

Narrator: Margaret 'Marge' Nonn
Interviewer: Emily Coffin
Date and Place: Interviewed on November 6, 2001 at the home of Ms. Nonn at
[REDACTED]

Begin Tape 1, Side A

Emily Coffin: This is Emily Coffin: and I am interviewing 'Marge' Margaret Nonn:. It is Tuesday, November 6 [2001] at 5:00 [p.m.] in the afternoon. Marge would you please spell your full name, or give me your full name and just spell you last name for me?

Margaret Nonn: Margaret Nonn, N-o-n-n.

Coffin: All right. And your maiden name was...?

Nonn: E-l-e-k [Elek]

Coffin: All right, thank you very much.

Nonn: You're welcome.

Coffin: You now live in West Granite?

Nonn: Pardon?

Coffin: You live in West Granite, is that right?

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: From what I've heard from other people who are from Lincoln Place there was a big rivalry between West Granite and Lincoln Place.

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: Could you tell me any stories about that?

Nonn: Well, only thing I could tell you when my brother used to go to...come over here to school they'd... West Granite would fight with Lincoln Place boys. That's the only thing I know about that.

Coffin: Yes. Yes. O.K. Did they fight over any particular thing?

Nonn: No just...

Coffin: ...just because they were from Lincoln Place. Huh?

Nonn: That's right. They never liked Lincoln Place 'cause they used to call it 'Hungary Hollow' at one time.

Coffin: Oh I see. Why did they call it that?

Nonn: Because they were all foreign people down there.

Coffin: In Lincoln Place?

Nonn: Um huh.

Coffin: I see. Well now is that where you grew up? In Lincoln Place?

Nonn: Oh yes.

Coffin: Yes. Do you... what street did you live on there?

Nonn: Spruce [Street].

Coffin: On Spruce [Street]?

Nonn: 1737 Spruce.

Coffin: And how long did you live there?

Nonn: All my life, until I got married. (laughs)

Coffin: Is that right? (laughs) Now did your parents live in Lincoln Place when you were born?

Nonn: I was born in Bonne Terre [Missouri, in 1918].

Coffin: ...in Bonne Terre. O.K. And do you... how old were you when you moved to Lincoln Place?

Nonn:: Oh I was small.

Coffin: Small?

Nonn: Little.

Coffin: Do you remember why your parents moved to Lincoln Place?

Nonn: No.

Coffin: No?

Nonn: I guess for work, I don't know.

Coffin: Yes. O.K. All right.

Nonn: But do you want to know how my mother... how we made our living?

Coffin: Sure I do!

Nonn: Well, see my mother had... we had five cows. (laughs)

Coffin: Five cows? (laughs)

Nonn: Five. And my mother would milk every morning and night. And then we would, my sister and I, we had to take milk house... You know, we had customers. We had to go house to house. Sell milk.

Coffin: How did you take the milk house to house? Did you have like a wagon?

Nonn: No, no. My mother had buckets.

Coffin: O.K.

Nonn: No bottles.

Coffin: ...so you carried the buckets from house to house?

Nonn: Uh huh. And then we would take the cows out to the... where the Depot [United States Army Depot] is at now, to the pumping station. And a man would watch them. And then we would have to go get them. And the gypsies would try to steal them from us.

Coffin: The gypsies?

Nonn: Yes, there were gypsy!

Coffin: Really?

Nonn: Oh yes!

Coffin: Did the gypsies live around here all the time?

Nonn: No, they would come, you know, once in a while and just park any place, you know.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: And we would... oh they wanted... and the KKK was walk of the... of the levee too.

Coffin: Is that right?

Nonn: Oh yes.

Coffin: What year was this about?

Nonn: Oh, I... we were small. We were going to Washington School at the time.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: And then, then I went to Catholic School after that. Angels...

Coffin: Now is the Catholic School in... was there a Catholic school in Granite City?

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: Yes?

Nonn: St. Joseph's.

Coffin: St. Joseph's? O.K.

Nonn: And then Ms. Prather. Oh, I used to go there and she would, well she would shake me, she'd say 'Now I want to tell you... that your mother should not...' we had ducks, geese, and everything... She says that, now I don't know how she always blamed me, because my mother, our ducks and geese would go over there and [Marge indicates that the ducks and geese would poop.]...

Coffin: Oh, and mess up?

Nonn: ... on the stairs. Yes. Mess on the stairs. And she'd take me in her, in her office and shake me. She says 'Now I know that your mother sends those geese...' Now you know there are other people had geese now. You know, but she is just... and then I went to the clubhouse [Community Center]. I don't know what you call it now... well they call it the community house.

Coffin: Is it the [Lincoln Place] Community Center?

Nonn: We used to call it 'Club House'.

Coffin: Oh is that right?

Nonn: Uh huh. And then, she... that's where I learned how to embroidery. And I was in folk dance. (laughs)

Coffin: Oh my!

Nonn: Big deal, you know. At that time it was a big deal.

Coffin: Oh sure, sure. Did you have sisters or brothers? Well you have a brother...

Nonn: My brother is in St. Louis. My sister died when she was real young. She was 52 years old.

Coffin: Oh, I see. Did she, did she live around here as an adult also?

Nonn: Yes. All of us.

Coffin: Yes? What did your father do for a living?

Nonn: He worked at Union Starch.

Coffin: O.K. All right.

Nonn: Then he got hurt and then he couldn't work anymore so that's how we made our living with the cows.

Coffin: With the cows... Did... if you walked them over to where the Depot is now, for a man to watch them, did he... is that where the cows stayed all the time? Or did they...

