**Janet:** This Janet Levine for the National Park Service. It’s October 25th 1993. I’m here in the Ellis Island Oral History studio with Dannie Madden and Mrs. Sara. Her maiden name was White, Madden. It turns out we have a double kind of interview today because Mr. Madden came from Ireland in 1928 when he was 18 years old. He then worked here at Ellis Island from 1928 till 1938. Mrs. and Madden worked here from 1937 to 1940.

I’m very happy that you were able to come today. I’m really looking forward to hearing your stories.

**Dannie:** We’re happy to be here.

**Janet:** Why don’t we begin, Mr. Madden, if you would say your birth date and where in Ireland you were born.

**Dannie:** I was born July 19th 1909 in Moylough, County Galway, Ireland.

**Janet:** How do you spell that?

**Dannie:** M-O-Y-L-O-U-G-H.

**Janet:** That’s the county?

**Dannie:** No, Galway is the county, that’s the parish.

**Janet:** Did you live there the entire time until you came to the United States?

**Dannie:** Yes I did. I lived with my parents, my brothers and sisters.

**Janet:** What was your father’s name?

**Dannie:** Brian Madden.

**Janet:** Your mother and her maiden name?

**Dannie:** Julia Hynes Madden. Hynes was her maiden name.

**Janet:** H-I-N-E-S?

**Dannie:** H-Y-N-E-S.

**Janet:** Your brothers and sisters, would you say their names and where you fall in the birth order.

**Dannie:** I have Nelly, she’s diseased now, but she was born in 1910. Margaret was born in 1912. Martin was born in 1914. John was born in 1915. Mary, the youngest, was born in 1916.

**Janet:** That makes you the oldest?

**Dannie:** That’s right.

**Janet:** Tell me about the town, what was it like there when you lived there?

**Dannie:** I lived in a farm, where’s the farm there. Moylough was a town there. If you drove 25 miles [inaudible 00:02:52] you’d miss the town.

**Janet:** What was there in the town? What did the town have?

**Dannie:** They had two grocery stores there, a gasoline station, a school and a church, that’s about it.

**Janet:** Was it a Catholic church?

**Dannie:** Yes it was, Catholic Church. There was a Protestant Church on the other side of the street, they were looking at each other.

**Janet:** Was your family a religious family?

**Dannie:** Yes, more or less. We went to church regularly.

**Janet:** Catholic Church?

**Dannie:** Yes. They didn’t believe in [inaudible 00:03:32] stuff like that. They weren’t fanatics though, they were just Catholics that’s all.

**Janet:** Did you have grandparents who were around?

**Dannie:** I did. Dan Madden was my grandfather. He was in this country three times in his life. He come out here in the ‘78 and he stayed four years in Montana. Then he come again in ‘96 and he stayed five years. He come out in 1919 and he went back in 1922. He spent three years and went back again.

He never stayed in New York, he was [inaudible 00:04:16] all the time. In Montana, he was all over because I have a lot of uncles and aunts around Montana, Salt Lake City, California.

**Janet:** Was his idea to come to the United States, make some money and go back?

**Dannie:** Yes. I don’t know what his idea was to tell you the truth, but he made money because he was here when it was good, California was growing big when he was here.

**Janet:** What did he do when he came here?

**Dannie:** He’d do anything. He was a farmer, well, he take anything. He worked on a ranch and he worked in a copper mine in Montana. He worked [inaudible 00:04:58], whatever job he got he took it.

**Janet:** Do you remember any stories he told you when you were a little boy?

**Dannie:** Yes. He got a gold watch one time in the copper mine in Montana, he saved three men out of the pit. He rescued them live, he pushed him into a place where it was right and he got it and he got a gold watch.

I had it last week and I gave it to my son because it was written to Dan Madden and I have another son who resides here so I gave it to him.

He talked about when he was driving a team of horses, one of them was wild, was always kicking and lashing. He wanted to cross a bridge that was just wide enough for the cart. I didn’t realize it [inaudible 00:05:55] come to this country [inaudible 00:05:57] and he went over because it’s just wide enough for a cart. [Inaudible 00:06:02] walking and [inaudible 00:06:03] horse kicking and lashing.

**Janet:** Where was that?

**Dannie:** That was in 1896 to 1901.

**Janet:** Where was the bridge?

**Dannie:** It was in Montana.

**Janet:** How about your grandmother, his wife?

**Dannie:** She was eight years older than he was. She was arthritic and she hadn’t walked -I never saw her walk. She died in 1922. She was always a cripple for as long as I knew her.

**Janet:** Do you remember any times you spent with her when you were little? Do you remember your grandmother?

**Dannie:** Sure, I remember her, I was 12 years old when she died. I remember [inaudible 00:06:55] Canon was her name. She liked to talk to the neighbors [inaudible 00:07:02] and she was very blunt, [inaudible 00:07:06]. She was a nice woman, I’d call her a nice woman. She never [inaudible 00:07:14] when she talked.

**Janet:** Do you remember any experiences with her? Would she tell you stories or do you remember things?

**Dannie:** Yes, nothing important, there was nothing. She’d tell us things about her youth. One story she told us, there was a bunch of guys and they had a house there. Nobody was getting out of it because he was [inaudible 00:07:45] so she volunteered and [inaudible 00:07:49].

