

**A micro-study of Greek Female
Immigrants to NZ in the 60s**
An Oral History Project

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: *Akrivi (Voula) Hiotaki
/ Misirlakis*

Interviewers: *Athina Tsoulis,
Evangelia Papoutsaki*

Date: *15/4/2011*

Location: *Sydney, Australia*

Additional material:

*Bio details/consent forms/photos/other supporting
documentation/transcript of interview*

Transcription by Lucy Anastasiadou – Hobbs

(**Ath** – Athina Tsoulis, **Akr** – Ακρυβή – Akrivi Hiotaki / Misirlakis, **Eva** – Evangelia Papoutsaki)

This is an interview with Akrivi Hiotaki, A k r I v i H I o t a k i. Voula is her petname or nickname and Marsalaki, Miselaki is the married name.

Akr – Right.

Ath– M i r s

Akr – i am sorry but it is not correct, M i s i r l a k i s. My surname..

Ath– Ah, ha!

Ath– So let's say it again: M i r s i l a k i s

Akr – No Misirlaka no a, i s.

Ath– Misirlakis. M i s i r l a k i s.

The interview is for the Greek women oral history and the interview is Athina Tsoulis, A t h i n a T s o u l i s also present is Evangelia Papoutsaki, E v a n g e l i a P a p o u t s a k i.

The interview is taking place at 140 Roberts road, Roberts street, Green Acre

Ath– It is road...so it is 140 Roberts road, Green Acre, G r e e n A c r e, Sydney, Australia.

The recording equipment is a fostex fr 2 el recorder and akg c 417 pp click on microphones.

This is file number 2:

Ath– So, Akrivi, can you tell me where ere you born?

Akr –I was born in my village, Vas Fakion, what else do you want?

Ath– Which year?

Akr –23rd of May, 1944.

Ath–And your parents?

Akr –My parents, my father's name was Nikolaos Hiotakis and my mother's name was Stiliani Yiparaki.

Ath– Stiliani Yiparaki.

Akr – Yiparaki

Ath– St i l i a n i Y i p a r a k i.

Ath– and what was your father's occupation?

Akr –He had sheep, he had vines, you can call him a shepperd, you can call him, what can I say now, farmer.

Ath– Farmer

Akr –.I think farmer is more suitable, because he was involved with everything.

Ath– Ye, and how about your mother?

Akr –My mother was staying home, looking after and taking care of us. She did not use to go out.

Ath–And did you have any brothers and sisters?

Akr –I have, we are 4 sisters and 2 brothers. My oldest sister is Ioanna, Asimonia, Aspasia, Petros, Spiros, whom am I forgetting? I did not forget anyone. Ioanna, Asimonia, Aspasia, Petros, and Spiros.

Ath– You have got them in here. On the back. and your father was a farmer and he was selling that which, did he sell stuff or?

Akr – Yes, he was turning the milk from the sheep, they were turning it into cheese and he was selling it. He was selling the wool, he was cultivation pulse and he used to sell them.. He was making some pulse that [? 4'44] to sell them. And for our home. We used to pick up, we had olives and we were making olive oil. That was the only income coming from the women, indeed even now it is still the same only the olives, but our village is small and it is in a place that does not allow many jobs for women. Its is rocky and there is no much water to cultivate the land properly. And so we want, even if we want to work, we have to leave from the village, the ones who work they left from the village. Not...even though they started buliding hotels, they have shops, they have butcher shops, no wthey have everything. In the village. Because the y way they have orginized the things now, my village is in the middle of many gathered villages, and they have opened a high school, a primary school, they have made there the slaughter houses, they made them in my village. And so, now it is more....

Ath–It is a city now.

Akr –You cannot call it so...it is a village, it is not possible to become a city, because there are not many inhabitants. You cannot call it a city but it is much better now.

Evay – There are more jobs.

Akr – Yes, hotels have been established, they have built hotels, and so there are restaurants, it is coastal, and people comes. It is better than then. Now from when I used to live there.

Ath–But how was life these years?

Akr – What shall I tell you now!!I remember only a few things because I left from the village when I was 13 years old. I went to Chania. My childhood was nice. Even though it was difficult because were six children and only my father was working and not always, but we never missed anything, we had always everything. We didn't have luxurius things but never missed anything. Then, my oldest brother, Petros, went to Chania, and I went along and stayed there, learn how to patch socks. They don't do that here, if you know.

Ath– Yes, yes...

Ath–But before you went there, when you were little, you were born when the war was almost, almost over.

Akr – No, I was born during the war, because my mothre had told me that the Germans gave permission to my father to go out and herd the sheep, to dig and do errands so to feed his family. And the Germans used to help him, they gave him a written document, and my mother used to tell me that she was holding me, many times when the Germans were passing by, you know our house was on their way to get to their base, the Germans had to pass by our house. They used to pass and caress us and they used to give us biscuits or anything else they were having because we were babies, and my mother, because I was a tiny babe, very little babe....

Evay – babe....

Akr – Babe, babe, but my brother remembers those things, my sisters remember them, my oldest sisters remember all these.

Ath– And what do they remember?

Akr –.What do they remember!! They remember that they were allowed to be out at certain times, to go to certain places, if they weren't allowed to go freely somewhere, despite the fact that some had official documents, because the village, the people in the village didn't resist the Germans, they gave them whatever they wanted so not to be harmed. And thus in my village they didn't harm as much as they did in other villages. In some other villages, Vouva, spernou, they didn't harm anything, in Vouva however, there are some other villages in which people descent from the mountains during the winter time. Because like us –in our villages- we are residing in different place during summer time and in different place during winter. Did you understand? And in the winter some residents go to Imvros or Skivou or to

other villages and later they come down to Vouva, and some residents resist and they had killed also there, we are not completely free, but they had assist many people from the village, in many respects. Whomever didn't harm them they used to protect him.

Ath- So, they came and brought food and whatever they wanted...

Akr - ... when it comes to this now...

Ath- You don't remember, yes...

Akr - I know that in our house, in Asventou, there is, it is in a very big place, very high, and in order to come down, he had built, what shall I tell you now, a wall, you know, and it is higher, higher than this. One and a half times than this one. And the wall was so wide and hollow inside, you understand what I am telling you.

Ath- tunnels, tunnels?

Akr - And they put, not tunnels, it was like...

Ath- cave

Akr - as if it is this wall

Ath- yes...

Akr -And it is hollow and had in between space, you know, you were able, they were putting thing inside.

Ath- cellar

Eva - What they were putting there?

Akr - ...the cheese, so they won't find it and take it...

Eva - they were hiding it. It was a natural hiding place. So from outside it looked like a wall...

Akr - Hiding place...

Ath- ...a wall...but inside...

Eva - but inside was empty they could hide things, so this is how they were keeping

Akr - Yeah. They had huge rocks, you know, which they were lifting them up and....

Ath- ...yes...yes...

Akr – I didn't manage to get there, because later on they covered it, because, we, who were more free, they covered it with stones because it was [1941-42] the children and the boys, you know, in order to avoid any accident, they covered it to prevent any accident, they covered it with stones....

Evay – But then they were using it....

Akr – they were using it, they were using it to hide things, so not to be found, I heard of guns. My father didn't have guns, but, excuse me, some others had and they were hiding them. They were hiding them so the Germans won't find them, because otherwise....

Ath– So, óταν your first memories of, the things you remember....

Akr – My first memories, first memories. What can I tell you now. I remember my father taking the sheep in the winter time and moving them to the other side of Crete where there was no snow carrying food to eat. I remember that I used to cry and my father always was doing my favours because I was his most beloved child, while my mother was strict. I also remember some games we used to play, me, my brothers and sisters and our friends. We didn't have toys like the ones nowadays and we used to make dolls and putting sticks making cloths, creating dolls. The school. I don't have many nice things to remember from the school, there were also the older children and we weren't in good terms with them, and the youngest ones, us, because there was only one teacher for all the classes. The school was big.

Ath– One class

Akr – ...a big classroom and all the children were inside. The oldest children were naughty because they didn't want the teacher to tell them «do this», some children were 20-21 years old. At school to learn. I also remember the teacher, because they used to hit these days, now they don't, they used to have also....

Evay - ...stick...

Akr - ... a stick...I remember that they used to open the windows and jump out, leaving from the school, I remember, I remember that....

Evay – Why were there students 20years old?

Ath- In school, because there was the war, they had to stop, and when I went to school and things were settled a little bit, after I started going to school, these students came back even just to learn how to write their name. Just to learn how to read because the conditions were very difficult those days...

Ath– Yes, and how many years did you go to school?

Akr – Six years in the primary school.

Ath– Yes, and you didn't like it a lot?

Akr – What can I say now. I might have even liked the school if the conditions were different. What I didn't like is that the teacher would leave during the classes to go where she was staying, to cook. The school was next to her place, it was one building split into two. She was making the classes and the same time she was cooking. If she wanted some water, no there are taps everywhere, they have amenities now there as we have them here, but when I was little we had to go and fetch water with the crock. And we had to go the fountain to get water for her. I didn't like these things. Because, back at home, my mother and father didn't allow me to do these things. It is stuck inside me.

Ath– Yes, and did you mention to your parents that you had to do these errands?

Akr – Of course I did...the school...our house is like that and the school is over there. And Ayia Paraskevi is here. Our house is attached to Ayia Paraskevi. Now they have opened a road and our house is separated from the school, they abalienated a part from the school, the courtyard of Ayia Paraskevi, our house's courtyard and they made a road and thus we are separated, but when I used to go to school there was no road, our courtyard used to be the backside of the school. And of course they knew, they knew. And how many times this happened, I don't know, something like this cannot happen now. Life is very different now.

