

Maureen and Mike

Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Archives and Special Collections

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History Number: 420-001

Interviewees: Danica Duletich, Bratislav Bratso Krsic, John Sepceovich, Milan Marsenich, Marko Lucich

Interviewer: Allison Fromm

Date of Interview: February 22, 2003

Project: Serbian Immigrants in Butte Oral History Project

Note: Because there are five interviewees, it is often difficult determine who is speaking. At certain points throughout the transcript, the speaker may be misidentified.

Milan Marsenich: —Serbian immigrants came here and how they made it. My brother [unintelligible].

Allison Fromm: [To someone else] You'll just forget it's there.

MM: He came over by himself. And I don't know how he got to Chicago and started partying. Then he called my brother called me [unintelligible] to Montana and his brother sent money. [laughs] My little brother sent the conductor down with the ticket. But how did he communicate? He didn't talk a word of English.

AF: This is your father?

MM: Yeah.

AF: And when was that?

MM: 1906, I think.

AF: And he was trying to go to Montana?

MM: Yeah. See, him and his brother...I guess the government, the rulers, sent him to a seminary, and they were going to be workers or something. They were going there to be priests, and maybe eventually if they would have went. Both of them ran away. He said they traveled at night, because they still had to hide from the church during the daytime. This is 1900, early 1900. And then they...I don't know why they split up. They got into Austria, and my father stayed in Austria and worked there for a while, and his brother got ahold of him somehow. Told him, "Come to the United States, Montana." So he came all by himself. When he got to Ellis Island, they wanted to take his knife. I don't know if he had a gun. But wanted to take his weapons away from him. And somebody finally got somebody to explain to him, that talked the language. And how he got to Chicago, I don't know. And how he contacted his brother, you know. That always amazed me, how these people did this. They come over here. Even English people. But the ones that didn't speak English, they really must have had...I don't

know how they communicated. I don't know how they did it. Anyhow, he finally got to Montana. You're talking about them all coming to Butte [Butte, Montana], but they went to Taft, Montana, because they were working for the Milwaukee Railroad. He says that was the toughest time in the United States in 1906.

Marko Lucich: What was the name of it?

MM: Taft, Montana. It's over by Superior.

John Sepceovich: How do you spell that?

MM: T-a-f-t.

JS: Taft, t-a-f-t.

MM: It's just a little...there's a sign there now. I don't know what [unintelligible]. He said there wasn't a day went by somebody didn't get shot or killed in that town.

AF: Wow! Why was it so violent?

MM: I don't know, it was just that way. It was—

JS: That's why they call it the "Wild West."

MM: Him and his brother had a room, and they heard this noise outside. They saw this fellow—he was an Irishman...I don't know if he was a...and he killed his this Montenegrin. He saw them looking, and so they put what furniture they had against the door, and his brother talked enough English that he told the guy he had a gun. The guy says, "Maybe you have and maybe you haven't, but tomorrow he better not be around." [laughs] So they snuck out of town. Then the funny part about, came out...used to have that thing in the paper that said "It happened in Montana," give historical events of years ago. It said 1907—pretty sure it was '07—this guy, brother, this Montenegrin's brother went to Taft, and him and some of his friends killed this Irishman who killed his brother. And my dad saw. That was kind of, you know, after him telling me that story, many years later you see this in the paper. He said it was a Montenegrin. It's the same story [unintelligible].

JS: Let's find out from Danica how [unintelligible]. You said you were going to tell us about your trip over.

Danica Duletich: Well, I heard about Butte since I could remember myself. You know, they were always talking there about Butte.

AF: Where were you from?

DD: My father-in-law came here in 1904. Then 1909 he sent for his brother. They both, they come to Butte. How they come, I don't know. I heard that they told them that they were talking and thinking about money when they came to Butte. Then in 1914, they sent for my husband. He was only 13 years-old. So he came to Butte 1913, and I was born 1915. When my husband came back 1931, we got married back in Yugoslavia.

ML: Where at in Yugoslavia?

DD: In Boka¹

ML: In Boka?

DD: Boka. Then he have to come here. My son was born by just two days after left because he have to go because his passport was expiring. So he have to leave before passport expired. So he came here 1932 and come back. Then he start working in the mine, and he say that going to send for me, soon as he get some money. But in mine, there was two month...one month, they work and one month was a...you know, they don't work. It was a... what you call them?

ML: A strike?

DD: Strike. Yeah, a strike. So then finally he send for me in 1936. My son was three, pretty near four years old. And I remember when I...I never been...I live right on the Adriatic Coast, but I never go on the boat or anything. So from Kotor to Split [Split, Croatia], I went on a boat. And from Split to Germany we went on the train, but I don't know how...It was okay then because there was a lot of our people on that boat to Split, and there's a lot in Germany. But after we were in Germany for about three days, we went through all the...I don't know what they done. We went someplace and they look at our clothes and wash our hairs, and all lived in Germany. So, [unintelligible] for three days, then we went on the...America, to go to United States from, what do you call that, [unintelligible].

ML: Hamburg?

DD: Hamburg, Hamburg, yeah. So, we were on...the boat was *President Harding*. I remember that like it was yesterday.

JS: Where did you board the *President Harding*?

DD: Pardon me?

JS: Is Hamburg a port? It's a port?

¹ Formerly Boka, Yugoslavia. At the time of the interview, Boka, Montenegro.

DD: Yeah, yeah. So we start then. Like I say, I never been on a boat, and I was so sick on the boat, and they put me way down someplace. It was a two-story down. So there all those little cabins with people, so it was just me and my son in each...in one cabin. I didn't want nobody there. Well, just like a [unintelligible] in the sack. We were 13 days on the boat. Like I say, I was so sick. I know that they would call for to go up and eat. But I was so sick that I couldn't get out of bed. There was a one lady that was living next to me, and she understand our language. Not very good, but she understand. So she always take my son upstairs so he could eat, and bring me some tea and toast. So that's all I could see, there was a little tiny window and I could see the water. If I have enough sense to get outside, you know, and I feel better, but how did I know. So when we came in New York, I guess it about 13...yeah, it was 13 days on the boat, I know. So when we came to New York, there was a man was...one man waiting for me because my husband send him and...from the agency, to wait for me. I don't know. He took me and my son, he took us somewhere. I don't know where. By that time, my son has some bumps on his face, you know, a rash. So they were looking at him, you know, because they were afraid maybe...now I think they think that there was some disease.

JS: [unintelligible], yeah.

DD: So he took us someplace. It must have been on Ellis Island, I don't know. That what they call it?

JS: Ellis Island.

DD: But it's in New York. I remember seeing the Statue of Liberty right away whenever I get out. And I know that because I see the picture in Yugoslavia, Statue of Liberty. So I know that we were in the United States. So he took me and my son, and we were there for about two days. They took my son someplace to check him I guess, and bring him back. Maybe third day then, somebody came and put me on the rail station. I don't know...I can't remember...but that's all I could see, the tracks. That's all...all the tracks, you know. So we were there for...I was there, and he told me to sit there. I wait there, I guess, about maybe four or five hours. Somebody else came and put me on the train—me and my son. And on the train, I didn't know that there was things to eat there. They put me to sit in one of those little cabins, you know? I just sit there. I don't know what to do or what...So I see that guy that carry that thing on the front of him, on the train, around his neck. He had oranges and candy bars, and I know Hershey bars—

All: [laugh]

DD: I know Hershey bars, and I know oranges or apple. So, that's all...Oh, that man in...when he put me on the train, he give me 50 dollars. I don't know why he give me that, but my husband send that 50 dollars for me until I get to Butte. But I bring that 50 dollars in Butte.