Nonn: All day. Yes, and then at nighttime my brother had to go get them or we, my sister and I would have to go get them. There's a man watched the cows over there.

Coffin: Yes. Did you have like a fenced in area with a shed or something for the cows to sleep in at night?

Nonn: Oh yes. Yes down in Lincoln Place.

Coffin: Yes. All right. I'd never heard of that before. And gypsies... I'd never heard a story about the gypsies.

Nonn: Oh yes. And there's... wait a minute. These two ladies [indicating two ladies in a photograph] I don't know if you want to shut it off [indicating the tape recorder] or what...

[Tape recorder was turned off while Marge showed some photographs and gave me some names]

Coffin: All right. We stopped the tape just a minute so that Marge could give me the names of a couple of people who might be interested, or who are interested, in being interviewed. Marge, do you remember who your neighbors were when you lived in Lincoln Place? Do you remember your neighbors?

Nonn: They were Armenians.

Coffin: They were Armenians? Did you get along with your neighbors?

Nonn: Oh yes. Yes. Yes

Coffin: Yes?

Nonn: And another, before you...you want to shut it off? [indicating the tape recorder]

[Tape recorder was turned off]

Coffin: All right here we go again. So your neighbors were Armenian? Do you remember their names?

Nonn: Oh no. (laughs)

Coffin: No. Did they have children that you played with?

Nonn: No.

Coffin: No. No children? O.K. Were your neighbors close? I mean like in subdivisions like we are today?

Nonn: No, next door. Next door.

Coffin: Right next door. Yes? O.K. How about this...what can you tell me about your neighborhood.

Nonn: It was all Hungarians and we all had to work. (laughs) All those kids worked.

Coffin: All the kids worked as well as the grown ups? Did you get paid for working?

Nonn: Are you kidding? I worked at the rag shop.

Coffin: The 'Rack' shop?

Nonn: In St. Louis at the 'Rag' shop.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: Nine hours (laughs)...yes. That's true.

Coffin: Did you ride the trolley there? Or did you...

Nonn: Yes I did.

Coffin: Yes you did?

Nonn: Oh yes.

Coffin: Yes. Well what did you do at the rag shop?

Nonn: Pick rags...they were all clean rags, you know, they were...like, you know, from they make dresses and all that stuff?

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: And we had to sort them.

Coffin: Yes. How old were you when you did that?

Nonn: My mother says I was sixteen but I was fourteen.

Coffin: Oh my gosh. Well did you go to school?

Nonn: Yes I went to school. But, oh yes...

Coffin: So were you finished with school at that age?

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: You were?

Nonn: Of course at that day you didn't have to have an interview or nothing. My mother used to work there too.

Coffin: Oh did she.

Nonn: ...at the rag shop. And she says to this lady, her name was Teresa, "Oh my daughter, I've got a daughter she's sixteen years old." Teresa said, "Bring her in." and I've been working every since.

Coffin: Oh my gosh! Oh goodness. So, so did you, did you...you went to grade school in West Granite? Is that right?

Nonn: ...at Washington School. And then I transferred to Catholic. But my mother wouldn't let us go to high school. I don't know if you want this down or not...

Coffin: O.K. we can stop.

Nonn: Yes.

[Tape recorder was turned off so Marge could tell me why her mother would not let her go to high school.]

Coffin: O.K. So you worked when you were fourteen [years old]...

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: ... but you didn't go to high school.

Nonn: No.

Coffin: ...and we talked about why.

Nonn: No, you know why.

Coffin: Did you and your mother ride the trolley together and everything?

Nonn: Yes and my sister.

Coffin: And your sister was older than you are?

Nonn: Yes she was older than I was.

Coffin: By very many years?

Nonn: Let's see, she's about...she died when she was 52 [years old]. Yes she was about three or four years older than I was. My brother was the oldest. He's eighty-eight [years old] now.

Coffin: Wow, eighty-eight. And he lives in St. Louis [Missouri]. Well did you travel outside of Lincoln Place for recreation? You know, on vacations or anything like that? Did people take vacations?

Nonn: Are you kidding?

Coffin: No vacations?

Nonn: No, no. But I did work; I don't know if you want me to say it...

Coffin: Sure.

Nonn: I worked for Judge Shuman for twenty-five years I was his bailiff.

Coffin: Oh really?

Nonn: And for Judge Matoesian for seven years. And I worked at Nestle, Nestles', you know, coffee factory before the war was on.

Coffin: Now that was World War II?

Nonn: Yes. When I was the seventh one, the fifth one to be hired. And then after that I went to Judge Shuman, (what was that...)

Coffin: (a gnat... Uh Oh... there, I got it) (laughs)

Nonn: He [Judge Shuman] asked me to be his bailiff. And I was... then, then Judge Matoesian come to my house after Judge Shuman died. Judge Matoesian came to my house and asked me to his bailiff. And I was his bailiff for seven years. And then I worked at the jail for seven and one half years.

Coffin: Now where was the jail?

Nonn: Madison County jail.

Coffin: Madison county jail in Edwardsville.

Nonn: I was, well, I'll show you in the book.

Coffin: O.K. All right. So is that where, how you met your husband when you were working for one of the judges?

Nonn: Oh no, no, no. That was... oh no, he was an alderman, you know. Just an alderman here in West Granite, Lincoln Place. You know.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: And that's where... I met him at Washington Theater.

Coffin: Oh, O.K. at Washington Theater.

Nonn: Standing in line. (laughs) Isn't that exciting? (laughs)

Coffin: (laughs) How old were you when you met him?

