Narrator: Nelle Bogosian
Interviewer: Tina M. Young
Date/Place: 14 Nov 01; [redacted] Granite City, IL; kitchen

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

Tina Young: Okay, this is Tina Young interviewing Nelle Bogosian at her home in, in her kitchen at [redacted] in Granite City, it is November 14, 2001. This is tape one, side one. Okay, well the very first question I've got is just a very general one...where were you born, and what is your relationship with, to Lincoln Place?

Nelle Bogosian: I was born at 901 Niedringhaus Avenue, Granite City, Illinois, and I lived in Lincoln Place for 63 years before I had to move.

Young: Could you, this is a very formula question...could you just state and spell your name for the record.

Bogosian: My name is Nelle, N-e-l-l-e, last name is Bogosian, B-o-g-o-s-i-a-n.

Young: Okay, thank you. [movement of recorder closer to Bogosian] Sorry... [tape stops, then restarts] How did you come to, your family come to live in Lincoln Place?

Bogosian: Well, my, my father came first in 1914, he's, he came from Van, V-a-n Armenia, and his parents could see that there was going to be war, so he came first in order to bring the rest of the family here, make way for them. But then in 1917, United States entered the war, so, of course, he couldn't go back to bring them. He signed up as a volunteer, to go back as, like, a freedom fighter, whatever you want to call them. But they, he couldn't get

out of the country. So, then, came the Armenian massacre, Turkish massacre, April 15, 1915, and he lost contact of my mother, and the time he came, my brother was born, and she was pregnant with another child. So, I think there was epidemic of small pox, or scarlet fever, what it was, during the WWI, so the little baby got sick and she died. And my father didn't have contact with them for twelve years, because of the war, you know, they were refugees going from, walking from country to country...wherever they could get, find freedom. And then, somehow or other, through the Armenian papers, English and Armenian papers that were going back and forth, people were looking for one another, families from the States, and from there, from Armenia...somehow, he wrote in, in one of the, put my mother's name in, and my brother's name in, and the rest of the family's name in, and that's how they made contact, correspondence. And, so then, he had them come to Istanbul, it was Constantinople at the time, to wait for a visa...and they waited there for two years to get a visa to the United States. First, he brought my mother, my brother and his eldest nephew because he was a boy, he was the eldest. And then, a year later, he brought them here in June 1925, and then in January of 19-. no 19-, yes, 1925, and then January 1926 he brought his brother, his wife and the others, the younger son, to the United States, and we all lived together. And at that time, Niedringhaus was Pacific Avenue, I, we lived at 901 Pacific Avenue, Olive.

Young; So the, did the grandfather, your father's father die...?

Bogosian: He got, his mother got killed by the Turks, his father

got killed by the Turks, his niece got killed by the Turks...it was a massacre, I think it was, some people say a million and a half, and some people say two million people were massacred and you should hear their stories, the people that survived, how terrible it was. And the Turks to this day deny it. So all the Armenians want is for them admit it and there will be peace. That's all, they just want to admit that, you know, the massacre occurred. It was the first massacre of the century, or genocide.

Young: Did the United States, was this anything published, or, or in regular newspapers?

Bogosian: They say it was, it was published and they were starving, or course, just like the other countries are now, and they, and that's when, the children were taking, like, pennies to school, like, "Feed the Starving Armenians," that's where that comes from. Not that we were starving, but that's the, was to help them. Was a lot, everyone admits it, I mean, you know, but except the Turks. They deny it, not only the Armenians, they did it to the Macedonians, they did it to the Lebanese, they did it to the Syrians, the Greeks...the Greeks dislike them also...because, you know, my generation heard it from, you know, our parents what went on...

Young: First hand accounts...

Bogosian: First hand account. That's why I was born here.

Young: How did your mother come to this country?

Bogosian: They came by boat, I guess like a banana boat. My mother brought, first my mother brought my, my father brought my

mother, had my mother and my brother and her eldest nephew here, they came like on a banana boat, or whatever you want to call it, you know. And the first time, oh! [excited] And then when they were in Algiers, coming by boat, my mother, the boys went out to do something, the two boys, and my brother came back, he was very obedient, but my mother, my father's nephew was a little mischievous, you know, and he didn't, the two boys stayed out, the boat was taking off, my mother had to get on the boat to leave. So, she said she was crying and everything, so finally they sent a motor boat out after them, to pick them up, [laughter] and bring them to the boat. And then when they got to New York City, it was the first time they saw a black person, and they kept, you know, kept following... My father went to New York to pick them up, and they kept following him, they didn't know what this black person was. [laughter]

Young: [laughter] Well, I guess if you've, you know, never seen somebody who looks so very different, I would imagine that would have been a...

Bogosian: Yes...so, that's the story on that. And then went to school here, you know, graduated from school. And then my brother went to military, of course, WWII, but he didn't go, he didn't have to go. He, because he was an alien, but, of course, all his buddies went, so, when he was drafted, he went also. And then when he got, because he wasn't a citizen, he didn't have to go, so then when he got out, after the war, they gave him his citizen, the government gave him citizenship papers.

Young: After the war.

Bogosian: After the war, yes.

Young: I guess that's the least they owed him, huh?

Bogosian: Right. [laughter]

Young: What is your earliest memories of Lincoln Place, as a child.

Bogosian: My kindergarten days. I don't know how we all communicated because we learned to speak English at Miss Prather's school. Because we, our parents were immigrants and we spoke our native tongues in the house, when we got out on the street or the playground or kindergarten, I don't know how we communicated, really, because none of us could speak English, you know. We had no problems when we went to school, or special ed, or anything, and we all came out pretty good.

Young: Speaking of Miss Prather...

Bogosian: [correcting pronunciation] Prather.

Young: Prather. Is it Prather?

Bogosian: Prather.

Young: Prather. The Community Center was already built by then?

Bogosian: No, no, no... That was built, I believe in 1924, or '25. See, everyone, all the men worked at the, at the American Steel, Nesco, and General Steel and Granite City Steel. So, Commonwealth, it was General Steel, it was called Commonwealth at that time before they merged, built that building for the children and the people of the community. We had three bakeries there, oven bricked bakeries built, made the pita and the, you know, sour dough breads.

And people from all over came to buy it on Sundays, and I think we had about four barber shops, people all over town, men did, came to get their hair cut, and there were about twelve taverns, no fight, nothing, you know. It was nice, and we had a beauty shop in town, two of them...three.

Young: I noticed, just looking at old directories, that most of the businesses, well, all of them that I could list, were on Niedringhaus/Pacific, is that true, is that most of the businesses?

Bogosian: Yes, that was all business area. And the Hungarians built Hungarian Home on 1800 Spruce, and now, the Mexicans have it. I think, well the Hungarians moved out, or they passed, you know how everybody moves out...and the, I think they gave it to the Mexicans for the Mexican honorary society, for like a dollar, just legally. And they really re-did the whole building, and they had stairs there.

Young: When you were a child did you go much to the, that Baptist Mission that was down the road?

Bogosian: Oh! We'd go to, if you didn't go to Sunday school it was a sin! Miss Prather, she ran the Methodist Sunday school...if you didn't go to Sunday school it was a sin. We'd go to Miss Prather's Sunday school an nine o'clock Sunday mornings, then in the afternoons if we didn't go to the movies, walk to the movies, we'd go to the Baptist Mission there.

Young: What did they try to teach to you, or instill in you in the Baptist...