**Janet:** This was your father’s father and mother. How about your mother’s father and mother?

**Dannie:** They were both dead before I was born.

**Janet:** Did you have an extended family, aunts and uncles and cousins?

**Dannie:** Yes, but there were mostly here. I had an uncle in Montana, I had an uncle in California and uncle in Salt lake City. I had an aunt in Montana, an aunt in San Francisco. I had an aunt that’s dead for years, she was in Nebraska. She’s dead about 75 years. I never knew her, I never saw her but the rest I did see out here. Then I had three aunts on the other side and I had two uncles, they’re all dead.

**Janet:** Tell me about the house you lived in, describe it.

**Dannie:** It was a [inaudible 00:08:57] house. There was three rooms, my [inaudible 00:09:02], there was a big kitchen it and [inaudible 00:09:05].

**Janet:** What was the kitchen like? A stove or?

**Dannie:** It was a regular room but there was a chimney made for a fire, we had table on the side, a [inaudible 00:09:19] for the dishes and stuff like that and apart from that that’s all.

**Janet:** What did your mother cook on?

**Dannie:** She cooked on a turf fire.

**Janet:** In the fireplace?

**Dannie:** No, it was an open fireplace. You made the fire there, you rake the fire. They kind of raked the fire at night when you went to bed pull the ashes on the top. You got up in the morning you push the ashes off and the fire started up, you put turf on it and before you know it you had a fire.

**Janet:** How did you get the turf?

**Dannie:** We cut it, dug it out of the land, we had turf in the area. There was a bog in the area not for about two miles. We dug it out of there. That was a great time of the year [inaudible 00:10:09] the turf.

**Janet:** Tell me about that, getting the turf.

**Dannie:** It was a process, you’d have to dig about two foot off the turf which was [inaudible 00:10:17] in the bog to make the [inaudible 00:10:19]. Then you start to cut this up. There’s a slean, the slean is a spade like that and split it like that. The way you’d [inaudible 00:10:29] up was you go along to cut it off and you throw it up to another guy and he puts it on a barrow and wheel it. He’d put about 30 sods of it on a wheelbarrow, that’s the fuel good enough. When I was starting to wheel turf I was only able to wheel 10.

**Janet:** When did you start? How old were you when you started raking turf?

**Dannie:** I was about six I guess. It was [inaudible 00:10:56], was a nice weather at time. It had to be cut in fine weather anyway. There was always some [inaudible 00:11:07] going …

**Janet:** Was this done in the autumn, in the fall of the year?

**Dannie:** Pardon.

**Janet:** Did you go turfing in the fall of the year?

**Dannie:** No, you did it in the summer, June. It was just after school closed, we were getting ready to cut the turf. Then we headed for the barn there.

**Janet:** You kept it in a barn?

**Dannie:** Yes.

**Janet:** A bog.

**Dannie:** Spread it out on the bank. Then you had to go and turn within, turn it twice and then [inaudible 00:11:39]. Build it up in [inaudible 00:11:42] nine or 10 sods, [inaudible 00:11:46] dry out.

If you got two weeks of fine weather to dry with your, it was tough to get two weeks of fine weather all the time. Our turf would get wet again. Turfs take two months before you could take it home.

Then you had the donkey and cart, you couldn’t bring a horse in there because the bog was too soft and horses go down on it. You had a donkey and a cart [inaudible 00:12:11]. It generally took about two weeks [inaudible 00:12:15].

**Janet:** Did you go turfing with your father? Did your father do that?

**Dannie:** Yes, he cut the turf, he’s got the slean and nobody. There’s a [inaudible 00:12:30] because it was hard work. [Inaudible 00:12:40] they wouldn’t trust [inaudible 00:12:42] because the slean was sharp, and if you miss it you miss your toes or [inaudible 00:12:47].

**Janet:** Do you remember any experiences when you were getting a turf? Are there any incidents that happened that you can remember?

**Dannie:** Yes. The other one I remember was my youngest brother, he was fooling around, he was jumping in a place where it was [inaudible 00:13:10]. He jumped off, he thought he was a smart guy he jumped on and he landed on a ledge. The ledge broke [inaudible 00:13:19], I remember that. He was drinking the water and couldn’t [inaudible 00:13:27].

**Janet:** What other duties or chores did you have as a boy growing up?

**Dannie:** You [inaudible 00:13:42] making hay. Hays generally come in July and August, you’d have to save that, turn it and turn it and gather it up. Then to make into a big reek and take into the house, take it to yard put it all together.

The horse was the hardest part of it because that had to made into sheaves, taken out, then you lift it and put it down, start again and [inaudible 00:14:14].

At that time of the year, 14 hours because they had to be -As long as the [inaudible 00:14:22] is ripe you have to get it out of there. You had to work [inaudible 00:14:27]. Then the potatoes, that was another story, they had to be dug. I was only [inaudible 00:14:34] when I come from school because [inaudible 00:14:37]. The cold weather was terribly [inaudible 00:14:44].

**Janet:** In the beginning you would do these things with your father and then as your brothers got …

**Dannie:** They’d come along too. They had to get in there too

**Janet:** How about your sisters, did they take part in those?

**Dannie:** One of them, the second sister but the other one didn’t. She liked to work around the house with my mother. The youngest one, she was too young when I left home.