Nonn: Oh, well I was twenty-five when I got married.

Coffin: Were you? Was that a typical age for young women to get married?

Nonn: At that time...

Coffin: Yes. About what year was that? Well I guess could do the math, but...

Nonn: Don't ask. (laughs)

Coffin: I'll do the math later. (laughs) O.K. So you really got active in politics...

Nonn: It's not because I wanted, honey, because it was... I... it was either that or divorce because he loved politics. He was a politic man. I mean, he lived at the pumping station and his mother used to drive in on a horse and buggy to take people to vote.

Coffin: Oh my goodness. How... this Judge Shuman... is that S-h-u-m-a-n? Shuman?

Nonn: Uh huh.

Coffin: O.K. How old were you when you went to work for him?

Nonn: Oh, let's see. I really don't...

Coffin: Was it before you were married?

Nonn: Oh no, no. That was afterwards, deary.

Coffin: O.K. And Judge Matoesian... is that... do you know what his first name is?

Nonn: Huh?

Coffin: What is Judge Matoesian's first name? Do you know?

Nonn: Andy.

Coffin: Andy. I was going to ask if it was Andy. O.K. All right. So were the people in Lincoln Place and West Granite, were they...

Nonn: Brother was from Lincoln Place. You know that.

Coffin: I know that. Yes. He's on our list as a matter of fact.

Nonn: Is he?

Coffin: Uh huh. Were the people in Lincoln Place, and West Granite...

Nonn: They were all foreigners, you know.

Coffin: All?

Nonn: Armenian, Hungarian, Macedonia, and Mexicans. We were all...

Coffin: ...all together. Were they active in politics? Or...

Nonn: Oh no.

Coffin: No, not at all? Yes...so your husband was what...

Nonn: Oh my husband was always in politics.

Coffin: What nationality was he?

Nonn: Well his mother is German, was German. His father was German and she was Irish.

Coffin: Oh, O.K. All right, so you married sort of outside your ethnic group.

Nonn: Oh yes.

Coffin: Yes. Was that O.K. at the time?

Nonn: Oh yes, my mother loved him. Oh yes, he was good... Yes.

Coffin: That's great!

Nonn: My parents really...he was really, really good to my parents. My father had cancer. My father...well you know they used to give Hungarian plays...I'm going to show you this picture here. [Marge reaches across the table and picks up some photographs to show me.] They used to give

Hungarian plays and you had to dress up like that. [Showing me a photo of some children.] You know...now this girl is Theresa Petras. She's the one right there.

Coffin: That's right there?

Nonn: That's my sister there.

Coffin: Oh my!

Nonn: Uh huh. And then my father...and Johnny Petish and my father...my brother won a car.

Coffin: Your brother won a car?

Nonn: ...from Lincoln Place. They sold tickets. He won the car. My brother could tell you all this. And my father and then Johnny Petish was in the car, too. They went to go to get some costumes for the play, and they had an accident.

Coffin: Oh. Did anybody get...No body got hurt?

Nonn: Well, my dad got cancer from it. That's what he died from.

Coffin: Oh really? Oh my.

Nonn: See Johnny will tell you all of this. I don't want to let it...(laughs)

Coffin: O.K. (laughs)

Nonn: He'll probably tell you...you know...whoever...

Coffin: So where did they get the costumes? They...so your mother...

Nonn: They made it.

Coffin: Oh they made it?

Nonn: Oh yes.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: See that's all...uh huh. Let's see, she's still living [Marge points to girls in the photograph and indicates the individuals who are still living.]

Coffin: Wow. And here...how old do you think you are in this picture? When was this taken, does it say?

Nonn: I don't know.

Coffin: Yes. Wow! So what kind of car did your brother win?

Nonn: Ford.

Coffin: A Ford? A Model-T or it was past a Model-T?

Nonn: No it was a nice, a nice car.

Coffin: A nice car. Did a lot of people have cars?

Nonn: Are you kidding? No, he used to take people on...he was like a chauffeur for these people to go to the store or downtown, you know. He took them around.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: Because he was the only one that had a car down in Lincoln Place. That was a big deal, you know.

Coffin: Oh I bet it was. How about the stores and shopping and everything. Were there...what kind of...

Nonn: Grocery stores, there were three of them and my mother would go to Kirchoff's store.

Coffin: Kirchoff's. Was that the one that would have been on the corner of...let's see...

Nonn: Niedringhaus...

Coffin: O.K. Yes, the Kirchoff's...

Nonn: Well they were all on Niedringhaus to tell you the truth.

Coffin: Were they? (laughs)

Nonn: Yes. (laughs)

Coffin: So what made one store better than the other?

Nonn: Well, my mother just went to...just went there, you know, and got credit, you know. And they had to pay a lot of time and this Mr. Kirchoff says to my mother " Ms. Elek, if you don't have no money just put it on the book. As long as I can, you can have it." Because my mother paid and my daddy used to kill pigs, you know...

Coffin: Oh really?

Nonn: Oh yes. They would go buy the pig and my job was, I don't know if you want to hear this or not, my job was to stir the blood...

Coffin: Yes...

Nonn: ... when it was, you know, when he stabbed it.

Coffin: Yes. What was the purpose of stirring the blood?

Nonn: Well, for blood...for sausage.

Coffin: Oh you used the blood in the sausage?

Nonn: Oh yes.

Coffin: Oh my, yes, you are right. I don't know if I want to eat sausage again.

Nonn: Or, or there is a Hungarian church, over there in St. Louis, that's where I'm going to buy some for Christmas. Blood sausage.