Bogosian: Nothing really, it was just, you know, religious stories

and regular church. We all enjoyed it.

Young: Now, I know from talking to a couple of other people that there was a shared church in the neighborhood? It was a Macedonian and....

Bogosian: Oh, yes! Yes. That was St. ~~Ceril~~ Cyril Church. And the Armenians shared it with the Macedonians, it belonged to them, you know, it alternated.

Young: Did they have, what kind of role did that, a shared church, play in, in making the neighborhood seem one, as far as, you know, different ethnicities, different people?

Bogosian: The majority of the people were Catholics, the Mexicans and the Hungarians, Italians, so they would go to St. Jo's Church. We had no problems what so ever.

Young: Were the, was the Mexican population, did they come in around the same time, or did they come later than...

Bogosian: Well the Hungarians settled in Lincoln Place, and they use to call it Hungary Hollow, because of the Hungarians, and it was down in the, you know, down in the, like a little belly, and then when Miss Prather came into the community, she changed it to Lincoln Place. I guess because of Abraham Lincoln, freedom, I don't know.

Young: She initiated the name? That's one thing...

Bogosian: People called us honkies, they were wrong because a honky is a Hungarian. That's a nick-name for a Hungarian. But, and then there were a lot of Mexican in town, too, they were all nice people, no problems. No, we didn't have any fights, or shoot

ups, or whatever you want to call them, we got along well. All our parents knew one another, we all knew how we were all related, you know. To this day, we're, I'm friends with, you know, a lot of them...keep in touch with them. And the pool room was Sim's place, was the center of the town.

Young: When did that open as a pool hall?

Bogosian: 1928, my father opened it, and then my brother passed in January '88, and then I just closed the pool, because it was a big building. I couldn't stay there by myself, and then I moved here.

Young: How did the neighborhood change from when you were a kid to, as and adult, and being older, how did the neighborhood change?

Bogosian: Well, when the men came back from the military, from the war, you know, and then they'd get married, they moved out a little by little, it thinned out that way. I wished they, we had a, because, you know where 1800 is on Maple Street and Spruce Street?

Young: Relatively...

Bogosian: Okay, that was all nothing but fields, and had, they people built and added on, it would have been a wonderful neighborhood because it's very clean. Saturday mornings, everybody is washing their porch, washing the steps, brick steps and sidewalks, you know. It was a wonderful neighborhood.

Young: You mentioned washing the steps and, what not, is that a European, is that very much a European kind of tradition to wash the stoops, and what not?

Bogosian: I don't know, I don't know...everything had to, everything had to be clean, I don't know. And then on Saturday

mornings what we had to do, the kids, we had to go to the club house, we called it the club house, not Community Center. We went, we'd go to the club house and Miss Prather would give us a rag, and a broom and everything, and we had to clean the bathroom, we had to clean the whole building, you know. And then there was a big play ground there, big play ground. They had a big sand box, we'd go, like, in the summer time, we had to go to Bible school for six weeks, and then we received different merits if we memorized like the 23rd Psalm, the hundredth Psalm, different things, you know. And, and then if you passed all these things you got a crown, a star for each, I think, I don't know how many it was, and then she'd, you'd get a Bible. And then, after Sunday school we had like arts and crafts. I was like seven years old, they put a needle and a thread and a piece of cloth, and you'd fold it and we learned by hand how to do our handkerchiefs, you know, like a handkerchief, then. And what else did they have? We made dresses, we assisted, of course, because we were too young. I was nine years old when I start, made a dress. I didn't cut it out, or anything, but they taught us what to do, you know. And we had, we were monitored, and we did embroidery work and the boys did wood craft, and then at end of the season, at the end of our, we'd have a big exhibition, and a, everything would be on display, the embroidery, all the hand work and everything. And then we'd have like a program, and our, it was a big affair, and our parents would come, and, you know look at everything, it was cute. [laughter]

Young: Well, I guess it would, gives the kids something to do...

Bogosian: We were busy all summer, we had softball teams. Friday nights during the winter was girls night, on, in basketball. We had every, we had softball, you name it, we had it.

Young: It sounds like a lot, organized small community.

bogosian: Right.

Young: Now you went to school in Lincoln Place...

Bogosian: No we went to Washington School...

Young: Washington.

Bogosian: Well, actually, Lincoln Place is in West Granite, but we never considered it West Granite, they were West Granite, we were Lincoln Place. And, and there was always rivalry, you know, between the kids.

Young: But the school was in West Granite, then?

Bogosian: Yes, Washington School it was down...

Young: That's the little neighborhood that's right next to you...

Bogosian: Yes. It's on West 20th, it was on West 20th, it's an empty lot now.

Young: Did you then, did they have public schools in Granite City proper that you went to?

bogosian: Yes, that was, it was all Granite City proper.

Young: Well, I just...

Bogosian: I went to kindergarten there, because there was no other kindergarten in town. People didn't even know what a kindergarten was.

Young: When you were in school, with, let's say, the other kids, as you were older, did you feel different from them?

Bogosian: They made us feel, they called us foreigners. We weren't foreigners, we were born here, just like they were. Yes, and it took a long time, after the boys won, the basketball team, because the team was all from Lincoln Place. All the athletes were from Lincoln Place, they kind of, they didn't look down upon us. You talk about being shunned, the blacks don't know what it is. We were foreigners. Children, you know, I guess they learned it at home.

Young: Most probably. That usually begins...

Bogosian: We called them hoosiers. [laughter] Kid stuff, you know? And anyway, we got older we all loved one another.

Young: Did that sense of, you know, feeling different, or being picked on, did that make the community, maybe, stronger, that way, or because people...

Bogosian: No, I think, no our parents, they all ignored it, you know...I'm just talking about how the children were.

Young: Right.

Bogosian: The children could be cruel. Yes, they made us feel terrible, you ask anyone, if you've talked to any one other than me, you know, you'll hear the same story. We were really shunned.

Young: But after...

Bogosian: Not by the teachers, we had wonderful teachers in Washington School. They knew our brothers because, you know, our older siblings.

Young: Well, I found it very political and very funny, in a way, that, you know after the basketball team wins the championship,

then they go ahead and they change the name of Pacific to Niedringhaus...to include, to include it, you know, it was kind of like a way to say...

Bogosian: No...I'll tell you what we did. We had brick streets, you know red brick streets, and the war came, WWII, and they started building the army depot, and they widened the, Pacific Avenue and renamed it Niedringhaus because it actually is Niedringhaus, you know, runs all the way to the hospital from Lincoln Place. Before, it was nothing but farm fields out there. And, and we'd get, and Nesco, they made enameling products, pots and pans and buckets. And we kids, we'd get together and pack a little lunch from home, and go, go junking, we'd go out there. Like if, they were enameled pans, if they were a little chipped, and we'd bring them back home. I don't know why we brought them home, and then we'd take a lunch and sit out there and play and the guys would go, they called it the [unintelligible], they would go swimming there. It was fun, it was a wonderful neighborhood. No one kept their doors locked. No one. It was very nice.

Young: It sounds like it.

Bogosian: I got to know everybody from the pool room, because, you know, everybody came there.

Young: Were there any...I don't know how to say this...because there was a, you had quite a few different ethnic backgrounds living in that same neighborhood, were there any, did everybody basically get along, or was there ever any, any differences maybe due to cultural differences?