Ath– Yes, and these years they used to respect the teachers a lot, there was a lot of respect for teachers is that alright?

Akr – Teachers.

Evay – Respect for the teacher, they never used to say a thing to her.

Ath– Like doctors.

Akr – I wonder how we were educated.

Ath– Yes.

Akr – We, now, we know how to write, to write I have to ask, when my dear departed husband was alive, so to write a letter, I had to ask. I had to ask him “how do you spell this word?”. I wonder, why shouldn't I be able to write, I can read, but I can also read English, I don't write English but I can read English.

Ath– Ah, you weren't taught anything?

Akr – Not many things. My mother was illiterate, because her mother had passed away and her father married again, and his second wife didn't want the children to go to school. So, my mother didn't know how to read and write., thus, we didn't know much things. Apart from my brother Petros who went to school the rest of us don't know what we had to.

Ath– Why did they send him? We know the answer, but we want you to tell us.

Evay – Was he the youngest one?

Akr – No, he is 8 years older than me. He liked school, he wanted to leave from the village, I also think that my parents want to, wanted to send him away from the village, to become something different, to progress.

Ath– And he was also a boy.

Akr – Eh, he was also the boy.

Ath– Yes, we need to say that.

Akr – Ah, we didn't do the same thing for my youngest brother.

Ath– Yes, but the first, the oldest brother always got the best.

Akr – Yes.

Evay – It was also a financial issue. They couldn't provide for all to study.

Akr – No, because we were working for him. He needed people to take care of him, he needed place to rent, teachers, he needed....the usual things that come along.

Ath– Ah, it wasn't that your parents didn't know of these things, but they decided for the oldest brother...

Akr – I cannot really tell, because my father went up to the fourth year of the high school. My father had been to the high school. Although at these schools, where we used to go, the children weren't learning enough to make it to the University. But I don't know how things are in Greece now. However the schools here are not, in New Zealand the schools are better than here. My children came here when they were older and my daughter said to me «mum, what I am learning here in the high school I learned back in New Zealand in the fourth year. New Zealand, the educational system of New Zealand is better than the one here. The children here are too many, I don't know. It is very crowded here.

Ath– Are you talking about Australia?

Akr – Yes, Australia in comparison to New Zealand.

Evay – Are you comparing Australia to New Zealand?

Akr –It is better, the education and health for the women of New Zealand, there is no country to beat New Zealand. Not even one.

Ath–Where were you staying in New Zealand?

Akr – In Wellington

Ath- In which suburb?

Akr - I was living in Mt Victoria

Ath-You know it depends on which place you are how good the school is. Here in Australia, there are very good schools, but it depends on the location.

Akr -Here, if you want to learn, it is not that they don't teach, because my children didn't go to a private school.

Ath- No, no, no. No, I know that.

Ath- Anyway, we will get to Australia. We are still in Crete.

Akr - In Crete

Ath- Ναι. So when you were, so, you seem quite angry about not getting any education.

Akr - Not angry because I know that we couldn't, I am not angry with my parents...

Ath- No.

Akr -I am angry with the whole village that they allowed the teachers to take advantage of us. And they were making money even though they had their salary and they were making more money from us and we didn't learn anything. I am upset about this.

Ath- So do you think they didn't have high ambitions for you the teachers?

Akr - It's not just me.

Ath- No for all the children in the village.

Akr - I am talking just individual, me

Ath- Yeah

Akr - for that. I am talking the whole village. Όλα τα παιδιά.

Ath- Yes.

Akr - Because most of the children of my age from my village, stayed in the village. And if you are not educated, you cannot get a job. Easily. And so we left, most of the children of my age, they left to America, Australia, Canada, Germany, they have gone, now the village, the little children which they were born and have the same age like my children, they left for Chania, indeed there are not many people who stayed there.

Ath– But your brother who had studied stayed in the village?

Akr – No. No, he was in the village until he got married. After he got married he went to Chania.

Ath– Probably there weren't jobs there, as you said before. But now he might have regretted....

Akr – The job that my brother was doing at the end. Because he went to the clerical school, he went to the high school, he became a carpenter, and finally a builder. And he was able to find work even in the villages. Because the builders are building houses, they are building ...he was able to find work, but his children I don't know, they didn't want to grow up in the villages, I don't know why, for this he went to Chania.

Ath– Everyone wants excitement. So, your life in the village was fine. You had good time. You didn't like school....

Akr –The school is in loss....

Ath– Yes....

Akr –My life at our house, we were very happy...

Ath–and you had food...

Akr – Yes...

Ath–You didn't go starving...starv.... how do you say it?

Eva – You didn't starve.

Akr – No, I don't remember not having meat at home, or cheese and similar things, that my father used to have. We always had, I remember my mother browning the meat, if you understand what I am saying. And then she used to put it inside terracotta containers, she was putting olive oil inside it and cover it. We didn't have fridge because we didn't have electricity. And so, she was preserving it, she was doing the same with the cheese. And she was putting it, so we always used to have, always, I don't remember being starved. Never, we probably didn't have other things like clothes and similar, but food was always available.

Ath– And what do you remember from, you know family you used to do in the weekend, in the evenings? Did you have good time?

Akr – Now, in the evenings. Sometimes the older people used to sit down and tell us stories, the older children were reading books, tales, whatever was available. And we used to chat a lot. There used to be the oil lamps those days, there wasn't much light so we used to go to sleep earlier. Now they have electric lights and....

Ath- So, were you playing with other children or just with your sisters?

Akr - No, I used to play with other children. We used to play with the other children mostly outside, we used to gather at the courtyard of Ayia Paraskevi and played hopscotch, If you know what I mean.

Ath- Yes, yes....

Akr - the hitting stick....

Evay -Hitting stick, what is hitting stick?

Akr -Ah, it is a big stick and also a small one and you hit the small one and it goes away, it is like, how can I describe it now. The way they play the cricket here, something similar, but we didn't have these equipments and we used to play it with sticks. My mother didn't like me playing this game.

Evay - Why?

Akr - Because it is for men!

Ath-And you said that you left from the village when you were 13 years old...

Akr - ... And I went to Chania, we rent an apartment and stayed with my brother. My broter was working as a builder. I learned sewing and I was making socks but I wasn't earning a lot of money, but somehow my time was passing...

Ath-Was it your oldest or youngest brother?

Akr - The oldest...

Ath- The oldest...

Akr -And I used to clean and cook for him...

Ath- Ah, you were looking after him?

Evay - Were you taking care of his house?

Akr - Yes, 13 years old...

Ath- Yes, and what did you think about that?

Akr - I loved it

Ath- You loved it?

Akr - I loved it

Ath- Why?

Akr - I love all my brothers and sisters but there is a special bond with this brother of mine. It is something different, you know. I don't know, I love all my brothers and sisters, I adore them, with the one who is New Zealand we talk every week, I was there in Christmas and New Year's and afterwards they came here, we are a very loving family. But I have something special with my oldest brother.

Ath- So do you have children, girls and boys?

Akr - I have a girl and five boys.

Ath- A girl, Sophia. And what if you tell Sophia, 13 years old, to take care of her brother, to wash and cook for him, what would she say?

Akr -No, it is out of question.

Ath- And why?

Akr - Because, don't....life is very different from the one who we lived. Our life was very, very different, we are used in a different way. Our parents in the village, we were doing everything since we were little, but now we have buttons here, don't forget, we do the dishes, we have buttons, we wash, we cook with buttons, what are we doing now, we do nothing. But then we had to start a fire to cook. So to...nothing was happening the way it is happening now here. And so from our oldest brothers and sisters we were taught the youngest ones.

Evay - Everyone was involved in keeping up the house. A child of 13 years old was not a big deal you know.

Ath- I know. It wasn't the times, it had to do with the fact that you were a girl. If you were a boy, you wouldn't, they wouldn't have asked you to take care of your brother, to cook and do the washing.

Akr - No, I don't think that this is correct. Because I know of brothers who didn't have sisters and left from the village and went to Chania and both the brothers were working and they were doing.....

Ath- Yes, if they didn't have...

Akr - They were doing all the works by themselves.

Ath-But these years, it was ver, women used to do this, and men used to do that.

Akr - Yes.

Ath- It was very....

Akr – It is not as it is now.

Ath–No, as now. Now, men are taking care of babies, they are cooking, but these years, didn't

Akr –Yes...those days, I don't remember my father cooking, ever, eh, he would have cooked, of course, when he was alone, bu at home, if we were in the village all together, I don't remember him even setting up the table...

Ath– Yes, I know that.

Evay – He had a tough life keeping the sheep up in the mountains.

Akr – Oh yeah that's true. That's true. The life is different. No we live a very different life style

Ath– Yes

Akr – And now the women, we have the upper hand.

Ath– No. Well just as well. So, you were 13 years old, and how many darn sock you use to make per day?

Akr –For as long as I was working.

Ath– Ah.

Akr – Because I was unexperienced I didn't have a lot of experience and I ddn;t have much work because 20 meters from me there was another lady who was sewing up for years and she knew how to make the seams, not to be obvius and things like these. So, I din't have a lot of work. But I was passing my time.

Ath– Yes.

Evay –You used to make this at home or somewhere else?

Akr – No, No.

Evay – Where did you use to go?