Coffin: Not blood sausage?

Nonn: Not blood sausage, rice sausage, I'm going to have.

Coffin: Oh yes? Was it called blood sausage, the kind that he made?

Nonn: Uh huh.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: And then we used to sell it too. You know, my pop would kill the pig and sell the meat and sell the sausage too.

Coffin: Yes? Yes. Did you have refrigerators?

Nonn: (laughs)

Coffin: Iceboxes?

Nonn: Iceboxes.

Coffin: Yes. And then...

Nonn: And my mother would get...fry the, like pork chops, you know, and she would get one of these big crock-pots, you know. Then she would cook...fry the meat and then she would put it in this crock-pot and then put lard all over it and keep it for the winter.

Coffin: Oh really?

Nonn: Yes. And then we had...my daddy had a smoked house...hung...well you probably know...

Coffin: ...like hams and stuff like that? You could do that? But, and the meat would stay for a while in the smoke house, wouldn't it.

Nonn: Oh yes, but they smoke it. We had a smoke house.

Coffin: Yes. Yes. How much...I mean what would a pig cost? Would it...I mean...they would be pretty?

Nonn: At that time...about fifteen dollars.

Coffin: Really?

Nonn: Fifteen, twenty [dollars], not much.

Coffin: But that was probably quite a bit of money in those days.

Nonn: At that time, yes.

Coffin: Yes. Do you remember how much you made when you worked your first job?

Nonn: What job you talking about?

Coffin: Well...

Nonn: The rag shop? Not much honey. (laughs) I worked nine hours, a dollar a day.

Coffin: A dollar a day for that much.

Nonn: A dollar a day for nine hours.

Coffin: Wow. Boy.

Nonn: (Laughs.) Yes, yes, honey. And then we glad to get that. Then we would come home and have to give our check to my mother.

Coffin: Is that right?

Nonn: No. Ten cents we went...they had a show down Lincoln Place. Ten cents.

Coffin: Is that right?

Nonn: Ten cents to get in.

Coffin: I'll be darn. We talked a minute ago about all the different ethnic groups. There were the Macedonians, and the Hungarians, the Mexicans and...I know I'm forgetting one of them at least. But were...were...was everybody pretty equal or was there like...

Nonn: We never are no fussing, no killing, no nothing down there. I mean it was nice.

Coffin: Yes. Yes. Did it seem like one group had, had better jobs than the others? Or was it all...

Nonn: No.

Coffin: So it didn't matter if you were Hungarian or Macedonian or Armenian...you all had...

Nonn: Everybody got...

Coffin: Yes, the same kind of thing? O.K. Do you remember, do you remember how you celebrated holidays?

Nonn: Well, just like anybody else. I mean...I'm Catholic. And we...you know, like on holy day, obligation days we'd have to go to church. You know. And then, like, like it was last Thursday they had All Souls Day. My mother would get candles and we'd...she'd put it on the kitchen table and we would pray.

Coffin: O.K. So, religion was really an important thing at that time?

Nonn: Very, very...

Coffin: And I suppose the people that were like, well the non-Catholics...

Nonn: ...mostly were Catholics. Well the Armenians weren't Catholic. The Bulgarians, they had their church, you know.

Coffin: But...and so each, each...

Nonn: Hungarians had mostly Catholic and Mexicans were Catholic.

Coffin: Were they? O.K. And then did you go to the same church with the Mexicans.

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: Yes?

Nonn: Still do. (laughs) I mean I go over there at Fairmount [Illinois].

Coffin: Do you? O.K. Did...

Nonn: I also went to Ms. Prather's too, for Bible School.

Coffin: Sunday School...is that

Nonn: ...or Sunday School and then I had...when we'd go we had to take a penny to put in the ...

Coffin: ...like the offering plate. Yes.

Nonn: Uh huh. A penny?

Coffin: A penny.

Nonn: Ms. Prather you can come in and bring a penny. We did.

Coffin: Did your parents go to church with you?

Nonn: Oh yes. My mother. Not my father. My father...I don't know if you want me to say it or not...well see he was a soldier in Europe and he says these priests had women...

Coffin: Oh. Yes.

Nonn: So...

Coffin: So he didn't want to go.

Nonn: Well, but when he died he asked for the priest. And I got him the priest and he gave him his last rites. I don't know you know what the last rites are or not.

Coffin: Well I kind of know...like I'm not Catholic so...but I have an idea.

Nonn: Yes. His last he did want the priest. I want to show you...come on...let me show you my dad's picture...[Tape recorder was turned off and we went to another room and looked at a portrait of Marge's father]

Coffin: [Resumed taping] We went into another room and looked at a portrait of Marge's father in military uniform with four stars on the collar of his jacket. And then there was also a Catholic, a Catholic...

Nonn: ...whatever (laughs)

Coffin: I'm not sure what to call it but it had the Stations of the Cross there. It was very pretty and her mother brought that from Europe and had it in her bedroom. Marge do you remember on holidays did, did different ethnic groups celebrate the holidays in a different way? I mean...

Nonn: Well I don't know about the others but, I mean, we always...one thing we had was a Christmas tree.

Coffin: You always had a Christmas tree, huh?

Nonn: Always. Always had a Christmas tree.

Coffin: Yes. And...

Nonn: We didn't have no toys, but Christmas tree we did.

Coffin: Did you have like a special Christmas dinner?

Nonn: Well, my mother was always a good cook. I mean, she, we had soup every day. That was a have to.

Coffin: Yes?

