

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

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: *Eleftheria (Elli)
Katsigaraki*

Interviewers: *Athina Tsoulis,
Evangelia Papoutsaki*

Date: *15/5/2011*

Location: *Sydney, Australia*

Additional material:

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

Transcription by Lucy Anastasiadou - Hobbs

(**Ath** – Athina Tsoulis, **Eva** – Evangelia Papoutsaki, **El** – Eleftheria Katsigaraki, **N** – Nikos Petrakis, husband of Eleftheria)

This is file identification 7 an interview with *Eleftheria Katsigaraki*. *Eleftheria Katsigaraki*. The interview is for the oral history of Greek women and the interview is Athina Tsoulis, *Athina Tsoulis*. Also present is *Evangelia Papoutsaki*, *Evangelia Papoutsaki*. Also present in the room is *Eleftheria's* husband Nikos Petrakis, *Nikos Petrakis*. The interview is being held at the home of Eleftheria 134 Croyden Road, Sydney.

The recording equipment is a fostex fr 2 *El* recorder and ak g c 417 pp click on microphones.

And as I mentioned before this is file number 7.

Ath – So *Eleftheria*, where were you born?

El – *I was born in Kandanos*

Ath – In Kandanos, in Crete

El – *Crete*.

Ath – What year?

El – *In 1941*

Ath – And can you please tell me the name of our father and mother?

El – *The name of my father was Theophanis and my mother's was Aryiro*.

Ath – Did both of them come from Kandanos?

El – *Yes, both of them*.

Ath – Both of them.

El – *Both of them*.

Ath – And what was your father's occupation?

El – *My father was a barber*.

Ath – Ah, a barber. Was Kandanos large, a large village?

El – *It is a small town*.

Ath – A small town

El – *Yes*

Ath – And people were coming to your father to get a haircut...

El – *Yes.*

Ath – Yes, yes. And how about your mother?

El – *My mother was a housewife.*

Ath – Housewife. And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

El – *Altogether we were 11.*

Ath – 11?

El – *4 girls and 7 brothers.*

Ath – Could you name them in order for me?

El – *Of course. Girls Popi, Katina, Eleftheria which is me and Christina. And the brothers Yiannis, Yiorgos, Antonis, Pavlos, Eftihis, Manolis, Nikos.*

Ath – Right, were you the third child?

El – *I am the fifth.*

Ath – The fifth

El – *I think so.*

Ath – A, ok. And you also said that your mother had a few more babies that died.

El – *2 girls were died and I think she had one miscarriage as well.*

Ath – Did they die instantly?

El – *Yeah, very young age.*

Ath – Very young age. Ok. So can you talk to me about your earliest memories? In the village?

El – *Well yes, I was [? 9:39] I was seven years of age I start working in the farm, picking olives.*

Ath – Ah. So your family had a farm as well as...?

El – Yeah. What else did you do there? Up to working very hard up until 18 and I decided to learn hairdresser.

Ath – Oh ok.

El – After I had my own shop a couple of years

Ath – Oh ok. Let us go back a little bit. So is that your earliest memory 7 going to work on the farm? You don't remember anything before that?

El – That will do.

Ath – Did you go to school?

El – Well yes. Yeah.

Ath – Yeah.

El – Until forth. Because I had to help the family you know they couldn't send me to school any more.

Ath – Ok. So, you went to school but you would help after

El – Yeah

Ath – After school you helped at home. So did your parents talk much about the war?

El – My mother used to. Yeah.

Ath – What were the memories?

El – All I remember is that she was very [? 5:02] going hide behind the gates because the Germans was you know after kill us and yeah. We survived at the time.

Ath – So did the Germans come to your village?

El – Yes. For fight.

Ath – Burn houses.

El – That's right.

Ath – And what about your father? Was he hiding your father during the war?

El – I suppose so. Yeah.

Ath – He didn't talk about it very much?

El – Yeah. Well, it was hard though, very hard you know.

Ath – In what way?

El – All the childhood, you know. Since we were little, let's say we were so many kids my family so many kids we were over there. After the war was difficult.

Ath – Was very scared?

El – Oh no was not scared but, you know, would come to the stage shortage of food and everything, yeah.

Ath – This is what I mean. Food was not a lot.

El – No. Because they destroyed everything. Everything!

Evay – The Germans burnt Kandanos during the war, isn't it so?

El – Yes, everything!

Evay – Your house wasn't burnt?

El – The house too along everything else.

Evay – Was the house burnt?

El – Yeah.

Evay – And where did your parents use to live during the time your house was burnt?

El – I don't know. Friends. Yeah.

N – In another village?

El – Another town probably.

Evang – Did they use to talk about these things?

El – Yes

Ath – So, when you remember the place you used to live, what is your first memory where you lived?

El – Well I remember the house, you know, I left. They probably built other again.

Ath – The house on the same property is the other house?

El – *Yeah.*

Ath – Yeah. Did your parents didn't like talking about the war?