Bogosian: No, no, no. We were all equal, we were all, our parents to them, we were good, you know, you didn't know...so what if she was Macedonian, or he was Mexican? We were all friends, we exchanged foods, you know. We learned, we were very international at the time and didn't really even know. I knew what the Macedonians ate, I knew, I ate the Mexican's, we all ate at one another's homes, you know. No, we didn't realize how well exposed we were to things at the time, very naive.

[tape stops then restarts]

Young: Okay, let's see...did people in the neighborhood, growing up together and relating with one another, we were talking a little bit briefly on the break about intermarriages, was there a lot of intermarriages? That was no problem there?

Bogosian: No, none what so ever. Because they knew the families, you know.

Young: Right. So, did it make no difference at all, or was it, was it more, I don't know, did they care less if a woman married someone outside of the family, [meant ethnic group] or if a man married someone outside the family?

Bogosian: I'm sure maybe there was some kind of [unintelligible] between families, but I've never heard of anything, they'd have big weddings at the Hungarian Home, you know. I mean fabulous, big weddings, you know how foreigners are. [laughter] And then when there'd be a funeral at the church, you know, at the St., what was the name of it, Holy Trinity, I think...no, I forgot the name of the, real name of the Bulgarian church that was there...well, at

that time they use to bring the dead to the home, viewing at the home, and then they would take them to church. And then Mr. Todoroff had a band, and he was a Bulgarian man, terrific little band. And they played Armenian music, Mexican music. We had two bands, a Mexican band, Mr. Santa Cruz, and, and then they would march, they put the hearse up at the top of the hill there by American Steel, and then they would give all the kids the flowers, the funeral flowers, and the band would play. And then we would march with the flowers, and the, you know, the [unintelligible] people, everybody marched up to the hill there and got in their cars. Just like they do in New Orleans, you know, that's what we did.

Young: Did that, was that a popular tradition?

Bogosian: Well, I just remember, you know, a couple of times we had a march, we talked about, [unintelligible...trailing off]

Young: When, did that particular tradition come out of any particular ethnic group, or did the whole neighborhood participate?

Bogosian: No...well, the Armenians and the Macedonians and Bulgarians did it that way, but of course, the Hungarians went to St. Jo's which was on this side of the tracks, you know. They were all Catholic. We didn't have a Catholic church in the neighborhood, we had Orthodox and the Baptist Mission.

Young: When did that, I guess that tradition would have stopped...

Bogosian: After they all started dying off [laughter] , I don't remember. I guess they stopped probably, we were, I was probably about ten, or something like that. But as a child you remember

those little things.

Young: Yes, I would imagine because it's a whole, large group of people...with a purpose...

Bogosian: It was nice, now when I think of it, it was nice, you know.

Young: That would be a nice send off.

Bogosian: Yes.

Young: Did the neighborhood have activities, festivities outside of, let's say, Granite City as far as holidays and what not?

Bogosian: Yes, the Mexicans had a fabulous fiesta every summer, it lasted for three days. They had the foods, you played bingo, and they had a dance, Mr. Santa Cruz Mexican, he had his orchestra and they would play and people would dance and make merry, and fun, you know. And then the Armenians would have dances, they were family affairs. The children came, you know, we'd go, that's how we learned our dance, our folk dancing. The Macedonians would have a dance, and then the Hungarian with all their [unintelligible] you know, polkas and all. And we'd go, they'd have it at the Hungarian Home.

Young: You talked a little bit earlier about having school outside of the public school, what was the purpose of these like Armenian schools, and...

Bogosian: Well, it was to teach us Armenian, you know, I mean the reading and writing. And the Bulgarians had it up at their church, and we had it at the Armenian building, we had Armenian school.

Young: Was that ran like in the evenings, then, or weekends?

Bogosian: Yes, in the evenings after, you know, after school. Our teacher came from St. Louis on the street car.

Young: Yes, when St. Louis still had street cars.

Bogosian: Oh yes, I loved the street cars. I use to walk up to by Nesco there to catch the street car to go to St. Louis, and then if you wanted to go to Edwardsville, or Alton, or wherever, then you got off, you know...I loved the street car, it was nice.

Young: So, I'll move you a little bit later on, you know, outside of your childhood...Let's see...well, why don't we talk about your family life...your own family life, outside of your parents.

Bogosian: Like how?

Young: Just, I don't know, were you ever married, did you ever get married?

Bogosian: No, I never did marry.

Young: Okay... Oh! I didn't ask a real simple. You mentioned a brother, do you have any other brother or sisters?

Bogosian: No, no one. They're all, they're all gone, everyone's...I'm the, I'm, I guess, the only Bogosian from that family. There were eight of us, you know, living there, from the original family. Then after me there were other, you know, after they married and had children, now they're grandparents. You know, but I'm, I'm the original. [unintelligible]

Young: But you did have an older brother...

Bogosian: See, let me tell you. My brother, my father brought his brother, his wife and two boys here, okay? My, we all lived together, eight of us, upstairs at 901. My father didn't let his

brother go to work, ever go to work, because, you know, he lived, my mother lived, when she got married, the woman divorces her family and she lives with the male family, right? So she was with them all the time, and she took care of them, the boys and all of that, and we all lived together, then they, the two of them married and went off you know. And they had children, and their children have children now. So, you know, we're like on the third, fourth generation now. Wait... one, two, three, four...[counting to herself]

Young: Do any of these younger kids in the family, do they, have they been taught Armenian language?

Bogosian: Oh, they know words here and there, and then, my little niece that I did a lot of baby-sitting, and she's darling...[unintelligible]... I got the, all those pictures there. But anyway, so I did a lot of baby-sitting for my nieces and nephews, a lot. After I retired, you know, I went on an early out, I said, "Gee, whiz." I want out, the first year I was free. Then the babies started coming. Then, of course, they don't trust anyone...so, I was a volunteer baby-sitter for about ten years. From baby-hood, then I had to take them to pre-school, and then kindergarten, now they're all in school, see. So, then after that, I started volunteering in church.

Young: So, that would be St. Gregory's, right, I passed it coming in.

Bogosian: Right. And then, we're all friends, you know, we all grew up together. But, our, and then, of course, people moved out

of Granite City, like I said the Armenians, a lot of them come through West County, Belleville, a couple from Collinsville.

Young: So when you sold your business, and decided to move out...why did you move out of the neighborhood?

Bogosian: Well, when I, when I was working, my mother became ill, okay. And we didn't want to put her in a nursing home, so I quit my job, and I opened a little boutique downstairs. The building was ours, right. And I did very well there, and people from all over came to buy, in town, and their friends from out of town, they'd bring them out. And then, when my mother passed away, I said, well gee, I mean, I didn't want that responsibility anymore, you know. So then, I went to work for the government, my last, because if you put in five years, and you can retire at sixty-two, you know. So, I went to the government and put in my time.

Young: What, what kind of job was that? Where was that at?

Bogosian: Oh, I, where'd they ship me to? I started out at the depot, and then IRS drafted me. Then I had to go work for the IRS, that was at the Federal building downtown. You know, I didn't like it because if I drove it was like eight dollars all day for parking, you know. So then, I put in a lateral transfer, I stayed there for a year. I put a lateral transfer, and I went to Goodfellow, which from Lincoln Place it was only like fifteen minutes, and if it was, and no parking, and you know, free parking. So then I left, that's where I left work.

Young: What was your very first job?