Nonn: Oh I have to tell you this too. (Laughs) I don't know if you...my mother and Ms...all these Hungarian ladies went to Koki's corner [the corner of Spruce Street and Niedringhaus Avenue, near Kakoski Dry Goods Store]

Coffin: ...Koki's corner?

Nonn: Uh huh. [Yes]

Coffin: O.K.

Nonn: Kakoski's corner...Mrs. Kakoski, and they gossiped. (laughs) That was their...yes that's what they liked!

Coffin: They did that everyday?

Nonn: Everyday! My mother put the soup on; go there. And they would get together and gossip. That was their... But my mother did go to the show every time the picture turned...changed. She was at the...

Coffin: She would go to the ten-cent show?

Nonn: No at Washington Theater?

Coffin: Oh, at Washington Theater which was downtown Granite?

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: No, she would just go from Lincoln Place. She would walk.

Coffin: She would walk all that way?

Nonn: And she was a heavysset lady. My mother was...

Coffin: Was she? Yes. What kind of soups did she make?

Nonn: Hungarian. Regular Hungarian soup. We had to have soup everyday. That my father demanded; had to have soup everyday.

Coffin: That's a man I could live with. (laughs) I love soup.

Nonn: ...and homemade noodles too.

Coffin: ...and homemade noodles. Yes. Did you bake Christmas cookies?

Nonn: Oh my mother always baked Christmas cookies. Oh yes. She... now cookies she could bake and cake, but no pies. Pies...her pies was terrible. (laughs)

Coffin: (laughs) So what did you learn from that? Do you make good cookies and cakes and bad pies? Or...

Nonn: No...well I make cookies but not... See my, my husband didn't care too much for sweet. His was apple turnovers and stuff like that I made.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: But soup...he liked soup too. But I didn't make it everyday.

Coffin: No? (laugh)

Nonn: I couldn't because I was working, you know.

Coffin: Yes. But your mother didn't work everyday?

Nonn: Just at the rag shop, that's all.

Coffin: Yes. Was that an everyday thing that she did?

Nonn: Yes. Yes. But when she got older she quit. You know.

Coffin: Yes. Did she work old enough to retire?

Nonn: Oh they didn't...didn't retire them days.

Coffin: ...you didn't retire in those days? You just worked until...you either quit or you...you quit one way or the other.

Nonn: Yes. Oh yes.

Coffin: O.K. What job did you have when you retired?

Nonn: What job did I have retired?

Coffin: ...when you retired? Did you retire from...

Nonn: Yes, I worked at the jail.

Coffin: So you retired from there?

Nonn: Seven and one half years I worked there. I hated that job.

Coffin: Did you really?

Nonn: Oh! (laughs)

Coffin: Tell me why you hated it?

Nonn: Honey we had to strip those girls and look. Ugh! You know. It was good; good pay is good! But ugh I was so happy when I was 65 [years old]. I was going to quit before and one of my bosses says “Marge stay until you are 65 [years old] because you will get a good pension.” Which I do get a good pension. But boy it was to stay there.

Coffin: Oh, I bet. I bet.

Nonn: I mean it wasn't a hard job. But...

Coffin: So you were probably still working in the mid-80's. [1980's]

Nonn: Yes. I was. See I worked for Judge Shuman for twenty-five years. I was his bailiff. And I was Judge Mateosian's for seven and one half years. Then the jail...

Coffin: (laughs) It's a shame you couldn't have gone out as a bailiff.

Nonn: Oh yes!

Coffin: That looks like it would be a good job.

Nonn: Yes. Well, Judge Mateosian, I don't know why, or what happened or something...but...I don't know...

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: I don't know, it was just...No I never did like...I don't know how I ever got to the jail. Really, I don't. (laughs)

Coffin: Well, what made...how did you get to...

Nonn: Somebody talked me into it or something.

Coffin: What made you, what made you go to be a bailiff? I mean what sort of led you to that position?

Nonn: Well Judge Shuman...well I was his bailiff for a long time.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: I don't know...well see I was working in...and then my husband got sick, you know, and he was sick for seven and one half years, back and forth...I don't know, Judge Shuman and Roger, my husband, was very good friends, and he asked me to be his bailiff one day and...

Coffin: Well that's wonderful.

Nonn: It was a...now I liked that. (laughs)

Coffin: (laughs) Yes. That does sound pretty good. Do you know what, what were some of the typical jobs that men in Lincoln Place held besides...I mean your dad worked at the starch, at the starch factory, or...

Nonn: Yes. They tore it down you know, right across...over that viaduct, right there. That's where it was...

Coffin: Right. O.K. Yes. And then, how old was he when he stopped working there? Do you remember about?

Nonn: No.

Coffin: No? O.K.

Nonn: You don't remember...I mean...you know...

Coffin: Yes. I know. I'm really bad right now. I can't imagine what I'll remember in twenty years. How did... Some of the people that I have talked to talked about, you know, they worked at the Depot, as secretaries,

Nonn: ...or how about the Stamping Works [NESCO]. I never did work there.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: Lot of Hungarian ladies worked at Stamping Works.

Coffin: ...at Stempling?

Nonn: Stamping.

Coffin: Stamping, O.K.

Nonn: It, it is over here right across...you know, by this railroad track. Stamping Works.

Coffin: O.K.

Nonn: NESCO.

Coffin: Oh that is what that is. O.K.

Nonn: Yes. Ms Bozarth worked...a lot of Hungarian ladies worked there.

Coffin: Ms. Bozarth?

Nonn: Have you got Mary Gages on here?

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: O.K.

Coffin: Yes, she's there.