El – *No much.*

Ath – Was it the same for everybody in Kandanos, was something it was very hard.

El – *I suppose yeah. It was difficult for everyone not just my parents. Yeah.*

Ath – So what do you remember from your childhood working hard?

El – *This is what I can remember really. Oh yeah another thing. I remember because I was the youngest one always I was forced up to do jobs they said because the youngest one was to do the floor, to do the bread and all sorts of things.*

Evang – And since you were a family with many children, you had, how did you use to pass your time, so many children that you were....

El – *Happy.*

Evay – Happy, were you happy?

El – *Very happy. I remember When the priest of the village was coming to our place for a blessing, usually in the evenings, when he was going to the village coffe shop he used to say «Theophanis' house, when I went there, it was as if in a church».*

Evay – Yes?

El – *Can you imagine?*

Evay – «Church» because it was peaceful?

El – *Quiet. Yeah, yeah, quiet.*

Evay – And how was it, so many children???

El – *My father was very strict. Oh! Yeah. Very strict.*

Evay – Very strict?

El – *Yes.*

N- Excuse me to say a word, that they also had a large farm, their father did not only have the shop.

Evay – Yes.

Ath – Yes, and did your brothers and sisters went to school or were they like you?

El – *Well one I have got here she went to high school, the youngest one. But the other one she is a hairdresser, the second one, the first one probably worse than me*

Ath – So there is no one actually...

El – *Popi the first one.*

Ath – Did anyone go to the University?

El – *No, no, some of the... the youngest brother I think finished high school. We didn't have so many schools at the time, you know. No. High school for example, they burnt it, took them years to rebuild, you know.*

Ath – Did you use to like school?;

El – *Pardon?*

'Eleftheria's husband is talking but they told him that he is interrupting.'

El – *My oldest brother was a policeman (do you want all of this? All right). Second was music player?*

Ath – Musician?

El – *yeah. The third was barber but now he is, what is he, business like supermarket*

Ath – In Greek?

El – *Supermarket, yes. The other one-shoe maker, plumber, let me think*

Ath – So all sorts of trades

El – *The other one is technician; the youngest one is real estate.*

Evang – And all of them are in Greece except from your brother who is here?

El – *I do not have a brother, I have a sister.*

Evay – A sister here.

El - *Yes, all of them are there.*

Evay – All of them are there, in Kandanos?

El – *No.*

Evay – They were in Athens and in Chania. And in Kandanos. 2 in the Kandanos, the rest of them in Chania.

Ath – So, did you like school?

El – *I liked it, of course. Yeah but I didn't have the chance you know.*

Ath – So, there was not much food and you had to help at home.

El – *Oh yes.*

Ath – On the farm? And what did you do? Pick olives?

El – *Pick olives, I used to do, I was mowing the wheat. What else?*

Ath – Until you came to New Zealand?

El – *Yeah.*

Ath – You were doing these things. Oh you were a hairdresser.

El – *Yeah. After that I finished being a hairdresser, there in New Zealand.*

Ath – When did you become a hairdresser?

El – *I was 18 years old.*

Ath – And where did you learn?

El – *I went to Palaiochora.*

Ath – Was there a school there....

El – *Ah, yes, it was a private*

Ath – Private. And why did you choose to do something like this?

El – *I liked it, it must have been in my blood, you know, because...*

Evay – You were practicing cutting hair at your father's place?

El – *Yes... [? 12:13]*

Ath – And how long was your training to become a hairdresser?

El – *Oh about a year.*

Ath – A year, and then what did you do? Did you work...?

El – ...*in my own shop.*

Ath – Own shops. Whereabouts?

El – *Kardanos.*

Ath – Ah.

El – *yeah.*

Ath – Not with your father?

El – *Actually that was my father and that was mine*

Evang – Truly?

El – *Yeah. But it was just the men of course*

Evang – You weren't poaching your father's customers?

El – *Yes, no... Yeah,*

Ath – And what were you doing with the money you were earning?

El – *with the money I was earning, of course I had my parents a bit. Because the oldest sisters when they got married they had to have a dowry. OK? I used to give the money.. I do not regret doing this because when my parents passed away, both of them, I inherited the house there*

Evaγ – Οκ

El – *yeah.*

Ath – So your sisters had got married?

El – *Yes.*

Ath – And did they have a dowry?

El – *My father gave them dowry because one fo my sisters built a house in the city and my other sister also over there. But I didn't contribute towards the first one, only a little bit for the second one.*

Evaγ – The dowry they gave was it in money?

El – *Money.*

Evaγ – Money to the groom.

El – *To the groom.*

Evay Do you know how much money they used to give for dowry those days? To your sisters?

El – *Whatever anyone was capable of offering then, we are talking many years ago. It might have been even 60 years ago or even more. It must be more, yeah. You were able to build a house with 30,000 drachmas then. Exactly the same when we came here from New Zealand, we bought this house 72,500. Now they offer us more than seven hundred thousand dollars. In thirty years time.*

Ath – And when did you hear about New Zealand?

