

**ORAL HISTORY T-0091
INTERVIEW WITH MRS. CECILIA KNEA AND MARY OLDANI
INTERVIEWED BY DR. MARGARET SULLIVAN
IMMIGRANT PROJECT (CROATIA)
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DR. SULLIVAN: All right, Mrs. Knez, would you like to tell us where you were born and something about your early life.

MRS. KNEZ: I was born in Croatia, Austria-Hungary.

DR. SULLIVAN: What town?

MRS. KNEZ: Grizane.

DR. SULLIVAN: What was your early life like?

MRS. KNEZ: Here?

DR. SULLIVAN: No, in Croatia. When you were born, what did your family do?

MRS. KNEZ: My father was on the farm. My father was a contractor for the stonemasons, or something like that, and my brother worked for him. My mother was housekeeping.

DR. SULLIVAN: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

MRS. KNEZ: I was the oldest one, and I have two brothers and two sisters... five children all together.

DR. SULLIVAN: You were in Croatia when you got married, I believe.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: How old were you when you got married?

MRS. KNEZ: Sixteen.

DR. SULLIVAN: And then you were widowed?

MRS. KNEZ: I had one twenty-six years, and one died. When he was twenty-seven, he died. And I say, after ten years, I don't want to marry nobody. I came here in 1913. I left my old country the 4th of November and came here the 27th of November, Thanksgiving Day.

DR. SULLIVAN: Why did you leave?

MRS. KNEZ: Cheaper working, and I couldn't stand it, and I go. Everybody say, you make more money in the United States, so that's why I go.

DR.. SULLIVAN: You thought you were going to make a fortune?

MRS. KNEZ: I went to work in a laundry before I married for four dollars a week.

DR. SULLIVAN: What would you have made in Croatia? Doing the same thing?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, I was on the farm...oh...a krona...fifty cents here all day.

DR. SULLIVAN: So, you did make a lot more here?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes. Four dollars a week.

DR. SULLIVAN: Oh, wealthy!

MRS. KNEZ: Fourteen cents over. (?)

DR. SULLIVAN: It sounds better at four dollars a week. How many hours a day did you work in the laundry?

MRS. KNEZ: Eight hours.

DR. SULLIVAN: How did you happen to pick St. Louis?

MRS. KNEZ: My friends were here. We were together in the old country. She was here in 1905. Her husband worked, they had kids, and she wanted me to come to stay here.

DR. SULLIVAN: You stayed there with your friends?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. She had seven kids and twenty-two boarders. Her husband had come. Well, it was so hard to live and work for somebody else. My cousins were here. Not long after, I married my husband.

DR. SULLIVAN: Where did your friend live?

MRS. KNEZ: 22nd and Franklin.

DR. SULLIVAN: When you left your friend's house where did you go?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, I lived about a whole year and a half...in the old country... live?

MRS. OLDANI: You mean, here in America...where did she live after she married? Where did you move to? It was still in the same neighborhood.

MRS. KNEZ: My husband died and I lived with my mother. I lived with her ten years. Then I came to America.

DR. SULLIVAN: How did you meet your husband?

MRS. KNEZ: He was here. He came in 1906. I'm not from here, I'm from Europe. We came from the same place, same church, you know, so I knew him.

DR. SULLIVAN: You knew him before?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, and he was in the field, and I was working in the hayfield. Fifty-six years we were together.

MRS. OLDANI: They were married fifty-five years.

DR. SULLIVAN: You were married the 28th of August, 19_ (?) Where did you get married.

MRS. KNEZ: St. Joseph's Church at 12th and Chouteau.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did you have a big wedding?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, it was nice...sixty or seventy people.

DR. SULLIVAN: Well, sixty or seventy people...that's not too small, (laughter) What did your husband do?

MRS. KNEZ: He was a stonemason.

DR. SULLIVAN: Was he a stonemason in Croatia, too?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, and he was a watchmaker. He had to have something to do in his spare time, so he fixed watches at home.

DR. SULLIVAN; Where did you move after you were married?

MRS. KNEZ: 22nd and Franklin.

DR. SULLIVAN: You told me there was a Croatian settlement around 22nd and Franklin?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: What other kinds of people were in the neighborhood?

MRS. KNEZ: Jews, Irish, many kinds of people. Italians, any kind of people. Colored people, but not much colored in the front yard, but in the back.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did you have a lot of rear, didn't they call them, rear tenants?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: When you came to this country, what things impressed you as being strange or different?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, not much. Not too strange, you know. It was a different area. It was not like the country...different air, water, and everything. Quite a difference. We had nice clean water, nice air. I'd liked it better anyhow.

DR. SULLIVAN: You mentioned before that you found the city ugly.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, she thought it was ugly. She was used to the wide open spaces more.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, we didn't have many factories over there. We lived close to the sea, close to the Adriatic Sea.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, Adriatic, that's where they were from.

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes. It must have been quite different from 22nd and Franklin You were telling me last time, too, something about the Croatian social life and the Croatian clubs in the city.

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes. We had clubs or lodges. The lodge was to get together to benefit something or when somebody died, or something, and we helped them. I don't know what the name of it was.

DR. SULLIVAN: I think I've got that written down. Was it the Croatian Union? Was that the name of the lodge?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: They had church groups, too.

DR. SULLIVAN: This Croatian lodge...how many members did it have?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, sometimes we had four or five hundred. Maybe three or four hundred.

MRS. OLDANI: I guess it would depend on who came over and joined.

DR. SULLIVAN: That's what I was getting at. How many of the Croatians joined?

MRS. OLDANI: Most of them. I would say 95% of them. Right, Mom?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes. There were so many Croatian people.

DR. SULLIVAN: How many branches did the lodge have?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, about, I guess, four.

DR. SULLIVAN: Do you remember where they were located?

