

INTERVIEWS WITH PEARL CAMILLE LEONARDIS

Windber, Pennsylvania

By Mildred Allen Beik

March 5 and March 8, 1984

MB = Mildred Allen Beik

PL = Pearl Camille Leonardis (1905-1997)

Start of the Interview (March 5, 1984)

Beginning of Tape 1 Side A (March 5, 1984)

MB: Right here on Graham Avenue. I guess. Would you mind telling me, Mrs. Leonardis, how old you are?

PL: Seventy-nine. July 14, 1905.

MB: 1905.

PL: That gives me 79 years old.

MB: Oh boy, and where were you born? Were you born in Windber?

PL: I was born in Windber.

MB: Oh.

PL: Same Place. Down Jackson Avenue, at 2000.

MB: Hmm.

PL: My cousin lives at 2001 (Jackson Avenue). We lived on 2000.

MB: Hmm.

PL: And that's where I was born. Then my mother moved. We wanted to go away. My father said, "Oh, we're going to move to Boswell."

"Big thing," my mother said. "Boswell." She came from Italy. She thought, "God knows where we're going to move. Some place." There was nothing here. Your water was--the spigots were outside. No bathrooms. Well at the time nobody had a bathroom.

MB: Even in the town itself? Not just in the company houses and the surrounding area?

PL: No, very few had a bathroom. They call it the “back house,” and they had it outside. (Beik laughs).

PL: We used to hate them because, you know, when you are small, you don’t mind, but as you got bigger and people have to see you’re going in there. The neighbors, they know you had to go out...(Beik laughs).

PL: So my mother came. Her aunt came first. She said my mother didn’t want to come. She asked her daughter, that would have been her sister, cousin at that time...

MB: Um hum.

PL: A cousin of mine at the time, and they became sister-in-laws. They were cousins. Well, her husband would be my uncle. He said, “I’m going first.”

And the wife says, “I’m going with you because every time all these people goes to America,” she says, “yonz [slang for ‘you’ plural] always forget to come home.” (Beik laughs). And if they do come home, they’ll have another baby, and I don’t want that. When I have to have babies, I want you to be there with me.”

He says, “No, they go back there.”

They, the poor wives, become pregnant, and they [the men] leave. They say they have to come out and make a couple more dollars because the family is growing.

My aunt says, “I’m coming.” She came, and she had one son with her. And when they came out, it was 1900.

MB: Oh.

PL: And my mother followed in 1901. There was nothing in this town. My mother said there was nothing. Nothing! They had water outside, you know. And when the water would freeze. There was a couple of creeks. We had a creek run this way. And then there was another one. Big creek, big, they called it. And the water all would go in there. It was dug deep purposely so the water would go there. And in the winter, if their pipes would freeze, then they, the men, used to go there.

Everybody had boarders. When my mother came and she got married, she had twenty boarders. (Beik laughs). Twenty boarders.

MB: Oh boy.

PL: So she said the boarders used to go down and break up the ice. Then they had big tubs. They had little stoves that they brought, what they called it, and they put these tubs and melt[ed] the ice. That’s how they, these guys, bathed themselves, the ones that didn’t have it.

MB: Oh.

PL: To cook they'd go maybe where they could get some water, [to] somebody, if it didn't freeze or something, till they built the reserves back up. It was miserable. See, I remember lots of that. Then I was born in 1905.

PL: It was miserable. I remember lots of that.

PL: I was born in 1905. I had a sister.

MB: Older sister?

PL: Older sister. She died, and I am the only one that's left of the whole family.

MB: Oh. Could you tell me a little bit about where in Italy your mother came from? What was it like? Do you know what region of Italy?

PL: I never went. But, oh, I wanted to go. But my mother never regretted that she came. Like a lot of people regrets when they come [and says]: "Oh," I says, "I should have never come."

My mother never did. And she said, she says, "Why," she says, "here, I don't [regret coming]." She says, "I'm working, but at the end of the month, who's paying?" At that time pay was small, but whatever it was, they paid you. (coughs) But there you didn't have no pays coming in. She said, "If I bought a blouse in one year [coughs] --"

MB: Sure.

PL: (coughs). We had two girls come in [who] interviewed us a couple years ago. Interview[ed] us. We had fun with them. You can't believe it. One was an Italian, and one wasn't. (Beik laughs).

PL: So then my mother--

MB: Do you know what town she came from in Italy?

PL: She came from a real small town like Windber.

MB: Was it in the southern part of Italy or the northern part?

PL: She lived in the northern part, see, the northern part, is ...a...it's in the middle like, it's not at the end. It's not at the top.

MB: Was it near Abruzzi?

PL: Abruzzi. It's only one class of people.

MB: Oh.

PL: You have to belong to the [Abruzzi town]. They have a big map like this down at the club [gestures]...

MB: Do they?

PL: Come down. I'll be there tonight.

MB: Oh, okay. Yeah, I'd like to see that.

PL: And all this young generation, they go study this map, you know, because they like... A lot of people don't know--

MB: Where their family comes from?

PL: The ones are married, they're older. Their family never talked about things like this.

MB: Right...yeah, oh... Did your father come from the same area?

PL: My father came first. He wasn't married.

MB: Oh, okay. Did they know each other in Italy?

PL: Oh, yeah, they were neighbors. Yeah. They were neighbors. Well, and they were already sister-in-laws. His sister was my mother's sister-in-law. And so, they, my Dad came first. Then he called her [Pearl's mother] to come out, and she come out. And they got married at the Polish church [St. John Cantius] because we didn't have no other church but the Polish church, the only one.

MB: Oh, that was the only one.

PL: The only one.

MB: That was the wooden one before the big one?

PL: Well, it wasn't a big one. No, it wasn't a big one. I remember it. Then they built the, oh, when they built that church [the larger St. John Cantius Church], everybody went wild because it was such a beautiful church, you know. We used to visit, and I used to. My mother liked to go to it because she was a member of that church. Well, she was married there, and we had, she [correcting herself] had, children--my sister, a brother after me, and another sister, and I--we were baptized there.

MB: Oh. Hmm.

PL: Only one of the boys. When our church [St. Anthony's] was built in 1910, my brother was born in 1910, and then he was baptized at our church up here.

MB: St. Anthony's?

PL: St. Anthony's. Yeah.

Because, then, they said you have to go to your own [national] church, you know. But I always tell these Polish, when they say something about the Pope, I say, "Shut up. I'm Polish, too." [Beik laughs]. And I say, "Don't say nothing about it. I was baptized there, you know."

MB: Right.

PL: And I needed some papers, and I said, "Were you here?" See, I wanted to go to Italy--

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: (continuing) and visit other places. But I couldn't go because when I was born, they didn't register me.

MB: Oh.

PL: And I didn't have no papers to show. And I says, so I tell them, I says, "Why can't I ask one of the priests?"

So I have a cousin--she's Polish. She married a cousin of mine. I says, "How about you ask your priest? See if you can find mine [baptismal certificate]." Sure as God, in the morning and the night, I get this [paper]. I was so happy. [Beik laughs].

Because you see that church burned a couple times, and when it burned, my mother always thought that the papers all had burned, the papers, too.

MB: I'm glad they didn't.

PL: We got them.

PL: See, all my friends they had gone already to Italy, and then I didn't want to go by myself.

MB: Oh, that's too bad.

PL: I had a passport. I had everything ready, but then the other ones had gone, and I said, "Oh hell, I am an American girl. I am going to stay here. The hell with Italy," I said. So I didn't want to go.

MB: Oh, So you didn't want to go? So you never saw where your parents came from?

PL: Nah, it's a small town. My mother always talked about it. When she talked about it, we always thought just like we were there. She used to tell us how the homes were and everything.

MB: What do people do for a living, there? Did they farm?

PL: They [her mother's family] farmed a lot. And they used to go [migrate for work]. Now the men's all had to go because there was no way of making a living unless the man [left]. They went to France. They went to Germany. They went places.

And, if the man, but the ladies never went with them. So then, when they came to the United States, they all followed there--

MB: I see.

PL: When they came into the United States. But my husband, my husband. He was from Italy.

MB: Oh, he was?

PL: Yeah. He was born in Italy.

MB: I see.

PL: Yeah. And he lived in another town. It's in the Abruzzi, too. They called it Tussio. My mother's [town] was Calasio, C-A-L-A-S-I-O. And Tussio is T-U-S-S-I-O. Now it's hard to find these little wee things [towns] on the map. But you know where the Northern Italy [is], who [which] they follow. See, there's little towns a little bigger than those, and they are on the map. They don't put these [small ones] in, but it's right around that [bigger] place. Yeah. They don't put these in, but it is right around there.

MB: Oh.

PL: We studied the map down at the [Abruzzi] Club lots of times because they tell me, those guys down there, they don't know this word...what this means in Italian.

MB: Right.

PL: I said, "Come and ask me. I have a dictionary."

MB: Good.

PL: I follow my dictionary. I'm pretty good with that.

MB: Right.

PL: Well, our parents came from Italy. They didn't know no words in English, and they... So when we were born, we were just about the first generation. And uh, we didn't have no English language, 'cause they didn't know about it.

MB: Right.

PL: And then my mother had a bunch of boarders [who] says, "Well, boss, what did you learn today?"

Well, she used to tell them what she heard, and they said, "Oh, you'd better not say that. That's not a good word, you know." And so, she said, "Well, I'm not going to learn because I don't know what I'm saying." That's how, why, she didn't want to learn.

MB: She picked up all the swear words from the boarders.

PL: Some bad words. When they made fun of her, she said "I'm not going to learn." She said "When my kids are grown up, maybe they will teach me." That's how she learned-- from us. She learned. She could pick up songs. That was something. She went to school.

MB: I would think that would be harder to do than speak.

PL: It was. They had it rough in Italy because their father died when they were just little children, and that's why she says she had to work real hard.

MB: Did she come from a large family, then?

PL: From a family of five.

MB: Hmm. Did she work as a child?

PL: She worked all the time. Over there you go early. They take you out in the fields. Then, as she got bigger, she worked for these rich people, like, big people. And she said they loved her there. They didn't... She was a good cook. She learned from people there.

MB: Did you know how old she was? Did she have a chance to go to school at all or not?

PL: See, over there, her father died [when] she was three years old. You have to pay in order to get to go to school. She was just three years old. They go and start in school at three.

MB: Oh really. I didn't know that.

PL: Oh yeah. They put them in school. And she was in [school]. She said she had learned all her ABCs and little things from--

MB: So she could read and write in Italian.

PL: So she couldn't a ... Then her brother taught her. That's how I learned. I learned from my uncle, her brother. That would be her [Pearl's mother's] brother. He'd come; every night he'd come to the house. He'd read the Italian newspaper, and I'd stand back. And I says, "You read loud so I know what you're saying."

Well, we had the Italian language, no other. So I'd stand back of him. He'd read, and I'd go back of him, you know. That's how I learned. I could read and write in Italian pretty good.

MB: That's nice. Do you remember what the name of the newspaper was that you read?

PL: Oh, we had the "*Star*."

MB: How would you say that in Italian?

PL: *Stella*. S-t- e- l-l-a. It was.

MB: Okay.

PL: And then we had the *Progress*.

MB: How would you say that? Similarly.

PL: *Progresso*.

MB: *Progresso*. A huh.

PL: See, Italian words, as you pronounce them, that's how you spell them. Really, it's not hard.

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: And then they had a--Oh wait, what's the other one? *Union*. Oh dear. *Union*? Oh dear. [Pausing to think] *Union de la Mattina*!

MB: Umm.

PL: *Union* paper. That was a morning paper. *Mattina* is morning.

MB: Oh. Oh okay.

PL: And we had, we had more. They had some more. [I] can't remember them all, but them I do because my uncle would bring them in.

MB: Uh huh.

PL: So then ...so then I learned a song. It was a beautiful Italian song. I wished I could remember it, but I can't.

MB: Can you remember part of it for me?

PL: I can't remember. It was something about the flag and everything, in Italian. I learned this with my uncle. We made our own tune, and it was beautiful. So then, in school, the teachers-- they used to love me. My sister couldn't get along with the teachers. She used to call me "teachers pet." I said "I'm not a teacher's pet. I obey their rules."

And then they [the teachers] tell me [to] bring something in. It was an Italian paper they wanted. They made me read it. See, because they used to tell me. "You know more about reading in Italian than you know in English." I says, "Sure." I was only in third grade. I says, "In Italian I have been reading with my uncle, every night."

MB: Uh huh.

PL: Then they wanted me to sing this song. I sang it. They loved it; they copied it. Oh yeah. They copied it, and they sang with me. Then they called all the teachers to come in. We went to this school right here.

MB: Which one?

PL: Up right here. That's a grammar school.

MB: Oh, What was the name? What was it called?

PL: Oh, grammar school, you know.

MB: Okay, yeah.

PL: That was our first to fourth grade, and [after] the fourth grade, they used to send her up [to] the other one. My sister, they sent her up there. I said that "I'm not staying in your school. I want to go up the other end." They said. "But it's a little too far for you." I said that I'll make it. So they sent me up there.

MB: To the public school?

PL: Yeah. That's the other. We call it the "East End" and then the "West End." This is "East End," and the other is the "West End" school, and this is our high school [located near where she lives].

MB: Um hum. Yeah.

PL: So we went, ah actually, we sang that song in a group. It was beautiful, a beautiful song, but I can never...

I knew I had that newspaper, but oh my, I sold the house to my daughter, and she threw everything out.

MB: Um hum. Oh, that's too bad.

PL: See, I tried to keep lot of things. I have boxes here with other things. My daughter said that you can't fill a house with junk.

MB: Well. I hope you will show me things some time when I'm here if you want to go through boxes. If you have some photos or something, I'd love to see them.

PL: Yeah. Little things from papers, we used to cut. My mother, she picked everything because we used to have them all in these boxes, cigar boxes, we used to have. Or your writing boxes. But when I moved from there, I don't know, they threw everything out.

See, I went away to California.

MB: Oh. You did? When did you go there?

PL: Oh, about...My girl bought the house about ten to twelve years ago. I sold the house to my daughter. I said "I'll give you the house, but don't forget we have seven children in the family. I can't treat you good, giving you the house, so you just pay me so much." I could of got \$20,000. She give me \$5-6,000 dollars, enough to put money all in bonds for the girls, for the children, so they all had \$1,000 bonds.

MB: That's nice. That was nice.

PL: But they, you know, when you move out, everything then gets throwed out, you know.

MB: Yeah, that's the sad part.

PL: Then I moved here. I am here about 12 years.

MB: So tell me some more about going to school. Did you get to go to school for a long time?

PL: No. See, in our days, it used to be bad. Our town, it was run by the higher class people, you know, and they were sort of your boss. Like the poor miners. They'd go to work. The boss--he was the big boss. And the Berwinds was the big people. They'd [the Berwind-White people] tell them [the miners] they had them. They [the miners] were really slaves.

I don't care. Sometimes they'd say, "Well, you lived here."

I'd say, "Sure, we lived here. I don't care where you're going to be born, you're going to live one way or the other. You're going to make it," I said. But how were we treated [emphasis]! You know.

I says, the men would go to work, and there was nothing there--"Why don't they tell you tomorrow there's no work? Why do you have to go there and then come back? We have to fix our lunch and that takes money." But anyhow we made it.

MB: Was your father a miner?

PL: He was a miner.

MB: Do you know when he came first to Windber then?

PL: He came [in] 1901. My mother followed right after he did.

MB: Right after, okay.

PL: He came in November, early. My mother came on November 22.

MB: Yeah, oh.

PL: And she [her mother] always used to say, "I should have stayed in Italy. I should have stayed in Italy."

I said, "Well, I'm glad you're here because I'd be an Italian." I'm Italian anyhow, but I live in the United States. I didn't want to be born in Italy.

And she said, "Yeah, but it's better over there for people to go to school, and if they have [an education], you can make a good living. Because others did, too, you know." You see, she was just about the first ones, and it was hard for them. But then the others--another sister of hers--came, too. She lived in Illinois.

MB: Um hum. How old was your mother when she got married then? Was she very old?

PL: She was 24.

MB: She was 24? How old was your dad then?

PL: They were both the same age. One was born in June, and the other was born in July. They were both the same age. Yeah. Yeah. And I was born in July.

MB: Did they chose their own marriage? Parents sometimes used to arrange things.

PL: My days, my days, yeah. In our days they were chosen because, well, you were... A lot of these people considered they were a little bit higher. They called themselves

Americans. When our people came, because they came from Italy, you're more pushed out like, you know, but their parents came from Germany or some place. Oh, I used to battle with them.

MB: Did you?

PL: Oh, I used to battle with them because I knew who their parents were. And then I used to ask people, "Were they born here? Or did they come across?" I used to find out. Oh, I used to be a little dickens. [Beik laughs] I had to go find out. I still do. Yeah, you know. I didn't want to be pushed.

MB: Um hum.

PL: I thought that was awful that you have to get pushed around, you know.

MB: Did they make fun of you when you went to school--that you didn't speak English?

PL: When we went to school, I told my teacher my name, and I brought a slip [of paper]. My Dad used to write. He had beautiful writing. And he says, "Your name is Pia, you know, P-i-a." There was nothing there that they couldn't spell it. And he put my name, Pia Camille, and he put the year that I was born, and I took it [the slip of paper] in.

"What was this Pia? What's the name?"

You know what they ended up in calling me? "Pucha!" P-u-c-h-a. And they gave me that name, and I'm telling you, I had to hold that name until I got out of school.

MB: Oh.

PL: Yeah, I told them. I said, "My name is not [emphatically] that name." The teachers just made that up. That's how they called me. So then they said to me, "Why don't you go back to Italy?"

MB: Oh, they did?

PL: Oh, yeah. They did that to my children. They did that to my children.

So I says, "I was born here." Me [emphasis], I knew I was born here. "Where were you [emphasis] born?" I said. They were older--the teachers.

MB: Right.

PL: And then when I went into third grade and fourth grade, one of the teachers used to talk [to me] because I used to talk to her. And she used to tell me, "I'm glad you answered them because they are no better than you are." And, yeah, but, yeah, you had to fight. You had to fight for your rights because, then, you always got pushed aside.

You could not attend--like these kids today--they [sports recruiters] come into your house to interview these kids for football, for basketball. They want the parents. They see the parents. And they come in your homes. At that time you wasn't allowed. We, the lower class people could never, never, get into playing football. Never [emphatically]!

And so when I was in fourth, fifth grade, I think, or sixth, and I used to hear, "Right in the neck. Right in the neck." I used to say, "I wonder what they were doing outside." I said, "I have to be closed in here." And me, I was one who wondered what's going on. So I says to the teacher, I put my hand up, and she says, "Okay."

"Can I please leave the room?" I wanted to pass right around the windows to see, and I saw these, well, these were ladies. They were big, you know. They were a graduation class. See, we didn't have no high school at the time. So then they had it [graduation] there. I said, "All I wanted to see was what was going on."

Then, after school, I said to the teacher, "I want to know what's happening? What does that mean outside? They were really having a good time. I'd like to join."

She said, "No, you're too young, honey." She said, "You're too young to join."

I said, "But what is that?"

[The teacher replied] "Oh, that's for football; that's for sports."

Well, I didn't understand what this meant, these football and these sports, because we wasn't allowed to go, and we didn't go anyhow.

So then when we had the Delaney field—I'm glad they took that out—they should have never... I said, and we used to go down and watch. That's how we learned our football and our sports, baseball--

When I was a little girl, yeah, we played ball. We broke a lot of windows around the neighborhood playing ball, and I got hit in the head with a bat. But still, you didn't know what they were doing, you know.

That's why I always tell them, then, [that] all these girls--they all became Windber Hospital nurses. See, and [sadly spoken] nobody could get in [as nurses] unless you were somebody. And they were the nurses. Now when they put these pictures out, then you can see them. I should save some of them when they come out. Dr. [William Stuart] Wheeling, Dr. [John C.] Gourley was there, the doctors....

MB: You wanted to be something, too.

PL: Yeah. [Movingly spoken] I was curious because why they could do it, and we couldn't, you know.

We'll have some coffee. [She begins to make coffee and continues talking.]

We had to get out of school because we were the lower class, okay, and they sort of didn't, they didn't pay attention to us people.

MB: Yeah, and I suppose many of your--did your brothers go in the mines?

PL: I had a brother went into the mines. He was 14 ½ years old. We had to lie to get him in because at 15 they'd leave him in. So my husband took him in. Because somebody had to take them in. So my husband, he says, "I hate to do this," he says, "but for your mother's sake," he says, "I have to take him in."

MB: Oh.

PL: He was 14 ½. He died. He was fifty. He died at 57.

MB: Did he work in the mines all those years?

PL: He worked in the mines, and he got this black lung, what they call this asthma. He was really, really, really bad. Oh. A beautiful man. Oh God. Six foot tall. Slender. Never an ounce on him. Of course, he had a rotten life. His wife divorced him. She started running round. She had two kids, and then she had another one and blamed it on him. I said, "It's all right, dear. It's nothing." So [we] give him a name, and we adopted her, and that's it, you know. What are you gonna do? I says, "Don't let mother know because it will break her heart." So I said, "It's okay. You and I know."

MB: Oh boy. So you were going to tell me some more about school and your mother and stories about growing up?

PL: Then when we got—I went to school as far as sixth grade. That's it because you couldn't go more [even] if you wanted [to go]. And I was good in school, the teachers used to tell me. They'd always let me stay in later and help them with the papers. She [a teacher] said, "You're great in spelling, arithmetic."

As far as I got, I was pretty good at it. They wanted me to [continue to] go to school. See, at that time, you could be a teacher, too. It isn't like that today.

I was called to be a teacher, and I was thirteen—[correcting] twelve years old when they, two great big men, come to our house. We lived here on 21st street. They just tore our house down. And two big guys come in. I says to my mother, "I'm afraid of these guys."

She says, "Don't be afraid of them. I'm here."

I said, "But I'm afraid."

They were all dressed up. I always thought they [those dressed up] were policemen or somebody, you know. She says, “Just shut up. Let me see what they want.”

She didn’t understand. She called our neighbor. See, that would be Mrs. Stevens’s across the street--that was her mother. She came over, and she [Pearl’s mother] asked who they were, and she [the neighbor] said, “Well, they’re men from the schools. They’re trying to locate a girl around 12 years old that’s good for the first and second grade.” See, at that time, you didn’t have to have all this rigmarole that makes you go broke before you become something.

So then my mother says, “Well, what do you say?”

“Well,” I said, “I’ll take a chance.” I said, “I’ll go.”

They told me, “We teach you. Now you teach and learn.” ‘Cause they couldn’t get anyone. These [schools] were more out in the country.

MB: I see. This wasn’t for the local schools. It was farther out.

PL: No, these were country schools. And maybe they had five, ten kids, you know, just something like that. These guys used to go to all these schools.

MB: I see.

PL: And he says, “We teach you.” [She hesitated to accept the offer.] “Because, but,” I said, “then I can’t go to school.”

He [the recruiter] says, “We teach you. You don’t have to go [on further with school]. We’ll take care of you.”

MB: Did you do that then?

PL: My mother wouldn’t let me go. After they left, [she said], “I didn’t like them guys. You said you didn’t like these guys. I don’t like them at all.” She says, “No.” She was a little bit afraid. She says, “Maybe there’s something, but...”

This lady –she did investigate and said, “Oh, they are men from the school.”

But my mother said, “Oh no. I want you under my eyes to see what’s going on. You’re going to be a young girl pretty soon.” She wouldn’t let me go.

MB: So you left school about 12 then?

PL: I was in the sixth grade. I had to go into seventh. I wanted to go, I says to my mother. See, my mother was a sick lady. She used to sew a lot. She was a dressmaker, a seamstress. Beautiful. Beautiful. She cut all her patterns. When she came from Italy, she didn’t even know how to thread a needle.

MB: Oh, really. She learned that here?

PL: She learned when she came. She said, “How am I going to learn how to sew? I know I should have learned in Italy.” But being that she always went to work out in the fields and out for the rich people, she couldn’t go. So then she cut all these patterns. She picked the dresses she bought. When she came [to Windber], she went to buy clothes. She told my Dad, “This is what I like. You go to the store, you buy something, you put it on, and it looks nice. And why do I have to sew?”

But then, you know, things start to go a little bit tight because you don’t have that kind of money to go buy clothes all the time. She’d rip these things. She’d cut the patterns with the newspaper or any kind of paper. Then she’d sew these back up together, the dress. That’s how she did it.

MB: Did she make your clothes, too?

PL: She sewed beautiful, beautiful. I wore new clothes at school because she sewed a lot for us. I’d go to school. Like every holiday we had new clothes. Every holiday. So it was Halloween, and my mother made me a pretty dress. I’ll never forget it. Yellowish-like with a black, [correcting herself], brown polka dots. I wore this, and the way she had it, you lace it from the bottom up.

The teachers always called me in class. Always called me in class. See, they used to like me. Everybody used to say, “I wonder why they do.” [They liked me] because my mother sewed, and when I wore something they liked, and they [the teachers] sewed, they used to take me in the back room and pick my top to see how my mother sewed.

End Tape 1 Side A

Start Tape 1 Side B (March 5, 1984)

PL: [continuing] 14. Then I worked.

MB: Where did you work?

PL: I went to work. Oh, I worked everywhere. Help people. Any place there was a baby, I was there.

MB: Oh, were you a midwife?

PL: No, no, no. I just liked to go take care of kids.

MB: Oh, I see, I see.

PL: I liked babysitting; that’s what they call it today. I used to go. I used to go help washing clothes for these people by hand. I was short, and they put me at a smaller box.

MB: Did they pay you then?

PL: You never get paid No. I used to go help ‘em.

My mother always used to say, “Go help them. God will love you better. Go help them. God will love you better. God takes care of us.”

But my mother made a living with boarders. She had twenty boarders.

MB: Twenty boarders, you said.

PL: Twenty boarders, when she first got married. She thought she was going to be a rich lady in no time. But she saved every penny, and then she bought the house. It was \$700.

MB: Oh.

PL: All company homes here in Windber. These were all company homes, and it was for \$700.

MB: She was able to buy one, though?

PL: Well, she had paid \$400, and to her, \$400, she thought she was a big rich lady, you know, and she had boarders. My Dad was working, too, at the time. And to her it was a lot of money. She went to put the down payment. I have the receipts, but God knows where they’re at (laughs), you know. She bought the house from the Berwinds, the Windber [office]—

MB: They would sell some houses?

PL: Oh, yeah. These were all, you see, they’d sell them to the people who worked in the mines. Yeah. See, because when they first came, there was, I remember, there was no streets.

MB: Oh.

PL: There was buggies. This house across the street was a big livery stable there. All horses. And me, I used to love horses. I used to tell that man [at the stable], “Let me see a horse. Let me see a horse.” And he used to take me through the barn, you know, and we used to look at the horses.

Then as I got bigger, “Well,” my mother said, “now you’re getting to be a young lady. You don’t talk to—Watch yourself when you go down the street. Don’t talk to men because they’re foxy.” I didn’t understand what she was driving at, anyhow, at our age, you know.

Then I went to work up at Rizzo’s. I was 14. [Correcting the name] Rillo. There used to be a Rillo [Celestino and Mary Rillo]. That big white house right across from the church. Then there is Rizzo’s restaurant that is right across there, right across from our church. And this other one was right across the other way from the church.

She lived there, and she had, oh my God, did she have kids! She had nine girls and about four boys.

MB: Oh boy.

PL: Four boys. Me, I used to love her, and I used to be happy because she had kids. I used to like to go where there were babies. I didn't like to go where there was no children. Any place there was little children to take care of, I was happy.

So then I went there, and she said to me, "Why don't you come to work for me?" Because I wasn't working then. She said, "I'll give you a dollar a day," you know.

A dollar a day! I was thinking, "In a month I'll have \$30. I can surely buy a coat." I wished. So I said to my mother, "Mom, Mary wants me to go to work for her."

[Pearl's mother responded] "No, no. I don't like my children to go to work where there's a lot of babies. All you have to do is wash diapers and take care of the kids. That's too much for you. I don't want my girl to get ruined so young," you know.

"Mom, it won't hurt me. You send me every place to wash clothes. At least I'm gonna wash baby clothes." I used to like to do that.

So then my mother says, "I'm gonna go talk to her." My mother went up to Mary, Mrs. Rillo, and she talked to her. She says, "Okay. I'm going send her under one circumstance. You have to treat her as your own daughter."

MB: Oh.

PL: If you see anybody goes to talk to her, you better watch these young fellas around her. You have a store."

She [Mrs. Rillo] says, "Never mind about that." She says, "I know what I'm gonna do about that. I love your daughter, and, oh, I know she loves kids. I have to have somebody that loves my children.

MB: Yeah.

PL: And that's how I went to work.

MB: Did you work there a long time, then?

PL: Well, I didn't work that long because then there was too many young boys coming in. There were fellas; they weren't boys, you know. Before you get married like the age they do today, a man had to always be five, six years older than the girl.

MB: Oh, I see. Okay.

PL: So my mother says, “They’re men, and they’re smart,” she says. “And you’re just a little girl, and I don’t want nothing to happen to you.”

So, okay. I’ll watch myself. “Don’t worry about it,” you know.

