

EI-156/WIELAND

EI-156

FRED WIELAND

BIRTH DATE: DECEMBER 29, 1915

INTERVIEW DATE: 5/13/1992

RUNNING TIME: 49:02

INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

RECORDING ENGINEER: KEVIN DALEY

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND RECORDING STUDIO

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 12/1993

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 3/1994

BRAZIL, 1926 PORT: SANTOS

AGE 11 RESIDENCES: BRAZIL: JACCAREHY

US: PATTERSON, NJ

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Thursday, May 13th, 1992. I'm here at the Ellis Island Recording Studio with Fred Wieland, who came from Brazil in 1926 when he was eleven years old. Good afternoon, sir.

WIELAND: Good afternoon.

SIGRIST: Can we start with you giving me your date of birth?

WIELAND: December 29, 1915.

SIGRIST: And where were you born?

WIELAND: I was born in Brazil.

SIGRIST: What town in Brazil?

WIELAND: It was in Jaccarehy. It's about an hour-and-a-half or two hours by train from Sao Paulo.

SIGRIST: Can you spell the name of the town?

WIELAND: It's J-A-C-C-A-R-E-H-Y.

SIGRIST: What was this town like? Can you describe it?

WIELAND: It was very small, a very small town. It consisted of one large hotel. That's where we were staying. As a matter of fact, I was born in the hotel. And the people that owned the hotel, the lady who became my godmother, she was, I believe she was German, and the husband, he was German. No, he was Jewish. He was Jewish. And they became my godparents.

SIGRIST: Why were you born in the hotel?

WIELAND: Well, that's where my, when my father went down there they didn't have any furniture, so they had to stay in the hotel until I was, oh, about two or three years old. We stayed there quite a long time. And I remember they had a bakery in that hotel and they delivered horse and wagon, just a small wagon, and I remember going around with one of the children, with my godparents, and they had quite a large grove of orange trees and what they called lima. It's not, it must be a cross between a grapefruit and an orange.

And, as a matter of fact, I have a picture of myself standing under one of the orange trees. I must have been about two-and-a-half years old. And the clothing that I have on, except the shoes and the socks, my mother made. And I was blonde at the time.

(he laughs) After, my father became the foreman there. He left Germany in 1913 and he went to this town because they had bought some hosiery machinery in Germany, and they had to be assembled. It's quite a job to assemble everything, the cams and everything had to be levelled and so on and so forth. And when that job was finished they asked my father to stay there as overseer. He was a foreman. And then we rented a home and we stayed there until 1921.

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

WIELAND: Oscar.

SIGRIST: And you said he went to Brazil in 1913.

WIELAND: 1913.

SIGRIST: To basically set up this equipment that he had purchased from . . .

WIELAND: Yes, that's right.

SIGRIST: A German factory. That leads me to ask you, was there some kind of industry going on in this town or was it trying to industrialize?

WIELAND: Well, it was just trying to industrialize. There wasn't, there wasn't much industry there. I remember they had a theater, a movie. That was the big thing there, you know. Almost every night, I guess, people went to the movies. I remember some of the Charlie Chaplin films. I used to laugh so loud that people laughed at me. And . . .

SIGRIST: What was your father like as a person? What was his temperament like?

WIELAND: Well, we weren't all that close. I was much closer with my mother. My father, well, (he sighs) he disciplined me. He kept me in line. Never really struck me, but when he said something that was it. So . . .

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

WIELAND: Minna. M-I-N-N-A.

SIGRIST: And what was her maiden name?

WIELAND: Kuehne. K-U-E-H-N-E. Kuehne.

SIGRIST: And did she come with your father in 1913?

WIELAND: Yes, uh-huh. And one of the things my mother said when they landed in, when they were in the Harbor of Rio, which is possibly the most beautiful harbor in the world, and my father came up and he says, "This is paradise."

SIGRIST: Do you think that, do you think they were happy about going to Brazil, or do you think that . . .

