**Paul:** Good morning this is Paul Seacrest for the National Park Service. Today is Thursday April 27th 1995. I’m in Utica area, although this is not Utica …

**Edwards:** New Hartford.

**Paul:** New Hartford, New York with Mr. Fued Shaheen. Mr. Shaheen came from Lebanon in 1920 when he was 15 years old. Present also is Wadih Zoghbi who is going to intercede in the interview when needed. Good morning.

**Edwards:** Good morning.

**Paul:** Where in Lebanon were you born?

**Edwards:** Baskinta.

**Paul:** Can you spell the town please.

**Edwards:** You spell it.

**Wadih:** B-A-S-K-I-N-T-A.

**Paul:** Thank you Mr. Zoghbi. Where was that in the country? Where was that town?

**Edwards:** In the mountain.

**Paul:** In the mountains of Lebanon.

**Wadih:** Almost in the center of Lebanon, 30 miles …

**Edwards:** Lebanon is all mountains, the whole country.

**Paul:** This village was up in the mountain?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What do you remember about the village? What sticks out in your mind about the village itself?

**Edwards:** The village, well I have to tell …

**Paul:** What did it look like? What did the village look like?

**Edwards:** It looked like over here, just the same. Same thing, you see that land over here, same thing.

**Paul:** What kind of buildings were there?

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:01:43] just like over there, exactly.

**Wadih:** Excuse me.

**Paul:** That’s all right, Mr. Zoghbi go ahead.

**Wadih:** The buildings there are all built with stones.

**Edwards:** With the stones, no [inaudible 00:01:57].

**Wadih:** The roofs are red brick roof, some are zinc metal and some are flat roofs. The town has approximately 10,000 population. It’s a large town in comparison to the towns in Lebanon.

**Paul:** The house that you lived in, what was it made out of?

**Edwards:** The bricks.

**Paul:** Your house was made out of bricks?

**Edwards:** The stone yes, big stone.

**Paul:** How many rooms did your house have?

**Edwards:** two families, two families for eight rooms.

**Paul:** Eight rooms?

**Edwards:** Eight rooms.

**Paul:** You said two families, but were you all related?

**Edwards:** Yeah, my brother, my brother, my father and his brother used to live together, but half.

**Paul:** Your father’s family was in one half and your uncle’s family was in the other half?

**Edwards:** That’s it.

**Paul:** I also should say for the sake of the tape that your mother told you you were born the Saturday before Easter. Correct that’s what she told you?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** We think maybe 1905.

**Edwards:** I don’t know.

**Paul:** We’re not sure, we think 1905.

**Edwards:** I tried to get the certificate, I can’t get it.

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

**Edwards:** Sam Shaheen.

**Paul:** What did he do for a living in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:03:35] the calf and the lamb.

**Paul:** He had cows and sheep?

**Edwards:** Yeah, that’s his business.

**Paul:** Was that a family business? Did his father do that?

**Edwards:** His father? I don’t know his father. I don’t remember his father what he do, but I remember my father and my uncle used to do sheep business and cows.

**Paul:** What were some of the things they did to take care of the sheep and the cows? How did they …?

**Edwards:** They had two men working for them to take care of it.

**Paul:** What did they …?

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:04:15].

**Wadih:** Shepherds you mean?

**Edwards:** Shepherds yeah.

**Paul:** How many sheep did he have?

**Edwards:** Many, sometime 200, sometime 100, the cow about three, four, five.

**Paul:** What did they do with the sheep?

**Edwards:** They sell them to the people.

**Paul:** Where did they sell the sheep?

**Edwards:** All over Lebanon, I think we’re trying to do the …

**Wadih:** Those are little towns near Baskinta.

**Edwards:** Tell them, [inaudible 00:04:51] a lot of people.

**Paul:** Your father sold the sheep to other people?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did he use the sheep at all for the family? Did you use the sheep for your family?

**Edwards:** One.

**Paul:** How?

**Edwards:** We use one.

**Paul:** What did you do with the one?

**Edwards:** We take care of it to get big and then we kill him and then eat him after.

**Paul:** How did you slaughter sheep? How did you kill the sheep?

**Edwards:** How you kill a sheep?

**Paul:** Explain to me how one kills a sheep.

**Edwards:** We kill him with a knife. Then we make him small, the meat small and small, we boil them and put them in the kettle for the winter and then we eat. Sometime you fry eggs, sometime you cook anything and you put the meat on it. [Inaudible 00:05:52].