Akr –In a shop that used to sell electrical appliances I had installed, the owner, he allowed to, with having to pay rent, put a small table and I had the sewing machine on it and the chair.

Evay – And where in Chania was that place?

Akr –. Now it is Margaritis' Clinic, if you know.

Evay – Somewhere in the city centre.

Akr –Yes, it is in the centre, near the market.

Evaγ – Ah, in the market.

Akr –. Not part of the market, it is near by, 5 minutes.

Evaγ –And you were 13 years old having your own little table.

Akr – Yeah.

Eva – ...with the sewing machine....

Akr –Yes, now they still play with the dolls.

Ath–Yes. And did you like it being in a bigger city?

Akr –Yes, I used to like it. I liked Chania, I like it. It is a beautiful city, Chania. Have you been there?

Ath– Not yet, we will go in July.

Akr – Good. Enjoy it.

Ath– I will.

Ath– And the money that you earned you gave it to your brother?

Akr –I used to but things we needed for home. Something that I was noticing and like it or I used to buy something for me. Yeah. As they still do the young ladies.

Ath–And how many years you were taking care of your brother?

Akr –Oh, I was in Chania with my brother until I was seventeen and a half years old. And afterwards I filled in my application and came to New Zealand.

Ath– And how did that happen?

Akr –These days, New Zealand, Australia and Canada declared to the Greek State that they were willing to accept young people, girls and most of us who went, we were appointed to work in hospitals and private schools in public jobs.

Ath–Yes, yes. But how....

Akr – ...and so I learned it. You know, I was in the village then...

Ath– Ah, you had gone from Chania?

Akr – Yes, I was coming and going. I never used to stay in Chania.

Ath– Yes!

Akr – I was going to the village too. Well, some cousin who stayed in Athens came and as we were having a discussion he told me. And I said “I want to go”.

Ath–Ah, how did you say that?

Akr – I wanted to go.

Ath– Why?

Akr – I don’t know. Neither I can understand because I didn't know nor we had the time to find out, we didn’t even have a television, not even a radio, nothing. How come I wanted to leave, I wanted to leave. I didn’t want to stay.

Ath– So, you wanted to leave even before you heard this?

Akr – Yes!

Ath– Ah, when was it, how old you were when you first thought of it?

Akr – Oh, I was 17-18 when I used to go to Chania, and you know, I had girlfriends who had their relatives in America, Germany, and we were discussing also these things, since then I wanted to leave. My dear departed father didn’t want me to go.

Ath– And what were they saying about Germany and Australia? And about America?

Akr – They didn’t want, they didn’t want.

Ath– Yes, I know, but what did your girlfriends used to say?

Akr – That life was better, that they have money, but they didn’t know that you had to work so to have money, they didn’t know that the language is very difficult and that [? 34’19] you wouldn’t be able to communicate. I will never forget, I went to Whanganui, when I went to New Zealand, I went to Whanganui and it was very hot, I wanted cold water, and I didn't know where to find the fridge. We were in a hospital, in the dining room where the doctors were eating, and the fridgesm stoves , everything was on one wall, and each one had a door, which you had to find. How would I know of such things? And I went with the girl to the tap, I opened the tap and said to her “no good” with gestures and he took me to the fridge.

Ath– However before you decided to leave, your life, you used to work for your brother, making socks and....

Akr – My life was nice. I cannot say the opposite, because we had done our trips, I had my sister there with her husband, I had friends, I had made many girlfriends. We used to go out, I cannot say that we didn’t have a good life and that I left

because I wasn't enjoying it. It is not this. It is something, how can I explain it now. It is that thought in your mind that life will be better in the place where you are going and not where you are.

Ath- You wanted something better.

Akr - Yes

Ath- That you didn't know what. You thought you might find something better.

Akr - I didn't know what to expect. Yes, it's better. My life here is better than the life I would have had if I was in the village. I would be, I would have, I would have had to pick up, to work in the fields because my husband would have been a farmer aand I would have been in the village, and the village errands are not so..... as it is here.

Ath- Yes

Akr - I used to work here, I had also my children I had to have them with me in the shop, it was difficult but it was a different life, it wasn't just going out.

Ath- So, you could see that woman's life was hard....

Akr - Indeed!

Ath-And you didn't wish this life for you....

Akr - No!

Ath- And your sisters had already been married?

Akr -Yes, the youngest one. The youngest one is almost 6-7 years younger than me, and it has been many years, almost 30, since she got married. 30-31, she got married after I had returned, after I had left. I wasn't.....

Ath- They got married before you were 17 years old?

Akr -My first two sisters had got married, yes!

Ath- Yes. And did your parents have to give a dowry for the girls?

Akr - No!

Ath- The didn't give a dowry?

Akr - No!

Ath- Well done! How did that happen?

Akr – Not everybody gives a dowry and also not everybody asks for one. In my village they don't ask for a dowry, very seldom they do!

Evaγ – Since there wasn't also. The wealth of the people in that part of the island comes from the sheeps and the land and just enough for each to have.

Ath– Yeah. And other women would say that that was a big thing for them.

Eva – But not all of them asked.

Akr – In some parts of Crete, like Kandanos, where they have more land, life is different than in my village. Crete, you will see when you go, is different from one side to the other

Ath– Right.

Akr – Because where my village is, they found water, they have done arrangements but they are not active. There is land to create vegetable gardens, to cultivate tomatoees, to produce such things, you know. There is land. But they haven't organize the way to bring the water from up, where it is, to the village.

Evaγ - Very maintenance of the rain, very maintenance, very difficult to cultivate the maintenance

Ath– So, dowry was not a big thing for you. And did they try to find you a husband?

Akr – Yes!

Ath- Yes. What happened?

Akr – No

Ath– You didn't like anyone?

Akr – No!

Ath– Why?

Akr – I don't know, if your fate is, I think, the fate of eachone is determined, where he will go, how, and what he will become. That's my opinion. A guy that my sister with my brother-in-law found for me to marry, he was very rich, extremely rich, so rich that I wouldn't have to do anything. Everything would have been available for me. But I didn't like his personality. Also, then I was too young to think of these things. We were different, I don't, I don't know what I was thinking about getting married and all these things.

Ath– Did you want something better?

Akr – Better!

Ath– And you heard about New Zealand, did you speak to your mother, what happened?

Akr – They didn't want me to leave so I had to put a cousin of mine to sign for the papers and when the time came to leave for Athens, I went, because as I told you I wasn't staying in the same place all the time, I used to go to Chania and come back to the village. So, I went to farewll them. Then the realized that I had prepared the paperwork and that I was leaving.

Ath– Oh, and what did she do?

Evay – Did she have a shock?

Akr – Yeah, it was a big shock. Because they were usually more strick with the girls, ho wcan I express that....

Ath– Yes, yes....

Akr – They didn't like this but they couldn't prevent me of doing it. I said to them that I was leaving and that was final. There wasn't any way to stop me from leaving.

Ath– You had a lot of courage.

Akr – So, I left and went to New Zealand, I had a great time there.

Ath– And you brother?

Akr – I brought him here.

Ath– Your brother didn't mind you were going to New Zealand?

Akr – No

Eva – Your oldest brother.

Akr – My oldest brother, in the beginning, didn't like it, in the meanwhile he was living in Chania and he had contacts with people who had gone and returned to Germany or America, they had discussions and all these, so my brother was different from my parents. My parents didn't know, where I am going, what I am going to do what I will find there. My brother though had discussed with people who had left and came back for holidays to Greece, and after Petros talked to my parents "let her go, besides for two years, the New Zealand government is responsible of knowing where they are". They were taking care of us. And they made their presence in Athens. In Athens they know....They knew in Athens about me, wherever I was going, when I went and when I returned. Because the Immigration

Department used to give report to Athens every 3 or 6 months. They had...they had to do this. And for this we went to public jobs.

Ath- Yes, because you were...

Akr - The Government invited us, the Government paid for our tickets, our expenses, everything and so, even when we went to Athens, the New Zealand, Australian and Canadian Government were paying for everything. All the schools where we went and learned some English, all these were paid by the foreign countries. Nothing was paid by Greece.

Evay - Did you do your training in Athens?

Akr - Yes, In Athens!!!

Evay - Where in Athens?

Akr - I cannot remember now.

Ath- And what did you do at school? What did you learn?

Akr - We were learning English, The New Zealand Government had sent a lady, one was from here, another one from Canada who was teaching us Domestic Duties, because many of the girls went to work in Hotels as cleaners, you know, I was very lucky because I went to work in the dinning room and we didn't have to deal with patients, I didn't have to do such things, there were other ladies who were going and cleaning in the Hospital. And so we had to learn how to make the beds, to clean, whatever is required for such a job, we had to learn everything. Ironing, to...to...all these things, we had to learn everything.

Ath- And did you know anyone from your village who went also there?

Akr - No!

Ath- Only you?

Akr - No one came from my village!

Ath- Yes?

Akr - I am alone with my brother. Now my brother is in New Zealand and I am in Australia. The rest of my brothers and sisters are in Crete.

Ath- Scattered... So, did you like the school there?

Akr - Yes, I liked both the teachers, they were very nice, and the children. All the children we were about 65 and 32 we went to New Zealand. Some went to Canada, some went to New Zealand and some stopped here. It was nice, we had very a good time.

Ath- Did you go back to your village to say goodbye?

Akr - Of course, we went down (to Crete) and greeted....

Ath- And what do you remember from this? The last day in Greece?