WIELAND: Oh, yes. I think so. I think so. They, my mother, where she came from, it was mostly farmland, and everybody, every family apparently must have had a plot. They would grow their own food. When I was in Germany I remember staying at my mother's mother, they had pigs, they had some geese, and I was there when they slaughtered one pig. It must have been in the fall. And the eggs my grandmother sold. They were very poor. My mother came from a family of nine. And then my father's mother and father, they were still living then. And they lived in the other part of Germany, towards the Czechoslovakian border. And we visited there, and my grandfather, he was a carpenter.

He was quite busy.

SIGRIST: So this is a tremendous change in culture for your parents to go . . .

WIELAND: Yes.

SIGRIST: From their German way of life to the life in this town in Brazil.

WIELAND: What you must remember that in Brazil and in Argentina there are many, many Germans. There are also Italians, quite a number of Italians. For instance, my mother and I went to Germany in 1921 and we stayed for about a year. I went to school there at that time and learned German, read and write. And when we came back my father had given up that job and had gone to Sao Paulo for the same type of job, but apparently for more money, and it was a much more modern city. Sao Paulo, even at that time, was quite large. He, I guess in 1920 it was the beginning, no, the beginning, 1926. He decided to come to the United States. Now, I have, I had an uncle who lived in Clifton and he was in the hosiery business and my father and uncle must have corresponded and my uncle said yes, that he'd come up here. That's how we came here.

SIGRIST: Now, when you returned from Germany in '21, did you then move to Sao Paulo with your father?

WIELAND: Yes.

SIGRIST: How was that different than the town in Brazil you had come from?

WIELAND: Oh, this, there is no comparison at all. Sao Paulo was a wonderful city with large parks. They had a lot of German people there. As a matter of fact, my father belonged to a singing society, a German singing society, and they used to have dances. I remember going to them.

SIGRIST: Was there a large German population in the first town that you, the town that you were born in?

WIELAND: No, not that great.

SIGRIST: Who lived in that town?

WIELAND: Well, the natives. The Brazilians. The, uh, most of them are farmers. I remember in that town my mother wasn't all that well, and the doctor suggested that she have, drink goat's milk. And we went to this goat farm, and this was not pasteurized. I mean, this came

from the goat. (he laughs) And we drank that. Not to my liking, believe me, but apparently it must have helped her.

SIGRIST: What kind of German customs did your parents hold on to while living in Brazil that you can remember, especially when you were a small child?

WIELAND: Well, they held, we ate what my mother and father ate in Germany, you know, the, I guess they must have had stores, German stores or something, a German butcher. You know, the Germans are great on cold cuts. So I do remember that, and my mother cooked, probably cooked the same all her life, never changed that much. Of course, the living here was much easier, the shopping and so on and so forth. Like in Brazil I remember my mother going to the market and they had no bags. They just had a flat sheet of brown paper. And if you bought rice they would pour the rice in the middle of the sheet and they would crinkle the edges of it. So sometimes when you were carrying that home you got home you had half of the sugar or whatever you bought because it opened up and fell on the ground.

SIGRIST: What about living in Brazil did your mother or your

father really not like? What part of that life did they find distasteful somehow?

WIELAND: Nothing that I can really think of that was that distasteful. It wasn't as sanitary as they would have liked it. I remember when we lived in Sao Paulo we had no indoor plumbing and all your cooking was done on charcoal. And they had a stove in the kitchen which was built for charcoal but for some reason or another my mother didn't like that. So my father took five-gallon cans and cut the top out and built a grate in there, and that's what my mother cooked on. As a matter of fact, she even baked on that, because she would put two of them together and then, five-gallon cans end to end to keep the heat in, and she would bake in that.

SIGRIST: Were you living in an apartment in Sao Paulo or in a house?

WIELAND: No. This is a house, but they were all connected, like you find in Philadelphia.

SIGRIST: Like townhouses.