Bogosian: My very first job... Oh, I didn't go to work when I

graduated. I, you know, I would get up in the morning, clean the pool room, you know, the candy, do my work there, and by noon I was free. And then, I had friends that didn't work, you know, you're young, I didn't want to go to school. And we all would bum in the afternoon. And then after a couple of years I thought I'd better go to work. [laughter] So...I did, I went to General Steel. I was working there in the office, in the clerical work. And then, then when the boys, the men were coming back from military, you know, see they bumped people to get jobs, so I was out of a job again. So, I said, well I think I'll go to school. So I went to secretarial school.

Young: Where at, what...

Bogosian: In St. Louis, downtown. It's called Brown something. They moved here, there, you know, satellites, I guess, in St. Louis and here.

Young: Was it like Sanford-Brown or...

Bogosian: Yes, and Sanford and Brown were separate at that time. Sanford was a little farther out, and Brown was right downtown St. Louis, so I went to Brown and did secretarial work.

Young: Who did you work for once you....

Bogosian: What?

Young: Who did you work for whenever...

Bogosian: I don't even remember the, I went to a legal firm downtown. I don't remember their name. And then my two friends, they wanted to take a vacation, I think we were about nineteen, something like that. They wanted to take, they wanted to go to

Canada. The one girl had relatives up there. So, I couldn't get off so I quit. [laughter] I hadn't been working long, and I quit, and the three of us hopped the train from the, we had a train station in town at the time. We went to Chicago, from Chicago we went to the, I think it was Windsor, not Windsor, I think, not Windsor, what's the other big town there...I can't think of it...we went there, just messed around, you know.

Young: For how long?

Bogosian: We were gone a couple, three weeks, and then we came home. We just went in our jeans and t-shirts, you know, like bums.

Young: Bohemian traveling...[laughter]

Bogosian: Yes. You know what was cute, we were at the train station in, in Detroit, to interchange trains, you know, and there was an elderly woman and she looked so bewildered there, you know, and she had a babushka on, and, and I felt so sorry for her, I kept thinking about our parents, you know. So I went and spoke English to her and asked her if I could help her, and she didn't know English, she showed me her paper with a name and a telephone number to call. And it was an Armenian name. So I said to her, I spoke to her in Armenian, you know, I'm Armenian also. And she said, oh she said, it sounds funny in English, "Oh," she said, "Like the sky opened up and you came to rescue me," you know, so I told her we were interchanging and so, she gave me a nickel, and I didn't take it, to make a phone call, her daughter was going to come, and so I called her daughter, and said I'm so and so, and I met your mother at the train station, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And she's here

waiting for you, and then she started on me, and I said I wasn't all that baloney, you know, but we had to catch a train. So I said, I told the lady, I said, you sit right her, I told her in Armenian, sit right here and your, I told the daughter where I would place her mother, you know, and, you know, be sure to come here and pick her up. And I told her don't move because this is where your daughter is going to pick you up. And the three of us just laughed about it, to this day we laugh about it.

Young: Very fortunate that, that woman ran into you, and vice-versa, or that you showed interest, I mean that's...

Bogosian: Oh, of course. That was cute.

Young: Sounds like you had a lot of freedom when you were, you know, young...

Bogosian: I did.

Young: to just pick up and go and, and do what you wanted...

Bogosian: Well, like I say, our parents knew my friends parents, they were all friends. And the brothers were, we were like one big family there, there was no introduction, this is my cousin, or this is my godmother. We knew everything about one another. It's cute.

[Tape turns off, turns on again at end of small talk]

Bogosian: [at end of small talk began when tape was turned off]...it's still not like eating from someone's kitchen table...

Young: Yes..

Bogosian: ...you know, when you eat out it's different.

Young: Well good grief...well, we were talking about food on our little break here...describe to me what, what do you thing is a

typical Armenian dish, what do you...

Bogosian: You mean what a favorite dish is?

Young: Sure.

Bogosian: A favorite dish is shish-ka-bob, of course with lamb. We were eating shish-ka-bob before it became so nationalized. And pita bread, salad and pilaf, rice, or cracked wheat pilaf. And that's or, or chicken with pilaf, and salad, that's a meal. And then yogurt, always yogurt. We grew up on yogurt. We made it, you didn't buy it in a store, we made it at home. And home made yogurt is completely different than the commercial.

Young: I found that out recently.

Bogosian: Yes, completely different.

Young: Now, the neighborhood had it's grocery stores...

Bogosian: Oh, we had, let me see...Kirchoff's, Barton's, Chris, and... we had four grocery stores. All on Niedringhaus now.

Young: Did they offer...

Bogosian: ...the cleaners...

Young: Did these grocery stores offer certain products that you couldn't buy at, say, a regular, or different grocery store...did they have specific...

Bogosian: Yes, they had the feta cheese, they had the kalimara olives, they had foods that we liked, you know. And you couldn't, well, who ever heard of these, like the kalimaras or the fetas, you know, at that time, other than our people, you know.

Young: Right. Was...

Bogosian: The world was small until after WWII. They were exposed

to everything, pizza, you know, everything they were exposed to, you know, it was a smaller world.

Young: When they started that, or they built that army depot down the road, how did that change the neighborhood, any, if at all?

Bogosian: It was busy. It was busy. There were a lot of military, you know, they, they had a lot of military stationed there. Excuse me, and they would of course go to the barber shops, or here and there, or the bars there. And they had MP's, military police, you know, patrol the streets. They were no problem. People were nice to them because they, themselves had men, boy in the service. They were respected.

Young: Did it financially help all the neighborhood to have all this extra business, then?

Bogosian: Oh, I imagine it did somewhat. And then Lincoln Place, Niedringhaus Avenue when it became, was very busy at, you know, certain hours, like work hours. In the morning, in the evening, very busy. That's, that's when they ...[unintelligible]... in Lincoln Place, too. We were, you know, "hoodlums," according to them. [laughter]

Young: When you were small did a lot of women work outside of the home, or did they...

Bogosian: Yes, during the war they did. They went to work in the plants, you know, the women did. They went to work. They had to, they did that all over the country.

Young: Right. Okay, now when your parents came over, did they, were they able to actually bring much with them, or did, just what

they could carry, or...

Bogosian: No, just what they could carry.

Young: And, did they, let's see, how do I want to put this. How did they, other than, like say with the neighborhood, and the Armenian school, and, you know, just living in a, in a, neighborhood that reinforces your own cultural/ethnic identity, what, was there anything in particular that your parents tried to pass onto you about your heritage, and where you came from? Was there...

Bogosian: No, they just maybe told different stories about, you know, the genocide, you know, what they went through. They went through very tragic times. Just like the people are today, like the world wasn't aware of it or accepted it like today, you know.

Young: Right.

Bogosian: To help one another. No, it was just ignored. You out of tape?

Young: Yes, I'm going to end this side of the tape.

[Tape one, Side B]

Young: Okay, this is Tina Young interviewing Nelle Bogosian in her kitchen at [redacted], in Granite City, IL. It is the fourteenth of November, 2001, and this tape one side two. Now, I want to ask you some more questions about Miss Prather, it sounds like she had a huge impact and influence on the neighborhood. How did you know her?

Bogosian: I guess from kindergarten I knew her, you know.

Young: What, what did she try to do for the kids?