Akr - Tears. Wishes. What to do, what no to do, the usual things which every family....

Ath- What did your parents tell you? ... single woman.

Akr - To be careful....

Ath- Yes, to be careful of what?

Akr - Everything! Not to trust many people. That was the most important, my dear departed father, I used to have very long hair, he said to me not to cut my hair. I had very, very long hair. And he liked them a lot and didn't want me to cut them. But it wasn't possible.

Evay - Did you cut them?

Akr - I grew them until I got married, but it became too difficult after I had the children.

Ath- You did well, it was quite a long time. So, when you left, did you think that you were going to stay in New Zealand for few years?

Akr - Yes, like everybody else. They think that they will go overseas and they will get rich in 2-3 years and come back. They believe that money grows on the trees and you just have to cut it.

Ath- And when you left from Greece what did you know about the, how much did you know when you were quite innocent, naive young woman?

Akr - I knew nothing. I really I knew nothing, I am still make some things.

Ath- So, you didn't know about women and men, how babies are born? These things....

Akr - No, no, no. I found out these things after I got married, after I met my husband.

Ath- And your parents never told you anything about your clothes? You know the periods? Nothing!

Akr - No, no, no.

Ath- So, how did you find out about these things?

Akr - My mother didn't have a mother to tell her and so she didn't know, when I first got my period, I remember, I sat down and cried because I didn't know, what is the blood, where was it coming from. And I was in tears until my oldest sister came and told me that it didn't matter ,that it is normal, gave me cloths and told me what to do.

Ath- Ah, your sister told you....

Akr - My sister...

Ath-And she hadn't talked you before?

Akr - No.

Akr - It was embarrassing thing.

Ath- Well you would if you start bleeding think you must be dying.

Akr - Now the children, they have lessons at school, fourth fifth grade they learn everything. We don't have many things to tell to our children, because they know everything, we were then....

Ath- Which one do you think is the best?

Akr -.Its is better now because children know what to expect - in some aspects it is better now - in other aspects it was better back then. I think. We are compromising.

Ath- So, it must have been the first time you had been on an airplane. When you arrived to Athens?

Akr -Yes, I went from Chania to Athens with the boat.

Ath- Yes

Akr - I had been in Athens

Ath- In Athens....

Akr - ... I liked it, I love being in the airplane....

Ath- Really?

Akr - I am getting crazy. I didn't sit down for a long time, while I was sitting, you know, to be fasten, I [? 49'47] I am getting crazy, and you know. I am getting crazy in the airplane. I like traveling a lot but now I got older and it is not easy.

Ath- And how many days did the trip to New Zealand take?

Akr - We stopped here for a night. We stopped in Sydney at YCM, how is it called?

Ath- YWCM?

Akr - We stayed there in the city centre, for a night we stayed there and left the next day.

Ath- So, you came from Athens straight here?

Akr - In Australia where the girls which had to stay, remained here.

Ath- Yes.

Akr - And the next day we took another plane and left for New Zealand.

Ath- And did you have company?

Akr - I had the girls what we came with, have you already seen Theano Phountoulaki?

Evay -No, but we heard about her, others have also mentioned her.

Akr - Did you find Vaggelio?

Evay - She was in Wellington, eh?

Akr - Yes!

Evay - No!

Akr - They are sisters. Ah, you didn't visit Theano?

Evay - No!

Akr - I came along with Theano.

Ath- And what did you think when the plane arrived in New Zealand?

Akr - Then I realized what I had done. After I arrived at the airport in Wellington, we came down from the plane and everybody was speaking English. The English we learned was completely different from what we speak now. I remember the word water, water, the letter r is not pronounced. For this they couldn't understand us, and many words that we were saying, we were supposedly speaking English, they couldn't understand us, because we were using the pronunciation we need to use.

Ath- The New Zealand accent?

Akr – Yes

Ath– Yes, because it is different English. I didn't understand some New Zealand words and I was brought up here. Yes. So...

Akr – When we arrived in Wellington, the people from Whanganui came and took us, straight from the airplane they put us into another airplane and took us straight to Whanganui.

Ath– Ah, you didn't go to Whanganui in a different airplane?

Akr – Yes, to Whanganui.

Ath– How many, how many were you?

Akr – We were two, Diana, who is in Greece now, she lives in Athens, and me.

Evay – Was Diana Cretan or?

Akr – She comes from Herakleion, Herakleion, Rethymno, Herakleion.

Evay – Can you give me her name later on?

Akr – I will give you also her sister's name, her address, her sister was also in New Zealand. And I also have her sister's address. I will give it to you later on, to go and find her in Athens.

Interview with Akrivi Hiotaki continued this is file number 3.

Ath– You arrived in New Zealand and they sent you to Whanganui.

Akr – To Whanganui.

Ath– 2 girls to Whanganui.

Akr – Artemisia and me, Artemis. Greeks came and picked us up, Mr Georgiou and his wife, they took us and we stayed at their house.

Ath– Ah, with a Greek family...

Akr – We stayed there for the night. And the next morning they took us to the hospital we were meant to go. There were 13 Greeks in Whanganui.

Ath– Yes? In the hospital?

Akr – Not in the hospital, in the whole city. There were 13. In the hospital there were me and Artemis, there were two other girls, Christina and Stella who worked at the school, a private school, where the Queen's son was teaching. Teacher.

Students from many countries were going to this school. And they were at this school.

Ath- The private school of Whanganui

Akr - Yes, yes...

Akr - It is very....And the girls used to come around if they had time,we also used to go to them. It was difficult. We went to the dining room and we were collecting the plates, we were washing the plates, washing?, we used to put them in the dish washer, and so to learn the language they put us on different hours. One was staring at 6 o'clock was finishing at 4 and the other used to start at 10 and so we were obliged to learn to speak English. But the girls at the dining room they were so good to us that I will never forget them until I die. We were sitting down, they were so patient at the serviettes, they were taking me along and thus I learned to write, to teach me how to speak, what was the word for each item, they were finding and bringing things and they they were naming the objects so to learn them, this is the way we call this, they used to take me for walks, they took me as far as Palmerston North. I will never forget them. It was so...and despite the fact that I was alone and many times I wanted something and I couldn't express it and started to cry because I didn't know how to.... but these girls made me feel like one of them. As if we were sisters. And so, slowly, I learned to speak, eh, speak, I sam capable now to do so and I don't need my children, if I have to go to the doctor now or anywhere else I am able to manage by myself. And it is, I feel free. Because wherever I might go I can cope.

Ath- So, αυτό ήτανε το Whanganui Hospital?

Akr - Whanganui Hospital. Yes. I stayed there for a year and a half. And then I left and went to Wellington.

Ath- Και στο Whanganui Hospital τι δουλειά έκανες;

Akr - I was at the dining room where the doctors and the nurses were eating. I was picking up the plates and cheaned them. We were cleaning the tales but it was exceptional, everybody were amazing, even the doctors, tecahers who were coming, you know, and they knew that we couldn't speak the language, they were taking care of us, they were talking to us so slow that we were able to understand, eh, they made us repeat they word they were teaching us and if weren't correct they weren't laughing to mock us, they were stopping until we were able to say it correctly. This crowd, what can I tell you, is like my brothers and sisters to me, despite that I cannot, I lost any contact with them, because I don't know how to write, so I have lost any contact with them but I will always have them in my heart. I love them.

Ath- And how did you work for six days a week?

Akr - Yes, we were staying in the hospital.

Ath- Yes

Akr – At the hostel they have in the premises, eh, we had excellent time.

Ath– Were you home sick?

Akr – Of course, because in a place without anyone of your relatives and not knowing the language, and it was difficult also to learn, how to get to the place to find the other girls, because they were at the school, it wasn't that easy. You didn't know, after we managed to find out where to go, it was all right. Then you get used to it. And eventually you come to realize that I am here, and I couldn't send a letter to my parents saying that I was unhappy because they didn't want me to leave. My family didn't want me to leave and I decided it myself, so I couldn't come back to them saying, you know.

Ath– Yes, yes. I made a mistake.

Akr – It is not possible to say that. And so, as the time passed I got used to it, this is also a habit.

Ath– And did you get your first pay cheque? What was that like?

Akr – It was nine pounds.

Ath– Nine pounds.

Akr – It was pounds. [7'01]

Ath– Was it the first time you had so much money in your hands?

Akr – In my hands. And the girls took us to the bank, we opened an account, we didn't have any expenses. Our food, our staying was paid, apart from our personal expenses, if we wanted to have any. Unless of course if you wanted to buy something individually.

Ath– Yes!

Akr – Soap and things like this. They even had the soap. It was in the baths, they had soap, but the shampoo for your hair, these things. If we wanted to collect money, I did for the first month and send it to Crete.

Ath– Ah!

Akr – All the money!

Ath– And then?

Akr – Then I was collecting slowly, I was collecting the money, as we all do in the beginning, we collect the money and we say that we won't spend it, we will economize as best as possible and we will go back. In the meanwhile, luck plays its

role, things become this way that you stay, you stay. Now we are going to Greece, we are foreigners.

Ath– Yes – So, you weren't sending money every month to Athens. To Athens, to Crete?

Akr – No, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter, I sent many times, abut no, I used to send also parcels, I was buying things, you know, clothes and similar things, and I was sending them. Meanwhile my parents and my brothers and sisters didn't want me to send.

Ath– You would save it because you were thinking of going back and you would have need the money.

Akr – Yes..

