**Janet:** This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. It’s May 4th 1994. I’m here in Colts Neck, New Jersey with Mary Fieramosca Mancine. Mrs. Mancine came from Sicily when she was 10 years old in 1924. I’m very happy to be here.

**Mary:** Glad to see you. Very happy to meet you.

**Janet:** Let’s start by your saying your birth date and where you were born?

**Mary:** My birthday is January 6, 1914. I was born in Ragusa, R-A-G-U-S-A, Sicily which also Italy, it’s an island in Italy.

**Janet:** Did you live in Ragusa until you left for America?

**Mary:** Yes, we did.

**Janet:** What do you remember about the town? What do you remember …?

**Mary:** My town where I was born?

**Janet:** Yeah.

**Mary:** To me it was a beautiful town. I lived across the street from a villa, which over here they call a park. It had beautiful flowers, roses, all kinds of games you can play in there.

**Janet:** What were the games? Do you remember what kinds of games?

**Mary:** Hide go seek. Then we would pick snails and we try to see who caught the most, who found the most snails. They have a different name for that. It will be in the fish family. They come out after a rain and you bring them home and you cook them. Mom would cook them with tomato sauce and onions and they were delicious.

**Janet:** Were they little?

**Mary:** They were maybe as a big as a 50cents or a silver dollar or a silver 50 cent piece. It came into a shell, it was in a shell. Their heads would come out and you see their little eyes and little antennas sticking out. They were cute, we used to play them. We had no toys to play with so we played with things like that.

**Janet:** Can you remember anything else that you played with?

**Mary:** We used to have hickory nuts that we used to pick on the ground and play with them like they play marbles here, you throw the marbles. I think there were five or seven marbles and you throw them like you played marbles and mibs or jack, you played games like that.

Of course you had a ball. You’d play with a ball, if you were lucky enough to have a ball. Hide go seek. Then we had a lot of religious net games, little place we put, and knowing us children especially around Easter holidays or Christmas, Jesus is born and then Easter holiday when he was crucified.

**Janet:** You would act it out you mean?

**Mary:** We would get three, four children that lived right there in the neighborhood because the children were not allowed to go away from the house and the park was you just cross the street and there was a park. You would play just on that one spot where your parents or whoever’s watching you can look across the street and see you that you were okay.

Also I remember during the war, First World War, we had German women and children that stayed at the park. I don’t know the story about that all, I remember very well that mom would give me breakfast or lunch outside. I would sit by my front door, the step there had a little chair, I would sit there and she’d give me my breakfast and lunch. I would sit there and this little girl would come out of the park and watch me eating.

One day I went out there, across the street, and I gave this little girl a piece of bread before I put it in my milk. We made friends. Then she used to come out there she would come out every day and I would give her bread or fruit, whatever I was eating I was sharing it.

Because then I was not allowed to go across the street. Mom says you don’t because she didn’t know who would be behind the hedges there.

**Janet:** Was a whole lot of German people?

**Mary:** This is vaguely but I remember that little girl had brown hair and she would come out -There was an opening between the hedges that she would come out from there. First she would peek to see what’s going on. Then after a while she’d actually came out into the sidewalk.

**Janet:** Did you actually then play together?

**Mary:** No, she got her bread.

**Janet:** We better turn it off. We’ll stop for a minute. We’re resuming now. I’m speaking with Mary Fieramosca Mancine. You were saying about the little German girl.

**Mary:** The little girl, yes.

**Janet:** You never were allowed to play together but she just appeared …?

**Mary:** No, I didn’t even know her name. There was nothing said, just that I showed her the bread. I said to her, come here in Italian and whatever when she’s seen the bread I guess she came over. She was hungry probably.

**Janet:** Do you remember anything else about Germans being in the town?

**Mary:** No, I don’t remember anything else. They probably were not allowed to walk around. I know that the women and children they had them in a park, that’s all I know about it. My brother says he never seen any, but he didn’t sit still like I did. I had to be by the house and not move around.