Bogosian: Taught us manners, cleanliness, obedience, you saw that picture, didn't you? She taught us how to carry the chairs, and I still carry it that way. Really. This is how you carry a chair. [gets up and demonstrates] One night I was working at the, helping, I would help out the mingle at St. Gregory's, and this one fellah, I said, he picked up a chair, I said, "Oh don't hold it that way!" I said, I always hold it the way Miss Prather taught us, this way, because if, you know, we'd fall, if you carry it this way, you're more apt to. To this day I hold it this way. He said, "Really, I don't remember." I said, "I do!" [laughter] She, she taught us everything. Everything, you dare not speak back to her. No one, if you came home and told your parents Miss Prather said this or that, they'd say what did you do, you know. You never spoke back to her, or any of you elders.

Young: Now, I read a little bit about her in a few of the articles, but what did you know about her as far as where she came from and her own, her own background?

Bogosian: I didn't think about those things, you know, as a child, you know, think of those things.

Young: But she was just well respected among everybody in the neighborhood?

Bogosian: Very highly respected. Even our parents addressed as Miss Prather.

Young: Was it because she was, she was so involved in helping, was that...

Bogosian: She helped everyone, everyone she helped. I don't think

you'd find another woman like her, you'd have to really hunt and seek before you found one similar to her.

Young: It sounded from what I've read that she really, I mean, what she did she took so seriously, it was twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Bogosian: Right.

Young: That's a huge commitment.

Bogosian: She was sweet.

Young: Now I know she was honored quite a bit when she died and there was a, a big...

Bogosian: She was what?

Young: When she died, there was a huge, you know, they really honored her.

Bogosian: You know, oh, you know what they did? She was Methodist, she went to Niedringhaus Methodist Church, and she, they brought her to the Community Center for people to come view her, it was jam packed in the gymnasium, I remember. I was only about nine years old at the time, and we all had to go the church funeral. She's not buried here, they took her to her home town. I think she was from Murphysboro, somewhere. I'm not quite sure. We had to go, to go pay our last respects to her. Our parents, everybody went, that gym was packed. I remember going to the church, Methodist Church.

Young: It just sounds like, you know, she was just so, so loved and...

Bogosian: We, I had, I loved her and then I had fear too, I guess

for respect, you know. I better not do this or that because Miss Prather would get mad. That's how, that's how we would think of her, you know. [both talking at once, unintelligible]

Bogosian: Very prim and proper, very. I think she was in her sixties when she passed.

Young: Yes, there was an article that, you know, sounds about right. What about, [both talk at once], oh, go ahead.

Bogosian: Who ever you interviewed will say nothing against Miss Prather.

Young: Right.

Bogosian: No one.

Young: What other stand out people were in your community? I mean I, was there anybody, I mean, I know you have the basketball team, and, and the...

Bogosian: You mean who did well from our neighborhood?

Young: Well, who just, who really gave back, or who, who in your mind stands out as a either a child or an adult that really, you know, epitomized the neighborhood as far as their actions? Anybody in particular, or just, was it such a community that everybody kind of...

Bogosian: Well every, all the kids were very sports minded. And then Andy Philip went onto make a name for himself then. And then, you know, he was with three different NBA teams, and then when he was with the St. Louis, they had the Hawk team at one time. In the fifties, it was. My friend and I, we had like season tickets, we'd go. And, I guess a lot of people went to see him play. But he

never, he never put his nose up in the air. He was always like he was from the corner, you know. And who else, [unintelligible] I guess Vas Septimoff, did, he became superintendent of the county schools. That's a big one, being called a foreigner. And then Danny Todoroff, he became high school band director, Elsie Maliff was a band director for the elementary school, she passed away. Who else...I don't know...and one was vice president of the bank, Barry Lohman. He was Macedonian. That's a big [unintelligible] foreigner, you know.

Young: Well, exactly, from, you know, moving...

Bogosian: They, they called us foreigners, that's what I'm referring to. I can't think, one became a big stock broker in California, Pasadena. He passed away, did very well, very, very well. Gee, off hand...

Young: Going back to the neighborhood, where there any, as a woman I'm kind of interested in women's issues and what not, where there specific women's activities that all the women would get together and do, or any women's groups, organizations within the neighborhood?

Bogosian: Oh yes, yes, yes. The Macedonians had a women's organization, the Armenians had the Armenian Relief Society, ARS we call it. And the Mexicans had the Honorary Commission, and the Hungarians had the [unintelligible] Verovase, we all had organizations that fit one another, and they, we, they all had affairs, we joined in with them, you know.

Young: Are these organizations...

Bogosian: Still in existence? The Mexicans are there, they're real big in town, real big. And the Macedonians they have a ladies organization, I don't think they [unintelligible] locally, or not. And, but they have a church guild, of course, in Madison. We have a ladies organization, we have a ladies guild for the church, you know, organization. And we have different affairs, then we have a junior organization. As a fact, as a matter of fact, within, they belong to a, the organization is National Armenian Federation. We're having a dance Saturday night the kids are giving. We bring a band from, I think Detroit, or Chicago, I don't know where that band is coming from. Armenia, everybody dances Armenian, no American music. Yes. It's fun, you know. No, Madison was loaded with Polish people. And they had Polish [unintelligible], they still have it. So, we, we all had organizations. And we had Girl Scout, we had the Brownies and Girl Scouts, we had Boy Scouts. Miss Prather say to that.

Young: Again, Miss Prather's influence, that's, that's a good thing.

Bogosian: Right, right.

Young: I took a walking tour of the neighborhood and...

Bogosian: It's run down now...

Young: ...and I noticed that there's a lot of vacant lots along Niedringhaus, and a lot of closed businesses and what not.

Bogosian: We had two dry goods stores...

Young: When did all these, when was the beginning of all these stores starting to close, was it...

Bogosian: I guess, I guess about ten years after the war, [unintelligible] I'm talking about the WWII. Because of the guys went to school, you know, they got free education so they went onto college, they all made something of themselves, you know. And they outgrew it, then they get married and nowhere to live, instead of building, they moved out.

Young: In one interview, the person basically said, well, you know, the time for the neighborhood has passed. It, it basically, you know, served it's purpose, you know, for a length of time, but, but, the time for the neighborhood is passed. What do you think about that?

Bogosian: I don't believe that. Had everyone stayed in Lincoln Place and added those areas I told you, we would have been better than the St. Louis Hill, the hill in St. Louis. But they moved out, see.

Young: Right. Well do you see, do you see the neighborhood...

Bogosian: Now Paul Padrozzi, he bought our building on the corner there, he's done a lot for the neighborhood. He goes up and down the streets, picks up cans, beer cans and all that. And he keeps those two lots very nice and trimmed all the time. I think he added a lot to the neighborhood.

Young: Do you see people, you know, coming back and improving it, or is it a different crowd moving in that neighborhood now?

Bogosian: Different crowds have moved in, there's some that are still there, you know, but different people have moved in.

Young: So, definitely the nature of the neighborhood definitely

forever changed, then.

Bogosian: We should have stayed there. We should all, not, not like my brother's generation, they should have built and stayed there. And I've heard other people say it, too. Instead of moving on. I don't know, money was tight, you know, I had my first job I was making a hundred and thirty-five dollars a month. But I lived, I'd buy a bond each payday and put half my check in the savings and the other half I'd blow. I didn't have to pay room and board. I didn't have to pay room and board or anything. [whispers and laughs] Then I'd run out of money and I'd go to my father, and say, I don't have any money can I have some money. And he'd say, "You see the register there, you go get what you want, but don't tell your mother." Then my room and board, you know what it was? I'd get paid every two weeks, and I'd go and buy, he liked Stag beer. I don't know if they have Stag beer today.

