

EI-1242

ERICA MATHER WELTER

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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LEVINE: Today is April the 18th, the year 2002. I'm here in Damariscotta, Maine and I'm at the home of Erica Mather Welter. (clears throat) Mrs. Welter arrived by the name of Erica Mather in 1906, September, with her mother, father, sister and brother—

WELTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: —from England.

WELTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: At that time that she arrived at EI—in New York, she was eight years of age. And at the time of this interview, Mrs. Welter is going to be one hundred and four years old next month. So you're one hundred and three. Okay. And

you didn't really come through Ellis Island but we'll get to that part and you can tell about that. Okay. When were you born?

WELTER: May 15, 1898.

LEVINE: Okay. And where were you born?

WELTER: In a suburb of Manchester, England.

LEVINE: Okay. And so you—did you live in that suburb of Manchester for the whole eight years before you came to America?

WELTER: Yes, but not in the same house.

LEVINE: Okay, okay. Now, do you have very vivid memories of your time in England?

WELTER: I have very vivid memories. I was telling some of the things of my early childhood.

LEVINE: Like what? What are the things you remember so clearly?

WELTER: The first thing I can really remember is when my father carried me into the bedroom of my grandmother, his—his—his mother, because she was dying. I didn't know that. He told me that I must be very quiet and very still because she was ill. I was almost two, within about a week of being two years of age.

LEVINE: Wow!

WELTER: That made a great impression on me because young people – young children like to be noticed. And I was so glad that I got [unclear] to see me.

LEVINE: Oh.

WELTER: I can remember being very glad that she wanted to see me.

LEVINE: Ah. Did you—did she talk to you? Did you—do you remember?

WELTER: I don't remember anything that she said—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: —or what I said. I just remember looking down from my father's shoulder on this beautiful face in bed. That's all I can remember, nothing of the conversation.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: Just being there on my father's shoulder looking down.

LEVINE: Yeah, wow.

WELTER: So—

LEVINE: And s—and what else do you remember with some vivid images—images?

WELTER: That was the only thing I remember—I remember about her.

LEVINE: About your grandmother?

WELTER: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: You don't remember anything else—

WELTER: No.

LEVINE: —because she then died, probably.

WELTER: She died very soon after, I think within about a week. The next thing I can remember is when my sister, Joyce, was born. She was born exactly two years and one week after I was born.

LEVINE: Huh.

WELTER: So that's how I can remember the date. I can—people were born in their own homes in those days, and I can remember when my father called my brother and me into the bedroom and said to my brother, "Now, Ronald, you have two little sisters." And at that time, I was just two years and one week and I promptly said that I have two little brothers, because all I knew was brothers had sisters and sisters had brothers. So that seemed logical to me.

LEVINE: (laughs) Oh, wow. Now, what else do you remember?

WELTER: Oh, (chuckles) about my early childhood.

LEVINE: Yes.

WELTER: [pause] I remember when Queen Victoria died because everybody made a very big fuss. I had a picture of Queen Victoria on—on the wall in the day nursery of our—my bedroom. We—we had a day nursery on the second

floor and a night nursery on the third floor. And I stood on a—on a couch, a box couch just under the picture and looked at the picture. I said, “This is—this is my Toria, Queen. And I was told that she had died. So I was told first that she was ill so I told everybody my Toria Queen was very ill. Then I told my—everybody my Toria Queen was very dead. I can remember that because everybody raised such a fuss and how my—my mother bought me a purple velvet coat for the ceremonies. And I—it was kept in a bottom drawer of a chest in the day nursery. And I loved that purple velvet color so I used to open the doors, stroke the pur—purple velvet coat. And Mother saw—saw—saw me one day and she took the coat away, hung it somewhere else so I couldn’t—couldn’t stroke it, because she was afraid I should become vain.

LEVINE: Oh.

WELTER: That’s a Victorian idea in those days. I am a true Victorian and I’m still trying to offset behaving like a true Victorian. (chuckles)

LEVINE: What—what—what ways do you have that are Victorian? What ways did you keep—keep up with?

WELTER: It’s hard to think of. (chuckles) I think perhaps being very particular about [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

WELTER: I—all the children, little girls, had to be ladies the day they were born.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: They had to be very proper. I think perhaps I should have tried to be proper sometimes. But I tried to get over that and be more natural.

LEVINE: (chuckles) Uh-hmm.

WELTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: W—was the royal family part of what you knew about and thought about when you were a little girl in England? Was—

WELTER: Oh, yes. Everybody did. Everybody looked up to the royal family. Everybody respected them. Everybody was very pleased to see them. They—they were greatly in the favor of—one thing I remember was I had to be a little lady, and all little ladies were told to walk with their toes pointed out. And I was taught to walk that way because I should be a little lady. And it's—and it's difficult for me now to try to walk with my toes pointed straight, and I know it's more healthy. (chuckles) But—but the next thing I can remember was when the new king and queen came to Manchester. And I was taken down to the edge of the city to see what was going on, to see the new king and queen. And we—I was taken upstairs to the second floor so I could see out of the bedroom of my grandfather's office. My grandfather was a chartered accountant and—and so I was watching everybody, watching everything from the second floor because we—we couldn't go into crowds. I was always kept away from crowds. You couldn't mix with these people because they didn't behave properly or they didn't talk properly. And that was partly because what—what we called the common people didn't know much about hygiene. And if you were close to them you could get impetigo or something like that. It was partly because of cleanliness and—and health. It—I—I say I was brought up a snob. To stay away from the common people.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: And I can tell you now that when I was growing up and was working in the Army with wounded soldiers I found out how nice the common people are. I was pleased to know that. But I must go back to my early childhood. I remember seeing th—this wonderful golden coach and the wonderful white horses and the King dressed in red and the Queen beside him, and the King waving to everybody, just smiling to everybody, looking first to one side and then to the other side. That is a very—picture in my mind.

LEVINE: Wow.

WELTER: Still a vivid picture in my mind [unclear]—

LEVINE: Who was that? What—what king was it? King or Queen—what ye—about what ye—

WELTER: (laughs)

LEVINE: (chuckles) About how old were you? Maybe that would—

WELTER: Bertie -- must have been Edward the Seventh.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

WELTER: I—I imagine. I [unclear]—

LEVINE: Yeah.

WELTER: (chuckles)

LEVINE: That's okay. Well, you just have the picture of it. That's beautiful.