**Janet:** Tell me about the religious life of your family.

**Mary:** We’re Catholic, very religious. My mother came from a very religious family. She had two uncles that were priest, one of them was almost going to be ordained but then he changed his mind. She had first cousins that were nuns.

I remember the cloister, anyway, they were nuns and they’d stayed right in the city. Then there was a few that lived in the monastery up in a mountain some place, I don’t remember the name of that town. I was really small.

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

**Mary:** Gevana, I’ll say it in Italian, Licitra, L-I-C-I-T-R-A.

**Janet:** That was her maiden name?

**Mary:** Yes. My grandfather was Licitra, it was his family, the brothers were priests.

**Janet:** Do you remember your grandfather?

**Mary:** No, my grandfather died very young, both of my grandfathers they died. They never seen any grandchildren.

**Janet:** How about your grandmothers?

**Mary:** My grandmothers yes, I remember my grandmother. The day my mom got the letter that we were going to come here, my grandmother happened to be at our home and she started to cry. She didn’t want to hear that we were going to leave and go so far away. Anyway, they happened to have a parade on that for Benito Mussolini. My grandmother said, “Come on Maria I’ll take you to the parade. I don’t want to hear anything about you going to America or any place else. I don’t want to hear nothing. Let’s go out.”

My grandmother took me out. That was the last time that I spoke to her because right after that she got a stroke and two days later she passed away.

**Janet:** This was in 1924?

**Mary:** May of ‘24. My father’s mother, she was a sweet grandma. We left her there with two grandsons, her daughter had died. She had no husband, my grandfather died when my father was only about five, six years old.

She raised the two children by herself, she even took an orphan, I don’t know how he was an orphan but she took him in and raised him. My two cousins, my aunt’s boys, they stayed with grandma and they took care of her until she passed away. She was over 90 years old. She lived a long time.

**Janet:** What was her name?

**Mary:** Emmanuela Fieramosca, that’s her maiden name.

**Janet:** Do you remember any experiences with her? Things that you did with her?

**Mary:** I remember we’d go over there. She’d always have a snack for us. Mom would bake bread and pies and we would go there once a week and bring the bread and such and most of the time I didn’t go, I only went on holiday because I was too small. Any time any of us went there she’d always have snacks for us.

Then she would come and see us. One time she came over and I was crying I had just had an accident. I have a scar in the finger here that you can see, can you feel it? That I said to my brother, “John,” I says, “make me a bed for my little doll.” He was a good carpenter. He was studying to be a carpenter, going to apprentice school.

He says, “Oh no, I don’t want to be bothered.” He gets mad when I tell him this. He says, “No I don’t want to be bothered.” I says, “Please do it.” He says, “No.” I took the ladder, went up in the attic I got the axe and boom, instead of hitting the piece of stick that I was going to make the bed I hit my finger.

My grandmother walks in just then when my finger was bleeding. She got so upset she asked me what it was I had to tell her the truth. She says, “Well let me take care of you first and then we’ll take care of him.” I remember that, she cuddled me. She was a really a tiny sweet woman, very sweet.

**Janet:** Did you ever go places with her? Can you remember going to market or any place?

**Mary:** No, I don’t think they took children then to market, children stayed home then. The mothers went and did the shopping or most of the time if the fathers were home they had the kind of job they would do the market and then bring.

It was not like here that you go shopping every day. You want to make bread, in those days they made bread so you have the wheat in the house for the year. The flour for the year until the new crops comes in. You made your fresh bread once a week and it stayed fresh good and whatever baking mom had to do.

She made it for her mother and my mother, because they were both widows. My mother’s mother had many children so she was getting stuff from the other children. While my other grandmother just had my mom, her daughter had died so my mom took care of her. That’s what we did.

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

**Mary:** Santo, S-A-N-T-O, no middle name.

**Janet:** What did he do for work?

**Mary:** As a young boy I think he start maybe fooling around, making shoes or fixing shoes. Then he fooled around with flowers, making bouquets. I know when he courted mom he’d make a bouquet of roses flowers whatever and he’d bring her a bouquet.