El – *When did I hear, yeah, it was something on the newspaper actually. I saw it in the newspaper and then when I read it, oh my God yeah. And my mother says to me no no you wouldn't go to the other end of the world. Well but I didn't take notice you know I wanted to go.*

Ath – What were you hoping to find?

El – *Just get out. Another country.*

Evang – But you had your own job, you had your hari saloon.

El – *Yes, but my English wasn't that good. It wasn't that was the reason why I didn't start the hair saloon straight away. No. It was a bit difficult.*

Ath – Yes, but in Greece....

El – *Yes, that's right. Now, like I said before every time, every time he needs to go and help, I had to go and help, when the customers were coming, you know, I will call you, I didn't like that. So I thought, no, puts me off.*

Evang – How did they use to call you for work?

El – *No, no, when I had the shop and they were coming around, we weren't spending much time together, I used to go to the farm. So I didn't consider it right to be going there, to have the hairsaloon, to go to the farm to help when I had customers to go to ..I didn't like it.*

Ath – Ah you had to work on the farm.

El – *Yeah. So that make me to...*

Ath – You wanted to leave

El – *That's right.*

Ath – Had you heard anything about New Zealand?

El – *Hardly. I heard many things about Australia, about USA but about New Zealand, no, just, just click like that.*

Ath – And what were they saying about Australia and USA?

El – *About Australia, they used to say Australia, Australia, Australia....*

Evay – Do you know any other immigrant from the village?

El – *No*

Evang – No.

El – *I didn't know anyone.*

Ath – So, you made up your mind to leave.

El – *It was a matter of luck, let's say.*

Ath – And what did your mother say?

El – *My mother, my mother didn't support me, because she was thinking that I was going to go too far. I didn't pay any attention.*

Ath – And what about your father?

El – *My father had to sign in order for me to leave because my mother was illiterate. Completely. He was signing like that. Just scribbling. But I had to go, I want to leave, let's say.*

Ath – And how did your father allow you to leave being so strict?

El – *But there were too many children. Too many children requesting a dowry.*

Ath – Why? So did you go and train somewhere before you left for New Zealand? Did you go to school? Did they take you somewhere to teach you....

El – *Ah yeah of course. We went to Mitilini for 3 months. We learned there a little bit of side, a bit of English.*

Ath – Did you go to the hotel?

Evay – The “Dolphins”?

El – Well done, the “Dolphins”, I couldn't remember it.

Ath – Because there was another lady there.

El – *Some other lady must have told you that and it seems that she didn't know it.*

Evay – It was Mrs Alexia

El – *I forgot about them*

Evay – In this hotel....

Ath – The first woman we talked to.

Evang – Also Mrs Kiki...

Ath – Kiki. Yes...

Evay – And what date was that?

El – *I've got to use my brains now.*

Evang – '62 - '61;

El – *No, that would be, hang on...I was here in June June, it could be beginning of January. In '62.*

Ath - '62.

El – *Because we came in June. So, we stayed 3 months. It was probably March to June. That's right.*

Ath – And what did you do at the school there? What did you learn?

El – *W were learning some...it was...we were... Our teacher was Mr. Hearth; he used to teach us the words for «water», «forks», things of everyday use. And if were going to become nurses, they were teaching us how to make the beds, and things like these. That was it...*

Ath – Yes. So, you went back to the village to say goodbye?

El – *That's right. From there we went to Athens, at the hotels, [?19:37] also my oldest brother don't go*

Ath – Don't go?

El – *Don't go, I said why? He says I am going to find you a hairdressering shop now in Athens and stay. And I thought because this is just the last days is he going to tell me this now? I wouldn't change my mind. Yeah.*

Ath – So, why you didn't go to Athens instead of going around the world?

El – *I didn't want to because he didn't give enough notice.*

Ath – But have you thought about it before about...? Did you think about it before you went to Athens?

El – No.

Ath – No.

El – It was just, just the shock, you know, because I was going to say goodbye and he said to stay. Would you do it?

Ath – No, but I am just wondering you went before... You had the intention to go to New Zealand, did you have the intention to go to Athens?

El – No, no, no. And when he says I would accept the offer. Was to go to New Zealand.

Ath – So were you looking for adventure?

El – Yes. Definitely.

Ath – You wanted something different.

El – Something different.

Ath – Why was that? When you looked other women in your family in Crete did you think I want something different?

El – Always I wanted something different. Not make it a bit extra money because, sometimes you had sometimes that always I got to go to America, Australia, you hear a lot about money, money really,. Yeah.

Ath – But that's not what you wanted?

El – Well that as well. Sure.

Ath – But you also wanted adventure.