**Wadih:** That’s it.

**Paul:** What about the wool from the sheep did you use the wool for anything?

**Edwards:** What?

**Paul:** The wool, the skin.

**Edwards:** We sell them. The men buy it and they make it for the shoes.

**Paul:** Where did you keep the sheep?

**Edwards:** In the front of our house.

**Paul:** Where did you take them to eat? When the sheep were hungry where you did take them?

**Edwards:** In the field. We got a lot of field.

**Paul:** Did you own the field?

**Edwards:** Yes. If you don’t own it you can’t put your lamb in it.

**Paul:** Did you have any other animals other than the sheep?

**Edwards:** No, just two, three cow.

**Paul:** How did you use the cows?

**Edwards:** We use them just like the sheep, exactly.

**Paul:** Did you milk the cows?

**Edwards:** We milk it, we sell the milk.

**Paul:** Did you ever keep any of the milk for yourself?

**Edwards:** Yes, we saved it and we make Laban [inaudible 00:06:59] …

**Wadih:** Yoghurt.

**Paul:** That’s spelled L-E- Laban …

**Wadih:** Laban, L-A-B-A-N.

**Paul:** This is the yoghurt that you …?

**Edwards:** Yeah we eat. We put them in a [inaudible 00:07:12].

**Wadih:** A bag.

**Paul:** The milk went in a bag, then what happened to it?

**Wadih:** Then it got hard.

**Edwards:** To make the yoghurt I mean [inaudible 00:07:27].

**Wadih:** I’ll tell them, the milk when you put it in the bag, the liquid falls out and …

**Paul:** The solids are left.

**Edwards:** Yes solids.

**Wadih:** It becomes concentrated.

**Paul:** Did you eat yoghurt frequently?

**Edwards:** Absolutely, all the time. It’s the best thing for your heart.

**Paul:** Were there different ways of preparing it? Did you mix it with something or did you just eat it?

**Edwards:** No, we don’t mix it with something, we eat it like this.

**Paul:** You eat it plain?

**Edwards:** With the bread.

**Paul:** What other kinds of food did you eat in Lebanon when you were growing up?

**Edwards:** We eat potatoes, we ate beans, we ate rice, all those we eat.

**Paul:** What did you drink?

**Edwards:** Water and beer, not beer, wine and anise.

**Paul:** Did you make the wine?

**Edwards:** We make the wine, we make anise.

**Paul:** How did you make the wine?

**Edwards:** From the grapes. We put them in the carton, 40 days, sometime you go check with something, take the [inaudible 00:08:37] out and there’d be wine. 40 days.

**Paul:** Where did you get the grapes?

**Edwards:** From my land.

**Paul:** You grew the grapes?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did you have other fruit that you grew?

**Edwards:** We got figs lots, we never buy nothing [inaudible 00:08:58] from my land.

**Paul:** You ate everything that you raised?

**Edwards:** We raise potatoes, we raise onions, we raise all kind in our land. We save it in the winter and we eat it.

**Paul:** How did you save it for the winter? How did you store food for the winter?

**Edwards:** The fruit we make them dry, [inaudible 00:09:23] dry up. The grapes we make them just the way -What do we call them?

**Paul:** Raisins?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** How did you dry fruit? Can you explain to me how you did that?

**Edwards:** Yes, we get them put them on the roof and then once in a while you put olive oil all around the top and raisins. The [inaudible 00:09:52] you put nothing and the figs, we make them dry.

**Paul:** Who prepared the food in your family?

**Edwards:** My mother.

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

**Edwards:** Zardekhan.

**Paul:** Can somebody spell that please.

**Edwards:** Zardekhan.

**Paul:** Mr. Zoghbi.

**Wadih:** Z-A-R D-E-K-H-A-N.

**Paul:** Thank you. What do you remember about your mother in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** I remember a lot of things. She used to make bread, she cook, what else?

**Paul:** What did your mother look like? Can you describe her in words?

**Edwards:** I show you the picture?

**Paul:** No, describe her, don’t show me a picture describe her in words.

**Edwards:** She’s a nice woman, nice looking face.

**Paul:** What color hair?

**Edwards:** Black.

**Paul:** What color eyes?

**Edwards:** Black.

**Paul:** Do you know anything about her family history?

**Edwards:** Yes I know.

**Paul:** What?

**Edwards:** Jidi and Sitti, they used to live in this nice house over there and [inaudible 00:11:09] not very far.

**Paul:** She lived close to where your father lived?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Wadih:** Where her parents, his grandparents …

**Edwards:** My gramps.

**Wadih:** Jidi and Sitti, that’s my grandfather and my grandmother used to live …

**Paul:** The grandparents lived near each other?

**Wadih:** Yeah.

**Edwards:** Do you know how your parents met? How did they meet each other?

**Edwards:** They meet just like the different people, what do you mean how they meet? They come to see us. We go out and see them, just the same. They coming in my house very often, all the time. My mother she go out to the mother and father and the grandmother used to make my mother [inaudible 00:11:56]?

**Wadih:** Used to be a mason. Her father was a mason.

**Edwards:** Mason.

**Paul:** Your mother’s father was a mason?

**Edwards:** Yes.

**Paul:** Stones?

**Edwards:** Cut the stones. Then they used to cook for grandmother.

**Paul:** You knew your grandparents?

**Edwards:** Yeah, we knew them all.

**Paul:** What sticks out in your mind about your grandmother? When you think about your grandmother what comes to your mind?

**Edwards:** I love it, sometime you sleep, every time, I left my house and then I go up to her house and sleep. She used to love me. My brother and I, [inaudible 00:12:43] used to come and my grandfather, my grandmother, oh boy can’t be better.