Ath– Yes. And did your parent write to you?

Akr – Yes, we were sending letters an dsometimes, you know, I used to call them and it was difficult because there was only one phone, thecommunal phone. Every village had a phone. And you had to call not as we do nowadays. I was ringing today, saying that I ws going to ring tomorrow at a certain hour so my mother or my father to be there to talk to them. It was very difficult, it wasn't that easy. Now everybody has one at home. But life back then was completely different. Don't mention, that when I first went back married and having my three children it wasn't easy to call even back to New Zealand, to home.

Ath– Yes, yes.

Akr – Because there weren't available phone lines.

Ath– ... you aid that you left from Whanganui Hospital after a year, how and why, shouldn't you have stayed there for two years?

Akr – I left and I went again to the Wellington Hospital. Again to a public job.

Ath–Did you ask to leave?

Akr –Yes, the first time I asked.

Ath– Why?

Akr –They had to know where I was.

Ath–But why did you want to leave?

Akr –Because most of the girls which we left together from Greece, they remained in Welington. Most of them were working at the laundry in Wellington Hospital.

Ath- A, where you in touch with them?

Akr – Yes, and later I went there and I stayed but not for long because the sound of the machines damaged my ears which started to bleed.

Ath- Why, how?

Akr –You know, the washing machines, the ironing machines...

Evay – Did they damage your hearing?

Ath- In the laundry

Akr – Yeah.

Ath- So, did you know that the other girls were in Wellington?

Akr – Of course!

Ath- And you wanted to go....

Akr – Yes!

Ath-With them because you were lonely....

Akr – Yes!

Ath- Lonely

Akr – Yes, I wanted my friends!

Ath- No. So, did you have to, did you have to make an application?

Akr –No, I went, I left from Whanganui, I resigned and left from the Hospital and public officers rang because they were responsible about where I was abd what I was doing....

Ath- ...yes, yes....

Akr – and they turned me in, that I left. And I went to Wellingotn, to the Immigration, , it used to be at Corner Place, I don't know where it is now, it is not there anymore. I went there and already I had found a job at the hospital, the girls had found a job for me, so I went and told them that I was going to go there. In the meantime, since my ears started to hurt and started to bleed, I went to the boss, I don't know what her name was, Matron I think it was and I told her that I need to leave from there because I cannot work there, to put me at the packet rooms,, you know, where they are packing and folding the clothes they keep....

Ath- ...yes....

Akr – ... or where they put them in bags and take them to the hospital. There, they didn't only work for the hospital, but also for other places where clothes were needed. And she declined my application and didn't want to transfer me so I left and went to Whanganui, in a fish shop...

Ath– Did you go back to Whanganui?

Akr – Ranuy is the one and Whanganui is the other....

Ath– A, Ranuy

Akr – yes, they are different places

Ath– The other one is near Wellington, yes...

Akr – Yes, yes. I went there and worked at a fish shop. No, this fish shop is owned by a nephew of mine.

Ath–How did you find this fish shop?

Akr –In Wellington I used to stay in a private, you know the government didn't have a hostel for the girls to stay, there was not any space, there was not a room for me to go, and so we were renting a room, Diana, that girl who....her sister and me we were staying in a room. There, there was someone who told me, he was Greek-Bulgarian, he was from Bulgaria, his wife was Greek-Rumanian, and I went there and started to work. I got angry then and didn't go even to the immigration. Because I went and told them that I cannot live, I cannot stay there otherwise I will lose my hearing and they did nothing and so I disappeared.

Ath– Oh that's not very good since they have said that they would take care of you....

Akr – And so I left.

Ath– So you hadn't done the two years

Akr – No, I had to pay sixty pounds, according to the legislation I had to pay sixty pounds.

Ath– Really?

Akr –But because, you know, it was mostly their fault, I didn't have to pay anything. My boss had to give a report on what I was doing, if I was all right or not, they had to know. Up to two years. In the meantime I completed this period, the government didn't have to do with me anymore.

Ath– So you never paid the money because they didn't catch you.

Akr – No!

Ath- And what was like working at the fish? Was it a fish factory or...?

Akr - No a shop.

Ath- A fish shop.

Akr - A fish shop.

Ath- But fish and chips.

Akr - Yes, fish and chips. It is hard working in a fish and chips shop, it is no teasy, you are around fire, oil, it is very difficult. You have to be extremely careful.

Ath- Yes

Akr - But it wasn't and...at the age I was then, you are not afraid, you don't have the fear that you have now, when you turn on the frying pan and you scream "No!". Things were different then, life was different.

Ath- And when you had the trouble with your ears you didn't think oh I am going to go home now.

Akr - I couldn't leave.

Ath- Because your two years were not up.

Akr -It was also this, also that I didn't want to leave afterwards, you know, I made up my minde, I came to make money in order to go back.

Ath-Ah, did you have in mind a figure that you had to save, how much money you wanted to take back?

Akr -I never thought that, but I knew that the money I had made by then it wsn't enough to go back and live in Greece.

Evay -And so you remained...

Akr - I remained...

Ath- So, for how long did you have the fish and chips shop?

Akr - I stayed there for a year, a year and a half, I think. In the meantime the girls went to work at Shelly Bay, if you know, at the military base. Shelly Bay and Washa Bay. Shelly Bay is for men and Washa Bay is for women, Diana used to work there, Diana with whom we went together and she started to work there. And the money was good.

Ath- Was it a hospital?

Akr – No, It is military....

Eva – Military base

Ath– Military base

Akr – Yeah. They are soldiers.

Ath– Shelly Bay

Akr – Shelly Bay

Ath– And what was the women's one?

Akr – Washa Bay

Ath– Washa Bay?

Akr –It's not far, I am not sure if it is still there. If the military section is still there. But it was there those days. And so I left from the fish shop and I went there and I was working at the mash, at the officers' dining room. I was a waitress, it was very nice, the job was very easy, and you know, the people were very nice there. I was working with rena, we were working together. Diana was working at the other one, in Washa Bay, where the women were. Anyhow we had a great time there. Afterwards I met my husband...

Ath– So, during this period you were staying in a small house, you said?

Akr – Μένναμε σε ένα δωμάτιο. We were living in a room.

Ath– One, one room.

Akr – One room three of us.

Ath– Three of you

Akr – Yes.

Ath– Was that to save money?

Akr – It was more for to have company. Because the three of us we were friends but we had no one else. You know, we, the girls, we were on our own, and we had our friends as our sisters, our mothers and such things. Friendship, all things were gathered. Family, parents, friends, everything was together. It was nice. Because you weren't alone, and even going shopping, one was helping the other, you know, with the english and we had very good time.

Ath- And what did you do when you weren't working? Since you were working, did you have celebrations?

Akr - No, because we didn't have much time for celebrations. Because starting work at 10, you had to finish by 6, work was finishing at 6, but by the time to finish everything, to wash, you were, definitely, leaving work six thirty. You were getting home around seven thirty, just before eight, what could you do? We were staying home. We were going for a walk to the shops, at the most, if the shops were open. But they used to close down between four thirty and five. So, there wasn't any place to go to. We didn't know the entertainment places those dys. Believe me, even now, I don't know where people are going out in New Zealand.

Ath- And what about food? Did you cook Greek food?

Akr - Yes, we were cooking when we had day-off, we were cooking, but we were eating at work, mostly we were eating at work, the days we were working, we were eating at work.

Ath- And how was that?

Akr - I will tell you, I am easy going when it come to food, I like everything. When I was in Whanganui, the kitchen was new, and the utensils and everything were new, you know, and I used to like them but by the time I got used to them and started not to like them, I had left. After that I went to the fish-shop, you know, and they were cooking Greek food. After I went to that place with the soldiers, the food was special, it was like going here to a very luxurious hotel to eat. The food was special, so everytime there was different breakfast, different lunch, different dinner. Their food was special, was different. And so....

Ath- Yeah, you were fine. Άλλες missed the Greek food. Όμως εσύ ήσουνα easy. With the food.

Akr - Το φαί δεν το αναζήτησα και τόσο. Τώρα που είμαι τόσα χρόνια που μαγειρεύω Ελληνικά νομίζω άμα θα πάω σε αυτή την κουζίνα δεν θα μ'αρέσει.

Ath- So, how did you meet your husband?

Akr - My husband. I met him with Rita, I will give you her phone number to find her, she lives in Athens. She was staying at my husband's brother's house. My girlfriend, my brother in law was renting rooms and my husband was staying there. His brother brought him over to New Zealand.

Ath- From which place?

Akr - He is Cretan.

Ath- Cretan?

Akr – From Crete. And I used to go to my girlfriends and we met there. It started there, we went out a few times, that was it.

Ath– Ah, did you go out on dates, on your own?

Akr – No, I don't remember going out on our own much, we went to the movies, then, they were screening Greek movies and we used to go with my brother and my girlfriends, you know, as a group, now even there they don't do these things. We had a very good time in New Zealand. Now, we used to go out, picnics.

Ath– Yes.

Akr – And all these. Even now they do, but not as back then, then it was different.

Ath– Yes, yes, I remember. We used to do Greek pic nics.

Akr – Yeah.

Ath– Very special

Akr – When I got married we used to have many parties.

Ath– Ah...

Ath– So, you were going out with your husband?

Akr – Ehm we got to know each other.

Ath– Yes, you got to know each other. With friends?

Akr – Yes.

Ath– And after, what did he do? Did he ask you to marry him or did he write to your parents? What?

Akr – No, no, no.