WELTER: Oh, but I was— (chuckles) I was very poor on history and dates. I don't care about dates.

LEVINE: No, me neither. I don't either.

WELTER: I just care about how people live.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Well, speaking about how you lived, were you a religious family?

WELTER: Not too religious. My father was a Congregationalist and I—I think the Congregationalists were about the most liberal and modern thinking s— sector of Christians in those days. My mother, however, was a Baptist. And I think the Baptists were some of the most narrow minded (chuckles) people in those days. And—

LEVINE: Did they go to church or did you go?

WELTER: Oh, yes. We went to church every Sunday but not to Sunday school. There was no Sunday school in those days with—with the Congregational Church. But when my mother married my father it was the custom to—to join the church of the—of the husband. And the father was king of the—king of the castle. The—the—the wife was—just did everything the hus—husband said. The—the father owned the wife. [unclear] own. Even in the marriage ceremony still today, the—there is a phrase, "Who giveth this man to this woman?" The—the father owned his children until they were given to the husband. Then the husband owned the wife. And I—that, I find is very strange. That I [unclear] very quick to get over.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

WELTER: But—

LEVINE: So did you go then to the Congregationalist Church as a child?

WELTER: Oh, yes. We—we went. As soon as I was able to sit through the—quietly through the—the service, I was taken to church every Sunday [unclear] every Sunday. Oh, yes.

LEVINE: So you and your brother and sister—

WELTER: Yes.

LEVINE: —and your mother and father? Would you all go?

WELTER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. [unclear] Sunday. And Sunday, you c—you couldn't play. You couldn't run. You—you couldn't do much except read—read the Bible and sing—sing hymns and go for a walk. It—it was very hard to be told you couldn't run on Sunday. And—and my mother was always quoting St. Paul, St. Paul, St. Paul, St. Paul. And when I was grown and in my teens, I said to her once, "If you're Christian, why don't you quote Jesus instead of St. Paul?" And I—I -- from the time I was grown and in high school in this country, I heard some very good sermons. So I said to my mother once, "Has nobody said a word worth listening to since St. Paul?"

LEVINE: (chuckles)

WELTER: And she had no answer. But that was a very, very great day to see that golden coach, the white horses with the King and Queen. It was a very, very hot day, exceptionally hot day, the few hot days in England. And there were crowds, crowds, crowds, very, very crowded.

LEVINE: Did you go with your family?

WELTER: Oh, yes. I—I—I think my—no, just my brother and my mother and father were upstairs in my grandfather's office looking down on the crowds, the—so—crowds were so thick and—and such a hot day, the man fainted. And there was no room for him to fall and he just dropped straight down to the ground. That is a living picture now in my mind because I thought it was funny. It looked funny to me.

LEVINE: Yeah.

WELTER: It made me think of my father's top silk hat. Do you remember the top silk hats? They had [unclear] them. You [unclear] them—dropped them straight down and then they came back up—up again. To see this man drop straight down made me think of my father's top hat and I laughed. My mother said, "Oh, you mustn't laugh. That poor man is—have to be taken to the hospital." So that is—I remember seeing two men come with a stretcher, put him on the stretcher and take him away. And other people also dropped down at the same time but I—I didn't laugh.

LEVINE: Wow.

WELTER: Th—that was a—really a great day.

LEVINE: Wh—what—what—go ahead.

WELTER: A—a pic—still a picture in my mind.

LEVINE: Wow. How else were you treated to make sure that you became a—a real lady?

WELTER: Oh—

LEVINE: What else did you have to do?

WELTER: Oh, oh, [unclear]. (chuckles) Everything you did had to be proper. You—you—you ate only meals upstairs in the day nursery until you could behave properly at the—at the family table. You had to learn to be good—table manners first. So you were three or four or maybe five before you could go down and eat with the family at the—at the family table. And—

LEVINE: Did you go to regular school?

WELTER: There was no regular school. Every—every—children had private school.

LEVINE: Ah.

WELTER: And—yes. Mother—Mother taught me to read and write at home. This was the custom in those days. From the time you went to school, you could read and write. And I had two aunts, my—my father's two sisters. They were very good to us. One of—one of them had been—was a graduate of the—the—the Royal School of Music in London. And she played very, very beautiful music. And we had a little tiny organ and—in the house, a pump organ, which you first pumped with the feet, making a—a [unclear]. And she taught me to play on that little organ a—a—“Long, Long Ago.” I remember that. And—

LEVINE: So then when you went to school you knew how to read and write.

WELTER: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: And you knew how to play some music?

WELTER: Just—just that little piece.

LEVINE: One piece.

WELTER: (chuckles) I never learned to read music so I can't play now but—but on—on Sundays, as I say, you—you could only walk. You couldn't run. You—Mother played the piano. We al—we always sang hymns on Sat—on Sat—on Saturday night. And then everybody in the whole family knelt down on the—on the floor and our father made a prayer. That was Sunday evening.

LEVINE: Hmm, hmm. What was school like for you when you did finally get there?

WELTER: The school I went to was a very, very nice one. It—it was ver—it was quite close and I could walk all the [unclear] to school, because I was six. It was time I went to school. It had—had been the home of the Greek Con—Consul. And it was a beautiful, beautiful building. It had a lovely domed ce—ceiling with colored windows. And then in the main room on the—the classrooms were small and very nice. Teachers were all very nice. The classes themselves were all small, not more than four or five pupils in a class. So you had great at—attention.

LEVINE: Were you fond of school?

WELTER: Oh, yes. I li—liked school because it was interesting. I—I was always curious and—and I liked it. The teachers were nice. One thing I remember most distinctly about going to that school was when a teacher made a model of [unclear] and a mountain. And she took some sugar and put some sugar on the top of the mountain to show sometimes there was snow on top of the mountain. That's the only thing I can really remember except recess.

Recess, of course, was a lot of fun and at recess, we played rounders—R-O-U-N-D-E-R-S—which essentially is the beginning of baseball. You had a small tennis racket and a pitcher threw the ball—and a small tennis racket. You hit the ball as far as you could and then you ran—ran from this space to this space to this space and then to home while the opposing team tried to catch the ball and send the ball home before you got home. So it was a race between you and the ball. We liked that very, very much. I—I—I liked rounders and when I came to this country I found it was really the beginning of baseball.

