**Andrew:** This is Andrew Philips. It’s the Monday, the 28th of August, 1989. I’m with Mary Grande, spelled G-R-A-N-D-E. This is interview number 414, the Ellis Island Oral History project. Commencing this interview at a little bit before 12:30. Mrs. Grande, could you start by telling me what your name is and where you immigrated from?

**Mary:** What my maiden name … What?

**Andrew:** What’s your [inaudible 00:00:37]?

**Mary:** My maiden name was Maria Yankovich. My mother and I came from Candia by Novo Mesto which is in Yugoslavia now. Originally, it was Austria, Hungary. We left there August 12th, 1920 and we stayed a few days in Thrust Trieste, Italy.

**Andrew:** Can you spell it for me please?

**Mary:** T-R-I-E-S-T-E, Italy. Then we got on a ship. I believe the name of it was [inaudible 00:01:33]. It was right after World War II, so they stopped in a lot of places, in London and I suppose Paris, and all over but part of our clothes were stolen in Trieste, so a fellow that my mother knew he went in I believe in London to buy some clothes for us. He could speak American. He came back from the States and who he brought back … I don’t remember. He bought some clothes so we had something to change in, to wear.

**Andrew:** Before you tell us about travelling from your home country to the United States, could you tell us a little bit about what your home was like? For instance, start by telling us what your parents did for a living.

**Mary:** My father was here in the States since 1911. In fact, he was during World War I here in the United States and my mother was a farmer. She raised some cattle and bartered with it.

**Andrew:** Tell me what your home was like. What did it look like?

**Mary:** It was average peasant home. It was three rooms, living room, and a kitchen in the middle, and a small room on the side, and then facing what would be I guess the East side was a barn where the cattle were.

**Andrew:** So the cattle were actually … They were part of the house. The barn was part of the house.

**Mary:** Yes.

**Andrew:** Explain that to us, what that was like.

**Mary:** It was all one building and later on they made that all as one room, but at that time we had half room was for the barn for the cows or when my brother had horses. It was there. Then there was a manure pile just to the side of it. Majority of people had it similar like that.

**Andrew:** Why were the houses and barns constructed together like that?

**Mary:** Had been historical, as far as I know. I don’t know any different. They don’t do it now anymore like that, but they used to.

**Andrew:** What was it like for a little girl to be living so close to the animals? Did you enjoy that or you…?

**Mary:** Yes, I enjoyed it because they were part of my life. In fact, I had a pet cow that I loved very much. Then the pigs sty was across from the kitchen door just a little way away. All the animals were right close to the house. It was a regular home life between the animals. You wouldn’t bring them in the house, but you had them outside.

**Andrew:** When you were sitting down to eat, for instance, you could look out the kitchen door and there were the pigs.

**Mary:** Right.

**Andrew:** You had names for the pigs?

**Mary:** Sometimes.

**Andrew:** Did you like the pigs?

**Mary:** Yeah. They used to slaughter them in winter and save some meat, cured it for the summer and some of it for right away. Not too much fresh but mostly cured.

**Andrew:** How did they cure it?

**Mary:** Salt, and water, and pack it, put some rocks on it and let it stay like that, and then they would smoke it.

**Andrew:** Did you used to help to do that?

**Mary:** I had to help with that. When the killed the pigs, I had to catch the blood. I didn’t like it, but that was part of my job.

**Andrew:** Can you perhaps remember actually what you did? Can you describe it for us?

**Mary:** When my mother got the fellow to kill the pig, well, I had to hold the pan there and catch the blood because they made the blood sauce each out of that. Of course, they worked with that to make it good and then they made the blood sauce each and usually, they fried the liver right away good and fresh. That was really good.

Later, out of the other left over pieces of regular meat, they’d make smoked sausage each and then they’d smoke them and have them during the summer. They had for special occasions or when they had hired help. They had different pieces for different times.

**Andrew:** You got a lot of different meat. You got your money out of those little pigs across the way from the kitchen.

**Mary:** Yes. Of course, we had the milk from the cows. We didn’t kill the cows at home. It’s very seldom we had beef but we had chicken, so there was chicken meat and eggs, and pigs, and milk, and geese, and whatever.