All: [laugh]

JS: Didn't you have to change trains in Chicago?

DD: No. I didn't change train no place.

JS: At all! From New York to Butte?

DD: No. There must have be...I don't know, I was on the train all the time, three days.

JS: That's unusual because Pennsylvania Railroad—

DD: Maybe there is, maybe they put me—

MM: Maybe they changed the car.

DD: Maybe they changed the car.

JS: Just the car, yes.

DD: Car, that's it. Because I came on Northern Pacific, I remember. But I had some small change that my husband send me some money before I left. So somehow I got...I give it that man, you know, for the candy bar and oranges or apple. I give him some money, but I don't what he takes anyhow. But that 50 dollars I brought home.

All: [laugh]

MM: I don't think Hershey bars were [unintelligible].

DD: Fifty dollars in those days was pretty good money.

JS: Danica, what time of year was it that you arrived in Butte? What time of year?

DD: Pardon me?

JS: When during the year? Spring, summer, winter?

DD: Oh, November the...November 16, I came to Butte. Snow was about this high, and I never [seen] snow before in my life, because where I was born there was no snow.

MM: Is that right? No snow in Boka?

DD: I see on those hills in Montenegro, but not down in [unintelligible]. So anyhow, we came to Butte on the Northern Pacific, I remember. I remember when they started hollering, "Butte, Butte, Butte." So I [unintelligible].

All: [laugh]

AF: Did you like Butte?

DD: At that time, I wasn't too crazy about it.

All: [laugh]

DD: It was too cold, you know. Too cold. But that time, I bet there was about 50 people on the depot waiting for me. Because at that time there was over...in our lodge alone, it was over 75 people. My husband was living in a boarder house to some next-door neighbor from the old country. So I didn't know anybody but they were all waiting for me. And my husband. So, there. We came to Butte—

ML: Danica, How many Serbian people about that time were in Butte?

DD: Oh! My god.

JS: A couple thousand?

DD: There was...I would say at least 1,000. At least 1,000. I know there was a lot from our place, but mostly there was from Boka and Montenegro. And we were kind of more together from Boka and Montenegro than from Lika and those other, you know, like Herzegovina and Lika. There was kind of...well you know that when they get the lodge, there were four lodge.

JS: Four lodges.

DD: Yeah. Getting in the wrong...join a lodge [unintelligible].

JS: There was factions?

DD: Oh, yeah.

ML: Every group had their own lodge?

DD: Yeah. So, I was—

ML: Even at the cemetery they built a hedge between two lodges. [laughs]

DD: Oh yeah, that's true.

ML: You had your allegiance to where you came from.

Bratislav Krsic: So we had four lodges, am I right? Four or five?

DD: Four, yeah.

BK: Four. So there was...can you name them?

DD: Bokelian Brotherhood, number 69. Then there was Prosveta, number 17. Thirty-six was Montenegro, and Jedinstvo [Srpsko Jedinstvo] was number 3. Jedinstvo was organized 1809.

JS: 1809?

DD: 1809. And that book say it.

JS: Gee, I didn't realized that far back.

DD: I didn't either. I didn't either. But that book say 18...and they say who was the first president and all that in that book.

JS: That's interesting, yeah.

BK: In this book, *Early Days: Serbian Settlers in America*, it says here, "Organized way back among the pioneer lodges that we so readily pinpoint, [unintelligible] Society, organized April 2, 1899. Serbian Benevolent Society [unintelligible], organized in 1899. Montenegro Literary Society, organized February of 1920. Serbian Benevolent Society, Bokelian Brotherhood"—

[Two conversations happening simultaneously]

MM: I was going to ask [unintelligible].

DD: When?

BK: This one was organized in 1914.

DD: No, it was in Anaconda before that.

BK: Right. They say here in 1914 in both Butte and Anaconda (Anaconda, Montana).

DD: Yeah, but before they in joined Butte and Anaconda, they had just in Anaconda, because Marko's grandfather was in all those. So they joined Butte to them. There was one lodge in Butte and one lodge in Anaconda, so they joined together in 1914.

JS: It's not logical to me to say that one lodge begins in 1809, and the others in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Something tells me that that's a misprint, that should be 1890 instead of 1809. Because they couldn't have organized—

DD: Oh, no, no.

Unknown Speaker: National

JS: They couldn't have...what?

US: It's a national organization.

DD: No, I don't...there's nothing in 1809, no.

JS: But that's what you said.

DD: Oh, I'm sorry. 1890.

JS: Okay, that makes sense.

DD: I'm sorry, yeah. 1890.

BK: But didn't here in this book, let me read to you about Benevolent Society Bokelian, what they did. It says organized in 1914. It says, "During World War One, both voted to dissolve assets for transportation costs of [unintelligible] volunteers, and to give 1,000 dollars to the American Red Cross. The society it was reorganized in 1923 at Butte with John Lucich as president." That's your dad.

ML: My grandfather.

BK: Oh, your grandfather.

ML: My grandfather. I'm Marko, and my father, John. My father was only about seven years old.

DD: Oh yeah, your grandfather was—

BK: Okay, okay, that's right, that's right.

DD: Your grandfather was first in organizing Anaconda. Your grandfather, yeah.

BK: Here they list, also they give us other two lodges. It says, “[unintelligible] Lodge, organized July 1940 in Butte, and Prosveta Lodge, origin unknown. It was headed by Olar Popolitz (?), who also once directed the church choir.” Have you heard of that?

ML: That was Bessie Popovich (?) that was just here? That’d be her husband. He directed the choir? Choir director during the ‘50s.

BK: It says, “Origin unknown.” There’s another one, Loewitch Lodge (?), and Father Evo Froneta (?) was president. So that means seven lodges we had, according to this.

JS: The Prosveta Lodge and the Jedinstvo count nine [unintelligible].

DD: Prospeta, Jedinstvo. But later, way later.

JS: Later, much later, yeah.

DD: I know. And that book there, say that...they didn’t say that Prosveta and Jedinstvo, that was...all those United States churches there in that book, but they built before 1953. But after that. And they say history [unintelligible].

JS: There’s one other thing you should be told about these workers here. Because they had to work in the mines and there was no systems of ventilation—no way of protecting the worker—quite a few young...quite a few men who came from Europe to work here had to...some left their wives back there and they were going to bring later, a lot of them died in their early 40s from what they call silicosis. That’s the mine dust that settles in the lungs and builds up and builds up, and then they die from asphyxiation. You know what I mean? So quite a few young men died in this city, and other mines throughout the United States, because of the fact there was no way of protecting them while they’re working in the mines. So they came here and they died, which is sad.

ML: Danica, so, you were here in the 1930s. The migration—

DD: 1936.

ML: ‘36. Then still a lot of people are coming over from 1936 and all over.

DD: Not in Butte.

ML: So, that sort of stopped around the time that you came?

DD: I’m telling you, I was the last one until Bill Petrovich (?) came from Canada.

MM: Is that right?