LEVINE: Ah, oh.

WELTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: W—why did your family come to this country at the time that they did?

WELTER: That's—that's good, because in those days everything was patriarchal. I told you the father owned his children un—until he died. And my grand—my grandfather had my father taught to be a chartered accountant and—and he—he worked at my grandfather's firm. Everything was learned by the apprentice system in those days. But my father had done some very, very good things. He had—he had run a very, very good case for a client. And then my father thought it was time to—to be made a partner in the firm. But my grandfather was not that kind of man and my father was almost forty years of age. So when a firm in the United States was advertising they wanted a chartered accountant and my father took the opportunity to come to this country to see him. As usual, people of this country held—held higher [several words unclear] countries. He had to come for an interview. So he came for an interview and—

LEVINE: Did he come by himself?

WELTER: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

WELTER: Came all by himself, came for his interview and the—the man of—offer— offered him a job if he could—once he was here as a visitor, he could be offered a job. So he was offered a job. He took the job. He sent a cable out to my mother, “Bring the children.” My—my brother was two and a half years older than I and I always wanted to do everything that my brother did. I was very active and—and always asking questions. I was always curious. I wanted to know about the whole world.

LEVINE: How did you feel, and how did your brother feel about coming here?

WELTER: I think we were all very happy.

LEVINE: Your mother too?

WELTER: No, no. (laughs) No, no, no. (chuckles) No. Mother always wanted to stay in England and then she always thought she was English. When my father became a citizen, she became a cit—automatically, but she did not feel like a citizen. She always felt she was English and she wanted to stay English until in her—when she was quite older, must have been 60 or 70. She once said, “I couldn’t live in England anymore.” Then I knew she was very—really happy to be in this country. But the things I remember mostly about my childhood was my two aunts, Auntie May, who played the beautiful music and taught me to play on the little pump organ, and Auntie Gertrude, who was my father’s older sister, who used to take us on trips. She—she played games with us. She—she took us on trips to [unclear] Moor. The—the moor is a large, uncultivated, wild tract of land. [unclear]

hills and pools and she would take us to the [unclear] Moor. I loved to go to [unclear] Moor. And the spring there were pools of water and we collected pollywog's eggs. And we brought them home and kept them in a little bowl in—in the day nursery to watch them grow up. And one grew up to be a frog. M—my brother put a—put a big rock in the—in the bowl of water and [unclear] a little [several words unclear]. But I can't remember. My sister took one of the pollywogs out and put it in a smaller dish. And the dish dried up and the poor pollywog died. So that was—that was too bad. And my—my—my brother's little frog used to climb up to s—sit on the rock in the middle of the pool. And we always loved to watch him. And one day, the frog was missing. We didn't know what happened, just was gone. And—and because we had no cat. We had no dog. So for—a few days later we found a squashed frog down on the first floor in the hall.

LEVINE: You saw the frog there?

WELTER: The frog had hopped all the way downstairs. H—he got out of the—of the pool. W—we were all very sad—very sad about—about that.

LEVINE: Hmm.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1

WELTER: The Moor though, was wonderful. It had a—a—not—not much going, just—just grass and heather and—and gorse. Do you know what gorse is?

LEVINE: Gorse?

WELTER: Gorse—G-O-R-S-E. Gorse.

LEVINE: Why don't you say what it is?

WELTER: Gorse is a—is a—a small—small bush, maybe four or five feet high with yellow—yellow flowers. And—and in—in England, it has a—a mild climate, not so cold as here. The gorse always has a little bloom on it all year round.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: A little bloom. And my Aunt Gertrude told me, "Kissing is out of fashion when there is no gorse in bloom." And my m—my mother didn't like it. They were not proper enough.

LEVINE: What was your Aunt Gertrude like?

WELTER: She was lots of fun. She was dynamic and interesting and always—always had lots to say to us about—she used to take us sometimes down to Manchester to—to—to the park. The—the park had a lot of grass lawns which was very nice. It had a pond with ducks and we always took some bread, two—two little pieces of bread for the ducks. And that was very great fun to go to feed the ducks with some bread. But the edge of each park had a metal—a fence around metal rings, oh, maybe a foot high, just so you—you must not walk on the grass --you may not step on the grass. The—the English people are very fond of their grass because it grows well. They keep it well watered and they keep it well rolled with a huge roller. Do you know anything about that?

LEVINE: No, I—well, I know a little bit but why don't you tell about it?

WELTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: What they do.

WELTER: Yes. They—the—they—they keep it well watered because there's always plenty of rain in England every month. They—it's a huge roller, must be about two and a half feet in diameter and very heavy and takes a strong man to push the roller. They roll and roll and roll and roll and roll and that helps keep—keep the grass like velvet, really, really good like velvet.

LEVINE: Was there a park near you that you used to go to?

WELTER: Hmm?

LEVINE: A pa—a particular park that you went to when you were little?

WELTER: Only that one park in Manchester that I can remember. Only that one park.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: But otherwise, we went to [unclear] Moor [unclear].

LEVINE: Yeah.

WELTER: Because it was wild.

LEVINE: Yeah.

WELTER: Wild and very few people. We—we could run and play and do what we wanted to do.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: [unclear].

LEVINE: So when your father came here to see about that job—and then he went back to England?

WELTER: No, he stayed here. He sent a cable to my mother, “Bring the children.”

LEVINE: Oh, so he didn’t travel with you?

WELTER: Oh—

LEVINE: You just traveled with your mother and your—and your brother and sister.

WELTER: He came to this country just for an interview and he was offered a job so he stayed. He got—he got a—a visitors permit – when he had a job he could stay. And – and he applied immediately for citizenship, but in those days it took five years before you could become a citizen. But he thought, ‘I’m going to live here; I want to be a citizen.’ So he applied immediately. And then he sent a cable to my mother, “Bring the children.”

LEVINE: And was your—what did your mother have to do then? Did she have a house that she had to put in order or—

WELTER: We didn’t own a house. W—we lived in what was called a row house. R-O-W. I mean R-O—(chuckles) row—R-O-W-E. And houses were built that way, in a row, four or five or maybe—maybe 10 houses in a row. But our house was—was quite nice. We had a—a very nice entrance of black and white tile on the—the little hall and the—and they had a long wall, the dining room, a nice dining room, and the back of the house, which looked out on

the garden. And the nice garden but it was very narrow [unclear] garden. All those row houses had narrow—long, narrow gardens.