Young: They do.

Bogosian: I went to Madison, and I'd buy two cases of beer for five dollars and bring it home to him. And then for my first car, I wouldn't spend my money, I asked him for money, and he gave me five hundred dollars, "don't tell your mother," everything was "don't tell your mother," you know.

Young: But would your mother have really cared?

Bogosian: No, my mother would, if I borrowed money from my mother she'd bug me until I paid her, but I would never pay her. I'd tell her [unintelligible] says I don't have to pay you back. Terrible. Well, there were three boys, and they were from thirteen, eighteen

years older than me, and then I came along, you know. I got it, I never was deprived of anything, you know, in my adult years.

Young: Did...

Bogosian: I always got what I wanted. Really.

Young: It's a good thing.

Bogosian: It was rough when I moved on my own. [laughter]

Young: Then you realized, hey...

Bogosian: No, it's not that rough. We had coffee houses...we sip, we drank [unintelligible] you know, coffee, that's coffee they served.

Young: Is that a Turkish coffee...

Bogosian: [dramatically mad] Don't call it Turkish, they don't have coffee.

Young: Oh! I'm sorry.

Bogosian: Middle Eastern.

Young: Middle Eastern, that's it.

[gets up, moving around kitchen]

Bogosian: They, they are, they are just so dumb. You know what? I had a friend that came here from Istanbul in the fifties, it was, she came and she stayed with me a couple of times. She was really, my mother's husbands, you know, a little blood relation, really. And she couldn't get along with their kids, so she come and stayed with us, so, and she'd say the Turks are so stupid, she said. She said you could take, in Armenian she's telling me this, you can take a piece of metal and paint it yellow, you know, like gold, and you could pass it off to them as gold. All the business commerce

couldn't help [unintelligible] the Jews, of course, Armenians and Greeks. See, Istanbul was belonged to the Greeks at one time. And then, when I was self-employed, you know, I had my own little shop, and all the represent, all the sales reps are Jewish, that's their business, clothing, you know. And this one man told me, he said that Istanbul was beautiful, but it was too bad that it was in the hands of the Turks, because it was dirty. I'm not saying that they all are, you know, that was another generation, darn it, admit that it happened. [talking to herself] Where's my...[pots and pans clanking] I should have made some for you, [referring to coffee] You can buy them here not at the Middle Eastern store, you know, in St. Louis. [referring to coffee pots]

Young: Is it similar to, I've had Bosnian coffee, from a Bosnian restaurant, is it, is it strong like that, as far as..

Bogosian: You know, I'll show you. I don't know how they make their coffee. There's water in this...[getting the coffee ready]...if you'd like to taste it, I'll make you some.

Young: If it's not a problem.

Bogosian: No, it's not.

[tape stops, then resumes]

Young: Okay, well we're back, and we're enjoying some Middle Eastern coffee. Right now it's a little too hot for me to even drink.

Bogosian: You're not suppose to drink, you're suppose to sip.

Young: Well, sip. [laughter] Well, this little sucker is really hard to even sip. So, where, what stores now do you go to, to get

certain things.

Bogosian: To shop? Oh, when I want certain things I go to St. Louis, I go to the Lebanese store, and buy stuff, you know, like...is it bad tasting? [asking me about coffee]

Young: No, it's got a very nutty flavor to it.

Bogosian: That's it, that's the... I go like, different foods, I wish I had some pastries here so you could taste... [unintelligible]...send my nephew, cookies and his children, they like the cookies that I made, Armenian cookies, you know.

Young: Now, we were talking earlier about, like, the coffee houses down in Lincoln Place. When..

Bogosian: It was for the men only. They went in there and all they had in the coffee houses was maybe a few candy bars and they sat and drank, no hard liquor, they sat and drank Middle Eastern coffee and played cards. Ain't it cute.

Young: I guess it keeps them out of trouble.

Bogosian: You know what time it was? Nine o'clock in the morning, eleven thirty you'd, they'd go home for lunch. One o'clock they would go back to the coffee house, you know, then go home for dinner and they'd go back there until nine o'clock in the evening. That's where the older men congregated.

Young: Did these coffee houses, did they close in the 1950s, too, with all the businesses, or...

Bogosian: Oh, they must have closed, maybe, yes, early fifties, you know, they all passed on. Our parents were dying off, the generation was leaving us.

Young: And that particular tradition just didn't survive. Replace maybe by a pool hall? That'd be fun.

Bogosian: No.

Young: It sounds like you traveled a lot.

Bogosian: I did.

Young: So was that, was that like a big thing in your life then, to just pick up and go?

Bogosian: My friends, we'd get together, and God, we went to Mexico a few times, Mexico City, and when Acapulco was big. ....[unintelligible]...Tosco, now they go more to the beaches, you know, Acapulco has beautiful beaches. I went to Brazil. I went to Cuba before came in, Batiste, he had it then. It was swinging. You think Las Vegas was something, that was, what's his name, Mugsy? Bugsy?

Young: Bugsy.

Bogosian: You know, it was, it was underworld covering. The clubs were out of this world. Loved it, it was very international. You know, we stayed at the National, on one, the hotel, this side was the Gulf of Mexico, this was the Caribbean, and right here was, like, the Atlantic Ocean, right smack, too bad... At first Castro was buddies with U.S., then they went off with Russia when we [unintelligible] and they became communistic. Oh, United States, Hawaii. I went to Hawaii, we just got back, we just got in San Francisco when JFK was assassinated.

Young: You always...

Bogosian: They didn't have tours, then. Today they have tours for

everything, they have tours.

Young: Well, that's kind of a good thing, though because then can explore something on your own without it being fed to you and, and you see what they want you to see.

Bogosian: Well, they had tour guides wherever you went, you know. We went every where. The only place I haven't been yet, I've been to England, except, I want to go to Greece, you know. And I never did make it to Spain and Italy. I've been everywhere else.

Young: So you...

Bogosian: The Middle East, you know, the Far East. Central America, United States practically every where.

Young: What are, what stands out in your mind about certain places that you've been as far as, wow, you know, I've always wanted to see that, or did you just go, just to go?

Bogosian: The Eiffel Tower, they call it the Tour d'Eifel [spell], I didn't know what they were talking about when I was there, you know. But at night, it looks like gems, looks like diamonds! You know, when they call it the city of lights? The Eiffel Tower is breath-taking. Of course [unintelligible] would be for me.

Young: Yes. So, you've been to Armenia. When was the first time you went there?

Bogosian: I went in September '91, when they, I was there for their vote, first election. [clanking sound is Bogosian banging coffee cup on saucer] You know, and they voted no, I mean yes, they wanted to separate, they called it "Yes." The yes iota in Armenian. I always wanted to go to Armenia. That was the weirdest

feeling, when you, you first put your foot down on Armenian, you know, your home, your parents homeland, the weirdest feeling. And go to places they've talked about, you know, it was strange. But I loved it, I really did, it was different, you know.

Young: So you were able to maybe go to some of the places that your parents talked about, or...

Bogosian: Yes, a couple of places, not much, because they were on the eastern part. That part belongs to Turkey now, but when they were refugees they were in the Armenian part now.

Young: How were, how were you perceived, or how were you seen by the Armenians that still lived there? Did they, was it very, was it like...