And so then these people start –a lot of these young fellas who was-- it was around Christmas-- buying me a gift and who was buying me another gift. I took one gift home. My mother says, “You take that back because they’re something with that gift. You have to be wise.” She used to tell me, “Be wise. Why do they want to give you a gift?”

I says, “It’s okay. So what?” I says, “I don’t have a sweater. I have a sweater.” She wouldn’t let me wear it. [Beik laughs].

She wouldn’t let me wear it. So she got mad one day, and she put it in the furnace, in the fire. We had stoves. She put it in there. She says, “I don’t like that man who gave it to you. He’s one of these old foxy. He’s a way older than you.”

I says, “Mom,” I said, “I’m not going to marry him.” I says, “He just gave me a sweater. A gift. Once in a while people gives you stuff. Don’t you get gifts?” I said.

[Her mother replied.] “I don’t like him.” She wouldn’t let me wear it. (Beik laughs).

So, then, I went to my brother-in-law. My sister was married. My brother-in-law said, “Well, if you’re gonna stick with your mother all the time, I don’t think you’re ever going to get married.”

I says, “I don’t want to get married.”

[He responds] “You’re going to get married someday. You have to get married.”

So then they started coming around. And my cousin, oh, I was about 15 then. I wasn’t 15, not quite 15. ‘Cause I got married at 15 [years old].

MB: Did you?

PL: Yeah. I got married at 15. I used to tell my mother, “If somebody comes, I’m going to get married because I have to get out of this house. Because,” I says, “I’m not allowed to go out. You won’t leave me sit out on the porch.” I wasn’t allowed to sit out on the porch. Too many guys pass by. They used to do that purposely.

MB: Um hum.

PL: Passing up and down the streets.

MB: There was a shortage of women at that time. [Both were talking at the same time].

PL: There was a very, very shortage of women. Yeah. There was.

MB: This mining town. And all these men came [talking at once]--

PL: All these men came from Italy. See, they came from Italy, but the girls didn't come.

MB: Ah, hah.

PL: No, unless you had a boyfriend, like my mother.

MB: Right.

PL: He came first, and then he called [emphasized] for her.

MB: I see.

PL: [That] made her come. That was different. But or else you don't come. Never go on your own.

So these damn Black Handers started coming in.

MB: Oh.

PL: These are what we call Mafia today.

MB: Oh.

And they gave me a rough, rough time. They gave us a rough time. So my mother said, "Didn't I tell you? Didn't I tell you? Now we're going to be in trouble with these guys."

They were different. They were not our class of people. They're Italian, but they were Sicilian. The Calabrese people. See, they're down South. They're the southern people.

MB: Okay.

PL: Which you read today how bad those places are, some of them places. And our people was from the northern [Italy]. So then they started coming, and my mother says, "That's it. You are not going to work." She made me quit working, and I cried.

I said, "I'm not giving you that money. I'm going to buy a coat."

She [her mother] says, "We'll buy you a coat, but you're not going to get--"

So there was a beautiful man. I married this man. He used to come. I knew his Dad because he boarded at my mother's place.

MB: I see.

PL: And when he came [from Italy], he came straight to my mother because that's the address his father had given him. And he [the father] says, "You go there. And she's got beautiful girls. She has two daughters, and she has a small one. But these two girls are bigger, and you wait for one of them."

And so he [the father] said, "She has two. One's Rossina (my sister's name is Rossina in Italian), and one's Pia, but you wait for Pia. I like Pia better than Rossina." Little girls, you know.

And, you know, that's what, how, it happened. That's who I married. See, Steve Leonardis. He was a nice person, a very nice person. And we got married, and we had seven children. And when he died, he was 37 years old.

MB: Oh, for heaven's sake!

PL: And I was married 15, about 15 years, and I had seven kids.

MB: When did you get married?

PL: I got married when I was 15 years old.

MB: So that would have been in 1920?

PL: 1920. [In] '21 my boy was born, my first son. And then he [her husband] died in 1934.

MB: Oh. Was he a miner all those years?

PL: He got, died of, a strep throat. Can you imagine he died from a strep throat? If he would have went to the doctor...Right after that, the sulfa drug came out. See, they didn't have nothing at that time, and he died. He thought it was a tooth ache, and I did, too, but I says, "Go to the doctor. He knows better. Go to the home doctor."

"No." he says, "I have a toothache, and I am not going to go to the dentist. I am afraid of them." He died, a couple days. That's it. He died.

MB: Could you tell me something about your father and his mining experiences, what you know about them and so?

PL: Well, my dad, when he came, they used to walk in these pits, because it wasn't deep. Like now they have to get in cars to go in, 'cause they're way miles inside. His father came from Italy.

MB: Oh, your father's father came from Italy?

PL: Yeah, that would have been my Grandpap.

MB: To Windber he came?

PL: He came to Windber.

MB: Oh.

PL: See, I used to tell my mother, “Why did you stay in Windber?”

MB: Right.

PL: She’d say, “Why did I stay in Windber? They’d take them to South Fork. They didn’t have... they didn’t come into Windber.” See, we didn’t have a station [in Windber] like the train station. She said, “In New York, they would get on the train after they got off the boat. They took them out to South Fork. That was the big station, South Fork, at the time. Then, after a while, we had one [a station] in Windber. There is a library there. That used to be the station where they used to buy tickets to go back--

MB: I see.

PL: [continuing] and forth to work. The “3642” used to be a train that took them out to [Mine] 36 and [Mine] 42.

MB: Oh, for heaven sakes, I didn’t realize that the train went out there, too. So your father came, and then he brought his father?

PL: Well, his father came. And he figured, “Well,” he says, “if I like it, I’ll be...” He was going to make his wife come. That’d be my grandma. He went in the mines. He got real sick. And he said, “Well, it’s pitch dark. You have to have a little wee light.” At that time, they had “sunshine lamps.” See, I remember how they worked.

MB: How were they? I don’t know how they worked.

PL: They were just a little--how can I tell you--just about this big (gestures), and this wide (gestures), and they come up narrow, and it had a beak on one side. And then you put... they’d fill these in with side wax. They’d call it the “sunshine.” Yeah. We used to chew it. Kids used to like wax. It didn’t have no bad odor or nothing. It’s just what it was--wax. And then on this here, where they had a piece of--what would you call it? A wick! Yeah. There, then, that’s where you’d light it, and this “sunshine” would be in there. That’s how this was going.

And we used to... I had to clean them because my mother had all these boarders. “Hey, Pearl!” They called me Pia, and they says, “Hey Pia, are you going to clean my lamp?”

“Yeah, if you give me a couple pennies.” Me. I thought pennies were a big thing at that time.

My mother says, “You don’t take pennies. They are our boarders. You don’t do that to them.” So I would be cleaning all these lamps when they come home.

MB: Oh.

PL: We had, my mother built a shanty outside in the back. This is where they used to take their baths. My mother put a stove in there.

MB: Oh.

PL: And well, she carried the water because there was no connection yet. But after a while, she did. But she’d take...fill these big boilers on the stove tops, to get them ready, and everyone, everybody had their own towels when they’d take a bath--

MB: Um.

PL: And their clothes. Yeah, yeah. They’d come in, when you’d see them coming home, all black, you know. And, oh, in the winter time, I used to feel sorry for them. Ah, I remember my dad. He’d come in. He had a really beautiful little moustache. I said, “Why don’t you shave that off when it’s cold? You don’t get whiskers.”

He says, “Yeah, this protects me.” You know. But then he’d come [with] all these whiskers full of icicles, just a little wee cap under there. See, they didn’t have clothes like they have now.

After I was married, they started to put out these beautiful big jackets and clothes from animals, wool hats and everything. They had different lights, too, in the mines.

MB: Did the miner supply his own clothes to go in the mine?

PL: Oh yeah, yourself. Oh, yeah, everything you buy yourself.

MB: And the tools, I guess, too?

PL: Oh yeah. Everything. Oh, yeah. You buy your own. You have to. The men worked hard in the mine.

MB: Which mines did your father work in then?

PL: He worked at [Mine] 35.

MB: Uh huh.

PL: There was a little mine; they called it “Hyman Mine.” I used to go visit this mine every once in a while. I’d go. They took it down. Now it’s gone. I used to go there. They had little

mines. Then they opened up the big mine, [Mine] 35. My dad used to cut across here and straight up to the...Oh, he used to run. He was young.

MB: Yeah.

PL: I'd be waiting for him when he come home. "Did you bring me something home?" [Pearl would ask her father.] I'd take his bucket, you know.

He said, "I sure did." I used to love pork chops. Go in the mines, and I don't know why, but [when] they [the pork chops] come out, they had a different taste, you know. He says, "Didn't I bring one piece of pork chop for my girl!" He didn't care for my sister; he didn't care for my brother--to bring [them pork chops], but he had to bring it for me because I used to go meet him as far as down here. I'd get his hand, and get the bucket, and I'd be going down the hill.

MB: Oh boy.

PL: So then when I got to be a young girl, these Black Handers started coming. You're supposed to marry this guy; you're supposed to marry the other guy. And I said, "I'm not going to marry none of them guys. I don't want to get married."

Then my sister was married. Then they even took him [her husband]. "Either you belong to us," they said, "or we are going to kill you!" They used to kill you right off the bat.

MB: Oh, my goodness.

PL: These Black Handers. Oh, it was bad. They think it's bad now. It was always bad. But then my mother said, "Well, if that's going to be the case, you're going to get married, but you're going to marry Steve. We told him."

I says [to Steve], "Hey, I am not going to marry you. I am not going to marry nobody else because I said, if I am going to marry you, I am going to have trouble."

Sure as God would allow, he was, we had him in our house, nobody even knew that we had him three months. He was staying in our home. He was from Hollsopple. See, he was a Windber man, but then he moved to Hollsopple on account of his work. Then he come back, and he stayed at our house. And my mother says, "No. You're going to marry Steve."

I says, "I'm not going marry him because he's going to be killed." I says, "You want him to get killed? Yeah. But after you marry, they're going to give you trouble, and he's going to be killed." And I didn't want that to happen because I knew how they were working at it.

So then my mother says, "Well, you're not going to marry none of them."

And I says, "I'm not going to get married." Nor these, nor them.

Then I wasn't allowed to go nowhere, wasn't, no, not even sit on the front porch. Not even on the back steps. And I says to my mother, "I think I want to get married and get out of here. Because I'm not allowed to be here. I'm not allowed to be there. I can't go down the street." I says, "What's coming?"

MB: Um hum.

PL: See, the next time, I was working up at Rillo's yet--

MB: Um hum.

PL: You know. So then a couple fellows said, "You're going to marry who you want, or they [the Black Handers] are going to let you have it."

So then, I knew a girlfriend of mine lived a couple houses from here. She used to watch these guys. She was older, much older than I was, and she says: "Pearl, I'll take care [of it]. Don't worry. I'll let you know what's going on." So, poor girl, she did. She watched every step.

MB: Oh.

PL: There was one of the reporters that was in the gang.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: See, he used to go to her. He says, "Don't give my name or I'll be killed." So then he used to go, somehow, one way or another, I don't know. He used to get to her and let her know what was going on. And they'd watch me, you know.

So I was coming home, my brother and I, and she says, "Come on in." Just a little bit of the door was open and I could hear her voice. She had a rough-like voice. "Come on in," she said, "I have to tell you something."

So I went in. She said, "Don't you move, please." She says, "I will show you from the window. There's four men right on this street, right here on this street going down." She says, "They're four men. They are going to kidnap you tonight."

I said, "What! What are they going to do with me? Kill me?"

She says, "You're not going home. You're going to stay till my Dad comes home."

MB: Oh.

PL: On account of her Dad--There used to be a club. They called it the Italian Club. They tore it down. Where this Stone Hotel used to be, right next to it. And this man, he used to take of this club, and he's a ... When he came home, 2 o'clock, [a.m.], and I was crying because I said I know my mother's crying. "Mary, I have to go."

[She said] “You’re not going.”

And her mother was sick, and she was in bed. She [the mother] said, “Come over here. Get on your knees and stay beside me.”

So I got on my knees, and I was talking to her, and I said, “Yeah, but my mother’s crying. I know my mother’s crying because,” I said, “you know how my mother is when I’m not home.”

She says, “It’s all right. It’s better she cries now, not that she has to cry after they kill you.”

And I says, “Why [are] they going to kill me?” Then I was getting scared.

MB: Oh, huh.

PL: So then I said, “Okay.” I says, “I’m not going.” So then I was praying, “Oh, please let her father come back.” And anyhow, by the time they close the place [the Italian Club] and everything-- they had gamblers there, used to play cards, you know-- it was two o’clock. It was a club.

He [Mary’s father] came in, and he looked at me. He said, “What are you doing in my house till this hour? Don’t you know your mother’s crying?”

I said, “Just shut up and let me talk to you.”

Oh, he got so mad when he heard the story that I was going to be kidnapped, and he told his daughter, “Who told you, Mary?”

[She replied] “It’s some guy from the gang. I am not allowed to mention his name.”

He [her father] says, “Okay, I don’t want to know.” Because if he’d know the name, he’d let him have it.

MB: Yeah.

“But,” he says, “I don’t want to know the name. Don’t you tell nobody the name. Because you’re going to be in trouble yourself.”

So he took us home. After this couple hours, he put two revolvers in his pocket. And boy, when I saw these revolvers, my hair stood up.

MB: You were terrified.

PL: For sure. So, he put his both hands [out], and then my brother hanged on one arm, and I hanged on the other. He made my brother walk like we were going down street and put him like

on the inside of the street here. He said, “You stay on this side, the street-side. Her I want to go on this side.”

I was thinking, “Why did he want me on this side? Something’s going to happen.” And oh, we was holding on for dear life. He was a big man. He’s talking going down [the street]. He says, “If anybody wants to come in front of him,” he says, “let him come. If they can blow people’s brains and grabbing people’s homes and steal, I can surely do it, too.” And he talked all the way going down, you know, and I was worried.

MB: He was saying things like that as he was walking?

PL: Yeah. Because they [the Black Handers] would hide people behind the homes.

MB: I see.

PL: And everybody had like a bush, or rose bush, maybe. And so he figured, let me talk.

When I went home, my mother looked at him and looked at us. My mother almost passed out. She said, “What happened?”

He said, “Okay Rita,” (my mother’s name was Rita), “just sit down, and I am going to tell you the story, just what my daughter told me. I am going to tell you.”

MB: Oh.

PL: And so he was telling them that they were going to kidnap me.

[Pearl’s mother then said] “You’re not going out no more. This is your home, and here’s where you going to stay.” She made me quit right off the bat. I was not allowed to go to work no more.

So she goes up to this lady’s house, Mrs. Rillo. She says to her, “What did I tell you? If you wanted my daughter to work for you, you had to treat her just like your own daughter.”

She [Mrs. Rillo] says, “I done it, but what do I know after she leaves the store?,” which was true, too, you know.

“Well,” [Pearl’s mother says] “I’m not making her go out no more.” She says, “I’m sorry.” She says, “If you want her to come in, give you a hand in the day time for a couple hours, then I want her home. I want her home. I don’t want her to go out no more. I can make a living just as well if she comes over here. What is she doing, killing herself?”

I’d go in there 7:00 a.m. I’d go 6:30 [a.m.] from the house, and she’d never be open, and she said she wanted me there by 6:30 – 7:00 o’clock. And I am standing there behind the door. Mrs. DiGiulio lived next door. She died. God love her. She was a good person. She was a good person. She [Mrs. DiGiulio] says, “Come on, Pia, you come to my house.” She says,

“You’re my girl, and I just made beautiful strong coffee. You and I are going to have coffee together.”

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: [At] 6:30 in the morning, I’m drinking coffee with this old lady. She wasn’t no old lady; she was young then. She just died. She died in her 90s.

MB: Oh.

PL: Beautiful lady. Still love her. She always...I always looked at [after] her. All the time, I used to go see her. And she says, “Why don’t you stay home? Why do you have to work for her? You don’t get nowhere working for her because everything she pays you, right away, you want to buy this for your mother, you want to buy that for your mother, from the store.”

You know. I says, “I have to bring something home.”

And she says, “You work from six o’clock in the morning, you get out of your house, and you go home [at] 12, 12:30 in the night for one dollar a day.” Look at the hours I put in for one dollar.

MB: Oh my.

PL: Isn’t that awful!

MB: Oh boy. So how did you end up getting married then?

PL: Then my, I was going with this, you couldn’t go out with them--

MB: No, no dating. (Laughs).

PL: You just stay in the house. You meet in the house, you know. We went to Johnstown a couple times. My mother went with me because she was afraid. She was afraid. “I won’t let you go. They might either drag him or drag you away and then you don’t have nobody.” She was just worried because you had to be worried at one time. It was bad here. It was bad.

They (the Black Handers) used to rap at your door. “Gimme, I want ten dollars,” and you didn’t have it. You know it was hard once before. People never had money, but they [the Black Handers] wanted it. They made people move out of this town. In fact, one of the ladies, it was on the 2nd of February in church. See, we have Candle Day in our church...

MB: You have to explain that to me ‘cause I’m [both talking at once]...

PL: Well, it’s...see...What church do you go to? You go to the--

MB: Well, I’ve been to Protestant ones more than Catholic ones so I don’t know what Candle Day is. I’ve been to lots of Catholic services, but I don’t quite know--

PL: Judy [a mutual friend]—she goes to the church up at the--

MB: the Orthodox.

PL: Yeah, the Orthodox.

PL: Well, they have it, too. Only theirs come in a little bit later because their calendar is little bit--

MB: Different.

PL: We have a week's difference. So this was Candle Day, and I says, "Oh, she was a girlfriend of mine, 'cause she had trouble, too, when she was young."

She's my age, same age, and she says, "Hey, I have to come to Church today."

I says, "Yes, I come to church, too. It's Candle Day."

"But," she says, "I have a reason."

"What do you mean, you have a reason?" I says. "Come on. We're going to the sacristy in the back to light our candles. We don't have to wait for the priest [to] come out and give them to us." I says, "We'll leave the money there, we'll get our candles, and we'll walk out."

She says, "Yeah, I'm going to go home and light these candles because I am living. We were supposed to be all dead."

I says, "Wait!"

So she went way back to when she was a young girl, and [it was] the same thing. She said they put dynamite under her house, and she said it just tore the porch off.

I says, "Huh?" Then I says, "How's come I can't remember this?"

And then she said, and then she was talking to me, and when she kept on talking, then I remembered.

MB: Oh.

PL: Then I said, "That's the time yonz moved away."

She says, "That's right."

MB: Oh.

PL: “Remember the other family that lived across, over there?” She said, “Somebody of their family lived in there. Do you remember when they went there? These people moved out in the night. They went back to Italy and never come back because they [the Black Handers] were after them?”

MB: The Black Hand was after them?

PL: The Black Handers, they call it. What’s called today “The Mafia”. We called them “Black Handers.”

MB: Then, yeah.

PL: “Then there’s another one.” She says “You remember the other one up there?”

I says, “Gee,” I says, “the Magazzus?”

And she says, “Yeah. You remember when they moved out, and I moved in their home because they blowed our porch off, and I was scared, and I didn’t want to stay in that house?” She says, “I moved in there because they had... “ They chased them out.

MB: Oh.

PL: The Black Handers. So these poor guys, he ran away. I felt so bad because, you know, you had a family. But that’s what they did. They used to do this.

MB: So what finally prompted your getting married then? Did your parents insist? Your mother insist?

PL: No, my parents, they wanted me to get married. Oh, yeah,

MB: But they got over this fear? They thought it would be--

PL: Well, after a while, see, then, when these guys....Oh, one night I picked up the rolling pin. My mother had a big rolling pin. I was going to hit this man. My mother had boarders. This one man was sitting on the other side, and this Black Hander was facing him. I took this rolling pin, and I had a great big brick. I was going to hit this man. I’d a killed him. I’d a killed him. So he come in the house [and says] “If you don’t do this, don’t do what these guys want, they’re going to burn your house down.”

So we had a family [in the other side of the house] because it’s a double home. This poor family. He didn’t go to work in the morning, this man. My mother looked outside and saw. “Hey, Wayne, how’s come you didn’t go to work? Don’t you feel good?”

“Yeah, he says, “Rita, I feel very, very good, but I don’t know what we’re going to do.”

My mother says, “Why, what happened?”

He says “[those] damned little Black Handers in your house.” He says, “I heard them. They’re going to burn the house down.” He says, “You know where I went.” He says, “I went to Johnstown.” We had street cars at the time. He says, “I went to Johnstown to buy insurance.” Because we didn’t have nobody who had any insurance in Windber. We had to go to Johnstown to buy anything you wanted. We had none of this. So we went to Johnstown.

And my mother said, “Is that why you didn’t go to work?” My mother felt real, real bad about that. “Does he have to miss a day’s work?”

So then, there was some other guys used to come to our home, and they used to come and ask my mother what went on last night, and what went on, and who came in the house?

I used to tell my mother, “Mom, you know, these guys, maybe. I don’t know. I don’t trust nobody no more. I couldn’t trust them.” I says. “That gang,” I says. “My brother-in-law,” I says, “Joe don’t come to the house.” He wasn’t allowed to come. That was my sister’s husband. He wasn’t allowed to come and see us because they says you go there. They made him stay with them. And if he didn’t, he says, they were going to kill him.

My mother said, “It’s okay, Joe. Do what they tell you because I can’t marry her [Pearl] onto that, and I don’t want you, my daughter’s husband, to get killed.”

And I says to my mother, “He, can I go away and get married? Who is going to know?”

[Her mother responds] “And then when you come back? Either we’re going to do it right and fight,” she says. “Just wait.”

But me, I was afraid for Steve because he was staying in our house. They [the Black Hand] had asked him...they wanted \$3,000, and he says to my mother, “Hey Rita, how did they know I have \$3,000? Well, they made a mistake anyhow. I have \$3,300, but they wanted \$3,000.”

My mother says, “Don’t you part with them. Don’t give them nothing. They’ll get away. They’ll get away. Don’t you give them [nothing].”

So then one day one guy come in. He says, “Yeah, it’s a shame what’s they’re doing,” he says, “but we have to settle this problem down.”

End of Tape 1 Side B

Start of Tape 2 Side A (March 5, 1984)

PL: For you. [Pearl served coffee. Beik was waiting for the tape to start after she had turned it over to the other side.]

MB: I’ll take a little sugar if you don’t mind.

PL: Go ahead.

MB: Oh boy. It's okay. [The tape was starting.]

PL: So then this man, when he come in, he says, "Well," he says, "I'm going to solve your problem." This is the man who used to come in and, see, he was sent...

MB: Oh.

PL: See, this poor guy was sent [emphasis] to do this. See, they picked one out of the gang.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And they picked him. They picked my brother-in-law. My brother-in-law didn't belong.

MB: I see.

PL: But because he was a Sicilian [they picked him]. He [the gang member] says, "You can't go there. You have to be with us, or we'll chop your head off."

MB: Oh.

PL: So he [her brother-in-law] says he played it cool, you know.

MB: Umm.

PL: He says they won't hurt him because he is married to my sister.

MB: Ah ha.

PL: And then this--another fella come in. He says, "Well," he says, "we're getting a little bit straightened out. Just be calm. Don't say nothing to nobody, and pretend nothing's going on."

So this fella said, "My wife's pregnant."

My mother says, "What do you want from me if you wife's pregnant? You did it; it's yours. You're going to be the father of the child."

He said, "Yeah, we are going to settle this thing now. I want your daughter with me. I want her to christen my baby."

MB: Oh.

PL: He said [that] because he was the one who was sent to the house. He's going to burn the house. He wanted the money. So he was sent to do it. He didn't want to do it. But he was sent. Either you do it, or they chop your head off.

MB: Oh.

PL: So then he said, ah, he says, “I was [sent] to do this. But now that I’m getting clear,” he says, “I think we’ve got them just where we want these guys because they can't win their point,” he says, “and something's going to come up.” And they were afraid because if this went into the other-- the big gang--this was, well, just like when you go to the movies, and you see the outlaws and the, you know, this is the gang and the other one [a rival gang] doing on their own. That’s how this was.

MB: Ah.

PL: It was a big gang of the Black Handers. But these were the undercover [ones] that they were doing on their own.

MB: I see.

PL: They wanted to do like the other big ones were doing, but they didn’t want the big ones to know what was going on.

MB: I see.

PL: So they figured [out] something. There was a leak in this, outfit, and they was gonna get caught.

MB: Oh

PL: So then they, ah--He says “Well,” he says, “Let’s play it cool. Let's go to the Eureka store. We'll buy everybody a hat,” he says. “A ten dollar hat,” he says. “We'll tell him here, and he'll let us all go.” And that's what they did, and I christened his baby.

MB: Oh.

PL: And she died, that poor girl. Then they had, then she, no--she had a boy. It was a boy first. He comes down the club, and I always call him “*Compare*.” Because in Italian, “*Compare*” is like the Godfather.

MB: Ah.

PL: I always called him that because I baptized him. So he didn't know too much about this, but when, ah, because you know, he moved up to 42 (Mine 42), and we lived and then I baptized him, and I baptized the girl--

MB: Um.

PL: And we became real, real good friends with these people.

MB: Um.

PL: But I loved his wife. I used to go to his wife all the time. But I was just a little girl.

MB: Oh.

PL: You know. And we became big friends. The kids today, they all know me. But I never tell them what happened. (Beik laughs).

PL: I couldn't tell the kids. I didn't want [to tell them]. But I says [that] I should tell him because his father wasn't, he wasn't the one of them. He was just pushed. "Either you do this, or else you're gonna be killed."

MB: Um.

PL: So, yeah, that was story of the Black Handers. So the--

MB: How did you get married?

PL: I got married in church.

MB: At St. Anthony's?

PL: St. Anthony's Church.

MB: Um hum. And nothing happened to you?

PL: No.

MB: You were safe, and they were--

PL: They were all across the street looking over, and I...One of the guys, he says--he was another one--and he says, "Nobody's gonna marry her [Pearl], but I'm going to marry that girl."

MB: Oh.

PL: So, he was a nice looking man. He used to come to the store, but he didn't belong to no gang.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: He was just an ordinary--

MB: I see.

PL: Yeah. So then I says, “No,” I says, “I’m not marrying you.” I says. “I’m going to marry Steve. Although I don’t want to get married.” I says. “But,” I says, “either you get married, or I will be having more trouble again with another gang.” Because that’s how it was at that time.

MB: Um hum.

PL: You get married fast, and then you... It was okay. I got married in a veil. We had a beautiful wedding. Home, it was [at] home.

MB: Oh.

PL: Yeah, we had a big dinner. We had so many invited.

MB: Oh.

PL: And these people came.

MB: Um. They came to your wedding.

PL: Yeah, they came to--

MB: Were you frightened?

PL: I wasn’t.

MB: Were you frightened?

PL: No.

MB: Not this time.

PL: I wasn’t frightened. No, because I figured that was it. Because he, they did this. It was done on their own. But when this other big guy--he found out I was married, he says “Hey, Pearl.” He was a barber.

MB: Oh.

PL: And he used to come down to see me. He says, “How come I wasn’t invited in your wedding?”

“Well,” I says, “My mother didn’t do too many inviting. A lot of people came themselves.”

MB: Um.

PL: He says, “Why were them people there?”

MB: Um.

PL: I says, “They’re neighbors. I says, “From 22nd street, up 23rd street.” I says, “These people came on their own.”

See, he’s trying to get me, if I would talk about it, but I was warned. My mother said, “Don’t you ever tell him because he’s a good friend of ours.”

MB: Um.

PL: But see, he, he was [with] the big gang.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: And my mother had boarders. And he used to come to our house, and he wanted some new guys to join.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: This Black Hand. But he was a big man in Windber.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And so I says to my mother, I says, “You know, I don’t like this man when he comes in our house in the night.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: My mother says, “What do you know?” You know. She says that, “They don’t come for you. They don’t come for me. He comes to talk to them two guys.”

“Yeah,” I says, “But I have ears.”

MB: Oh, (laughing).

PL: She says “How can you hear when you’re sleeping?”

I says, “Yeah, I pretend I was sleeping.” We had a little cot on one side. You know. And I pretend I was sleeping there, you know.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: I was just a little girl. (Beik laughs.) I used to hear everything they spoke. (Beik laughs.)

How they used to tell these guys, these men, my mother’s boarders. But I said, “Ah, yeah, when you join, it’s what do they do to you.”

“Oh,” he [a boarder] said, “that’s nothing. They don’t do it.”

He [the other] says, “Oh, yes, yes, yes. I was told. He says, “I know what they do. “

He says, “Who told you?”

“Never mind who told me.” But they were so thick, he couldn’t. They never got into each other’s way.

MB: Hum.

PL: You know, these two, they just loved...He was a boarder at my mothers. He was just one of these guys, always happy, always trying to do things to make people happy. You know.

MB: Hum.

PL: Jokes, and be flying all over. You know. He’s one of them guys. See, but I used to hear this.

MB: Hum

PL: And then when I used to-- I told my mother one time, “Hey Mom, let’s go down to Angelo Savarino.”

“What do you want to go down there for?

“Mom, these guys are, these guys don’t belong with that gang.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: My mother says, “What do you know?”

I says, “My mind say[s] that Angelo Savarino don’t know nothing about these guys.” But I’m telling you. They did know.

MB: Oh.