MRS. KNEZ: Around Chouteau. We had a big hall on Chouteau. Yes, we had a big meeting up there.

MRS. OLDANI: Where were the other ones?

MRS. KNEZ: Around South St. Louis.

MRS. OLDANI: Near St. George's Church.

DR. SULLIVAN: Where were the other branches, do you remember?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, I know.

MRS. OLDANI: There were a couple of... that was on Chouteau, too?

MRS. KNEZ: Near the Croatian Church, too.

DR. SULLIVAN: What sort of activities (?)...cough...did the Croatian lodge have? What sort of things did they do? Did they have parties?

MRS. KNEZ: Every month, we had dancing, meeting.

MRS. OLDANI: They had the Mardi Gras every year.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: How often did they give parties? Very often?

MRS. OLDANI: Three or four times a year...there was something.

DR. SULLIVAN: And how often did they have meetings?

MRS. KNEZ: Once a month.

DR. SULLIVAN: And they had social gatherings after the meetings?

MRS. OLDANI: Sometimes.

MRS. KNEZ: The main office was in Pittsburgh.

DR. SULLIVAN: There was a national Croatian Union?

MRS. KNEZ: Anybody could join.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, anybody could join, but it was a special Croatian Fraternal Union.

DR. SULLIVAN: That was what it was called?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: And anyone could walk in off the street?

MRS. OLDANI: Oh, I guess anyone could join really. It was for insurance.

DR. SULLIVAN: There were insurance benefits?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: Do you think that this provided a social life for most of the Croatians? Was it the main social gathering kind of place?

DR. SULLIVAN: You were telling me last time about the Mardi Gras party, too, at the Union.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. It was called the "mesopust"? It was a man made from straw, you know...there was a place for dancing.

MRS. OLDANI: They blamed this man of straw for anything that happened during the year.

DR. SULLIVAN: He was the scapegoat?

MRS. KNEZ: You know, the father performed, and they made fun of the girls, you know, talking, everything, you know.

MRS. OLDANI: They had a court scene. One man would read his sentence...(a sentence, it was called) . It would all be in rhyme, you know. It was really good.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, it was comical, you know. Everyone liked to see it.

DR. SULLIVAN: It was like a skit or a play?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, this was a big thing for Mardi Gras. Everyone was going around the house doing something. Music afterwards. They had a big dance afterwards.

DR. SULLIVAN: I guess they had all kinds of big parties.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. Everybody liked to see it. It was fun.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did the different Croatian Union branches have their own parties?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, or else they would combine the get-togethers.

DR. SULLIVAN: What other social affairs did you have then? Was there any- thing else they had every year? Like that, you know?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, there were the parks for picnics.

DR. SULLIVAN: I imagine the picnics got rather large.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. We have roasted lamb. Whole lamb roasted.

DR. SULLIVAN: And all the Old World cooking?

MRS. OLDANI: And then they would sell it by the pound and by the plate. It was real good.

DR. SULLIVAN: Do they still have that?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: I thought I had seen that written up.

MRS. KNEZ: (?) cannot be understood_____. There was a big park up there...O'Fallen Park.

DR. SULLIVAN: What park did you say?

MRS. KNEZ: O'Fallon Park...before it was...and before it was someplace else. Where a hospital is now (?)

MRS. OLDANI: Where the new one is now?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: There used to be a big park up there and they used to go up there and play games.

MRS. KNEZ: There was a big park up there, and we were up there one year, and the picnic was there. We go...O'Fallon Park, Forest Park, Chain of Rocks Park.

DR. SULLIVAN: What time of year was that? Was that usually in August or July?

MRS. KNEZ: In July...June.

DR. SULLIVAN: Any time in the summer.

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, some time in the summer.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did you have any other big annual events like Christmas, Easter or parties?

MRS. OLDANI: Christmas parties were held in the lodge.

MRS. KNEZ: In the lodge, yes.

MRS. OLDANI: And we would have a party for the kids. They distributed gifts for the younger members. They called them "The Nest" (for junior members). And you stay in there until you are eighteen, and then you transfer to the main lodge. It's really just an insurance coverage for little kids.

DR. SULLIVAN: Insurance coverage and social events.

MRS. OLDANI: Right. It's all mixed in.

MRS. KNEZ: I cam home once because ____ (?)

DR. SULLIVAN: And now you don't so much. It's still in existence, I know.

MRS. OLDANI: Oh, yes. We still belong.

DR. SULLIVAN: Where do they meet today?

MRS. OLDANI: 12th and Russell. It's changed now. We're going down there, and we have a meeting every second Sunday in the month.

DR. SULLIVAN: Do they just have one branch left?

MRS. OLDANI: No, there's about...how many branches. Mom? About three, isn't it? About four of them are left.

MRS. KNEZ: Four, yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: It really has maintained itself very well.

MRS. OLDANI: Oh, yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: Oh, I know in a lot of these ethnic things, a lot of them die out.

MRS. OLDANI: No, this is a big organization...it publishes a Croatian paper.

MRS, KNEZ: The biggest lodge still have about five hundred members.

MRS. OLDANI: Lodge 56.

DR. SULLIVAN: Where is that?

MRS. OLDANI: That's on...they meet at 12th and Russell, too

DR. SULLIVAN: That's in St. Louis.

MRS. KNEZ: I'm going to transfer to that lodge because it was too far away from me down there. I have no machine. I can't go all the time.

DR. SULLIVAN: You all meet at the church, right? Is that where you meet?

MRS. OLDANI: It's a hall.

MRS. KNEZ: The church has a hall.

DR. SULLIVAN: You mentioned before that you moved to Walnut Park.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, I moved out in about 1925.

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes, 1925. And you mentioned that there was still fairly many Croatians in the area.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, .we couldn't live downtown any more because colored people live there now. So we have to move.