**Paul:** That’s your mother’s parents?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What about your father’s parents, did you know them?

**Edwards:** I don’t know much about my father, because they live far away a little bit.

**Paul:** You never saw them?

**Edwards:** We saw them, but we didn’t do just like my grandmother.

**Paul:** You were close to your mother’s parents?

**Edwards:** Yeah, the rest very far.

**Paul:** Your mother’s parents, did their house look like your house?

**Edwards:** No, it’s different.

**Paul:** How was it different?

**Wadih:** Flat roof.

**Edwards:** They look like a [inaudible 00:13:37].

**Wadih:** Roof.

**Edwards:** Roof, just a roof.

**Wadih:** Flat roof.

**Edwards:** Not like our house, our house is beautiful.

**Paul:** Your house was a bigger?

**Edwards:** Yeah, bigger and good.

**Paul:** You said your grandfather was a stone mason. Was he still doing that when you were a little boy?

**Edwards:** Yeah, I used to work with him.

**Paul:** How did you help your grandfather?

**Edwards:** I carried the stone, he’s shoveling I’d carry two on the other side.

**Paul:** Do you know what kind of stone it was?

**Edwards:** Yeah, [inaudible 00:14:16].

**Wadih:** Mostly lime stone.

**Paul:** Was that hard work cutting the stones?

**Edwards:** Yeah it is.

**Paul:** Did other people work for your grandfather also?

**Edwards:** Yeah three, four men used to be, I don’t know their name, yeah they were sure.

**Paul:** How did he cut the stone? What kind of tool did he use to cut the stones?

**Edwards:** When you cut the stone first, you have to make them like this …

**Paul:** To smash the rock?

**Edwards:** Smash and then you build the [inaudible 00:14:55] around and then putting them up. [Inaudible 00:14:58].

**Paul:** Was all over the place?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Then what happens, the stone is all over the place?

**Edwards:** Then he fix it up, [inaudible 00:15:11] make the shape.

**Paul:** What kind of tool did you use to shape the rocks? What did it look like the tool that you used?

**Wadih:** A small sledgehammer.

**Edwards:** I don’t know.

**Paul:** Something that smashes, like Mr. Zoghbi’s saying a small sledgehammer?

**Edwards:** Yeah and a hammer.

**Paul:** Where would he sell the stones? Who bought the stones?

**Edwards:** People would build the house.

**Paul:** Did someone else build the house?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Your grandfather just did the stones?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Thank you that’s interesting.

**Edwards:** Beautiful.

**Paul:** What about school did children go to school?

**Edwards:** Absolutely.

**Paul:** Where was the school?

**Edwards:** By the [inaudible 00:16:04].

**Wadih:** The town’s church. The one near, there’s several churches, but the church near them had …

**Edwards:** At the church’s school.

**Paul:** The church ran the school?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What do you remember about going to school?

**Edwards:** What I remember?

**Paul:** Yeah, what about going to school sticks out in your mind?

**Edwards:** Then when we you go to school you had to go to mass first. I used to go to the church, have mass, then we’d go to school. When you go to school you have to pray. The teacher he sit down in his chair and you study and you work. Sometimes he ask you for something, you have to read it. That’s it.

**Paul:** Who taught? Who were the teachers?

**Edwards:** A man named Yusuf, his name is Joseph.

**Paul:** What I was asking was did the clergy teach? Were they nuns or priests that were teaching you?

**Edwards:** No, not the nun. Maalim he [inaudible 00:17:15].

**Wadih:** A regular teacher.

**Edwards:** A teacher.

**Wadih:** That the church hired for little pay.

**Edwards:** No nuns.

**Wadih:** The nuns taught the girls and the teachers taught the boys.

**Paul:** Girls went to school separately from boys?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did they have a separate building?

**Edwards:** Yeah sure.

**Paul:** The nuns taught the girls?

**Edwards:** This side and the other side.

**Paul:** This hired teacher taught the boys?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What things were you taught? What subjects did you have in school? What did they teach you?

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:17:57].

**Paul:** In Arabic?

**Edwards:** Arabic and French.

**Paul:** Why did they teach you French?

**Edwards:** I don’t know.

**Paul:** They did?

**Edwards:** They did, yes.

**Paul:** How often did you go to school?

**Edwards:** Every day, except Saturday.

**Paul:** Six days a week?

**Edwards:** Yeah, but no Saturday.

**Paul:** Why not on Saturday?

**Edwards:** I don’t know the teacher might be busy.

**Paul:** Did everybody go to school in town, all [inaudible 00:18:34] …?

**Edwards:** Everybody.

**Paul:** Could your parents be …

**Edwards:** Not the same school, they got different school. You had [inaudible 00:18:43].

**Paul:** Different ages went to different …

**Edwards:** Different ages and different side that’s all.

**Paul:** What about your parents, could they read and write?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Could your parents read Arabic and write?

**Edwards:** Yeah my mother read Arabic and my father read Arabic.

**Paul:** They had been educated also this way?

**Edwards:** Yeah sure.

**Paul:** Did your parents teach you anything at home?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What did they teach you?