His job, he worked as a manager of a Duke Duchess, what would they call it here? Castle I guess, castello. He was managing the whole place there. He had about between 20, 25 people working under him.

**Janet:** There was a Duke and Duchess living in the …?

**Mary:** In the castle yes. I don’t know who else, if they had children or not, I don’t remember that. My sisters and brother, they were all born there. He worked there until about a year before we came here because he was getting ready to come here.

The reason he came here, it was World War 1 and they were already calling men with five children. He says to mom, “You know I’ll be the next one that they’ll be calling to go to war. What do I do? Do I leave you and the children and I be killed, never come home, what do I do?” He says, “I don’t know what to do.”

Then he come home another day and he would say to her, “You know there’s a place they call America. Over they’re making all the people come in so they can to build the United States this America.” Not United States, he didn’t say that he said America. He said, “What do you think if I go over there but I have to go far away across the ocean and all.”

Mom didn’t like the idea but she says, “Well, it’s really up to you.” Nobody wanted him to come but he thought of us children, if I get killed my children be left alone. I was the baby then. I was about a year old when this was going on or two.

He made up his mind and he had to resign. Until he got ready to come here, he was doing -There was a millionaire in town or in the vicinity of our city. He said to my father, “Before you go to America you got to do …” There was some kind of a garden, a place, in the estate of the Duke that this man seen it and he liked what my father did.

He says, “I want you to do the same thing for me. You have to do that for me before you go. I’ll pay you well, you got to do it.” He says, “Suppose I have no time to finish it by the time they call me.” He says, “You’ll finish they’re not going to call you the same day you leave, they’ll give you a notice.” Anyway pop did it for him.

**Janet:** What was it?

**Mary:** An estate, he had a big estate also, it’s in a garden. I don’t know how to explain it. It was like a puzzle made into hedges. That you went into this place and you had to find your way out, a tricky place.

**Janet:** A maze or something like that.

**Mary:** Something like that right. I can’t find the words to explain it right. When he did that, the gentleman was so happy. He says, “Okay now you can go any place you want to go.” He paid dad well.

**Janet:** Was that something that people did in Sicily, made those kinds of hedges? Or was this very unusual?

**Mary:** I think that just came out of my father’s head.

**Janet:** He sounds like an artistic or creative kind of person.

**Mary:** Pop, yes, was with flowers, with hedges. He would cut hedges for us in the places that we lived here and it would be a masterpiece. You got every [unclear 00:18:38] to be in place.

**Janet:** How else would you describe your father from when you were a little girl? If you can remember.

**Mary:** A lot of these things I found out later, I was too little to really take in. Then not only that, pop retired from that place where the Duke was when I was only about a year, two at the most. What can a child of two remember? I don’t remember anything like that. My sisters and my brother, they remember it well.

**Janet:** Do you remember the doll that you wanted your brother to make the bed for? Can you describe that?

**Mary:** It was just a little rug doll. A little small thing and you would make a cradle as big as your two hands together and it would go back and forth. He would make wooden bicycles- my brother did, made a wooden bicycle.

**Janet:** A model of one?

**Mary:** A model one, yes. I was able to sit on that and ride around, the wheels were going around, just like a bicycle only it was wooden, didn’t have no chains or anything like that. We used to have a lot of fun. That’s what we used to play, he used to make toys, anything he’d get a piece of stick and make a toy.

He made a great big wagon that I made it go down the hill and broke it on him and he says, “I catch you I’m going to kill you.” He never did, he was my baby sitter and of course, he was a boy I guess he didn’t like that too much but he was a good brother.

I love this country but I love also the country where I come from because I had a very happy childhood, very happy 10 years. The only sad thing that happened to me when my grandmother died, of course, when pop left, all I remember my mother saying, “Papa’s going to go America now you kiss him goodbye.”