Ath– No

Akr – My parents didn't have to do anything with this. We had a civil wedding and later on we had our religious wedding, we had it when I was three months pregnant.

Ath– Ah, tell us about that. How did that happen?

Akr – We were staying together but we did the civil wedding..

Ath– So, when you met the...

Akr - ... husband, after few months we were staying together.

Ath- Yes. So you decided to live together.

Akr - to live together

Ath- That was risk e?

Akr - Very risky.

Ath- Aha, how did that happen?

Akr -If you love someone you want to stay with him.

Ath- Yes, I know it but those days it was unusual.

Akr - It was unusual, it was very unusual but also the conditions were unusual. Because I had no one to ask. My mother, my father, whom to ask...

Ath-But those, those years, to stay with a man without been married to him, it was a big deal.

Akr - Not such a big deal, as you believe.

Ath- Yes.

Akr -No, because many girls used to live like this because they had no one to tell them to guide them the way it should have been.

Ath- So the other Greeks, the Greek Community didn't comment on that?

Akr -They said nothing in front of me.

Evaγ -Eh, they were supposing that you were going to get married.

Akr -Eh, but we got engaged, we had a big engagement party.

Eva - So it was public it was official.

Akr - Public, it's official.

Eva - It was a commitment, it was not just they were a boyfriend and girlfriend.

Ath- I know but this is very interesting for me. In the sixties it is very interesting.

Eva - But they did it in Greece, fiancé could live together.

Akr - Yeah

Eva - Yeah

Akr – Now in Cyprus the girl must get pregnant to get married. If she is not pregnant they don't even get engaged.

Ath– In Cyprus...

Akr – Ah, you don't know this?

Ath– No

Ath– So, Ah, you were staying together? So it is a love match?

Akr – Yes. Yes.

Ath– So, when you went out with him you thought this is the one?

Akr – He was beautiful man. With the best memories with him.

Eva – He was good to you?

Akr – Very good.

Ath– Why he was different to the other men in Greece, in Crete?

Akr – Well, he was very kind, he liked to help people that I loved very much because we help a lot of people in many ways. He helped more because I was at home the most of the time because I had the little ones but he liked to help and he was very gentle, very as a husband, as a father and friend. He was very very good, ask anybody. When he died they had a memorial in New Zealand the Greek people in club, one here and one in Greece. He was very special person. He was different from the rest – I don't say because he was my husband but if you ask people they tell you.

Ath– It sounds like you were fussy and that you wanted somebody different, you didn't want the same thing that you know you saw around you so you lived together after a few months did you rent to place, was that easy for you to rent a place as a non married couple?

Akr – We were living in a room at his brother's house.

Ath– Ah, I see.

Akr – We were staying at his brother's house.

Ath– Και so what was that like? So you first time had sex what was that like? For someone who knew nothing about it? Did you think this is strange?

Akr – Was something I never expected. I think nobody expect this anyway but it's past.

Ath- And was that ok?

Akr - Yes.

Ath- Nowadays women are expecting to enjoy sex was that always the case back then?

Akr - No, no. Not my knowledge. Because at that time now the girls they talk about it, everything but that time we didn't think those things, those things was secret, was special things. I don't like to talk about it now. It is something I think that persons doesn't include anybody else.

Ath- But for you was it more just you have sex to have babies, it was something special between the man and the woman.

Akr - Yes. Was. Except the babies yes.

Ath- And so you said that you had a civil marriage or registry office. How soon after did you do that?

Akr - After we got engaged. We have done that. Priest didn't like it.

Ath- Ah so you had a registry office wedding straight away when you got engaged?

Akr - Yeah.

Ath- But you were living together already?

Akr - Yes

Ath- But you were living together and then you got engaged and then you had a registry office wedding. That was a game, two Greeks doing that. That was brave. Why did you decide to do that?

Akr - Oh I didn't like to live just like that.

Ath- So you wanted to make it an official in some way.

Akr - Yes. Some way.

Ath- And why you didn't get married in the Greek Church straight away?

Akr - We didn't have the money.

Ath- Is it expensive?

Akr – It is because we bought, we got engaged, we bought a shop and we put all our money in there and the wedding had to be something special [? 30:47] we got to the church and get married and that's it finished but he wanted it a party so...

Ath– right. So you had to save that for the wedding.

Akr – Yes. That's why we didn't have this straight away.

Ath– So how long did you wait before you had your white wedding?

Akr – 3 months, I was 3 months pregnant when we got married.

Ath– That's probably not unusual

Akr – No

Ath– And where did you get married and...?

Akr – In Wellington church.

Ath– In Wellington

Eva – Chania Street

Akr – Virgin Mary, in Chania street, yeah.

Ath– That's a Greek Church?

Akr – Yes.

Ath– It was a Greek priest

Ath– You said that the priest didn't like the fact that you had a registry

Akr – Yes

Ath– What did he say to you?

Akr – He said you shouldn't do both of them. I said to him do it now. I didn't care. It doesn't make any difference. So...

Ath– So what happened after that? You had your baby?

Akr – I had my first baby, I used to work in a fish shop. My husband didn't know or understand a lot of English, he used to learn in Greece, he could write and read but he couldn't speak properly so we worked together. It was nice because I worked with him all the time. So when I left Friday night I was late shopping we left from the shop 10pm at night and I had pain. And we went home and my sister-in-law because we used to live altogether says [? 32:59] I couldn't eat so next day I went to

the hospital, I went by myself, a friend of ours took me to the hospital because my husband had to go to the shop. And I had my baby. My husband came after he closed the shop on Saturday night and my son born Sunday morning. 1 o'clock after midnight. I was by myself all the time. And the experience to have the first baby was something and then you didn't have anybody to teach you new things, to breastfeed him, to change him, was a beautiful lady, she was very very old, the mitron [? 33:52] of the son Helen's Hospital, she was very special. I was in hospital for 14 days she came every day, she teach me how to bath the baby, how to dress the baby, what to do.

Ath- That was a long time 14 days?

Akr - Yes it was

Ath- It wasn't ceserean was it?

Akr - No, no. That time was 14, 2 weeks

Ath- Wow.

Akr - In the hospital. Now it is 2 days but that time was...

Ath- So, when did you go back to Greece?

Akr - In 1979.

Ath- And that was before your brother came out?

Akr - No my brother was in New Zealand.

Ath- Ah, so when did he come to New Zealand?

Akr - In 1969 I don't know.

Ath- And this was your oldest brother?

Akr - No, no.

Ath- The young one?

Akr - Young one. The one still there. He is still in Wellington. Why you haven't saw my sister-in-law Chrysoula?

Eva - We live in Auckland so we don't know many very much the Wellington Greeks.

Ath- So, did he write to you and say that he want to come out? Or did you suggest?

Akr – Yes, he is gonna come so I brought him. I made the papers and New Zealand Government said ok, I had to find him a job, so we took him working with us in the shop. It was ok and then we brought my other brother, but my other brother they came late. He came after I went to Greece and come back.

Ath– So you went back to Greece in '79 for the first time? When you left?

Akr – Yes, and we stay; come back to New Zealand in '81.

Ath– So, had you packed up to go back to Greece? Or you just would...?

Akr – Yes, took everything. Some of my things are still there. My washing machine, my dryer, my tables, my fridges, things, I left them all there.

Ath– So, what brought that about? Did you think it is time to go back home?

Akr – My husband he wanted to move, he wanted to go to Greece.

Ath– Did he?

Akr – Yes.

Ath– Why was that?

Akr – He thought it was better for our children like we say you know it is better to you know your own country. But I find out in hard way – no.

Ath– So you packed up everything and went back to your, where did you go?

Akr – I went to the village of my husband, my husband's village, that's where he lived.

Eva – Where is it?

Akr – In Agia Kidonias. And we sold two units we had in Wellington, a house we had in Lower Hutt and the shop and took all the money to Greece. We built a beautiful house in Galata, yeah outside Chania, we bought a property, we had about 400 orange trees, we had cows, we had goats, we had chickens, rabbits, we had everything. But what was very hard for my children. Because got school there, to university, it is very hard, you need a lot of money, the money we need was not enough just for one, because my first son he wanted to be designer electric for the planes. So to work the rest of my family just for one it wasn't, wasn't right.

Ath– How many children did you have at that stage?

Akr – I had 4 and my fifth wouldn't there. So I did like the life.

Ath– So did you find that you have changed or? The Greeks changed?

Akr – If I was me and my husband I had just 2 children it would be different. Perhaps money we made perhaps we had enough to bring them, to take them to schools and do something about it, but 5 children was impossible. To send them to school, you know, to educate them. It was impossible. And I don't want my children in the village to go to stay home. And when to find something to do. Because if you are not educated you can't find a job, very hard.

Ath– And you hadn't thought about this before you went back?

Akr – I never thought Greece was that bad

Ath– You forgotten about the schools?

Akr – I don't think I forget completely but I never thought they are expensive so much up now.

Evay –When you went back, in 1979, was it the first time you were going back after you left?

Akr – Yes.

Ath – And where your parents alive?

Akr – No, my mother was. But my father no.

Ath– When did your father pass away?

Akr – My father passed '71. I had my third son six months.

Ath– And what was that like going back home to the village to see your mother for the first time?

Akr – Was like born. When you are born it doesn't matter I love New Zealand, I love Australia but the place you born is something different altogether. And to see your mother it is very very special.

Ath– So you liked being back in Greece was just the fact you didn't get to earn enough money to educate your children?