**Janet:** What was school like in?

**Dannie:** [Inaudible 00:15:19] on school, country school [inaudible 00:15:22] about 85 kids in [inaudible 00:15:28].

**Janet:** That was all the grades together?

**Dannie:** Yes. There was a girl school on one side, the same village, but there was two school. We had one the girls, one the boys, and an entrance for the boys and girls. It was about 80 students [inaudible 00:15:46] maybe 40, 40. There were two rooms [inaudible 00:15:54] classes every hour [inaudible 00:15:58] to break it up, to get the air change it up [inaudible 00:16:01] and all that. The teachers were rough too.

**Janet:** How were they rough?

**Dannie:** They didn’t take no, you had to just sit there and you kept your mouth shut you didn’t [inaudible 00:16:16]. I still to this day can’t tell how the [inaudible 00:16:22] upfront, “Hi, cut it out.”

**Janet:** What would they do if you talked?

**Dannie:** They’d give you a thwack in the hand like a stick.

**Janet:** Were you a good student? Did you do your homework?

**Dannie:** I was average. The oldest kid in Ireland never gets to go to study. Because [inaudible 00:16:51] there and when it gets busy you’re [inaudible 00:16:54] home in a day or two [inaudible 00:16:56]. If you miss a day you’re behind for exam. Apart from that, it was all right, I made it.

**Janet:** What kind of things would come up where you had to stay home?

**Dannie:** The time of taking in the [inaudible 00:17:16]. If there was two or three [inaudible 00:17:19] you stayed home. The same with the potatoes too, when it come later the season November. Then if you had a lot of wet days, if you leave the potatoes too long in there they start to rot so you have to get them out. I’d help on that.

**Janet:** Did your father have his own farm?

**Dannie:** Yes.

**Janet:** Was it a big one?

**Dannie:** No it wasn’t. It was medium, say about 40 acres.

**Janet:** Did he sell farm produce?

**Dannie:** He had all sorts of vegetables [inaudible 00:17:59], he had turnips, [mangoes 00:18:02], potatoes, pigs and cows and stuff we sold them in the garden there. We had sheep there, we had cattle, we had two horses. It was the average farm, some were bigger some were smaller. [Inaudible 00:18:24].

**Janet:** How would he sell the farm produce?

**Dannie:** He’d go to a fair day. It was [inaudible 00:18:33] fairs, we used to call them and everybody went there. Sometimes they’d be a fair for cattle and sheep, sometimes there’d be fairs for horses and cattle. Bring them there to sell them [inaudible 00:18:49]. The [inaudible 00:18:50] from Dublin to [inaudible 00:18:52] buying here and there. They bought [inaudible 00:18:57] they sent to England and places like that. You got the best price you could.

**Janet:** Was it a bargaining situation?

**Dannie:** Sure and haggling, you never know which way you’re going.

**Janet:** Did you go to the fairs? Did you help your father?

**Dannie:** Yes. I was up at the fairs to take of the cattle but I never [inaudible 00:19:19] my father would handle that. I just kept my mouth shut.

**Janet:** Were you treated in some way special because you were the oldest son?

**Dannie:** No, the only thing I was treated I was called to do everything. That’s about the only thing special.

**Janet:** You didn’t get any special privileges, you just got a lot of work?

**Dannie:** [Inaudible 00:19:47].

**Janet:** What would people in your, I guess it was a village sort of?

**Dannie:** Yes, it was a village.

**Janet:** What would they do for enjoyment? For recreation?

**Dannie:** Ball games and [inaudible 00:20:05] football, [hauling 00:20:06]. Card games and the one [inaudible 00:20:09].

**Janet:** Would they be in each other’s house?

**Dannie:** Yes they’d go from one house to the other. Nine or 10 of them get around a table and play cards, make a lot of noise.

**Janet:** Would you play as a boy?

**Dannie:** No I never did.

**Janet:** It would be for the older men?

**Dannie:** Yes. I never got interested in playing cards.

**Janet:** How about your mother, what did she do as a social thing?

**Dannie:** She was a [inaudible 00:20:42], she’d go visit different places. Most of the store, the store was the central of everything. [Inaudible 00:20:56], gossip what have you.

**Janet:** What was your mother like?

**Dannie:** She was about 5’ 7”and she weighed around 106, at the time she was [inaudible 00:21:12] she was 106 throughout. A round face [inaudible 00:21:17], typical Irish face.

**Janet:** Were you closest to any particular family member?

**Dannie:** There was one sister I was, but I didn’t realize till I come out here that I was closer to the second sister Margaret. I felt just about the same with all of them though …

**Janet:** Did Margaret come here?

**Dannie:** She did, she come here 40 years later. She’s back home.

**Janet:** Is there anything else that you could say about life in your village? Maybe anything about the way people dressed or how they got their clothing?

**Dannie:** There were stores there. The country store, like I told you, you could buy yourself a clothes, you could buy yourself shoes for the horse. You can buy anything. [Inaudible 00:22:24] the most important clothes that you got them off the rack too. Some of them used to get their clothes made, there was a local tailor there. He’d make the clothes, he used to make a good [inaudible 00:22:36] I remember .

**Janet:** How about shoes?

**Dannie:** Shoes the same thing, you bought them at the store. When I was young there was a shoe, we called them the clog. What it was it was a sole made out of wood into a shape that was nice and then they tapped the leather into the [inaudible 00:22:58]. They were wonderful, they went out of style, the young guys would wear them but they were wonderful shoes.

**Janet:** You would wear them everywhere?

**Dannie:** I wore them, yeah. They were wonderful, they were always warm. The leather shoes they got damp but the wooden shoes they never got cold. People who used to wear them weren’t subject to cold either. They wouldn’t know what you were talking about over there now.