El – When I left I thought I just go for one, two years actually. For 2 years because I sign a contract. And I thought I go for 2 years and then after if I don't like I will go back to my country. But what happen once you get money you thought oh a bit long, a bit what happen, get married, have a family and you thought eh I don't want to go anywhere I will stay here.

Ath – So was it exciting going on a plane?

El – I wouldn't say that. The plane?

Ath – Were you scared?

El – I never have been in a plane in my life before so just go.

Ath – It wasn't anything special?

El – No, I didn't know what's, you know about it.

Ath – And how long did it take to go to New Zealand?

El – Oh 24 I suppose. 24 hours.

Ath – You had any stopovers?

El – I can't remember. Oh, Singapore, Karaki, Chania, Australia, New Zealand.

Ath – And when you landed in New Zealand, what did you think?

El – I thought oh what the world looks like. A little bit sort of, how can I put it, am I going like it, you know. I thought about it.

Ath – Did it look like what you thought? When you first saw it?

El – Mostly. Yeah.

Ath – And when you landed it, did you, they take you on a train to Auckland?

El – I can't remember exactly, a bus maybe. No, I didn't go to Auckland.

Ath – Did you stay in Wellington?

El – Wellington, yes.

Ath – Ah, ok, and where did they take you in Wellington?

El – Straight there I think and they put us in a nurse's home.

Ath – What was it called do you remember? Do you remember which hospital?

El – Oh I can't remember. It was in the Lower Hutt.

Ath – In Lower Hutt? Ok. So you were going to work in a hospital?

El – Laundry, doing laundry.

Ath – But was it attached to the hospital?

El – Yes. Yes. I stayed there for 2 years and then I left from there and then I got to Waikato, Hamilton and that's why I found a job in the laundry again, they put me seam stress, for I don't know 6 months, after that I got engaged to my husband

Ath – Ok, we are jumping the gun a little bit here. So, let's go back to the hospital.

El – Yes.

Ath – So you were a hairdresser, a trained hairdresser, and they put you in the laundry, what did you think about that?

El – I didn't mind.

Ath – You didn't mind.

El – No, there was so many girls there, you know, I thought it was fun.

Ath – So there were other girls who came from Greece? Did they all come with you?

El – Yes.

Ath – How many came with you?

El – I can't remember exactly, 20 probably.

Ath – Were there any people who were special friends who came?

El – Yes.

Ath – Who were they?

El – Ah, there were few. I remember Despoina here, Despoina Tsigari, was another girl Yiota Kaparagianni; I don't know if she is still alive. Another woman, Ena Simoglou, she's dead though. She passed away.

Ath – So what these early days like in nursing?

El – I quite enjoyed it. To be quite honestly. It was ok, you find all your meals early in the morning, you have to go right in the morning, like 7:00-7:30 [? 26:19] and then the next day it was weekend you can stay with friends and all that. Then next I go to work

Ath – Did you meet much with New Zealanders? No.

El – No. I was a quiet girl.

Ath – Find it hard to believe.

El – No.

Ath – you were quiet?

El – Yeah.

Ath – And so you were put to work in the laundry and then you became a seamstress. So what actually did you see?

El – Mainly it was marking floors.

Ath – Marking patrons or...?

El – No, no. Marking alphabet where to sew on

Ath – Ah ok. Yeah.

El – So made clothes. Αυτά.

Ath – And then what happened? How long did you stay there? 2 years?

El – Not quite.

Ath – Not quite.

El – Not quite. I stayed there closer, year and a half.

Ath – year and a half?

El – I was supposed to finish in 2 years but I didn't.

Ath – Oh what happened?

El – What happened? What's the story there. Now my friend's husband was assistant manager. I was there with his wife and him and I happened to move out because they were moving to Hamilton I go with them working on the place, I finished with my contract.

Ath – Oh your 2 years was up?

El – Yes, yes. Yes, yes. Almost yeah. And after that I made 4 years live to my friend's place. Another friend.

Ath – Right, so what were you doing in Hamilton?

El – Hamilton I was sewing.

Ath – You were sewing?

El – Yeah.

Ath – Privately or for...?

El – No in a whole proof

Ath – Whole proof factory?

El – I was mainsins, yeah. 15 good years there.

Ath – 15? In Hamilton?

El – Yeah.

Ath – Ah ok, that is quite a long time.

Evang – How was life in Hamilton?

El – Good.

Evang – You had friends? Greek life?;

El – Not much really. There weren't many Greeks, they were all mixed . Because they were married to New Zealanders, to Greek, not many. There weren't , few family Greeks.

Ath – And when did you meet your husband?

El – I didn't meet my husband. I met him through photo.

Ath – Ah, from Greece? It was a match make?

El – Yes that's right.

Ath – And who arranged that? Your family?

El – My parents.

Ath – What did they think trying to settle you down? And so they sent you the photograph and you agreed?

El – Absolutely. And I sent mine.

Ath – Yeah.

El – Yeah

Ath – So did your husband arrive?