PL: When he come down to see me after we got married, he said [that] we didn’t invite him. My mother should have invited him. But she didn’t want him because she don’t want no trouble.

MB: Right.

PL: And then [when] he come down, he brought me a big bottle of perfume or something.

MB: Oh.

PL: And then he'd come down. Every time I knew he was coming, I'd see him [coming], I'd lock the doors. I didn't want him to come in my house no more.

MB: Um hum, um hum.

PL: I says maybe one thing or another. Maybe I might make a slip.

MB: Um hum.

PL: Oh, ah, he died not too many years ago. But--

MB: Um hum. Oh, goodness. Ah--

PL: Yeah, I'm telling you. He always used to bring this stuff up. I heard so much, "Who was the one who used come to your house?"

"Nobody came to our house." I says, "My Mother has boarders." Every time there is men coming in.

MB: Hmm.

PL: I say, "When you have boarders, you have friends coming in."

He says, "But they weren't friends."

MB: Sure.

PL: I says, "What do you mean? I am '*Compare?*' After I got married, I baptized their babies." I know what he was driving at.

MB: Um hum.

PL: But I told him I christened babies. Then he shut up.

MB: Umm.

PL: He figured, but he had--

MB: What does that mean? What is the significance then of being the Godmother like that? It protected you in some way?

PL: Yeah, because you're, you're, that's your God child. See. And you're, like, in the family.

MB: Right. It protected you.

PL: Yeah, it protected you because, like that boy, if anything would have happened to their mother and father when they were babies, I'm responsible for them.

MB: Yeah. I see.

PL: Yeah. And this boy comes to the shop every night I'm there. (Beik laughs). I love him. He's grown up, has children and grandchildren. Still I always look at [after] him.

MB: Oh. That's nice.

PL: Yeah. So his children wanted to know why I called him "*Compare*." I told the children this is why. (Beik laughs.)

PL: Then they liked me better.

MB: Right, so when you, when you're thinking of these early days in Windber, [did] all the Italians live in the same section of town?

PL: One section. Up here. These, this here was "Little Italy," they called it.

And down the other end, it was more like Slavish people. And then up at 35 [Mine 35], they were all Slavish people. Like 35 where the mines were. They were all company homes. They are still standing up there.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: Yeah, they lived up there. No way. If you take me [there]. [She told her husband], "You're going bring me up in one place or," I says, "I'm ready for a divorce" (Beik laughs).

PL: And I moved on the farm. Yeah, we moved to the farm. I think I was married five years, six years. We moved out in the country.

MB: Um. Far from here or close by?

PL: Oh, about seven or eight miles. Not far.

MB: Did your husband still work in the mines?

PL: Yeah, he'd go to work. Yeah, he would get a ride right off of the road. Somebody would pick him up.

And, I worked, oh, I worked so hard on that farm. I loved it though.

MB: Did you?

PL: Yeah, I loved it. I loved it.

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: I did learn a lot of things...to milk cows. And I made cheese. I made this--what they make raviolis today with.

MB: Um hum.

PL: Oh yeah. We'd butcher our own chickens. You ought to see me killing them chickens. Oh, dear God, today, I'd be afraid of them. (Beik laughs).

PL: After you don't do it. We'd butcher our own pig. We'd make our own everything—bacon, eggs, and sausage. And your lard. We used to do everything.

MB: It was hard work.

PL: Oh. it was hard.

MB: Your parents couldn't keep animals, could they, in Windber? At Mine 35 and 37 they kept animals. [Did] they keep animals here, too?

PL: My mother, yeah. Well, at that time you was allowed. Chickens. Now they're not allowed. It's a shame that people can not have a chicken. You know, my mother had chickens, and she had a little...a couple pigs, and she had a cow. She loved that cow. See, in Italy, everybody usually had.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: A little thing. It's something they had, you know. My mother said she didn't because there was no boy in the family. And the big boy, he got married, and he took off. He was about seven foot tall.

MB: Oh boy.

PL: He had a good job with the forest, you know. So he says to his mother, "You don't expect me to stay here, milk a cow or something, when I have a good job?" The way he had, you know.

MB: Uh, huh. So did you live with your parents when you were first married for a while before you moved?

PL: I lived for about three weeks with my parents.

MB: Oh. Then you--

PL: Then we found a house.

MB: You found a house?

PL: Because the houses were hard to find.

MB: Were they?

PL: O-o-oh, and I didn't want to move no further than 21st Street. But everybody owned their homes.

MB: Yes, that's right.

PL: [continuing] ...and everybody. You couldn't go. So then I went down 12th [Street]. We looked around. My mother and I [went], and another woman came with us, and we looked all over.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And we took street to street, and we found this place down 12th Street. And, right where the lumber company is--

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: On the other side. And I found this house. And I said, "Oh, my. It's too far from my mother."

MB: Umm.

PL: You know. She lives on 21st street. This is 12th street.

MB: Long walk.

PL: And I thought that was too far. But then, when my husband get out to work, I'd run out of the house. Down 21st street. Boy, I used to go down there in no time. My mother says, "Here she comes."

MB: (Beik laughs). So you were close even after you were married ... (both talking at the same time).

PL: Oh, yeah. I was always close with my mother, all the time, even after.

MB: Were you close to your Dad, too?

PL: I was close to my family. I was close to my family.

MB: Were you close to your Dad, too? Not as much?

PL: Yeah, he died. He died years ago. Well, I'll tell you. Oh this is what I want to tell you. See my Dad--the Black Handers chased him.

MB: Oh.

PL: They came in. There was a christening right across from my mother, and we were invited. My mother didn't feel good. She didn't go. She said, "Now you girls go with your dad, and make sure when I call, you come, because it's right across [the street]."

So we heard her call, and I says [to] my sister, "Hey, Rosie, let's go."

"All right. Boy," my sister said, "that mom. Right now she had to call because they're playing music and dancing, and we try to learn how to dance." (Beik laughs).

PL: So my sister loved to dance. So I says, "Let's go, because you know how mom is. She'll come over here. She'll get us by the hair. She don't have no pity."

And she says, "Oh, if you want to go, you go."

I went. And I says, "Mom, we're not doing nothing. We're sitting down listening to the music."

"Yeah, but," she says, "do you see what time it is? It's nine o'clock." My mother says, "I want yonz [slang for "you" plural] home."

I says, "Mom, the music just started not long. "

"But," she said, "Yeah, you can sit on our porch. We can hear it from here."

I went back [to my sister], and I says, "Hey, Ro, come on 'cause Mom is getting mad. She wants us home." And my Dad stayed. We did tell him. We said, "Dad, we're going to go home."

"All right, yonz" [he said]. "Course yonz have to go to bed. You have to go to school tomorrow." He says, "For me, I'm going to stay."

So he stayed, and he said they had outside toilets. "Back house," what they call them. So he was going down there, and one guy gave him a big shove.

He says, "Hey, you know what?" he says, "I'm Jack Cardone." And my father says, "That's right, and I'm Frank Camille. So what do you want?"

"Oh," he says, "nothing right now, but I'm going to fix you up." So that sort of upset my father.

MB: Um hum.

PL: So then they started going on, you know. My Dad. Then they killed somebody at 21st street. And my father just come back that night.

Ah, no, [correcting herself] there was a christening. Another christening. What am I talking about? It was the christening we had gone to...oh, that christening where we had gone, and these beautiful people was there, and they were no good. They're friends [with each other].

So I think, just like I says to my mother, "I think Mario belongs to that gang, or they made him." They forced you to do it.

And my mother said, "It's all right. Just shut up. Don't say nothing to nobody." Because you had to keep quiet so you don't get in any trouble.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And my father come home right after, and there was a shot over there. I didn't hear it because we went to bed. But my mother was up. She was waiting for my father. She wouldn't go to sleep till he was home. And we had an American family right next to my mother's home.

MB: Um hum

PL: She was listening to all the music, and she could hear everything because, you know, they get loud. Especially here, it's quiet; it's summer. And she said, she was one witness.

MB: Oh.

PL: She said, "Don't yonz say," because the policeman came, and everything came in the morning. [The neighbor says] "Don't yonz say, [that it was] Frank Camille [who did it]. Frank Camille went home. I saw him."

MB: Uh, hum.

PL: She [the witness] says, "I'm at the window," she says, "and I saw him going home. After he went home, it wasn't too long there was a shot. But if they killed anybody, or what," she says, "I heard a shot. But I don't know who shot, or whatever."

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: But they tried to blame my dad.

MB: Oh. For heaven's sake.

PL: For the shooting. Yeah.

MB: Oh.

PL: They blamed him. It was the Black Handers. Another gang [of them]..

MB: Oh.

PL: So, then it wasn't too long. Well, he'd [her Dad'd] go away, and he'd come back. He'd come back, like, Fridays, Friday nights. And he used to be up at Seanor. Then he moved out to [Mine] 38. Well, he had a sister there. And then he'd stay with her, and then he['d] go home, like, for the weekend. He worked there [at Mine 38].

MB: Oh.

PL: There was a mine there. And he worked there. Then he'd come back. After so long he sort of [got] lost. They started getting after him; these people [were] getting after him. He didn't come back no more. And we were left without a father.

MB: Oh.

PL: Yeah, because these people were after him, and then they shot the guy. They killed, they stabbed, this man at 21st street, too. Right down this...It was a carnival show that night. And we were just kids. My mother says, "Yeah, we'll go down. A little bit later we'll go down. I'll take yonz down." So we were sitting on the porch, and ah, I tell you, you see all these people go over to this lady's—

MB: Oh.

PL: So I would go over to this lady's house because she was a good neighbor of ours. She had children my age, and I went over. And I saw this man. I can still see him. They had one room, and they had a table there, and they put this man on top of this table [laid him out on the table after he was dead].

MB: Oh.

PL: He was dead. Doctors came in; the policemen came in. He was dead.

MB: Oh boy.

PL: Just a young boy. Twenty-one years old. Beautiful. And I thought, oh, I thought the world of that boy because he was such a nice young kid, you know.

MB: Um hum.

PL: Me, I was about 14—[correcting herself] 13 [years old]. He used to talk to us girls. All the time he'd come over on our porch and sit. And they killed him. They stabbed him.

Then they [the authorities] wanted to know who did it. Who did it? So I says, "Who did it?"

Nobody knew who did it, but then they found out who did it. He [the killer] stabbed him. Then he [the killer] says it wasn't the man he had to stab; he says it was another one. No matter it was another. But he did stab him. So he served jail this man.

MB: Hmm.

PL: And he was the one [who stabbed the boy] who came to our house for my father.

MB: Oh, oh.

PL: He come in to... I'll never forget. The next morning like, the Christening, I think it was the next morning. My Dad had to go to work. With all this commotion, he didn't go to work.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And he says to me, "C'mon Pearl, we're going to eat my bucket [the food in it] because--"

MB: Um hum.

PL: I packed his lunch. And I says, "Ah, yeah, you give me a piece of my pork chop." (Beik laughs). I loved pork chops. And I says, "I don't care, whatever you give me." But you got to eat a little bit of bread with it, because we don't eat meat without bread.

MB: Hmm.

PL: Because you're supposed to learn how to eat bread with your meat. And I called my mother, "Hey, C'mon. I says, Daddy has pork chops."

[Her mother replied], "Oh you and your pork chops. That's all you like."

I says, "Yeah, I do. I says, "You do a good job."

He come over, and we sat there, and he was talking to us. Here comes some guy. And this man come in, and he talked to my father, and he got nasty. My mother was, she was, mending some sheets. She was in the dining room, sitting there.

MB: Yeah.

PL: And my mother says, "Hey, I want to know what do you want with my husband?"

He says, "What do I want?" He says, "What does he [emphasis] want?"

My mother says, "He [her husband] don't want nothing from you or nobody." She says, "You let him alone."

MB: Um hum.

PL: And he says, “And who are you?” to my mother.

So, we were just kids, you know. And I says, “Now, why don’t you get out of our house?” I says to him. And he walked out...and this other guy come in with a revolver. He come in.

My Dad didn’t even have shoes on. He made a dive, [to] go through the coal shanty. Our coal shanty. Because we had a coal shanty then, you know. He went through the coal shanty. There’s a door where you put your coal in. He made a dive out of there, and he went up to 21st street. And on 22nd street, right across from the church where Rizzo’s [restaurant] is now, there was, he had a cousin there.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And he went in there, and he was a shoemaker.

MB: Um hum.

PL: See, my father ran out without shoes.

MB: Oh.

PL: We didn’t know where he had gone, where I could reach him to give him shoes. But anyhow, this, his cousin, gave him a pair of shoes because he was a shoemaker.

MB: Um hum.

PL: People don’t take their shoes all the time. He says, “Here, I’ll give you a pair of shoes. Go to your sister’s [place] out at ([Mine] 38.” Go past Seanor, and then there’s [Mine] 38.

MB: Right.

PL: And that’s where he went.

MD: Oh. So, then did he ever come back to--?

PL: He come back all the time, but then, at the end, he was scared. He was scared because they killed a couple people where he was. Then, when he come home, that’s when they killed this young boy, and he got so disturbed, and he went. And he says, “Well, I won’t make it every week,” he says, “but [at] least if I work I’ll bring pay in.” You know.

MB: So you didn’t get to see him very much after that, did you?

PL: After that then, I got married. Well, he’d come up and see us. He’d come see us at the farm. And [not long after] then he died. He died of cancer.

MB: Oh. That's awful. So he did... When did he die, Mrs. Leonardis?

PL: Oh, he'd be around, he must be about 50--50 something.

MB: Fifty some [years old]. Yeah. Oh, Boy.

PL: He was a nice young man. He was a nice young man.

MB: That's too bad that he had to live with such fear.

PL: Yeah, that's it. That's the way back.

MB: Yeah.

PL: So we had one policeman. And this policeman got rid of all these Black Handers.

MB: Oh, did he?

PL: He got rid of them (emphatically)!

MB: How did he do that?

PL: He says, he says, "They have one life, and I have one. If they can shoot, I can shoot better." He didn't care; he didn't have no mercy. He said, "I'm going to shoot them down." He says, "If they want to run the town, we have no law." And that's how they started [to stop the gangs]. They got a little bit--Oh, there was a lot of killing, though. (Sadly) I remember how many people got killed.

PL: In fact I was married. They killed one fella. See, it wasn't [the] Black Hand. This was a real head gang. And I saw. I was married, just married. Just married, and I went down to a neighbor's house. And I says to my husband, "I'm going down to Angie's house. Why don't you come along?"

He says, "I'll be there a little bit later."

MB: Oh.

PL: I was sitting there on the porch. This house had just three apartments...

MB: Um hum.

PL: We were all sitting on the porch, and I see these men. I says, "Oh, oh." I says, "Meeting tonight."

"What do you mean?" [her husband asks]

I says, “How much do you want to bet?” I says, “In one hour, somebody’s going to be killed.”

MB: Oh.

PL: He says, “Pearl, please don’t say it, not around here.” I says, “It’s going to be around here somewhere.” I says, “Somebody’s going to be killed.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: Because it was the house across the street, and I never knew that he {emphasis} belonged to one of these gangs. And I lived on 12th street. I never knew.

MB: Um hum.

PL: So, I saw one man getting out [of the house]. Pretty soon I saw another man getting out of there. Pretty soon another one come out... First the man--there was a street, and the man and I could see them under the bridge. There was a creek. From 12th street you could see it right there. There used to be a trestle.

MB: Oh, yes.

PL: There used to be a big trestle going out to [Mine] 31. See, the streetcar used to pass under there, just where the street car passed.

MB: Oh, okay.

PL: On, it was on, a Sunday afternoon about 4:00 o’clock. Here this little man they killed.

MB: Um.

PL: And he was coming back from--and I hear him hollering. He was going, “Oh *di Mon*,” [?] that’s “Oh, Dear Mom,” you know. He was calling, and he’d go, “Oh Dear God,” in Italian.

Me, I wanted to run. I wanted to help him. My husband, he held me back. He said, “Don’t you dare [emphasis]!” He says, “Because if you’re going to hold him back,” he said, “you’re next.”

I says, “Yeah, but somebody has to.”

He says that there will be somebody on the road. He says, “You know these people. Keep away from them.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: So then this Italian guy, little short thing, and he passed. There used to be the track there, though you couldn’t go through. Now you can go through. But at that time it was a dead end.

MB: Oh.

PL: So he's going over, and he mentioned the name, who it was that killed him. And when I heard the name--he lived right across from me on 12th street.

MB: Um hum.

PL: I says, "Oh dear God!"

So I says--My husband says, "Keep your mouth shut. Keep your mouth shut, and don't say nothing because you're going to find yourself in a lot of trouble again."

MB: Right. Ha, ha (laughs).

PL: So, here, I'm trying, I wanted to keep my mouth shut, but I wanted to go to help him. Poor guy, he was holding his heart and his hand. And they, he, said that they stabbed him seven times.

See, there used to be a Mussolini from Italy, but this was another one. This other guy who's a good guy, this Mussolini, and they stabbed him seven times. And that's what they told him.

MB: Um hum.

PL: We're stabbing you seven times, just like they did to Mussolini, but Mussolini was a good guy. They were the bad guys. But this guy was a good guy that they killed...

MB: Oh.

PL: They killed him, and he was a nice guy. He lived on 11th street at the time.

MB: Oh. Oh, boy.

PL: Yeah, and I lived on 12th street, and these guys lived on 12th street.

MB: Um hum.

PL: You know.

MB: So when did all these killings stop? When did this policeman sort of get this stopped?

PL: This man fell. Somebody picked him up. And there was Dr. Brumbaugh, and Dr. Brumbaugh, he lived in a little place. It was a book stand, and he had an office in there, and he wasn't there, but his wife was there.

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: And the wife says, “Who killed you? Who did this?”

He says “Bruno.”

MB: Oh.

PL: That was his last word.

MB: Oh.

PL: So when they says “Bruno” --Bruno lived right across the street.

MB: Oh.

PL: So in the morning I get up, (cough, cough) I go across the street, and I says to a friend of mine--I says, “You know, Caroline, he mentioned Bruno. He’s Bruno over here.”

“Shut up,” she told me. “Mind your business.” (laughing). She was always telling me to shut up, so...(Beik laughs).

MB: Oh.

PL: I says, “Yeah, but that isn’t right.” So, I'm going outside, and I saw this lady, a beautiful lady, the wife of this man. I says, “Hey Carmella. Did you husband go to work? Is he working today?”

“Oh, si,” she goes “Yeah.”

And I says, “You know what? I wonder who killed that man, that man?”

“Oh,” she says, “I don't know.”

“Yeah,” I says, “but we have a lot of dirty people around this corner.” I says, “I'm moving out of this street.” I says. “I didn't want to move on this street, but I'm getting out of here. There are too many crooked people. They’re bad.”

She says, “Who's bad?”

I says, “Well,” I says, “I don't know, but they mentioned Bruno.” My husband told me, “Shut your mouth. Don't you go saying that.” Me, I wanted to find out.

So the [neighbors from] next door, they says, “Hey. Come back.” This Caroline, she says, “I didn’t see no light this morning when your husband went to work. How’s come? He didn’t go to work?”

[Carmella replies], “Oh, yeah.” She talked in Italian ‘cause she couldn't talk in English. She says, “Yeah, he went to work.”

See, this lady Caroline and her neighbor didn't see no light, and she heard about this, and she put that in there. The next morning all 12th Street was shocked. They moved out, and nobody heard [more] of them.

MB: Oh.

PL: They moved out. Nobody knew--

MB: Nobody knew.

PL: [continuing] where they got to. Nobody. He was the man. I don't know if they got him, whatever. I don't know.

MB: So when did these killings, kinds of killings, stop then? When this policeman sort of enforced--?

PL: Then we had this policeman, Mr. Mullen. He was a great man. He says, “Somebody has to shoot these guys down.” He said, then they start, he says that they started getting kind of scared because they did too much.

MB: Um hum.

PL: See, after they did that killing under the bridge, people start [getting angry], you know.

MB: So this was around 1920 because you were married in 1920--

PL: I was 21, 22 [years old]. (Both talking at once).

MB: So did things get better after that? (Both talking at once).

PL: Yeah, after that, then everything sort of [got better]. Oh, they did it, but it wasn't as bad, you know.

MB: Okay. Hmm.

PL: You'd find in the morning, then you'd find somebody. There was a house right above here. This poor man. Somebody was going to work.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And they saw blood coming out of this place, out of the door. Now, he [the person who saw the blood] was going to work. He could have turned around and go into find out because [but]

he couldn't miss work. But at that time, you'd miss one day's work, and one day's work at that time, if you missed work, the family didn't have nothing

MB: Ah.

PL: So blood was coming out. So then they found...They went there. They killed this man. And I'll never forget this man. I'll never forget it. He looked just like a Chinaman.

MB: Oh.

PL: But he was an Italian. He was a Calabrese, whatever he was. But they killed him in the house. Nobody knew who killed him. And after they saw the blood, someone must have put a report.

MB: Um hum.

PL: And the policeman come up, and everybody investigated.

MB: So where all was the community from that came from Italy then? The Abruzzis and the Sicilians?

PL: Yeah.

MB: Any other big groups of Italians in the community?

PL: From all kinds of Italians. From all over. Oh, yeah. (Both talking at once).

MB: From all over? Okay, oh, okay.

PL: We had all kind here in Windber. Here, there were all kind.

MB: How did the Italians get along with the Slovaks or the Hungarians or--?

PL: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

MB: They got along okay. (Both talking at once).

PL: In fact, my mother and us kids, we got along better because we had Hungarians and Slavish people always close by on 21st, and so, we loved them. My mother used to... in fact when the neighbors--

End of Tape 2 Side A

Start of Tape 2 Side B (March 5, 1984)

MB: Oh, but there were some people who were... Were the Americans more privileged than the Italians?

PL: (Both talking at the same time). They were everything [emphasis]. Yeah.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: They started on all the Italians. They were spaghetti eaters. They used to call us. I almost killed a girl.

MB: Oh!

PL: My mother was cooking for some wedding. She went to help, and she says, “Pearl, you come with me so you can give me a hand.” Because I always went with my mother. And I peeled garlic, and we made the meatballs. We fixed up the cupboards. I was just a little girl, but I knew how. My mother made me. She taught me regular. Oh yeah. Nine o’clock. When I was nine years old, I made bread.

MB: Oh.

PL: Oh yeah, I had to learn. I wanted to learn. (Beik laughs.)

PL: Oh. Ah. That’s why they tell me—Oh, I says, my mother, when she, when she had to make supper, I was right there. I was always with her because I had to see what she’d do.

MB: Hum.

PL: Yeah, and I'd do it. She didn't have no trouble with me.

MB: Hmm. Do you remember much, I guess there were a couple of really big strikes in Windber?

PL: Oh, my God.

MB: There was the 1906 one, which would have been before you were born. Do you remember people talking about that?

PL: I was a year old. I had an uncle, my husband’s uncle, God love him. I had him for 41 years. He stayed with me. I miss him; [he was] just like a father in the family.

MB: Oh.

PL: He was never married, never went out with a girl.

MB: Hum

PL: Never went with no girls. Never. So he said... He had just come from Italy.

MB: Oh.

PL: And he was walking where the old Post Office used to be, and he said he had his both hands in his pockets.

MB: Um hum.

PL: It was chilly, and they didn't have coats like they have today.

MB: Right. Uh, huh.

PL: He says he was coming down that little bit of a hill there by the old Post Office, and some policeman caught him. Some guy. He wasn't even a policeman. He says, "Hey! You're the... You have a gun on you."

He [her uncle] says he didn't understand because he just came from Italy. But he knew [the word for] a gun, you know. He took his pockets and turned them out. He didn't have even a nickel on him. They put him in jail.

MB: Oh really!

PL: Oh, yeah they put him in jail. Oh, he was... Oh--

MB: This was during the strike time?

PL: 1906 strike. Yeah.

MB: What was your uncle's name, again? What was your uncle's name?

PL: Sabatino DeRubis.

MB: Oh, okay.

PL: And he was a dear. He wouldn't hurt a fly. Nobody.

MB: And he was sitting in jail during the strike?

PL: Yeah, he had to serve six months. And he says he cried. He cried every night. He says, "Why did I come to the United States?" He says, "I could have stayed in Italy," he says. "Maybe you kick one stone one time, but you kick another stone." Because it was stony-like, you know. They'd fill these places [resorts] up. They were, at times, better than lot of places.

In fact they have all resorts where my mother came from and my husband. They [the Italians] are building because they have beautiful buildings. They'll never break. They are all resorts where people go. Like, in the summertime.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: From Rome they go there and stay because it's cool, a cooler place. And they fix up all the buildings for that. They make money on it.

MB: Uh, huh. Sure.

PL: They go for vacation there. People vacation there, you know like--

MB: Oh.

PL: Like my sister-in-law. (cough) And I have a sister-in-law. My husband's family. They have quite a family, too. My mother-in-law came from--she came. After. how many children did I have? I was married about--

MB: Hum.

PL: Nine, ten years. My mother-in-law came from Italy. Then she remarried here. My husband was so mad at her. He didn't want her to remarry. (Beik laughs).

He didn't want her to remarry. I said, "So that, let them get married." And she married an old man, Mr. Marinelli.

MB: Um.

PL: She died [at] 82 [years old]. My mother died [when] she was 82. And she [her husband's mother] was 82.

MB: But this poor uncle here, had he literally just come off the train? Just came?

PL: He just came from Italy. He had a job from the mines.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: But they were on strike. And he didn't understand what they meant by strikes. Whatever--

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: And he didn't know how to speak in English, and they put him in jail. And he says [that] when they put them in jail, he says he got so nervous.

MB: Um hum.

PL: He said in the night he'd see, like, people, like, that they were hanging in there because that's the place where they hang people.

MB: Oh, ah.

PL: They don't have jails like they have today.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: You know. He said, "Oh!" He said he would always see somebody like was walking around, all in white, with a red tie around his neck. Boy, he used to be scared.

MB: So he didn't know what was happening to him then?

PL: No, no. He didn't.

MB: Did your family try to help him then?

PL: Yeah, well, yeah. The Italian people [did]. But you couldn't do it because you wasn't allowed to help somebody like that.

MB: Oh.

PL: See, you're working for the company. Oh, they, [the] Berwind [company]. They say, "Well, we made a good living." Sure you made a good living. You worked for it.

MB: Um hum.

PL: They didn't pay you for nothing.

MB: Right. (laughs)

PL: You know. Sure you made a good living. After a while, but if it was--

MB: They didn't like unions and strikes.

PL: They didn't like 'em. Now they're trying to break them. That's what they're trying to do now.

MB: Yeah.

PL: But [if] they break the union, you know, you yourself, you're not going to have nothing at the end. Sure. Like our little town. Our town is kept up by the older people.

MB: Right.

PL: They have their checks coming in every month. But they fought for it.

MB: Um hum. That's right.

PL: They fought for it. They worked for it. They worked for it.

MB: Did you remember the strike of 1922?

PL: '22?

MB: You would have been.... You would remember that.

PL: Oh, yeah. Yeah. (Both talking at once). I was married.

MB: Tell me something about that.

PL: My husband was off [work] 13 months. And I told my husband, "You don't go back to work." Because I believed in that [the union].

MB: Oh, yeah.

PL: I was one of these. I used to go to every meeting.

MB: Did you?

PL: I had one child. I was pregnant with my second. I says, "We're going to the meeting.

He [her husband] says, "But you can't walk."

I says, "I'm walking." And we used to walk [emphasis] to the meetings.

MB: Where did you walk?

PL: Way out in some field, out in some farm.

MB: Did you? Oh boy. (laughs)

PL: God knows where.

MB: I guess you couldn't have any meetings on the company properties anywhere? They wouldn't allow them.

PL: No. It had to be some farm. They [certain farmers] let you go on, you know. Well, someplace. Oh, yeah. We was, ah, my husband--. Oh, we worked for that [the union].

MB: Do you remember what, what the reasons were, why the strike took place then? Do you remember anything about that?

PL: Ah you see, you're working in the mines. You're doing all this dead work [removal of stones, rocks, anything but coal, work that was the miner was not paid for]. You never get paid.

MB: Um hum.

PL: You're working for them, you know.

MB: Yeah.

PL: And you're not getting paid.

Well, then you go to work, and they didn't want you to go to work. Like tell me [emphasis] there's no work tomorrow. I don't have to fix lunch.

MB: Right.

PL: Or get up in the morning. You know. Fine. [If] there's no work, there's no work. Now when you get there to the mine, for a half a day, because they'd make you work a half a day--

MB: Hum.

PL: When you get there, Big Sign [saying "No Work"]. I don't... The men used to feel bad. "Hey! What are we up to? You know, this isn't fair. Just tell us. If there's no work, fine. We don't have to pack our lunch and come up here, and you know, people with a car use gas."

MB: Um hum

PL: [continuing] "That's not right for us."

Then their pays. Then they [the miners] want to raise their pays. You know, and well, in 1922, my husband was working in the car shop right then. He was a miner, too. He came from Italy. He was about 16 when he went to work in the mines. He worked 27 years in the mines.

MB: Ah.

PL: Then he was in the car shop. In '22. Then he went back in the mines again. But, he was in the car shop. When he come back, he says, "Well, I'm glad we got a Democrat president." At the time their pays come up. [Pearl seems a bit confused as to the timing of the Democratic president].

MB: Roosevelt, I guess. FDR.