**Janet:** How was it decided that you would leave Ireland and come here?

**Dannie:** I had the, what would you call it? Wonderlust I guess.

**Janet:** Your father stayed there? He hadn’t come over here?

**Dannie:** My grandfather was here.

**Janet:** Your grandfather was the one who came?

**Dannie:** Yes, my father was never here. I wanted to go some place. It was very hard to get a visa to come over here in my days in 28, only 2% of the people got them. It was very hard to get. One day I told him, “Listen if I don’t get a visa I’m going to New Zealand.” I had known another guy about five miles away that was going to New Zealand and I was going to join him. Then I got the visa and I come here.

**Janet:** You came here, would you say for adventure?

**Dannie:** No.

**Janet:** Why did you come?

**Dannie:** I come here to make a living. I started work the day after I come here. Working in the [inaudible 00:24:45], that’s when they had local storage [inaudible 00:24:50]. I was [inaudible 00:24:52] on 73rd Street Madison and Columbus Avenue.

**Janet:** Let’s get to that a little bit later. First let me ask you what did you know about America before you came here?

**Dannie:** I had a pretty good idea because my grandfather used to talk about it, tell stories.

**Janet:** Do you remember any stories that he told? You told them some before is there anything else that you remember him telling you?

**Dannie:** They called him the miner in Ireland. The reason for that is because he was always talking about the mine because he worked in there. He was very demonstrative when he talked, he’d get up there and he’d be like, “You put a hole in the wall like this and you go this way and that way.” They’d get [inaudible 00:25:42] talk.

I remember one time there was a fellow, Ned Kelly was his name. [Inaudible 00:25:54] business he’s talking to him about, never mind what you did America, just forget about it. All right I’ll forget it, [inaudible 00:26:07] ten minutes till he come up and he’s not talking to him, talking to [inaudible 00:26:12] or some neighbor was doing in the mines. He’d get up, “Oh you don’t do that way you do this way.” [Inaudible 00:26:21].

**Janet:** You got your visa, did you have to go to Dublin?

**Dannie:** I had to Dublin yes. I was up the 30th of March, I remember well …

**Janet:** That’s when you got it?

**Dannie:** I went up to Dublin. I had to stay in Dublin that night and then go down to the visa office in the morning. I passed to Dublin [inaudible 00:26:55].

**Janet:** Did it just take you that one day to get the visa? How long did it take you from the time?

**Dannie:** It took three weeks.

**Janet:** From the time you tried to get it?

**Dannie:** I went to the agent in Moylough [inaudible 00:27:11] the agent, the travel agent and he wasn’t from there. About three weeks I guess it was and then I got it then he says, “You go to Dublin on the 30th of March and you’ll be in Dublin the 31st at nine o’clock in the morning.” I had to go, there was no train to go that early so I had to go the day before.

**Janet:** Was that the way it was done? You would contact a travel agent?

**Dannie:** Yes that’s right.

**Janet:** Near where you live?

**Dannie:** Yes, local [inaudible 00:27:44].

**Janet:** You’d tell that person …?

**Dannie:** Tell him that I wanted to go [inaudible 00:27:48]. He’d get all the papers [inaudible 00:27:50] but you had to have a letter from somebody here that they’d take care of you when you got here [inaudible 00:27:56]. I had an uncle working here and he sent me a letter a long time, that was [inaudible 00:28:04], in other words he’d be responsible for me. Then I went up to Dublin.

**Janet:** What else did you have to have in order to?

**Dannie:** Nothing more.

**Janet:** Just the letter?

**Dannie:** Then we went to [inaudible 00:28:18]to the shipping office on the 30th of April, I was up there. Then we had another physical and he [inaudible 00:28:25] that was [inaudible 00:28:27] wasn’t sure that you got there or not. [Inaudible 00:28:30] sometimes petty reasons that are but I made it through.

**Janet:** You had a physical in Dublin and then a physical in [inaudible 00:28:45] …?

**Dannie:** That was where the real physical was there. Funny thing, there was a doctor working on the other side of this place. I don’t know why I looked at him, he impressed me [inaudible 00:29:01].

I was in the hospital, working in the Island over here and I was in the hospital one day and I saw this guy coming down. I asked the guy, [Tufo 00:29:12] was his name and I stopped I said, “[Inaudible 00:29:16]?” I was and he said, “Were you?” “I was.”

**Janet:** How many years later was that?

**Dannie:** This was two years later. “You got a good memory.” He said. That was [inaudible 00:29:32] but then when I got on the ship I suffered. I got one boil left another down my shoulder and I was waling around like this. Some of the help on the ship were [inaudible 00:29:46] me.

**Janet:** They didn’t treat you very well?

**Dannie:** No, they didn’t treat anybody. If you made a move [inaudible 00:30:00] was one guy there he used to sing a lot the [inaudible 00:30:05], “Keep quiet, do you want to land in New York?” “Yeah.” “Well if you don’t keep quiet you won’t land.” There’s [inaudible 00:30:12] land, but they had no authority [inaudible 00:30:14] didn’t know that till week later [inaudible 00:30:18] a week later. I’d tell him where to get off, but I couldn’t. [Inaudible 00:30:25] out there walking around, “Come on move, get out of the way.”

