**Janet**: Okay this Janet Levine for the National Park Service. It’s November 10th, 1995 and I am here at the Armenian home in Jamaica plain, Massachusetts and I have the pleasure of being with Alice Papazian Hovnanian.

Mrs. Hovnanian was born in Turkey but she went to Cuba for two years before she through Ellis Island and then to the United States. Well I am looking forward to hearing your story. I will ask you questions and then you tell me what you remember. Whatever you remember is good okay? Now do you remember your birth date?

**Alice**: My birthday? September 18 or 17 like that.

**Janet**: Well you thought before that you were born in 1901 which would make you 94 years old now. Is that right? Do you think you are 94 years old now?

**Alice**: Yes 1901. I born in [unclear 00:01:18]. I came in here September 17th or 18th something like that I forgot it.

**Janet**: You came to this country?

**Alice**: Yeah.

**Janet**: Do you remember the year?

**Alice**: Huh?

**Janet**: Do you remember what year it was?

**Alice**: September that’s September.

**Janet**: That’s the month and the year? It was September 19 what?

**Alice**: September 1917.

**Janet**: 1917. Well you were married when you came? You had a baby when you came?

**Alice**: Yeah I have a baby born in Cuba. I bring it here.

**Janet**: Right. And your baby was 3 years old when you came to this country?

**Alice**: My was-very small when I bring it here. No-

**Janet**: Take your time.

**Alice**: My son is I don’t know if they were ‘31 or ‘36.

**Janet**: You think you came into this country in 1930 something?

**Alice**: Yeah.

**Janet**: Okay. Well, I might be able to check on that. So we will just go ahead okay. Tell me what you remember about Turkey? What was life like for you when you were a little girl in Turkey?

**Alice**: Oh Turkey. I hated Turkey.

**Janet**: Why did you hate it so much?

**Alice**: Turkey all the Armenian killed. All the Arminian sent to dessert. All the Turkey very bad, Turkey I don’t like the Turkey. That why everybody get up. Everybody get up. Come in America come in America.

**Janet**: When you lived in turkey when you were a little girl did you have a grandmother and grandfather?

**Alice**: Oh. My grandfather and grandmother all die before I-no my father soldiers they take soldiers. I didn’t see my father because my mother me and my brother I am my sister all they get out dessert you know get out. After one Turkey they came my mother says can I have this one boy and this one girl I take to my house I have big [unclear 00:04:16]-

**Janet**: Big what?

**Alice**: Big-what call it?

**Janet**: Chimney?

**Alice**: [unclear 00:04:29].

**Janet**: What does that mean in English what’s the word in English?

**Alice**: Big Garden. They have one Armenian woman and that woman she got one children too with them. This is no either one give up [unclear 00:04:54] just my boy and my small brother. She takes that.

I am stay with my mother I didn’t go to Turkey. And after when I come in home I see one Armenian house and he got a white donkey. You know and I can speak the Turkish over there after the towels that man is get out he said, “Mamma, I am going downtown you want something I bring?' said, “I don’t want anything you [unclear 00:05:47- 00:06:06].” I don’t know I can’t speak the reason. Then stay on the house and the boy he know Turkish.

After I look downtown down like that the man white donkey [unclear 00:06:26] come on come on. Hurry up hurry up. My man coming that man takes my sister my mother my mother and she come in she said [unclear 00:06:42].

**Janet**: What is that?

**Alice**: [unclear 00:06:47] what do you name-where are you? What is your name yeah Turkish yeah come on down come on down. We go down my God and he takes me and my mother and my sister over there. He takes me I go. I say to my brother he cry my sister just like don’t talk don’t talk to me. Take the [unclear 00:07:34].

**Janet**: They cut her tongue?

**Alice**: Yeah don’t talk to me they cut your tongue. [Unclear 00:07:52] anyway we find that I bring them my sister, take on my brother is the one he’s man. It’s alright I take the [unclear 00:08:13] and my sister she said [unclear 00:08:16]

**Janet**: What is that mean?

**Alice**: The [unclear 00:08:23] sister. I said don’t talk like that. You’re affecting his heart. [Uncle 00:08:45] I said no, no, no. You always [unclear 00:08:49] okay. After she take with me.