LEVINE: What kinds of flowers did you have in them? Do you remember?

WELTER: I don't remember very many flowers, no. My father, I think, grew a few vegetables but he gave each of us a little piece of garden for ourselves. We could plant what we wanted. And we—we planted—oh, I don't quite remember an—anything (chuckles) what we planted, maybe some flowers, maybe some vegetables. But—but there was always a long walk to the—to the gate—gate at the end of the garden. The gate looked out upon a lane—L-A-N-E—where all the—the garbage and the trash was put. And it was—it was called a dustbin. A trashcan was called the dustbin.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: And—and—and there was—was—people would—cleaners would come and clear out the dustbin maybe once a week. I don't know how [unclear].

LEVINE: And then the mailman would probably come?

WELTER: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: The mailman—the post must have come and—

LEVINE: So did you live in the whole house or did you live in one floor of the row house?

WELTER: E—each row house was complete in itself. And—and each row house had three storeys. And the postman came and the lamplighter came. The lamplighter was great fun also because there was a lamp and—on each street, oh, maybe a few yards away. And there was—on the [unclear] lamplighter he had a long—I—torch on—on a stick. And he pumped this long stick up and then a lantern would come on. And it was that nice – it was fun to watch him.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. So when you came in the bottom of the house, what rooms did you come into on the first floor?

WELTER: On—on the first floor, you came into the—the hall, which was of black—black and white tile, and always has a table and a big container, umbrella—umbrella stand, which had [several words unclear] to catch the drips and—and [several words unclear]. And—because [unclear] very, very frequent—frequent that—and then they—on the side of that hall was the kitchen. And then at the end of that hall was the dining room. And then the—the—another [unclear]—before you came to the kitchen you came to the—a drawing room—D-R-A-N-G-W-I-N-G . [D_R_A_W_I_N_G] It was called the drawing room but the word came from a [unclear] with-drawing room. There was—that was the room into which the ladies withdrew after dinner.

LEVINE: Oh.

WELTER: And the men could sit at the table and they could smoke and they could drink and they could tell stories which were unfit for ladies ears. But the ladies had to withdraw.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: And that's—we children were never allowed in the drawing room except when—when we were old enough. My mother had a—a—a v—visiting day once a month and when I was old enough, if I would be very good, very quiet and put on a clean—a clean red pinafore, I could go into the drawing room and help pass the cakes around. And I liked it [unclear] it made me feel important.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: And I could—I could see the ladies. I couldn't talk to them but in those days children were literally seen and not heard, as you—you'd go there and everything. You could see everything but if you—you would talk, you were sent upstairs to the nursery. Th—that was— a very important custom. You—you couldn't talk until somebody talked to you.

LEVINE: Wow. Well, after you went from the drawing room to the kitchen to the dining room—

WELTER: Yes.

LEVINE: —did the dining room look out on something—

WELTER: On—

LEVINE: —in the back of the—

WELTER: On the gar—

LEVINE: On the garden.

WELTER: The garden. That—that was very nice. And that was—that served as a living room for everybody all day long. That was really what—what we would call a living room here, a living room – living room. And—and at night my mother would sit at the – after the supper was cleared away – my mother would sit at the - at the – this dining room, living room table and write letters. And she used a quill pen, which you dipped in the inkwell. And I can remember hearing the squeak, squeak, squeak of that quill pen. That's a familiar memory.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Oh.

WELTER: But—but my—my—my two aunts helped my mother dis—or disposed of the possessions in the house, and –and they decided which should come with us here to this country and which should stay, or be sold or given away in—in England. That took a long time. And during that time, we children and—and my [unclear] and—we children—my mother, part of the time, went to Cambridge to live with my grandmother for that summer. It was a very nice summer. It was a—a very fair summer. It was a hot summer. It was a—a very happy summer for us. My—my grandmother was very nice to us. She had been extremely strict with her own children but she was very nice to us. Of course, we—we knew how to behave. We knew how—we had to be—we had to behave so we—we didn't get into any trouble there. But that—that was very happy summer.

LEVINE: W—do you remember what your mother brought with her?

WELTER: (chuckles) One thing particular—the—two things in particular. One thing particular I remember was a box couch. You—it was padded on top. You could sleep on it. You opened it up. It's a very big—very big couch. You could put all sorts of things [several words unclear] in that box couch. That

box couch came and I have it now. I have it now in my cottage in [unclear].
That box couch must be more than a hundred years old.

LEVINE: Wow.

WELTER: It came back—it's still going—it's still in use. It's still used as—

LEVINE: Oh, my!

WELTER: —as a box couch. [several words unclear] and we keep—keep the things in it. So anyway, w—we were all very happy to come to the United States and we—we—we used to—our mother and—and Ronald and Joyce and myself sailed on the Baltic—B-A-L-T-I-C, a White Star Line. Now then, it was one of the biggest and fastest ships afloat at that time. My brother, as I told you, was two and a half years older than I. He was now the man of the house and—and my sister was exactly two years and one week younger. And we—we enjoyed our trip across the Atlantic very, very much.

LEVINE: Do you remember Liverpool?

WELTER: What?

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about Liverpool before you left the port?

WELTER: Not—not—not really. We just—we had to take a train—train to Liverpool. It was just a big city. And then we—then we got on—on the boat and—

LEVINE: Did—

WELTER: — all new to us on the boat and—

LEVINE: What kind of accommodations did you have on the ship? Do you remember?

WELTER: We had one—one cabin for all of us. And there were four bunks. And my—my--my mother and Joyce, my younger sister in the lower bunks, my brother and I in the up—up—upper bunks. And I was very pleased to be on the upper bunk. I liked to climb—

LEVINE: D—

WELTER: —on them—

LEVINE: Were you in a first or second-class cabin? Do you know?

WELTER: It was second-class.

LEVINE: Second-class, uh-huh. And do you remember, was it—was it a—a pleasant voyage?

WELTER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We—we loved the—the – great fun. [pause] As soon as Mother had put all the baggage in the state room she—she had got a pair of little hor—baby horse reins and hitched Joyce and me up to horse reins and drove us around the deck. I was eight—eight years old. My sister was six years old. They had these little horse reins on us [unclear] the deck. We were mortified. We were—

LEVINE: They were harnesses?