**Janet:** I think we’ll pause here while we turn the tape over. Then we’ll continue about the voyage.

**Dannie:** Okay.

**Janet:** We’re resuming now with side b. I’m speaking with Dannie Madden. Before you tell me about the AMP, tell me more about the voyage, what were your accommodations like?

**Dannie:** The accommodations were all right, were nice. The food wasn’t very plentiful, it didn’t bother me I wasn’t able to eat anyway. I was sick all along.

**Janet:** How do you think you developed the boils?

**Dannie:** I don’t know. I got them on my neck and I had five of them all together, one after the other. I’d pull on my collar [inaudible 00:31:20] I got over [inaudible 00:31:20]. That’s what brought me into Ellis Island.

**Janet:** First tell me anything else about the voyage. Were you down in the hold of the ship in a dormitory or were you in a cabin?

**Dannie:** No, in the steerage.

**Janet:** When you were given meals, was it in a …?

**Dannie:** No, we went to a dining room.

**Janet:** You did?

**Dannie:** Yes, we went into a dining room. As far as I was concerned it was all right. Most of the guys were complaining that they didn’t get enough to eat.

**Janet:** When you were aboard ship did you leave with someone you knew?

**Dannie:** Yes, there was a friend of mine Tom Miskel.

**Janet:** What’s his last name?

**Dannie:** Tom Miskel, M-I-S-K-E-L. He’s dead now, been dead 20 years [inaudible 00:32:12].

**Janet:** He was from the same village?

**Dannie:** Same village.

**Janet:** You both decided to go together?

**Dannie:** Yes. He was talking about it for long, [inaudible 00:32:26] he didn’t move until I did [inaudible 00:32:29]. We were doing all right, we got to New York. At the ship, they were very particular, [inaudible 00:32:41] Ellis Island, they weren’t too particular.

I’ll tell you why. They used to take nobody into the island except that had defects, had some [inaudible 00:32:54] papers God knows what and they’d take them in here. They were supposed to [inaudible 00:33:02] was just children [inaudible 00:33:04] and finally went, “You can go.”

I did, I had to go outside to guard, or stand out on the dock there. He says, “[inaudible 00:33:20] all right go ahead.” I went down the boat, down the ferry and I got to New York. There were four more there, two girls and a fellow. They had somebody to meet them right away. They were lucky they got going.

I didn’t have anybody. My uncle was supposed to meet me down to the ship and then he got [inaudible 00:33:46] up somewhere and didn’t get to the island. Anyway, he was a city cop was working there. I called on the cabs, the cabs are all thieves.

He says, “What’s with you?” I say what my uncle had told me. He says, “Listen if you go up to the dock you won’t get a boat because they’re closing. What’s your address?” I gave him his address, 139 West 86th street. He called a cab.

By the way he asked me, “Do you have two and a half dollars on you?” “Yeah I have.” He says, “I’m calling a cab.” [Inaudible 00:34:28] he wanted to make sure, “Listen, take this guy up to 139 West 86th street. Make sure that somebody knows him before you leave.”

He says, “Here, give him two a half dollars, your tip is there too.” I found out later that this was fifty cents [inaudible 00:34:51]. There was no uncle there. [Inaudible 00:34:56] owner of the house he knows that I was coming so she said, “All right come on in.” That was it. I got [inaudible 00:35:03].

What I wanted to tell you, when I got out to the [inaudible 00:35:08], somebody was supposed to stop me and take the tag. He took the tag and he just pulled it off then he said, “Go.” A lot of guys got trapped [inaudible 00:35:21] and especially girls, they got laid down, pulled aside. They were kidnapped and them days we didn’t call it kidnapped, they were taken into [inaudible 00:35:32].

I haven’t thought of that. Two weeks later when I was down here and I knew what was going on. I talked to [inaudible 00:35:42] boy he was, immigration they didn’t care, he was getting ready to go home anyway it was near four o’clock.

**Janet:** What did your tag say?

**Dannie:** My tag with my name that’s all and ship. It was a tag [inaudible 00:35:58] on the ship, and there was this colonial canal line [inaudible 00:36:03]. I was supposed to wear that all the time.

That’s why when I was getting [inaudible 00:36:11] out here, he asked, “You got a tag?” “Yeah.” “Right, go ahead.” That was it. The other guy he goes, “Give me your tag.” He didn’t ask me where I was going, was anybody picking me up, nothing. The cop was there, he was real good, he was an old man, Eddie Whelan, was his name. He was as tough [inaudible 00:36:38].

**Janet:** Did you ever see him again? That cop?

**Dannie:** Sure when I came to work in the Island I used to see him every day. He was a tough, he was a big man, he [inaudible 00:36:52], “I told you to take him some place, didn’t I? Did you take him?” “Yes I took him.” “Yeah you took him around the city.”

That’s what they used to do, drive you all around, drive you up to Queens, Bronx, any place then drop you off in Manhattan. When [inaudible 00:37:09] his money there.

**Janet:** Is there anything else you remember about Ellis Island, when you were here?

**Dannie:** I’ve told Brian before, over in that section where we worked, there was a prison ward. They had deportees, that was mostly in my day that’s where they had deportees. They’d take them in from all over the country, they’d come to Ellis Island. Then process and they shipped back [inaudible 00:37:42].

**Janet:** This is when you worked here? When you were working?

**Dannie:** When I worked here. One night they had a noise over there in that building, a guy broke the seal off my window. He took [inaudible 00:37:59] he killed one guy and there was a guy that he left [inaudible 00:38:04] this detour. He was a tough guy, he said, “Where do you get a box? Body box?”