And she day with after that [unclear 00:09:00] my brother she tell over there. My brother one day again they kick he I said he take that we take over there they got that you know the [unclear 00:09:20] people [unclear 00:09:23] not the church that keep a ticket-orphanage.

**Janet**: An orphanage?

**Alice**: Yeah. And my brother or the Armenian people we take you know carpenter he is good enough.

**Janet**: Your brother is a carpenter?

**Alice**: Oh he is very nice. He knows everything. Because my father is very nice carpenter. And my brother we sent it again carpenter. Don’t even pay them. After [unclear 00:10:18] good money that times nothing and that’s all.

**Janet**: Well let me ask you a few questions? What was your mother's name?

**Alice**: Huh?

**Janet**: What was your mother's name? Your mother.

**Alice**: My mother Taqui her name is Taqui. queen.

**Janet**: How do you say her last name?

**Alice**: Huh?

**Janet**: What was her name before she was married? Her last name before she married your father?

**Alice**: Oh my mother name? Nazagian. Nazagian. After [unclear 00:11:03].

**Janet**: What was your mother like when you were a little girl? Do you remember what your mother was like?

**Alice**: You know what.

**Janet**: What?

**Alice**: She said don’t talk to me Turkish take out your tongue. Doesn’t talk Armenia Turkish people will cut your tongue?

**Janet**: They cut your cut if you talk?

**Alice**: Huh?

**Janet**: If you talk?

**Alice**: Yeah. Small kid

**Janet**: Well how old were you when you left Turkey?

**Alice**: Me?

**Janet**: Yeah.

**Alice**: Oh I didn’t see too much. Yeah. We come from after-my country they got there just something Red Cross people they gave them money I come from Syria. After Syria my husband sister over there.

My sister all the time she said why did you get married? I am not going married I can find nobody Armenian here. And after when I come in she see me she arrived here when I was-too crazy and very nice blunt have everything. And crazy

**Janet**: What you were crazy?

**Alice**: Yeah.

**Janet**: How were you crazy? What did you do?

**Alice**: I don’t know. And asked them with my husband he says my mother he say Mrs. queen he says 'when I go in all every I have to come I am going to get married to your daughter' says oh my all..! [Unclear 00:13:20] the first time in I don’t know.

My all chicken. The girl I met one for no. Say oh you give me that I like her. Say no I am not going to give you. Says I like her I am get it. She says my all chicken they go girl I am not going to give it to him [laughter].

**Janet**: Okay we are going to pause here for a minute.

[Speaking in Armenian]

**Janet**: Maybe we should start with when you left Turkey. Do you remember when you left Turkey? When you went from Turkey?

**Trans:** [speaking in Armenian 00:14:15-00:14:23]

**Trans:** It was Genocide. It was Genocide.

**Janet**: The genocide was when you left?

**Trans:** Yeah. [Speaking in Armenian 00:14:31-].

**Alice**: [Speaking in Armenian 00:14:39].

**Trans:** They went Halle after Turkey they went to Halle.

**Janet**: How long did you stay in Halle?

**Trans:** [speaking in Armenian 00:14:48-56].

**Alice**: [Speaking in Armenian 00:14:56-00:15:07].

**Trans:** She-five years she stayed in Holmic and she did engage in Holmic. [Speaking in Armenian 00:15:16-22] [Laughter]. I know her story.

**Janet**: You know her story maybe you can tell in English about how you got engaged?

**Trans:** [Speaking in Armenian 00:15:33].

**Alice**: [Speaking in Armenian 00:15:39] you come from Cuba I come from over there. And then he comes from Cuba with me.

**Janet**: How come why did you get engaged to that man? How did you get engaged to-?

**Trans:** [speaking Armenian 00:16:00]

**Janet**: In English.

**Alice**: [Speaking in Armenian 00:16:08].

**Trans:** You tell.

**Janet**: Tell in English.

**Trans:** [unclear 00:16:15] so we have a neighbor she said [speaking in Armenian 00:16:22-33].

**Alice**: You know I go in Garden.

**Trans:** Grapes [speaking in Armenian 00:16:45] She still pull her from the neighbor who had boy she go there and grape and steal the grapes so that boy.