PL: Roosevelt. Come on. [There was a knock at the door. She opened the door and talked to someone. I stopped the tape and resumed the interview after the person left.]

PL: All the time. Didn't matter. You had to shop from their stores.

MB: Ah.

PL: See. And when payday come, you'd get \$2.00. They have to leave you \$2.00. What could you do with \$2.00? You had light bill to pay. Your water.

MB: Ah

PL: And that was it. You would go, and if you wanted anything, you had to go to the store, you had to go to their [emphasis] stores. You were forced [emphasis] to go to their stores.

MB: Oh. What would happen to you if you tried to go somewhere else?

PL: Ah, they'd take you out of work. Ah, yeah. You'd lose your job.

MB: You'd lose your job?

PL: Yeah, fast, you know. There was no mercy here. Say, well, you could find something. That's why, when these big stores started coming in, they [the Berwinds] had to do something to, you know--

MB: Oh.

PL: Because they had their own stores. Our big store was here. Well this [building where Pearl lives] used to be [one of] the Eureka stores.

MB: This building right here? Oh. I didn't realize that.

PL: This is called the [Mine] 32 store.

MB: Oh. I didn't know that. Oh, I see.

PL: Yeah, this is the 32 store because it was 32 mine. And there's Eureka Store at 35--

MB: Um hum.

PL: [Mines] 36, 42, 40. They all have their stores. [Mine] 37. They all had their stores.

MB: Um hum.

PL: So you had to shop from them. And if you didn't, you'd hear it, you know. Farmers used to come. People from here [the Berwind people], when the farmers would come, they would chase them back.

MB: Oh.

PL: Past the tracks. And "Don't yonz come back." That wasn't fair.

MB: No.

PL: Because you couldn't buy an apple. You couldn't buy a potato from these farmers. They had to make a living, too.

MB: Sure.

PL: That's why people lived on the farms. They never. Now they make some money because even if they don't make [it], the government always reimburses them.

MB: Um hum.

PL: But not at that time.

MB: Not at that time.

MB: So there were a lot of grievances in 1922?

PL: Oh, yeah.

MB: Do you remember any more stories about '22, and how that worked, and what happened during it?

PL: What happened? Well. That's... before '22. [1922]. After '22 it started to get [better?]. We started to get [gains], and when we started, when we started and I don't care. They'd say, Republican or Democrat.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: Before it was all them [the company's candidates, all Republicans]. It was them, and nobody else. You'll have to vote for who they said.

MB: Oh, how did that work? Did they tell you who to vote for then?

PL: They'd tell you, and if they find out [that] you didn't vote [their way]--

Well, we had a couple Italian guys-- these were, they were nice people. Like Mr. Leone. They had a Leone store over here. But the old man, he was never, he never got married. He said, "I can't get married, Pearl."

I says, "Why?" He was a neighbor friend of mine from 21st Street. I says "Why didn't you get married."

He says, "Well," he says, "you know my job. I can't get married because my wife won't let me do what I want to do."

MB: Oh.

PL: So he was one of these great big [men]. He'd wear a coat with a badge underneath, you know. And I told him. I used to go to the big Eureka stores, and I'd go upstairs in the office and talk to them guys like a reporter, you know.

MB: Oh.

PL: I says, "Go ahead. Pussyfoot." Me. Yeah I used to tell him. (Beik laughs).

Oh, he loved me to no end. He loved me to no end. He says more like a father, you know. And, but, I used to tell him, "I love you very much, but I hate what you do." I said, "That isn't fair to these other men."

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: I says, "Who in the hell do you think you are?" You know. I says, "Rather help our people." I says, "No. You walk around like you're the Big Man."

MB: Hmm.

PL: Well, he was one of them, and we had the Torquato gang. There were two brothers. Well, they run the bank. They even had a bank.

MB: Ah, huh. Oh.

PL: There was this bank. In fact, one of his nephew, [correcting] niece, had money in there. Everything went bankrupt.

MB: Oh.

PL: And she loses her [money], I think. His own cousin. She went there and said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "You don't have no money in the bank." He says—well, in Italian they say *banco de sapone* [soap bank]--"We have all your money in the Soap Bank because it's washed out."

MB: Oh, I see. Were they tied to the company then, or was this independent from the company somehow?

PL: (cough) They wasn't tied up with them, but there were working underhand for them.

MB: Oh. I see. Okay.

PL: See, so they weren't pushed around.

MB: I see.

PL: Well, they'd have a little bit of work. Contractors, you know--

MB: Um hum.

PL: And they had work of their own.

MB: I see.

PL: It was a little bit more higher class of Italian people.

MB: I see.

PL: Today they are worse, lower than anybody else.

MB: Well, back in the '22 [1922 strike], I guess that some people were evicted from the company houses. Do you remember anything about that?

PL: Oh, the way they did. Yeah. I lived on 12th street at the time. We had, I had, my brother-in-law, my uncle, and a cousin of my husband, and a cousin who used to come from Italy, used to come to my house.

MB: (laughs)

PL: I used to tell her, "Well, we're a big family, aren't we?." But I loved them. I didn't care.

MB: Uh, huh

PL: So then, when they went on strike, they [the Berwind agents] went and threw everything out for these families.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: What a shame, you know. You don't do stuff like, that, you know. You stop in the book [credit], and don't give them, don't give them, the power, the light. But don't throw their stuff out.

MB: Uh, hum.

PL: Everything was thrown out, and these people were stranded. They were out there picking up their things. So we had to-- I told my husband, "Well, yonz go pick some families up."

MB: Um hum.

PL: So they went out to [do so], and they bring me a family. She had a couple kids. So we had beautiful-- because this house was a nice home down on 12th street. It's a big home. We had to make do, but it was a double house. But our cellars were beautiful.

MB: Um hum

PL: Our cellars were beautiful.

MB: It wasn't a company house?

PL: No, no. This was a--

MB: It was private.

PL: Martinelli built this house. So--

MB: I see.

PL: No, the old man built this house. This lady had bought this home. She came from Philadelphia. So her husband was working, too, in the mines. And they were out on strike.

So she says, "Well, Pearl, we're gonna have company tonight."

I says, "That's right," I said. "I want somebody we can take care of."

MB: Ah, huh..

PL: So this lady had two children, and she had a brother-in-law and her and her husband. So I says, "Okay, I'll give you--." I took the dining room parlor. I pushed everything, brang a piece of furniture upstairs, and I made her a bedroom.

MB: Um, huh.

PL: In my parlor. And downstairs we had carpeting. We put carpeting on the floor, and we partitioned off where because we had a wine cellar like, because our people liked wine. Everybody used to make their own wine.

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: So I says, “We’ll partition this off. Get a few boards, go to the lumber company, hurry up and do it.” (Beik laughs).

We partitioned it off. They didn’t use. We didn’t have no bathrooms at that time. We were just going to put one in, but then these people moved away, and so, anyhow...but there was a toilet there. We’d take a bath in big tubs we had.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: And we had a stove.

MB: Hum.

PL: We brought her stove, took ours out, and put hers (stove) in. We took her furniture. About everything that they could find out there and brought everything in. And we gave her. The brother-in-law, I says, “I have a bunk bed,” I says. I’ll put him in with our men upstairs, and I told the men, “Don’t you say ‘No’ He’s a brother.”

MB: Oh.

PL: I says, “Yonz are all on strike. And he’s on strike. And we have to take care of these men.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: And we had a family. Then this other one did like I did.

MB: Oh. (laughs).

PL: We put up another family, you know. It was a circus. (Beik laughs).

They used to cry, them people. They’d cry. Your heart hurt when you’d see them. They had little ones. And going there and throwing everything out, that wasn’t fair. They [the Berwind agents] were really hateful. I don’t know what to call it.

MB: Oh. I guess there were some tents. People lived even in tents at one point. Where...?

PL: Some people. They had to. It was in the summer-like, you know. But usually everybody got into homes. Everybody put them in.

MB: That was really something.

PL: I says, “They would-- if they would have more kids, like--.” I said, “We can take a couple kids.” Who cares how they sleep, you know.

MB: I read that there were some people from New York who came to town and who had some kind of hearings [the Hirshfield committee appointed by Mayor John Hylan to investigate the living and working conditions of the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company’s Windber-area miners], or something, too.

PL: Yeah, oh yeah.

MB: Do you remember anything about that at all?

PL: Well, they had hearings because they had to come, to come, you know, from Philadelphia because they were Big Men from Philadelphia. [She seems to have thought that I was referring to the Berwinds, not the Hirshfield committee.]

MB: I see.

PL: From New York. They came from New York. They had a hearing. But then when they settled the strike, that’s when they got a raise.

MB: I thought they lost the strike? [The miners did lose that strike.]

PL: No, they got a little raise.

MB: Oh, they did? Okay.

PL: Oh, yeah, they got a raise. Yeah. Then these people all went back to their homes.

MB: Okay. They came back.

PL: Yeah, the strike settled. They got a little bit more pay. Yeah, because my husband was working in the car shop. He says, “Well, I’m getting now, I think, \$6.95 a day.”

MB: Oh.

PL: “Big deal,” I said. “You fought like fools for \$6.95.”

He says, “Well, this is first.” See, and then after that, when they [the miners] called for what they want[ed], they got it. They didn’t do all this, you know. And then when they—Well, the union started to get stronger, and they saw that the people, how they were going on. You know. They worked for that. Then when Roosevelt come in, that really--

MB: Oh.

PL: They did a big job.

MB: Do you remember much about that? How that changed? Can you tell me about that?

PL: Yeah. Oh, it changed. That's my first time [voting]. I was 21, and I voted.

MB: Oh.

PL: When Roosevelt come in. [Her recollection of her age and the election dates are confused.]

MB: Oh.

PL: When Roosevelt. And the Berwind man, because we lived on the farm then--

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: And I was doing a lot of canning, and we bought lot of jars from them. And so the boss come over. Come to the house. He says, "Hey, Lady. I want to know what you're doing."

I says, "Why, what did I do wrong now?" You know.

He says, "Well you're buying all these jars. Are you sure you're not selling stuff in jars?"

I says, "What makes you think that I'm selling canned food?" I says, "No. I'm not a store. I have a family, and if anybody wants some, [anybody] that I know, [that is] families [I know], I'd surely like to give them some."

MB: Oh.

PL: I used to can. Well, we lived in the country. We used to make wine. And during that time, well, we gave a lot of stuff out. And it was a--

MB: The Depression.

PL: Depression time. Oh, my God. Did we feed how many people. I can't believe it. We gave a lot of stuff out because you couldn't sell it. Eggs. Two dozen for a quarter.

MB: Mm.

PL: We couldn't sell it. My husband had to make a trip because he didn't have a car to come down. He'd hang a great big basket on his arm, and he'd walk about 45 minutes. And I'd wait, and I'd say, "Well, did you bring me back fifty cents home?" Not a penny.

MB: Oh.

PL: I says, "It's all right."

MB: The mines weren't working much at all, were they in the '30s?

PL: They weren't working. They weren't working, and people didn't have. You know. People with small children. Today, for everybody, it's different, you know.

MB: Um hum.

PL: At that time it wasn't. I used to feel sorry. He [her husband] says, "You don't want to go in the house, and people are crying with their kids there whose [who had] bare feet and whose [who were] half naked."

MB: Oh.

PL: My husband, he was, he [was] a guy with a heart.

MB: Yeah.

PL: He says, "It's all right. Here's your eggs. Sometime, if you have any money, you can pay me the rest back. It's all right." Eggs, cheese. And he used to peddle all this by himself. People owes us money, but we never got it.

MB: Did you say you lived on a farm through the '30s pretty much?

PL: We moved there on [in] 1925. And when we went there, we went in August, bad time of the year to move on a farm.

MB: (laughing). Yeah, I guess so. No planting time.

PL: The work [in the mines] was bad. There was no work.

MB: I see.

PL: And my husband said--One of the fellas who lived in the same house said, "I'm moving to New York."

MB: Oh.

PL: So he moved to New York, and he got a damn good job.

MB: Oh.

PL: And he worked for the Berwinds, same thing, outside, little jobs, you know.

MB: I see.

PL: You couldn't even pay the rent [in Windber]. So he made one jump. He says, "I'm moving to New York. In the city. I'm bound to find something." So him and his wife went. They had about three kids. We loved them people.

MB: Oh, huh.

PL: And he moved there. Then he called my husband. He says, "I got a nice job for you where I work." He worked in a gas company.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: I says, "Oh, dear." I got a heart attack, almost, because, he [her husband] says [that] we were supposed to move.

MB: Oh, you didn't want to?

PL: I says, "I can't go." I says, "I have a mother here."

He says, "Yeah, but your mother is not a baby. She's not old. She's good. Why can't we go? We'll come back every so often."

[Pearl responded] "Wait until I talk to my mother. I have to talk to her first," you know. And so I went to talk to my mother, and I says that Steve would like to move to New York.

"Yeah, Go!" (Beik laughs). "If you don't go, you don't find. You have to go."

"Yeah," I said, "How about you? You coming with me?"

"No, no. I can't come"

I says, "How about Ed?" my brother. "Ed's here. Rosie's here." You know. They were married. She [her mother] had two [of her other children] more here.

MB: Right.

PL: I said, "I'm not going. No, Mom, I can't leave you." I started to cry.

She says, "Its all right. If you don't want to go, don't go. Don't go there and make yourself sick."

MB: Hmm.

PL: So I went home, and I told my husband, "Hey I can't go because my mother don't want to come with us."

[He says], "How about if we go to Colorado?"

“That’s worse yet. I don’t know where Colorado is,” I says. “I know where New York because I was there. But I don’t know where’s Colorado.

He says...that he had a cousin in California. Oh, we should a went. Oh God, how dumb we were. You know. And he [the cousin] lived in California. And he had a lot of ground, and he wanted my husband to go there. He says, “Yonz come out here. You can become a millionaire in no time. There’s land for sale. It’s cheap.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: I says to my husband, I says, “If my mother comes, we’ll go, but if she doesn’t come, I’m not going.” I was always with my mother, and I didn’t want to leave her. I didn’t want to leave her.

MB: Oh, yeah.

PL: So I didn’t go no place. I stayed.

MB: So you stayed here in Windber, yeah?

PL: I stayed and took care of my mother. Then I had her for 19 years in my house. I had my uncle in my house for 47 years. I had everybody.

MB: Oh.

PL: I didn’t care.

MB: Ah.

PL: I took care [of]--I had three, two of my sisters’ daughters, too, I says, for four years. They wanted to go to school here because their mother moved to Johnstown, and they didn’t want to go to Johnstown school. So I had them, too. Two young girls.

MB: So when did you move from the farm then into town again?

PL: I stayed nine years.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: I was a farmer. Boy, I loved it.

MB: Lots of work. (laughing).

PL: Oh, but it was a lot of work.

MB: Oh.

PL: A lot of work. Washing by hand. No machines.

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: And, but I had it good, because I had, every Wednesday, I had a bunch of young girls coming in my house. Up the farm. All my girlfriends and all--

MB: I see, um hum.

PL: Every Wednesday they'd come up early in the morning, "Okay, Sis', they called me Sis', "we're going to do all the housework. You [emphasis] cook." (Beik laughs).

The coffee pot. I had a big coffee pot. I had to make coffee there because there was about 20 girls come up. (Beik laughs)

I'd make a big pot. I'd be boiling it in there in this pot. I'd have couple ... to make and make, and I'd be cooking up a storm. They'd tear my whole house apart and clean house for me. Every Wednesday they used to do this.

MB: How nice.

PL: Yeah, so Monday I used to do a big wash. But when they come in...they were there, doing all kind of work.

MB: Were these all Italian friends of yours or others?

PL: Oh, yeah. Mixed up. I had some nice Slavish girls. Used to love 'em. In fact, one still lives; she's still going. Oh, yeah I love her.

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: And we had all kinds of fun when we worked.

MB: Ha, ha.

PL: You know, they're all girl friends to me. And I used to cook up a storm. Then I'd give them a couple dozen eggs each. Whatever I had-- cheese. I'd always give them something so they could take [that] home. And they'd come up every Wednesday. Then in the winter they wouldn't come because [it] was too far. But, as soon as the weather was nice, some [come]. (Beik laughs).

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: Yeah, they'd come trotting up here, walking. They used to come. Oh, we used to love them. Oh, yeah. So I was up there nine years then I come back.

MB: And you moved to 21st Street? 22nd Street?

PL: I moved, and, oh, I couldn't find a home no place. But I found close, a house, and no junky, bedbugs, full of bedbugs, down besides the Delaney Field.

MB: Oh.

PL: It was Mr. [Leo] Arcurio's house. His was one of the leader[s] [of the] Black Handers, and I was afraid to live there.

MB: Ah. Oh.

PL: I was afraid to live there. But I says, I told my husband, "I'd like to move there because if we don't get out now, we'll have to stay all winter." See, I had kids, and my mother took care of the kids. They'd go to school here [in town].

MB: Oh. I see.

PL: And they couldn't walk two miles. They couldn't come.

MB: I see. Oh.

MB: So you wanted to be reunited.

PL: So then I said to my husband, I says, "I don't know, you tell me what to do."

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: He says, "Me, I'd move in, but you're the one who's scared. You're scared."

And I says, "I am." So anyhow, I went.

He [Mr. Arcurio] says, "Hey," he called me 'Atea.' That's the way of Sicilian people, Calabrese, whatever. He says, "Atea, come over here. I want to talk to you."

I thought, "Oh dear," because he'd shot a man. And I says to him, "Yeah, Mr. Arcurio," in Italian. You see, I talked to him in Italian. "What you're going to tell me? Have anything nice to tell me? Tell me something's that's good nice and will make me feel better."

And he says, "You live in my house. (Pearl coughs.). You went to school with one of my daughters."

I says, "Yes," I says, "Sarah, and I like her."

And he says, “You could go any hour outside, any hour, and nobody will harm you.”

MB: Oh

PL: [continuing] “Nobody will harm you. On my property nobody comes.”

MB: Oh.

PL: Then it hit me. Black Hand, you.

MB: (laughing) Ah, goodness.

PL: Yeah, I--Right away it hit me. Nobody--They are afraid of him, you know. So I [emphasis] was afraid of him.

MB: Yeah, yeah. Oh.

PL: Them people was afraid of him, but I [emphasis] was afraid of him. (Beik laughs).

“Well,” I says, “I don’t have go out. Sometimes I might need a bucket of coal when my husband comes home from night shift.”

He says, “Well, make him go out for it. Don’t you go out at that time. A lady don’t have to be out.”

MB: Oh.

PL: He used to tell [me]--But I used to go. But my husband says, “Go, nobody will harm you.” So I used to have courage to go after that. See, I used to be a fraidy cat. Oh, I was a fraidy cat. I used to be afraid of every-- if I’m walking and I’d see a shadow, I thought there was somebody along side of me. I used to be afraid.

MB: Um hum.

PL: But after my husband died, I was scared. Oh, dear. I couldn’t stay in my house. I couldn’t stay in my house. I couldn’t stay. I says, “Oh, my God...I can’t live in this house.” I’d run out every time. I thought he was calling me, and I’d answer.

MB: Oh.

PL: And I’d answer, you know. And I’d walk out. When my kids come home from school, then I’d see them coming over, then I’d go. At night I’d have to have people staying in my house. And I had four men. Yeah. My brother come in. My mother had boarders. [I said to them] “How about you just come and sleep at my house?”

MB: Um hum.

PL: So I'm not afraid because if somebody was there, I wasn't afraid. (cough). And I thought somebody maybe would come and harm us.

MB: Oh.

PL: After that, I started going to work. When I went to work out [emphasis]--

MB: Oh, what did you do?

PL: Well, I worked down at the Palace Hotel, and I worked at. .. oh, I worked everywhere.

MB: Did you?

PL: Oh, I did more work than enough. I used to go to work, and then I used to come home to my family.

MB: Your mother took care of the kids when-- (both talking at once)

PL: My mother. Thank God. Yeah, she used to take care [of them]. She used to go up to the house and stay. She said, "Anytime you want to go, don't you bring the kids to my house, I'm coming to your house."

MB: Oh

PL: Because it's better for the kids to be in their own home, you know. And that's how I used to go to work.

MB: So you worked...

PL: I still [emphasis] work. Still work.

MB: You still work. So tell me what your different jobs were. That's fascinating to me.

PL: I worked in the fire hall upstairs, cleaning. It's all cleaning work. I baby sit for nurses, and when payday come, they didn't have enough money to pay me. So I says, "Well, pay your bills, and if you have a few dollars, fine, or else I'll wait." I'm still waiting.

MB: (Laughing) Oh dear. Oh dear.

PL: (Coughing) So what are you gonna do? You know. [These were] People I knew. So then I worked in the Palace Hotel. I says, "Hey, Bill, what do I come in here to do?"

He says, "I want you for a dishwasher."

I says, “Go to hell. I’m not a dishwasher.” (Beik laughs). I did more dishwashing than enough.

He says, “I want you in the kitchen. I want you to help the lady cooking. When she needs help, you help her. When the other lady needs it, you help her. And then do your dishes.

I says, “Who helps me?” (Beik laughs). You know?

And I worked there for a good while. But no social security. I didn’t have—See, they didn’t have none at that time at these places. That’s why my social security is very low. Yeah. So I worked there.

And then I used to take care of ... then I worked in the pizza shop here for Mrs. [abbreviation of the name “D’Archangelo”]. They were really down and out, this family. My daughter lived here. So I did housework for her [Mrs. D’Arc], see, because she had a store.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: She said, “Pearl, would you like to come and give me a hand? It’s good for you, and it’s good for me. You help me, and I’ll help you.” At least you get a pay steady. You know.

And of course, she had a store, and I didn’t care because whatever she had to pay me, I used to tell her, I said, “It’s okay, Mrs. D’Arc.” I says, “I’ll buy what I want. We’ll, help each other.” And that’s how I came to work here.

MB: Oh.

PL: Bobby is 22 years -- 22, 23. I worked here for 20. He was eight months old when I came.

MB: Ah huh. So you have been working here a long time and you--

PL: I worked for them. Housework. Then they had a sewing factory they had leased for one year. I said that you don’t lease for one year, at least two years.

MB: Ah.

PL: But if they want to move out, they’ll have to pay you the whole year’s rent, you know.

MB: Yeah.

PL: But, Mr. D’Arc couldn’t--

End of Tape 2 Side B

Start of Tape 3 Side A (March 5, 1984)

PL: They was down and out, you know. And I says, “Right now. Right now. Like the first day of Lent. (cough) Like the Wednesday.”

MB: Right.

PL: My daughter lived here. So my daughter called me one day, a couple days before Lent. She says, “Mom, Mr. and Mrs. D’Arc are so mad. I never heard them...They never said words against each other. Never.” They were noted for being nice anyway.

I says, “Why, what happened?”

She says, “I don’t know, Mom, but she was crying.”

“Well, don’t get upset.” I get upset because they’re nice people. They can’t make out, and I wonder what’s going on.

MB: Oh.

PL: My daughter paid \$50.00 a month to rent here. I pay \$145.00 now. Still, it’s a little bit because they furnish the heat.

I said to her--She said, “Mom, why don’t you come down? Please come down Mom.” I lived a little way out, you know.

MB: Oh.

PL: I says, “Okay, I will be there.” Couple of minutes, and I was there.

She said, “Don’t come to my house,” my daughter said. “Just pretend you are going to her house because I don’t want them to know that I called you. Mom, I don’t want them to be mad like that, or something will happen.”

So I go over there. I open the door. “*Compare, Compare*, I am going [saying]. She christened my daughter’s child.

They say, “Yeah, we’re here.”

She says, “We’re here.”

That sounded pretty good. I said, “Where’s the coffee pot? I’m going to make a pot of coffee. Because I worked for them all these years. I said, “Come on. We’re going to have a cup of coffee.” I said, “I’m so thirsty for a cup of coffee.”

She says, “Yeah. I am, too.”

And her husband come. “If you two are, I think I am, too. I’m going to join you ladies.” (Beik laughs). We sat down.

I says, “What gives? What’s going on? You don’t look right, *Compare*.”

“Oh,” he says, “we had a little spat, but it passed.” He said. “You know our spats, how they are.”

I says, “Okay, don’t get mad at each other. Yonz [slang for ‘you’ plural] are not supposed to get mad. Not when I am around, anyway. (Beik laughs). I don’t want yonz to be mad.”

That went on, you know. I stayed, and I come over here. And she came with me and her husband because we were just like one family.

MB: Um hum.

PL: So they come over here, and my daughter was cooking. We sat down, and we ate with them.

After a couple days, I came to work. This was during the week. Monday, I came to work. I says [to my mother], “You know, Mom, I have something in my mind I want to do.”

“What do you want to do?” she says? “You’re going to get married?”

“Hell no. Who in the hell wants a husband?” I says. (Beik laughs).

I am so nice to everybody. I says, “Let’s put up a pizza shop downstairs. (Beik laughs). Well, it’s empty. The fact [is] you moved out. You moved your store up in this corner. Now why do you want to move all your things back? Don’t go putting them back in the store.” Because they do have a big store. “It’s too much work.”

I says, “I’m putting up a pizza shop.”

“Oh,” she says, “it’ll never work. (Beik laughs). It’ll never work.” They were down and out because the bank got on their back.

I said, “Hey, I’m going to make it work.” So it was like Monday. Wednesday it was Lent. I said, “Mom, put a sign up in your store: ‘Pizza. Orders to take out.’”

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: So she put up a sign. That was Wednesdays and Fridays I’m going to sell pizzas for you. We’re going to sell something anyhow.” So I got a lot of orders. (Beik laughs.)

I got seventeen pans and pizzas to carry, and I’m running upstairs, downstairs. I had her stove here. I cooked two pans on yours, and two pans on hers. For certain times, see.

She says, “Boy, how did you think about things like this?”

I says that you have to do something. (Beik laughs). “You can’t sit around all the time and think about nothing.” I says, “I want to do something.”

MB: Right.

PL: First day we made \$3.40 profit. Her little boy...I’d mark everything, and he was with me, that little thing [her son]. I said [to him], “You get a pencil and paper.”

And he had a little jar. He says, “I am keeping this \$3.40 all my life.” (Beik laughs). He still has it.

Then on Friday we made more.

I says, “Oh, this is going good.” Then, I says, “We are going to clean up the shop.”

My son-in-law lived here. They had a boy, too. Nice size. I says, “Okay, we’re all--we didn’t have no hot water. That’s all right. We’ll scrub with cold water. When we have it, we’ll do it. (Beik laughs while Pearl talks.) Put more soap in. We will scrub it out.” I made my son-in-law paint one side, the back side. (Beik laughs).

I says, “Okay.” We put up a stove. We called the gas company because it is too much money with your electric [for heating the stove]. The gas company comes in [and] put[s] up the gas.

He [the gas man] says, “What, are yonz going to have? Another business?”

I says, “We’re going to run the pizza shop.” (Beik laughs) That place went crazy. Ask Judy about it.

MB: It really worked.

PL: Oh, my God. We all worked downstairs. We had people working. We couldn’t keep up. First she [Mrs. D’Arc] had a back operation, see. And it was bad because she had to pay for this operation, too, because she got it in Pittsburgh. See, we didn’t have none of this here union stuff that they have today or you know--

MB: Um hum.

PL: [continuing] Medicare. She had to pay. I said, “My God!” Well, I’d rather pay the bank [for her]. She had to go pay that. She went down [to] the bank. The bank didn’t care. They made it hard for her.

“We come first [emphasis],” [say the bank people].

She says, “No. My medical bill comes first. At least maybe I can work now.”

MB: Yeah.

PL: I says, “All you do is collect money [at the cash register]. I’m working.” And I am telling you I mixed 100 pound of flour. Next time I am mixing (Beik laughs)...” We went through 150 pound[s] of flour a day. And that is a hell of a lot of pizzas.

MB: Oh.

PL: So we did a good, good job.

MB: And you’re still working doing this.

PL: I’m still working. I still have my own job.

MB: Oh, boy. You are . . . 79 [years old], and you are doing your--

PL: I [started working here] about 20 years ago. About 20-some years. I must have been in my 50s at the time.

MB: So you really worked all your life.

PL: All my life.

MB: You worked out [emphasis].

PL: I worked out, and I worked at the farm.

MB: Everywhere. Oh, boy.

PL: I worked for people. I never got paid. I didn’t care. I said, “I’m working. They need it. Maybe someday they will pay me.”

But more of these nurses used to get me. ‘Cause you know, their husbands would be working, and they’d go to work.

MB: And they didn’t pay you?

PL: And I used to tell them, “Why can’t yonz make out? Two pays. It is better if one of you ladies stay home if yonz can’t make out. Why go to work?” One family, you know.

MB: That must have helped sometimes, though, when your husband was not working that much in the mines when you were younger.

PL: When I was young, my husband wouldn’t let me go to work.

MB: Oh, he wouldn't?

PL: Oh, no. My husband. Absolutely [not]. I worked on the farm. But not going out. He always swore to it. He says, "My wife will never go out to work."

MB: Oh, so when you first went to work, had he passed away?

PL: After he died. See, I was married only 14 ½ years. See, I was 29 when I became a widow.

MB: Oh, so you really--you had to raise those children, then. That must have been hard.