**Edwards:** When I read in the book my father and my mother she used to tell me, “No you read differently, [inaudible 00:19:25].” I can’t tell you.

**Paul:** What religion were you?

**Edwards:** Catholic.

**Paul:** Christian, you are a Christian?

**Edwards:** Yeah. I used to go mass every day, never missed.

**Paul:** What time of the day did you go to mass?

**Edwards:** What time?

**Paul:** Yeah.

**Edwards:** Nine, 10 o’clock.

**Paul:** In the morning?

**Edwards:** In the morning.

**Paul:** Then you went to school?

**Edwards:** Then the school.

**Paul:** Then what happened when you came home from school?

**Edwards:** Nothing, we walk three, four boys we walk. You say when you see somebody say, “Hello Amy, hello Judy, hello [Haley 00:20:08].”

**Paul:** When you got home from school did you have to help out around the house? Did you have any chores to do when you got …?

**Edwards:** no we didn’t do anything around.

**Paul:** You didn’t help out in the farm?

**Edwards:** No.

**Paul:** With the sheep?

**Edwards:** We work Saturday when the school close, then on Saturday we work. We herd the sheep. We get the hashish and [inaudible 00:20:42].

**Paul:** Was there a specific thing that was your responsibility to do on Saturdays?

**Edwards:** No, it was [inaudible 00:20:51] we had to do everything.We used to help our father.

**Paul:** How did you practice your religion at home?

**Edwards:** You pray the book, just like this.

**Paul:** A bible? You’re showing me a bible?

**Edwards:** Yeah the bible, every day, every night, we read the book, somebody must the rosary every night, every night never miss.

**Paul:** Who was more religious, your mother or your father?

**Edwards:** My mother,

**Paul:** Did she teach you prayers?

**Edwards:** Yeah, my father have to go out and get the money.

**Paul:** Can you say a prayer for me in Arabic.

**Wadih:** Paul, allow him to sing something for me because he used to serve …

**Edwards:** His father and my father and my brother used to work together.

**Paul:** The Zoghbi family knew this family?

**Edwards:** No, friend.

**Paul:** Can you sing something for me in Arabic?

**Edwards:** Sing in Arabic?

**Paul:** Sing in Arabic for the tape.

**Wadih:** [inaudible 00:22:06].

**Paul:** Go ahead.

**Edwards:** [singing Foreign language 00:22:10].

**Wadih:** Incidentally that’s Syriac.

**Paul:** Thank you, the language is Syriac.

**Wadih:** The language is Aramaic Syriac.

**Paul:** What’s the difference between Arabic and Syriac?

**Wadih:** Just another language all together.

**Paul:** Totally different language?

**Edwards:** Totally different.

**Paul:** What was it that you sung for me? What was that?

**Wadih:** Syriac.

**Edwards:** A prayer, I prayed

**Paul:** What are you praying for? What does that mean?

**Edwards:** To the God.

**Wadih:** [Inaudible 00:23:15] priest in the mass.

**Edwards:** In the mass.

**Paul:** That’s part of a mass service?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did you used to sing in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** Same thing.

**Paul:** You liked going to church when you were a kid?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Were you given religious instruction in church, Sunday school, did you go to Sunday school?

**Edwards:** Sunday school you pray, first beginning you pray and then you read. Same thing, read the religion. That’s it.

**Paul:** Tell me about what you did for fun as a child, how did you have fun when you were a kid?

**Edwards:** Oh my God.

**Paul:** What did you do for fun when you were a kid?

**Edwards:** For fun we played with this ball, Catch. [Inaudible 00:24:14] to catch it, seven eight, throw the ball like this, some time you hit the fellow like this.

**Paul:** You hit each other with the stick?

**Edwards:** Yeah, not with the stick with your hands.

**Paul:** With your hands?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Why would you hit the person?

**Edwards:** If you don’t hit them hard, they going to move away.

**Wadih:** If you caught the ball, you touched him, if you didn’t catch the ball you lost.

**Paul:** Is there a name for this game?

**Wadih:** Just Catch.

**Edwards:** [Tyabbi 00:24:46].

**Wadih:** That’s not tyabbi, that’s ball.

**Paul:** T-A-B-E, Tabe?

**Wadih:** T-Y- or something.

**Paul:** T-Y- Tyabbi, that means ball.

**Edwards:** Yeah the ball.

**Paul:** Did you have any other toys that you played with as a child, any toys that you remember?

**Edwards:** I remember.

**Paul:** Just the ball you played?

**Edwards:** Just the ball I play. [Inaudible 00:25:13] they used to play hello did you hear, I can’t explain how to do it. We had someone here, 10 over there, two over there and everybody stand up around. You go, “Hello did you [inaudible 00:25:28].

**Paul:** Is that running from stone to stone, is that what you mean?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Wadih:** Without being caught.

**Paul:** You’re explaining to me a game where you put stones on the ground and then you run around the stones and you can’t be caught by somebody else?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** That has a name to that game?