El – Ah '66? And with 28 days

Ath – You had to get married in 28 days. So what happened when you first saw him?

El – That's ok.

Ath – And where did you get married? Did you get married in Hamilton?

El – I can't remember. Did we get married in Hamilton? We did, ok.

Ath – In a Greek church?

El – Not a Greek church, no. I think it was Anglican.

Ath – Anglican Church.

El – We had a Greek priest.

Ath – So you brought the Greek priest up?

El – From Wellington.

Ath – Did you get married on your own or other young Greek girls married too? Sometimes they got married in 2s and 3s.

El – No we got quite big, few people there. Proper wedding.

Ath – Yeah. Yeah. No I was just wondering if there were other young girls who got married with you?

El – Oh no. Just us.

Evay – Did your girlfriends from Wellington come?

Ath - ...in the wedding there?

El – Yeah. No, no, no, just other friends you know.

Ath – So who were there?

Evay – Who was at your wedding?

El – Who was in the weddingit was a girlfriend an Australian lady, Mr. and Mrs. Rye, they get to the church. This is the brother of my bridesmaid, my brother on the other side, the daughter of a girlfriend of mine as a flower girl and her son was the pageboy.

Evay – You said your brother?

El – Yes, He was here and he went back.

Ath – When was your brother...

El – He left, he did not stay long.

Evay – Why?

El – He came, got married, he did not like it here and he left.

Evay – And he got married here, didn't he?

El – he got married here.

Ath – Greek?

El – Yes.

Ath – And they went back?

El – They brought a lady for him from Greece

Ath – The lady...

El – Yes, He got married but the lady did not like it here and they had to go back, yes. But she did not stay for a long time....

Evay – How long did your brother stay in New Zealand?

El – About 10? Nope...How many years did my brother stay in New Zealand, Nikolas? You do not remember also... 3-4 years probably. Yeah.

Ath – So, when you got married were you still living with your friends or did you move out?

El – No, no, I went out in the brunt.

Ath – Were you still in the whole proof?

El – I was not one year; only 6 months and then we bought a house. Brand new and what? 2 years time we paid it off. Believe it or not.

Ath – WOW.

El – I had my first child, my daughter, less than what, 2 years, and just remember the girls in Holburn they said to me are you going to stop bla bla bla, which is more important, the money or the baby? The boss.

Ath – So how did you manage to work, and have the baby at the same time?

El – It was sit down job.

Ath – Did you bring the baby with you?

El – No, after I had the baby?

Ath – yeah

El – No, no, no. The boss was pretty good with me. When I have the baby because I was hand solar they gave me the work home, finish the work, take the children to school, then the work home finish, take more work and take it back and so on. Yeah.

Ath – And where was your husband working at this time?

El – There was in building somewhere

Ath – In building somewhere.

El – Yeah.

Ath – So that was your life for 15 years in Hamilton?

El – Yeah.

Ath – You stayed at whole proof all the time while you were having babies? And you worked at home?

El – That's correct, yes.

Ath – So what happened to make you move out of Hamilton?

El – That is a good question. My husband wasn't happy. You know, so we just tried to go to Australia.

Ath – Did he, was he home sick did he want to meet the Greek Community, what was going on?

El – More like it. We had a cousin then here, in New Zealand, and he says to my husband what are you doing with such and such, and then he says to come to Australia. This is what he want to hear. No long after he decided sell and come here.

Ath – How did you feel about that?

El – In here?

Ath – About leaving New Zealand?

El – Oh, wasn't happy. But I had to please him actually. Yeah.

Ath – So you came mainly because your husband wanted to move?

El – Absolutely.

Ath – And did you come to Sydney first?

El – Yes.

Ath – And what was that like?

El – Oh at the first I thought what a crowded place, you know. It was too crowd. It is actually, you know. [?35:05] people go down cities pump to each other. Most of the times yes. But I am used to it now, I don't mind.

Ath – Where did you live when you first came?

El – Bakesley

Ath – In Bakesley?

El – Yeah. We rent it for about 6 months

Ath – And did you work?

El – Yes I did. Not straight away because I was seeking for job, you know. Yeah the first job I got was a hairdresser in north city

Ath – Ah ok. So you went back to hairdressing when you came to Australia?

El – *Well* it was handy.

Ath – Yeah

El - I always prefer to have a sit down job. Always. And I got a shop with a ladies dresses at Samona, I stayed there for about 5 years. In the city.

Ath – And did you mix with the Greek Community much when you came here?

El – Yes.

Ath – And what was that like? Because you wouldn't have had that in Hamilton?

El – Oh there were heaps of, you know, a group of couple like 8-10 people together, here to there and their clubs and dances, everywhere. I was enjoying actually, you know, the between 38-50 years of age I really had enjoy myself. With group of friends. Yes.

Ath – So you really threw yourself into the Greek Community here?

El – Yes.