PL: Oh, I had it tough. I went to people's homes. They never, never say no, that they couldn't help me. They says, "Sure. We're glad to help." And they used to tell me certain days [to] come back. "We'll have more clothes for you." Somebody'd give us food.

And then when we moved from the farm, we moved to this place. And from this place we moved up [to] my husband's uncle, who bought a home. Small home. Then he built it up. But we had an acre of land. We made [a] garden there. We kept this house, and then we built it up. My husband died right after we moved back to the farm, you know.

MB: Did you get any benefits or anything? I guess there wasn't any then--

PL: That's why today. There's these unions that they fight for everything. We didn't have nothing. That's why people don't understand if you're going to let everything drop, they're going to go back like we used to be. The companies are going to be boss on you all the time. You do what I tell you, not what you want to do. And that's how it was before.

That's why we had strikes on top of strikes. I went to every meeting. Oh, yeah. I used to go to meetings. Oh, yeah, I used to like to go.

MB: Women did go to some of the union meetings, too?

PL: They used to go. Oh yeah. I was pregnant, and I had my first son.

Mr. [Joseph] Thomas, he was a real nice [emphasis] person. He says, "Pearl, I would like to give yonz two pair of shoes."

I says, "Not for us." I says, "I don't need them. I still have a couple dollars, and I have one son. You go, you see who has a family. Buy them shoes. I don't need them. My son has shoes enough. And I have one [pair] on my feet and one at home. That will be good. I don't need."

In my house I stay in bare feet because I like to go bare feet anyhow. I don't need it. Why give for me when there are other people that need it? I never went for food [the surplus food program] because [she believes they should] give it to others who need it more than I do. Even

today, now they are giving this cheese and butter. I won't go. [People ask me] "Why don't you want to go?"

"I don't need it," I says, "and that is how I feel. It is for the needy, needy people."

"That's why you are not rich," they say. I know I'm not rich, but I'm done with it.

MB: Um.

PL: There is a lot of children I give [to], but I don't want. I give envelopes, and I send them in. Our church, we have food. Even the priest told me, he says, "Pearl, you really go out of the way. You make somebody happy."

I says, "That's how I feel. That's how I feel. I like to give [emphasis]. I don't want to take because I don't need."

I'm alone. I have a daughter. Her husband is not working for so long, and she is working here at Anderson's [a local store], and it's hard, believe me.

MB: Yeah, it is a hard job.

PL: And he's a guy who never wanted his wife to work either. I says, "But, you see, after a while, Paul, how things go? "

He does everything for her in the house. He does washing and everything. He cleans house when he is not working.

Every once in a while, [I think], "Why do I have to go take?" I tell them [her daughter and son-in-law] to go for cheese because they are entitled to it. I says, "I won't go. Get it for the needy people." Me, I fix a big box. I call my daughter and tell her to come pick something up. That's how I feel.

MB: Um hum.

PL: I am not here to make money. For what? That's how I was.

MB: They used to have all these lodges. I guess they still have the Abruzzi lodge? Did that help with people in need some times, or was it insurance or --?

PL: Yeah, each lodge had insurance. They still have. Of course, we have a lot of social members, which they don't get no benefits.

MB: I see.

PL: But at least they have a place to go and sit. They want to come down there, sit, and then hang around, play card[s], play pool, whatever.

MB: Do you dance? Did you ever have dances there? Or--

PL: We used to have them. We have weddings, though. We still have weddings there. They are still going. Yeah. We had weddings. Look how many years I worked for the Abruz'? [As] far back [as] I can remember.

MB: You worked there too?

PL: When I come back from the farm after my husband died, I went to work. I used to clean that place. I worked for the Moose for I don't know how many years until that closed up.

MB: Oh, did you? Oh, boy.

PL: Then I asked for a raise. I said, "Why don't yonz give me \$25.00 dollars a month raise. I am not asking too much, but I'll work a day more every week." They wasn't giving me more because I'd work a night shift every week. I was getting four days for \$25.00. Some months it was fine.

MB: Right.

PL: I used to strip that place. I used to keep it clean. I used to even wash the poles outside. And I used to get on the ladder. I don't know how I didn't break my neck.

I used to do everything for them. I used to do everything for them. And then I cooked for them. They had banquets. We used to do a lot of cooking.

MB: Oh, boy, yeah.

PL: I did, oh, a lot of cooking. Then I worked up at the church, our church. We had weddings all the time. I worked there three years. Charity work. Then I says to the priest, "Well, Father, I'll tell you. We are going to go to Helen's house, and we're going to sit down and have a cup of coffee. We have something to bring up." I says, "I know she is getting paid because you got her out of the Rizzo's [restaurant]. But me, I came. I'm charity. I worked three years now. Now it is about time; our church is almost paid. Now you pay me, too."

MB: Oh that's good.

PL: "I don't want too much, but \$2.00 an hour. I'll be satisfied. And if there is anything, sometimes when it is charity, I will do charity, too."

Now when I was working, then everything was fine. I worked about six years. Six or seven years I worked there. Then, when they were paying me, we had one of the fellas taking care. He was cheating me. He cheated me one time. Then he cheated me another time. I didn't care.

Well, the first time we had the priest that built the church. And I talked to him.

“Oh my God, Pearl, not after you worked three years for nothing. Now you’re getting paid. What did he do wrong?”

I said, “Father, here’s my hours. You have the slip he gave you. And you have the books. You see what he did wrong. He shorted me \$75.00.”

MB: Oh.

PL: “Okay, Father.”

He says that he is going to make me a check.

“Okay,” I said, “you make me a check.”

This man [who cheated her], when he [the priest] went to make a check, boy, he could have killed me. He said, “You had to cause all this trouble.”

I said, “I didn’t cause no trouble. You have the trouble. Fine. I don’t.”

MB: Right. You had to defend your rights.

PL: “[continuing] \$75.00. You’re not giving me five dollars, ten dollars. I wouldn’t care, but don’t you do that again.”

I said, “You don’t do it to the others. You are not supposed to do it to me. I am the one that does most of the work in here.”

So Father came. He gave me the check. \$75.00.

I says, “Father, I just want you know that I was cheated. I don’t want this check. I want you to have this check. This is for you.”

“Oh, no, no, no. I wouldn’t accept it,” he says.

“I don’t care what you do with it,” I said. “This is mine. And I want to give it to you.”

MB: Hmm.

PL: “And,” I said, “I don’t care what you do with it. Tear the check up; it’s yours.”

He said, “No. We will put it toward the building fund.”

I said, “I don’t care what you do.” And that’s what he did.

So then when changing the priests, because our priest gets changed every three years--

MB: Oh, really.

PL: Yeah. Every three years. So then this other priest come in; he is a little bit stubborn. He went to Spain now. He just went to Mexico. He just come back [from Mexico], and he went to Spain. There's a lot of money in our church. Then I told him, "Well...this other lady works with me. She says, 'You know what, Pearl? He short changed you.'"

"Oh, not again," I says. Well this goes on all the time. Not only now.

She [the other church worker] says, "He short changed you a good bit." She said, "That would be the day that he would do it to me."

I says, "Oh, he don't do it to Rose, nor to Helen. He does it to Pearl." I said, "Well, we'll see."

He [the man in charge of paying] comes in. I says, "Hey Hark. You know what? You short[ed] me again?"

"Here we go again." He tried getting mad. He hollered on [at the] top of his voice. He hollered, and I hollered.

I said, "Here is my slip, and here is yours, and this is the pay you gave me. How much am I short?"

"You're not short. Maybe I gave you too much,"

I says, "If you gave me too much, we'll take it off, but if you short changed me, you better come across."

MB: Um hum.

PL: Oh, I was mad. I told this lady, "Yonz didn't help me anyhow." At least [they could have] open[ed] their mouth[s]; they just was stuck. He started shaking me. I turned around. I couldn't find anything to hit him with. I wanted to strike him in the head. I told him that he was going to get it off of me sometime. He went out, and the priest came. This here new one, the one who went to Mexico.

I said, "I want to know, Father, why do I always have to be the goat that don't get paid in here?"

He says, "Why, Pearl?"

I says that this is what happened. So he says to me, "Well, you know how it goes, Pearl. It is a church. And we are working for God."

"That's what you [emphasis] say!" I said to him. I went. (Beik laughs).

He was stunned.

“That’s what you say,” I said. “Listen, Father. Do you like to work for nothing?”

“Well, we say our masses upstairs. It is just about the same.”

“That’s what you think. You are getting paid and paid enough. You handle everything. You don’t have to get paid; you have [emphasis] it.”

MB: Right.

PL: [continuing] “That’s what you want to do, you want to do. Hey, listen here, Father. We are not working for God. I am working for you. I want you to know that I went upstairs. Blessed Mother is there. Jesus is there. St. Anthony. Nobody has a check hanging on them. You didn’t pay them.”

He got so mad. He has got that against me. (Beik laughing)

MB: Oh, dear.

PL: He liked me. He says, “Pearl, you are a good person, a very good person, but that--I didn’t expect it from you.”

I said, “If you’d have shut up your mouth and come across like Father Reginald did, I would have shut my mouth.” (Beik laughs). “I don’t want that money. But since you insist,” I says, “you send me a check. I’m going to California.” (Beik laughs). He sent me the check.

MB: Well, good. You deserved it.

PL: If he would have said something nice, I’d have said, “Father, I don’t care what you do with it. Here it is.” But since he got a little bit stubborn—[saying I’m] working for God. “I am not working for God. I am working for you.” (Beik laughs).

MB: Mrs. Leonardis, when you were raising your children, then, did you have any hopes for them? What did you stress with them? Did you stress education or religion, or what? Hard work? What did you sort of want them to be?

PL: We all do, usually, you know, even with my grandchildren. Not my children, more with [emphasis] my grandchildren than I do [with] my children.

MB: Ah, huh. Oh.

PL: Oh, yeah. Because when my children were growing up, we didn’t have this education that you can borrow from the bank. Like today, they can help you. Oh, yeah.

We didn't have none of that. If you had [emphasis], you sent your child to school, and if you didn't have, that was it.

MB: You couldn't, yeah.

PL: Now, my kids went. My first born, God bless him, I feel so bad for him. He has got this miner's asthma very bad [pneumoconiosis].

MB: Oh, does he?

PL: Oh, very bad.

MB: He went in the mines then.

PL: He worked in the mines. Well, he went to CC Camp [Civilian Conservation Corps], and he was in school. He says, "You know, Mom," he says, "things are really, really tough for us." 'Cause one year we didn't have coal. Well, see, I had my mother, too, but she had her own house.

I tried to pay her taxes.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: She didn't have no way [to pay them]. And I says--My son bought her coal every time she needed coal. We did. She had a boy [to take care of], but he was married and lived next door. Well, he needed coal; he had two or three kids. So my boy says, "Well, Uncle Ed can't help her, but we can help her."

Every Christmas, and every Easter, my boy had to go out and buy her shoes, and [a] dress for her. And if she needed a couple dollars, I always gave her a couple dollars.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: To keep her going. Which she had always a couple boarders in the house. When she got sick, I had to tell her boarders to move out. See, she took a stroke.

MB: Yeah.

PL: She was 70 years old. But she had four men at the house. So I told them, "Yonz have to move out. I can't take care of you guys."

One man said, "I'm not moving out because I'm in here for a long time." He says, "I will take care of your mother when you are not here." Real beautiful. What a good man! He wasn't married.

MB: Oh.

PL: But he was a soft spoken person. And how we loved him. My mother loved him dearly. And my mother said, “Don’t tell Joe to move out. Leave Joe in here.” Because he kept... By the time I’d go down to my mother’s--when she was a little bit better, (phone rings) but when she was real sick... [Beik stopped the tape for the phone call and then resumed taping.]

MB: We were talking about your children, and education, and things.

PL: Education. See, yeah. We didn’t have like they have schools today.

MB: Yeah. Right.

PL: So we tried [to] make sure that they would graduate. So my poor Roger, he figured, “Well, Mom, we need help. I am going to go to CC Camp [the Civilian Conservation Corps], thinking that the government was giving us a few dollars a month. At that time it wasn’t like today.

MB: Right.

PL: For 12 months, for 9 months, I got \$12.00 a month. And they said that they were giving me too much. (cough, cough).

MB: Oh, dear.

PL: Can you imagine? So anyhow, then, [her son said], “This can’t go on, Mom. Why, I’m going to finish school.” Great deal. He says, “I’m going to school. There’s no jobs around here, and I won’t leave you and go away. (cough) I’m going to CC Camp, and I will send you checks from there.”

Well, poor kid, he went. They cut me off what I was getting. They cut that off because he was sending me this much. They don’t allow you to have more. So he lost his school.

MB: Oh.

PL: He said, “Gee, whiz, I did it for a purpose, to help out like that. Because,--What’s the use? I am going to go work in the mines anyhow. Even if I would graduate.” He says, “What is there around here?” But he went as far as 10th grade, whatever.

MB: Then he went in the mines?

PL: Then he went in the mines. And then my girls, the rest all graduated.

MB: Oh, did you have one boy? How many boys did you have?

PL: I have three boys and four girls.

MB: Three boys and four girls. And you had one who became a miner, one boy who became a miner?

PL: Well, yeah. My first. Then my second boy, he went to school. He played football. He was made--he could have went for school, but he had, (cough) got, a scholarship (cough), but he joined the Navy. So what are you going to do?

He joined the Navy and came back.

MB: Did he go in the mines, too?

PL: Then he went in the mines. But he had a leg...He got hurt when he was playing football. That leg always gave him a little bit [of pain]; even still yet, he says it bothers him. In the house he'd always walk straight. When I used to watch from the windows--because when my kids would go to work, or whatever, I always watched till the end, and then they'd turn around, and they'd wave at me. And I used to see him. I says, "Hey," I says, "don't tell me your leg don't hurt. I see you limping."

MB: Oh.

PL: "[continuing] Especially when you go there down that little bit of a hill. No wonder it hurts." (Beik laughs). But I didn't want him to work in the mines.

Then he went to Lancaster. He got married, and they went to Lancaster. They had one girl, then they had another girl, then they had twins. And I was so happy because they had twins. I went out and stayed with them for a while. And, oh, I thought they were so beautiful. Now they are married, and they have children.

MB: Oh, yeah. So you really didn't want your sons to go in the mines.

PL: No. I didn't like it. My Roger, he's a sick man. But he said, "I liked it." My brother was the same. You have to like it. He [Pearl's son] says, "It is how you make it." He says, "Once you go in there, you know, it is easy. You are making your money. So what more do you want?" My son never cared. He says that he loved it.

MB: As a woman with so many family members in the mines, did you worry about accidents and things a lot?

PL: Oh yeah. Oh, yes.

MB: You did.

PL: See, these mines aren't bad. Because I remember when my husband was working--I was just married, not long, about three years or four years, before I moved to the farm--and boy, [at] that time we got the news, somebody coming around. He says, "There's gas in the mines."

“Oh, my God,” I says. “Goodbye.” I thought Steve was dead. They wasn’t coming out, and they wasn’t coming out. I said, “Oh boy!”

So I called the Berwind office. I wanted to know. I went over to the store, where they had a telephone, because we didn’t have no telephone. You couldn’t afford it. I went over there, and I says, “Could I use your phone? I would like to call the Berwind office and see what’s cooking.”

And so I called, and I asked if anything had happened. He [the person at the Berwind office] said, “No. Everything will be fine.” He says that they would contact the families if there would be something.

I says that it is all right here.

I was fidgeting, and I was walking up and down 12th street and up and down and looking at these other families because everybody had...we all had somebody working in the mines,--

MB: [You were] worried. Yeah.

PL: [continuing] working in the mines. But, other than that, it was pretty good. My brother and my son, he says, “You have to watch when you go in. You watch to see if there are any dangers first. You don’t just ahead there and start working. Make sure that your place is safe at all times.”

MB: Did you worry about lay-offs and things--?

PL: They would get laid off. Yeah. They’d go on strike. They’d lay you off entirely, but there was no work so it was worse than being laid off.

MB: Oh, okay.

PL: See, but then after they, when we had the union, when they had... Before they closed [the mines], I don’t remember what strike it was, they had a misunderstanding. The union man went to the stores and ordered all the stores. He says, “You give these people food, and don’t yonz stop their food even though there is a strike or a lay-off. These people have to eat.”

One guy, we die laughing... for this story here. He come in [to the store] and says, “You know what? I am going to go for twelve pound of pork chops.”

[I said to him], “What are you going to do with 12 pound pork chops? You invite me, too. (Beik laughs). I will be there.”

He come in [to the store]. He says, “I’d like to have 12 pound of pork chop.”

The butcher looked at him. He says, “What do you mean, you want 12 pound of pork chop?” (Beik laughs).

He [the man who came into the store] says, “I have a family. I am having company. I want 12 pound of pork chops. Didn’t I ask you for 12 pound of pork chops?”

“Yes,” he [the butcher] said, “I will give you 12 pound of pork chops.” (Beik laughs).

He did it just to see if he was going to get it. He took it. They gave it to him. He took it. He says, “We have a Frigidare. We will put them in the freezer.”

And [he] got his 12 pound of pork chops. (Beik laughs, laughs). Just to see what they’d do.

But they were crooked, the companies were. They were something. They were something. If somebody shopped in your book [put their order on your bill], and you’d go tell them, they wouldn’t take it off. Like me and my son, we never buy...Of course, I did buy too much at first. But after a while my boys says, “Mom, make a book like that. It’s better. You don’t have to go buying [paying] cash all the time.”

MB: You were trying to avoid having to use the book and credit?

PL: Yeah, because one of the stores--when my husband just had died--Mr. [Julius] Fulgenzi’s store. Mr. Fulgenzi’s. I went there. It was around Christmas time. And he said, “Well, I can’t give you food if your check didn’t come in.”

I says, “Jul’, my check didn’t come in, but I got one. I paid the light bill, and I paid my water. My check should have come in today, too, but it didn’t come in. Maybe it will come in the day after Christmas.”

He says, “Well, I can’t give you the meat.”

I got mad. I took this meat. I threw it straight in his face.

MB: Oh....

PL: And I says, “You may have this meat and the rest of the meat.” This is it. That was our [emphasis] class our people from Italy. And my mother helped him to put the store up with peanuts [for the customers] that they had a couple of pennies for her, you know.

MB: Oh. They wouldn’t give you credit for a day.

PL: And I says, “That is fine. “ And I says, “All this shopping, Julius. My mother helped you. My mother had boarders, and we shopped from you. I was married; we shopped from you. I had my husband, my uncle, and everybody.”

During the strike he gave us anything we wanted. “But now that I am a widow, now you can’t see. My kids have to eat, too, you know.”

And I only owed him, about ten, twelve, dollars.

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: In the book, I have \$10-\$12. His nephew is still living, and he used to come [to collect]. “Don’t give me nothing. I’ll report it.”

At that time \$10-12, whatever it was, I says that I’ll give him a couple dollars every. . . when I feel like. He did that to me.

I went in right after Christmas, and we didn’t get our checks. Our checks were stolen.

MB: (Sadly) “Oh, really.”

PL: That’s why we didn’t get a check. And I reported it to the bank. I says, “We didn’t get our checks.”

He [the person at the bank] says, “Well, they’re cashed.”

I says, “Well, somebody cashed them.”

MB: Oh.

PL: We were four widows.

This lady, this Mrs. D’Archangelo, the older, her mother; and Mrs. Grieco; Mrs. . . . I think it was Hudak, [who] lived on 23rd street; my check. We were four of us widows. We didn’t get a check.

MB: Oh. For heaven’s sake.

PL: And they were all cashed.

MB: Do you ever find out who cashed them?

PL: We never found out, and the bank’d admit nothing.

MB: Did that happen once, or more than once?

PL: That’s the only time. And we still blame--

End of Tape 3 Side A

End of Interview (March 5, 1984)

Beginning of Interview (March 8, 1984)

Start of Tape 3 Side B (March 8, 1984)

MB: When I was leaving last time from our interview, you mentioned that we hadn't talked about the Evil Eye.

PL: Yeah, the Italian believe this. They call it "*malocchio*." Lots of time we had movie stars. And the Italian people, they would bring this stuff up once in a while. Take me for instance. When I was to get married, these Black Handers gave us a rough time.

So before, when I went to get married, about a week before, I got real sick. I was sick. I said to my mother, "I don't want to get married. I don't want to get married because I don't think I am going to make it." I was just 15, but I knew what I was doing and what I was saying.

And she says, "What do you mean you don't feel good? Well, we'll call the lady in."

We had a neighbor. She was just about this big (gestures), but a beautiful woman. My mother called her. She says that "Yeah, I'll be over."

Her ways, her prayers. Then my mother took a dish. She puts water in. They say words. Now this stuff you have to learn at midnight, Christmas Eve, straight at midnight. If you want to learn anything like this, that's the only time you could learn, they can tell you. They don't forget, or else they will forget it. Isn't that something? (Beik laughs).

This woman who came in started working on it. She looked at me. She says, "You have a real bad one." They didn't make you just an Evil Eye. They want you dead."

I said, "They want me to die?" Me, I got worried. I lost about 15 pounds in no time.

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: That's how sick I was. This woman kept on working. She called another lady that she knew, and they worked it together. They worked it at home. Then they come back. Then they made the sign of the cross three times. Then they'd take...they have this water; they have the olive oil. Then, with this, they make the sign of the cross on the dish, too. Same way. Three times. They dropped this oil. And when you have it [the Evil Eye], that oil just disappears. You don't see it. But if you don't [have it], it stands still. That oil just drops, and the oil's always on top, and it stays there. But when you have it bad, the more you drop in, the more....But they pray with it, but I don't know what they say.

I learned a little bit, but I don't want to go through that midnight. I am going to church. I am not going to look for stuff like that. I want to go to midnight mass. They says, "You could miss one time."

I says, "No."

So then they did this three or four times a day. And they worked on. Like at midnight, they'd do it at their homes. They could do it at their homes.

MB: Just on Christmas?

PL: No, this here, when they take this Evil Eye away from you. The lady that's working with you.

MB: Oh. Okay.

PL: Yeah, to learn, you have to learn [at] midnight. Christmas Eve, at midnight. But they can do it anytime, but at midnight this lady used to work on it.

MB: I see.

PL: We had...this woman had a beautiful daughter. They lived just right up here. She just died, the girl. She came to our house. She was about this big (gestures) when I got married. They couldn't get me; they got this girl. This Evil Eye couldn't get me, but it hurt this girl.

When I went to get married, this girl, she passed out. And she laid on the floor. This girl's mother who was my--what they call like in the flower girls--the maid of honor [was] this girl's mother. So they figured they couldn't get me. They got this girl while she was with me when we went to get married. When I come home, I says, "Where is Dorothy?" Because I loved her, you know. She was a beautiful, beautiful girl. Beautiful.

My mother says, "Do you know? We don't know what's the matter, but we called Mrs. [Mary] Emanuel."

And I says, "Now what?"

She says, "You know what? Mrs. Emanuel says it left you and touched her."

I says, "Why her? She's not getting married. She's just a little girl." And I start to cry because that hurt me.

I went upstairs right away with the dress and the veil. I am running up the steps, and I went upstairs, and I am hugging her. And I says, "What's the matter, Dorothy?"

And she says, "I can't even talk." That's how bad she got. She was real bad. But anyhow this lady kept on working with her. She got better, too, [pausing] later.

They said, "After she took her veil, she's married, you can't touch her."

These women tell you if it is a man or a woman. I says to my mother, "That is Anna Costa. She's the one. She's the jealous type. Her husband was in with the Black Handers there. That is the woman who is doing something to me."

My mother said, “How do you know?”

I said, “Because I know.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: I said, “That’s her.”

Mrs. Emanuel then. . . Because they used to be neighbors, too, [with] this lady. And she [Mrs. Emanuel] said, “It has to be her.”

So they used to give you, I’m telling you, they can give you. . . I don’t know how they can throw a spell on you, but they do it. They used to do it, you know.

MB: Um hum.

PL: My mother, I used to tell my mother, “Don’t believe in this stuff, like these fortune tellers.”

MB: Did you have lots of fortune tellers?

PL: I went to a gypsy one time. She scared the devil out of me. (Beik laughs). I don’t know what she did, but she did something.

MB: Do you think that these early immigrants in Windber, because you go back so far, do you remember some of the early ones, were they real superstitious or not?

PL: Oh yeah. They were. In Italy I had a cousin. . . My mother, well she wasn’t married. She was there because this happened in her day. She said this boy didn’t grow, wasn’t growing. He was seven years old, but he never. . . he was just--

See, my mother married this boy’s (cough, cough) uncle. In Italy they lived in a . . . It was a building. You have two rooms, and another has two rooms. They don’t have homes and dining rooms and all this stuff. They have. . . This boy’s mother called my mother. She saw her, and she said, “Would you please come and take care of my baby?” She had to go to a, they had a little, store to get a small thing. So she had to go pick up some salt.

My mother said, “Sure, I will come and stay with the baby.” He was in a wheelchair, [correcting herself] a high chair. He started to scream.

My mother got scared. She said, What’s the matter? His name was Bulimbio [Spelling?]; they called him [that] in Italian. (Beik laughs.) “What is the matter?”

“I am scared. I am scared.”

See, he could talk. And that day he went blind in one eye. He became blind through that. And my mother said, “What’s the matter? Who do you see?”

He said, “You see that woman over there. You see that; that’s the woman who comes for me.”

He knew. He recognized this woman, and he screamed. My mother waited until his mother come back. They became sister-in-laws after a while when my mother got married, but she got married here in the United States. That was her [future] sister- in-law.

My mother says to him. “Well, what does she do to you?”

“Oh,” he said, “they light a fire.”

I says, “With what?”

He said, “They put some straw. And they pass you across. Give it to you on top of this fire. And they say words. They pass it over to this other one. It’s like a cross like. Pass it over, and the other passes it over.”

It’s a bunch of women. But this boy says [that] when they do this to him, they look like animals. They turn; they’re different.

And you know, my mother was, when she came, she was 24 years old. But then--she was a young women then--when she was taking care of this baby, [she was] about 20 years old. She wanted to know everything they did to the boy. When his mother come back, my mother says, “Hey, it’s no wonder your boy over here don’t feel good and don’t grow. It isn’t he don’t grow. We better do something about it because your boy’s blind in one eye.” They blinded [him]. He became blind.

In the night, they call it the “Nine Nights.” They come like...You invite so many people. You don’t even have to invite. If they know you are you going to do this, they come. They don’t want this. It’s like a spell. They have somebody come in with an accordion. They dance. Nine nights that has to go on, night and day. They take everybody who goes. When they are tired, somebody else comes in. They already know who is going to come in next and entertain, who’s cooking, who’s baking. And they have a good time. It has to be a good time. It’s all laughs.

MB: What is the purpose of it?

PL: Night and day this has to go on so these people can’t come to your house. One way or another they would come into your home.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: If they see...maybe at night when you are sleeping, but they come in, get your son. They come in. Somehow they come in.

MB: Scaring people.

PL: Oh, I am telling you, this used to be big at one time. They did [it] here, this here.

MB: They did this here in Windber, too?

PL: Oh, yeah. Very, very, very much. Oh, yeah.

MB: Do you remember any other superstitions like that? Go ahead. I didn't mean to interrupt.

PL: [pausing] Well, let me finish telling you this. Then they have the Nine Nights. They have this big, it's a big feast like. When they come howling around, they howl just like these cats. You know how cats howl.

I used to be afraid of cats. I was afraid. When I was a little girl, I was afraid because my mother used to tell us all these stories. And I used to tell her, "Mom, I don't want a cat in the house." See, when my mother would go out, I'd chase that cat out. I put the cat out. I was young, small, and I was afraid of them.

They went for Nine Nights, and they [the evil women] never came back to this boy. He became a beautiful man. The only thing, he was blind, blind in one eye. That boy attended church, and he wanted to be a priest then, but because he was blind, he could not be a priest.

MB: He couldn't be a priest and be blind?

PL: He couldn't be a priest because he was blind. But he was in church. He played the organ. They say he played beautiful. Now that would have been my cousin after my mother got married.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: Then, his brother came to the United States, and he lived with us, too. He was telling this story, you know.

But they pass you over a fire. Then, over here, we used to have people like that. When I got married, they did this to me.

But there was a lady when I was working...I was young then. Somebody told me, "Better watch this lady." They called her Mrs. Camille. Her name was Camille. See, my last name is Camille, but hers, she spelled hers different. But her name was Camille.

MB: How do you spell your last name?

PL: C-a-m-i-l-l-e. You have it down right.

MB: Okay, I just wondered.

PL: An “e” or an “i,” whatever. Sometimes we put an “e” or an “i” but I always use an “e”

MB: So go on with your story.

PL: So when I was working at this little store, up here, it used to be Rizzo’s, across from our church, [correcting Rizzo’s], Rillo’s [Celestino and Mary Rillo]. This woman come in. And every time I’d see her, I don’t know why, but I was scared of her. She always tried to catch me. I yelled on top of my voice. The lady of the house come over, and she said, this Mary Rillo, she says, “What happened to you?”

I couldn’t talk. I couldn’t talk. I got so scared because she tried to grab me, this lady. And me, my mother always warned us, “Watch.” And my mother used to talk about her so much, what kind of a person she was. Me, I was scared. Oh dear. Then she [the woman who tried to catch Pearl] left, and Mary, the lady, says to me, “What happened? Did she do anything?”