WELTER: What?

LEVINE: Did you say they were harnesses?

WELTER: Yes, little baby—baby—baby harnesses. You know, with straps and—

LEVINE: (chuckles)

WELTER: —reins and she drove us around the deck. We were mortified. We went down into the cabin and my sister had always been a very meek little child [unclear]. And we—and we—we told Mother, “Here we sit till those reins came off—come off—we—if we have to sit here the whole voyage.”

LEVINE: Wow. So did she?

WELTER: The reins came off, yes. But I think my mother had seen babies crawling free on the deck so I think she decided perhaps it was not necessary [unclear]. I—I’m always proud to say we staged the first sit-down strike in history (chuckles) because the sit-down strike did not come to this country until the 1920s. So I—I’m proud that we could do that. (laughter) That—that’s [several words unclear].

LEVINE: So do you remember when the Baltic sailed into the New York harbor?

WELTER: Oh, yes! Yes. We stayed in—stayed in at night. And that was great. But I—I should—should tell you something about the voyage because the—the—the first day I was—we landed at—at what was then called Queenstown in Ireland. Queenstown. It is now Cobb—C-O-B-B.

LEVINE: Cobb, uh-huh.

WELTER: Queenstown. And Mother would not let us get off the ship. I wanted to go out and look around but she would—she was afraid she’d lose us. So she did not let us get off. But the Irish ladies came up. They were selling like

lace and—and other things. They had—I remember Mother bought a little—a little tiny pot carved out of [unclear] oak. It was [several words unclear] underground in a swamp for hundreds of years. It's very, very hard. And I—I still had that till a few years ago. I gave it to my niece.

LEVINE: Huh.

WELTER: Because I felt that was a valuable antique, even though it was very—very tiny, because it was nicely carved with three legs and nicely carved around the edges also.

LEVINE: Do you—

WELTER: [unclear] and on the voyage my mother was so seasick that she couldn't do anything except sit in a deck chair all day long and wait till it would go away. So we went up (chuckles) on the top deck. And you know, if you have ever been on a ship there's plenty of room between the curve and the end of the lifeboat. And the—and the way they had the handrail, and we children would crawl under that—the—the handrail to the shi – to the edge of the ship and look down on the water. We didn't know how dangerous it was. If the ship had given [unclear] we should have been in the sea. But—we had fun doing it and Mother—Mother never knew. And lots of things, we learned, never tell Mother.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: But—

LEVINE: What were the Irish girls like, the young Irish girls who came—who came over here from Queenstown? Did you see them when you were on the ship?

WELTER: Oh, no. We didn't see any of the immigrants. The immigrants were all down in the hold. And they stayed there. They had no fresh air. They had nothing to—[unclear] dark. I suppose they had the light [unclear]. That was miserable, miserable for them. But they—well, they were called Colleen—Colleen. But I didn't know much about them at all.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: But—but to—to—to --to stop at Queenstown, I wanted to get off. I wanted to explore but--but—many, many years after, when I was grown, I had the opportunity with my sister. We went—we went to England. We went to Ireland and we went to Queenstown and so finally, I got to see (chuckles) Cobb.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Great. Well—

WELTER: Some—some things you could—you could—some—sometimes you can satisfy many, many years after you want to do them.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Were you—(clears throat) w—what happened? Did you get examined on the ship?

WELTER: Oh.

LEVINE: How come you went to Port Authority?

WELTER: Oh, we didn't. We didn't. We—

LEVINE: What did you do when you l—were landing?

WELTER: Well, the—the last day—oh, well, first I must tell you, when we stayed in the New York harbor it was night and I saw the Statue of Liberty all lighted up. It was [unclear]. I was thrilled, really thrilled to see that Statue of Liberty and know that we were in the United States – we were in New York, in a new la—land to have a new life. And I’ve always remembered that and I have a vivid picture in my mind also of seeing the Statue of Liberty all lighted up. That was—that was very – very delightful. But—but we—we had some rough days. And we—we didn’t dare go up on the deck, some v—very rough days where it was so rough the waves put water on the tablecloth so the—so the dishes were sliding around. And my mother was seasick so she sometimes stayed in the cabin. But we children never missed a meal. (chuckles) We didn’t get seasick at all. As long as I could be on the deck and getting fresh air, I’m never seasick.

LEVINE: Wow.

WELTER: I’ve crossed the Atlantic many, many times since then. And I prefer to go by boat rather than to fly.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: But I—I love to travel on a -- on a boat.

LEVINE: Well, wh—when you—when the boat came into the New York harbor, where did you get off?

WELTER: Oh, the—the—the day—we came in at night. The next day, there was a notice on the bulletin board, “Do not go out on the lower deck.” But I didn’t read bulletin boards. They were for grownups. So I went out on the lower deck. Then an officer came and locked the door. And here, I was stuck. (chuckles) And then they began bringing up the—the people from the hold,

the poor immigrants, the poor immigrants from—from Europe, from Germany and many, many Russian—many places in Europe, most of—a group of them. I walked in through to the lounge. We—they—they were examined by the doctor in the lounge. The doctor examined their eyes first for trachoma, because if they had anything wrong with their eyes they had to be sent back to where they came from. And they—they examined the [unclear]. If they were healthy, they [several words unclear]. They were taken off. And batch after batch after batch came through.

LEVINE: What did they look like to you as a little nine-year-old who had had a—a much more charmed life than t—they did, probably?