She picked me up to him, he was sitting on a carriage and she said, “Kiss him goodbye.” I started to cry I said, “I want to go with papa.” She says, “You can’t go.” Then pop pulled away and that was the two sad things and when my grandmother died.

**Janet:** You had two sisters and a brother?

**Mary:** No, I have four sisters. Two remained in Italy because they were already married.

**Janet:** What are your sisters’ names as from the oldest going down?

**Mary:** The first child’s name was Emmanuela, after my grandmother, my father’s mother. My second sister, her name was Consetta, she was named after my mother’s mother and they were married. My older sister had two little girls when we left. The younger one Consetta had one little girl.

**Janet:** What about the other two sisters?

**Mary:** The other two sisters, we came to the United States.

**Janet:** What were their names?

**Mary:** Salvitrice, S-A-L-V-I-T-R-I-C-E, she was 17 when we came here. My other sister, she’s in the passport she passed away, she was 15. Her name was Julimna.

**Janet:** Then your brother John?

**Mary:** Then my brother John and I was the youngest one.

**Janet:** Tell me about religious celebrations or observances that you remember from Italy?

**Mary:** Christmas is a big religious holiday. You go through the whole thing from when Mary got that she was going to have a baby. You go through the whole thing and then Jesus is born. It’s beautiful for children.

Easter is a sad to me anyway. It was very sad because Christ was crucified and you go through that in church. The people they go way out and they have a big piazza. You know where the piazza is? Okay.

They would demonstrate Jesus carrying the cross and how he was nailed to the cross. Before that, they go through the garden of- how’d they call that in Italian? I forget how they call that in Italian. Where he goes to think about everything, what am I doing? Am I doing right? Am I doing wrong?

They have the people actually act this out. It comes so natural to the people, they’re not actors or actresses, but it comes so natural. I remember mom would sit in a chair and recite the whole thing for me from when I was a child.

I know by heart that when Easter time comes for the week, the [unclear 00:24:35], the Holy Week that’s sad for me because that was in your mind all the time. Mom would recite what Mary said when she went looking for her son. How she found out that she was going to be crucified and Mary Magdalene and all that.

The holidays were beautiful. I don’t know if they still, but yes at a certain point they still celebrate them. They go all out for the religious holidays. Our Patriot Saint is Saint John the Baptist, for whatever reason, I don’t know but we have a church in our city, Saint John the Baptist, very rich parish.

Mom and dad were married there, they had their baptismal there, they had all their sacraments there and we did also. I read in our bible that Saint John the Baptist walked the mountains of Ragusa, its right there. You think about it and you find out, jeez Saint John was right here, I wonder how many more saints were here. People are very religious. When you’re religious, you’re religious that’s it.

**Janet:** When the children were acting out these stories of …

**Mary:** We’re just imitating the adults because they’re doing it. We go to the park and do the same thing.

**Janet:** It sounds like it was very much a part of your life and you feel …

**Mary:** The biggest part of our life and our families.

**Janet:** [Off the record conversation 00:26:29-00:26:40]. Did you go to school at all?

**Mary:** Yes. I finished fifth grade and I had just start …

**Janet:** This is in Sicily?

**Mary:** In Sicily. I had started halfway through- no not halfway. School opened in September like this here and I went until November. A couple of months in sixth grade.

**Janet:** What do you remember about school there?

**Mary:** I remember …

**Janet:** Maybe you can compare it to what it was like after you got here.

**Mary:** I loved school in Italy. I didn’t like it here because of the language and because of the children. They couldn’t take foreigners that came from the other side, they couldn’t speak. Children were not nice most of them, they were naughty. I would go home crying every day but in Italy I was happy.

Then I went to a religious school, it’s a convent, where they teach girls. They teach us to embroid, to sew, whatever you’re interested in learning. I learned some of that**.**

I was very good in Geography and they had a map of the world, a map of Italy, I would get right up there and point out. The teacher would say, “Where’s Geneva?” Stick right there. “Where’s Milan?” Right there. “Where’s this?” Find it. “Where’s America?” I would go, “That’s where my father is.”