I says, “Mary, she tried to grab me.”

“She did?”

Then I says, “Yes. Why do you let this woman...? She comes to the store. Don’t let her go no further than into the store. Why does she have to come in the hall, and she’d come in the kitchen? I’m afraid. If this woman is going to come in the kitchen, and then they come through the back door (there’s a back door), I am going home. I’m going to tell my mother.”

“Oh, don’t tell your mother. She will be scared.”

“I’m going to tell my mother.” I used to tell her everything. I waited until I got home, and I told my mother.

She says, “Well, we are going to ask some lady, maybe see, what she can do about her.”

Then Mrs. Rillo, where I worked, she says to her [the woman Pearl feared], “Why? Leave that girl [Pearl] alone when you come to my house. Why do you want her?”

She says, “Because I love that girl.” She says, “I don’t want to hurt her. I just want to love her. I just want to hug her and kiss her.”

I knew they had a son. Their son was a tailor. I wasn’t afraid of her son. He was much older than I was. Skinny little wee man, but he was a fine tailor. I used to go. . . But after she came from Italy, I wouldn’t go to his shop.

See, my mother was a seamstress, and he used to. . . He was a tailor, and I always used to bring him things; my mother wanted little things done from him. But I wasn’t afraid of him. But after she came, it upset me. She used to do little things. I was just afraid. Now if she would have

come like to the house and she'd said something, but she used to do this out of our house. I was afraid. I was afraid of her.

MB: Oh boy.

PL: It's funny, but I'm telling you, they work in such strange ways.

MB: Maybe she was lonely or something, needed affection.

PL: I was just afraid of her--

MB: Yeah. I could see that one would be.

PL: [continuing] Yeah, because people used to tell us that she was strange. I was afraid.

MB: Do you remember many people being ill and things? Midwives coming in then? Is that how it worked? Do you remember--?

PL: The midwives?

MB: [continuing] anything about them and how--?

PL: My mother had them. That is how they had babies. The midwives, yeah. I remember the midwife when my brother was born. I was five years old. Oh, I remember because they gave me...I wanted a haircut. I don't know, but at that time there was no haircuts. (Beik laughs). I says to my mother, "You are going to be in bed, and there is no one to comb my hair." My hair was real curly, and I didn't want nobody to touch my hair because when they'd comb, the comb'd go through. I'd be yelling.

Oh, yeah. And my mother'd be saying, "Now behave."

But I didn't want anybody to touch my hair. I says, "Mom, you're not going to be able to comb me." I was five years old.

She says, "It's okay. We're going to get somebody to cut your hair."

So next door a woman, God bless her, she used to be like...we loved her. Her mother was a midwife. She cut my [hair]. She says, "I will cut it for yeah."

So then my mother says, "Go ahead." Then my dad got mad, because--

MB: He didn't want you--

PL: [continuing] he didn't want my hair cut. He says, "Now it looks like things flying all over."

I remember myself with that cut hair. I remember my brother being born. And they showed me him, and I was so happy because he was a boy. And him and I were close like that till he died. But yeah, the midwives, they used to come in.

MB: Could anybody be a midwife, virtually? Could anyone be, or did they have to--?

PL: You have to go... Well, there was some used to do it, but after a while the law started getting after them. First, they didn't even register these babies.

Yeah. That's why there was a lot of kids not registered. See, I wasn't registered. No. Because they couldn't do it. They'd get a doctor, and he'd do it. And sometimes... The doctor would charge you. It's his job. Yeah, it's his job, not anybody else's.

But this woman cross the street, that would have been her grandmother, Mrs. Stevens' grandmother. I remember her very, very well. Boy, she was a little woman, but she was a toughie. You could hear her swear like a man. I used to tell my mother, "I don't like it when she comes in our house and swears."

My mother said that she don't swear.

I says, "I know when she swears. (Beik laughs). God, when I hear her say, 'God,'" (in Italian it's '*Madonna*'), "When I hear her saying something about *Madonna*, that's swearing."

My mother didn't want us to understand that because we were little. (Beik laughs). Especially [because there] was a bunch of boarders in the house, and [when] you used to hear the words, you pick[ed] them up faster.

My mother had every one of us with a midwife.

MB: Did you have your children in the hospital, or was there a midwife?

PL: I had a doctor at home. We had Dr. Brumbaugh. God bless him. Well, he was really for babies. But he was a doctor for everything else, but he was for babies.

MB: I see.

PL: Because the building up there where Joe Kepko lived, the funeral home, that is Kisiel and whatever now, he built that. It was a baby's little hospital.

MB: Oh, really?

PL: Yeah, but he built that. He was going to have that as a hospital. And his wife would work with him. But the Berwind [company] stopped him.

MB: Oh.

PL: See, a lot of people don't know, but they stopped him. They [the Berwind people] says, "We have the Windber Hospital. You do not put a hospital in our town."

So poor Dr. Brumbaugh, he went to deliver them at home. See, he was going to have like a little hospital, take the women in a certain time, because he loved, [it] when you had a baby. He was just like a nurse, too. He'd bathe the baby for you; he'd dress it. And he'd come in every day and take care of you, make sure that--

MB: How long did he come back then?

PL: Nine, ten days, sometimes more. It just depended on how you felt.

MB: Did the women stay in bed all that time?

PL: Well, no. They used to tell you so many days, but then you have to get up. See, he was a little bit more, see, he would watch. Oh, I saw him taking care of one of the patients, Mrs. Bell. I was married. She was to have this baby, and this baby died right at the... It was alive. He [the doctor] almost went crazy. He cried. He cried. It was such a beautiful baby. Then this lady started bleeding. The husband took off, and him [the doctor] and I were in the house.

And we had another lady [to help], and she passed out on us. (Beik laughs) And I was taking care of her. [I said], "Will you please go home where you belong."

They [others] were there to help because they had children, but her mother [correcting herself]-- her husband [the one having the baby] took off with the kids. And they were walking way down the creek because he thought she had died.

MB: Oh.

PL: Then I yelled, and I yelled, and I yelled. Well, he come back up. I was calling for help, for him [the husband] to come. She got over that.

Well, he [the doctor] went home. He says, "Pearl, you kneel here, and you pray for her. Just hold her hands. I'm coming back."

He went home because he must have had a book, and he went for medicine. So he come back, and he says, "Pearl, how 'bout make me...get a little saucepan, not too much water. I want tablespoons, not the teaspoons. I want seven tablespoons of coffee."

I said, "You are going to make poison. You are going to kill her. Her hair will stand up."

He said, "That's what we want." And me, it didn't dawn on me why did he want to do it. Give her a shake like, you know.

And so he held her, and I poured the coffee real slow with a teaspoon. I bet we got about five, six teaspoons in her. One time she opens her eyes. She was a beautiful lady, beautiful teeth.

She opens her eyes, and she started to smile. And he [the doctor] says, “I love you very much that you come back to us.” (Beik laughs). And he was, you know--

MB: This is the doctor?

PL: The doctor. He kneeled. He kissed her. He says, “Now we will call your husband.”

She didn’t know nothing what happened. She didn’t know, see. And then she went into a deep sleep. He says, “That’s what I want.”

He gave her a shot. He gave her this coffee to give her nerves a shaking, and that did it. That did it. That’s why I tell lots of people when they are sick, I says, “Come on. You have a little bit of coffee so you have a little pep.” I will never forget that. Oh, she was miserable. And she came to. She was a beautiful, beautiful lady. Just imagine. She had three girls. Then she had this... it was a girl, too. Beautiful girls. Then they moved away from here.

MB: Do you remember the flu epidemic, Mrs. Leonardis?

PL: Huh? The flu? Do I? I was 12 years old. But it was during the First World War. I remember.

I went to see every soldier that left. I remember Father, Father [James] Sass, from the Polish Church. He gave every soldier that left a five dollar gold piece. At that time it was gold pieces, you know. It was just like a little pen; it was gold. And he gave everybody that leave [one]. And I went out with my Ed [her brother]. “You going to go, too?”

“Yeah,” I said, ‘ I will go with the boys.”

He [the priest] says, “If you go, I am going to give you ten.” (Beik laughs).

Yeah, I remember. Oh, I used to feel bad because some ... I used to go see them because some of the boys... everybody had boarders at the time. There was ones that had [a boy in the service], and they put a flag outside. Stars. How many stars on your flag, that’s how many people went to the service from that home. This home beside us had five people, five boys. Well, they were related, almost all relations that they boarded in this home.

Because, when they came from Italy, you can’t get a house like they do today and go live alone. You don’t live alone at that time. Everybody lived together. That’s how I went to see them, [the] soldiers that left. First World War, Second World War. I went to see everybody. I went to see everybody that left.

They used to tell me, “Where are you going early in the morning?”

“I am going to see our boys leaving. We have to tell them goodbye. Somebody has to be there.” I used to go see everybody, every boy, off.

MB: It must have been hard on people, like in World War I, when some of these people had come from some of the countries where all the fighting was, and sometimes they were on different sides of the war.

PL: Yeah, yeah, like the people came from Italy, and then they were going to fight against you--

MB: The Austro- Hungarian[s]...must have been hard.

PL: It was hard. I think more or less if you're a citizen, then you have to go because you really, you know, just like, refused your country [if you didn't go] on account of you want to be a citizen. Because that's what they wanted to be.

MB: The people must have had relatives.

PL: They had. "Well," they said, "we killed our brothers." Lots of them. They felt like they had killed their brothers.

Do you want more coffee?

MB: Yeah, if you've got some. That would be fine. [Beik stopped the tape briefly while Pearl served more coffee.]

MB: You mentioned the citizenship business. Do you know how it was in those days, the early days, for people to get citizenship? I don't know really much about that, how it worked.

PL: At that time, it wasn't too hard.

MB: Wasn't it?

PL: No. They, if you knew somebody, or like, you'd go to Somerset. Then you'd go to Pittsburgh. They'd give you [citizenship papers] down there. I remember my husband went to Pittsburgh. Good thing that he got his. Lot of people didn't have to make another trip. Of course they'd go by train at that time. There weren't any buses. They'd go by train, and it was a whole day because you had to go in the morning and you come back late in the night. There was only two trains, one going, one coming.

MB: Was there a big process involved with it at that time? I don't know what it was like then. What was it basically? Did they just swear allegiance, or did they have to do something else?

PL: To become a citizen? Well you have to learn, first, your flag, then the president. Like they tell you if he is a Republican, if he is a Democrat. You have to know what they mean.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: See. You had to learn.

MB: A quiz, or something like that?

PL: They asked you these questions, yeah. And they ... then they got little bit, little bit tougher.

See, before, well, when they came from Italy, they went straight to work. They didn't go out because they didn't have no money. Maybe they'd buy a big keg, a small keg, of beer, and keep it on the back [porch]. In the summer they'd keep it under a tree, and they'd be drinking there, or in the winter...I remember my mother had it behind the door because she had boarders.

I'd bottle the beer for them. Then, I would take it downstairs. We'd make a hole in the basement. The iceman would pass, and you'd get, we used to have these sacks, like potato sacks they used to call them at that time. And we'd wrap the ice right in there, and we'd put a couple in this big hole. We'd fix it up. We'd put a top or something. And that's how they used to keep their beer cold, and it used to be cool with that ice. That was my job. Yeah. They'd give me a little half a glass of beer. I used to love beer. I used to like wine better.

MB: So it must have been something when Prohibition came in. People all had to make their own, I guess.

PL: People, yeah, then. Well, it was on the sneak. If you got caught, you got caught. (Beik laughs.) My second child was born. And my husband says, "It's a shame that there's no liquor." There was no liquor at that time because of Prohibition. So my husband said, "Well, we used to make wine."

When the baby was born, their way, the Italian people, had to have all kind of liquors. You fixed up a tray, and anybody come to see you, you'd make them coffee, you'd have something to eat. And you have to have. It was beautiful really. Today you have a baby, they don't even care if you have one, yes or no. Who cares? Why another one, you know? At that time, a child was born, he was born with a lot of happiness. Yeah.

And so my husband says, "We ought to make a little bit of moonshine."

"Oh dear," I says, 'I'm afraid."

See, at that time I had an uncle, the one who lived with us for all the time, for 41 years. Then my husband's brother had moved in with us. He came from Italy, and he was something. Oh, I could die laughing with him. He was something. He wanted to hurry up and learn English. (Beik laughs.)

End of Tape 3 Side B

Start of Tape 4 Side A (March 8, 1984)

MB: Just wait a second. It takes just a few seconds for the beginning of the tape to start rolling. Okay. Now it should be fine.

So you were telling me about your husband's brother and--

PL: Yeah. All these. [Counting] I had one, two, three. There were four men in the house at that time. And I says to my husband, "I don't want no part of liquor in this place. Some of these men in here, they'll be getting drunk, and, hey, I don't want none of this. I don't believe in people getting drunk. If you get drunk you're going to walk out, too."

He says, "We don't... We want it for when we have a baby. When we are going to have people coming in, what are you going to do? A cup of coffee?"

[Pearl says] "We have wine."

He says, "A lot of people don't want wine. You don't use wine in coffee."

I says, "Yes, you could." I love wine in coffee. (Beik laughs.)

So we had. . . They were making this moonshine. I was pregnant, big. I laughed every time I could think about it. I laugh about it. "Well," one guy says, "you know what? I have a revolver."

"Boy, you have a revolver? What do you think you are going to do with a revolver?"

He says, "You sit on the top of the steps while we're making whiskey."

I says, "How about if this place blows up?"

"It can't blow up."

I says, "Yes, it could blow up. I have heard of quite a few blowing up."

He said that we are not going to get blowed up.

"I am just staying up here. I am not coming down stairs," I said.

You see policemen used to go around and around. They used to smell [it]. They could smell [it]. You know.

MB: Oh. Huh.

PL: We had a house. It was a big house. Couldn't... Maybe the smell wasn't that strong like [in] these little places, in the kitchen like. Ours was way downstairs, but by the time it goes up--

I said, "Okay, what am I supposed to do?" So I sat down on the steps, and they gave me this revolver. "So what am I supposed to do?"

"Well, if the policeman comes, you shoot him down." (Beik laughs)

So I says, “I am not going to kill a policeman.”

Once in a while I get up and look around outside. I didn’t move the curtains. In the dark I could see. The top [floor] was dark. “If you leave all the lights on, nobody will come to our house. But if yonz [slang for ‘you’ plural] put the lights off, they can see the cellar light. They know that you are down the cellar doing something.”

“No, no, no. We don’t want no lights upstairs.”

“Okay,” I said. “When the policeman come, you can find out. Yonz can all go to jail. I am not going. I am going to run upstairs when I hear somebody at the door.” (Beik laughs).

So they gave me this revolver. Pretty soon it hit me. I says, “Hey, I went downstairs and put that damn revolver [Pearl slams the table] on top of the table. I says, “You want to be the murder[er]? Who in here? You go sit on the steps or go outside. I’m going to bed. I’m not going to shoot no policeman, nobody. I says, “Yonz better watch what yonz are doing.”

So I left. I left. I went straight upstairs. (Beik laughs). So, the next day, I was telling this lady, the landlord. She says, “Boy, how we smelled.”

Sure you can smell it. And they says you can’t smell. Sure you can smell it.

But I told them, “That was it.” They were going to try it the next night. I said, “I don’t want none of that stuff. You can find somebody who sells it. I am pretty sure that there is somebody selling it on the side.”

My husband says, “You were right,” after a while.

Good thing we had chickens. We threw this mash to the chickens. They ate it all before...(Beik laughs). They liked it. (Beik laughs).

MB: Oh, dear.

PL: There was places. They had big stills. Big ones.

MB: I understand that some of the clubs, like all the ethnic clubs, served it, too, sometimes.

PL: They never made [emphasis] it. No, they never made it. Maybe they could have made it outside in some home and then bring it in.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

PL: But our Abruz [Abruzzi] Club, they never made it. The wine, yeah. They made the wine. But somebody made it and then brought it here.

MB: Made it and brought it. I see. Yeah, huh.

PL: Like she had...my mother, she says...because you are not allowed to make too much wine. You weren't allowed. See, then, now, you have to register, but people never registered. There is a lot of people never knew about registering.

But if they [the authorities] find out, then it's no good. My mother made it. They'd buy it off of her. She knew. She made it for them just as long [as] they'd give you [her] \$25 maybe on the barrel. Because you buy the grapes and everything, you have to pay.

MB: Oh.

PL: There was speakeasies around here, you can't believe.

MB: Yeah, [it] must have been a booming town once with lots of things happening.

PL: Oh, my God.

MB: Did you ever hear about any houses of prostitution?

PL: There were.

MB: I imagine there was if this was a booming mining town with a shortage of women.

PL: Of course there were. They were. There was a bunch of boarders. This was late when I was...oh, well, they used to be before, too. In fact, there was a pretty girl. She had...she was in one of these. But then she married. A man from Windber married her. She was a French [woman]. She's still a beautiful lady. Now he died maybe about a year ago. And she had a lot of children. She had a lot of children.

MB: Don't tell me her name. (Beik laughs).

PL: I don't know her name. I don't know her name, but she was a beautiful lady. Beautiful lady. Pretty, pretty. She was French. Beautiful reddish hair. She's still pretty. Beautiful. But she had a bunch of children, boys and girls. We love her. She joined our church after she... After she was married, that woman was [a] most strict woman.

MB: Oh really?

PL: Yeah. She said...because she made it known to the people. She says that she didn't have no choice because they didn't have no food. Her mother threw her out. She wasn't right in Windber [not located in town]. They was way out, but people used to go. But this man married her, and they got along beautiful. Beautiful.

MB: Oh, that's nice.

PL: She had about a dozen kids.

MB: Nice.

PL: And them kids were all beautiful children.

MB: That's nice.

PL: In fact, last night I did see one. I bumped right into him. He says, "Hey, Pearl."

And I says, "Jesus, [unintelligible name] where in the hell were you? I didn't see you." (Beik laughs). I bumped into him in the dark, you know. I was coming out of the church. Yeah. I was coming out of the church, and I was going down [to] the club. We had a meeting last night.

Beautiful children. She's a widow. She married this man, and he gave her everything. She worked hard raising all these kids. Never went places, nowhere. She's beautiful, built, yet.

MB: Maybe you could tell me about some of the Italian customs or religious. Maybe tell me something about your church because we didn't really talk much about that, like holidays, or religious days, or you know, because the church seems very important to you. You go every day.

PL: I go.

MB: Not every day but once a week?

PL: I go like on Sundays, and if they have anything [special]. Like I went twice yesterday. I didn't see... I can't find my bulletin to see if there was a mass today. And God knows where I put it. (Beik laughs). I always leave it here, and I says, you know, so I know what to do.

But I go every Sunday. I receive communion every time I go to church. I receive communion all the time. I go every Monday, Monday at 1:00 [p.m.]. Between 12:00 and 1:00, I go to church. There is no mass.

I love to go. I love to go. I light candles. On both sides, St. Joe's [Joseph] and the Blessed Mother. And I go up to the altar. I pray up there. And I go, and I pray for everybody. It isn't--I am not going for myself. To me, I never pray for me, for myself. I start [to pray], "Just take care of me, that I can be on my own."

But I go up there and light candles if I know somebody's sick. There was a woman, she was very [emphasis] sick. About three weeks ago, we went to see her.

MB: Um hum.

PL: Oh, she cried when we went in. She says, "Boy, am I glad yonz come. But I won't even be able to make you a cup of coffee because I can't drink coffee."

I says, “You’re going to make coffee.” A friend of mine and I went. I says, “You are going to make coffee. What do you mean? Because you don’t feel good, you can’t drink coffee? You’re not going to make coffee? I says that you’re going to make coffee. You’re going to be better.”

We talked to her, and we talked to her. And the next morning, this friend of mine has--he has a partially retarded brother. So he [the retarded brother] goes to church every day, and he prays for everybody who is sick. It helps. Because he’s not a man with sin or, you know. Now he is fifty-some years old, but he goes to church. The priest knows when he’s going in the afternoon. And the priest come out. One [Pearl’s friend] here, one [the priest] there. They put him [the retarded man] in the middle. He [the priest] says, “Who shall we pray today for?” (Beik laughs).

We tell him who’s sick.

MB: I see.

PL: And we give him the name, and he goes to church and prays. So we told this lady that we are going to make Alfie pray for you.

“Oh,” he says, “I’m tired, I’m tired [of] praying.”

I says, “Don’t you say you are tired of praying. You do not talk that way because she is a very religious person.”

We called her up one day [and said] “How are you doing?”

“You know I feel much better today.”

I says, “You’re going to be better.” I says, “Your sons are talking to me down [at] the club. They would like to take you to Florida. You go to Florida because you are going to be better.” She just moved there a couple days ago.

We told this boy to pray, and we are going to make prayers for her, and we light candles. Last night in church she hugged us and hugged us. She says, “You know, I haven’t had no more pains.” And she had that thing for a year.

MB: Oh.

PL: It’s right in here [pointing] to her abdomen]. She’d double out. She used to be... The girl said...One of her daughters [said], “She is the most crankiest person you could ever....”

I said, “You would [be], too,” I says, “when you have pain. She’s used to working. She raised a big family.”

And I says, “And then all of a sudden, you get this pain. And it turns her down, and she’s laying down, and it didn’t hurt.” Then I says to her, “It could be an inflammation in there. And as soon as that clears up...If it isn’t that, it has to be your...Sometimes, if you fell in [earlier] years, maybe one of your ribs is rubbing somewhere because, as we get older, everything moves.”

She says, “Boy, maybe so.”

I says, “It is [emphasis] so.”

Oh, she was so happy.

Now we have to go down. I don’t know. We are not going tonight. We told her that if we don’t come in this week, we’ll be in next week. She says that it don’t have to be in the night. “I want yonz in the daytime so we can make something.” (Beik laughs).

PL: “Okay. We’ll be in.”

MB: Oh. (Beik laughs).

PL: And I said, “Prayers do [emphasis] count.” They do [emphasis] count. Yes, they do.

MB: See, you remember, oh, like, so many of the priests and the whole, probably the church, almost when it was first built. When was it? [both are talking at the same time].

PL: I was five years old [in 1910] when they built our church.

MB: Oh, do you remember them building it?

PL: Yeah, sure. We used to go like. Our mothers used to walk up. Because we lived only in this corner. You know. She [Pearl’s mother]...we’d go through the alleys, and we’d go see how far. . . My mother used to take us by the hand, and we used to walk up and check, see how many bricks. My mother used to say, “Let’s go see how many bricks they put up today.”

And everybody, the place would be full, because everybody was happy that we were going to have a church because we all went...It was the only [Catholic Church] [the] Polish church. That’s the only [Catholic] church [in town]. We all went to that.

MB: Did you have services in Italian then?

PL: Then, up here, yeah. We had an Italian priest. Yeah, we had, oh... Father Leone, I remember, very, very well. He was one of these . . . you know, he used to go to every house, like for collection. Because nobody had money to put in there. But anyhow, he used to come to your house to talk to you. He was a friendly [man]. He was just like that to everybody; he was the same. He got...Well, he was here... Like these priests are always changed. He was never changed.

MB: Yeah. In those days I guess they weren't changed as much.

PL: Well, they're in a different order.

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: Yeah, These here, they are the Franciscans. These here. He was a Jesuit.

MB: Jesuit?

PL: He was a priest that stayed. But these here, the Franciscan priests, they are on the move all the time. They stay so long. Every three years. Then maybe they may just stay. They vote. Sometime you get another turn for three more years, and it would be six years. You'd become a head priest then. See, from the lower, you become the head priest. They have rules. They have strict rules, too. They do. They do. They have.

So, then this Father Leone. Well, everybody loved him because we never had no change in priest. (Beik laughs). You grew up with him. I was a little girl. I remember him. I went to catechism for like, they call it Sunday school. We used to go on Sundays. Then when we was to get communion, like maybe for one week or two weeks, we'd go like four o'clock in the afternoon, every afternoon after school. From school we'd go straight to church, and our mothers would be there to see if we were there. (Beik laughs). You had to make sure that the kids were there. He married me. Yeah, so--

MB: He went through your life with you.

PL: Yeah, I was just small. We used to go clean the church. Mrs. Stevens, she was a Zankey, they lived right behind our church. She's still there. Her and I and the boys, we used to go [to the church to work.] A great big runner, we used to pull this way out to the street. Then we'd roll it. We'd clean up the place and sweep and scrub and fold the chairs, then put the chairs back.

We used to work when we just little things. Today they don't. Kids don't want to do nothing, but we used to. Yeah.

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: I was always with the priest every day. Yeah. I used to go there. I was his. He says, "You come because you have to go to the store. [If] I'm out," he says, "Mary Byers, they had a maid [will be here]."

And they had a big, big dog. Oh that dog! I was in that house every day, but I was afraid of that dog. I used to tell him [the priest], "Father, why am I afraid of this dog?"

"Because you want to be afraid." (Beik laughs). He says "This dog loves you, but you don't know that he loves you. He says, "It's like everything else."

I says but I was afraid to touch him.

But the only thing, they had a drinking cup hanging on the . . . and I'd take this drinking cup and tell him [the dog] to come. He'd open his mouth, and I'd pour water down. Yeah. If he was hungry... I used to tell him [the priest], "He eats [many] loaves of bread a day if you are going to give it to him." No, he is only allowed so much. And I gave him a piece of bread. I'd give him, and then I'd give him cheese. He was happy.

And, you know, I was afraid of him. And I was afraid of him. When that dog got sick and he died, I told him [the priest], "I'm glad he died."

"That is a big sin for you. That is a big sin you have about my dog."

I says that I was afraid of him. And I says, "Don't you buy another dog because I'm not coming in your house."

Oh, I was with him. When we had communion, our First Holy Communion, he gave us a big feast. He never did [have big feasts]. And he says, "Well, on account of you, I am going to give everybody a nice feast."

Me and this Zankey girl, Mrs. Zankey. We always cleaned the church. He says, "That you're such good girls," he says, "we are going to give you a nice...." Oh, he made a big table for us.

When you get communion at that time... Today it's nothing. You'd get your First Holy Communion. Then we would go out to his place. There was a porch, and then we'd go into his house. He stands there, and he has, they have, some kind of a ring. It is a holy ring. And you take his hand, and you kiss that ring. And then we would go in. One [boy] tried to sneak. He [the priest] caught him by the hair. (Beik laughs). "Come back here." (Beik laughs). You always find little boys doing things. (Beik laughs).

He was nice. We used to have bazaars outside. Oh, the older people, see, they looked for that stuff because they didn't go no place. You know. It was like we had it twice. Like St. Anthony comes on the 13th of June, then the Immaculate Conception. That's the big holiday. That's on the 15th of August. That is a big... We call it "The Big Day." And we have bazaars for three nights each time, and everybody... We had a band outside.

Today there's nothing. I used to go, before. I used to love them days better than today. There's nothing today.

MB: You mentioned a band. I guess there was an Italian band?

PL: An Italian band. Yeah.

MB: Were there lots of parades? Do you remember lots of parades and festivals?

PL: Way, way, way back, we had the Torquato band.

MB: Oh, tell me about that.

PL: Yeah. These here, when it was Columbus Day, see. My mother lived on 21st street, right down this street.

MB: Yeah.

PL: My mother had cows. She used to make her own cheese. Then to dry it she had her cupboard in the dining room. She had her board then and put these cheese there. I used to tell her, "Go ahead. Put them out there so when somebody comes in, they know that you have it and they'll ask you for it." I says, "No wonder we never had cheese." (Beik laughs). We had cheese, but we never had cheese. (Beik laughs).

My mother says that it is all right. "That's how we eat it. That is how I was brought up in Italy. We make it. Whatever we make, we share. You have to give."

That's why people tell me today, "You make all these little breads." Like breadsticks, but they are about this thick and that long (gestures). [She says she makes them] down [at] the club, and I give them away. They says, "Boy, Pearl, you give all that."

And I says, "Give and you shall get." I says, "That's it."

Me, I give. I says that you are supposed to give so much bread every day away. (Beik laughs) And it is what my mother used to [do]. I remember the words [of] my mother, you know.

And these Torquatos had a band. And there was two other fellas. They were from Italy. They boarded in my mother's house. And they were the higher teachers for the Torquato Band. That's how they [the other musicians] learned, through these guys.

Then they'd have a parade. A beautiful parade on horses. Yeah. I remember. They'd come down [the] street where they'd start, and they'd come down and make a circle around the Eureka stores because they had to go around the Eureka stores or else because that's a big [Berwind] company. So they'd circle around, and they'd come down 21st street. They'd stand right in front of our house because it was no cars like now. There was no cars.

Then they had the other road in case there was anybody with a horse and a buggy. They had to go through the other place to go down in town.

They'd have a ball, them people that would sit on our porch. Then they'd go over to the other people's porch. And they would play the band. Everybody used to travel with them. It was beautiful. Kids, you can't believe.

Then they'd go into my mother's house, these band leaders. They says, "Well, what do we get today?" They knew there was cheese there.

My mother had it. At that time, she had a lot of cheese. It was my sister's birthday on the 12th of October, and my mother says, 'Well, we'll celebrate my Rosie's birthday today.'

And she'd slice all this cheese and her bread. Then the men, the boarders, they had the wine. They'd bring the wine out and give everybody a drink. And, you know, they used to do this every year. Every year.

