Did you ever...?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, secretary.

E. GEROGEORGE: That figures.

C. KONTINAKOS; And I have my own from Greece, the ladies from Greece.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, the [unintelligible - 00:19:57].

C. KONTINAKOS; From my hometown, [unintelligible - 00:19:58].

E. GEROGEORGE: Oh, yes.

SPEAKER 3: [00:20:00] The Alexander the Great Auxiliary.

C. KONTINAKOS; Auxiliary.

SPEAKER3: Oh, yes.

C. KONTINAKOS; Everybody makes Greek pastries and everything and bring other people and all the money goes to the orphanage. And people over there, the sick people, used to send the money there for that cause. No other cause, none.

E. GEROGEORGE: Yeah. Well, that's good, yeah.

C. KONTINAKOS; I belonged to that. I was secretary, too.

E. GEROGEORGE: Did you have any special or favorite priest? I know you like all the priests but was there anyone in particular that you really liked?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, Papa Thomas and Papa [unintelligible - 00:20:36].

E. GEROGEORGE: Father [unintelligible - 0:20:38] and Father... they were wonderful.

SPEAKER 3: That was before I came.

C. KONTINAKOS; That [unintelligible - 0:20:46], young fellow, he make the choir. He was the one...

SPEAKER 3: That started the choir in the church?

C. KONTINAKOS; Started the choir.

SPEAKER 3: But what year was that?

C. KONTINAKOS; That's...

E. GEROGEORGE: 1945, 1946?

C. KONTINAKOS; Something like that. But he was a wonderful teacher for the kids and retained the kids that had dogs and things like that. He was a wonderful...

SPEAKER 3: Yeah. It's good to have a priest like that.

C. KONTINAKOS; Papa Tomas, he's the one who started the ladies, the choir, the ladies' choir. Yeah, but Papa [unintelligible - 0:21:28] started the young generation.

SPEAKER 3: I see.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEORGE: I noticed you have an iconostasio over there. Do you have a kandili?

C. KONTINAKOS; Every day.

E. GEROGEORGE: Is it electric or do you use oil?

C. KONTINAKOS; No, oil.

E. GEROGEORGE: Oil.

C. KONTINAKOS; You see that [unintelligible - 0:21:44]?

SPEAKER 3: That's what I like, too, the oil ones.

E. GEROGEORGE: And you've got a lot of eikones. Where did you get all your eikones?

C. KONTINAKOS; Eikones, they send me some from Greece, and some from my father and mother.

E. GEROGEORGE: Do you like to burn livani?

C. KONTINAKOS; All the time, every Sunday.

E. GEROGEORGE: Every Sunday.

C. KONTINAKOS; Every Sunday, I read the altars and [unintelligible - 00:22:04].

SPEAKER 3: What's livani?

C. KONTINAKOS; It means mint.

E. GEROGEORGE: Incense.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, it's the incense.

E. GEROGEORGE: Incense [unintelligible - 00:22:11] livani. Do you have any eikones from Greece?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEORGE: Which one?

C. KONTINAKOS; Mother Mary, Saint Nicholas.

E. GEROGEORGE: Do you like to make prosforo?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes, I used to make...

E. GEROGEORGE: Do you have your own [unintelligible - 00:22:27]?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes.

E. GEROGEORGE: I see you've got your stefana. Is there any reason?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. The wedding is holy matrimony, not business. And I got my stefana in here.

SPEAKER 3: With your eikones?

C. KONTINAKOS; With the eikones.

E. GEROGEORGE: The crowns and your two candles and your veil, too. It's mounted very nicely there.

SPEAKER 3: Yes, it's beautiful.

E. GEROGEORGE: It's a nice corner.

SPEAKER 3: Yeah.

E. GEROGEORGE: Do you have any stories you would like to tell about St. Nicholas and your daughter? What did your daughter do when she would write her term papers for school?

C. KONTINAKOS; She always put it in St. Nicholas's...

E. GEROGEORGE: Icon, behind the icon.

C. KONTINAKOS; Behind the icon.

SPEAKER 3: Is that right?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah, and she prayed for it.