Body bag, they call it now body box and take him over to the morgue. They had a morgue in the second island, we took him in this. My belt broke [inaudible 00:38:29] that he didn’t need this [inaudible 00:38:37], he says, “Pull the boat up. “

**Janet:** Before we talk more about when you worked here, let’s talk about when you first got to New York were there things about it that struck you as very different from anything that you were used to?

**Dannie:** No because I had [inaudible 00:39:01], I wasn’t awfully impressed, no. The only thing was, the second day I was here I was on my way home from [inaudible 00:39:11]. I knew the difference of uptown and downtown, that’s all I knew. I was in the ninth avenue [inaudible 00:39:19].

This woman she come along and she asked [inaudible 00:39:24] I know it was downtown the address was -He gave her the address and she had to go down and [inaudible 00:39:30] the other side. I thought to myself [inaudible 00:39:35] downtown I knew it. I thought to myself, nobody will ever do that to me.

There was a red boat that was [inaudible 00:39:50] five bottles and I just carried one [inaudible 00:39:54] of the same. Nobody ever send me wrong after that. I tell you [inaudible 00:39:57] and she was lame too and he sent her down, those were dirty tricks I saw. The store I worked in, I had to go in the morning at eight o’clock.

**Janet:** Tell me how you got your first job?

**Dannie:** The [inaudible 00:40:18] cop I was talking to on the streets and he says, “You working?” “No, I’m not working, I just got here yesterday.” He says, “You will be working now. You want to work for AMP?” I didn’t know what the AMP was [inaudible 00:40:34].

“What is that?” Go down to 73rd Street, tell him I sent you down. [Inaudible 00:40:43] cop sent me down. I said, “What will I tell him your name is?” “Kyle.” He says, “All right, come back here at 12 o’clock.” He says, “Get ready to work.”

I come back 12 o’clock work till 10. Next day I come in at eight, work till 10. We did that every Friday night, Saturday I come in, work from eight to 11 at night. Then two weeks [inaudible 00:41:17].

Then there was a fellow working down the Island and he found out I was up here and I knew, my mother knew him I didn’t know him. He comes up to see me and he says, “Yeah [inaudible 00:41:28].” He says, “Come down the island tomorrow.” He says, “Just come down here soon.”

**Janet:** What island?

**Dannie:** Right here.

**Janet:** Ellis Island?

**Dannie:** I come down the island and he [inaudible 00:41:41] and I was hired. I stayed 10 years.

**Janet:** What were you doing in the AMP?

**Dannie:** I was doing delivery mostly, [inaudible 00:41:52]. I didn’t mind the hours so much but I didn’t like that work.

**Janet:** Were you in a community of people who had come here from Ireland? How did you meet the fellow who knew your mother?

**Dannie:** My mother wrote to him. I didn’t even thank him, I didn’t even know him and she wrote to him, she told, [inaudible 00:42:20] and he come up to the address where I was staying in 86th street.

**Janet:** He went to find you?

**Dannie:** Yes, he went to find me.

**Janet:** Did he work at Ellis Island?

**Dannie:** He did. He worked here till 1934.

**Janet:** It was through this friend that you got the job? What job did you get here?

**Dannie:** I don’t know what you’d call it, we used to call it the bull gang.

**Janet:** Bull gang?

**Dannie:** Yes, you did everything you had to do. They’d tell you the carpenter need a helper, go and help him. Plumber need a helper, go and [inaudible 00:42:54], electrician needs a helper. You’d do anything, [inaudible 00:42:57] snow, you sucked the sidewalk. The boss told you what to do and you did it.

**Janet:** Do you remember who your boss was?

**Dannie:** Yeah. His name was [inaudible 00:43:10] Hagbrg.

**Janet:** Can you spell the last name.

**Dannie:** He was my immediate boss. H-A-G-B-R-G. The big boss at that time was Theiss, a guy by the name of Fred Theiss.

**Janet:** T?

**Dannie:** T-H-E-I-S-S. He [inaudible 00:43:29] but he was a good natured man, a decent man, it’s the way it was that’s all. If you made a mistake he was willing to help, but he was quite hilarious. “Did you pay any attention to what I told you?” “Yes I did.” “All right, let me not have to [inaudible 00:43:49] you again that’s all.”

He used to go and [inaudible 00:43:53] then he’d catch a guy, “What the hell are you doing? I saw you doing the same thing the other day.” “[Inaudible 00:43:58]”, “Get off the island.” He was a decent man though, [inaudible 00:44:06] they had nothing in common with him, he was a very nice man.

**Janet:** What was going on here on Ellis Island during the years you were working here?

**Dannie:** Them two islands over there were turned into a marine hospital. The shipping industry cut a deal with the government to take care of the sea men that got sick on board a ship, they put them over there. [Inaudible 00:44:41] handling mostly deportees, [inaudible 00:44:46] deportees.

**Janet:** Were there a lot of people here?

**Dannie:** It was quite a few.

**Janet:** In the hundreds?

**Dannie:** [Inaudible 00:44:56] here. Then a lot of ones that go back and they were getting a free ride because of depression [inaudible 00:45:04]. A lot of them [inaudible 00:45:06], come with us [inaudible 00:45:09].