**Mitzi:** Hello.

**Mary:** Hey.

**Andrew:** Just a small interruption there, Clyde Mitzi [inaudible 00:07:34]. Mitzi is the daughter of Mrs. Grande. Okay, we were back, you were telling us a little bit about your life on your farm. Can you tell us perhaps how you warmed the place in the winter time? Was it cold for you?

**Mary:** We heated it with the wood. There was times that my mother later on got some coal but not very much, it was mostly wood. The forest wasn’t far from the house, so we used to get the wood there. Of course, she had quite a bit hauled in the fall, so we would have wood.

**Andrew:** You said hauled in the fall. She got the wood during the fall?

**Mary:** Yeah. We’d have it all winter long, but she would cut it up herself, saw it and chop it, and of course, later on when I was bigger I tried to help which I wasn’t’ t much good but I helped on the farm with little I could and I had about a mile or better to go to school.

**Andrew:** Before you tell us about going to school, can you tell me what your life was like for your mother. She was … One moment. I’m just going to have to ask. We need the interview to be as quiet as possible.

**Mary:** Originally, she was widower when she married my husband. Then she bought this home and then when she met [crosstalk 00:09:07]-

**Andrew:** Mrs. Grande, could you continue please? I think we were talking about how difficult it was for your mother. You said she was a widower and married again.

**Mary:** She was widower and she had two boys, one died before but two of them were living. She was raising them. I came along after she was married with my father. He came to the States and there was another sister born after that.

**Andrew:** It sounds like your mother must have been a tremendously strong and hearty woman to look after a farm, and bring up these children, and chop the wood. Was that normal?

**Mary:** Normal. Most, all of the women did similar work, worked on a farm and took care of everything. There was quite a few men that came to the States to make a livelihood and then probably come back which a lot of them never did. A lot of them took their family then over here but a lot of them … Some did help but during the war time they couldn’t help back [inaudible 00:10:21].

My mother used to sell milk and eggs, and whatever she could … Products not too much off the farm because that was our livelihood throughout the year and you had to keep some seed for next year.

**Andrew:** Did you tell me how many were in your family? Could you tell me that?

**Mary:** There was actually four, five with my mother and then my sister died. She was about a year old when she died, so there was four of us. We’d done the best we could just like a lot of others.

**Andrew:** Why did your sister die? What did she die of?

**Mary:** Childhood problems.

**Andrew:** Was that very common in your village?

**Mary:** Well, there’s quite a few children that did die. I don’t know exactly cause of what it was, but she died.

**Andrew:** Now could you tell me please about going to school? You said to had to walk to school. Tell me about your school days.

**Mary:** Well, it was a good mile or maybe further past the cemetery which I wasn’t scared of. I didn’t mind it a bit. We crossed the track, of course, one time I didn’t pay attention to whether it was bad and I had my head down. The rails were down. The train was going to come and I bumped in there which wasn’t very good. That woke me to pay attention but we walk back and forth, wouldn’t take nothing of it.

That was normal, nobody had cars or anything. They didn’t take them with the wagon because there was too much other work to be done. When my brother got older … He was quite a bit older than me. He went and stayed with my aunt for a while in a different part of the area. My mother and I were alone for quite a while. She bartered with the cattle and sometimes I’d stay with the neighbors overnight when she’d go and barter to different places. Now that she’d done all of it walking. She didn’t have no other transportation.

After the war when my dad started writing about coming to the States, naturally we were enthused about it. I don’t know if my mother was enthused or not, but I was.

**Andrew:** Tell me what it was like for during the war. Do you have some memories of that?

**Mary:** We had to have refugees from the Italian side. The extra room that we had that was like … It could have been a summer kitchen. We had to give that to the refugees. Everybody had to share their homes with the refugees and of course, they spoke quite a bit Italian but we managed to get and understand each other pretty good.

**Andrew:** Do you Know or do you remember whether it was the government immunities [crosstalk 00:14:14].

**Mary:** It was more or less a government decision that everybody would take some refugees. We went down by the river which was about a good half mile or further to wash clothes on the rocks. I don’t know if you ever heard or not. My mother would take them sometime over to the hospital which was the other way. It wasn’t as far. The only thing she didn’t like to go there because there was too much bloody stuff in there.