**Edwards:** The name [inaudible 00:25:48].

**Wadih:** I don’t know what the name is.

**Edwards:** Hello [inaudible 00:25:53] I used to do that well.

**Paul:** Tell me what you remember about growing up during World War 1. What happened in Lebanon during the First World War?

**Edwards:** Don’t tell me about that, [inaudible 00:26:05]. World War 1 is a bad.

**Paul:** Lebanon was in a bad situation?

**Edwards:** Absolutely, bad.

**Paul:** What groups came into the country? What armies came into Lebanon?

**Edwards:** Turk.

**Paul:** The Turks came into Lebanon?

**Edwards:** Turks take everything. My mother [inaudible 00:26:28] when my mother she make bread and the Turk soldier come in and take everything away from her. It’s bad, we were getting hungry.

**Paul:** Were the Turks ever violent towards the people who lived in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** They don’t bother nobody but they take everything what you had to eat. [Inaudible 00:26:59] he says, “I’m going to make Lebanon starve.” Because he can’t take the soldiers, the French even didn’t protect our Lebanon, without the French they kill everybody.

**Paul:** The French came in to battle the Turks [inaudible 00:27:23]?

**Edwards:** The French say to the Turk, “If you touch anybody in Lebanon they kill him.”

**Paul:** The Turks tried to starve the Lebanese people?

**Edwards:** Yeah, they make them starve.

**Paul:** What did you eat during that period?

**Edwards:** I didn’t know what we eat. We can’t find any food to eat that’s the whole trouble. [Foreign language 00:27:49].

**Wadih:** [Foreign language 00:27:52].

**Edwards:** They go in the outside, get us some milk and big, just like the grass.

**Wadih:** Greens.

**Edwards:** All kinds, that’s all we eat. Otherwise you can’t eat meat, nothing they take everything away from us.

**Paul:** The Turks took the sheep and everything?

**Edwards:** Everything, the sheep take them.

**Paul:** How long did the Turks stay in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** I can’t tell you how long, everybody often once in a while they come.

**Paul:** Do you remember when the war was over? Do you remember when World War 1 ended?

**Edwards:** 1918.

**Paul:** What happened to your village when the war ended?

**Edwards:** Everybody happy [inaudible 00:28:46], the house was safe. [Inaudible 00:28:51].

**Paul:** Did the Turks leave Lebanon at that time or were they gone before the end of the war?

**Edwards:** I didn’t understand, what did you say?

**Paul:** Were the Turks still in Lebanon when the war ended?

**Edwards:** No.

**Paul:** They were gone by then?

**Edwards:** They all run away, never stay.

**Paul:** Did things get better when the war ended?

**Edwards:** Sure everything got …

**Paul:** What army was in Lebanon after the war, were the French still there?

**Edwards:** No, nobody stayed there.

**Paul:** Everybody left?

**Edwards:** Everyone, Lebanese Army after.

**Paul:** Lebanon had its own army?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Tell me what you knew about America when you were growing up. How did you think about America when you lived in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** My father came here first.

**Paul:** What year did he come?

**Edwards:** 1914.

**Paul:** Why did he come?

**Edwards:** He came to see his sister, he want some money. When he came to see his sister she gave him no money.

**Paul:** Where was his sister living?

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:30:15] Street.

**Paul:** In New York City? In Utica?

**Edwards:** Utica.

**Paul:** Your aunt was living in Utica, she had come earlier?

**Edwards:** They come in before my father, long time.

**Paul:** Your father came in 1914 before the war started?

**Edwards:** Yeah. He wanted to see his sister, maybe she give him money come back, she didn't give him nothing and he stayed.

**Paul:** What happened to him? He stayed?

**Edwards:** He stayed.

**Paul:** What job did he get?

**Edwards:** He sell sheep and cow over here just like home.

**Paul:** That’s what he was doing while you were still in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Was he communicating with you?

**Edwards:** Then he sent some money to us, after the war he sent some money.

**Paul:** Did you hear from your father during the war? During World War 1, did you have any communication with your father in America? Was he writing you letters?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** During the war was he writing you letters?

**Edwards:** You can’t get mail.

**Paul:** Why?

**Edwards:** I don’t know.

**Paul:** You didn’t hear from him for a long time?

**Edwards:** Yeah, I didn’t hear anything after the war we can get the letter.

**Paul:** Was it your idea to come to America or was it your father’s idea?

**Edwards:** No, my father’s idea.

**Paul:** Did you want to come?

**Edwards:** We wanted to come in 1914, we liked to come here when my father come. My father’s mother didn’t want us coming, they wanted to stay there

**Paul:** Why?

**Edwards:** Because they want her son come back.

**Paul:** I see. Your father’s mother didn’t want you guys to go because she wanted your father to come back?

**Edwards:** Yeah, that’s what happened.

**Paul:** Tell me what happened, your father decided that you were going to go to America. Did you want to go? Did you want to leave Lebanon?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** You did want to leave Lebanon?

**Edwards:** Yeah, we wanted to come with my father, my grandma she didn’t want us to come in.

**Paul:** After World War 1 ended, did your father send for the whole family?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Who comes to America then, your mother?