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes, I think that Mrs. Oldani said that there were three other Croatian families on the block. When you moved to Walnut Park, you were telling me before that at some special times, you'd charter a bus.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. No, not a bus that time. One bus go downtown and from downtown turn around and come back and go back downtown. First, one bus. It was a streetcar from Riverview to downtown. (?) North Pointe goes on far. Leave there from Caroline to Jennings. A little train for people who could afford. It's all different now.

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: But they chartered a bus to go down on midnight on Christmas Eve for Mass. And they'd all go down to the Croatian Church. St. John's. They used to have every Holy Saturday, they would take thins that they had baked...bread, rolls, and sweets, and things from the garden, and they would put it in baskets, and take it down for the blessing. The priest would bless all the stuff at the Croatian Church. That was a custom, too, years ago. I don't think they go down any more now.

MRS. KNEZ: I don't think so. They can go if they want to for \$2.00.

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes, that was expensive in those days. How often after you moved to Walnut Park did you go back to the Croatian Church? I mean, just special times of the year?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, that's about it.

DR. SULLIVAN: Christmas...Easter.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: We stayed in our old neighborhood. The parish church we belonged to.

DR. SULLIVAN: What was your own parish?

MRS. OLDANI: Nativity.

DR. SULLIVAN: Were there many clubs and societies around the Croatian Church that people belonged to? Years ago?

MRS. KNEZ: No. We had a Croatian School,

MRS. OLDANI: And they had...

MRS. KNEZ: Three or four lodges down there at that time, but...

MRS. OLDANI: But they had Church organizations, too. They had St. Anne s. They had the Immaculate Heart of Mary, too, didn't they?

MRS. KNEZ: The Immaculate Heart of Mary, I was first time going there, and we had thirty-three members at that time. I moved...! married my husband... I went to _____with my husband was there. It was called...! don't know what name at that time...Stanislaus. And we bought a lot and moved from there, right here and been here from '67. We belong up there now.

DR. SULLIVAN: I was just wondering if the Croatian Church gave social functions, if there were dances.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, and they still do. They have a picnic. St. Joseph Croatian Church has a picnic every summer at 12th and Russell. In back of the church in the yard.

DR. SULLIVAN: When you were younger, did they have many parties down there or social events...

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: ...when all the Croatians got together? So, the two main social things were the church for Croatians and the lodge. They provided most of the social life.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, outside of the friends you had.

DR. SULLIVAN: The Walnut Park area is kind of interesting because a lot of groups went up there. There were Polish right in Walnut Park, some Italians in Walnut Park. Who else was up there?

MRS. OLDANI: German, Irish...not too many Bohemian, Mom, not in Walnut Park; there weren't too many. The Irish were up there...Italians.

DR. SULLIVAN: Nativity was an Irish Church? What drove people up there?

MRS. OLDANI: It was a new development, and when we first moved out there, there were no streets. How many times we got stuck in the mud going to school. You know, the big boulevard. . .Riverview. . .none of that was made. It was just like country really.

DR. SULLIVAN: I have been doing some work on where people move, and I notice that there was a movement from downtown kind of straight out west towards U. City, and then there's up in Walnut Park you find all these people, too. So, I was just wondering if it was a new development, nice housing...

MRS. OLDANI: We moved to what they called West Walnut Manor, and that was up this way from Riverview, and the older Walnut Park that was more developed.

MRS. KNEZ: Walnut Park was from Union to Goodfellow. That's Walnut Park.

DR. SULLIVAN: From Union to Goodfellow, and what would you say about the north/south streets?

MRS. OLDANI: From Riverview, I would say to Lillian. Right? Because where St. Phillip/Mary Church is, they call that Walnut Park now. I think that is Walnut Park. That's down towards Kingshighway.

MRS. KNEZ: Before that was all farmers down there. Then they made small lots down there.

DR. SULLIVAN: And I guess that really build up around the small arms plant.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: How many parishes composed Walnut Park? What parishes were there?

MRS. OLDANI: Nativity, St. Adiesbert. That's about it.

DR. SULLIVAN: Was St. Adiesbert mainly Polish?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes. Now it's faded away. A lot of the Polish have left, but I think they still have a Polish priest up there. There's Lutheran Churches in there, too. And Baptist.

MRS. KNEZ: And Jews.

MRS. OLDANI: There were some Jewish people in there.

DR. SULLIVAN: IN Walnut Park?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: They had a little church on Riverview. And they had a grove there we used to call "Shinney Hollow." That's terrible to talk like that, but that's what they called it years ago.

DR. SULLIVAN: I didn't know that. I missed that neighborhood. Where was this exactly?

MRS. OLDANI: On Riverview and...as you come off 70 at Riverview. I guess right from Highway 70 to Theodore...wasn't that mostly Jews there where Northwest High School is...that was all like a little Jewish settlement. They had a church there years ago.

DR. SULLIVAN: Do you remember the name of the church?

MRS. OLDANI: No.

DR. SULLIVAN: I know...of course, this goes back to 1920 or before...there was a builder who tried to build a Jewish subdivision up there...around Baden, I thought it was. But I thought nobody moved.

MRS. OLDANI: Now, Baden is up this way further north.

DR. SULLIVAN: That isn't the same area we were talking about?

MRS. OLDANI: No. Baden was up a little further. And Baden. . .now Mt. Carmel Church is up in there...in that area. And, let's see, what other church? That's about it.

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes...at Mt. Carmel, there was a fight between the Germans and the Irish.

MRS. OLDANI: Oh, really?

DR. SULLIVAN: Holy Rosary, maybe?

MRS. OLDANI: Holy Cross was up there.

DR. SULLIVAN: The Germans and the Irish got mad at the priest, or something, and took off.

MRS. KNEZ: Corpus Christ!.

MRS. OLDANI: Corpus Christi is up in Jennings, and a lot of North Pointe is divided between Corpus Christi and Mt. Carmel.