E. GEROGEORGE: And what happened? Did she get good grades?

C. KONTINAKOS; All the time, even miracle, lots of miracle, in college miracle. When she was in college, miracle.

SPEAKER 3: See, St. Nicholas helped.

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes. Well, St. Nicholas helped the boats. The one that come from Greece have a little place over there. They have an icon and they have a kandili and the people go and pray.

SPEAKER 3: And the boat, too.

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes, even in Greece. On December 6, they celebrate and all the boats in Greece, they stay for five minutes in silent prayer. Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Are you glad you came to America?

C. KONTINAKOS; I am.

E. GEROGEOGE: Would you ever do it again? If you had a chance again, would you ever come to America?

C. KONTINAKOS; I tell you, Greece is my mother and America is stepmother. I love them both. I don't know about the people who live there, but the scenery, I love it. I don't know. I can't say anything bad against the people because people are good and bad all over the world.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, sure.

C. KONTINAKOS; But I love them both.

SPEAKER 3: You have a wonderful attitude. I know that.

C. KONTINAKOS; I don't know, but I love them both. I [unintelligible - 0:24:37] make trip, and I enjoy that, and I give a big party, picnic in my hometown.

SPEAKER 3: What year was that?

C. KONTINAKOS; I used to dream about that. Nineteen...

E. GEROGEOGE: Fifty-eight. We went...

C. KONTINAKOS; Fifty-eight. [Unintelligible - 0:24:52]. And I went in my hometown because when I was little, I say, "I hope I go once more and I'm going to make a picnic for everyone in that village," and I did.

E. GEROGEOGE: [00:25:00] Was that kind of in the mountains then?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, that sounds like fun.

C. KONTINAKOS; I did and all the people from that hometown even remember now. The little ones, they remember the lady that come from America and make

that picnic. I ordered everything and I enjoyed the big dancing and have a good time, everybody.

SPEAKER 3: Was this the last time you've been back there then?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. I enjoyed that. My mother-in-law lives in Kavala. The other live in Salonica. I've been all over in Syros [unintelligible - 00:25:33]. I had a wonderful... my mother-in-law, she was a wonderful person.

SPEAKER 3: She was living at that time?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. Oh, yes, she was 90 years old.

E. GEROGEOGE: Ninety-six.

C. KONTINAKOS; Ninety-six, something like that.

SPEAKER 3: Is that right?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. She says, "I give you my blessings," she says, "because you bring my son's..." you know, her granddaughter to see her. Oh, we had a wonderful time.

SPEAKER 3: Did you know any of Tom's relatives?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes. I saw them in Katerini.

SPEAKER 3: In Katerini?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah, I saw them. And I saw Sofia, too, [unintelligible - 00:26:11] aunt.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, yes.

C. KONTINAKOS; She was living at that time. I traveled a lot before, even here. There's been quite a few places.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, that's good.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. I love people.

SPEAKER 3: Well, I know you used to take care of a nice little girl, too, when...

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. Her mother died in birth. She was born Christmas Eve.

SPEAKER 3: Is that right?

C. KONTINAKOS; She's going to be 35 years old now.

E. GEROGEOGE: She was born in 1945, wasn't she? Yeah, either '45 or '46.

C. KONTINAKOS; She was a lovable, lovable, good girl, smart.

SPEAKER 3: And she stayed right here with you then?

C. KONTINAKOS; When she was six days old, I took her. She died when she was seven. I took her to Rochester three times, three trips. He had Dr. Dan Bergen. He was a wonderful doctor. He didn't get a nickel from me.

SPEAKER 3: Is that right?

C. KONTINAKOS; He would see her all the time. He comes at home and visits and everything. [Unintelligible - 00:27:25]. Yeah. I had a good friend, very good friends, even now, my husband and mine.

SPEAKER 3: Yes, I know Steve. He's one of the best.

C. KONTINAKOS; Not the best but...

SPEAKER 3: Not the best.

C. KONTINAKOS; Not the best but very good.

SPEAKER 3: Typical wife.

C. KONTINAKOS; Very good. He's better than me though because he's too easy.

E. GEROGEOGE: He's honest. He's kind.

C. KONTINAKOS; Everything, same as his daughter. Not me. I watch people.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, I think you're pretty nice.