**Alice**: And that boy he hit me I say I am going to tell my mother I go home I cry my mother says 'why you cry?' I say you know that

**Trans:** [speaking in Armenian 00:17:17-31]

**Alice**: My neighbor hit me I say 'why you hit him' because I streaking her [unclear 00:17:39] everything. I am too crazy. I steal everything I likened. I say my mother she says is she coming tender. I do good thing because she is stealing. She say that small children. I say I don’t care because they are children. She steals my everything.

**Trans:** Neighbor says I don’t think she is a child. Her mother went to the neighbor and she says he had says because of [unclear 00:18:22].

**Janet**: What did that have to do with how you gore engaged to your husband?

**Trans:** [speaking in Armenian 00:18:32-38]

**Alice**: After you know [unclear 00:18:40] I see that her sister. When I was in the she seen me [unclear 00:18:53]

**Trans:** She was in house in Syria she was in Syria she saw his sister at that time.

**Alice** : My mother said' my all [unclear 00:19:14] [laughter].

**Trans:** [speaking Armenian 00:19:19] when that boy with her and her mother got very mad and she says if in my [unclear 00:19:29-44].

**Alice**: [speaking Armenian 00:19:45]

**Trans:** [speaking Armenian 00:19:46] girl I never give it to you because he says someday I am going to get married with your daughter. He said to the mother.

**Janet**: What did you think about him? How did you feel about him?

**Trans:** [speaking Armenian 00:20:09].

**Janet**: You liked him?

**Alice**: Yeah. Nice man laughter].

**Janet**: What did you like about him?

**Trans:** [speaking Armenian 00:20:28]

**Alice**: He like me too I like him too.

**Janet**: He liked you and you liked him? Yeah?

**Alice**: Yeah.

**Janet**: Okay so that was in Syria?

**Alice**: No.

**Trans:** No in Chimuschazak. In chimuschazak [unclear 00:20:46] is where things happened.

**Janet**: Oh okay.

**Trans:** And then when they went to Syria Hale, it was after genocide so he was-after genocide he came to America. And then he later took his sister [speaking in Armenian 00:21:07]

**Alice**: [Speaking in Armenian 00:21:09]

**Trans:** And her sister meets Alice that time. And she said you know my brother looking for someone do you want to go there? And she says I don’t know who your brother is? And she tells he and she showed him the picture and they sent her picture there. And they get met picture after a while and he says come on come to Cuba and they go on engage in Cuba.

**Janet**: So he went from America to Cuba?

**Trans:** Correct.

**Janet**: And did you remember him from the picture? When you got the picture in the letter. You got a picture of your husband?

**Alice**: Yes.

**Janet**: When you saw that picture did you remember who that was?

**Trans:** [speaking in Armenian 00:22:00:-14]

**Alice**: Yes.

**Janet**: [Laughter] you remembered him so you said yes you would go.

**Alice**: I am crazy.

**Trans:** About him. She was crazy about him he was nice looking good boy he was right? She said I will show you the picture that way.

**Janet**: What was your husband's first name?

**Alice**: My name?

**Janet**: No your husband?

**Trans:** [speaking Armenian 00:22:42]

**Alice**: George.

**Trans:** [speaking Armenian 00:22:49]

**Alice**: Mkrpich. his name is Mkrpich.

**Janet**: Mkrpich? how do you spell that? well just right it out and we will say the spelling on the tape.

**Trans:** M-K-R-P-I-C-H

**Janet**: Okay. And so this are pictures of you husband. Oh wow that’s beautiful. beautiful yes. And that’s your son what a handsome son you have. yeah. so do you remember going to Cuba? do you remember the trip to Cuba? when you went?

**Trans:** [speaking in Armenian 00:23:49]

**Alice**: [speaking in Armenian 00:23:53] I was bought transatlantic-

**Janet**: Transatlantic? okay

**Alice**: Just two days-

**Janet**: Two days when you went from Cuba to the united states-