**Janet:** What were most people being deported for?

**Dannie:** Most of them they’d become a public liability. It was the depression [inaudible 00:45:29]. Some of them committed crimes, we had John Dillinger’s girlfriend, she was in here.

**Janet:** Really?

**Dannie:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Did you see her?

**Dannie:** Yeah. She was held here about three months, they had trouble trying to get a country to take her. They got rid of her and sent her over to Austria in the end. There was a lot of gangsters in here too, small town gangsters, they didn’t have any pull to take care of themselves.

**Janet:** Where were they going mostly?

**Dannie:** They were going mostly Italy [inaudible 00:46:07] Sicily, a lot of them went to Sicily.

**Janet:** You didn’t have to deal with them personally?

**Dannie:** No.

**Janet:** You were more a handy man doing all the …

**Dannie:** Yes. It was five years in the crew. [Inaudible 00:46:30] you went there. In a way it was good. I was the only young guy that was here, there was nobody in the places working less, there were none under 45.

**Janet:** You were 28?

**Dannie:** I was 18 when I come here.

**Janet:** That’s right in 1928.

**Dannie:** They were all [inaudible 00:46:52] and they didn’t want to work especially nobody wanted to go to south island. Because between the two islands there was a passageway there, it was more [inaudible 00:47:04] 300 feet. You could see the water down under you and the galvanizers broke and busted and everything else. [Inaudible 00:47:13] they were working. I get out of the boat and I run like the devil and make it to the other end, [inaudible 00:47:20] come back and row like that. They couldn’t do that, they were too old.

**Janet:** Where did you live when you worked here?

**Dannie:** I lived in the island. On the front end of the second island there, there was a cottage there. We found a cottage which was, you could pass it [inaudible 00:47:41] house and there was rooms there. I was in one of them.

**Janet:** Was that still there, do you know?

**Dannie:** Pardon.

**Janet:** Is that building still there?

**Dannie:** No, it’s not there. It was out near the front of [inaudible 00:47:57].

**Janet:** It was a separate structure?

**Dannie:** A separate structure, they called it a cottage.

**Janet:** Was it like a dormitory or was it … ?

**Dannie:** No, there were rooms in it.

**Janet:** Each one had a separate room?

**Dannie:** Yes, it was very spaced.

**Janet:** How many staff members, would you say roughly, were living here at that time?

**Dannie:** About 25 or 30, I don’t know which, I was up on the -In the main building over there the second island, the tall building, the top of that third floor was the girls. The female staff were there and the men were down there. There were some men were living in houses [inaudible 00:48:45] where the old laundry used to be, they were living over there.

**Janet:** Did most of the staff live on the island?

**Dannie:** Pardon?

**Janet:** Did most of the staff?

**Dannie:** No. [Inaudible 00:49:00]. Then the y fed us, yes we eat in the place.

**Janet:** How was that food?

**Dannie:** It wasn’t good but it was all right, you can get by in it.

**Janet:** Would you go to New York or New Jersey?

**Dannie:** Yeah I used to go. [Inaudible 00:49:17] New York, you didn’t go to it. Did you tell me that they have a connection [inaudible 00:49:23] to Jersey now?

**Janet:** Yes.

**Dannie:** There was nothing there in my day, nothing. They couldn’t have anything there because, main reason was because they used to have criminals in here. They didn’t want them to escape. They were very particular about who got on the boat, not who got off it. If you got off you were there, if you got on, that was it.

**Janet:** When you went to New York, would you go with some of the other fellows who worked?

**Dannie:** Yeah by yourself or go with somebody. In the evening at five, 10, six, 10 and seven [inaudible 00:50:03] the boat, you’d come back and nine o’clock, 11 o’clock and 12:15.

**Janet:** What if you missed the 12:15?

**Dannie:** You could sleep in the park, you could sleep [inaudible 00:50:15].

**Janet:** Did you have any friends your age who worked here too?

**Dannie:** Yeah. It’s like a small community, you get friendly with all of them.

**Janet:** What happened to your friend who came over on the boat with you?

**Dannie:** I never knew, they all disappear one way or the other, the only one I knew was the one that [inaudible 00:50:43]. We never exchanged addresses or nothing. Some went to Jersey and some went to God knows where. I never had from any of them.

**Janet:** Were they mostly Irish people on that Coronia?

**Dannie:** No, there was Scotch people and English on it too.

**Janet:** What happened to your pal who went with you?

**Dannie:** He went over Brooklyn and he got a job over there in a nice factory. He stayed there for 40 years almost. We were friendly right along, he got married there, he got married 32. We were friendly ever up to the time he died 21 years ago. None of the ship passenger I never, I was sorry after that I didn’t but I never took an address or nothing, they didn’t get mine.

**Janet:** Mrs. Madden tell me how you came to work at Ellis Island.

**Sarah:** I came looking for a job. I got a job as like a nurse’s aid and I worked there.

**Janet:** Were there people in the hospitals who were to be deported? Is that -Who?

**Sarah:** No I never …

**Dannie:** The sea men.

**Janet:** They were the sea men?

**Sarah:** Yeah. Then they had people in the hospital wards and you took the meals to them and things like that …

**Janet:** What …

**Sarah:** There was a lot of nurses too.

**Janet:** What year did you start?

**Sarah:** 37.

**Janet:** You worked as a nurse’s aid for?

**Sarah:** For 1940.

**Janet:** Till 1940?

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Did you live here too on the island?