Ath – yeah, yeah. So now that your husband has left the room, what was it really like when you first

El – Actually I expected to look him different. He sent me that photo, and he didn't look like it at all.

Evang – No?

El – No.

Evang – He looked better or worse?

El – Worse.

Evang – You were disappointed?

El – Crying. That's ok.

Ath – Did he see you crying?

El – Sorry?

Ath – Did he know you were crying?

El – Yes. He saw me I couldn't hide it. Just natural I mean is that the same photo? Is that not. But that's ok it works out all right. We are married for 45 years now. He's got a big problem now; he's got a cancer.

Ath – What cancer?

El – Lung cancer. It's depressing but I mean, you know, but trying not to show it, yeah. He coughed because of his lung cancer.

Ath – I am coughing too.

El – No, no, no. This is different one, this is woofing cough.

Ath – Yeah, yeah.

Evang – Was he a heavy smoker?

El – No. Never had.

Ath – Probably from the working, having metals, breathing.

El – But he had protection. I don't know.

Ath – So, that's good that you, did you find the Greek Community welcoming here?

El – Yes.

Ath – So what year was that you came?

El – Sorry?

Ath – what year was that you came?

El – '62.

Ath – No, to Australia?

El – In here. 1980.

Ath – 1980. 1980. And have you made good friends here?

El – Heaps.

Ath – So how do you compare the two now?

El – I had all all type, of, you know, Greeks, Lebanese, Chinese, all different sort of cultures, you know, my friends I don't mind they are black or white, or whatever they are, I just get on well with them.

Ath – So have you got a lot of friends non-Greek?

El – Yes. I have a neighbor, she is a Greek and she is telling me oh you have half of the Sydney friends.

Ath – That you go out a lot with your friends?

El – Not, I don't now.

Ath – You don't.

El – My husband is sick I have to stay at home but before yes. The neighbors were coming to me, going out together, go to club, go to church, go, share, you know.

Ath – And did you go back to Greece at all?

El – I had been twice.

Ath – And what was the first time like when you had to go there?

El – The first time was good, I had the kids with me.

Ath – What year would that have been?

El – '75? Then 2000, '98 was the second time I went and I was planned to go again but I was waiting for the husband how he is going to get on, you know.

Ath – And were your parents still alive when you went first time back?

El – No. The first yes, yes.

Ath – Yeah.

El – The first time and the second time my mum was but my father wasn't.

Ath – So what was it like the first time? Did you come back and say oh this is home? Or did you find it changed? How did you feel?

El – Oh I was quite happy to see my parents, my brother, all my relatives. I was quite happy when I got back it was a bit sort of strange. I missed them but after a week or two I thought oh it's good to be home again.

Ath – Back what?

El – Here.

Ath – Ah!

El – My home.

Ath – So you didn't think I would like to stay.

El – No.

Ath – Why not?

El – I just, I don't know. I was used to Australia/New Zealand, this is my home. I had a home there for eighteen and a half years, 30 years here. Yeah.

Evang – 30 e?

El – 30. I mean I was left at 20 years of age so I am more like Australian now, New Zealander. I have three nationalities, believe it or not. Greek, New Zealand and Australian.

Evang – You have three passports?

El – No but I have got the nationalizations.

Ath – So did you think it was easier moving second time? Migrating from New Zealand to Australia than it was the first time?

El – It was easy. Good decision. And it was easy for me, not a problem.

Ath – Why do you think it was easy?

El – It was easy. I just liked to please everyone else. For my children might not be easy. Particular for the girl. She was crying all the way because she miss her friends. The boy was ok. There were about 11 and 13 age. It wasn't very easy for the girl.

Evang – yeah.

Ath – So how have you found Australians compared to New Zealanders?

El – To be quite honestly I would prefer to be still there. It's more quiet. The country was more clean. Yeah it is. But no many friends there. A few. Here you have all the Greek, you know. Community. Anything you want here you can get it. But there.

Evang – You get it now but not then.

El – You do? When I was there it was very hard.

Evang – Yeah.

El – very hard that time. Yeah.

Ath – So, is there anything you want to say about your different experiences with New Zealand and Australia?

El – I just love both countries. I think this is my country. I lived here so long I get adopted. Yeah. That's right.

Ath – And did you say your sister came out? Do you have a sister here?

El – I have a sister here.

Ath – In Sydney?

El – No she is at Whyway.

Ath – At Whyway? Woyway. Where is that?

El – That's Gosford

Ath – So, it is in Australia?

El – Yeah.

Ath – When did she come out?

El – Probably 20 years ago. I mean from New Zealand here.

Evang – ‘85

El – From New Zealand here. Yeah.

Evang – So she came to New Zealand because of you? You [44:36] her.

El – No, I don't want to risk it.

Evang – Why is that?

El – No she came back herself.

Ath – So, she decided to come?

Evang – With a man or no, just migrate differently.

El – different way.

Evang – differently?

El – Yeah. Sometimes you get somebody they don't get on well so, oh it is your fault.