Bogosian: Oh, they, no, no, they were fascinated because I spoke Armenian. You know, they thought being in America, you, you're lost. They, no one, wherever you go, they don't realize how big the United States is, you know, like, Spain is the size of the state of Texas. You know, the British Isles are the size of state of Illinois, you know, they, they'd ask you, do you know, are you near Boston, or towns they'd know. Are you near Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. Those are four towns that are suppose to exist in the United States, that's all they know. So, when I looked up my friends family in, cousins, in Armenia I told them we lived in St. Louis, near St. Louis, and they never heard of St. Louis, they just knew Granite City when their parents used to exchange... Well, how could you live in St. Louis, Missouri when, you know, the letter, your address is...so I said, "Have you ever

heard of the Mississippi River?" "No." Of course, not. So, then, I went, I'd tell them, I lived smack dab in the middle of the country. And, and they didn't understand how big it was. So, on our second meeting, he brought a map in, in Armenian, of the United States, and he showed me the Mississippi River. And, and it was all in Armenian, though, and I showed him where we lived.

Young: So they were surprised that, what you would come back, or that somebody would come back, and that you would know the language, and...

Bogosian: No, they were, they couldn't believe, it was hard for them to take that I spoke Armenian I didn't, you know, I could communicate with them in Armenian. Of course, everybody knows French, wherever you go everybody knows French. And I don't know anything in French. So, I didn't have a hard time, then I went back the second time with the Armenian Relief Society they were having an international convention there. You know what was cute, Gorbachev was still in office, I think that's when they had the coup in August, and I left in September, anyway, we were up in the mountains, beautiful, up in the mountains. And school, it was lunch time, they were out, the kids, the kids are dressed alike going to school, the boys wore a little short pants, and the girls wore...they all dressed alike. So, I guess they knew we were American citizens, and this little boy, he must have been about eight, nine years old. He came up to me, in Armenian he says, do you like Gorbachev, you know, and I, in Armenian said, no, do you like him. And he says, no, real strong, and then here comes the

school teacher and the principal, "Boy, what is your name, who's your father and blah, blah, blah, blah, don't bother these people!" It was so cute. It was cute.

Young: Well, it sounds like...oh, I'm still working on it. [Bogosian motions to coffee] It is strong, it is strong coffee.

Bogosian: Not bad, though, with the cardamon in it.

Young: No, it's good.

Bogosian: My father, that's the only thing he knew how to make was coffee and he'd drink this is a standard cup.

Young: Well, it sounds like you came from a rather international, cosmopolitan type of neighborhood with all the different...

Bogosian: Positively. I wish everybody...

Young: ...and then, you, you know, sounds like you kind of lived your life that way as far as traveling and going about. Where you off to next?

Bogosian: I don't know, what with the situation, I was supposed to go on a, back in June, we have an Armenian heritage cruise every January. And that departs from Fort Lauderdale to the Caribbean. And I never cared to go, I never cared to even go on a cruise, or I'd have been on one years ago. But my friend from Washington [unintelligible] she said, let's go on that cruise. I said, I don't want to go, you know, I just explained, if I'd wanted to I'd gone a long time ago. Cruises just interest me. She said, oh please go, I said oh, I'll think about it. So she calls me a couple of weeks later, because you got to register months in advance. And I, I said okay, I said if you asked me to go to hell

with I probably would, you know. And, this is all in Armenian talk, because she's our former pastors wife. And so, I said okay. Well, you got to make your reservations in June to go in January. I really don't, didn't care to go, I didn't then, so I made, she said, "Call United Airlines, they have a real nice rate for one hundred eighty dollars from Washington to Fort Lauderdale, and today's the last day." So I called and made my reservations, and I sent in my money for the cruise, so I got, so I got to go to...it's all paid for, you know.

Young: Well...

Bogosian: I love flying. I love flying, it doesn't bother me. I don't know if I want to go anywhere else. What else...I don't know. I feel like, you know what I really enjoyed? We were, my friend and I were, she's from Chicago area, she was here visiting her sister in the spring, and we were talking, you know, casually, talking about going, I said, "I always wanted to go to San Antonio." For the Mexican festivities, you know, and she said, "Let's go in May, Cinco de Mayo." I said, oh no, I said, I'd rather go in September, that's ~~there~~ their independence day, that's a bigger affair. So we, I got all kinds of literature from travel bureau in Texas, we made reservations on our flight, you know, companion flies free. And we were departing on the twelfth of September, and you know what happened on the eleventh, our flight was canceled, and they didn't know when they could book us again. So that happened on a Tuesday, and then Wednesday, Thursday we were canceled out and I said, why don't, so I told her, I said, why

don't we drive to Memphis. I said I've always wanted to go to Graceland. And I wanted to go to B.B. Kings and eat some bar-b-qued ribs. She said, okay, so we drove in one day for the weekend. It was nice, you know.

Young: So what do you think about what happened...[interrupted]

Bogosian: Do you see that in there? [referring to the coffee grounds as bottom of cup] Now, see the grounds?

Young: Yes.

Bogosian: Let the grounds cool a little bit, and then you turn it over like this [demonstrates] and let it cool off.

Young: And then after it cools off, then it's, you can read what's at the bottom of the cup, you can read it...okay.

Bogosian: They'll tell you you're going to receive a letter, you know, if you're unmarried, a girl friend or boy friend, and they tell you silly things, you know.

Young: But that was...

Bogosian: And you laugh.

Young: Well, that kind of brings me to a subject. What, what kind of, well, a related subject. When you were growing up, did your parents tell you folk stories, or do you have any kind of stories that were strictly Armenian in origin and what not?

Bogosian: Oh yes. When I was a child, yes. They told us all kinds of stories, you know, children stories.

Young: Did they have any kind of, you know, like the Grimm's Fairy Tales have like moral messages in them, did the Armenian folk stories have sort of a ...

Bogosian: You knew we have, we have a poet that everyone quotes all the time, Syod Novyd [spell] I want to show you something interesting. [gets up and leaves room talking] This belongs...[tape turns off and then resumes]

Young: Okay, let me back track then, and let, we were talking about, you were talking about people of Armenian...

Bogosian: ...descent.

Young: ...descent being very successful in this country. Do you think that was maybe because they were first born immigrant, ant their parents wanted them to succeed...?

Bogosian: I think because...their parents always emphasized education. They didn't want, they didn't want their children to work in the, do laborer work like they did, you know. I know that for a fact, yes. And they became very successful throughout the world, I would say, you know, as far as being in Congress, congressmen and writers. The majority of them are in the jewelry business and floor covering, gold business and oriental rugs. They're, they're into everything, medicine, big on medicine. They've been in, they're in the movies. Cher, Sarkesian is her last name. I don't know, in all walks of life they've done very well. I think, as immigrant parents were people who have been here for generations that have lost their, you know, descent and done better. Really.

Young: You were talking about going on your trip to Texas, in San Antonio and how your, how it had to be put off because it was September twelfth, that, you know, you were supposed to leave and

everything was canceled as far as flights. I was just wondering as to what's your opinion of what, what do you think about happened September eleventh with the terrorist attacks in the United States?

Bogosian: Oh, I don't know. I think we were just, we just, we've been sleeping, unless they're not telling us. And I don't think they should tell us everything for our safety, you know, really. And I don't think they should condemn the Muslims they way they do. They're different kinds of Muslims just like we have different Christians that, in this country. That's terrible.

Young: So, do you think, do you think the government is handling the situation right, because, you know, we're officially at war, and I mean, is that...