C. KONTINAKOS; I don't know about that. You don't know me very well, that's why. But I love people. I love people, especially the little ones and the old ones.

C. KONTINAKOS; You love animals, too, don't you, dogs and cats?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: They're the helpless ones, the young, the old, and the animals.

Those in between, she says, can fend for themselves.

C. KONTINAKOS; It's true. That's what I do.

SPEAKER 3: Yeah. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences when you first came here?

C. KONTINAKOS; I have so many, I just will not stop.

SPEAKER 3: We're listening.

C. KONTINAKOS; I've been in business, in a grocery business...

SPEAKER 3: Oh, were you?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, I didn't know that.

C. KONTINAKOS; I used to be the delivery girl and I have lots of friends over there.

SPEAKER 3: Was that here in Duluth or...?

C. KONTINAKOS; In Kankakee.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, in Kankakee.

C. KONTINAKOS; Everybody who knows us, the American people, are such a lovely people. They help us. My brother and my father go to Chicago in the market and buy fruit. Monday and Friday, I was the delivery girl. But everybody, "Christine, come." I used to drive the car and I park any place I feel like it, any place. And one policeman, he comes across me. He tells my father, "Look, I give ticket to Christine because she parked in the place she is not supposed to park." Then my father would start hollering, saying, "Now, you have to pay the ticket." And the **[unintelligible - 00:29:50]** wants to hear us in Greek in a fight, comes to the store and fight. And then one day I take that prickly pears and I put it in his pocket and then he comes to say hello to me and then I put it in his pocket. **[00:30:00]** And then he put his hand in and said, "Oh, Christine." He never tell that to my father after that, never said anything...

SPEAKER 3: Is that right?

C. KONTINAKOS; Never fight him, because anytime, that's my father. He was very good but he always, "If you don't fix this, if you don't put in..."

E. GEROGEOGE: He was a perfectionist, had to have everything perfect.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah. So he laughed and laughed and laughed and then, "Oh, Christine, running around and she spends a lot of gasoline, the money." My father said, "You're going to make the **[unintelligible - 00:30:37]** rich." My father **[unintelligible - 00:30:42]** even in the last minute that time, he didn't want anyone to visit to Kankakee. He comes and take me on his car and say, "Christine, I missed you." Everybody. Even in my church in Kankakee, lots of boys that marry American ladies. And they're always, always my friends.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, wonderful. What were some of the prices of some of the food that you sold at that time?

C. KONTINAKOS; That time, 10 cents the grapes, 10 cents the eggs, a dozen, and other things. Oranges 35 cents, according to wages.

E. GEROGEOGE: Yeah. How were the wages then? What would you be making like in a day?

C. KONTINAKOS; In the store?

E. GEROGEOGE: In the store.

C. KONTINAKOS; We make about \$100 a day.

E. GEROGEOGE: That's from selling things but you yourself wouldn't make that much. Did you, \$100 a day?

C. KONTINAKOS; I didn't make nothing.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, you were just...

C. KONTINAKOS; I worked for the family.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, I see.

C. KONTINAKOS; I didn't get any wages. My father was the boss but he never missed anything. There were clothes, and especially the food, the best in everything.

E. GEROGEOGE: Then you'd get an allowance or a paycheck?

C. KONTINAKOS; No.

E. GEROGEOGE: But they got their food and called that their...

C. KONTINAKOS; Everything.

SPEAKER1: ... shelter, so to speak.

SPEAKER3: Sure. Well, that is something especially at that time.

C. KONTINAKOS; I get \$8 dollars a week in the factory.

E. GEROGEOGE: **[Unintelligible - 00:32:12]**.

C. KONTINAKOS; Eight dollars a week.

SPEAKER 3: And you worked in the factory in Massachusetts?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. And the envelope, money, I bring in, that's every week, and give my father.

E. GEROGEOGE: And also, didn't your father have all the hospitals and institutions that he delivered fruits?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Is that right?

C. KONTINAKOS; It was all over.

E. GEROGEOGE: He was a jobber for the...

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: ... for the hospitals and institutions.

C. KONTINAKOS; We had a big business beside that and the state hospital in Kankakee, Illinois. But in the store, every day we make about \$100. The rest of it, that's... in Kankakee Hotel, big hotel.