**Andrew:** Why?

**Mary:** To wash clothes in shelter instead of outdoors.

**Andrew:** You said there was some bloody stuff in there. Why?

**Mary:** Well, it was a hospital. They’d let their women come there and wash clothes, but naturally the hospital supplies were going through fast.

**Andrew:** The rubbish and the [inaudible 00:15:22] from the hospital was thrown into the river.

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Andrew:** You probably tried to wash upstream from the hospital.

**Mary:** Yes, definitely and there was two hospitals. One side of the river was for men and the one on the other side, the river was for women. They didn’t have them all combined together like they have over here now. They have them like that now too over there but at that time there was each separate. There was a castle right across the street from the hospital which is now Tuberculosis Sanatorium. They have no castles no more. There was quite a bit of changes anymore to…

**Andrew:** But in those days, who lived in that castle?

**Mary:** The Austrian people. They were the higher reps from the Austrian … Not government people but they were well to do and all that.

**Andrew:** What language did you speak?

**Mary:** Actually Slovenian and we had to take German.

**Andrew:** Not Hungarian.

**Mary:** No. Germany was our main language, like in office or different places. You almost had to learn how to speak German to get along with them.

**Andrew:** That was the official language.

**Mary:** Right.

**Andrew:** So how many languages were spoken there in your village?

**Mary:** The two, German and Slovenian.

**Andrew:** Do you remember much at that age about any political structures or political problems?

**Mary:** I kind of remember when I guess it was about 1918 when they was going to overthrow Austria- Hungary all together and change it Yugoslavia.

**Andrew:** When it was.

**Mary:** The government was out of Yugoslav. The First World War started down in Sarajevo, in what is now Yugoslavia. It’s down more or less in Serbian section and that’s where Ferdinand got killed and World War I started. I kind of remember when they had the meetings around 1918 and 1920. After that it became Yugoslavia. Actually, I was born in Austria Hungary and came here from Yugoslavia.

**Andrew:** Do you remember what your older relatives or your mother, or people who came to your house were talking about during those times? Were they afraid? Were they excited? What was the atmosphere like?

**Mary:** During the war, they were excited and all that but not too much because you had to go along. There was restrictions on certain things you couldn’t buy. The people that lived in the city which was across the river from us, they didn’t have food and we had more food because we were off the country.

For any small amount to food, either eggs or chicken or no matter what or milk, they would share clothing because they had plenty of clothes but they had a time getting food.

**Andrew:** Did that become a barter system that you … Part of the barter system you were describing before or not? Did they pay money for the food?

**Mary:** No, it would be a bartering. I usually had real nice clothes and when we were coming here to the States, I would have had beautiful clothes if it wouldn’t be stolen in Italy while were waiting for the ship. We had to stay there three days, and they had my mother put the suitcases in the storage and when she went to get them they were gone. Not only hers, a lot of others too.

**Andrew:** Meanwhile back before that happened, how did people cross that river? Was there a boat or a bridge?

**Mary:** Further down, there was a big bridge or they went with wagons or whatever needed to be. Of course, you don’t see the wagons now anymore used. All you see is cars, but at that time there was wagons.

**Andrew:** When was it that your first learnt that you were going to travel to America?

**Mary:** It was I guess about not the very first part but about towards the second part of 1920.

**Andrew:** Can you tell me how you learnt about that?

**Mary:** Well, my mother was telling me about the letter she got from my father and then he sent the tickets. She had to go to different places to get it approved and all that but not too many. Some of them had to go through more than she did. I didn’t have to go anywhere because I was a minor. On the passport her and my picture were together, so everything went. Whatever she got, it was for me too.

**Andrew:** How about the other children?

**Mary:** Well, my oldest brother, he had to go in the army. They have to serve three years all the time, but he had to go. Then the other one, there was going to bring him here. In the spring, when he was supposed to go kind of like to report for the army, he was on a wagon and he fell or dropped or whatever and he got killed. This one got to come from the army earlier to take over the farm.

**Andrew:** Because his brother had been killed.

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Andrew:** Did your brother accompany you to the United States?