DD: Yes, I think—

ML: And he was 1950s, wasn't he?—

DD: Yes, after that [unintelligible] married in Germany, and they came after the World War Second. I don't know exactly when. But not right from Yugoslavia. Nobody.

ML: So the migration pretty much stopped in the mid-1930s? To Butte?

DD: To Butte.

MM: John's (John Sepcevic?) wife, he married her over there?

DD: Yeah. Oh yeah.

MM: Oh, okay.

ML: And then Bill Petrovich—

DD: They came after the war.

MM: She came from my father's [unintelligible].

ML: Bill Petrovich was the other person we were hoping to be here, because he came in the 1950s, didn't he?

DD: Yeah.

MM: That's right.

ML: But he came through Canada and then down.

MM: Well, that was after World War...I just left Yugoslavia before the war start, you know.

AF: Did you know that at the time? Did you leave because of the war, or...no.

DD: It was always...No, I didn't know. Soon as my husband had enough money, I guess, then I came, so. But I was here before the war start and lucky that I was because they had a terrible time.

JS: Before you leave, I mean even from the [unintelligible], why don't you call the *Montana Standard* here in Butte, see if they have any resource material from that time. They may have a database you might like to check.

AF: What is the *Montana Standard*?

JS: That's the Butte paper.

ML: Local paper.

MM: They have archives up there. Tracy Thorton (?), I think, is—

JS: So, check that before you [unintelligible]. You might be surprised, actually.

ML: It might be good, too, to see, if you get a chance to talk to Bill, because Danica was pre-World War Two, and then Bill came post-World War Two. It was about a 20-year span in there from when Danica came and then Bill came. Then our next newest comer is Father [Bratislav Krsic] in 1990. [laughs] So those are the three that came '36 through '50 to 1990. [laughs]

BK: Well, I think first when they came here that was economic migration because they came here because the economy [unintelligible]. They came here to earn some money, save it, and possibly go back to the country. I received a postcard two years ago—just a copy of it—from a man whose grandfather came here. He wanted to find out what happened to him. I did find out by going to archives and doing some research for this man. But postcard he send, his grandfather sent to his brother in Yugoslavia at the time, saying that, "My job is going well, I'm making some money and I'm saving it, I am sending you this much money as a down payment for the best property in this area [unintelligible]. In a couple of years I am coming back. Please buy this property for me." So it seems to me that most of them actually came here with the idea to make some money, save it, and go back. But they learned really fast that actually it was really hard to do that.

DD: My husband bought from here property back there, because he was thinking that he was going to go back and stay there. He pay 900 dollars, not quite 1,000 dollars for about ten acres right on the Adriatic Coast. Beautiful place. When he came back there, before we got married, he built a little house there—they build those stone houses. Of course, when he came back, I came so that his brothers have that land. But they told me, I remember when I...over 400 from Butte, 1914 went back to Yugoslavia to fight against the...We were under Austria.

JS: Are you talking about World War One?

ML: World War One.

DD: Yeah, oh yeah. I remember when was 1920, 1918, there was [unintelligible in Serbian; possibly Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes].

BK: It was the creation of Yugoslavia, right?

DD: Yeah. I remember that when 1920, I remember that King Alexander was—

BK: [unintelligible].

DD: Yes. And that was—

JS: How many men went back to fight? Fourteen hundred?

ML: Four hundred.

DD: Four hundred from Butte.

JS: From Butte?

DD: They went...yeah. It was...[unintelligible] they never come back.

AF: When you came to Butte, did you think one day to go back to Yugoslavia?

DD: I did for about a couple three years, then after that, no. Especially after the war and stuff. I went five times back, after the—

ML: She took nine of us back in 1984.

DD: Yeah.

ML: She was our tour guide. [laughs]

DD: I went five times back.

AF: But you never planned—

DD: That was first 1936, it was under [unintelligible]. It was terrible there, and those poor old people live so poor because if you don't join the Communist Party, you don't have much. If you are members, it was much better.

AF: And when you came to Montana, you were in the Boka Lodge?

DD: Yes. [speaks in Serbian] Bokelian Brotherhood. '69.

AF: Okay. And what did you do? Can you tell me about your work in the lodge, or your experience?

DD: No.

JS: She was just a church member.

DD: Just like a church member. Don't do nothing there. Just a lodge that we get together every month. Every month.

AF: That's what I was saying, that's what I mean.

DD: Every month we had a meeting.

AF: And what did you do in the meetings?

DD: Oh, first we'd pray. Then take care of what we had the money...we'd pay monthly dues. Every member pay monthly dues. And that time was an insurance. When you get sick, you got a dollar a day. And now they don't have that. [laughs] If you got a surgery, if they cut you head or you leg or anything, you get 100 dollars. That was it.

JS: Now, they also had during the year...you had a, like, slava.

DD: Oh, gosh.

JS: They had celebrations during the year. Each lodge had a specific date to celebrate a particular—

DD: Then all of us, all the lodges belong to the church. Church is our main things. But all those, you know, they belong to the lodge, and each church do their things differently. Like slava—

JS: You had a slava? Like for example, what were...you would have like, [unintelligible] what was it, your lodge, what was the saint's day for you?

BK: Patron saint.

JS: Patron saint.

DD: Oh, [word in Serbian].

JS: [word in Serbian] Holy Trinity. And so, you see, they'd pick saint's days and have celebrations because [unintelligible] traditions.

ML: What would happen when you had a lodge meeting, it was always a dinner. So, it was like a family, like an extended family getting together. They'd do all the cooking, and then their lodge meeting.

DD: Even you remember, which very few remember, they had 79 numbers when I came from the old country, in our lodge. They had about 79 number. They put me there right away. I don't know what, you know—

ML: That was there thing to do. [laughs]

DD: That was our...do all that from Boka, they belonged to theirs. Then we used to have a barbecue, remember...Marko. Remember those barbecue we had—

ML: They had a ranch out in Whitehall [Whitehall, Montana], so we'd always go out to their place, and it would be like a two or three-day affair, like Friday through Sunday. We'd have big lamb barbecues, and she always was a great hostess. Go in the garden and all the families would get together, so it was a family-oriented group of people. Also, I mean, they even did more like we have our cemeteries. So the lodge wanted to give them perpetual care, so then Danica had a fundraiser for people to donate. We had a bowling tournament. We did a lot of different things just to raise the money to put the lodge, the cemetery in perpetual care.

DD: I was lucky, you know, because I went to school six year. That's a big education in that time for the girl.

AF: In Boka?

DD: Yeah. Very, very few. My cousin and my friends that we used to herd the sheep and stuff together, but they never go to school. But I went to school six years, and that helps me a lot. As soon as I came, I went to school here to get my citi...I mean, my United States citizenship. To this day, I don't know what they ask me. But I know I pledge allegiance to the flag.

All: [laugh]

DD: There was about seven, eight of us. There's a lot of those that they came from our part of the country. Those lady, they never know how to sign their name. No. I know dozen of those ladies they never know. Maura (?), Ange (?), by herself. So that little school helped me a lot.

AF: Did you learn English there, or...

DD: No, that's all I went was just for that citizenship. I didn't go afterwards. I had—

AF: So where did you learn English?

DD: Right here in Butte. In the courthouse. When all we had a someplace we went to school for about, I think for one week or something. It was very short.

ML: Did you know English before that, Danica?