Then I got the bright idea, I asked my teacher, “When I learn how to write, would you teach me how to write a letter to my father?” She said, “Sure any time.” She says, “We’re going to work on that.” She taught me.

I wrote to my father the first letter. I was so proud of it and he answered me. Then I wrote often. When I came to this country and I lost my dad, my dad gave me his precious box and there was all my letters in there. I learned something that made me very happy and to know that my father appreciate them because he saved them.

**Janet:** Do you remember anything else about Italy that you think of when you think of your first 10 years or anything about your childhood?

**Mary:** My sister, the oldest one, when she got married her husband came from a different town. On vacation time, when they would take the vacation, they would take me. We stayed with her husband’s family. They had a vineyard where they grew grapes and made wine.

I enjoyed that going on a train, the first time that I ever been any place away from home. Maybe I was about eight, nine years old then. I enjoyed, they had chickens there and I’d play with a red hen, she would come to me and sit by me and I would play with the hen. I was a very quiet child. I think I was a good kid, that’s what they say here, very quiet, obedient. God help if you weren’t.

**Janet:** Was your mother strict?

**Mary:** In a sense, but very loving. If you were doing something naughty she’d just pick up her hand and she’d go like this, “I’ll give it to you.” But you never got it. Mom was very loving, very giving.

**Janet:** Did you have any chores that you had to do when you were still in Italy? Do you remember anything?

**Mary:** No, I was a baby.

**Janet:** You were the apple of everybody’s eye?

**Mary:** I guess they figured I didn’t know how, but I watched and I listened, I was a good listener. I guess that’s why I remember everything, I watched everything that mom or my sisters did and I learned by watching them. I listened when they talked, I never butt in, I would just listen. I remembered everything, it stayed here.

**Janet:** Do you remember any foods that your mother or grandmothers or sisters made in Italy?

**Mary:** Food?

**Janet:** Yeah.

**Mary:** Easter time we make cheese cake, which you know what Ricotta is? You hear it on television when we make Ricotta pies- that’s an Easter holiday. Then we make a lamb pie, that’s a tradition to have lamb for Easter time.

You can’t eat meat until Easter morning, all that week you can’t have no meat. Then we make biscuits that they were crispy and soft they would melt in your mouth. They were made out of owl eggs. All different kind of goodies.

Some stuff was made with honey. Then we had the fennel seeds, if you’ve ever seen them, they mix that with honey. You have to cook it, honey and almonds. You cook that until it thickens. Then you put it on a bread board and you roll it out like you would bread. Then you cut it in pieces like shape of a diamond, mom used to cut them. That was like a candy for us. That was a Christmas candy we had.

Each holiday you had something special. Christmas time was ravioli time. Easter time was the lamb pies, the cheese pies. We even had special food for Halloween night, [inaudible 00:33:21] night. We had special food for that. Everybody would get rid of the meat because the next day would be Ash Wednesday.

So that everybody would cook their food whatever they had and they would put it outside. All the people would be dressed up for Halloween, they’d be dressed up and you go from house to house. The men would play mandolin guitars. Be a lot of fun. That was a fun time for us.

**Janet:** As you went to everybody’s house, you would eat whatever they had put out?

**Mary:** You would eat whatever they had put out yeah.

**Janet:** Halloween was before Holy Week?

**Mary:** Ash Wednesday. The night before Ash Wednesday would be a Tuesday and that would be Halloween. Whenever Ash Wednesday came, Halloween was the day before.

**Janet:** Are there any other holidays that you remember?

**Mary:** There are the big ones. Then of course Saint John the Baptist, that would be a big celebration. The farmers have already finished working in their farm, their weed was in, their beans, dried beans. Everything was taken care of and they would go to the city for the weekend and celebrate this big holiday.