Akr – That's part of it.

Ath– Or they were things in Greek life you didn't like any more or...?

Akr – For me we had other issues except the money. We had problems, other problems.

Ath– With the families?

Akr – We build, the house we built, a first cousin of my husband get us the property and it was too much money. He had too much money. A lot of money and the rest of the family didn't like it. Because we were to get all the money. I never done it for the money. That's why I left.

Ath– Akrivi's son, Manos just walked in.

This is file identification 4 interview with Akrivi continuing and there is a lot of traffic and noise in the background because we are on the main road.

Ath– So did you find the dynamics to be with your husband's family was all problematic?

Akr – Yeah.

Ath– They made a lot of problems so I had left.

Eva – So how did you say that?

Akr – Just on my husband we were not there. I said to him if you are not coming I take the children and go. Take them out of the country.

Ath– Was he happy then?

Akr – Yes. Yes. In Greece, not, no. He didn't like it. He wanted he never thought a minute to leave his family so we pack everything, somethings they came to New Zealand, somethings they stayed in Greece or wherever.

This is file number 5 interview with Akrivi Hiotaki continuing.

Ath– Sorry you were saying that your husband

Akr – We had to leave. Because there were many things causing problems,, I never had any problems from my relatives, , never any problems, but from the other side because the money makes your best friend your enemy best friend. So I didn't like it. I didn't like the atmosphere for my children, for me for everybody. We just sold the house and left the rest and planning to go back home, I am calling New Zealand home.

Ath– Wow. So you went back to New Zealand? To Wellington?

Akr – Yes.

Ath– And what did you get to do when you got to Wellington?

Akr – My husband start work, we rent a house and my husband start working in a fish shop and I stayed home with my children. I couldn't work because children was little so we managed with my husband's wages. It was tough but we manage.

Ath- And so what happened with Australia? When did you decide to come here?

Akr – Oh Australia, my brother-in-law came here from New Zealand so a friend...

Ath- ...brother-in-law?

Akr – ...my brother-in-law, my husband's brother

Ath- Ah, your husband's brother. The one that you lived with when first...

Akr – yes. No, no that one. It is another one.

Ath- Another one. And why did he come to Australia?

Akr – He came, life is better than New Zealand.

Ath- Is this why he came?

Akr – If you want...yeah...because his son liked it better, came for holiday here he found out other Greeks here, the Greek food, Greek night clubs and all of these things that you cannot find them in New Zealand. So she made his parents sell everything in New Zealand and came here. So my Mano came with my husband and helped a friend of ours to go, he had a fish shop, so my husband came with Manoli and looked after it for few months and he went to Greece then got married. So Manoli didn't want to come back to New Zealand. He stay here and then the rest of my children came and what I am going to do without my children in New Zealand?

Ath- Ah, was your children who came over?

Akr – So, I came.

Ath- And so you and your husband decided to pack up and come here?

Akr – My children was here and what am I going to do – we spent too much money being on the phones all the time and everything so, and I missed them. And they were young. They need the parents near them. So we came.

Ath- So how old were you then? When you moved here? What year was that?

Akr – 1990.

Ath- 1990

Akr – 1990. I am nearly 21 years here.

Ath- Wow. 1990. And so when you came here you came straight to Sydney?

Akr – Yes

Ath- And what sort of work did you do when you came here?

Akr - We bought a cleaning jobs

Ath- Ah yeah. A cleaning contract.

Akr - contract in a pub, club or whatever they call them. And also we work at cleaning schools. My husband with another gentleman work in cleaning [? 4:17] you know this sort of things. And then we bought a shop, fish shop, but here is different from New Zealand. Here you have to be very very careful so we never had it very long the shop.

Ath- What was it dangerous or what was? What do you mean you had to be very careful?

Akr - Here the competition is very very big

Ath- big?

Eva - Competition

Akr - competition

Ath- Oh the competition. Yeah

Akr - And when we open the shop was one Greek shopping here and the other one there and we were here so those two wanted us out. So they made us go.

Ath- Ah.

Akr - We are not very good race, are we?

Ath- Ah, I think it is business. Nothing to do with race. So what did you do after that?

Akr - After that we clean, came back to cleaning again for few months and then my husband got sick and he couldn't work so stopped too.

Ath- You stopped as well?

Akr - Yes

Ath- To look after him

Ath- So, what, how would you describe your life here compare to New Zealand?

Akr - In New Zealand it's easier to move because the place is little, is small. And from Mt Victoria used to [? 5:58] to turn in here it is different story because you have to go, to change trains and buses and that but life is better here you find Greek

things, find them easier, cheaper, and my children got jobs here. I don't think they can find both jobs in New Zealand now.

Ath- And what do your children do?

Akr - Emmanuel he is a painter, he can find easy in New Zealand job. But one of my sons, the little one he is working in a factory, which fix up the aluminium and windows, he is the boss there. My first son he is working in the company, the exercise machines, he is like a teacher and he fix up all the electronic things. And he get good money. They sent him everywhere. And my other son, Spyro, he is working on electronics too he fixes up TVs and...how do you call them, you know all this complication things we've got today in all of the hospitals, sometimes you go and you see all the officers in the factories they have the machines all those computers or no, he is fixing all this up.

Ath- Yes, yes. Ah ok, he is an IT

Akr - Oh I don't know how they call them.

Ath- And so really you came here to be near your children and they came to have a better life.

Akr - Yes.

Ath- And so you sound like that you've got mixed feelings about...

Akr - Oh New Zealand, I love New Zealand. I love New Zealand. I love New Zealand.

Ath- Because it is easier to live

Akr - No, it's not, it's not just the living, but because I think I came there I was, I tell you in Greece I don't remember all my first years you know until I was 10 years old I don't remember much. New Zealand I remember all from the beginning to the end. I remember everything.

Ath- Because it was so different

Akr - Yeah. And I have got married there; my children were born there

Ath-You became an adult

Akr - Yeah, my friends everything were there. Here it is very hard to have friends. Not because, it is too far away. And until you know, I have got friends at the other side to go there it takes me a day to go there. To stay half an hour. From here to go to La Ceiba or [? 9"14] I have to change two buses and train it's not very easy to see your friends here and in New Zealand was quicker, easier.

Ath- Yeah, it is smaller.

Akr – It is smaller.

Ath– And so, despite the fact that there is more Greeks here you are not making as many, or you are not seen them as often. As you would in New Zealand.

Akr – No, no.

Eva – So do you have often the opportunity to go to Greek Community events?

Akr – If I want to, yes I can. If I want to yes.

Ath- If you want to. But you don't want to?

Akr – Not because I don't want to, if you don't have friends to go with, you know it is not easy.

Eva – How about your children? Do they go to these events?

Ath– They don't mix with the Greeks?

Akr – Not very often.

Eva – Do you speak Greek at home?

Akr – Yes. Yes.

Ath– Why do you think they don't mix with Greeks?

Akr – They do mix with Greeks it's not they don't mix but it's, how can I say it? They've got friends, they've got different, I don't want to go to the nightclub, what am I going to do at the nightclub?

Eva –Do you go to the Greek Church?

Akr – Oh yes.

Eva –Do you go every Sunday or whenever you are able to?

Akr –I go every Sunday, and this morning I had to go to the Church but I wasn't feeling well so I didn't go.

Eva –Is there a Greek Church near here?

Akr – There is at [? 10'49] a bus, it is near our Greek Church. Ayia Efthymia is near us. I go very often, I never miss going to the Church. Church brings peace to me I also see all my girlfriends there. It is something that....Its is something that we ought to have it in our lives.

Ath– So if you had a choice where would you live?

Akr – New Zealand.

Ath– New Zealand.

Akr – One day I think I will go back.

Ath– Really? And not Greece.

Akr – Greece no, I am sorry.

Ath– Have you been back since your return?

Akr – Yes. It's been a year and a half since I came back, I stayed for two months.

Ath– Why do you go back?

Akr – I am not saying I am not going back, to go back, to live there, I don't think I can any more. I change. I change.

Ath– How have you changed do you think?

Akr – Different cultures, different language, I don't know why I change but I think they change too. Because you don't see them often. And how often I saw them in so many years. '64 I saw them twice or three times, I went three times in Greece.

Ath– So you don't, your sisters are still there?

Akr – Yes. I ring them up I talk to them so often.

Ath– But you don't have much in common or...?

Akr – My first sister yes but the rest they got children, they got their work...

Eva - ...their life...

Akr – Their life. It is different, they got their friends it is different it's altogether, I am outsider

Ath– You are an outsider?

Akr – Doesn't matter, if, you know, it's not the same.

Ath– So when you go back to Greece the fact that everybody is speaking your language and they look familiar that doesn't make you feel oh...

Akr – Oh I feel happy to be with them. And I feel very sad when I left. I lost about 5 kilos. In one week when I came back from Greece. Because I missed everything from there. But I don't think I can live there anymore.

Ath- Yeah well once you have your mind somewhere you can't be happy anywhere really.

Akr - It is very hard. It is very hard. It is very very hard. Because the other my sister the other my brother and everything but I don't know why, so many years apart, they have their own lives settle and I have my own

Ath- Yeah

Akr - Own paths. Different.

Ath- Distance separates people

Akr - With my brother in New Zealand is different.

Ath- So that your younger or your older one?

Akr - My younger brother.

Eva - So the older brother went when you were back in New Zealand but he didn't stay long?

Akr - No. He stayed two years.

Eva - He didn't like it?