E. GEROGEOGE: You delivered there, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes. I used to deliver there and the sisters, they laugh because there's a bunch of bananas **[unintelligible - 00:33:00]** from the ceiling. And then they say, "Christine, when are you going to get married? I'm going to make a big cake for you because you're a good girl."
[Unintelligible - 00:33:10].

SPEAKER3: Yes, well, the banana bunches were bigger than you were, huh?

C. KONTINAKOS; That's right. That's why I got a crooked spine.

E. GEROGEOGE: Well, you said you drove a car. What kind of car was it?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oakland.

E. GEROGEOGE: An Oakland. I've never heard of that kind. Have you?

SPEAKER 3: I've heard of it but...

C. KONTINAKOS; Oakland. And everybody said, "Come mix," just like I wasn't **[unintelligible - 00:33:34]** in the horse at that time. "Come mix, come. Christine, come. Be careful."

SPEAKER 3: I can imagine how you drove.

C. KONTINAKOS; But I never had an accident, never.

E. GEROGEOGE: Did you have to have a license to drive then, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; No, no license.

SPEAKER 3: You just get in and...

E. GEROGEOGE: Just get in and drive.

C. KONTINAKOS; No, that's a wonderful, wonderful life.

E. GEROGEOGE: Yeah, it sure was. It sounds like a **[unintelligible - 00:34:02]**.

C. KONTINAKOS; I feel sorry for the young generation now.

E. GEROGEOGE: Things are different.

C. KONTINAKOS; Different too much. Too much because the mothers work. The mothers, they're not supposed to work.

E. GEROGEOGE: That's the way of life now.

C. KONTINAKOS; The philosophers used to say, "Give me good mothers and I'm going to give you a good citizen." It's nice to work but you have to take care of the family first then you got to work.

E. GEROGEOGE: I know. That's always been your philosophy.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: Nice. Okay.

C. KONTINAKOS; Because I raised only two kids but I'm always home. They never come and say, "Ma," from the door and I never say, "I'm home." Never. Always together.

E. GEROGEOGE: Yeah, that's wonderful.

C. KONTINAKOS; You discipline the kids, respect. Nobody loves nobody these days in my opinion. **[00:35:00]** Love is when the husband hurt, you feel it. And when he's happy... but when the lady of the house come work all day, get nervous and he comes from work, what are they going to do? They are going to start a fight. And they start supper in the kitchen.

E. GEROGEOGE: Yeah, well, there are some ladies that would disagree with that now.

C. KONTINAKOS; I don't know, I don't know.

E. GEROGEOGE: Things are...

SPEAKER 3: There's a goodly portion of people that are working that don't want to work but society demands that you have two incomes, I suppose, and...

C. KONTINAKOS; Two incomes and give the kids everything? And they never appreciate.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Yeah, the kids have a lot nowadays, for sure.

C. KONTINAKOS; The mothers, they try to work and then they give everything to their kids to get the love.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Material things instead of actually being there for them sometime.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. These kids these days, they are boss of the house, no respect. When my father come home, we know my father is home and my mother never hit us. My father never touched us, never. But he said a word and that's all, discipline. Where is the discipline these days?

E. GEROGEOURGE: Well, that's different. Have you always lived in this home when you came to Duluth?

C. KONTINAKOS; No, I rented. Another lifetime. Don't worry about it. We had now this one here...

SPEAKER 3: 1949.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes.

SPEAKER 3: No, 1949.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Was there a lot of homes around here when you first moved here?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes, across the street. **[Unintelligible - 00:36:43]**.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Oh, sure.

SPEAKER 3: Greek people from like my parents' vintage always tried to get close to the church and there was a lot of Greek families around this area when...

E. GEROGEOURGE: Yeah, that seemed to be the custom then.

SPEAKER 3: Yeah. They moved close to where the church was.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Close to the church, the **[unintelligible - 00:37:00]**, they all lived in this area, postal offices.

SPEAKER 3: Yeah. Those were all people that were here when you first came, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. No, no, no.

SPEAKER 3: That one, they used to call this area Athens Avenue because there were so many Greeks.