Bogosian: Oh, I'm going to leave it up to them. I mean they're, suppose to be guarding, you know, I have to believe in what they're doing is the proper thing to do. They know better than us, suppose to, anyway.

Young: Well, there you go, that's the trick.

Bogosian: This is cold now. [referring to coffee grinds]

Young: Let's look at what our...

Bogosian: Oh my...[being dramatic when looking at my coffee grinds] It looks like three people talking. [laughter] I'm going to bingo so I got to work in the [unintelligible] tomorrow night, and I hope we're jibber-jabbering in the kitchen. I think I see an animal, too. I don't know, animals are good, suppose to be. I don't know, I, you just make up things, you know.

Young: So, make up things? Okay, well then...

Bogosian: And this is suppose to be mean something...oh, you're going to get a letter from far away, it's fun, it's cute.

Young: It's kind of a way to just to socialize and have fun.

Bogosian: Yes, but some of them really believe in that garbage, you know, and I've always said that if your Christian, you believe in God, you don't believe in this, this is fun, don't you think?

Young: Well.... We talked a little earlier about different types of folk stories, or whatever, do you have a favorite one, or do you have any...

Bogosian: ...story?

Young: ...yes, or maybe imagery from a story, or were they just...

Bogosian: We have the three bears, right? I remember the three billy goats. It's similar to the three bears, you know, but it's billy goats, they talk about three goats, little billy goats. I'll always remember that story. It's corny, but, you know, as a child it's interesting.

Young: I don't know, it just seems like you've done so much with the traveling and what not, I'm really intrigues me.

Bogosian: Well, I'm old now. I'm seventy-five now.

Young: It, it really intrigues me. What from Armenia really impressed upon you the most? Just the idea of actually going there, or...

Bogosian: Yes, just going there, that's where your roots are, really, you know, and you feel sorry for the people, the way they have to live, you know. It's terrible.

Young: Was there an immediate kind of, you know, you're very

Americanized, obviously because you grew up here, you were born here, you're American, but you have this Armenian heritage. Did you, was there a kinship there as far as feelings of kinship, not actual kin, but feelings of kinship...

Bogosian: Yes, yes. They accept you very well, very good, well. And, I don't know, just a different feeling. Particularly, like my generation, then what they went through and you hear those stories, then going back there, you know. Very clean people, you don't see them messing around.

Young: Are they well off, are they poor?

Bogosian: No, they're poor.

Young: Do they see you as well off as far as...?

Bogosian: Oh, I don't know. But they're poor. We have Armenian organizations, and Armenians that here in the United States that I'm talking about, we have the United Armenian Fund, it's a national organization, I guess world-wide, god, we have loads of stuff, drives for them, you know, money. They send medicine there, our chapter here sent a mammogram machine there, paid for the freight and all that, I think it was about seven hundred dollars, the freight was, something like that, we paid. Yes, we do a lot...try to. Of course, you always have a couple of doggies in the group that don't, you know. Just like the Jews, you know, all these minor countries have their people, they don't solely depend upon the United States. But they have to be, they don't know what democracy really is, you know, like when they were under Russian machine, they didn't have to do anything, everything was given to

them, food, clothing, you know. And, and of course, there's no industry there, really, terrible. A little industry is going there, little by little, and I thing it will take, what, thirty years before they straighten out their government. It has to be formed, they don't know anything about a government. People go help them, and I'm not saying just in Armenia, all those little countries. I wish some of our people would go over there and see how it is and they'd appreciate this country. And I'm, I'm not glad that this happened with, Saddam, whatever his name is, Bin Laden, but at least people respect the flag more now, you know.

Young: I've noticed that myself.

Bogosian: Have you?

Young: The day it happened, I went out and bought a flag.

Bogosian: Yes. We all have our flags, the pins.

Young: It was just that feeling of unity, like this country needed to feel unified again, and that's one way to do it, symbolically, I would imagine.

Bogosian: I think that, like my generation, when you're a child, and you grow, and WWII came along, you know, you're in the seventh, eighth grade, something like that, and you, you realize how people are, everyone has gone away, and you become more patriotic. And then, Korean War, people weren't that patriotic. And then the Vietnam War, people didn't know there was a war going on. And I think this opened people's eyes, it was a lesson to be learned by us.

Young: I think people, certainly people in my generation, finally

learned what it meant to be patriotic, because we, you know, you could have parents try to teach you that, but until something really happens to test how you feel about your country, you don't know what it means to be patriotic.

Bogosian: Right. And this really put a scare into everyone...everyone. Where they've been living in fear all over the world, we finally felt it.

Young: You know, we've been isolated from that, as far as that being on our own territory.

Bogosian: What happened to the twin towers...frightening... but this was a lesson we had to learn. Well, we'll forget it again.

Young: That's the way history is, I think. If you don't truly learn and you don't truly forget, but sometimes you don't truly learn, either, because things repeat.

Bogosian: I think the other parts of the world, people are more educational minded, think more of education then anything. Where ours doesn't, they could help them go to school, we don't get help. You know, you got to do it on your own. And they make fun of people that talk a different language, those people there, those small countries, they speak two and three languages at once.

Young: That's an advantage.

Bogosian: Right. Here, we only know English and maybe a few words in, about ten words in Spanish or something, the average...

Young: That we've all learned from Taco Bell, so it doesn't count.

Bogosian: See we heard all our lives, we were exposed to it.

Young: Yes, I would imagine, I would imagine that just

automatically made someone more well-rounded.

Bogosian: It has.

Young: And to be well-rounded has nothing to do with wealth, it has to do with experience, I would imagine.

Bogosian: You know, I didn't realize it until I was older how lucky we were to be exposed to the different nationalities.

Young: Did that help you when were traveling, you know?

Bogosian: Sure.

Young: To be able to relate to people?

Bogosian: When we were kids, you know, we were, now it's everything, the world has become smaller after WWII, really. As far as noticing the outside of the United States.

Young: What was your favorite place so far, was it Paris then, or was it...as far as...

Bogosian: No. I like everywhere I go.

Young: Everywhere you go? I would too.

Bogosian: You will. You'll do someday. If you don't get married have babies.

Young: Well, I haven't yet. [laughter]

Bogosian: You will.

Young: How about the United States, as far as where in the United States, like a favorite city, or...

Bogosian: My favorite city is New York City.

Young: That's where my grandmother is from.

Bogosian: Is she?

Young: That's where she was born.

Bogosian: From where, what part did she live in?

Young: She grew up in, as far as I know, she grew up in the Bronx.

Bogosian: That was nice area, Bronx is nice. People talk about Brooklyn is beautiful, it really is, it's right on the water, you know, well, all New York is really on the water. I have a friend who lives in New York City, in Manhattan, lives in New York City. And I visit her quite a bit. I haven't been for about a year or two, about two years I haven't been. Usually I go every year, you know, but last year I didn't go anywhere. This ~~passed~~ past year the only place that I went was to Memphis. Have you been there to Graceland.

Young: No, I haven't.

Bogosian: Very interesting.

Young: Was it?

Bogosian: It takes two hour tour, I liked Elvis, you know, when he was around. But, it's very interesting, it's only five hours straight down 55 south, it's nice roads. Eat some bar-b-que. And we stayed at the Peabody Hotel, have you heard of it? I'd seen it on Dateline, or something, one time, and you know, the Peabody Hotel has nothing to do with Peabody Coal Company. It's an old, old hotel, absolutely beautiful, it's not updated, you know. And in the lobby they have a pond...[tape runs out]