Each part of Italy has a special patriot saint and they would celebrate whatever time. Ours was Saint John the Baptist. You celebrate that with fireworks. They would sell all kind of goodies when you go there at the piazza. That was a good time for us. I remember my brother in law would put me on top of his shoulders to see the fireworks, nice time we had.

**Janet:** You were writing to your father, did he tell you anything about America in his letters?

**Mary:** No.

**Janet:** What did you know before you came?

**Mary:** No, pop just said that he was glad to hear from me. That now I’m a big girl I can write and papa someday will be coming back. Never said about us going to the United States, he had intentions of coming home. As time went by I guess he changed his mind and maybe figured this would be a better country to raise his family.

The only bad thing was that we had to leave two sisters behind. In the meantime one of them died at 24, mom had a great loss and pop never seen her.

**Janet:** Do you remember packing up to leave?

**Mary:** Yes. Mom, everybody was packing trunks and suitcases and we had to pack. I had to get my own little personal thing. You never went out without bread because you never knew if you were able to get anything to eat. Made sure you had a little package of bread and cheese so you can nibble on. You had to do that.

**Janet:** Do you remember any particular possessions that your mother packed or that you brought that were personal?

**Mary:** No, I remember I made myself a little night gown at the convent, handmade embroidered that. I took that for my trip. That’s the only thing, no toys or anything like that. Pictures of my three little nieces we left behind.

**Janet:** When you left do you remember actually leaving?

**Mary:** Yes, we got on a train. First we went to Catania, that’s where my brother-in-law came from and then from there we got another train and we went to Palermo, that’s where we got the ship to come to United States.

**Janet:** Did you have any examinations or anything before you left?

**Mary:** Yes, we went through that. We had to go for passport pictures and we did that in Italy in Ragusa. My brother, he didn’t have to, but my mother says your hair is nice and thick and they shaved the hair. He wasn’t told to do it, but he figured there would be a lot of people on the ship you don’t know what you’re going to pick up. Girls you can’t shave your hair, but my brother had to shave his hair. That was mom’s orders, not that he had to.

When we got to Ellis Island there, mom had gotten twice double pneumonia. After that she would get a slight temperature. It didn’t make any sense but she would get this here slight temperature and they caught that when we got to New York.

**Janet:** Was your mother in good health as far as you knew when you left?

**Mary:** Yes, of course. That only would last a couple of days and it would go away, this temperature.

**Janet:** She was getting that in Italy, but then she was okay?

**Mary:** She was fine.

**Janet:** Why don’t you say the name of the ship for the tape, the name of the ship that you came on?

**Mary:** We picked up the ship. The name of it was Padre, P-A-D-R-E. Of course it was not a ship like you see today, a luxury liner but we had never seen a ship, to us it was like a big mountain. That you went into the ship so easily, we had to climb a ladder, scuffle, I don’t know what they would call it, a rope ladder I guess or something. It was at night time I really couldn’t see good. Maybe my brother will remember that I don’t know.

We had to climb up to the ship to go up there on the ladder. That was scary because you got the water below and if you miss a step you might fall, to me I was a little girl, I was afraid, but …

**Janet:** What about the voyage? Is there anything you remember about that?

**Mary:** There were incidents. We used to go to the chef, the kids found out where the kitchen was and you go there and the chef would give them a big potato. We were five, six kids all together. Mom was in charge of two more to bring them to United States to their family.

We’d get a potato every day. When it was my turn to get the potato I was afraid to go because you had to climb up another ladder to go up there. My brother said, “Go ahead go, he’s not going to hurt you, the chef, go ahead, go get the potato.” I finally got the potato. I got one once and I says “I’m not going to go again.”

The food was good. We had a cabin with- we were four girls and mom five and my brother, we were six in our cabin. My brother bunked with the other boy that we took here. We took a boy and a girl. We were six in our cabin. My brother was with the other boy.