Nonn: Did somebody interview her already?

Coffin: Yes. Well I don't know if they have already but they've committed to interviewing her.

Nonn: Did she agree to it?

Coffin: As far as I know.

Nonn: Because she is pretty old. She's...

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: Not that... I mean, she's almost ninety [years old].

Coffin: Wow.

Nonn: But she's got her right mind yet, though. She's pretty sharp.

Coffin: That's good. What I have noticed is that a lot, a lot of the people who have lived in Lincoln Place have lived a long time.

Nonn: Uh huh. (unintelligible)

Coffin: (laughs) That is good! Not a lot of vices... What did you do for entertainment and recreation?

Nonn: When?

Coffin: When you lived in Lincoln Place?

Nonn: Well we went to the Community House, that's all.

Coffin: That's it? Did you play games there?

Nonn: Well like I says, folk dance and embroidered and stuff like that. And basketball...

Coffin: Basketball? Were you good at basketball?

Nonn: Huh uh. [No.] There were unadvantages to a one man team... (laughs) No.

Coffin: (laughs) Oh gee... How did, how did, I know... I was talking about the Depot. How did... when the Depot was put there... how did that change the character of the neighborhood?

Nonn: A lot, a lot.

Coffin: Did it? Yes. Could you tell me... can you give me an example of how it did?

Nonn: Well my daughter married one and she, you know... well, they... And then she got a divorce. She had a boy. Then she got a divorce. And that, you know... lot of soldiers there... lot of things went on that should not have went on.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: Can't prove nothing, you know.

Coffin: Yes. O.K. So it really did make some changes.

Nonn: Yes. It messed up a lot of things.

Coffin: Yes. When, when do you think... I mean maybe you don't think... Lincoln Place has kind of changed from the way it was when you were a little girl, I'm sure...

Nonn: God, yes, yes, yes...

Coffin: When do you think those changes started taking place and do you have any idea why?

Nonn: Well, the Depot really ruined a lot of it.

Coffin: Did it?

Nonn: Lot of...

Coffin: Did people start moving out as a result of that?

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: Yes? O.K. When you were a little girl...these questions are not in any order so you'll have to excuse me for that...but when you were a little girl what did you want to do when you grew up?

Nonn: I never did...paid no attention to it.

Coffin: ...didn't pay any attention to it, huh? O.K. It sounds like you were...

Nonn: I, I'd never would know that I was going into politics. I'll tell you that...

Coffin: (laughs) Oh gee. Tell me about...you met your husband when you were standing in line to go to the movie theater. What was the first thing you thought when you ...when you...?

Nonn: Well, nothing much. But his mother never did like me because I was Hungarian. She wanted a foreigner...a different...and he went against his mother I guess because we got married. Then I had to live with them, you know. I knew I had to live with the...

Coffin: Oh you lived with them?

Nonn: ...in-law. And I knew one of them was going to go to work...there's two in a house, I knew one of them has to go to work, and (laughs) but it was me. That's where I went to the Nestle's coffee factory.

Coffin: Oh is that right?

Nonn: Uh huh. [Yes.]

Coffin: Yes. How long did you live with them?

Nonn: Until she died. Then we built this house. And then my father-in-law...now he was nice. My father-in-law was nice. He just minded his own business, you know. That's why I built a, you know, a room for my daughter and this other room was his.

Coffin: So you built this house new? And you...so long have you...

Nonn: ...in '59. [1959]

Coffin: In '59? [1959] O.K. What year did you get married? Oh we were going to figure that out later.

Nonn: (laughs) I could tell you, '42. [1942]

Coffin: You got married in '42 [1942]. O.K.

Nonn: And our daughter is 46...she was born in 46 [1946].

Coffin: So you lived with your in-laws from 1942 until 1959.

Nonn: Uh huh. [Yes.] That why I had to go...I didn't have to go to work, but I did.

Coffin: So, was that typical that...

Nonn: Well it wasn't bad because I went to work, see.

Coffin: Yes. And then, and then you had your daughter...

Nonn: ...my daughter. My...she took care of my daughter until, you know, we went...

Coffin: Did you have like a separate apartment in their house? Or did you...

Nonn: No, honey. Next door...(laughs) I know...I don't know how I stood it...my man was good. My husband was good.

Coffin: Well that's good.

Nonn: It was a...he was good.

Coffin: Well now was he in politics as long as you lived there too?

Nonn: Oh honey he was in politics since he was a kid.

Coffin: Wow.

Nonn: His mother was in politic.

Coffin: Is that right?

Nonn: Oh yes. Like I told you, she'd come from the pumping station and she broke him in. Yes. She...he politicked right along with her. But I knew that. I mean, you know...I knew he was in politics.

Coffin: What did his father do?

Nonn: He worked at NESCO. He was a...Nestles I mean. Watchman.

Coffin: Oh, O.K. All right. Did he have brothers and sisters?

Nonn: Yes. But they lived in St. Louis.

Coffin: Well that's good that you didn't have to like share the house...

Nonn: Well one of them, Carriea, she lives here in Granite. But the other... Oh he was nice, though. They stayed to their self.

Coffin: Yes. Yes.

Nonn: You are interfered with...one's enough, honey. (laughs) Going to tell you like it is!

Coffin: Did you mother-in-law dote on your daughter? Did she just...

Nonn: Oh she, she just took over.

Coffin: Yes. Yes. Wow.

Nonn: Me and my husband we went to Hot Spring, Arkansas. You just go ahead, go ahead. I'll take care of her. And we went for a week.