WELTER: Well, I knew they were peasants. They were—they were dressed in strange clothes from strange countries. And they had all their belongings wrapped up in a great big sheet. The woman would carry this great big sheet with the—the—all the belongings of the whole—whole family. And I could see these—it was —it was fun to watch them go through—but I was afraid I might get mixed up with them. (chuckles) And so when I saw a sailor—a sailor, I went up to the sailor and I said, “Please, the officer locked the door. I belong upstairs. I don’t belong with these people. How could I get upstairs?” And of course, just—just one look at my clothes could tell that (chuckles) I wasn’t with those peasants. And so he said to me, “Can you climb?” “Oh, can I climb?” There was a ladder that I’d always wanted to climb but I didn’t dare because I had to be a lady. A lady doesn’t dare to show her drawers. So I was told not to climb. Here, I could—I could be allowed to climb that ladder just—just that once. And I climbed up that and at—at the—at the top there was—it had a rail to climb over. I knew I could climb. I could do anything. (chuckles) And then there was a gentleman called Mr.Reg Griffiths. He was a man. He was a—a—a Dutch reform minister. He was known to both my father and my mother and—and he—he said, “Could I help you, Little Lady?” Well, I didn’t want any help but I

thought I'd better be polite and so I held out—then he helped me get over the railing. I was afraid he would tell Mother but I just kept very quiet. But—he didn't—he didn't tell Mother and I didn't need to tell Mother (chuckles) that I had almost lost -- got lost. But I saw all these peasant people being taken off the boat to Ellis Island. Well, they had all gone. Then the—the Immigration officers called everybody into the lounge. So I—I was there then. I went with my mother and my brother and my sister into—into the lounge. The Immigration officer talked to my mother. She had all the correct papers and all of the—all the correct answers. And the Immigration officer said to my mother, "Who is meeting you?" Because the—the [several words unclear] an immigrant woman had to be met by somebody. They didn't let—they didn't let a woman alone off in New York City, which is very wise. And—and she said, "My husband." So he said—they said, "Well, sit here and wait till he comes up." Then down on the [unclear], my father was—he'd come to meet the boat and he was trying to go up the gangplank. And then the guard at the bottom of the gangplank said, "Why do you want to go up?" "To meet my wife." And the guard said, "Well, stay until she comes down." That's how the [unclear] don't get—communicate with each other. So (chuckles) my mother was stuck. My father was stuck. What could we do? So my mother waited and waited and waited and waited. My father waited on the dock, waited and waited. [unclear] must have waited [unclear] got off the boat. My father [unclear] as—as [several words unclear] want to meet my wife. And Mr. Reg Griffiths, he—he was a regular citizen. So he—he told the guards, "Well, that's all right. The—the Immigration officer is making her wait till somebody meets her." So he—he made the guards allow him to go up and we were so glad to see my father at last. We were afraid we might have to be sent back to England. [pause]. But of course, there was no possibility that we could be sent to Ellis Island. But—but I—if my father had failed to connect with my mother, we would have been sent back to England.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

WELTER: But —

LEVINE: You might have been sent to Ellis Island to wait for him. Sometimes, they did that.

WELTER: Well, I do—I didn't know that. I didn't know that.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

WELTER: Could be. Could be. Yes, I think you'd just be sent back to England because [several words unclear] can't find my father.

LEVINE: Yeah.

WELTER: [unclear] here [unclear]. But anyway, Mr Reg Griffiths was able to explain to the guard that my mother had been told to wait. And then the—the—guard let my father come up. Oh, we were so [unclear] to see my father. (chuckles). And the—then—[unclear] what must have been late afternoon by that time because at a certain time and [unclear] the Immigration officer [unclear] the doctor examined us to see we were—we were healthy. And—

LEVINE: Okay. Well, we're at the end of this tape.

WELTER: Hmm.

LEVINE: So I'm going to stop the tape here.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2

LEVINE: Okay. I'm beginning here with tape two. We're speaking with Erica Welter. You mentioned you—

WELTER: Erica Mather Welter. Erica Mather Welter and very important and very—

LEVINE: That w—

WELTER: Erica Mather Welter.

LEVINE: Erica Mather Welter.

WELTER: Welter. Yes.

LEVINE: You mentioned the reunion with your father. How long had it been—

WELTER: What?

LEVINE: How long a time had it been that your father had left England before you did?

WELTER: Oh, I don't—a whole summer.

LEVINE: Oh.

WELTER: The whole summer because it—it took the whole summer for my aunt to help my mother clear the house and get rid of the furniture, decide which should come and which should not come. We had to all pack so—so we were at Cambridge the whole summer. And that was a very delightful summer. We were lucky, as it was a nice, warm, sunny—sunny summer.

And my mother to—took us to Deer Park and she took us around to see all the colleges, the beautiful colleges with their beautiful lawns, right down to the Cam and the—the Cam for which Cambridge is named, because after these bridge—bridge over the Cam—is very quiet river. It's almost like a canal. It's so—so quiet and so—so sluggish—and when my uncles—uncles used to take us out on trips on the Cam up—up to Grantchester. They would row us on punt -- punters and two hours a row we had a punt. You know what a punt is?

LEVINE: Well, it's a little boat, right?

WELTER: A—a rowboat and a man stands with a long pole, pushes the pole and the pole pulls the boat along. That's a punt. The uncles would take us up to Grantchester. Grantchester was a nice little village. There was a nice tearoom there. So then they would take us up there. We'd have—we'd have tea in the afternoon at Grantchester and then we would change in the evening. In the evening, they would light candles and put them on a paper dish and send—put them on the river and s—send them down the river. And that was lots of fun. We—we enjoyed that summer very, very, very much. And my grandmother was so nice to us. And—

LEVINE: What—did your mother take a whole household of furnishings?

WELTER: No, no. Not—not quite.

LEVINE: No.

WELTER: Not quite. Just enough to start because my—my father has found an apartment in New York to take us to. So just an apartment with very—very few rooms.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: And—and not—not—not enough for a whole house. We had remember that box couch and then a—a cabinet, a Chinese-made cabinet, made out of bamboo and glass. It was very, very beautiful and—

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: —was a bamboo structure and has bamboo decorations. Those two pieces, they were [unclear] only ones I can remember.

LEVINE: What about you as a little nine-year-old? Did you take anything?

WELTER: Ei—Eight-year-old. Eight-year-old.

LEVINE: Eight.

WELTER: No. Sadly, we were not allowed. We were not allowed to take any—any of our toys and it was very (chuckles) hard for us. Mother took us to the Children's Hospital and we had—had to leave all our toys at the Children's Hospital. Of course, we were glad to make children happy but we—we were sad to have to get rid of all those—(chuckles) all our toys. Well, here, the—the—one of fastest ships of the whole outfit, it took twelve—twelve days to cross the Atlantic in those days. That was 1906. And just as soon as I ca—came off the ship, I wanted to be American right away quick. But my father had applied for citizenship and it took five whole years. So I had to wait till I was thirteen before I could become a citizen. And even then I was only a minor.

LEVINE: (chuckles) Why did you want to become a citizen so much?