MB: [On] Columbus Day?

PL: Columbus Day. And I said, today, everything is dead. You know. These people, what could they return? All the murders. They can't remember nothing, and they have to remember. What's going on today is nothing but murders, stealing, and you know. There's nothing. There's nothing.

MB: Did you have any events at the club? The Abruzzi Club, then?

PL: Yeah. They used to have dances. Oh, yeah.

MB: Tell me about them.

PL: Because the ladies, their wives, they're not allowed out, okay? That's a funny way.

MB: Women? Or--? (Both talking at the same time).

PL: Married women. Yeah. After they were married, these mens [men], they married the women, you were like a slave. You were just like a slave. I always said that women were a slave at one time. I says [to] my husband when I was married--see, I was married a little bit later than that...And I used to tell my husband, "If you ever treat me just like one of these ladies who are not allowed to do this--"

He said, "Well, when you're married, you're married."

I says, "I am married. Sure, I know I am married. Don't I know? Don't you know you married me? I says you're not supposed to be [mean]. When anybody [is] like that," I says, "I don't like to live with you. If you're going to be mean, and you want to be like these [other guys], I won't live with you. I'll go home." I was always running to my mother.

But that's how these people used to be at one time. When you were married, you were married. And [if] you wanted to go down street, you never went alone. You went with another woman. You never walked the streets alone. Never, never! [emphasis]

MB: Not even in the day time?

PL: In the day time, because, well, they figured, "Well, what is she doing down [the] street? She don't have no business down [the] street. What is she doing?" You know.

[If] you want to go to the store, you had to go to the “five-and- ten.” We used to call them “five-and-ten-cents stores” at that time before Grant’s come in, and that’s demolished. And the Eureka stores. Four Bs [spelling?].

We used to have a beautiful store on the Midway. I used to like to go in there [the Four Bs] all the time.

MB: Where was that?

PL: Right at the corner where. You know where Midway is?

MB: Not exactly.

PL: Follow the track down street, there’s a trestle. Okay. Well, if you go straight and follow the trestle, the track, way, way out. Before you make that turn to go to the 12th street to go out on the main road, there is a Four Bs right off of the town.

There is the town here, then there is the ah...oh, there’s just a couple little buildings. There is a couple statues down street. There’s a library.

MB: Right, right.

PL: And there’s a track right after. All right.

MB: Right, I know where that is.

PL: That little part there, the funeral home that’s called the--

MB: Oh, that was what was called Midway? I see.

PL: It was called Midway

MB: I was wondering what [where] it used to be.

PL: There used to be Torquato’s bank up there at one time [and] a shoemaker. There was a livery store. There was a Timko’s Hotel. Then there was the store Four Bs. Now it is electrical something, electrical, but it was a beautiful store. I used to love to go. Sewing materials. Beautiful. Anything you wanted. Beautiful store.

And that used to be our... That’s where I used to go. I even went for a job when I was fourteen. They gave it to me. My mother says, “You’re not old enough.”

So I went from there. I went to the Stone Hotel. I saw this girl I used to know. She worked in there. I says, “Susie, how did you go [get] it?”

She said, “Just go to the old man, Mr. . . .ah, what was his name . . . Frank Lowry. Go to Mr. Lowry. He’ll give you a job.” She says, “I wish he would. You could help me scrub these damn floors on your knees.”

I said, “I don’t want to scrub floors. I want to do something else. I’m not going to scrub floors. I’ll run the machine or sweeper or something else.” I says. “But I am going to get . . . I will use a mop. I am not going to get on my knees.”

I had a bad knee.

MB: Yeah.

PL: At one time I fell and hurt it. But when--

MB: There was an Italian Bank. One of the Italian leaders, Torquato, had a bank?

PL: The bank. Them, they used to be the leader of the Black Handers. They were the . . . All the banks were going under. They went under. You know. But they were the band leaders, too.

Then they had a nice boy living in Johnstown. Oh, they have a doctor in the family. They have an attorney in the family. Oh yeah.

MB: What always surprises me when somebody describes what Windber was like with these stores, I don’t understand why [the] Berwinds and [the] Eureka stores let these other stores exist. I don’t understand because a lot of people say they had to shop at the company stores.

PL: You had [emphasis] to shop.

MB: So I don’t understand how they, why they let . . . with these other[s]. I don’t understand how that worked then.

PL: Well, now, like these little stores, like Palumbo’s over there; they have a little store. Mrs. Rillo, they had a little store. They didn’t bother them too much, but that was a little bit later though, a little bit later.

But right when they first . . . [when] people started coming in, there was no stores. But down below on 21st street, I remember he was Jewish. I remember this store. He was Jewish. And they didn’t say nothing to them because they were Jewish people. And they figured maybe they’re Jewish [the Berwind company people]. God knows. They had a little store, very small. They didn’t carry too much stuff.

But you had to buy from the Eureka stores. If you worked for the Berwind [company], you had [emphasis] to buy from them. Really. For sure they were slaves.

I always say... There is one of the boys come down the club [Abruzzi Club], and his father was a big man from Berwind. And I was always tell him [things]. He always asks me questions. He likes to hear about [these things] because he's different.

MB: Yeah, yeah, sure.

PL: He's different. Then I worked some years for Mr. Sanford. He was a big [Berwind] man. He was higher than this other one. And I worked for him. Housework. And I used to tell him. I used to talk to him. He used to like to hear me. "Boy, Pearl, I am glad it is not like it was." Because he could never be. He was later in the years.

MB: Yeah. Were there big changes, like in the '30s then when the union [the United Mine Workers of America] came in? Is that when the changes--?

PL: Yeah. When the union came in, it made a big... Oh, what a big--

MB: Because before then it was ... this really tightly controlled...?

PL: Because I lived on the farm, but I lived on a company farm. See.

MB: Oh, I didn't realize they [the Berwinds] owned the farms around here, too.

PL: Oh, yeah, they were all theirs. Yeah. They sold their land to these other people. You know, but they didn't have--

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: Yeah, you couldn't have, you know, if you wanted to run something, like these stores, you was okay, but you couldn't sell like big [emphasis]. Something like in the night. Those [the Eureka] stores are closed at five [p.m.] so you could--

MB: I see. That makes sense.

MB: Do you remember, were you in Windber during the Flood of 1936? Can you tell me about that?

PL: Oh yeah. Okay. Because I lived on the farm, and I just come back. We moved back in. I come back, I think it was, [pausing, thinking] 19... in '32 I voted for Roosevelt. Around '34. I come back from the farm in '33 because my husband died in '34.

MB: Oh, yeah. Okay.

PL: Then we had this big flood. But it wasn't a flood like we had this last time. Oh, no. It was just water. It was still water just come in the creeks and overflowed. But it didn't rush like the one we had in '77. Oh, God.

MB: That was a flash flood, I guess.

PL: Oh, my God. What a night! I was so scared that night, you know. I was so scared. I was worried about it. We had my son-in-law...He had a sister that lived right down below, the worst part of it [the flooding]. He tried to get there. He told these guys, "I have [emphasis] to get there. I have to get there."

He [another man] says, "You can't get there. You're gonna get hit with anything that would be coming. That trestle—there's a break in that trestle now."

I can't believe it. The tracks, all the way up. All the tracks were all moved. There's no work. The good Lord is going to make somebody get some work now. You see everybody working. It was terrible. Out at '36 it wasn't too bad.

MB: I guess it was bad in Johnstown but not in--

PL: Well, it was in Johnstown and Windber, but it wasn't really tht bad]. It wasn't destructive like it would come through your building and throw your building out like this one. My God! It was really ...When we went down, it was a flood in 1977.

We went to Pittsburgh this day, and when we were going, we went to Kennywood Park. It's our club [Abruzzi Club]. We took buses, about two buses from Windber and went. When we were going, I says, "You know what? Look at these creeks." I was telling the ladies. We had ladies and children. I says, "Just look. One good rain, and believe me, we are going to have a big flood."

"Oh, there she goes. We're gonna--"

End of Tape 4 Side A

Start of Tape 4 Side B (March 8, 1984)

PL: I said to them ladies about that, and they started to laugh. So we come home. We got here, about 9:00 p.m., and it was raining because we had a big storm out there. I am scared of storms. I don't like to be out where there is trees moving. Where that merry-go-round is, that was all steel, all that (Beik laughs) you know. I says that, "Boy, if we don't get killed today, we never will. "

Everybody says, "It is so wet. Why don't we try to go?" But the kids didn't want to move. It was hot. It was beautiful.

MB: Yeah.

PL: I says, "Well, if the kids don't want to go, what are you going to do? We will sit someplace and have a bite to eat and let them go."

Do you want a Kleenex, honey?

MB: Oh, thank you. I don't know. I seem to have a used one.

PL: Okay. When you need it, you need it. I'll give you.

So then when we come home, one bus of ours got lost. They made... there's a way... Rather than take the other road, they went [took] the other one, and it took them to Indiana.

MB: Oh, no. (Beik laughs).

PL: It was so bad that night because it rained. Oh, when we come home, the weather was just [awful] because it rained like all day, like off and on, big storms. But when we come back, it was so cloudy, so ugly. I said, "Gee, I hope this bus comes in." Because I was getting worried with all them kids, you know.

We waited and waited. I made more trips up and down, going out... But then it started to get bad, and I says, "Oh, my good Lord. I don't know if this bus come back." So I called this lady's house, and a man answered. He says, "They're not home."

I says, "Oh, dear God. I hope they get home soon. The weather is getting bad."

MB: Um hum.

PL: It was thundering, thunders all over. You didn't know where it [the thunder] was coming from. Rain. And all the time, this lady was with me. I said, "You know, Barbara, I am getting worried." I lived on the other side, a little place on the other side. I says, "Boy, not even Mrs. D'Arc [abbreviation for D'Archangelo] opens the door over there. She don't even come over. I wonder what. I have a funny, funny feeling tonight."

"Oh, shut up. Why don't you go to bed?" she [Barbara] told me. She said, "I'm going to bed."

I said, "You go to bed. I am going to choke you tonight," I told her. I didn't want her to go to bed because I'm afraid of thunder. I says, "Barbara, I am scared. You know I am." (Beik laughs).

"Nobody is going to say nothing. Just go to bed and shut up. Boy, you make me sick," she said. "Every time it storms, you can't sleep."

I says, "Okay." I was sitting in the corner. "I'm going to read."

Then, one time, more noise. I says, "You know, Barbara, I am going downstairs."

It was about 11:30 [p.m.], quarter to twelve. I says, "I don't know if the bus come in."

"What are you going to do if the bus didn't come in?" She was one of these; she didn't care.

I says, “You know we have lots of kids in that bus. I bet something happened to them. Nobody seems to know.”

A dreary night. Such an ugly night.

So I go outside. I have to go this way. There was a panel truck in front, a white panel truck. I’ll never forget. And I got scared when I saw this because I says, “What is he doing here? He don’t belong here. What is he doing?”

It was raining, but I stood in the middle of the landing. Now they closed up that little porch, but I went on there. And once in a while, every time I [he] would open the door, I would say, “Here he comes.” I was afraid to move [for fear] that he would run after me. That’s why I was there. I was afraid. I hope somebody passes, but nobody [did].

It was such a funny-looking night.

And so then I says to him, he opened the door, “Did your truck flood?” I says, “Maybe you need some help?” I says, “I have a telephone.” I went to him. I said, “Well, if he goes up, Barbara’s here anyhow.”

He didn’t answer me. So I says . . . Then I got more scared. Well, this guy is not good because he . . . I said, “Why doesn’t he answer me? I am trying to help him, and he don’t answer me.” It made me feel bad.

He opens the car. Every time he opened the car, I was afraid he was going to come out, you know. So then one time he come out again. He turned and looked all around.

I says, “Hey, Mister, can’t you start your car? Do you need help? It’s raining pretty bad. Maybe your car got wet. If you need help, maybe you want to call somebody to pick you up?”

He didn’t answer me. I says, “Go to hell.” I took off, and I am coming up the steps like the devil. I was scared.

Then I see him going out, and he took off. Now why? I couldn’t understand. I always think about that. If he needed help, he could have told me. I could have called. Give me a phone number. I’ll call.

MB: Yeah. That happened the night of the flood?

PL: That night. That was a real dreary night. So I come back in. I said to Barbara, “I’m gonna make a pot of coffee, and I don’t care what happens.” I says, “I’m just worried about them kids, if they’re home.”

“Oh, they are home. Don’t worry about it,” she said.

I says, “Somebody would have called.”

So she went to bed. Me, I was [thinking], “Why isn’t Mrs. D’Arc coming over tonight?” Because she would always come over. Even here, she’s got a bug like you. And pretty soon, I said to Barbara, “You know, I wish I could walk down the street. I’d like to walk down the street.”

“I’m not going,” she said.

“I know that you’re not going. But I feel like walking down the street.”

So this went on and on. Mrs. D’Arc come out. She is going down the steps. I say, “Hey, why, [unintelligible name for Mrs. D’Arc], what is going on?”

She says, “I don’t know, but we surely have to pray.”

Look, I still get it. When she told me them words... I had a rosary with me, and she had a rosary. She said, “Things don’t look too good”

I says, “Why? Do you have your television on?” I said, “I would never put mine on. I unplug everything when it’s bad weather.”

We went down the store. She had a store downstairs. We went in there and looked outside. Water, dear God!, on top of them curb stones. Me, I says, “Come over here and look.”

In the meantime, somebody came and banged on the door. I got shook up. Who is trying to break in? There were some boys. I says, “Hey, honey, where are yonz going?”

He says, “We’re going up to school.”

I says, “What do mean you are going up to school?” You know it didn’t dawn [on me].

“We are going to see if we can get some shelter.”

I says, “Come on in. We have shelter right here.”

So the boys come in. In the meantime, while they were talking, but some of the boys didn’t want to come. “No, we have to go. We’re going up here. We’re going up here.”

See, they must have opened the school, but they didn’t say that the school went open. They were looking for shelter.

And me, I’m crying. I started to cry when I saw these... Here comes... They went out, running up to their school. I says, “If you don’t find no place, honey, yonz come back. We’ll love you. We’ll take care of you kids.” They were nice young boys, you know.

[At] first I thought they were up to something. What? Poor kids, their house was flooded. These other men come in. They were from up here. These [men] we knew, these men. I says, “What happened?” And there was three of them. Three or four.

He [one of the men] says, “We’re flooded, honey.”

I says, “Oh, dear God. Where’s your mother?”

He says, “She is in the hospital.”

I says, ‘Oh, dear God.’ She was in the hospital. She was sick. “When your mother comes home and finds out, please, tomorrow, when things go better, you start cleaning so she don’t get all worked up.” She was supposed to be home. Then the boys told [the] doctor they needed three, four days yet because she would get sick again.

But that place, that, it was a disaster. So I come back upstairs. I says, “Hey, Barbara, you’re sleeping. Do you know that Windber is flooded so bad you can’t believe. Everybody’s crying. Everybody’s home.”

“Well, what are you going to do about it?” You know.

I took her by the arm, and I got her out of that bed. (Beik laughs)

MB: Um hum.

PL: In the meantime, I just locked the door because there was a lot of people running around now. Where are they going to go? Me, I got all shook up. I was crying and praying, “Please, dear God, don’t let nothing happen to nobody.”

I hear tip, tip, tip, [pounding lightly on the table] coming up the steps. I says, “They wrapped. Who is it?”

“It’s me, Grandma.”

I says, “Oh, my God. What happened?” They can’t get flooded. They live on the hill.

I looked, and my brother-in-law [correcting herself], my son-in-law was crying. I says, “Paul, what happened?”

He started telling me. He said, “I think my sister’s dead.”

Oh, God, that is all I had to hear. I got sick after that. I said, “C’mon, you get something to eat, something.”

Then I says, ‘Where is (one of the boys) David?’

He was a young kid. He says, “Well, David, he’s around someplace.” But he’s looking.

When I went down this way and I could see all that water, it was just coming. Oh, you’d see Frigidares, gas tanks, flying all over. And I got so worked up. And I’m crying. You think I went to bed? No way! [emphasis].

Then she got up, Barbara. When she heard my family, she got up. She said, “What can be so bad? It looks like it didn’t rain so much.”

I says, “That’s what you think. In bed you don’t see the rain.”

I fixed up my family there. I says, “What are we going to do now? We can’t get down there.”

He said, “There’s the Capaneris. The Carvels.”

The Carvel family and this family of mine, girls that lived in there, and then they moved in this side because this side happened to be empty. And they come in the next day, and they said that they were looking. They just had two bundles of clothes with them.

Mrs. D’Arc says, “Yes, yonz [the people who were flooded out] can come up here. “We will put up a bed for you if yonz want.”

We tried to take people. Then some of the people from [Mine] 37, Scalp Level, all these, they started moving up with their families. I says that, “Anybody who wants to come, I will glad to have yonz.”

I told Mrs. D’Arc, “You have a big house. Let’s put up some people.”

She says, “Yeah, if they want to come in, let’s put them. We’ll put somebody up. We have enough beds.” She said, “I’ll take my bed somewhere in the back room.”

She had a lot of beds. I says, “We’ll fix them up.”

Then I went down. As soon as the water...but all wet. I went in that mud. I couldn’t hold it up with a pair of bedroom slippers. I had a nightgown on and a raincoat. And I am walking. . . I had to go down and see these people.

MB: Um hum.

PL: When I went down to look at this house with these people, I says to Gloria Carvel, “Gloria, I wonder how May is?”

“She’s alive,” [she said].

I says, “Thank God.”

But this girl, oh, she turned white. Her hair got real white.

If her boyfriend hadn't been there, she'd have been dead. But he happened to be there. And she says, "You know, I am getting sleepy."

And he says, "Well, you go to bed." He said, "When it stops raining, I have an umbrella." It was raining cats and dogs.

So he looked out. He was just like falling asleep. One time he heard a noise. He said, "Oh my God. I wonder what happened?"

He opened the door, and it was water. And he hollered at her, "May, we're flooded. We can't even--"

So they tried to get out, but the water... They couldn't because the porches were falling. They'd get killed; they'd get hit. They had a rope. He says, "We'll go."

So from this rope that they tied there, that's how they got back in. With that they went, with that they come back in. They would have never made it. They'd have been dead. So--

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: Yes, that's how Paul went down, but they wouldn't let him go. The cops were there. Everywhere boats. One of the guys, Mr. Durst, he come up to me. I says, "I know you people worked hard, but by damn it, you know that girl lived back up there by herself and nobody made an effort to go to get her? That people, that is, Joe Tanturo [spelling? Tantorno?] is in there and Dorothy Bates." I says, "Nobody."

"We didn't know that she lived back there."

I says, "Yes, the other guys knew that they lived back there." I says, "Yes, they did. They know that Joe's there."

But anyhow, they had, she was telling me, there was a clothes closet. This clothes closet, there was a door on the other side. But they made this clothes closet, and then they closed the door on the other side. They--

My daughter's sister-in-law, this Dorothy May, she pounded on it. She pounded because that door was there. She said, "Anybody could walk in with this door." It hit her that that door was there.

Joe said, "That's right. We'll strip this."

She found an ax, and she started pounding, and this damned thing didn't want to break. She had a sewing machine, she said. Joe says, "Move, and I will get it."

He took this sewing machine and went real hard with it to hit it. It cracked. When it cracked, he was all cut up, but he says he didn't care, you know. That's how they got through. They broke all these splinters there, and they got through. And they just made the steps, and the water, (Pearl claps hard) went all over. She'd have been killed.

MB: Yeah, yeah. Oh, boy.

PL: They just got... She says, when she thinks about it . . . She says, every time she thinks about it, she gets sick over it.

MB: That was quite a town event, I guess. You think, over the years, like the flu epidemic and the flood and the strike in '22 and all these things [were a] big event, big events. (Both were talking at the same time.)

PL: Yeah, it is for a little town. There was lots. Just because it's little, you remember it, because in big cities, you don't remember things like that because it goes. You know.

Like when that flu was, oh dear. You see these [dead people], they didn't have no hearse to take them to the cemetery. They put them on a truck, on a wagon with the horses. There they were going. Because we lived on 21st street, they passed our cemetery. That was up [Mine] 34 hill up there.

So, two young boys, they lived on 17th street. This flu. They both died. Nineteen and twenty years old. The families, some of the families... In fact one of the girls lived right back in there somewhere. And another one lives down here. Jackie Torquato. You have heard of the Torquato family. But they died, the two of them.

Then when my mother... None of us, in our family [got the flu]. But the next door neighbor [did]. I'm crying because I say these people died; they are going to all die. The big people died; it didn't bother me. But I didn't want no babies to die. I didn't want no kids [to die] because they were like ours. I said, [correcting herself], my mother says, "Don't go out. The ambulance is going to come and pick them up."

My mother had a bad ear. She had an infected ear, a high fever, and she couldn't hear. She couldn't hear. But my mother says, "Don't yonz go out because yonz will get this, they called it the influenza; [you'll] get sick too.

MB: Yeah.

PL: But me, I'm crying because they are taking them, just putting them in, just walking in[to] the ambulance from the porch. But way over with the horse.

MB: Horse and buggy? Yeah.

MB: They have them down at the museum now, I guess.

PL: Yeah. They still have . . . And they took them to the hospital. Two stayed back because they didn't have it. The little ones. The bigger ones, they all got it--the mother, the father, and the children. And the little ones, they didn't get none.

A man come in to take care. Here he is firing up the stove. Pretty soon [there is] a flue fire there. My mother give him a bag of salt: "Here, go put this salt up there."

Somebody ran upstairs to the barn window, went onto this place, and then they went. And that's how they got . . . this flue fire, and I says, "That's all we need. The first company's here, too." (Beik laughs).

It seemed so funny because poor people, they couldn't get. . . Then the house, back this one house, the next house nobody got sick. Then the other one, two died, one in the morning, one in the night. She was my good friend. I wasn't allowed to go see her. I said that I'm going to sneak in. So I go through the back. I watch. Nobody [is] coming. They put you in for 40 days [quarantined]. On our street was over here, these were barred. They were all ropes, but the ropes [meant] nobody was allowed to come in town. Nobody was allowed to go out, nobody going in.

Me, I went to the back through the alley from one house to the other. I made myself [got] through the fence there. I broke a fence going in. They didn't say nothing because I wanted to go see her, and they left me go. I went in there, and who come in? Mr. Meek, the undertaker, was there.

He says, "Pearl, how did you get in here? Mr. Ball is coming."

I says, "Heck with him. Don't you tell him. I'll hide under the bed."

"You are going to get this flu, and you are going to be next."

Here she lay. They had her fixed up on the bed. They undressed her. I remember her just as plain as nothing. She was [a] beautiful, beautiful girl.

MB: She was a good friend of yours.

PL: A good friend. We were always together, always together every minute of the day. She used to come to the house. She wanted to learn how to sew. She knew how to sew. She was only about twelve years old, and she knew how to sew.

My mother was a seamstress. Everybody would come to our house to learn how to sew. My mother would teach 'em.

But me, I made [went over] one time; it was a high fence. I could have broke my neck. But anyhow I couldn't get nowhere. The policeman was coming because I could hear his motorcycle. Boy, I went straight up that fence. Out I jumped. I could have broke my neck. Then I went home. I got a good crack, but I didn't care.

I was crying, and I was crying. My mother says, “Now. If you’re going to cry, what are you going to do? We can’t even go see her.”

I said, “I went to see her.”

I didn’t care. Then the boy died. [When] I come out of, there, the boy was in bed. And I went over. I hugged that little boy. He was so cute, just a little wee tiny thing. I went over, and I hugged him. I says, “You are going to be all right.”

He says, “I think I am going to die. Me and Nicky’s going to die.” Because they figured, once you get that, you are going to die. But he died. His big brother didn’t, but he died, that little one. Such a cute little thing. Cute little thing.

MB: I guess there were a lot of deaths with that.

PL: Yeah, oh yeah. And then they used to just bury you. They didn’t even...The undertaker, they just put you in the box. They didn’t have no more. They couldn’t get coffins. They couldn’t get no coffins. Any kind of box. We’d see them. They were building them fast. And they’d put them on there, and they’d bury them like these two boys. Oh dear, the two young boys. She [Pearl’s friend] was like twelve and a half years old when she died.

MB: Um.

PL: Beautiful. I never forget her. I can’t forget her. The way she was dressed, the way she laid, she looked so beautiful. I went on the bed, and I hugged her. They says, “Oh, don’t do that because you’ll get sick.”

MB: But you never got sick, I guess.

PL: I didn’t get [sick]. Nobody in our family [did]. Nobody [emphasis]!

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: And my sister, she was pregnant. My mother was worried about her. But none of us [got sick].

MB: Hum.

PL: I says to my mother, “Drink wine and eat garlic and you won’t get sick.” (Beik laughs). I used to hear ... we had wine ... we had garlic. And I used to put garlic on to cook. I hated it. (Beik laughs). I hated it. And I carried [wore] it around me, too.

MB: Oh, really?

PL: Oh, yeah. I carried it around. Oh yeah, I drunk some. We used to have garlic all the time. We used it string it, wear it. Once in a while, I'd go for a sip of wine. It will kill the germs. None of us in the family [became ill or died from the flu].

MB: Oh, that is nice. That was good. Too bad about these other people. [Both talking at the same time].

PL: My friend there... Oh, every time you turned around, you'd hear the horses going down the [street] to the cemetery.

MB: Goodness.

PL: Oh, boy.

MB: Is there anything else you can think of that happened in Windber? That you want to talk about? Anything that, any big event or thing that made an impression that we missed? I don't know what else. Or anything else about Italian life that you missed, that you didn't tell me about, that you want to tell me? Customs?

PL: Way... their way of living?

MB: Yeah, was there anything else that we didn't talk about yet? I don't know. Did they celebrate Christmas very differently?

PL: Oh, yeah.

MB: Tell me about Christmas time.

PL: Our Christmas was beautiful. I still keep mine. In fact, last night we went up to this friend of mine. She had, I says, "Ro [probably short for Rosie], this isn't for Easter, the first day of Lent. The first day of Lent, you have to eat less."

She says, "We're only eating one meal because we watched all day." We didn't have [anything to eat]. So we had only one meal.

MB: Ash Wednesday, yeah.

PL: Okay. So she says, "They say you have one meal, but you ask the priest. He'll let you know."

She says, "No, I am not going to talk to him [about] what I ate!" (Beik laughs). She says, "They didn't give it to me." She says, "How many days we didn't have any." (Beik laughs).

Yeah, it is true, you know. Like Christmas Eve, we have, it's beautiful. We do, we have to have fourteen kinds of food on your table. It's beautiful. My grandchildren loves Christmas Eve. My

daughter and all her kids, they come in. The ones far away, they can't come. But like I have a grandson in Reading, Pa., and I have one in Pittsburgh. They make sure that they're home.

MB: Oh, they come home for Christmas.

PL: They come home for Christmas so Christmas Eve is in my [emphasis] house. Christmas Day, it will be in their [emphasis] house.

MB: Right.

PL: Because I want Christmas Day, too, but no, they figured it's too much. We have to have something in their house. So I make up a big meal. I decorate the table. Everything has to be just so. I cook up a storm all day.

When they come in, about 5:30, 6:00 o'clock at the latest, we'll just eat. When I'm cooking, my grandson from California calls. "Grandma, tell me what yonz are having. Name everything."

And I have to talk to him, and I am cooking. And I am talking to him while I am cooking. Then he starts to bawl. He's my pet. But anyhow, I says, "Now you go to your aunt's. You have Christmas with them."

See, they don't use it over there. No, my kids, when they moved away, I says, they..."What the heck do you do? Do yonz lose everything from what yonz had learned [about] what you are supposed to have for Christmas? Any holiday?"

They says, "Oh, well, we married these guys. He don't like fish; the other one don't like fish."

I says, "Yeah, because you don't use it." I says, "My daughter here, her children, anything I put on the table that night, they have to taste. Everybody eats a little bit, and they love it. They love it."

White wine with fish. That night is white wine. The next day we have the red wine with the Christmas meal. We have all kind of fish. I make the whiting, the *baccalà*, that is cod fish. We call it *baccalà* in Italian. I make little puff balls. They raise [rise]; these look like balls. They don't like *baccalà*, but they eat that. It's made different. Then we have the whiting with the sauce. Then we have the smelts. We fry them deep fried. We have our greens. We have spaghetti with anchovies.

MB: Oh.

PL: No sauce. I make some sauce I have from the fish. One of the girls, she likes that a little bit so she puts that sauce in. You have to have so many white beans. I use white beans that night. You have a variety.

You don't know what else to put...Then you have your trays fixed, where there's nuts, one kind of cookie, the next kind of cookie, your fruits.

Your, we like...I just threw a jar away; these [we] call them *lupinos* [lupines]. I says that “Hey, I’m pitching them out.” It was bothering me. You have all this stuff out.

Then you have other kinds of drinks. All kinds of drinks out [that] you want. The kids, they love that. They love that. They wait. They can’t wait for Christmas Eve.

Christmas Day, they say that they don’t care if they eat tomorrow. (Beik laughs). This is what we want.

MB: Can’t you tell about Easter then, too, because--

PL: Easter is, see, you have to fast. You’re fasting. Now, like me, I fast for four days. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, I don’t eat no meat, and nothing in that.

MB: Okay.