Coffin: Yes? Well that's a...so you did get to go on some vacations?

Nonn: Oh honey we went all over...you mean with my husband? Oh yes we went every place but Hawaii.

Coffin: Is that right?

Nonn: All in the United States and then three time to Europe.

Coffin: Three times to Europe?

Nonn: Uh huh. [Yes.]

Coffin: Is that while you were still living with them or part then and when you lived over here.

Nonn: Over here, when we lived here.

Coffin: Well that's good that you could do that much traveling.

Nonn: We did. We traveled a lot.

Coffin: Yes. What was your favorite country that you visited?

Nonn: I don't... I didn't care too much for... I wasn't a traveler, he was the traveler.

Coffin: All right.

Nonn: But one time, I don't know where we was, and we stopped (laughs) and then we... he says "Throw me the keys Marge". So I threw him the keys. We never did find the keys. (laughs) It's a good thing I had one in my purse or we would have been still there probably.

Coffin: Oh you had an extra? (laughs) Oh shoot, that is funny...

Nonn: Oh and then when we went to Europe... he didn't know how to talk Hungarian at all. Not one word. And me, them people didn't know how to talk in American. And here I was telling Walter what they said. And then... when we went to Europe we... three of us... four of us in bed... (laughs) well in one room, you know...

Coffin: Yes?

Nonn: It was in a village... (laughs)

Coffin: Oh wow... When you went to Europe did you go to some of the villages where you...?

Nonn: Oh yes. My uncle is a priest. But he had a girlfriend. So you know how that... well it's a little village, you know...

Coffin: Yes. Yes. So did you grow up speaking Hungarian?

Nonn: Uh huh. [Yes.] I speak Hungarian.

Coffin: Do you?

Nonn: I had to. That's all we spoke down at Lincoln Place. My mother wasn't no citizen. My father was but not my mother.

Coffin: Oh, but your mother never was. I see.

Nonn: And that's how we talked, is Hungarian. You know, both of them was Hungarian so that's all we knew.

Coffin: But didn't she speak English when she went to work?

Nonn: Very little. What she wanted to say...(laughs) Very little, honey. They didn't care if you could talk or not as long as you do the work...at that time.

Coffin: O.K. They probably really would prefer that you not talk.

Nonn: Uh huh. [Yes.]

Coffin: So the ladies that she met at the, Koki's to gossip with, they were all Hungarian, I suppose.

Nonn: All Hungarians, yes, five of them.

Coffin: Wow. Was it typical for the women to go out and get jobs?

Nonn: Not at that time. No.

Coffin: No.

Nonn: Only place they could get a job is Stamping Works, you know. And a lot of Hungarians worked there.

Coffin: But not the Armenians or the Mexicans or the Macedonians?

Nonn: Well some of them. Not, not a whole lot... I don't know.

Coffin: So it sounds like even though the neighborhood was, was dispersed, in terms of all the ethnic groups living together. You still kind of picked people like you, I mean, that's pretty much...like your mother met with other Hungarian women to talk to...

Nonn: Oh sure. Oh yes.

Coffin: And I'm sure the Armenian groups did the same...

Nonn: I don't know if you want to put...(laughs) The ladies would get together and one lady they didn't like, a Hungarian lady, because she drank. You know what she did? I don't know if want to put that on...[The tape recorder is paused for a moment and then we resume.] That's true...

Coffin: Oh wow...really?

Nonn: She did...they, they did...terrible things. (laughs) You get a kick out of ...

Coffin: (laughs) That is something...Did your parents go to St. Louis a lot? I know your mom rode the trolley to go to work over there. But did you parents go to St. Louis very often?

Nonn: No.

Coffin: No, they didn't? O.K. All right. Did you go to the movies very often?

Nonn: Oh yes!

Coffin: More than...at least every time the movie changed?

Nonn: I told you when my mother...the picture would change she was there at the Washington Theater...she owned one part and my aunt the other part...(laughs) paid a lot.

Coffin: What were...who were some of your favorite movie stars?

Nonn: At that time you could care less. You were just glad to get out.

Coffin: Is that right?

Nonn: Uh huh. [Yes.]

Coffin: Yes. How about music? Did you have music?

Nonn: Oh yes, we had Hungarian music.

Coffin: Hungarian music? Do you remember listening to the pop music or do you really pretty much listening to Hungarian?

Nonn: Oh I got records (laughs) still from Europe.

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: My mother's records, you know.

Coffin: Did you play a musical instrument or anything?

Nonn: No.

Coffin: Or did your dad?

Nonn: My dad did.

Coffin: What did he play?

Nonn: A tuba.

Coffin: A tuba? I don't... did he... he didn't serenade the family very often with a tuba, did he? (laughs)

Nonn: No. (laughs) I don't think so.

Coffin: O.K. Let's see. These lists look about the same. [Referring to the list of questions and subject prompts.] Tell... we were talking about when you worked for the judges, when you were the bailiff... Were there lots of women bailiffs? [Marge shakes her head in a negative manner] No?

Nonn: No. (laughs) I was one... I think I was the only lady bailiff there was.

Coffin: Is that right?

Nonn: And I was the second Alderwoman, too.

Coffin: I was going to ask. How many women were involved in politics?

Nonn: Well at that... Mrs. Bitnick was first Alderman.

Coffin: Betnick? Is that, could you spell?

Nonn: Mrs. Bitnick, I don't know.

Coffin: O.K.

Nonn: And I was the second... I'll show you in the book, you know.

Coffin: All right. O.K.