**Edwards:** My mother.

**Paul:** You?

**Edwards:** My brother and my brother and my sister.

**Paul:** Two brothers and a sister.

**Edwards:** One sister.

**Paul:** Yourself?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Your mother?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What were your brother’s names?

**Edwards:** Heikel.

**Paul:** Mr. Zoghbi.

**Wadih:** Heikel, H-E-I-K-E-L, that’s translated into [inaudible 00:33:18].

**Edwards:** Freddy, Fredrick.

**Wadih:** Fram F-R-A-M …

**Edwards:** Fram [inaudible 00:33:23] …

**Wadih:** They called him Fredrick here.

**Paul:** What was your sister’s name?

**Edwards:** Ramza.

**Wadih:** R-A-M-Z-A.

**Paul:** Thank you. Are they older or younger than you?

**Edwards:** I’m the old one.

**Paul:** You’re the oldest?

**Edwards:** No, my brother …

**Wadih:** Heikel was the oldest.

**Edwards:** First brother Heikel the old one.

**Paul:** Then you?

**Edwards:** Then me, and then my sister, then my Fram, Fram is the baby.

**Paul:** How did your mother feel about leaving Lebanon?

**Edwards:** She feel good.

**Paul:** She wanted to go?

**Edwards:** Yeah, she come with her family, she like to see her husband.

**Paul:** Did your father go back to Lebanon to get you or did he stay …?

**Edwards:** No, he stayed here.

**Paul:** He was going to meet you?

**Edwards:** He sent the money.

**Paul:** Do you remember what it was like to pack your belongings? What did you take with you to America?

**Edwards:** I tell you the truth, [inaudible 00:34:29] everything in [inaudible 00:34:36] when we get to Italia, they didn’t let us to bring it over here. We left everything and the Italian assistant authority, Italia.

**Wadih:** They brought things with them, but they confiscated it in Italy.

**Paul:** You brought all your carpets and things?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** They wouldn’t let you take them beyond Italy?

**Edwards:** When we get to Italy, they didn’t let us bring them over here. We left everything right there.

**Paul:** Did you have a lot of carpets with you?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Where did you get the carpets?

**Edwards:** From my house.

**Paul:** Where did you get them for the house though? Did you make the carpets did you …?

**Edwards:** No, we don’t make it, we buy it. I don’t know who bought it …

**Paul:** You kept carpets in that place?

**Edwards:** I don’t remember who bought it but you bring in them with us over there, then they didn’t let us bring them over here.

**Paul:** Do you remember saying goodbye to your grandmother and grandfather, your mother’s parents? When you left to come to America were your mother’s parents’ still living?

**Edwards:** No.

**Paul:** They had died by then?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** When you left to come to America, where did you leave from? Where did you go to to get a ship?

**Edwards:** We come from Baskinta to Beirut.

**Paul:** How did you get from there to Beirut?

**Edwards:** We came with a …

**Wadih:** [Foreign language 00:36:11]?

**Edwards:** No [foreign language 00:36:14].

**Wadih:** They rode mules and donkeys.

**Paul:** You took this down to Beirut?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did you stay in Beirut?

**Edwards:** We stay in Beirut two week.

**Paul:** Two weeks before you got on the ship?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What happened in Beirut during those two weeks?

**Edwards:** Nothing happened, everybody good.

**Paul:** Did you already have your papers? The papers you needed to get to America?

**Edwards:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Paul:** What about medical exams?

**Edwards:** We were examined not in Beirut, done in Baskinta.

**Paul:** Before you left?

**Edwards:** The doctor examined our eyes in Baskinta.

**Paul:** Just the eyes?

**Edwards:** That’s it.

**Paul:** What were they looking for, do you remember?

**Edwards:** No, I don’t remember.

**Paul:** They looked at your eyes before you …

**Edwards:** Looked at your eyes and everything, give you paper.

**Paul:** You went down to Beirut, you stayed two weeks and then you got on the ship?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Do you remember the name of the ship?

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:37:13].

**Paul:** Was that the first time you had ever been on a ship?

**Edwards:** First time sure.

**Paul:** How did you feel about being on the ship?

**Edwards:** I feel good. The ship is just like the home.

**Paul:** You had a nice?

**Edwards:** Beautiful.

**Paul:** Can you describe for me where you slept in the ship?

**Edwards:** In a room like this in the ship.

**Paul:** Who stayed in that room with you?

**Edwards:** Everyone, big room, my mother, my sister, my brother, all in one room.

**Paul:** Were there other people in the room also?

**Edwards:** No.

**Paul:** Just your family?

**Edwards:** Just the family.

**Paul:** Do you remember what class you traveled on the ship?

**Edwards:** What?

**Paul:** What class? Were you third class, second class?

**Edwards:** First class on the ship.

**Paul:** Do you remember how much it cost?

**Edwards:** I don’t know how much it cost. Ask my father I don’t know. Ask my big brother used to be the boss, make the money.