Akr - No

Eva - No. He was already told to.

Akr - No, he didn't like. His second daughter born New Zealand but he didn't like it. They had their own house in [? 14'28], his wife missing her parents and...

Ath- It is hard to learn a new language too when you are an adult.

Akr - Yeah, they are ok. They are alright.

Eva - They didn't need to migrate perhaps.

Akr - [? 14:49] this is how they see it.

Eva - But your other brother in New Zealand is happy there? His family?

Akr - Yes. My brother in New Zealand he has two sons and a daughter, his daughter is a teacher. One his son is working where he is finding a job the other one he is in the bank. He's high up in the bank I don't know what exactly he is doing but I know they send him everywhere. With a money.

Ath– So looking back in your life, would you have changed anything?

Akr – Not really. No. No. I was happy. My life in New Zealand was like a dream. The people, we never went, often out, oh how I say it. My times, the celebrations the Greeks used to organize, the pic nik, and that we always went. But to go shopping or that it wasn't very often we went with my husband out. But all people they say we look like we had 5-6 children we went hand to hand everywhere. It's a..., I miss it very much.

Eva – Did I talk to your daughter when I phoned?

Akr – Yes.

Eva – Because I asked her which country did she prefer and she said New Zealand was good but she likes living in Australia because there are more opportunities – this is where their home is. So children prefer to live in Australia.

Akr – In Australia, yes.

Eva – But she is married to an Italian e?

Akr – Yes.

Ath– But you think children always want to go something bigger and better like you left and they left New Zealand to something bigger and better. It is once you have done this it is hard for...

Akr – It is hard to go in small places now. For that.

Ath– A lot of people are going from a village to a city.

Akr – For me it's better because quieter.

Ath– You are in different stage of your life.

Akr – But for them it's exciting because they are going to a thousand people here you can't, you are going to the city and you can walk and they like it that way. And the friends they had in New Zealand, they, so many years now, twenty...my children is 21 years, they closed 21 years being left New Zealand. I have few months to go that. But, and it is long long time to [?17:40] you go the different ways. Here they met new friends, very, seeing them every day they have better life in here. They can do things here better than New Zealand. New Zealand is little. One day they could see it is better, I hope so.

Ath– Yes, maybe.

Akr – maybe. It is very hard to move from one side to the other.

Eva – Just one question I want to ask you about if you see there are any differences between the Greeks in New Zealand and the Greeks, here, in Australia?

Akr – Yes

Eva – What are these differences?

Akr – Here the Greeks really, I don't know how they do it, they have some friends and they stay close to that. You are outsider. You know. They say you hello but they never invited you to their home even you invite them to your home and they come and have coffee and that they see you after a few days and they really don't know you. I find it very...but there are so many here. And it is not very easy to, how am I going to say it...

Eva – ...to maintain a friendship?

Akr – Yes, and to know which is good and which is better. Because too many things happened and here is too many you cannot show trust easily here. It is a different life to the one New Zealand. New Zealand is quieter and you know the person next to you. You don't know him here. Here, I have seen my neighbor only once. Here, exactly next to me. I spoke to them many times. I never say to her, they never say hello so I didn't talk to them any more. I see them from here, there is not even a good boy, you know, they are not Greeks, from this side they are Lebanese and from the other side I don't know, they are from those ones.... But it is not very easy to trust them. It is not that easy. In New Zealand, we, the Greeks, were very few, I remember, we used to go for picnic, we used to be a very big family in the church, if you were meeting someone at the shops, they used to stop and have a discussion with you, to chat with you. If you were asking for something, you knew, there was help. . But here is different, it's really different. You go to the shops, you meet Greeks and they never talk to you in Greek. Very very few. To speak to you in Greek, even though you know, so many times, you know, I do it on purpose and I talk to them in Greek and they don't answer back.

Eva – Really?

Akr –. While there might be another Greek lady, which they know and they start chatting to her, but they are not going to speak to me, to the other lady....

Eva – So, they choose to whom they will...

Akr - They will speak. Two days ago we went out and we sat down, my brother was also her, we sat down to eat, and a lady, was sitting with us. We asked her, I didn't know that she was Greek. I asked her if we can sit along, there were three chairs, the table wasn't completely empty. She said "sit". We were speaking in Greek. They brought our food which we ate, and she wasn't talking to us, she didn't tell us a single word. She spoke to us only in English, whatever we asked her, and you know, we tried to make her participate in our discussion. Afterwards, a lady comes and she asked her "are you still sitting here?"

Evay – In Greek?

Akr –Yes, and she was speaking in Greek later on. I said “look”. It is not...I don't know...don't we trust...don't...I don't know. They have become...they don't trust as we used to do in New Zealand.

Evay –And the next question in relation to this lady, Mrs Akrivi, is, when you ere in New Zealand, do you think that the people used to look at you differently from how they do here in Australia? In other words, because your are Greek, a foreigner, do you think that there is a difference in the way they treat you?

Akr – No.

Evay – It is the same one.

Akr –No, No. I haven't seen form any race, from any country, as the Muslims say, Let's talk about the Muslims, i fave friends who are Muslims, men and women, I haven't been to their houses, they have ionvited me but I haven't gone. It is my fault not theirs and they have never shown me, both men and women, that I am lower class citizen that them, as people say, that the Muslim men consider women as a lower class. I think that we also to blaim in some respects. Because if you walk pass someone and you don't greet him, he won't speak to you either.

Evay – Correct.

Akr –I discover that because I don't drive and because I travel all around Sydney in buses and trains and I am sitting in buses and trains and many times, if I miss the bus, I am waiting at the bus terminals even for half an hour for the next one to come and discuss with everyone, whoever is there I will talk to him. I like talking to people. I like learning and all these. I have never found, man or woman, who wasn't respectful to me, I never felt that I am a foreigner, I believe that in many cases, with the Muslims, it is us who make them like this.

Ath– The Musoulman?

Eva – It is our attitude as well.

Ath– Yes, yes...

Eva –I foy had to compare the Australians with the New Zealanders as human beings, what would you say? Are they the same or different?

Akr – New Zealanders are more kind than the Australians. The Australians are very egoists while the New Zealand are not. I lived a wonderful life in New Zealand, Maori used to respect us, there hasn't been Christmas, Easter, to come and shop from the shop without bringing roses or something else. They used to take care of us, I don't know If you know the Wahine that was sunk in Wellington, do you remember it? In this case it was the only shop that had electricity, the government

did it on purpose, because of our location, in the middle of Upper Hut and Lower Hut and wellington, and they used to come and shop because there weren't many shops with electricity and it was Friday and there was so much people coming and shopping that we didn't have anything more to cook. An the Moris came on their motorbikes, they were about two hundred people, they came inside, they ordered like gentlemen and they paid, but they want, because it was cold outside, to sit and eat inside, but, you know, the shop was, hat can I tell you, as big as this room, that big was the room where the pople used to come. And the rest were queueing outside and they couldn't get inside. My husband told them "you need to go, because the rest need to get inside and eat, there are children who are hungry", "we are not going, we will eat and then we will leave". "Come on, you need to go so people can come inside to eat", finally, you know, muy husband got angry and he took a knife like this "I will kill you if you won't go". The guys left and nothing happened, you know. On the next they came and stopped their motorbikes opposite the shop and they wanted to start the engines and get inside the shop so to break down the walls, you know, with the motorbikes. My husband went out and he sad to them "you want to destroy my shop, why do you want to destroy it, now, he said, when we both of us are calm. The people who waited outside they had homes, they had children who wanted to eat, I didn't ask you to leave because I wanted my space." Did you see what it is. They became our best friends and they were paying attention to the shop, they were protecting the shop from anyone who wanted to come in and break it down, to do something bad, no one could touch it. Do you belive that even now, people are coming, young guys who greet us, even here?

Evay – Really?

Akr – *From these guys.*

Evay – They respected the fact that they approached the man, respect him

Akr – *And we look after them when they shop. Good.*

Evay – *And when did your husband die, Mrs Akrivi?*

Akr – *It's been three and a half years now.*

Evay – *Ah, so it is recently!*

Evay – *God rest his soul!*

Akr – *God should rest the soul of everybody who is there. Why do I wear these? My children don't like the black clothes.*

Ath– *What good could the black clothes create?*

Akr – *They achieve nothing!*

Ath– *Nothing!*

Evay – *And, so, did you come to live with them when your husband passed away?*

Akr – No, no, no. This house is mine.

Evay – It's your house

Ath– You stay together

Evay –And you daughter with her husband and your son are also live here?

Akr –Three boys live here, my daughter, my son and his girlfriend.

Evay – Ah, do you see them all well?

Akr – Yes. And next Friday my son who is married will come to saty for a month, he will go to Greece for holiday, and after that they will go to Melbourne.

Evay –They are moving to Melbourne. Ah!

Ath– Well you had a good marriage.

Akr – Yes, best.

Ath– So you are lucky. Yeah.

Akr – Very lucky.

Ath– And like all good things some times they come to an end.

Akr – Yes.

Ath– But the good thing is that you've got some good memories.

Akr – Yes. And I got my children. Out of it.

Ath– Yes it is lovely that they are around you and instead of you being on your own you've got all of them, that's wonderful.

Eva – Yeah.

Akr – Yes.

Ath– Thank you very much

Akr – You are welcome.

Ath– Shall we turn off;

Akr – Yes.

Eva – Thank you very much.

Transcriptions by Lucy Anastasiadou-Hobbs