DD: What I know...I came here in '36 and I got my citizenship right here, but I don't have to go to the first one because my husband was a citizen. Because even when I start from Yugoslavia, my son came on a United States passport, and I came from Yugoslavia passport. Because his father was a citizen of the United States. So anyhow, I went to that school. I don't know, they were writing down and I could read that, but I don't know what...you know, I could read that easy because it's Latinus so I could read. But I don't know what that means. So, anyhow.

ML: My father was Chief Deputy U.S. Marshal, so he did a lot of the interpreting for citizenship. The stories that I used to tell is, they'd say like, "Who's the president of the United States?" Then he'd ask in Serbian to the person, and usually it was [speaks in Serbian] which means, "My God, I really don't know." And my father would say, "President Eisenhower"—

All: [laugh]

ML: So they were pulled through this and then got their citizenship, and one person said, "You know it seems like their answers are all the same."

All: [laugh]

ML: [unintelligible].

DD: You know what the one...they ask one...they were big story tell about what people said. They ask one guy, you know, "Who's the president?"

And they say, "What's happen after the president die? Who's going to take his place?"

Say, "Undertaker."

All: [laugh]

ML: The undertaker to the mortuary. [laughs] Funeral director.

DD: That's a true...that was not [unintelligible].

JS: Does your paper, if you call it that, involve other ethnic groups and immigrants?

AF: So far, no. My professor thinks it might be interesting to compare the Serbian experience with the Irish experience. But that's maybe a later step.

JS: Now, if you ever have to have the Irish experience, you've got thousands of Irish people.

ML: Butte is really like an ethnic melting pot ...they used to call this like the "Little Chicago west of the Mississippi" just because of the—

BK: [speaks in Serbian].

ML: You had like your own neighborhoods. That was the interesting thing is you had your own neighborhoods. You had like the Irish neighborhood, the Serbian, pretty much they all lived in the same areas. But actually I think...and Father can tell you this...Father, the first liturgy in this church was 1897, wasn't it?

BK: Yes, it was on a feast day of [speaks in Serbian] Holy Mother of God, August 28, 1897.

ML: So that was the first liturgy—

JS: Which the Roman Catholic calls the mass.

AF: Right.

ML: But then actually—

DD: Excuse me.

ML: Go ahead, Danica.

DD: I was just going to ask you, did your mom and dad marry this country or in the old country?

JS: In this country. In Arizona.

DD: Yeah, I know your mom...you were born—

JS: Because see, my family, I was born...all four of us were born in Arizona.

DD: Yeah. But I know three, four ladies here that they...one was my aunt that she married my brother, my father-in-law's brother. She came from United...They were four or five [unintelligible names]. They never know their husband. But they just...their father or somebody know that girl's father in Yugoslavia, and they sent for her to be married. So there was about four or five weddings, that was before I came. Not much before I came, in '20s—that they come here, but...and never see their husbands—

JS: The brides were already selected.

DD: They had a big wedding three, four days afterward. You know, they had the big weddings.

ML: So pre-arranged marriages.

DD: Oh, yeah.

JS: Speaking of weddings, this is one more thing you might be interested in, the weddings lasted three days.

DD: Oh, yeah.

JS: Three days.

DD: And the slava, too, in the old country. Slava is three days.

ML: Slava is Saint's Day.

AF: So can you tell me about weddings or slavas from the '30s? When you first [unintelligible]?

DD: When I first came here Sam Stanisvich (?) got married, you know. And I went to the first wedding. I thought it was beautiful.

AF: Where was the wedding? Here?

DD: Yeah, here in Butte. In the old country they had a...even here for a while, there's no lady to go after, you know [unintelligible].

ML: My mother, none of her family was at the weddings.

DD: No.

ML: And they had the big wedding breakfast at her place, they lived in Anaconda. So they had...my grandparents had the big wedding breakfast, then the svatovi, the men who come to pick up the bride—

JS: To escort her to church.

DD: With me, it was 20 of them.

ML: Then they escorted my mother down the stairs, and the only women that were at her wedding was her maid of honor, her bridesmaids, and her flower girl. Otherwise, the whole wedding was all men, and all from my father's side of the family.

DD: But when I—

JS: And this could be as many as 20, 30 men.

DD: When I see in the old country—

ML: Well, the church was jammed with all men. Yes, it was more than that, it was in the...it was 100 or more. Because they always took pictures. So it was my mother, her attendants, and over 100 men.

DD: Yeah, but in the old country and here when I came, there was no ladies' attendants.

ML: No.

DD: Just the one that got married, and that's it. No men's.

MM: When I saw a picture of all these men at, I forget whose wedding it was. Sylvia's. All the men were there in your family [unintelligible]. She was the only one.

ML: Yeah, that's what...only one when my Grandmother Lucich...I didn't know her, but from what I understand, you didn't fight with her.

All: [laugh]

ML: She was—

DD: They always had two flags. One United States flag, and one of the Yugoslavian flag. You know, that was before, I mean, in the early '30s—'20s and '30s.

ML: See, my grandmother came over on my father's side, and then they were married. Then my father...my uncle was born in 1914, my father was born in 1916, and then their father died in 1928. So she was over here, pretty much by herself with two young boys to raise. Didn't speak a word of English, didn't have enough income. But Ilya Martinavich (?) basically raised...which, there were really no relatives, but they were like blood brothers to the church, and he actually took care—

DD: And they were from the same village.

ML: Yeah. So he took care of my grandmother and my father and my uncle, and what would happen is my uncle would go to school for one year and my father would work for one year. Then they would alternate. So that's how they...for a dollar-a-day they worked at Tuchia Drug Store. And that's how they helped get the money into the family. Because there was no pension. There was, I mean, really nothing. She had absolutely nothing.

DD: Can you manage what that was in, what—

ML: 1928.

DD: Yes. Can you manage [imagine] what was before that?

JS: Now, describe to her about our going around the houses to crack eggs on Easter time.

AF: Oh, I know that one.

ML: You know that one?

DD: Christmas.

JS: Okay, you know all about that.

ML: I don't know if it's Orthodox, but the Serbian tradition is the women pretty much stay at the house and prepare meals, and the men go from house to house to house on Christmas and Easter, too. Remember we used to do that too.

DD: Yes, I used to have a special—

ML: Christmas, yeah.

DD: Three days.

ML: Yes. And so, the men go from house to house to house and celebrate pretty much, and the women cooked the whole time. [laughs]

DD: Yes, and next day, woman could go.

JS: Greeted and cooked.

ML: Oh, the next day the women could go, oh.

DD: Yes. That was later. Not before, but later. I remember they come to our place about two o'clock in the morning [unintelligible].

JS: What is the symbolism of cracking eggs, or is there any?

BK: Well, the egg itself represents Christ's tomb. So when you break a shell, it's sort of breaking the seal of Christ's tomb, and you see this is the resurrection. Because the egg itself contains the life, and so did Christ's tomb, because it became like [unintelligible] chamber, and that's where Christ was buried. So by hitting egg against each other, we greet each other with "Christ is risen," and then of course we do... "He is risen." And we hit, you know, egg against each other and, you know, and one of them gets broken and that symbolizes Christ's resurrection.

JS: But it has to be [unintelligible]?

BK: Right.

JS: And then one other thing [unintelligible]. Then you split with the person who was the one whose egg is not broken, you're supposed to give the egg to the other person, right?

BK: Give it as a present.

JS: Right.