**Paul:** The ship went to Beirut, what stops did it make?

**Edwards:** It stopped in Italia.

**Paul:** It stopped in Italy, did it stop anywhere else?

**Edwards:** After there in Paris in France.

**Wadih:** Did you change ships?

**Edwards:** No change.

**Paul:** You stayed on the same ship?

**Edwards:** We stayed in the same thing.

**Paul:** How long did the ship take before it got to New York, from Beirut to New York, how long?

**Edwards:** I can’t tell you, I don’t know maybe two months.

**Paul:** It was an extended period of time.

**Edwards:** All together two months.

**Paul:** Are there any stories you remember about being on the ship? What sticks out in your mind about the voyage across the ocean?

**Edwards:** I used to go on top the ship, sing [inaudible 00:39:21]. I used to go from the bottom to the top, singing Arabic. Sometimes the ladies [inaudible 00:39:35] I sing for them, we met different people, but I don’t know who.

**Paul:** Where did they feed you on the ship?

**Edwards:** Where they feed us?

**Paul:** Where did they feed you?

**Edwards:** They feed me in the middle class.

**Paul:** What kind of food did they give you?

**Edwards:** All kind, everything. I can’t tell you what kind.

**Paul:** Did you see something on the boat that you had never seen before in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** Naturally.

**Paul:** What do you remember?

**Edwards:** I see different thing, but I cannot explain it.

**Paul:** It was all a new experience?

**Edwards:** All new to me.

**Paul:** Did anyone in your family get sick?

**Edwards:** Yeah, get dizzy.

**Paul:** Who got dizzy?

**Edwards:** Everyone except me. I never get dizzy, my brother, my brother, my sister, my mother, my cousin sleep all day long. I go on the top of the ship.

**Paul:** Singing?

**Edwards:** Singing, it’s a funny thing I never see in life.

**Wadih:** It’s a good medicine.

**Paul:** Indeed.

**Edwards:** I’ll tell you the truth, I’m still living, they’re all dead.

**Paul:** Did you ever see the captain of the ship?

**Edwards:** Yeah, I used to drink beer with him.

**Paul:** Where did you drink beer with the captain?

**Edwards:** Right in the food, he come and they take them out and drink beer. He gave me a glass of beer I drink with him.

**Paul:** Did they have safety drills on the ship? Did they tell you where to go if there was an emergency?

**Edwards:** Emergency?

**Paul:** If there were an emergency, did they show you where the life boats were?

**Edwards:** No, I don’t know. No emergency when I was there, everything okay.

**Paul:** Do you remember coming into New York City? Do you remember when the boat came into New York?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

**Edwards:** Yeah I did.

**Paul:** What do you remember about that?

**Edwards:** I don’t know I see some different people, that’s it.

**Paul:** When the boat came into New York, do you remember going to Ellis Island? Did you have to go to Ellis Island?

**Edwards:** Yeah I do remember, I know.

**Paul:** When you got to New York, did you have to be examined for any reason? Did they look at …?

**Edwards:** Examine your eyes?

**Paul:** Did they look at you?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Where did your father meet you?

**Edwards:** Right there, right on the boat.

**Paul:** He came and he met the family?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What did you think when you saw your father?

**Edwards:** I jump on him and kiss him. He kiss everyone, he cry and we cry too when we see him.

**Paul:** Where did he take you?

**Edwards:** Where did he kiss me?

**Paul:** No, after you met him where did he take you?

**Edwards:** Take me to the hotel, we slept in the hotel then next day we came over here to Utica.

**Paul:** Tell me about the night you spent in the hotel, what was that like for you?

**Wadih:** What was the name of the hotel?

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:43:21] you go eat and then you go sleep.

**Paul:** Do you remember what hotel it was?

**Edwards:** No, I don’t remember, but good hotel.

**Paul:** After you stayed overnight you took a train? Is that what you said?

**Edwards:** I take a train.

**Paul:** You went to where?

**Edwards:** Utica.

**Paul:** Was that the first time you had been on a train?

**Edwards:** First time.

**Paul:** What do you remember about being on the train?

**Edwards:** Nothing to remember there, [inaudible 00:43:49] and then you go. I don’t remember nothing.

**Paul:** Your father brought you to Utica?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Where did he take you in Utica?

**Edwards:** He rent a house.

**Paul:** What did the house …?

**Edwards:** On Bleecker Street.

**Paul:** On Bleecker?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Bleecker Street like in New York. Can you describe the house for me, what did it look like on the inside?

**Edwards:** It looked like the houses. I can’t remember.

**Paul:** Did your father want you to get a job, when you got to Utica?

**Edwards:** We didn’t get a job first time, it take two weeks then we get the job. We work in the mill.

**Paul:** What did you do?

**Edwards:** My brother and I in the mill we make [inaudible 00:44:55], we used to make [foreign language 00:44:51].

**Wadih:** [Fingers 00:44:58]?

**Edwards:** Yeah the finger something like it.

**Wadih:** For what? [Foreign language 00:45:01]?

**Edwards:** Rock and …

**Wadih:** Wait a minute, what’s …

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:45:07].