WELTER: Because it was so much nicer here. I had felt the restrictions of having to be proper all the time, having to be a lady all the time, having to be Victorian all the time. And—

LEVINE: S—

WELTER: I—I think—I think Bertie, who—they called him Bertie, who was Queen Victoria's son, -- was -- was Edward – Edward the Seventh. But as I say, I don't remember that much about—about dates. But we had a lovely, lovely summer that time and Mother's—Mother had a friend, a Miss—a Miss Cadbury that—Cadbury Chocolate [unclear]. She had a beautiful [several words unclear]. And she gave a—a costume party for children. And—and Mother dressed Joyce and me up as fairies. We had little gauze pretty dresses. And she made gauze wings—wings for us. And she let us go barefoot because of beautiful, beautiful grass. And we just loved to walk barefoot on that grass. We had never been allowed to walk barefoot anywhere before. (chuckles)

LEVINE: Oh.

WELTER: But th—that was a great, great joyous day to be able to walk barefoot on that lovely lawn at Mrs. Cadbury's garden. And Mrs. Cadbury had a huge—they called it a boat. It was a—a rounded thing, was—was round – there were seats across it and, oh, maybe—maybe—maybe six children get in. And they could rock back and forth in th—this boat. And th—that remains a vivid picture—

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: —in my m—mind. And all the beautiful cottages, the beautiful grounds, beautiful grounds, the beautiful lawns that went down to the villa.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: And I can remember in—in Cambridge there was the Cambridge Run is a little stream that runs down the [unclear]. I think there's a—the -- the main street of Cambridge this little stream always runs. It must come from a spring. It's always running [unclear]. And it's called the Cambridge Run. And year—many years after, when I was an adult and I met somebody who came from Cambridge, I said, "Is the Cambridge Run still running?" He said yes.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: And—and another thing she took us to see was Milton's mulberry tree. You ever heard of Milton? Who wrote this—wrote these wonderful poems and things. There was a mulberry tree, apparently had been planted by Milton on the grounds of one of the colleges.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: And it was hundreds of years old there and the branches were propped—propped up by props. And she told us about Milton's mulberry tree and we were—we must remember that. So I did remember. And many years after, when I met somebody from England, before I got back I says, "Is the Cambridge Run still running?" "Yes." "Is the Milton m—mulberry tree—mulberry tree still alive?" He said, "Yes, and it's still bearing mulberries." (chuckles) How many hundred years old? I don't know. But it's still there.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: Or it was a year or two ago. But here, the—the—there were t—two good steamship lines in England, the White Star and the Cunard. And—and they had the fastest, best ships and they took twelve whole days to cross the Atlantic that time.

LEVINE: Where did—

WELTER: [unclear]

LEVINE: I'm sorry. Where did your father take you when he—when he met you, where did he take you to?

WELTER: He took us to a boarding house, a boarding house in New York City, because he—we stayed—stayed there a few days before he found an apartment in the—the Bronx. But children were never taken to hotels in those days so he had to go to a boarding house. Children were not—not expected or allowed to go to hotels. And—

LEVINE: What do you remember about the boarding house?

WELTER: About the boarding house, well, we—we could go there and in the morning we could see the children going to school. And we didn't have to go to school. Mother took us to Cen—Central Park instead. And—and—and she went down to do some unpacking and she had taken my sister, Joyce, down with her. And Joyce got bitten with fleas, bitten all over with fleas and Mother was furious. She took her to the—the owner of the boarding house, and said, "Look. Look what happened." The—the boarding house owner said—"Well, you must have brought them with you." Or maybe they came on the ship. I don't know, maybe they came from the boarding house. But mother was so particular. A real Victorian. We never had fleas in our house. We (chuckles) would always use K—Keeting—Keeting Flea Powder. K-E-

E-T-I-N-G. It was very popular. Every—all—all the ladies used it, Keeting's Flea Powder. So we never had fleas. And here we had fleas in a boarding house in (chuckles) New York. That was too bad. But it was great fun. We stayed there a few days until my father could find an apartment in the Bronx. And—and in those f—few days we were so glad—see the other—other children had to go to school and we could go to Central Park.
(chuckles)

LEVINE: Where in the Bronx did your father find the apartment?

WELTER: I can't tell you exactly wh—where it was but it was the end of the elevated railway.

LEVINE: Oh.

WELTER: It was the very end of—it was kind of country all around. There was a nice hill where we could go [unclear] in the—in the winter. We had—[unclear] the winter there. And as we—we went to Public School number Thirteen. And you could look up and find out where that—where that is. But I—I don't remember the names of the streets or anything, just—just [unclear].

LEVINE: How was the school compared with the school you had been attending in England?

WELTER: It was—it was, oh, very different because large classes, much larger classes. And the—don't remember much about [several words unclear]. We had—we – I think—I think it was the second and don't remember much about it because we liked [unclear] better. But—but it—it was a co—countryside and I think—I think it was near—near where Mr. Reg Griffiths had—had his church because I think that's how my father found it, was the very end of the elevated rail—railway station. So you might be able to find

out the location, but Public School number Thirteen. And the children teased us because our clothes were different. We had nice little knit—knit bonnets pulled down over our ears, kept our ears warm. And then, well, one of them said to me, “Are you English?” I said yes. “Can you speak English?” I said, “Oh, yes.” “Well, speak some for us.” (chuckles) So I had to tell them, “Well, I am speaking English right now.” And they could hardly believe that.

LEVINE: Hmm. So the children teased you at first? The chil—

WELTER: They te—teased us about our clothes, m—mostly about our clothes and about our speech because Mother had—Mother came from Cambridge and she had told us to speak very distinctly and to pronounce words very clearly and very, very well. And—and th—they thought our speech was funny. And of course, we pronounced some things differently. The—I remember the (chuckles)—a—my—my father had sent some -- some c—coins back to England to tell us something about wh—what we would find when we got here. And my brother took it upon himself to teach—your sister and me, this—this was a penny. This was a penny. This was a nickel and this was a nilly [PH], he says. A dimmy [PH]. That’s all he knew. And my father told us that some words were pronounced differently. So we knew a little bit – a little bit about what to expect. But the children teased us mostly about our clothes and also about our speech and our pr—pronunciation of words, was a dif—different pronunciation than what they have here. And they have—we would—we would say a “gloss” and they would say a “glass.” So we—we tried to learn to be Americans. And I tr—I tried to learn to be American. But even now, my English friends think I—I’m very American. My American friends think I’m very English. So (chuckles) you never get over it because I was eight years old when I came—came here. Now, you’d better ask me some more questions.