MM: Yes, but the way we always figured it, if your egg didn't broke you were the winner.

All: [laugh]

MM: And then, my son, this Easter I think it was, he says, "Well, after our Father explained," you must have had it in the bulletin or something, he says, "The actual winner is one with the one with the broken egg. That releases Christ."

All: [laugh]

ML: You know, this church was the actual focal point for the whole state. Not only the whole state, it was the only Serbian Orthodox church in the whole Northwest. So like when my aunt and uncle got married, my uncle is from Anaconda, and who he married was from Billings [Billings, Montana]. The men drove—this was back in the 1930s, late '30s—actually drove from Anaconda, all the way to Billings to pick her up. Drove her all the way back to Butte to the church for the wedding. So, I mean, you think of it now, that's 200—

DD: But church was everything at that time. That's it. Church.

MM: I think somebody needs to explain—

DD: Easter, Christmas.

MM: The Serbian tradition, it isn't that way now. But it was for centuries, of what we call *kumstvo*, the sponsor. Are you familiar with that? It had to be someone, like she says, from the same village, but a close friend. That was almost same as making them...you were making them a part of your family. You were making them a relative. I don't think any other groups have...any other ethnic Orthodox have that.

BK: We do have it. They call them "godfathers," or godparents, but basically—

MM: Yeah.

DD: Godfather was—

BK: But Serbian Orthodox people took this very seriously, especially...Well, the reason they took it so seriously is because Serbian people who are almost five centuries under Turks. So naturally, life was...there wasn't any security, and so a *kum*, or a godparent, is the one who usually, should parents get killed or die, they were the ones who would usually take care of children and raise them in the Orthodox faith.

DD: Yeah, that's happened—

BK: So this is why they took it so seriously.

DD: That's happened right to me, too. My father got killed. I was born in March and he got killed in June—World War First. He was in Austrian army then. Then he don't want to fight in Austrian army. They were fighting against Serbians. So he run away from the Austrian army, run away to Serbia, and he was only there about two weeks and he got killed. So I had my godfather, and he was like a father to me. That's where I [unintelligible], that was when I grown up a little bit and I thought, "Godfather is a big thing to us."

BK: Absolutely. It's a holy thing.

DD: And they can be like a...There's a man when you get married that is your *kum* too. But father to baptize your child, it's a different one.

AF: And that's two people, the *kum* for the marriage, and the *kum* for the children.

DD: Yeah. No, yes.

ML: Now more recently sometimes you be *kum* for the wedding and *kum* for the godchildren.

DD: Sometimes *kum* for the weddings and for the baptized.

MM: You had to have at least one within the family. You didn't have to have two *kums*.

BK: Yes, you could just have one, just one.

MM: Usually the wife was automatic.

BK: Right, right, right, right.

MM: You more or less picked a family, and the head of the family was the one that stood up for them.

Talking about citizenship. I was going to tell you, my mother, you know, she came here when she was two years old. Her father became a citizen, and she was married to my dad at the time, and he was a citizen. Naturalized, both of them. But she figured because her father was a citizen, she was a citizen. And she voted from 21 until about 33—until she was about [laughs] 33. In 1940 she took her...she got naturalized.

All: [laugh]

MM: She voted all that time. She thought she was a citizen, and she voted.

AF: So did the lodges get involved in local politics or national politics?

MM: I don't think so. Church or lodges, none of them.

DD: No, no. We don't have anything to do with—

MM: Unless they ran for office. If some of our people ran for office, you supported them. You didn't get involved.

DD: Just when a member dies, and they brought the great big flowers. Flowers—everybody at that time, they brought flowers. And then somebody, like a president or somebody, when somebody die, he have to give a speech down at the cemetery. And when it's 30 below zero, it's not fun.

All: [laugh]

BK: Go on for a half-hour?

ML: Oh, more than that.

DD: It's true, honest. You know, [unintelligible name]. [unintelligible name] give a speech one time. That, what was his name?—

[Break in audio]

DD: Thirty below zero. Everybody start pulling out, you know.

All: [laugh]

DD: But they were still staying there.

MM: I never told about my dad's funeral, when the...give a speech. He says, "Five minutes." Another called John Milanovich (?). She's five minutes. And I mean five minutes, or I'm going to stop you. [laughs].

DD: Do you remember Bozer Jujevich (?)? He was a speaker. Even if you don't belong to the lodge, but he liked to talk.

MM: Yeah.

DD: So our people asked him because he could talk long to be his speaker [unintelligible]. And sometimes it goes from Boka to Cherna to Montenegro, to this to that, what's happened. Bozer Jujevich, I don't know if you remember him. You probably do. I remember him.

JS: Another thing you should keep in mind, too, is that all these different ethnic groups in Butte were like one family, actually. Everybody was very friendly to one another, so if anybody needed anything, you didn't have to go to another Serb to get it. An Irish person would maybe give it to you. Maybe a Greek or somebody like that. So it was a well-knit...how would you say it? Inter-ethnic...intra-ethnic group. Very much so.

DD: Serbian and Irish, they had a big problem in Butte the early years. Big problem.

JS: You mean—

DD: Yeah, between each other.

MM: Yeah.

AF: Tell us about that.

DD: I know that's...I know when Markos Stanisich (?), you know, that married Katie? That was the first marriage from Boka that married Irish.

ML: Those were considered mixed marriages.

DD: Mixed marriages, yeah. He run away with her. And his mother was...they were going to kill him. He run away to Boulder to get married. In Boulder. So they say that when he come back...he was a cousin of my husband's, so little by little they start liking each other. I mean, his mother-in-law start liking him.

All: [laugh]

JS: So, he kidnapped a bride, is what happened?

DD: Pardon me?

ML: No, they got married, but they left because he pretty much was disowned because he married outside the Serbian—

JS: Oh, I see.

DD: They couldn't get married. No, they eloped.

ML: Eloped, yes. Yes, they didn't kidnap her, they ran away and got married.

DD: Yeah, yeah, yes that's it.

MM: But who was going to kill them? The Serbs or the Irish?

All: [laugh]

DD: Irish.

MM: Oh, the Irish? I thought maybe both.

MM: She was a wonderful person. I mean, Katie. You remember her? I remember. What was happened before that. Well, they killed that...he was a policeman. Nick Alexich (?).

ML: Alexich.

MM: Alexich, yes.

DD: His cousin killed him.

ML: Cousin Martinavich (?).

DD: But the [word in Serbian]. He was a policeman in—

JS: When did that all stop this so-called friction between—

DD: Because there isn't many in either one of them.

All: [laugh]

ML: They're all trying out.

DD: I mean, there's a lot of Irish but not [unintelligible].

JS: Yes, but then you say there was friction between Irish and the Serbs at that time. When did that all stop? Like, right now do they—

DD: Oh yeah, they stopped, I would say after the World War Second, they stopped—different. It's different. But you see down at cemetery that [word in Serbian]. He was a policeman, and the one Irish kill him. And he had three sister, [unintelligible name] was his sisters, and they built a great big—

JS: [unintelligible].

MM: Was he killed up in front of the Arizona Bar?

DD: No, Nick Alexich got killed there, but—

ML: By the Rialto Theatre was where Nick was—

DD: Yeah.