Ath – So she migrated by herself?

El – That's right.

Ath – And what did she do when she went to New Zealand?

El – What did she do?

Ath – Yeah. What did she do when she first went there? She worked in one of the hospitals or did she come out on the skim?

El – I think she was working on a hospital. Yeah. After she found a New Zealander. She got married a few years with a couple of girls

Ath – And did she come here because of you?

El – I am not sure.

Ath – You are not very close?

El – I really can't answer that. We care. She comes for Easter on Sunday but she doesn't want to say here in Sydney cause for the reason she doesn't like too much noise, airplanes, pollution. She just doesn't like the...

Ath – ...the big city.

Ath – So she is the only one who is actually

El – here.

Ath – stayed.

El – But I think she wants to go back to New Zealand again.

Ath – Ah do you think she might go back?

El – She got her house to sell, if she sells she will go, her both girls are there.

Ath – Ah I see. So it was her husband's idea to come here?

El – No husband.

Ath – No husband. Eva? Did she have one at some stage?

N – Divorced.

Evang – She had her children with him.

El – Oh well she didn't get on well. Yeah.

Ath – Yeah. So did she come here by herself with the children?

El – No children, by herself.

Ath – Just by herself. How old are her children – adults?

El – They are my children's age.

Ath – Did they stay with the father?

El – With the grandmother.

Ath – Oh, I see so there is a bit of a history there.

El – Not the best really.

Ath – She must have found motherhood difficult.

El – I don't know really, maybe the mother-in-law was involved too much. You know.

Ath – Interfering

El – Probably. Yeah.

Ath – So, is there anything you want to ask Evangelia?

Evang – With the Greek Community here do you go to church or you used to go or what kind of connections do you have with the Greek Community or you just have Greek friends?

El – Oh well we just get together, go like trips sometimes here and there. For a day.

Evang – So the Greek Community organizes this?

El – We do sometimes.

Evang – Or the church

El – Not the church the Greek Community, we go together yeah.

Evang – Are you in touch with what is happening in Greece, Greek television?

El – Yeah. But I am not interested on that.

Evang – No?

El – No. I never do.

Evang – So what are your interests? What are the things that you like doing?

El – Hear here the radio more or less. Australia radio, go to school one day a week.

Evang – Why do you go to school?

El – Why? Just to improve my English.

Evang – Yeah?

El – yeah.

Evang – That's good.

El – I don't if it is but I enjoy it.

Ath – Your English is good.

El – Get you something to do, you know. Yeah. Because you stay at this particular time, you know, it is getting a little bit, how can I put it?

Ath – Isolated?

El – Sort of. I just go once a week two hours and meet other people, have a cup of coffee. At the same time you learn something.

Ath – What do your children do?

El – They are both house school teachers.

Ath – Ah, is that your daughter?

El – She is my daughter, she is journalist. But she doesn't do it.

Ath – She is a journalist

El – She decided to teaching.

Evang – Ah right.

Ath – In high schools?

El – Yes.

Evang – She is married?

El – Single.

Evang – This is your son.

El – My son. This is my grandson, cute.

Evang – And your son is married to a Greek Australian or to...?

El – She is, she is Australian.

Evang – Australian.

Ath – And he is here in Sydney. He lives in Sydney.

El – Yes.

Evang – Did you speak Greek to your children? Or do they speak Greek?

El – English.

Evang – English

El – A little bit Greek.

Evang – Why not? Why didn't you...?

El – As you know lived in New Zealand for eighteen and a half years. There is not many Greek there, you know and I felt that if I speak Greek probably they would think we don't know what to say they would look at us if we have people near us. English easier for us. But here they come to the right place, learn in Greek schools. If you want to learn they could do it. My son speaks quite a bit actually. He's been to Greece and he has improved his Greek. He said he is going to send his son to Greek school.

Evang – Really?

El – yeah.

Evang – Ah that is interesting.

El – [? 8:38]

Evang – Yeah. So your daughter doesn't speak Greek?

El – She never willing to speak Greek.

Evang – Why not?

El – I don't know.

Evang – Yeah. So, that's interesting because the second generation doesn't speak the language of the parents.

El – My son is very proud. She can understand though.

Evang – Ah.

El – But she doesn't want to speak.

Evang – She doesn't eh? Do they ever ask you why you left New Zealand? Would they prefer to live in New Zealand than here?

El – Ah, they do not ask questions.

Evang – No

El – No, They did not mind that they left so young, eh. 11 and 13.

Evang – Have you ever thought all these years that you might want to return back to Greece, all together as a family?

El – To stay permanently?

Evang – To return back to Greece

El – *For holiday.*

Evay – Ah, you would have gone only for holiday?

El – *Yes, Not for staying permanently. No way.*

Evay – No way. Neither you nor your husband?

El – *For holiday ok, me not to stay permanently.....*

Evay – Do you have contacts with your other brothers and sisters and your family in Greece?