**Mary:** No, he wouldn’t come after us. It was my mother and I that came then.

**Andrew:** Now tell me what you actually had to do to get your papers.

**Mary:** I wasn’t with my mother too much, but she had to through quite a bit of different courts and different offices and get approvals of all different higher ups that were line with the travelling and all. She had to make quite a few different trips.

**Andrew:** Do you know how long it took her to get the approval?

**Mary:** It was about … The last month before we left, it seemed like she was always coming and going different places.

**Andrew:** Meanwhile your father was in America.

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Andrew:** Tell me about finally leaving. How did you feel?

**Mary:** I was anxious to get here to meet my dad.

**Andrew:** Weren’t you going to miss your friends?

**Mary:** I didn’t think about them.

**Andrew:** How old were you when you were leaving?

**Mary:** 10. I was anxious to meet my dad.

**Andrew:** How had you school life been? Had you enjoyed school back-?

**Mary:** I liked school. I had average grades. I wouldn’t say they were exceptional but I had them average. I had to take German for two years in third and fourth grade. Of course, later on when I came here there was no German people around, so I kind of forgot it. It would be nice if I had ever remember it.

**Andrew:** How did you … You got to Trieste, I think you described.

**Mary:** We went by train and then we got to where we had the … Where my mother checked in the suitcases. We just had like bar and a place that wasn’t a hotel or anything where we stayed till 15th. My dad paid for first class but they put us way down on the bottom.

This one fellow spoke up that was here before. He seen my mother’s card and he said, “You don’t belong down here. You should up higher.” We had mostly fish and macaroni on the ship which I didn’t like very well, but you had to eat something.

**Andrew:** Did you manage to get up to first class?

**Mary:** Not first. We got up to second class. It was better but nothing to brag about compared to what the ships are now.

**Andrew:** Did you still have to eat fish and macaroni?

**Mary:** Yes. I guess that was the basic. It was the Italian ship and so I guess that’s what it was. They stopped in London. They stopped in different places. I guess they got a call from the United States where the people are that they were supposed to be in by a certain time and they weren’t and so then the ship started going real fast and finally get to New York. I do some not too much. I suppose I was too excited about getting to my dad’s place.

I know there was quite a few that had eye disease and they had them there for a few days. A lot of them were sent back from where they were coming from either Italy, Germany, or Yugoslavia. We were there and they vaccinated us again and checked us through and all. Finally, we got to go.

I think we changed trains in Chicago, from New York to Chicago and then changed trains. There were some people that went here to Denver that were from more or less same area as we were. We got on a different train in Chicago. The train they got was different than the one we had and that’s the first time I got to see the bananas on the train.

Of course, there was a fellow that he went over there to get his two children. He didn’t buy them very much some of the rest of them, like my mother and this other lady bought. We shared with his kids. They didn’t like it very much, but what can you do. We all went. There was a lady with her two daughters and this man with his two children, and my mother and me that all went to the same town in Utah. We got off in Price, and of course, that’s where my dad met us. We had to take the bus 28 miles to Sunnyside.

**Andrew:** Why was it that you decided to move up to … You were on your way to Denver I take it?

**Mary:** No, we were on the way to Utah to begin with. That’s where my dad lived.

**Andrew:** Why had he chosen to live in Utah?

**Mary:** Well, he was working in coal mines. He worked in different mines in Utah around. He worked part-time years before that in Aspen, Colorado but he went back to Utah around [inaudible 00:29:07]. At that time he was in Sunnyside and we lived there about six and half years and then his health went bad, so we came to Colorado.

**Andrew:** Can you tell me how you felt when you arrived in the United States and how eventually you must have started school, what that was like for you?

**Mary:** My dad rented a company four room house that was a double. The other family was same nationality as we were. The kids could talk broken Slovenian. We started getting along and I’d pick up words from them little by little and we came on a Thursday and the following Monday I went to school.

These were going to the same grades, so they put me in the fourth grade instead of the first. I started along pretty good because as far as figures, you didn’t have to talk. You could just write and it was good. I was in the county contest the first and second year from arithmetic to where we went from Sunnyside to Price Estate overnight. It was good. I skipped the sixth grade and in seventh grade I was in a running contest. I wouldn’t go now but I did go then.