MM: Okay, I—

DD: Yes, and [unintelligible name] was killed on a Friday—

MM: My dad was in the Arizona Bar, and he heard the shooting and he ran out, and he picked him up and he died in his arms. That was...I always thought it was [unintelligible name], but it was Alexich—

ML: Alexich.

DD: Yes.

ML: Nick Alexich was a police officer here, and in 1937 or '38, February 28th—

DD: Yeah, I came back in '36, and he got killed right next year.

ML: So it was February 28, 19...and I know this because our families are very close. Yeah, February 28, 1938. It was on a Sunday, he was at a baptism with his family, put the candles on the altar. They had the baptism. Before this, there was a cousin by the name of Martinavich that was in Warm Springs [Montana State Mental Hospital].

DD: First cousin.

ML: And Evo Froneta, which was my godfather, and Nick Alexich signed to get him out of Warm Springs. But this man was very deranged. So anyway, he was walking...he was going to work, he just got done with the baptism on his way to work, and there was the route, they called it like "Policeman's Alley," because that's where the city hall was up there, came by there. Well, his cousin Martinavich pulled out a gun, shot him once, then shot him again, and that killed him. Then he was on his way to Anaconda to kill my uncle and my grandmother, because he felt like they were evil people.

DD: Yeah, they said—

ML: Martinavich was the one—

AF: The guy from Warm Springs?

ML: Warm Springs.

AF: And why did your family get him out of Warm Springs?

ML: They were related. They were cousins. So they just felt like they wanted to help out their family member.

AF: Okay, but he was crazy and turned around.

ML: Yeah.

DD: I remember when that happened.

ML: Very deranged.

JS: You say he was on his way to Anaconda to kill the other two?

ML: To kill my Grandmother Lucich.

JS: Who intercepted him?

ML: The police got him.

JS: Oh.

ML: Yeah. And my Uncle Dewey.

DD: He wasn't...and he was pretty bad [unintelligible].

ML: Very bad, yes.

JS: How old of a man was he?

ML: Well, he died...I'm just trying to think, my father was still alive, so pre-1977, right around that time, right before that time. Because they called my father to ask what...he died down in Warm Springs. So it was like in the '70s that he probably died.

JS: How old was he?

ML: I would say he'd be pretty old at that time, because this happened 1938, so in the early 1970s, so he would have been, I think, probably in his 70s, 80s.

MM: I don't what year it was, but I was pretty small. We had the [word in Serbian] above the library up there, and I stepped on his foot. [laughs] He says, "He's crazy."

ML: I think that's just a good indicator of the Serbian community, how important family was and to try to support one another. In this particular case, ended up in death for one of the people that actually got him out.

AF: So you said that the church is everything for the Serbians.

DD: Yeah.

AF: But you also said church is the man's place?

JS: Only during the weddings.

AF: Oh, only during the weddings.

ML: That was a custom...that was ethnic, of that group.

DD: No, nothing, no. That's a custom of the—

BK: No longer. It's a custom, I should say, from a particular area that she's from. Because it's not so in other parts of former Yugoslavia. It's only from where she's from. Where I'm from, however, this was not the case.

DD: Oh yeah, they're all—

BK: Certainly not today.

DD: I guess...a long time ago it was different then. Sure it was.

BK: Right. Well, looking back, I think my grandmother's family attended her wedding.

DD: I would say your great...your grandfather. Did they still had the wedding like...no, not like we do?

BK: Well, the time when my grandmother got married and whatnot, everybody attended the wedding. It wasn't just the men, and the bride's party and the ladies. But everybody attended. So, I think that some was just—

ML: Well, from my understanding what it was—

BK: From Montenegro.

ML: Yeah, and from my...what my understanding of it was, is there were...when the Turks were in control that during weddings a lot of people were killed. That was when people were drawn together.

AF: Wait, during weddings people were killed?

ML: Weddings. Yeah...well, like that was the gathering of people, so it would be easier—

MM: Like they do in Israel.

ML: It would be easier to kill people at that time when there were basically congregations of people. So from my understanding, from what my father told me was...this was the tradition, that the men would go pick up the bride and they all really had guns at that time, and it was to guard and to protect the bride, on the wedding...at the wedding day—

DD: Oh, they all have to have a gun [unintelligible].

ML: So, that's...I mean, that's really what it goes back to. They just sort of carried that over—

MM: They all shot them off during the weddings, too.

[Everyone talks at once]

JS: I like that remark, you have to have a gun to go to a weddings.

DD: Oh, everybody.

BK: Of course [unintelligible] wedding ceremony, and go after the bride because they certainly did that. They would actually [unintelligible], they would take young, Serbian men and children—

AF: Yes, yes. Sorry I—

BK: They would take them and train them as their soldiers.

AF: Yes.

MM: That's my father and his brother would hide.

BK: Of course.

MM: You know, even then. [laughs]

[Everyone talks at once]

BK: Well this is why [unintelligible] were hiding, while even at...well after Battle of Kosovo, and we were conquered by 1389, by Kosovans, of course, and were enslaved for the next 500 years. You know, during that period—

MM: So during that entire period they were taking these young men?

BK: Yes, on-and-off, you know. I don't know if you know who the pasha was, a Turkish ruler in the region. But [unintelligible] but in Greece, too.

AF: Yes. And everywhere.

BK: Everywhere, of course.

US: One of the Serbian men that was taken as a [unintelligible] actually became one of the rulers in Turkey.

BK: Yes. Actually, his brother was a Serbian patriarch. [unintelligible]. Yes, he was taken by Turks, and he was raised and he advanced so much in training in the Turkish army that he was

elevated to the position of pasha, a regional ruler. Then he came to Serbia to rule Serbia. But there's a poem that actually kind of tells us about this, and in the poem it says that he kind of remembered the valleys in Serbia. He remembered the customs and family life, and so it came back to him. But his brother, who of course grew up in Serbian and was Serbian, he himself became a Serbian patriarch. And he did many favors as a pasha. I cannot remember his name.

JS: Did he know they were brothers?

BK: I'm sure that he did. Because he remembered, and the song goes...you see, the way that they carried history back then, it was by orally, by telling the stories, gathering around that fire. There's an instrument called *gusle*, and they would tell these stories because, of course, they didn't have entertainment like we do today—theatres, movies, and whatnot. So that was a sort of entertainment for them and a sense of a fellowship. So they would sit down around the bonfire and play this instrument and tell the stories. They would carry this on from generation to generation. So one of the stories is about this pasha, the particular pasha who was a Serbian and how he finally came back to Serbia to rule it and then he recognized that his memory came back to him, that this is where he grew up. Then he did many favors. I think the poem goes on to say that he kind of made a yoke easier on Serbian people.

AF: What was the name of the pasha?

BK: Boy, I cannot remember his name.

MM: No, I can't either. Who was the big naval officer? He had his own fleet. I think it was under Suleiman the Magnificent. It was Suleiman, and then Suleiman the Magnificent. And Suleiman Magnificent had a Montenegrin wife who was his favorite, until he got ahold of this...I think she was either Russian or Ukrainian, and she moved her right out. [laughs]

BK: Well we can find this out for you, I can go downstairs and check it.

DD: Excuse me. All the music that I know, before I come to this country, is *gusle*. You know, that the only music we had.

JS: What was interesting about the *gusle* is one person who's is this, he's singing to us. This goes on verse after verse after verse. I think it might take two or three hours to do it, right?

ML: Sing-song.

JS: And this is all from memory.