DR. SULLIVAN: To get back to St. Adiesbert's. Did most of the Poles go there?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, there was a priest up there that was sort of a healer,

DR. SULLIVAN: Really?

MRS. OLDANI: He would pray, and he would heal you. Wasn't it that priest, that Polish priest. Mom? St. Phillip Neri. That's down further. That's towards Kingshighway.

DR. SULLIVAN: But do you remember the name of this priest who did healing?

MRS. OLDANI: I used to know his name. Everybody went to him. Ask Mom. Maybe she would know. Do you remember that priest?

MRS. KNEZ: No.

MRS. OLDANI: We can't remember his name.

MRS. KNEZ: But the first priest at Chouteau. His name was Kompare.

DR. SULLIVAN: What?

MRS. OLDANI: Father Kompare.

MRS. KNEZ: He was the first.

DR. SULLIVAN: He was from Croatia?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: At St. Joseph's Church, Croatian Church, most of the priests were from Croatia, weren't they?

MRS. OLDANI: Right. I think they've got the Capucian Fathers. No, I forget who they've got down there now.

DR. SULLIVAN: The nuns, of course, at the school, they were there.

MRS. OLDANI: I believe they teach Croatian there in the school still and teach religion.

DR. SULLIVAN: When you were young, you didn't go to St. Joseph's, did you?

MRS. OLDANI: No.

MRS. KNEZ: Teaching Croatian and English.

DR. SULLIVAN: Was it customary for them to teach religion in Croatian, or just the whole day or part of the day?

MRS. OLDANI: Where? Down at St. Joseph's? I wouldn't know that. I imagine they did, because it is a Catholic School, and I imagine that they did.

DR. SULLIVAN: Up at St. Adalbert, did they teach them Polish?

MRS. OLDANI: I think they did'. ..Polish and English.

DR. SULLIVAN: I think it was customary to teach religion in the school, and they had Polish nuns and priests.

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ: She was baptized in the Croatian Church.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, I was baptized there.

MRS. KNEZ: And confirmation, too, down there.

DR. SULLIVAN: So, for big events, you always went down to St. Joseph's?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, we were involved with that all the time.

DR. SULLIVAN: Although you belonged to the other parish...

MRS. OLDANI: Right. If the old church gave anything, we always used to go. But mostly it involved the lodges. They always had dances or something. Masquerade balls. Like this Mardi Gras. They always had a Harvest Dance, too, which was very nice. They would have a big, like a roof made, and it was a trellis, and you'd have all this fruit hanging down, grapes and apples, it was really, the way they made it, it was really nice. It was real fruit, and if a fellow would be dancing with a girl, anyone who was dancing, and they'd reach up there and

grab the fruit, and if they didn't get caught, they'd have somebody watching it, they could keep it. But, if they got caught, they would have to pay for it. (laughter)...It was a Harvest Dance for the church.

DR. SULLIVAN: How about Halloween?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, they'd get all dressed up.

MRS. OLDANI: A masquerade.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, with a mask...and they had dancing.

DR. SULLIVAN: And this was at the lodge?

MRS. OLDANI: Everybody came. It was usually held at the Croatian Hall on Chouteau which is all boarded up now.

DR. SULLIVAN: That was about 12th and Chouteau?

MRS. OLDANI: That was where the old church was...what hundred was the Hall on Chouteau?

MRS. KNEZ: 14th and Chouteau.

DR. SULLIVAN: So, there was a lot of social activity between the church and the Croatian Lodge? Were there any other clubs or societies, or was it just the lodge?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes. There was a group of twenty or thirty people who would flock together.

MRS. OLDANI: Individuals.

DR. SULLIVAN: There were kind of a lot of other clubs?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: One other question I wanted to ask. When the Croatian Lodge had dances, could anyone come, or was it just for the Croatians?

MRS. OLDANI: Anybody could come.

DR. SULLIVAN: I suppose they sold tickets.

MRS. OLDANI: It was a moneymaking thing. Let's see, what else did they have? Years ago, they had picnics at the beach, too, at some club houses. You could go swimming...

MRS. KNEZ: On the Meramec...a picnic...some would go swimming.

DR. SULLIVAN: The lodge gave this on the Meramec. It sounds like there was quite a lot going on.

MRS. KNEZ: On 12th and Chouteau, or Jefferson and Chouteau, so many Croatians lived down there. They had a big sign down on the front of some...you know, saloon or something..."Hrvatske Selo"... "Croatians' Village."

MRS. OLDANI: They had a big sign years ago, but she doesn't know when they took it down.

MRS. KNEZ: So many people lived down there on Chouteau and Second Street and Broadway. And south were more Croatian.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did the Croatians, in other words, they didn't all settle in one area? They split up.

MRS. OLDANI: They spread out. Now, you take your Hill. Now, that is a concentration of Italians.

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes, that comes out in the statistics. MRS. OLDANI: It's like a little Italy, really, the Hill was.

MRS. KNEZ: First, we started bank. Croatian bank on 26th and Chouteau. And moved to 14th and Chouteau. After the depression, it wasn't there.

DR. SULLIVAN: Who started the bank?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, some local men.

MRS. OLDANI: They all bought shares.

DR. SULLIVAN: It was kind of a cooperative.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, I had a share in there, and I lost.

MRS. OLDANI: It went bankrupt during the depression.

DR. SULLIVAN: Who sponsored this bank?

MRS. KNEZ: A group of men...(sounds like "Sicojon")...and Boudrich (?)

DR. SULLIVAN: Yes, I think I have run into that name.

MRS. KNEZ: They sold shares at \$10.00 a share. It was all lost.

DR. SULLIVAN; Yes, that happened to a lot of people. You were talking about before, too, about the first World War...and some of the Croatians in the city got notices to come back and join the army.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, that was during the first World War.

DR. SULLIVAN: I think you said that only six went.