El – *Well, look, I have such a busy life, difficult to call and whom to call, but, here, I find out news through my oldest sister. I ring, she calls a sister and from time time we get news. But I am not calling, I am a bit lazy too...*

Evay – And if someone was asking you, since you had lived many years in New Zealand too and also here...

El - *...yes...*

Evay - ... do you see any differences between the people of these two countries? Are they different..

El – *Look, certainly. New Zealand is more friendly, if you like it. But here they are not, there are too many nationalities and everyone is wondering: «do I know this guy?», and the Australians themselves, let's say, even if they are your neighbors, he will greet you with a «goodmorning» but he will not invite you to his place for a coffee. No. You might invite him ten times but he will never invite you. They just do not do that. But people from other nationalities, I have a lady from Lebanon just next to me and an Australian lady with whom we are like sisters. Always, she came here yesterday and had a cup of coffee. We are communicating, there is not a single day that we will not talk to each other. She will talk to me about her puppies, she has two, and me, I will talk to her about my own things. So, OK, we are communicating.*

Evay – Yes.

El – *Yes. She, over there, she is also a nice lady. There were here two elderly people, they passed away, the lady was a very nice person, the old man was a bit strange. It is not possible to find everyone nice and friendly. There are also very good people that we have not met.*

Evay – And so it is interesting, eh... You say that you are Greek, New Zealander and Australian....

El – Yes

Evay – Or are you something more than the above?

El – *Well, I grew up as a Greek and I cannot deny this, but since, let's say, even New Zealand recognizes this, as I am getting my superannuation from there, OK...*

Evay – Ah...

Evay – They cannot refuse that since I have done my specialization (probably, she means: citizenship) over there. I did not deny it, I still have it. Here too. Because if I was not, I would not have the privileges which I deserve.

Evay – Have you been back to New Zealand since you left?

El – *I have not been back.*

Evay – Yes, eh?

El – *I have not been back.*

Evay – Neither your children?

El – *I think Antonis has been.*

Evay – You never felt the need to...

El – *. Yes, Antonis has been because he brought back some pictures of the house. Yeah.*

Evay – Of the house you used to live?

El – *Yes, yes, yes. I have not been back, we have not been...*

Evay – How do you feel, how do the Australians are behaving towards you? Do they accept you as a Greek-Australian, like all the others?

El – *But there is no problem. There is no problem because we have the same rites. They also pay tax, the rates and all the other things, we also pay the, we are the same. Yeah.*

Evay – There is no difference.

El – *Eh?*

Evay – They do not treat you differently, they do not look down at you?

El – *No.*

Evay – Yes. Do you think they treat you with the same respect?

El – *Of course. I think so. Yeah. We are popular to the Australians, as the Italians too, because our attitude towards them is flawless.*

Ath – It was not like this in the first years.

El – Eh, do you know how they used to call us the first years?

Ath – They have changed now because they see that we work hard and...

El – *Yes. And they admitt that they opened our eyes....so to say...*

Ath – Yes....

Evay – So, you experienced the adventure you desired. When you left Crete for two years. Life was an adventure, wasn't it?

El – *It was, it was...*

Evay – Have you kept any contact with your friends from New Zealand? With the ladies who traveled back then? Do you know where they are? Do you communicate with them at all? Not, eh? You have lost every contact....

El – *Yes, yes, yes. 30 years now. Besides, many of them went back to Greece.*

Evay – Yes, do you know any of those who went back to Greece?

El – *I have heard of them, but I cannot remember them.*

Evay – But some of them came here to Sydney. Do you know them, have you heard of these ones who came here, from that group of women?

El – *Just Despoina.*

Evay – What is her surname?

El – *Despoina Psinari*

Evay – Ah, yeah, Psinari....

El – *Did you go there?*

Evay – No. She is also Cretan, isn't she?

El – *No. From Limnos.*

Evay – From Limnos. So, as if you had three different lives, eh?

El – Yes.

N –We know of many people who came from New Zealand, not only Cretans but also others. My cousin also came here from New Zealand and also friends, we know off many, either Cretans or no-Cretans. A lot of people.

El –*But we had not come together...*

Evay –No, But, so you did not have any social contacts...

N –Just with one cousin

Evay –Ah, OK, do you have anything else to say that we forgot about in our discussion?

El –*I think we discussed everything thoroughly.*

Evay – OK. You have anything else to say?

El – *Any more questions I can answer?*

Ath – No I think that's it all good

El – *They will do you e?*

Ath – Yes I am Greek, Australian, New Zealander too.

El – *Greek, Australian*

Ath – New Zealander

El – *Really?*

Ath – I grew up in Australia.

El – *Really? Excellent*

Evang – I am from Crete. And that's all.

Ath – You are not even a Greek you are a Cretan.

El – *Cretan?*

Ath – Ok, thank you very much.

Transcription by Lucy Anastasiadou-Hobbs