**Sarah:** Yeah I did.

**Janet:** How did you find out about this position? How did you come to look for a job here?

**Sarah:** I don’t know.

**Dannie:** From an agency.

**Sarah:** From an agency, yeah.

**Janet:** How did you feel about working here?

**Sarah:** I liked it all right. You got your room and board and all that. You’re mixing with the people at work there.

**Janet:** Could you say what kinds of things they were being treated for?

**Sarah:** No. They were just sick.

**Janet:** Is there anything that you remember about the islands when you were here? How they looked? What was going on?

**Sarah:** They used to transfer me from one island to the other. Island two was a medical hospital. Island three was for, when you caught …

**Janet:** Infectious diseases?

**Sarah:** No, they were mental like. Some of them were coast guards and some of them were -They had problems.

**Janet:** Did you ever work with the people on island three?

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Do you think of any experiences that you had there?

**Sarah:** I had one English lady. She kept telling me that she was going to tell the FBI on me and all these. Yeah, mental.

**Janet:** How did a woman come to be there? Was she a coast guard or something?

**Sarah:** I think she was …

**Dannie:** They were prisoners going back.

**Sarah:** Yeah they were deporting them.

**Janet:** These were going to be deported?

**Sarah:** Yeah. Then there was one that was a navy guide’s wife. She had a baby and then she went mental. She was here for quite a while till finally he took her home. It was just ordinary people.

**Janet:** Do you remember when you first saw Dannie?

**Sarah:** I don’t know. I don’t remember. He was going around fixing umbrellas and stuff when I saw him.

**Janet:** Do you remember?

**Dannie:** I’ll tell you how it happened. There was a horse show in New York, I went up and got two tickets for Madison Square Garden for myself and a friend. The night before the horse show the friend come along and he told me he says, “Listen I can’t go, I promised to go to some place.”

“What the hell is this?” Like I told you before [inaudible 00:56:18] making a lot of money and I didn’t want to spend. [Inaudible 00:56:24] she come down and go on the boat, she’s standing there I said, “Do you want to go to a horse show?” He told her he says, “Don’t you go any place with him because he’s a woos.”

**Janet:** Do you remember this?

**Sarah:** No.

**Dannie:** “You will never be the same.” He said [inaudible 00:56:45]. I don’t know, but she, “I’ll take a chance.” She would.

**Janet:** Had you noticed her before that?

**Dannie:** No, I never saw her before.

**Sarah:** Some meeting.

**Janet:** Yeah. You went to the horse show?

**Dannie:** Boy what a mistake that was.

**Janet:** Yeah?

**Dannie:** 52 years of a mistake.

**Janet:** That’s a long mistake.

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Dannie:** The longest.

**Janet:** Too long for a mistake.

**Dannie:** That’s how it happened.

**Janet:** We’re near the end of the tape. Can you tell me, then you had children?

**Dannie:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Tell me your children’s names.

**Dannie:** Five of them, five boys. There’s Brian, James, Dannie, Francis, Mike.

**Janet:** Do you have grandchildren?

**Dannie:** Four of them, two in California, two in New York.

**Janet:** What do you feel proud of having done in your life time?

**Dannie:** I’ll tell you I had a lot of emergency jobs, jobs that people didn’t like. I never left one of them undone, I never walked away from a job never. I’m proud of that. I was ready to take a job, either I’d mess it up or something and go away. I stayed all night to finish the job.

**Janet:** How about the fact that you came here as a young man. It really changed your life by starting out fresh here. How do you think the coming here, the immigrating, affected the rest of your life?

**Dannie:** When you come young, you’re not built into one system and you just gradually move along with or without knowing what you’re doing.

**Janet:** Do you think your life was much different?

**Dannie:** Difference is certain ways, different mood of working, different hours, you [inaudible 00:58:58].

**Janet:** How about you Mrs. Madden, what makes you feel proud of having done?

**Sarah:** I don’t know, sticking with him I guess. The children I guess yeah.

**Janet:** Raising five children?

**Sarah:** Yeah. It was hard work.

**Dannie:** She had a busy life, seven in the morning, 11 at night, get up and get them out for lunch, bring them home for lunch, bring them back again in the evening. She was kept.

**Sarah:** I kept busy.

**Janet:** We just have one minute left. What did you do Mr. Madden after you left working here?

**Dannie:** I worked as a handy man in a [inaudible 00:59:54] house. Then I left there and I went to the war factory and [inaudible 01:00:00] Brooklyn. I stayed in that line of business ever since.

**Janet:** How’s this period in your lives?

**Dannie:** It’s all right. I take it as it comes. I don’t worry about anything. I never get mad at anybody, I might flare-up for a minute and just tell somebody [inaudible 01:00:22] but I never stay mad.

**Janet:** That’s good. How about you Mrs. Madden? How’s this time in your life?

**Sarah:** It could be better because I have my problems, but otherwise it’s all right.

**Dannie:** No matter how well you are you could be better, you might as well be satisfied with [inaudible 01:00:46].

**Janet:** I think that’s a good note to end on. I want to thank you so much, it’s been a pleasure …

**Dannie:** I want to thank you.

**Janet:** Talking with both of you.

**Dannie:** It’s a pleasure certainly.

**Sarah:** Thank you.

**Janet:** This is Janet Levine I’ve been speaking with Dannie and Sarah Madden. We’re in the oral history studio on Ellis Island. It’s October 25th 1993 and I’m signing off.