MRS. KNEZ: That was in 1914.

MRS. OLDANI: That was Yugoslavia...in Croatia.

MRS. KNEZ: I knew six...they go to the war. All came back, but all die here now.

DR. SULLIVAN: As far as you know, there were only six. I imagine a lot more got told to come.

MRS. OLDANI: Oh, yes. (laughter)

MRS. KNEZ: But the war stopped.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, some were in the middle of the ocean, and the war stopped, and they came back.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did many join the U.S. Army?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes, my husband was called down there. He said, "I can't go. I have a wife. I can't go." They asked him if he wouldn't fight for the country, and he said, "Yes, but I don't want to go down there."

DR. SULLIVAN: I'll fight, but I'd really rather not; I don't blame him. He didn't want to go. Then, you were telling me, too, some of the parades and things...the bond drives, and buying bonds during the first World War.

MRS. KNEZ: Bonds? Yes, we had bonds. We had to take a bond at work.

DR. SULLIVAN: At work, you had to buy them? You didn't have much choice.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, we had to take them at that time. And everything was so high at that time. It costs so much.

DR. SULLIVAN: The prices went up, you mean?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, sugar was 35¢ a pound. And the store mixed flour with sugar.

DR. SULLIVAN: Oh, really.

MRS. KNEZ: Sure. Bread was so high. 25¢ a pound for potatoes. Milk...high, bread...so high, during the first World War. You couldn't get anything. You couldn't get toilet paper. No.

DR. SULLIVAN: It was a hard time then.

MRS. KNEZ: They sell it all out, first War, you know.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did you feel any pressure to buy bonds because you were immigrants?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes.

MRS. OLDANI: Well, everybody had to.

DR. SULLIVAN: There was no partiality then.

MRS. KNEZ: No, everybody had to buy them.

DR. SULLIVAN: Do you remember any big parades? Did the Croatians take part in any big parades? For bond drives?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: There were lots of parades.

DR. SULLIVAN: And did the Croatian Lodge take part in the parades? Yes. I notice that I've got a lot of newspaper reports of these parades, and everybody was there, but the Germans. The Germans and the Irish. All these ethnic organizations...but not the Germans and the Irish.

MRS. KNEZ: THE RUSSIAN...(?) Anyone. So many.

MRS. OLDANI: They used to parade for a lot of things. There was something else I was thinking about, but I can't quite...did they march when they had a funeral? Did they march from the church anywhere? Or parade? I know the Italians on the Hill used to.

MRS. KNEZ: No.

MRS. OLDANI: From the funeral home, they would march to the church.

DR. SULLIVAN: Oh, I see. Did they all parade to Calvary from there? That would have been an all-day... You mentioned last time something about a woman who came to teach English.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. She came every week. One hour, once a week. (?) did some teaching but not much. She say, "Write, but I can't write. Spell, and I can't spell. If you instruct me, I will write, but spelling, I don't know." There were three-four, sometimes there were a dozen together. So go to school, some go down there. I didn't go. I got a book at home, and I learned from the book, that's how I learned.

DR. SULLIVAN: You learned from the books for the Croatian people. When did you take up your citizenship? I think you mentioned that before. When did you become a citizen? What year?

MRS. KNEZ: A citizen? In '42.

DR. SULLIVAN: I think last time you mentioned that you were afraid to go.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, in '29, because people didn't care much to be a citizen. My husband had to have it. The Union, you know, wants him to have it. So, I went, too. I went and they asked

me every question,

MRS. OLDANI: One of the senators, she was mixed up on. The woman asked her...

MRS. KNEZ: She asked so much. I told her, "I can't tell everything."

MRS. OLDANI: She was nervous, too.

MRS. KNEZ: She said, "That's all right. You pass it okay."

DR. SULLIVAN: Why were you afraid to go before? You were afraid of your English or...

MRS. KNEZ: No, I talked English.

MRS. OLDANI: But, she couldn't spell so good, you know.

MRS. KNEZ: You have to know a little bit.

MRS. OLDANI: Well, you know, that was quite an accomplishment...to come here, and learn the language.

DR. SULLIVAN: I'd hate to go there;

MRS. OLDANI: Right. And she's learned to read it.

MRS. KNEZ: I didn't write it because I didn't know. We got an English paper at home.

DR. SULLIVAN: You learned to read English mostly from the newspaper?

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ: Right. But, I didn't think I could pass it.

DR. SULLIVAN: But there wasn't the pressure on a woman to pass it...

MRS. KNEZ: You know when you go down there, the judge said, "Put your hands up." I said, "Okay, I'll put up two hands;" (laughter)

DR. SULLIVAN: You wanted to put two hands up?

MRS. KNEZ: The judge said, "That's a good citizen," he told me. "How come you stay in this country? I say, Because there is bread here and not in Europe." He laughed.

DR. SULLIVAN: That's a good answer, though. To get back to this woman who came to teach you English, after the first World War. No, I mean, the woman who came to teach you English after the War...Oh, she came during the war to teach English?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, not the second War, but the first.

DR. SULLIVAN: That's what I mean. You said before I think that the woman you met at

somebody's house and there were about six of you to learn English? And you didn't know where she came from?

MRS. KNEZ: No.

MRS. OLDANI: I guess the government sent her. Well, Mom, didn't they have the International Institute?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, some lady was here from Croatia. From Europe.

MRS. OLDANI: She represented them. They walked to this International Institute, and they used to have different affairs.

DR. SULLIVAN: What was this International Institute?

MRS. OLDANI: I don't remember too much, because I was a child then. I remember going there. Yes, what did they have? Did they have bazaars? Or what. Mom? Shows...or anything?

MRS. KNEZ: No.

MRS. OLDANI: If they needed any help or anything, she sort of helped them out.

DR. SULLIVAN: This was after the war?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: Sent by the Yugoslavian government?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, I guess so...it was the International Institute here in St. Louis.