**Janet:** Do you remember the ship coming into the New York harbor?

**Mary:** Also that came in the dark. Yes, because mom said, “Look.” We start seeing those, not pigeons, what do they call them? By the water

**Janet:** Seagulls?

**Mary:** Seagulls right. Mom seen them and she says, “We’re approaching land.” She said, “Come on, go on the deck you can see them.” We went up on deck and we were watching the birds, the seagulls. Actually I don’t remember seeing it going into the port. I don’t remember seeing that.

I remember though getting off the ship. To me it looked like I got into a real small boat to go to Ellis Island because they told us they had to bring us to the hospital to go with mom.

**Janet:** Did your mother become ill aboard ship?

**Mary:** She must have, because they wouldn’t let her go on the ship if she was not well. She was fine couple of days after that.

**Janet:** Did you go by the small boat to Ellis Island at night?

**Mary:** At night, yes.

**Janet:** What was your impression of Ellis Island when you first got there?

**Mary:** It was scary. Like I said, small boat and you’re in the water and then you go into this a big room, that’s the big room downstairs. We were already examined at the port, we didn’t have to be examined there, but mom was.

They took mom away. I remember the back of that Ellis Island, that room where they took her to the infirmary. I remember that and of course we were tired, we were crying, they were taking my mother and we couldn’t go home with my father. It was sad, very sad. Then they took my brother away.

**Janet:** Why did they take your brother?

**Mary:** Because they separated the women with the men. The three girls we were lucky we were together, but he was alone. I’ll let him tell you the story about the way he looking for us and he found us.

**Janet:** You didn’t have any contact with your father?

**Mary:** He would come to the port, to Ellis Island. I don’t think it was every night, maybe every other night he would come and bring us a nice meal. We stay with him, we spend time with him. Pop came to visit us, yes. I don’t know how many times he came, but he did come to see us and each time he came he brought us food.

**Janet:** Do you remember what he brought you?

**Mary:** Chicken, I remember the chicken was so good. He brought white wine and he brought fruit. I don’t think he brought any cake, I don’t know. I remember the chicken was very good, good food. We were getting spaghettis in Ellis Island and it was like tomato juice on the plate and six spaghettis flowing in the juice.

Then we seen bananas which we had never had bananas. The first time we had bananas, I didn’t like them anyway. Then I got to like them because that was about the best thing we had, the bananas to eat or we eat bread and sugar, they had cubes of sugar.

**Janet:** Did Ellis Island give you the bananas? Was that …

**Mary:** Yes, I don’t think it was a dish that you took it, that I don’t remember. All I know is getting a banana and eating it.

**Janet:** Then it was bread and sugar?

**Mary:** They didn’t give you that, you took the bread. Because they put bread on the table and the sugar there I guess for coffee whatever. I would eat bread and sugar.

**Janet:** Rather than the …

**Mary:** Rather than the food.

**Janet:** Did you have any contact with your mother while she was being treated?

**Mary:** Not until the third day until my brother found us. We were looking for each other and we could never find each other outside. We’d go outside to look for him and he would look for us. He is the one that found us because he changed his route. He’ll tell you about that.

**Janet:** Then your father would visit with your brother and your sisters?

**Mary:** All of us, except my mother. We would all go out visiting room, I guess, which would be the visiting room? I have no idea which. I know there were a lot of seats like they were in the theatre, in a row. Anyway, we would go to the visiting room and pop would be there. They had a rope there. You couldn’t cross over the rope.

**Janet:** What was it like being with your father who you really didn’t remember?

**Mary:** He was strange to me, but my sisters and my brother remembered him better. The first time I seen him real close I didn’t want to go by him. My sister poked me, she says, “Go that’s papa.” “I don’t know him.” I said, “I don’t want to go.”

Then, he would call me, “Come on Maria, come on.” I finally went to him and then I really loved him. Pop had a moustache with little curls, he had wavy hair, his moustache would just curl. You couldn’t touch his moustache that was his pride and joy.

**Janet:** What was the reunion like with your mother when …?