LEVINE: Okay. (clears throat) So what did you do then? How long did you stay in school?

WELTER: Oh, in—in—in New York at that house—in the Bronx, the end of the elevated railroad -- we were high up. And down beneath us was the railroad line. They had train—trains going in to New York. And—and we could see the river. That was nice. And in the—in the winter—we spent the winter there—we could see the great blocks of ice floating up with the tide, down with the tide. Because it was just still tidal at that part. And across the river was a speedway—S-P-E-E-D-W-A-Y—where they had horse races and, I think, buggy races. And we—we could—we could just hear them and the [unclear].

LEVINE: Huh. So did you work at all when you finished going to school?

WELTER: What?

LEVINE: When you finished school, did you go to work?

WELTER: Ah—

LEVINE: Did you ever work?

WELTER: Oh, we -- [several words unclear]—finished high school?

LEVINE: When you finished, right.

WELTER: Oh. Oh, well, we didn't—we didn't stay there. We didn't—I don't think we stayed more than one year there in—in the—the Bronx because my father had found out through a friend that in Montclair, New Jersey they had one of the ten best schools in the whole country.

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: So he—he -- made arrangements and then went—went to the house in Mont—Montclair, New Jersey. That is spelled M-O-N-T-C-L-A-I-R, all one word, Montclair, New Jersey, a very, very good school. And I was there from, I guess, the thi—third or fourth grade all the way through high school. But I want to tell you one other thing too. At first – at first he couldn't—couldn't—couldn't get a house in Montclair, he got a house in Glen Ridge. Glen Ridge is the next town, a very s—small town.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

WELTER: And my mother took my brother and my sister and me to the pr—principal. He was the principal to the whole school, small school. And he was put in the proper class. My sister was -- was only six, she was obviously ready for the first grade. Well, it happened there was a overfl –an overflow class containing first and second grades together, just the overflow class. And—and the—so a newcomer – my sister -- was put in that overflow class. Then my—my mother interviewed the principal [unclear]. The principal had me write one sentence. And in—in that sentence, I spelled one of the words with English spelling. The one word was—was not the same as the American spelling and the—the principal didn't know that. So he—he put me down in second grade instead of third grade. I should have gone into third grade. I had had two years in England. So he put me down in second grade and I went to the overflow class. Here I was put in the same room as my sister, who was two years younger. I was furious!

LEVINE: Hmm.

WELTER: Because the—the principal of the whole school didn't know that some—some spelling in English was d—different spelling in—(chuckles) in America. I thought he was very stupid but anyway, I was absolutely furious. So I refused to learn to spell, refused to learn to spell. And (chuckles) I [several words unclear] away from home. I would write a letter home. My mother would always correct my spelling and send the letter back to me (chuckles) and my sister's the same as [unclear] mother and I. So that's stayed with me almost of my life. But I think I can spell fairly well now.

LEVINE: (chuckles)

WELTER: My greatest difficulty is, well, where's the double letter? Where is the second letter? Where—[unclear]? I always spelled phonetically. How it sounded to me, that's the way I spelled it. (chuckles)

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

WELTER: Because I'm no good at spelling. (chuckles) But that shows how a trauma in childhood lasts your whole life long.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So what happened after you graduated from high school? What did you do then?

WELTER: Oh, graduated from high school and I'm trying to think of the fir—first thing. As—as it -- as it --as it was wartime—wartime, and I had—I had—hmm --I'm trying to think wh—what came first but—but I had—had gone to Columbia University to study to be a teacher. I finally got my B.S. degree in being a health teacher, health education teacher. And that included gymnasium and exercise of course, but also included diet and—and -- hygiene, personal hygiene and safety and relations with – relations with other human beings, all the things that may contribute to your—to your health. And I

had—I was studying that. And then I had—I also had taken a course in a very good hospital in New York to be a physical therapist. I had taken a course in physical therapy. So I had always wanted to teach and I was ready to teach and ready to teach as a health education teacher. And I was ready to be a physical therapist. And then this is—this is just at the -- just near the—near the end of the First World War. And the Army was calling for physical therapists. So I offered my services to the Army. The Army wouldn't—wouldn't take women but they took—took us as—as a civilian employee. So I had to wear a uniform and I had to obey all of the Army restrictions and [unclear]. But I—I helped—helped to give physical therapy to the w—wounded soldiers who were being fl—

LEVINE: Wow.

WELTER: —flown back. And—and I—I enjoyed that and that's where I—I learned how nice the common people are, because the—the wounded soldiers were everybody, as you—as you know.

LEVINE: Okay.

WELTER: So I was a civilian employee. And from—from—for about—about two years. And then, and then, sometime during that time the Armistice was signed in one day and everybody was very excited. I didn't dare go down to the street but I wanted to see. So I got on a bus. I got on the top of the bus and rode all the way down to the end of the bus and could see the— [several words unclear] celebrating in the street and then rode it all the way back again, didn't get off the bus. Anyway, we stay—stayed there on top of (chuckles) the bus, rode all the way back to—to Columbia University.

LEVINE: Okay.

WELTER: And—

LEVINE: Let me just pause here a minute. [pause in tape]

WELTER: Solitary confinement. It's so stupid – it's not a life -- but—so you—you better go now—[unclear] make sure [unclear]. If I'm here, I'll be glad to see you later. But I'm so glad that you came to see me.

LEVINE: Oh, I am too. And I think what I'll do is I'll go over the interview and then maybe I can ask you some other questions to fill in.

WELTER: If I'm still here. Right—I'm telling everybody I'm ready to die. This is no life. This is just existence and [unclear] time. And—and—and Bill Lattie is—is my very good friend now. He came because he's the best carpenter. He's done everything just the way I wanted. Other—other—other carpenters, I tell them what I want and they did what they want. Men seem to think that women know nothing at all and—but Bill is so nice. He's now my very good friend. He's taking care of the house and the grounds and now he's taking care of me and he's a very good friend and I—

LEVINE: Oh, that's nice that you have someone like that.

WELTER: Well, I call him my grandson. The family have—have accepted him as my grandson. So if I'm here in—in June when you come, I'll be very glad to see you. But I'm very glad you came now and took as much as you could.

LEVINE: Well, I am too.

END OF INTERVIEW