PL: You don’t eat big meals. No sweets for the first four days. But then you fast Wednesdays and Fridays. Them are the two days, Wednesdays and Fridays..

Then we bake. Oh, then, we have a lot of baking on Easter week. For Christmas, oh, we bake a variety, different kinds of cookies. Isn’t that something? On Christmas it’s more, a different kind of, more Christmas cookies. Then, like for Easter, we bake different.

MB: What do you bake?

PL: We have like, oh, I love the Easter bread. It is delicious.

MB: Does it have a special Italian name or--?

PL: They call it *La Pane*. Yeah, *La Pane*. That’s beautiful. Like Mrs. D’Arc would be here. She starts because she has a store. Then she gives them all away. Oh, sometime we moved, God knows, all those, about 50 loaves. (Beik laughs).

And, oh, every day, she’ll make maybe about fifteen [loaves]. Then she gives them out another day. Give[s] them out. I do the same. I don’t...In fact, when my grandson was here not too long [ago], what holiday was it? Around Christmas. Yeah. At Christmas time he was here. He hasn’t been here yet. He says, “You know, Grandma, you have this Easter bread in the Frigidaire. I know [emphasis] you’re not going to eat it. I know [emphasis] you’re going to pitch it out.”

I says, “Well, I gave a couple away.”

He says, “I’m taking it.”

So I says, “Great, I am glad. Take everything that is in there out.”

And he took it. And he says--after when he went up the house, he ate it, thawed it out--he says, "Grandma, we toasted it. It was beautiful." See, me, I was ready to pitch it out. (Beik laughs).

MB: Do you have the priest bless food around Easter?

PL: Well, way back, way back, they used to come in and bless your homes. They don't even do that anymore.

MB: Oh, they don't?

PL: We tell these birds up here. I says, "How's come?" We used to have beautiful, you know ... and now, nobody comes. You always had \$5.00, whatever you could afford, and when he'd come in, you'd have the table fixed with cookies and everything, when he came in to bless. If you want your basket of food blessed, you take it up there [to the church].

MB: For Easter?

PL: Or he'll bless it at your home. Yeah. See, but they don't do this no more. I know the Slavish church still does. The Polish, they still do.

MB: Yeah, some people were telling me that.

PL: Yeah. Some people do. Here they don't. We--

MB: But they used to do that when you were--

PL: Yeah. Oh, yeah. They used to do that.

Now, everybody, boy, you're cleaning house. You're cleaning house. The priest is going to come, [and you] don't want [him] to find a dirty house. You are cleaning away. I says, "They should have [it] a lot of places."

MB: (laughs) Oh.

PL: And I says that it's beautiful. They have nice... when the holidays come. Of course, my mother, she was the type, Fourth of July come. Well, the Fourth of July to my mother was a big day. She says, "That's United States' day. So if we respect the church, we respect our good Lord, we have to respect [the United States, too] because," she says, "I live in the United States." She says, "And I never went back neither."

And I used to tell her, "Wouldn't you like to go back?"

"No way. I come to United States--"

End of Tape 4 Side B

Start of Tape 5 Side A (March 8, 1984)

PL: It looks like it's getting dreary.

MB: I know. It looks like more snow. It's cold out there, too. It is not warm today.

PL: Yeah.

MB: You were telling me that you worked for the Democratic Party, I guess, here in Windber.

PL: See, when we lived out in the country [on a company farm], I voted [for the first time]. I was twenty years old. You have to be twenty-one. (Beik laughs.)

But me, the [Berwind] boss came, and he says to me, "Do you vote?"

I says, "I'm going to go to vote."

[He says)], "Did you register?"

I says, "Yes, I did register. I did register." I wanted to go to vote that day.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL. And he says, "Well, I'm gonna pick you up [to drive her to the polls]."

I says, "Okay. I don't care who picks me up."

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: He took me to the 42 [Mine 42 polls], see, because we had to go vote up at 42 at that time.

MB: Really? There wasn't--

PL: [I was on] the farm. Because I lived down in the country. And I couldn't come to Windber. I had to go to Cambria County. I was in that county. [The town of Windber is located in Somerset County].

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: I went to vote, and he wanted to come in and show me how to vote.

And I says, “Wait a minute. I didn’t go to school too far, but” I says, “I know something.” I says, “Nobody’s gonna be with me when I vote, nor you, nor somebody else, nor even my husband.”

MB: Um hum.

He says [grumpily]. “Thanks.”

So I said, “Listen.” I went in, and I voted.

MB: Do you remember what election that was for?

PL: For [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt. First time. 1932. Yeah.

MB: Oh, 1932 was when you voted.

PL: No, no.

MB: Oh, it must have been before then if you were 20. He [Roosevelt] was running for Vice President one year.

PL: [Pausing, thinking]. Yes, but wait. Who was it? It wasn’t Wilson. Smith [firmly].

MB: Oh, yeah, Smith.

PL: It was Smith.

MB: That was 1928, I guess. He was running.

PL: It was. I know it was some president. He was...I can’t remember if it was Dewey, the Republican--

MB: Well, Coolidge was--

PL: I knew all the presidents. You know I can’t remember. I knew them all in my heart. I learned every one. I worked in the recreation hall upstairs, the fire hall. And they had, the firemen’s had a great big picture of all of the presidents. And every time I’d be in that room, I’d see if I could name them. I got every one of them right, you know. I was proud because I knew them all, and now I can’t remember. Darn it.

MB: Well, Wilson was in during the war [World War 1]. Then Harding was in, and then Coolidge,--

PL: Wilson was--

MB: [continuing] then Hoover, and then FDR. So I don’t know which election--

PL: I think it was Smith.

MB: Then it was the 1928 one.

PL: I think it was Smith. Anyhow, I went to vote, and when I come out, he [the Berwind boss] says, “Who did you vote for?”

I says, “What do you care who I voted for? I voted the way- who I wanted.”

He says, “Now you have to walk home. I’m not taking you home.”

MB: Oh.

PL: I says, “I’ll have you arrested.” I went to him. “You better take me home, or you’re going to find out from my husband,” I says. “And then you’ll find out.”

So he got scared.

MB: Who was this person who picked you up?

PL: He was a boss for the Berwind store.

MB: Oh, I--

PL: The [Mine] 42 Berwind Store.

MB: Oh, I see. Okay.

PL: He was chasing [getting out voters]. He was doing the same thing [as I did later].

MB: Oh, I see.

PL: Getting voters out on the farms. That’s how I went to vote. The first time I voted.

MB: 1928. [Pearl is a bit confused as to the election dates. She would have been 23 years old in 1928, but she may have voted in an earlier election as well as the 1928 one.]

PL: I was 20 years old.

MB: Oh.

PL: I wasn’t 21 [years old] yet. I voted for the primary. I wasn’t 21 yet.

And he [the Berwind boss] said then, “Well, I’ll never come pick you up again.”

I says, “You don’t have to because I know how to vote.” I said, “Nobody’s going to tell me how to vote. I have a one track mind. I’ve learned this in school.” I went to him, you know. And that was it.

MB: So when did you become a worker for the Democrats?

PL: Not long after that. We came back to Windber. So my husband died, and this Mr. Nick Yocca--he was a good friend of ours; he’s related; his wife is a cousin of mine--So he said to me one day, “Hey, Pearl, you need a couple pennies.” He says, “I don’t.”

[Pearl says], “Why? Where am I going to get these pennies?”

MB: Ah, hum.

PL: He said, “Do you want to go to work for [the] election?”

“Yeah. What am I supposed to do? You tell me, and give me the papers, and I’ll do the work.” So I--

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: I chased all day. I went out to work, and I was happy. See, you worked to about 8:00 o’clock in the night, till the polls close.

So then he says, “You want to come with me?”

I says, “Yeah, I’ll go with you. I don’t know where you’re gonna take me. I’ll go with you.” Because we were real close. To me he was like a father. I loved him.

And so he said, “Well, come with me. We’re going down to the Italian Club.”

If we go in the club, we go downstairs. When I looked in there, I saw all these men. I said, “I’m not coming in there.” I went out. Boy, I walked out from there to go up to the house in two minutes.

MB: Oh.

PL: The next day he brings me the pay. And he says, “Well, from now on, you’ll go do the chasing. I want you to do this kind of a job.”

MB: I see.

PL: “When there is an election, you’ll make yourself a couple dollars.”

And he gave me, I think, about \$7.50 or \$8.00. What they gave him, he gave it to me. See, I took his place. And, well, I thought I was rich.

You can't believe, Mildred, I thought I was. "Oh, my God."

My kids [said], "Oh, Mommy, you have lots of money. You have lots of money. Could we go to the movies tonight?"

[Pearl replied], "Well, I guess so." That was big because, you know, if you don't have, you don't have.

MB: (laughs) Excuse me, when was that? About which election?

PL: I think it was our county [election].

MB: It was the county election in the '30s sometime?

PL: Yeah [correcting herself], no. Because it was in '34. Around '35.

MB: Okay.

PL: And ever since then, I says, well see...Everything was Republican. People. We had a committee woman. She was a Republican. But her and I, we got along wonderful.

MB: Oh, really?

PL: Where I lived, her girls went to school with my children. So I said to her daughter, I said, "You know, Grace, I feel so bad you're mother's a Republican."

[She answered], "My mother feels so bad, Pearl, because you are a Democrat."

MB: (laughs).

PL: She come [right] back at me, you know. I says, "It's all right, honey." I says, "I love your mother."

She says, "Yeah, she [her mother] never could get along with nobody at the polls, but she says she likes you very, very much."

MB: (laughs).

PL: "Sure. She's her way, and I'm my way [pause] when we're working, but otherwise," I says, "she's a friend of mine up this way."

MB: Yeah.

PL: So we got along real, real good after that. Everybody used to talk: "How dare you talk to that Republican?"

I says, “How dare she talks to this Democrat?” I says, “That don’t have nothing to do [with it].”

MB: Friendship aside.

PL: We’re friends. I says, “She lives out my way. Her girls come to my house. They go to school with my daughters, and that is it.”

I says, “This is different. That don’t belong in the family.”

MB: Were there many women in the politics then?

PL: Yeah, oh... (talking)

MB: Or were you the first?

PL: No, [there were not many women in politics then]. I was the first one. Then I got these womens [women] all stirred up. I said, “How about going [to] register, and like then we can go to vote. We’re going to start something.”

MB: Do you remember when women got the right to vote?

PL: Yeah. I remember, sure.

So then I went house to house. Then, Gerald Zeigler’s still living, God bless him. He’s my age.

MB: Uh, huh.

PL: And, another fella, a friend of his, he’s Italian, Tony Rulla. So these became big men. I says [to them]. “We’re going to get the mayor, a Democrat mayor in our town.”

And believe me, the firemens [firemen] were mad at me because I used to go to bingo in the fire hall and the fireman have the bingo. And I says, “I’m going to run this town.” Because every time I go down the street, they were mad because I was working for the Democrats.

“See,” they says, “there’s the little....” One guy, in fact, he says, “There goes that little black dago,” and I left him have it.

MB: Oh.

PL: I slapped him straight across his face. I says, “I’ll show you who is a little black dago.”

[The] more I got mad ‘cause they were teasing, [the] more I got into it. And I needed a couple dollars. So I says, you know. We had Mr. [B. Blaine] Barefoot. He was a Republican.

MB: The whole town was Republican in the old days.

PL: Yeah they were. But you had to...And the poor people. If you were a miner, you were afraid that if you didn't vote their [emphasis; the Berwind company's] way, you were going to be out of a job.

MB: Oh. Telling people [how] to vote or something like that.

PL: Everybody was afraid because the company had them always under their thumb. So then I says, "Well, we're going to get a mayor. I know we're going to get a mayor. First, let me get the Democrats."

I went everywhere to sign up the people, and I talked to them. We have to get the mayor [Barefoot] out of here. We're going to go for President. We need a Democrat[ic] President, or we are going...For sure, everybody is going to starve. That's the time the companies are getting tougher, too, you know.

MB: Um hum.

PL: But then when the union [the United Mine Workers of America] started coming in--

MB: FDR, yeah.

PL: The best thing that ever happened. And they're trying to break this union, but people better wise up, because once the union falls, we're back down where we started from.

So then all these ladies said, "But we don't even know how to read or write." A lot of people came from Italy. They didn't know really. Slavish people, any kind [who had never learned to read and write].

MB: Oh, yeah.

PL: I says, "I'll stand by you. I'll take yonz in."

I took them down and got them registered. I signed their names, and they put an X beside mine. And we got them all registered. In two years, Windber was all Democrat. All Democrat.

MB: (laughs). When would that have been? In 1936 or so--

PL: Yeah, around there. [In] 1936, because, in 1933, I came back from the farm. In 1934, my husband died. And then my baby was born at the end of '34. And that was '36, '35 and '36 when this started.

And then Dr. [Matthew J.] Klena, he was in the service. I called him back because his mother broke her leg, and I went to the Red Cross. I says, "We have to have the captain in the service." I said, "It's bad because there is nobody to take care of his mother, and she has a broken leg, a real bad [emphasis] one. She's laid up in the hospital. And she has an uncle, and he's old too."

MB: Um hum.

PL: I said, “Who is going to take care of her?”

They sent him back. I got him out of the service. Sure...out of the service.

MB: Oh boy.

PL: Yeah. So then, he was a dentist. See, he was a dentist. He was a dentist already, but they took him [in the service]. And when he come back, I says, “Hey, Doctor Klena, you know what? You’re gonna run. I want you to run for mayor.”

“Oh, not me, Pearl. Oh, not me. I need to make some money,” he says.

“That’s how you’re going to make your money. You’re going to have lots of customers [if you run for mayor]. Believe me. But if you’re not going to do this, you’ll have no customers. I’ll be the first one out of your place.”

He [Dr. Klena] was good to me. He was good to me. God bless him. He died when he was only 50 years old. (Sadly) What a pity. What a pity.

So it was getting late, and I says to him, I passed to his place, “You have to have cars to go chasing.”

MB: Yeah.

PL: He had a car. He said, “Pearl, my car, will it be good enough?”

I says, “I don’t care. It’s good enough. I’ll get the driver.”

So I got a friend of mine, a young boy. “He drives,” I said, “and you give me the car, so we’re going to save a few dollars for the Democrats. We’re gonna put money aside. We need it.”

So here we worked, and we worked hard to get there. These other fellas [pointing to a photograph], I worked with them.

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: See, all three of us. The two men and me. I was with them. Every time they’d come in in the morning, “Hey, Pearl, we have to go here.”

“I’m ready.”

I called my mother. I says, “You go pick up my mother. Bring her up. My mother will take care [of her children]. I won’t leave my kids alone.”

MB: Ah, huh.

PL: And my mother would take care of the kids, and I'd leave. Sometimes, all day, we'd go out to the farms, everywhere, to go to find people to register.

Dr. Klena. That's when he had come back from the service. He was working in his shop. I says, "Doctor, it poured cats and dogs. We had a miserable day."

But when we...but it was five minutes till eight, [and] I went to his shop. "C'mon," I says, "Get moving." I says to the lady [in the dentist's chair], "you can wait there. He's coming back right away." I says, "Close your mouth." I took him in to vote. He voted in one [booth], and I voted at the next because I hadn't voted.

MB: Yeah, uh, huh.

PL: And we both voted. I says, "Okay." Everybody was there. I says, "Yonz [Dr. Klena] are gonna be our next mayor of Windber." And [pounding the table] I worked so hard.

MB: (Laughs).

PL: They were mad at me. All the Republicans in Windber [were mad].

"Go ahead. Go ahead," I said. "That's right. You put your dumb... always pushed me down with your dirty thumbs."

I wanted my road fixed. The Republicans come up and stirred [up] the whole street because they figured I was a widow, and they wanted to come. He says, "Oh, I want you to be my girlfriend."

I says, "I'm nobody's girlfriend. I'm my kids' girlfriend. You see what I have here." He wanted to be smart, you know.

MB: Oh.

PL: One guy wanted to go out with me, and the other guy [too]. I says, "None of you guys are going out with me. Yonz have wives, and I'm going to tell your wives."

I let the wives know. I let the wives know. (Beik laughs.) I let them know it. I don't care. I says, "You better watch your husband." Because [but] I didn't say who they wanted to go out with. "Better watch because they're out looking for a young girl." I let them [the wives] know it. (Beik laughs.)

PL: And he became, when the election come up, he was the mayor of our town.

MB: Do you remember when that was? What year that was then? When did he become mayor?

PL: 1934-36. Oh, dear.

MB: In the '30s, though?

PL: It was in the '30s.

MB: Oh. So that must have been a big change, then, from the way the town [both talking at once]

PL: Yeah. See, when I come back from the farm...Maybe [it was] in the early '40s.

MB: I can look that up. I'm not sure. I'll find out. [Dr. Klena served as mayor of Windber from 1950-1966. He died in 1966.]

PL: You can find it. I have papers. God knows where they're at. I'll find them. I have certificates from--

MB: So did you work in all the campaigns, like all the local, national, all [of] them? You still do, I guess.

PL: Yeah, yeah. I still do. Yeah, I still do.

MB: Oh, boy. Yes, so--

PL: I was the first committee woman, first woman chaser. And I still go.

MB: Wow! That's really something.

PL: We used to go to meetings. I used to go every night. There were big meetings. In fact, one meeting I was in a wreck. Oh, yeah. I thought...coming back from a big meeting. And it was [the] 17th of June. I was supposed to go on the 7th of July. I wanted to go for lessons to drive, to learn how to drive. Yeah, I wanted to learn how to drive, but I didn't get them.

MB: Oh, ah, huh.

PL: So, on the 17th of June, we had this meeting way out, God knows, [in] Cairnbrook, Central City, way out somewhere. I'm telling everybody, "Come on. Let's get out of here because the weather's bad. I'm telling our attorney, Joe Kashew [spelling?], I says, "Joe, don't you drink [emphasis]! I saw you taking a double header. Don't you take another one. You have a wife and three beautiful children." I says, "You go home."

MB: Oh.

PL: And [to] the other one, I says, "We're all going home."

The word got round. Then when we're coming home. I says to this friend of mine, this cousin of mine...See, I was to go with her [emphasis]. I didn't have to go with these [men], but her

mother-in-law took a heart attack, she says. And she called me, “Pearl, I called Tony, so he will pick you up because my mother took a heart attack, and I won’t be able to make it.” See.

All the time I was committee woman, but this [other woman named Mary], I put her in for committee woman. But I worked with her, harder than her, to get always through [the meetings]. Then we were coming back. She says, “Come on. Come in my car. ‘I’ll take you.”

This here fella turned around, and he says, “I was going to have to take you in, and now you’re going with her. Tony has to--”

I says, “Tony, no problem. I’ll go with you. So what,” I says, “You took me.”

“Okay, Mary, I’m going home with Tony. I will meet you at the house.”

Up here at the crossroads, we wrecked.

MB: Oh.

PL: I told everybody to go home safe. And I was telling him “No Drinking” that night. It was such a dreary night. We couldn’t see the street. It was so foggy and so miserable that night. Well, he must have got a little bit off the road because the roads are narrow going up here.

MB: Yeah, uh, huh.

PL: And he must have got into these weeds. His car skidded.

MB: Were you hurt?

PL: Well, a car demolished. A beautiful Buick. He [Tony] wasn’t allowed to touch that Buick. Because that night he changed from one car. He was a car dealer. From one place he went to this other one. When he went to this other one, well, he wasn’t allowed to touch this car because he [someone at the car dealer’s] just had to go in the next day.

But in the night, he took [it]. A guy that was working there, a good friend of his and mine, he says, “You can have the car provided you don’t get a scratch on it.” Because, at that time, it was a \$5,500 car. It was a Buick.

MB: Oh, wow!

PL: I says “Let’s take care of it. Park it wherever.”

MB: Oh.

PL: Then we come back. We smashed the car.

MB: (laughing) Oh, dear. Oh.

PL: The car was demolished. I don't know what they did with the insurance. I didn't want to know because he [Tony] landed in the hospital. He [Joe Kosturko] had a bleed and a broken nose. This other man, this Jean Kosturko's husband, Joe. Then he leaves. He gets out of the car.

This other car turned over; he [Tony] was pinned under the car. But, me, I was in the car so they had to turn the car over. Well this [Mr.] Bowser, he got out. He was a big tall man. He got out somehow and opened the door, just like getting out of an airplane. I says, "Yeah, go ahead and leave me in here by myself." And I'm screaming because, you know, I didn't know that glass was shredded, real fine like sand.

MB: Um hum.

PL: When they turned [the car] over, and then I could feel that on my legs when they pulled me out. They got me out, but they had to. He says then, "Hold on."

I says, "Where am I going to hold? Where am I going to hold?"

He says, "Don't be too jumpy-like." Me, I was jumping up. He says, "Settle down a little bit." When they turned his car, my hip hit the roof when it turned over. I wanted out.

MB: Oh, yeah.

PL: Then I got scared. That's when I got scared. So they opened the door, and they got me out. And I looked, and Tony was under the car yet. Oh! I says, "Hey, Tony, are you dead? Talk to me. Talk to me."

MB: Oh, boy.

PL: Such a...oh, my God. No, this was in the car before I come out. I could see his foot laying down. That hurt me so bad. I says. "He's dead, and I'm here."

When we [were] pulled out, then the undertaker came. The ambulances were there, you know. Me, I was wondering, where are these whistles? Why these whistles?

MB: It was for you.

PL: It was for us there, you know. Oh, that's funny. You get so bad in shock that you don't know where you're at. So then we took him up to the hospital. I wouldn't go in the ambulance. I said, "I'm not hurt."

I went home that night. I wanted to get home before my boy got home. I says to Tony Palumbo and the boys, because when they happened to pass, they looked. He says, "Pearl, was you at the wreck?"

I says, “Yeah, that was us.” I says, “Hey, Tony.” and this other boy, one of the Rillo boys, I says, “Please, if yonz are going down there to the Moose or some place, keep Roger talking so he don’t go home. I want to get home before he does.”

MB: Oh, boy (laughs).

PL: I went home, and I stuck myself in bed while he took this fella to the hospital. And I didn’t say [anything]. They asked, Dr. [Ernest Z.] Eperjessy [asked], “Who else was in that wreck?”

I says, “Nobody else but these two.”

I didn’t want to be put to bed because I didn’t want my boy to get all shook up. So then when my boy got up [the] next day, I went to the hospital. I couldn’t undress. I couldn’t undress. I went home. See, [at] first, I wasn’t hurt, and after [a] while, I was hurt.

MB: Oh.

PL: I was hurt, but I had to go for a check-up in the morning. I had to go [emphasis]! The doctor says, “I want you up [at the hospital].” And he called me. So I went up there. And I says, “I want to hurry up and go home because I have a son in bed. He don’t know nothing of this story, and I don’t want nobody to call and tell him.”

So I went home. He [the doctor] said, “We’ll let you go home for today, but maybe tomorrow you’ll have to come back.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: So I went home, and I couldn’t undress. I couldn’t take these clothes off. No how! I didn’t want to tear it. I didn’t want to get a scissor and cut this dress off. I says, “I’ll stay dressed till my boy got up.”

He got up in the afternoon yet. And he says, “How’s come you’re all dressed up? Did you go out already?” He says, “How’s come because you’re never home.” I don’t go home right away. He says to me, “You look pale.”

I says, “I don’t look pale. I feel good. I just didn’t want to work today because--”

He’s thinking, “How’s come she’s doing nothing?” Because I am always doing something.

I said, “I have something to tell you, but don’t you growl at me because if you growl at me, I’m gonna walk out. I’m going down [to] Antoinette’s house, and I’m never coming back.”

MB: Um hum.

PL: “Now what did you do wrong?”

I said, “I didn’t do nothing wrong.” I says. “I was in a wreck.”

He looked at me. “Come over.” He said, “What did you do? Are you hurt? How’s come you’re here?”

I says, “I’m here because I’m not hurt.”

And he said, “I’m calling the girls.”

So he called my Antoinette [her daughter], “Did you know your mother was in a wreck?”

She says, “No, I didn’t. What happened?”

They [I] didn’t want to say. I didn’t tell my mother, and I didn’t tell [anyone else], but I told the girls because one of the girls was working, and, I says, “She’ll find out.”

So then they come up. They come up. They says, “Well, at least, don’t you think you have to thank God [that] mom’s talking to us.”

He says, “Yeah, but if she quits going in these damn cars with these politicians--“

MB: (laughs).

PL: [continuing] “We’re not going to have a mother someday.” You know.

MB: But you kept on going, always chasing, I guess.

PL: After that I landed in the hospital. The doctor thought I should be in the hospital. Then they started with my heart. I says to them, to Dr. Eperjessy, “My heart is fine.” I says, “I go like a jumping rabbit. I’m all over. If I had a bad heart, I couldn’t do it. I don’t have a bad heart.”

Anyhow, he wanted me just to get in the hospital and rest up. Because, then, my boy didn’t want me at the house. He says to my daughter, his sister, “I want yonz to take Mom at your house because she might feel good, but in the meantime, she don’t look good to me. There is something wrong with mother, but she won’t say it. You know how our Mom is.”

So the girls said, “Well, come down, and maybe you’ll feel better. Maybe [you] can’t move around too good.”

I couldn’t. I was at the house. I tried. So I went down. So my [other] daughter--her husband had left her. He was running around, so she says she can stay with my daughter, too. I went to bed. And it was summer; it was hot. I had a thin nightgown on, a silk one. She said, “Mother,” she says, “look here. You say you are not hurt. I told you. Hey, Tony. Hey, Tony. Come and see Mom.”

I says that I didn't notice. My whole side, from here way in the back all this side (gesturing), I was black and blue.

MB: Oh.

PL: I didn't know.

MB: (laughs). And you didn't know it. You couldn't see it, I guess.

PL: I couldn't move. I couldn't move, you know. I couldn't move.

MB: No wonder you had trouble undressing. Yeah. Yeah. Oh boy. (Both were talking at the same time).

PL: No wonder. But I didn't tear that dress. I got it off, one way or the other. I got it off. I had to live with a nightgown, one of these kimonos on top, till I got... But I had to go every morning. I had to dress somehow. And they'd take me up to the hospital. I got treatments for two weeks. Yeah.

I says to the doctor, to the nurse, I says, "How's come nobody said that I was black and blue?"

They didn't. Me, I couldn't move my head so I didn't know. But then, in the mirror, that's where I saw it. I looked in the mirror.

MB: Oh boy. Did you have any favorite election campaigns that you worked on? Favorite election?

PL: Oh, yeah. That's what an election is. You have your favorite, and I liked that guy that come in last night. He's for Hart [Gary Hart]. Now we were for [Walter] Mondale. He said that Hart would be a better man.

And one of the ladies got up and says, "Well, I would like to know if they were both good men, why do they bicker at each other? They shouldn't bring all this stuff out." She says, "That's no way to run a campaign."

It was one of the ladies. We died laughing last night. (Beik laughs).

PL: We worked hard for our town.

MB: Does Windber--?

PL: We always had it. Ever since then, we never had a Republican mayor. [Since 1950]

MB: Oh, really?

PL: Ever since. We still have a Democrat mayor.

MB: I see. Oh. That must a been quite some--

PL: And... they're all Democrats. We have a full house of Democrats all the time.

MB: And it wasn't like that before?

PL: No [emphasis]! God, no! You could go... You had to vote Republican, and if they [Berwind owners] found out that you voted Democrat, you're out of a job. See, they run you and everything [emphasis] in your [life], from you going to work, to your house, and to everything. Everything was run by them.

MB: Was it hard to get people [in] that first election?

PL: At first.

MB: Were they afraid?

PL: They were a little bit afraid. Yeah.

MB: But you were able to reassure them.

PL: Yeah, but then we had meetings. And I used to go in and talk to these people, and I used to bring these guys in to talk to them. You have to break this [fear]! You have to because there is no way that you can have always a ... see, we had a ... when we got... The President was a Democrat, see, and our town was still Republican. That's when everybody started moving.

MB: I see. FDR.

PL: Sure, that helped.

MB: FDR. And the New Deal.

PL: I says, "We got a Democrat [as] President. Why do you want one of these jerks in here all the time?"

Now we have them [the Democrats in office].

MB: I see. That worked, and you were able to do that so Windber still votes Democratic?

PL: We are still a Democrat town.

MB: Oh, huh.

PL: Great Democrat town. A straight Democrat town. Ours gets the people from Somerset. When our vote goes in, that's [when] they wait for Windber. Like when they wait for Pennsylvania to go in because it's got a big majority, too. It's big. That's how Windber is.

MB: I see.

PL: And Somerset when that... I went to a few nights up there. All night when all the things [election results] come in. One of the guys, he is a, he's a commissioner. In fact, we couldn't get no commissioners no how. Everything was, everything was Republican

This is the first time they got a couple Democrats in up at Somerset.

MB: Oh. In the old days, the county was Republican then.

PL: Yeah. They just started. We had one commissioner. He was like a Republican, too. Mr. Hay. Because he [was] more like farmers on that side, you know... Then when we got Mr. Paul O'Connor. He was a nice looking man. Beautiful. Just a young fella. He says, "Pearl, I don't think I am going to make it."

I says, "You're going to make it."

PL: Four Democrats we have in there this year.

End of Tape 5 Side A (March 8, 1984)

End of the Interview with Pearl Camille Leonardis