Nonn: I was Alderman for, let's see, my husband died and he had two more years to serve. And Mr.... Judge Shuman... I mean Schuler, Mayor Schuler wouldn't appoint me. So I ran.

Coffin: He wouldn't appoint you?

Nonn: No, because he didn't like my husband.

Coffin: Oh.

Nonn: See they had words, you know, when he was alderman. And he wouldn't appoint me for those two years. So I ran for two years and I was alderman for two years. Then I ran again for six years (unintelligible). So...

Coffin: Did you enjoy that?

Nonn: No. (laughs) I don't like politics. I never did.

Coffin: So why did you run?

Nonn: Because to show him...(laughs)

Coffin: ...to show him.

Nonn: I really didn't want it, you know. But I...just to show him that I could do it.

Coffin: Yes. Yes.

Nonn: But when I got on the floor he would never, would...you know I had something to say...he would never recognize me. Never.

Coffin: Yes. Were there other...were the other aldermen from other ethnic groups? I mean, you know... The distinction is that the people, it seems to me that the people that came out of Lincoln Place were really strong, had strong character in the ethnic background.

Nonn: Well, not when I was running, you know. There was none...but now there is. I mean there is more aldermen who are Armenian...

Coffin: Are there? Yes? Do you think that people held that against you? That you were from West Granite or from Lincoln Place?

Nonn: No. No. That didn't have nothing to do with it.

Coffin: That's good, that's real good. What are some of the things you remember doing on the city council? Can you think of things that you supported...that happened in the city?

Nonn: Like I told you...he never let me...

Coffin: ...didn't let you do anything?

Nonn: Just once in a while I'd slip in one word or two. But not too often. He just, he just was against me.

Coffin: Yes. O.K. Did...when you were running for alderman, what sorts of things did you do to have people support you?

Nonn: My husband's name. Everybody liked Walter. He did... he was a wonderful... You know for forty-seven years he had to be good. He, he was for West Granite. You could ask any body. They'll say Walter **Nonn:** was a good alderman. And he was. He was one of the best. Not because he was my husband. You could hear other people say it.

Coffin: Sure. Sure. Yes.

Nonn: Cause he was for people. He did anything any body wanted, you know, what he could. He wouldn't promise until he could do it.

Coffin: Yes. Well, that's good. It's pretty good to be that way as a politician.

Nonn: Well you can't say, you know. You have to...if you could...but he did. He was a good alderman.

Coffin: Yes. You don't make promises you can't keep, do you?

Nonn: He didn't either.

Coffin: Yes. Let's go back to when you were a young, a young lady.

Nonn: (laughs) O.K.

Coffin: Do you remember who some of your friends were when you were growing up?

Nonn: Yes. Theresa Patrick, Theresa Danko.

Coffin: O.K. All right. So you still see, you still really...

Nonn: I saw them Sunday.

Coffin: You still keep in touch with them and stuff? Do you go to the same church?

Nonn: No.

Coffin: No? Well that's good though that you still see them and stuff.

Nonn: Theresa Petras. I see her at the beauty shop. (laughs)

Coffin: And you still get your hair done in Lincoln Place. Yes.

Nonn: Yes.

Coffin: Do you go to that new place on Neidringhaus [Avenue]?

Nonn: Spruce. She lives on Spruce Street, 1600 Spruce.

Coffin: Oh O.K. All right. How did you find out about this project?

Nonn: Well we went to the Community House when they had something...well somebody was talking...I don't know...

Coffin: O.K. Anne Valk. She was...is our Professor...and she probably was talking about the project. And then, do you know Norma, Norma...I can't remember what Norma's last name is now...Asadorian. Do you know Norma Asadorian?

Nonn: Was she the alderman's wife?

Coffin: She might be. She's from Lincoln Place and her mother lives in Lincoln Place.

Nonn: Yes. Her mother lives on...Niedringhaus [Avenue] right across from the Community House.

Coffin: Right. Pretty much, yes. Yes.

Nonn: I don't know her. I mean I knew her when she was little.

Coffin: Did you, did most of the women who grew up over there, did they ...over there, it sound like it's so far away...but did they marry and leave the neighborhood? Or did they pretty much stay.

Nonn: Well...they stayed pretty good down in Lincoln Place. I mean, you know, until they died and...

Coffin: Why do you think they stayed?

Nonn: Where else were they going to go? (laughs) Really? No cars. No...you know...

Coffin: Yes.

Nonn: Once when you was married...when you was married. You, you know...no divorce in those days.

Coffin: When women became widows, did they remarry?

Nonn: No. Not very often.

Coffin: Yes. Why is that?

Nonn: I don't know. I never...like me...I never did date since my husband died.

Coffin: And how long has your husband been gone?

Nonn: Twenty-four years.

Coffin: Twenty-four years. That's a long time.

Nonn: Yes. Not that I couldn't go, but I just... Because they would try to fix me up at the jail (laughs)... I'm selfish; I'm going to keep what I've got.

Coffin: (laughs) Yes. I don't know if you'd want to pick one up at the jail or not.

Nonn: I mean...I mean...they were like...

Coffin: No...I know...

Nonn: Not with all I saw honey. You don't want to put that on that, what I saw.

Coffin: No, no I don't. (laughing)

Nonn: No. Right in front of me honey.

Coffin: Well are there things that you want to tell me that I haven't asked about?

Nonn: No not that I know of.

Coffin: But you have pictures for me to look at?

Nonn: If you want.

Coffin: Oh I do. Why don't...I'll turn the tape off and we'll look at the pictures and then if we think of other things we'll come back to the tape.

Nonn: O.K.

[End of interview]