MRS. KNEZ: She went to college and she talked English.

DR. SULLIVAN: And she taught English, too. She was just here to help you with problems.

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ; Something we need, then we can ask her. She took me one time down on 22nd ... to the hospital, St. John's or something...she took me down there that time. It didn't cost me anything.

MRS. OLDANI: She was sort of, what would you call her, a liaison, or social worker?

DR. SULLIVAN: But she was supported by the Yugoslavian government?

MRS. OLDANI: Right. Was she supported by the Yugoslavian government. Mom?

MRS.,. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: Oh, you see, I didn't know that. I thought she was from the city.

MRS. KNEZ: No, from Yugoslavia.

DR. SULLIVAN: That's interesting.

MRS. OLDANI: That International Institute was here in St. Louis. I don't know if that's still in existence.

DR. SULLIVAN: This International Institute. Was it just made up of Croatian?

MRS. OLDANI: No, all nations.

DR. SULLIVAN: And there was somebody there to represent their government, then?

MRS. OLDANI: Right. I think it's still in existence, if I'm not mistaken. Do they still have this International Institute, Mom, do you know?

MRS. KNEZ: I don't know.

MRS. OLDANI: It seems to me that I have seen it mentioned in the society pages. They have these groups and dances.

DR. SULLIVAN: I've never run into that before.

MRS. OLDANI: Really? Well, it might not be in existence.

DR. SULLIVAN: Anything I know about, usually the whole town knows about. But I don't happen to know.

MRS. KNEZ: _____ (?) (I think has something to do with boarders.)

MRS. KNEZ: Some woman came to my house after the men leave, my boarders leave. She came after we were married. And some lady from Bulgaria. She said, "Do you live here?" And I said, "Yes." "You know something." So, she stayed by me.

DR. SULLIVAN: She stayed with you?

MRS. KNEZ: After the war.

DR. SULLIVAN: You said that you kept boarders after the war? How many did you have?

MRS. KNEZ: Me? Two.

DR. SULLIVAN: This was down on 22nd and Franklin, that you kept boarders?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: Let's see, what else? Oh, I was asking you, too, last time about prohibition. And you were talking about people making..

MRS. KNEZ: One.

MRS. OLDANI: That's where a lot of them made their money;

DR. SULLIVAN: I know: Yes, you said everybody made homebrew. I think I asked you if you knew of any speakeasies in the neighborhood, down around Franklin? You know, not that you hung out there in saloons; (laughter) but...

MRS. OLDANI: No, but she said that there were quite a few arrested at the time. When they caught them.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, they were making moonshine.

DR. SULLIVAN: The people that were arrested...were they making it for home, or were they making it so that they could sell it?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. Lot of people made it at home and sell it. So, they would say, I not make it to sell, I make it for home. Who sell it, they catch them. Lots of people sell it. And whiskey, too. Moonshine. Lots of people sold it....nobody said anything.

DR. SULLIVAN: Nobody said too much about it?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, some people make money from it. I know some lady, she make it....built a house and everything...from moonshine.

DR. SULLIVAN: Sounds profitable. I had a great aunt who raised her family that way:

MRS. KNEZ: Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: We knew a lady who bought more property.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, they sold it...whiskey...one time, when we lived on Franklin, some lady made moonshine, too. I asked her to sell me a bottle, and she charged me \$6.00 a quart.

DR. SULLIVAN: Six dollars: Whew;

MRS. OLDANI: For a quart. That was years ago...

MRS. KNEZ: A long time ago, over fifty years.

DR. SULLIVAN: The police then tried to enforce prohibition pretty well. Some of them did and some of them didn't...some of them took a little money... and some of them...

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, my husband, one time, came home with some...they couldn't sell it...moonshine...and a lady cooked that whiskey, and he bought a little pint and put it in his pocket, and the policeman came, and said, "Who gave you this one?" He said, "I don't know who..." (he didn't want to say who)... and the policeman told him in Croatian, "Well, that's all right. You go home."

DR. SULLIVAN: Did all the policemen speak Croatian?

MRS. OLDANI: No, he just used those two words, "Hodi doma"...go home...(?)

MRS. KNEZ: He came home. Was scared.

MRS. OLDANI: Poppa was chicken. He wouldn't get involved in anything like that.

DR. SULLIVAN: No, I know. I have it in the back of my mind to do something on prohibition someday. So, I ask all the people what they remember about prohibition, which makes some people a little nervous.

MRS. OLDANI: I know:

DR. SULLIVAN: But...they are always the ones who tell you that they don't know anything at all. It makes you wonder. Mrs. Oldani, then, you grew up mostly in Walnut Park?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, I was five years old when we got there, I think.

DR. SULLIVAN: How many children did you have, Mrs. Knez?

MRS. KNEZ: I have three...my boy died, and my husband.

MRS. OLDANI: My brother died a week before his seventh birthday.

DR. SULLIVAN: Do you know what he died of? Or, was it just one of those childhood...

MRS. OLDANI: Sometimes I want to look it up. Finally, they had fourteen doctors, plus specialists.

MRS. KNEZ: I had fourteen doctors in the house. Nobody knew what was wrong with him. One doctor came and asked me for matches. I said, "What's the matter, you crazy?"

MRS. OLDANI: He'd light a match, the doctor would, and hold it up to his foot.

MRS. KNEZ: I told him, "You better get out of here." My boy was so scared, he said, "Mamma, he kill me." I said, "No, he won't kill you."

MRS. OLDANI: The final doctor diagnosed it as...what is this that they have in the army...

DR. SULLIVAN: Meningitis?

MRS. OLDANI: Meningitis...that's what he said. I often wonder if I could go into the medical records. Do you know where I could go and just see what...

DR. SULLIVAN: I guess the death certificate would say.