MM: History there.

DD: Oh, yeah.

AF: And you remember this from—

DD: Oh, yeah, that was...That's the only music we had.

JS: He understood everything. I mean, he seemed to know the whole story from memory.

DD: Oh, yes, especially they sing about the war, who was killed in the war.

ML: Most recently you had that one record, when we used to come out to Whitehall after President Kennedy got killed.

DD: Yeah, yeah.

ML: She had a record of a *gusle* player that actually was telling a story about President Kennedy getting killed. And it was just real interesting because that was the first time I really heard something like that. We sat on your back porch up at Whitehall, and we listened to it.

AF: Was it in English or in Serbian?

DD: I still got that.

ML: It was in Serbian.

MM: I had a tape of one, some guy, a *gusle* player in Canada gave to my brother. I couldn't understand him, and he was terrible. [laughs] You know, because the music was terrible and the singing usually isn't very good, but the story is...the story's the important thing. So I gave it to Father Nincovich (?). So I don't know if he ever listened to it or not.

US: Bill Petrovich was saying...he was in the—

DD: Talk about the wedding. I know on my own wedding...Oops.

US: I'm sorry.

DD: That's okay.

US: Bill Petrovich was saying when he was in the army in Yugoslavia—I guess this would be in the '30s—he was teaching a man how to read, he was of military age and he hadn't learned to read. So he taught him how to read, and he said even though he was illiterate, he knew huge passages of the saga *Battle of Kosovo* by heart.

MM: Yeah.

BK: Absolutely.

US: He couldn't read but he knew pretty near all of it..

ML: Yeah, it's really interesting, talking, this is the first time that this has really come to my mind, is, the church is very important, and people back to 1904—from 1897 the first liturgy, to actually having a structure of the church which Father can show you, we even have pictures of it—in 1904, those people, that that was that important for them to build the church.

DD: How did they do it?

ML: I don't know, and when you think about that—

DD: How did they do it?

ML: So you think, the church actually was, how we talk about, was the focal point of all of Montana, and the priests from here had to do funerals and weddings in Wyoming and Idaho and Washington—

DD: Yes, there's in that book, too.

ML: Like four or five states, just from Butte. The priests from Butte. So a funeral could be a two or three day experience just to get there, [unintelligible] to get back. But then when you really think about it, it's the church actually...if you look at the newest person who came from Yugoslavia, which is our priest, it's the church that actually brought him to Butte, Montana. It wasn't mining. It was the church. Then Michael is a convert, it's actually the church that has...that is why he's here. So it's just real interesting to see that the church is very important during the mining days, but now it's the church that's actually starting to draw...that has drawn people here.

DD: I can't figure out how they've done it, because I remember my husband told me when he came here 1914 that he was working—soon as he got 15 years-old he started working—and he was picking hay, you know, pitching hay for 75 cents a day—75 cents a day. If he was good, he said they gave him a dollar. But in 1904 and before that, in 18th-century [19th century], how did they build this church? They must have been—

BK: You know, church life was very important to [unintelligible] just like it's today for all of us here. It was very important. They were pious people. They were not necessarily studying their faith, but deep down they understood the faith and they were very pious people. And it was easy for them to sacrifice, because conditions for these people, a lot of them were just something you can't even begin to imagine today. So church life was important to them, and also the fact that they came here, they had people of other nationalities, obviously, who also

did not speak a common language—English at that time. So it was important for them to, first of all, to have a place of worship. To have services, divine liturgies, and whatnot. And also to gather together and kind of, almost like a... build a fence and kind of preserve their religious and cultural identity. Because they did not speak a common language, which is English. Therefore they could not go out there and engage in daily activities or fellowships and whatnot, social activities, with other people. Because they themselves did not speak a common language, which is English. Today, however, it's a little bit different because we all speak the common language, which is English. Therefore we can associate with one another. But back then they could not. So this is why they really strive and they did everything to build the churches, and to form lodges and different organizations, to try to have some kind of social life. That was the only source of social life for them at that time, because they were working from Monday to Friday or Saturday. They were working mines for 12 hours or 14 hours, and then Sunday came and they would come to church and have a luncheon—go to church, have services, and then have a luncheon afterwards—and have that sense of community. It was good for them, because everybody spoke the same language and it was good for them to get together. This is why they did really try to have this go on.

Unfortunately there was some things that happen here. These people sacrificed everything to go to church, to build a parish rectory and parish center for social gatherings and so on. They were sacrificing everything, and for their children as well. In doing so it seems to me that they did not...they passed everything on to their children—faith and everything—but they somehow, probably because of circumstances and so on, they did not pass that on to their children, to sacrifice. This is my personal observation. I hope I'm right. But the great sacrifice that first immigrants have, or their children later on, that was not passed on to other people. Because now we have more immigrants, not just the Serbian, but Irish and a lot of immigrants. Their children are well-educated, we have attorneys, we have even people in the government and so on from different backgrounds. But we did not pass on to them a sense of where they came from and a sense of sacrifice and so on. It's there, but it's not to the extent that first immigrants had.

ML: You're right. I think, too, what it was like...I mean, I look at me father and I looked at...It was each generation, from the time they became Yugoslavia, that they wanted their children to have more than what they had. So more in education, more as far as material acquisitions were concerned. So what it was that was taken for granted, as far as the spirituality in the church, I think it was just an assumption that that would go along with everything else. I think really what happened, that the priorities were a better education, a better life, and so that became the priority. Then the church was there, but it wasn't a priority as it was back in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

DD: Then another thing, how come there was only that time of church in Butte was built?

BK: In Butte, Montana?

DD: From on West, they never had a church. California, eventually—

ML: Jackson was the first one in '94.

DD: Jackson. But in Butte...Butte was the only one on the West that build a church.

BK: Well, I guess you got to look where these people came, and they came to...because of mines here, they came to Butte or to Jackson because the mines there. There was a...two, I guess, biggest ghetto in New England, so this is why they—

DD: To this day, our church is the only one on the West, isn't it though? Seattle?

BK: Well, the only church that is built. Yeah, the actual building that's built, yeah. But we have other churches now.

ML: That have grown since then. At that time, I think there's Jackson and us and probably Arizona.

BK: Bisby, Arizona. These mining towns at that time.

AF: So why were the Serbian immigrants going to mining towns. Is there a particular reason, or just because—

JS: Because that's the only way...that's the only thing they knew how to do.

AF: Were they miners in Yugoslavia? No?

ML: Were there mines in Yugoslavia, Danica?

DD: No.

ML: No.

MM: There's a lot of them in Hibbing, Minnesota, because of the mines.

ML: But they weren't miners first, then came over here, okay.

BK: It's a job that did not require much of a language skill. You know, it did require physical skill, but not...and these people had that, certainly, because most of them were actually field workers or farmers. So they had a little experience and physical experience that they were strong naturally, because of the environment that they grew up in. So they were strong people, and they were willing to go down underground. Because they were working physically back in

their own country. Like I said, it did not require much of a language skill. All they had to do, give you a shovel and say, "Here, dig."

JS: Dig.

BK: That's all you have to do. It didn't require much of a language skill there at all.

DD: When...excuse me.

JS: Are you going to leave a name and address in case we come up with more [unintelligible].

AF: Oh, yes.

JS: With Father?

AF: Yes.

ML: And meeting Bill Petrovich, I think would be so important for content, too.