E. GEROGEOURGE: So many Greek people right in this...

SPEAKER 3: Yeah, territory, **[unintelligible - 00:37:30]**.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah, that's too bad. It's a lovely country to suffer like that. Help everybody and nobody helped her.

E. GEROGEOGE: And that's the way of our life, I guess.

C. KONTINAKOS; Not the way of our life. We made the life like that. So don't take me wrong because I say things.

E. GEROGEOGE: Oh, I understand. I understand.

C. KONTINAKOS; These days, there's very few families together.

E. GEROGEOGE: Not like it used to be.

C. KONTINAKOS; No. That's the way it goes. The modern mothers these days.

E. GEROGEOGE: What about some of the other people that were here when you came like Mrs. [unintelligible - 00:38:25] and Mrs. Morris and those people? What kind of things did you do together when you'd get together?

C. KONTINAKOS; The talks and all that. We talked stories and everything but most, they have the phonograph and Greek music and everything, dancing, stuff like that.

E. GEROGEOGE: Did they have anything... like did they get together and sew and that type of things or was that more on...?

C. KONTINAKOS; Not those ladies. I used to but not those ladies. They work. They work in the restaurant.

E. GEROGEOGE: In the restaurants.

C. KONTINAKOS; I stay home and I do all the working and yeah, I do housework and everything. Mostly, I take care of my family.

E. GEROGEOGE: How about these other people? Did most of them have restaurants then? Is that it?

C. KONTINAKOS; Oh, yes.

E. GEROGEOGE: When you first came?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes. My husband had a restaurant, two of them. I didn't work. I worked before, then my daughter was born and then I stayed home.

E. GEROGEOGE: Where did your husband have his restaurants then?

C. KONTINAKOS; Where?

E. GEROGEOURGE: Where were these restaurants?

C. KONTINAKOS; The Lake Avenue in **[unintelligible - 00:39:23]** where is the hotdog now, next to the hotdog...

SPEAKER 3: Coney Island.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Next to the Coney Island.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yes, in the Lake Avenue.

SPEAKER 3: On the corner of Lake Avenue.

C. KONTINAKOS; It's where your mother-in-law comes every day.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Is that right?

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah. **[Unintelligible - 00:39:40]**. She was a wonderful lady.

E. GEROGEOURGE: What about my mother-in-law? I don't know anything about her, really.

C. KONTINAKOS; You don't know?

E. GEROGEOURGE: Tom doesn't know much about her.

C. KONTINAKOS; She was a nice lady, Christian lady. She always say **[unintelligible - 00:39:53]**. She's got only one son and she says, "Christine, I want to see Tom **[unintelligible - 00:39:57]** for that boy. She adored that boy.

E. GEROGEOURGE: **[00:40:00]** I hear she used to dress him up all the time and put him in a corner.

C. KONTINAKOS; She was a real Christian lady. She comes in the Lake Avenue every day because her husband is my cousin.

E. GEROGEOURGE: That's right. You were a **[unintelligible - 00:40:23]**.

C. KONTINAKOS; That's life. We have the good and the bad.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Did they live close around here then, too?

C. KONTINAKOS; No. They lived on First Street downtown.

E. GEROGEOURGE: Oh, wow. I don't think Tom remembers much about that, where they lived then.

C. KONTINAKOS; Yeah, he's probably **[unintelligible - 00:40:55]**. Memories, memories.

E. GEROGEOGE: You see, that's what we want to do this for because there's many things that I didn't know about you and many things that your children wouldn't know about you if we didn't try to preserve some of these things with this project that the Daughters of Penelope are trying to do right now.

C. KONTINAKOS; That's a wonderful thing.

E. GEROGEOGE: And I think it's really nice that you let us come here and interview you today.

C. KONTINAKOS; It's really nice to come and bring all the trouble to come here.

E. GEROGEOGE: No, it's really nice to be here.

SPEAKER 3: [Unintelligible - 00:41:25].

E. GEROGEOGE: Annie [unintelligible - 00:41:29] also helped on this interview.

This concludes the interview with [unintelligible - 00:41:39], December 29, 1987./AT/mb

[00:41:57] [RECORDING STOPPED]