MRS. OLDANI: But they didn't have death certificates at that time. You didn't get a death certificate for him, did you?

MRS. KNEZ: No.

MRS. OLDANI: Not in those years. I often wonder if it would be on a record anywhere.

MRS. KNEZ: He died in 1924.

DR. SULLIVAN: This was just before you moved to America.

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ: The 6th of April.

DR. SULLIVAN: Then there's Mrs. Oldani and...

MRS. OLDANI: My sister died in 1943. She died about five and a half years ago (?) She was twenty-two months older than I.

MRS. KNEZ: He was in the second grade in school. He was smart.

DR. SULLIVAN: He was seven years old and in second grade.

MRS. OLDANI: That was a tragedy, too. She didn't have anybody here that she could rely on.

MRS. KNEZ: He was sick seven months. Fourteen doctors in the house... that was nothing. After the doctors left, the boy was stiff.

MRS. OLDANI: He was stiff. He was sick for six months.

MRS. KNEZ: The chiropractor came. I paid him (hundreds) The last doctor said, "I can't help him. He isn't going to live no more." So, then, we called Dr. Kubec (?) He said, "Better put him in the hospital."

MRS. OLDANI: He was in the hospital for two days in isolation.

MRS. KNEZ: Everyone said, "He'll be all right."

MRS. OLDANI: Mom always said she felt bad. She could have kept him home those two days. She didn't want to put him in.

MRS. KNEZ: Seven months he laid on the bed.

MRS. OLDANI: What made it hard was that my sister was a baby, and I was there, and she never had anyone to give her a hand. You know how it is with a sick child. She's had her share.

DR. SULLIVAN: You know, no one there to relieve you or anything.

MRS. OLDANI: It was constant. She said she was so thin then.

DR. SULLIVAN: Constant pressure, too.

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ: Dr. Zaref, a Ukrainian...

MRS. OLDANI: He was the last doctor they had, and he's the one who told them the truth.

MRS. KNEZ: He said, "I don't want to charge you much. because you are poor people from my country... from Europe. I charge rich people more.

DR. SULLIVAN: He was a good doctor.

MRS. KNEZ: He was nice.

DR. SULLIVAN: I was wondering. Were most of the people who came from modern Yugoslavia to St. Louis Croatian? Were there many Slovins or Serbs here?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, quite a few...Serbians. They speak a little different. They speak the true Croatian...

DR^ SULLIVAN: Like the Italians.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes.

MRS. KNEZ: I come on a trip on the Carpathia. Three hundred people was on there.

MRS. OLDANI: It sank a couple years ago.

MRS. KNEZ: And more Greek, saying, "Mila, Mila, Mile." (Greek) Greek people dancing on our ship.

DR. SULLIVAN: What port did you leave from? What town in Europe did the boat leave from?

MRS. OLDANI: Triesta", isn't it?

MRS. KNEZ: It's a German name.

OLDANI: Fiume, it is. It's near Trieste

MRS. KNEZ; Left on 4 November... two o'clock in the afternoon when we left. And we came to New York on the 25th of November. Oh, that was a ship. Oh....

DR. SULLIVAN: You didn't like the ship, huh?

MRS. OLDANI: There is quite a bit of Slovia people that came in.

MRS. KNEZ: Some of any kind but to St. Louis only me, somebody Jew, some girls sixteen years old, and some lady the second time here in St. Louis.

DR. SULLIVAN: The only ones coming to St. Louis.

MRS. KNEZ: Anyplace in the United States. New York, Detroit, all around.

DR. SULLIVAN: In St. Louis, where did the Serbians settle?

MRS. OLDANI: Near McNair and...I forget the other street...they have their church there, But most of them settled in South St. Louis, didn't they? But they are kind of scattered, too, like the Polish. You can find them anywhere.

MRS. KNEZ: They mixed together, too.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did you know the name of the church? MRS. OLDANI: St. Nicholas, is it, I don't know. I was even bridesmaid for a girl there. It's on McNair and something... down in that area, yes.

DR. SULLIVAN: There's one area...neighborhood in South St. Louis in the 8th ward where there are a lot of Eastern Europeans. Down between Jefferson and Broadway, Lafayette...

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes. A lot of Bohemians and Slovaks.

DR. SULLIVAN: I get the impression that this area was pretty well mixed.

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

DR. SULLIVAN: There were Rumanians, Yugoslavians, Checs, all pretty well mixed up. One didn't live in one neighborhood and another there.

MRS. OLDANI: It was all pretty well mixed.

DR. SULLIVAN: They all lived together. Got along pretty well.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, except over there. The Serbs always dominated the Croatians. Years ago. Like the Irish and the British.

MRS. KNEZ: _____Harvat?.... that's American for Croatia.

DR. SULLIVAN: Was there any animosity between the Serbs and the Croatians in St. Louis?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes.

MRS. OLDANI: In Croatia...

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, no, not too much.

MRS. OLDANI: I think it might be like your old people...they might have a little, but they were real nice. They intermarried.

DR. SULLIVAN: I think it's when you get people-to-people that it's okay.

MRS. KNEZ: If someone is mean, that's_____.

MRS. OLDANI: If someone is mean and hateful, they aren't going to get along with anyone, you know. I know they are separated, and the king in Yugoslavia was a Serb...

MRS. KNEZ: Before the war, it was all Austria-Hungary. But we belonged to Franz Joseph, and, after the first war, it was Yugoslavia.

DR. SULLIVAN: And dominated by the Serbs.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes.

MRS. KNEZ: It was Hungary...Austria-Hungary.

MRS. OLDANI: It was better under Franz-Joseph. Better than under King Peter, or whoever he was. King Peter was the one who just died.

DR. SULLIVAN: But you didn't mind Austria-Hungary? They just minded the Serbs?

MRS. KNEZ: They were nice.

MRS. OLDANI: The Hungarians were kind of...