**Andrew:** Let me just turn my tape over. Now this side two, interview number 414 with Mary Grande. You did fairly well at school.

**Mary:** I’d say I wasn’t the best, but I was with the top ones.

**Andrew:** Tell me what life was like now for your mother. She no longer had all of those animals to look after. It must have been very different. What did she do?

**Mary:** All we could was house work, laundry cleaning, and cooking and that’s all. She got adjusted pretty well. She always hoped to go back, but she never did because they started talking about the war. She didn’t want to be another war over there which they had it worse right in the second one than they did in the first. My brother, half-brother, of course, he lived there till the 70s when he died. She gave the property over him. They had pretty rough deals there during the second war.

In fact, one of his daughters got deaf and dumb on account of the noise canons that they were shooting on their farm. We were right close to where they had the battles and everything … My brother was. I got pretty well with the kids in school. Of course, I couldn’t speak but I started learning fairly fast the best way I could and I enjoyed the school.

**Andrew:** Where were you living at this point?

**Mary:** In Sunnyside, Utah.

**Andrew:** Before I ask you that question, can you tell me a little bit about the depression years for your family? What was that like?

**Mary:** The depression really hit us after I came here to Colorado. Right after I got married that’s when we had the worst depression. My dad was kind of … His health was going down great so he couldn’t work and between my mother and him, they figured maybe he could do some outside work over here. My mother’s sister lived up on North-east of [inaudible 00:33:52] on what they call the dry land. We were there for a week and then we came to Denver.

He got a job finally over at the smolder. He worked there for a while but couldn’t work too long. Little by little he tried to work. He went finally back into the mine and he couldn’t work too long there and finally, the doctor said he couldn’t work no more.

**Andrew:** How did you feel at this point? How did your family feel about things so far away from home? Did they miss…?

**Mary:** My mother missed it a lot, but sorry to say I didn’t.

**Andrew:** You got married. When did you get married?

**Mary:** In 1927 here in Denver and I’ve been here ever since.

**Andrew:** You were moved to Denver when from Sunnyside?

**Mary:** In 1926 in October. We drove a Model T. in fact, I drove it most of the way and we stopped in Aspen. I had an uncle, my mother’s brother there. We stopped there for a month and then we came on to Colorado. After a while, we both got jobs and worked out. I met my husband on New Year’s and married him in May.

He was from the same area as I was. Years later we went back there. He liked the area where I was raised much better than where he was because it was close to the city and him and I went back there three times. We went once with a car and twice with a plane. Of course, I’ve been there since and a few times.

**Andrew:** Why was it that there was so many people from that area that you came from in Europe living in this area around Denver?

**Mary:** It’s a settlement when I look. It settled and then somebody else tries to come in, and they just like to integrate together.

**Andrew:** Is there anything else that you think we might be interested to hear about?

**Mary:** I worked later on during depression. It was kind of rough. My husband wasn’t making much, worked every other week. The girls were getting to the point being in school. We sent to [inaudible 00:37:00] but we had to pay and naturally we had to pay. It wasn’t like now that somebody else pays for them a lot. I finally got a job, in fact, in-house, which I worked close to 30 years in it. In between every [inaudible 00:37:20], I had to have different surgeries and I’d be home.

**Andrew:** What kind of work particularly were you doing?

**Mary:** Cutting up meat, pork and beef. Cut it for scraps, for sausage and stuff. Later on, she came into the packing house and she worked with meat for a while and then she went down into smoke house where they have to smoke bacon and hams. She worked there till she had to give up medically on account of it.

**Andrew:** Can you explain for identification who she is?

**Mary:** My daughter, Mitzi.

**Andrew:** M-I-T-Z-I, Mitzi Stake House.

**Mary:** I have another daughter, Jenny Musk. She’s a nurse. She is lives way up in North Land.

**Andrew:** Unless there is something else you think you’d like to tell us all.

**Mary:** My husband and I became American citizens in 1932. We tried to vote every time ever since. Maybe not right, but we try our best. Every time I go back to Europe, I’m happy to come back. This is my country.

**Andrew:** That finishes interview number 414 with Mary Grande [inaudible 00:38:54].