DD: I remember just before I came, they were paying in the gold.

ML: Allison, I have to excuse myself.

AF: Oh.

ML: I have some other things happening today. But it's a pleasure meeting you.

AF: Thank you, thank you so much for setting this all up.

ML: Well, I have to go, I'm going to go to the nursing home for a minute, and I have to go take care of some kids, too. They haven't been too good this last week. Juvenile probation officer.

AF: It was nice to meet you.

ML: Nice meeting you. Anything else that you need, please let us know. Father, thanks so much.

BK: Thank you, Marko.

ML: Everyone, see you.

MM: See you, Marko.

DD: See you.

ML: Thanks, Danica.

DD: I was saying that, when I came, that about just before I came, all those miners getting paid in gold. I know then, after I came here, because they save—if they save some money—they don't know what...they don't trust the bank, but they trust like a...Stairovich (?). You remember Stairovich? And John Milanovich? And a few, they were names that they trust. So they give them the money, and they don't know what the interest is but they just want to...whatever they need, that much money back. I remember my husband sending me five dollars in gold when I was there. But that quit right after I came there.

MM: Worst cases in Butte were, people would buy a house, you know, north...in old Butte? And they'd decide to renovate it and start, maybe digging or something, find cans,--coffee cans or any kind—with gold coins in it. People would hide it.

AF: What did you want to say about your wedding?

DD: Pardon me?

AF: You started a story about your wedding.

DD: Oh, we were talking about wedding. I know when I got married, about those costs—what kind of costing was—the same thing. But another thing, we was getting a little bit more modern. So the bride used to go and have [unintelligible] you know, just that they were homemade.

JS: Sandals.

MM: Pantaloon—

DD: Yeah. But when I got married, I got a pair of shoes. And they all wear same size. They don't fit well, because they bring you shoes, but they come after you, that day when they married. That you write like a brother or the groom or somebody to bring you a pair of shoes.

JS: But they don't know your size.

DD: No, they just...pretty good size, and everybody fit them. Same.

AF: When—

DD: But that's—

AF: Go ahead.

DD: No, go ahead.

AF: When you were a child, we were talking about the Janissaries and being a soldier in the Turkish army. Did you experience that in your family or your village?

DD: When my father got killed and stuff, you said?

JS: No, this is when the young men were taken by the Turks.

MM: Were stole by the Turks.

JS: Trained as soldiers for the Turks.

DD: Oh, that was it before my time.

JS: That was before her time.

DD: That was way before my time. We was under Turks 500—

JS: Five-hundred years.

DD: Five hundred years. But then—

JS: That was the part—

US: Was the area where you lived, was it part of Austria, or was it—

DD: Yeah. Until 1918 was a part of Austria.

AF: Okay. So your childhood, it was always Austria?

JS: The childhood, yes.

DD: Yeah. When I was about four years-old.

JS: Yeah. Until 19...until you left—

DD: Yeah.

JS: —you were still under Austria.

DD: Oh, no, we not under Austria then.

JS: No, what I mean is...I'm sorry, you say you were under...when did they change between...when did the Austrians lose that particular part of Europe?

US: After World War One?

JS: After World War One?

DD: Yeah.

JS: I see, okay.

AF: Were you involved in the Circle of Serbian Sisters?

DD: Oh, yeah.

AF: Can you tell me about that?

DD: As soon as I came here, they organized here a Circle of the Serbian Sisters. Same years. Was it same years? No, the year after King Alexander got killed. 1934?

JS: 1934.

DD: No, right after Alexander got killed, they organize it. Well, you're going to see in that old picture of the Serbian Sisters. Then they...soon as I came, I belonged to the...and I still am.

AF: And what do you do?

DD: We done exactly what we do in the lodge. We had meetings, we help a lot of church. Church was our...what was it, 75,000 dollars, Circle of the Serbian Sisters give them when this new church was built.

JS: Yeah.

DD: Seventy-five thousand dollars.

AF: Wow.

DD: Yeah. And still we work now. We don't have a...Circle and Mother club. You know, they had a Mother's Club. But now we're together. So we still help.

JS: Danica, when you...when they first organized, what was the largest number of members you ever remember? Was it 200, 300?

DD: Where, in Butte?

JS: No...here in Butte, yeah.

DD: You mean for the Circle?

JS: Yeah.

JS: No, not 200.

JS: Not 200.

DD: I would say 80.

JS: Oh, 80?

DD: Yeah.

MM: I remember their drum corps. Remember they used to have a drum corps?

DD: Oh yeah, they used to have all kinds, yeah. They help the church a lot, and all the work, like doing for the church and stuff, Serbian Sisters do.

JS: And then they had their day set aside, like we said before, for the year that they have their celebration. The [unintelligible].

MM: You mentioned, you thought you had to... someone had said there was just a men's church?

AF: Yes.

MM: There wouldn't be any churches without the women. [laughs] Yeah. I mean, the men do their part, but the women are really the [unintelligible]. And I'm talking about liturgies and things like that. Men might be here for Easter and Christmas and somebody's funeral, but the women were here every Sunday.

DD: Yeah. But there's men now, you know.

MM: Yeah, not like they used to be, but. But still—

DD: At my age it's...gosh, it's only about four, five...maybe it's [unintelligible] now, isn't it? About my age?

JS: About that.

DD: Yes.

MM: I will say one thing about our women. It don't take many of them to do a lot. Really, it doesn't. There's a few of them that are ambitious and knowledgeable.

DD: They make the pasty sale, they make...sell it, and it all goes to the church or Sunday school, or help with the church—everything.

AF: How old was your son when you came to Butte?

DD: He was four years-old. Not quite four.

AF: Did he go to school in Butte?

DD: My son died in 19...when he was 15 and-a-half years-old.

AF: Oh, I'm sorry.

DD: Yeah. He went to school in the first grade, and then Grant School in Butte here. It was first grade there. When he started school, he didn't know much language. It was one...Martin [unintelligible], you know that Charles—

MM: Charlie?

DD: Yeah. He live right next door to us. And he was exactly same age as my son.

MM: Oh, was he, Charlie? Oh.

DD: Yeah. So they were playing and he was talking Serbian, and Charlie, of course, he don't know. But they always say how they were pulling a rope, and he pulled this way and he say, "No." [speaks in Serbian]. You know—

JS: You pull this way, and you pull it that way.

DD: You pull this way, I...When he started school, he was right away that he knows...first grade, then we moved to Whitehall, and he went to grade school and he was on the basketball team and football team. First year, why...and he died when he was supposed to be sophomore in school, but he didn't [unintelligible].

AF: I'm sorry.

DD: That's hardest thing that could happen. It's the hardest thing that could happen.

JS: [unintelligible].

MM: You got three daughters. One of them used to be on the Board of Regents, didn't she?

DD: Yeah. I got three wonderful daughters. But no matter how many kids you had, if you cut this finger, or this, or this, it hurts the same.

MM: Yeah.

AF: Were your daughters all born in America?

DD: Yeah. One live in Bozeman [Bozeman, Montana], one live about 40 miles out of Bozeman, and one live in Seattle.

AF: Oh, okay.

JS: Well, shall we?

MM: Yeah, we got to get going.

AF: Okay.

JS: Hopefully and prayerfully, you'll end up with pretty good material through these other sources we referred to.

[End of Interview]