**Wadih:** Which factory did you work in?

**Edwards:** The Utica Heater.

**Wadih:** I see okay.

**Paul:** Utica Heater?

**Wadih:** They used to make grates for the …

**Edwards:** They made the grates for the furnace, stove, everything.

**Wadih:** They made grates that’s why I want to know what factory, grates for the furnace.

**Paul:** Making metal grates?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** How much did you get paid, do you remember?

**Edwards:** $15 a week.

**Paul:** What were your hours that you worked?

**Edwards:** From eight o’clock till four.

**Paul:** Did you work with other immigrants?

**Edwards:** No.

**Paul:** You were the only immigrants there that you know?

**Edwards:** After, I say I don’t want to work in the factory I’m going to open a store. I opened grocery store first.

**Paul:** What year did you open the grocery store?

**Edwards:** I don’t remember what year, 1923 I think, 23, 24.

**Paul:** You’d been here a couple of years before that happened?

**Edwards:** Yeah, because I didn’t want to work in the mill.

**Paul:** Why didn’t you want to work in the mill?

**Edwards:** Because I didn’t come to work in the mill, I want to be.

**Paul:** Did your brother stay working in the mill?

**Edwards:** No, they stay with me. You open and close [inaudible 00:46:31] and then we open a shoe store after.

**Paul:** What about your mother, did she get a job in America?

**Edwards:** No. She worked at home.

**Paul:** Was your father …

**Edwards:** Make the cook.

**Paul:** Still selling cows and sheep at that point?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** In Utica he was still selling livestock?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** How come you didn’t want to go into that biasness?

**Edwards:** I don’t like it. I open and close for the business I make good money, very good money. We opened the shoe store, from the grocery to the shoe business.

**Paul:** Tell me how you learned English?

**Edwards:** I learn English from the customer. The customer used to come in in the store, “Give me red potatoes,” I give her tomatoes, I don’t know nothing. The customer learned me, they go show me, “This is this,” they tell me the name.

**Paul:** Was it difficult for you to learn English?

**Edwards:** No difficult, I used to be happy, I sing all the time. I’ll tell you the truth, I love America, I love the people, because these people over here is a good people, they like each other.

**Paul:** Were most of your customers’ people who had been immigrants who came from Europe?

**Edwards:** No, all coming they all Utica. All Utica customer, nobody come from the old country.

**Paul:** Did anyone ever make fun of you because you were an immigrant?

**Edwards:** Nobody make fun. Everybody laugh and learn me how we do it.

**Paul:** They helped you rather than make fun of you?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did you become a citizen?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** When did you become a citizen?

**Edwards:** I think 1931 I be citizen.

**Paul:** Can you tell me a little of what you had to do to become a citizen?

**Edwards:** I go to school and learn.

**Paul:** What things did they teach you?

**Edwards:** When you go in the school, I don’t know. They didn’t teach me nothing, I read the book and then they tell you, ask you sometime who is the president who is this, who is this. I learn them.

**Paul:** How did you feel when you became a citizen?

**Edwards:** I feel good. I feel happy.

**Paul:** Did your parents become citizens?

**Edwards:** Everyone.

**Paul:** Everyone did?

**Edwards:** Except my mother.

**Paul:** Why not your mother?

**Edwards:** She didn’t go to school. My father is citizen I think she be citizen too, that’s what they’re saying.

**Paul:** Could be.

**Edwards:** Yeah, that’s what they’re saying.

**Wadih:** That time the law changed several times.

**Paul:** It did, frequently yeah. Did your parents ever want to go back to live in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** No.

**Paul:** Did your parents ever go back to visit?

**Edwards:** No.

**Paul:** Did you ever go back to visit?

**Edwards:** No, neither one.

**Paul:** Do you still have family in Lebanon?

**Edwards:** I tell you the truth, my brother and I we decided to go to Lebanon, but after he changed, I don’t know why he changed. After we bought the clothes, we take the picture and everything. He stopped and I stopped too, imagine, I don’t know why he changed really.

**Paul:** Do you think of yourself as being more Lebanese or more American?

**Edwards:** Now?

**Paul:** Now. How do you think of yourself?

**Edwards:** I like both of them. I never forget Lebanon, you can’t forget yourself.

**Paul:** What part of you is truly Lebanese? What part of your personality?

**Edwards:** We love Lebanese, but we didn’t love that people they kill each other. We love it, we loved our country. Over here now we love the America, America is the best country in the whole world. I always say it.

**Paul:** Before we end is there something else that you would like to sing for us? Could you sing something else for us?

**Edwards:** Yeah.

**Paul:** On tape go ahead.

**Edwards:** You want me to sing?

**Paul:** Yeah, I want you to sing go ahead.

**Edwards:** [Inaudible 00:51:34]?

**Paul:** Sing in Arabic or Syriac.

**Edwards:** In Arabic [singing foreign language 00:51:40].

**Paul:** Thank you very much.

**Edwards:** You’re welcome.

**Paul:** Mr. Shaheen I want to thank you very much for letting me come over and ask questions. It’s an interesting interview. This is Paul Seacrest signing off with Fued Shaheen on April 27th Thursday 1995 in the presence of Mr. Zoghbi. Again thank you.

**Edwards:** You’re welcome.