MRS. KNEZ: You know, the Croatian did like Hungary...Didn't like the Hungarians ...whew....:

MRS. OLDANI: They didn't like the Hungarians over there. They kind of dominated.

MRS. KNEZ: You know, it was war time. There were signs and everything were in Hungarian. All Croatian places, in Croatian.

MRS. OLDANI: They had like a meeting...something like our Congress.

MRS. KNEZ: My father was in that, too. It was altogether to make it all nice, against that Hungary... took all the signs down and put Croatian signs every place. It was_____ (?)

MRS. OLDANI: Everything was Hungarian, under Austria-Hungary. The Hungarians wanted them all to speak Hungarian.

DR. SULLIVAN: They just wanted them all to become good Hungarians?

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ: You see, they didn't like Hungary. Nobody...in Croatia.

MRS. OLDANI; All the Croatian, the. something. to drink, but the Hunlan give them a string to cut their throat; It rhymes, you know...they used to sing years ago. It's similar to what the Irish are doing... There seems to be something in every country like that.

DR. SULLIVAN: And then you didn't like the Yugoslavian government, under the Serbians?

MRS. OLDANI: You said it was better under Franz-Joseph. Much better.

MRS. KNEZ: Better under Franz-Joseph.

DR. SULLIVAN: And you said last time that most of the Croatians approved of Tito?

MRS. KNEZ: Oh, yes. Tito is a good man. Everybody likes him.

MRS. OLDANI: They really do. Very much.

MRS. KNEZ: He was for the poor people, you know. That king, he got a million dollars a year, and poor people were no good...no work...no nothing.

DR. SULLIVAN: John was saying that most of the people in this country were for him.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, those people who came over later, those displaced, they couldn't make it over there, and they're not going to speak up for him now either.

MRS. KNEZ: Everybody liked him.

MRS. OLDANI: I have relatives over there, and they all like him, so much.

DR. SULLIVAN: Well, he got rid of the rich.

MRS. OLDANI: Right.

MRS. KNEZ: He fight in the woods.

DR. SULLIVAN: He fought off the Germans.

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, he fought for the country. He helped save it. That's true. And when King Peter wanted to go back, they said nobody wanted him to go back. That's where they buried him...in Illinois...just recently, he died.

DR. SULLIVAN: Oh, yes.

MRS. KNEZ: Tito said, "O.K. It's all right, if you want him...take him..." Nobody wanted Peter, only him. (Tito.)

MRS. OLDANI: Well, we don't know what it will be either. He s getting old, 78, but they all seem to like him.

DR. SULLIVAN: And he's kept Yugoslavia independent.

MRS. OLDANI: Right, and don't they have free hospitals. Mom, over there?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, free.

MRS. OLDANI: Everything is free.

MRS. KNEZ: Their glasses, the hospital, everything is free.

MRS. OLDANI: Everything the government takes care of.

DR. SULLIVAN: I know: I know; Yes.

MRS. KNEZ: Everybody has work. They rest from twelve o'clock to three o'clock.

MRS. OLDANI: They do that in Italy, too.

DR. SULLIVAN: Oh, I didn't know that...they have a siesta-like?

MRS. OLDANI: I didn't know they had that either. Mom, that's the biggest part of the day. I don't think I'd like that.

DR. SULLIVAN; How long would you work after three?

MRS. KNEZ: Until five or six.

MRS. OLDANI: I have a cousin up in New York. They could really tell you a lot about things over there. He's going to be here...he has to be here for four years. He's a president of a pharmaceutical branch over here, and he's well educated. I think he could tell you a lot.

DR. SULLIVAN: You were the only one in your family who came here, weren't you?

MRS. KNEZ: The only one. Yes.

MRS. OLDANI: They said to my mother after she got married, she should come back and live with them there. But she never did.

DR. SULLIVAN: You said before you never had any desire to go back.

MRS. OLDANI: No. And now she has less desire even.

MRS. KNEZ: I don't want to any more. I worked like a mule for 50<? a day.

DR. SULLIVAN: Enough of that:'

MRS. OLDANI: She was a domestic more or less, you know.

MRS. KNEZ: We carried wood on our backs for burning.

DR. SULLIVAN: That's why you left, right? I think you said that you worked here, too, after you got married?

MRS. KNEZ: Yes. In a laundry.

DR. SULLIVAN: Where was the laundry?

MRS. KNEZ: On 22nd and Franklin. It burned up. I couldn't work after it burned. I was married already.

DR. SULLIVAN: Did you go back to work in the depression?

MRS. OLDANI: Yes, she went back to work as a charwoman in the Beaumont Building.

MRS. KNEZ: Yes, I worked down there.

MRS. OLDANI: So many of her friends were working. Who got you in down there? You had to get anything you could. It was bad. Well, your mother probably talked about it, too.

MRS. KNEZ: It was a hospital where I worked, before. Also, I cleaned in the evenings from five to ten. Boy, that was work.

MRS. OLDANI: Twenty-two rooms. Boy, that was work.

MRS. KNEZ: The sink, and everything, you know. Washing and dusting.

DR. SULLIVAN: And you had to do twenty-two rooms between five and ten o'clock.

MRS. OLDANI: For eleven dollars a week. That was work:

DR. SULLIVAN: I was just thinking... twenty-two rooms in five hours.

MRS. OLDANI: I helped her at one time.

DR. SULLIVAN: I was just trying to figure out how long you had for a room.

MRS. OLDANI: How long did you work there. Mom?

MRS. KNEZ: Three months.

MRS. OLDANI: Three months, was that all? I thought it was longer. She got sick. It seemed an eternity. I was young...eleven, at one time.

DR. SULLIVAN: I guess you had to do a lot at home.

MRS. OLDANI: Oh, yes, I took care of my sister. She was four years younger.

MRS. KHEZ: Yes, a hard life, I've got.