WIELAND: Something like that.

SIGRIST: Can you describe it, just sort of walk me through the house in Sao Paulo?

WIELAND: Well, it I'd say you had a long hallway and the bedrooms were off the hallway and then you came into the dining room and then into the kitchen and that was it. And then there was a door going out to the backyard. It wasn't much of a backyard. And all those houses have brick walls, high brick walls, like six to eight feet high. And we had two police dogs at the time.

SIGRIST: Two police dogs, you said?

WIELAND: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Were they pets?

WIELAND: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember their names?

WIELAND: Yeah. Roland and Kristall. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Now, were they allowed in the house, or did they have to stay outside?

WIELAND: They came in the house, sure. Yeah, they came in the

house. You know, I'm trying to remember now. It might have been 1924, 1925. They had of their one every other day revolutions. And let's see now, we lived on Rua Major Octaviano. And up the street, oh, maybe half a mile, three-quarters of a mile, there was a warehouse, and when this revolution started the people broke into the warehouses and they stole food and coffee beans. This is the coffee beans before they're roasted. So the military came around trying to find the stuff that was stolen. Well, we hadn't been up there, but they came in and they went to the back, through the back door, and they opened the back door, and my mother had tied up the two dogs and they didn't venture out to see if we had anything, a backyard. We could have had tons of stuff. And then another thing I remember about that was when they, the people that had stolen the beans at night, they would go out and roast their, the coffee beans, and you could smell that all over the place. It was . . .

SIGRIST: As a kid, was this a fun place to be? Was this a threatening place to be?

WIELAND: It wasn't a threatening place to be, no. When I went to school, I went to Portuguese-German school.

SIGRIST: Is that what most people spoke, Portuguese?

WIELAND: That's the language. The rest of South America is Spanish. Just Brazil was settled by the Portuguese and I guess the rest of those by the Spanish. We, this friend of mine and I used to go to school and we'd walk, and it was quite a distance. And there was never a time that we didn't have a soccer ball with us. We'd be playing, kicking the soccer ball all the way to school. It was nice.

SIGRIST: Now, did you speak Portuguese also?

WIELAND: I, no. I forgot it all because at home we spoke German, and when I came to this country I had to learn English. Now, when I came to this country it was in December. It was cold. And my mother, as I said, had made a lot of my clothes, and I had short pants on. This is in December, and it was cold. So I guess I was here until right after Christmas, and I went to school here. And not be able to speak the language I had to learn the language and they put me in the kindergarten. I was eleven years old, with the short pants, you know. Everybody was looking at me as if I were a freak. So it took a while for me to learn, and

we moved from Clifton to Paterson, and then I went to school in Paterson. And as I learned the language I started skipping the grades, because geography and history and arithmetic and all was, that was no problem. It was just the language.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about, you started telling me before about why your father wanted to come to America.

WIELAND: Well, I guess my uncle told him, you know, it's a good place to live.

SIGRIST: What was your uncle doing here in America?

WIELAND: He was in hosiery. He was working at the machines. At that time all the hosiery was with the seam down the back, you know. So it must have been about five different operations to make a stocking. You had the legger, the footer, you had the toppers in between. When the machine came off the toppers would get it. They would put it on the, on this, on these needles and transfer that to the other machine, and that machine would then put the foot on it. And then you would have the seamers and what the heck, I forget what they call the other operation, but they would sew

the toe and the heel. And then they would be dyed and put on forms to give them shape and boxed and that was it.

SIGRIST: Now, had your uncle come from Germany?

WIELAND: Yes.

SIGRIST: Would you know when he came?

WIELAND: He must have come in about '21 or so.

SIGRIST: I see. So he's corresponding with your dad.

WIELAND: Yes.

SIGRIST: And what was it that finally made your father decide?

WIELAND: I suppose it's, he just wanted the change. He had a good job in Sao Paulo. My father was a good mechanic. He was not office material. And if I'm not mistaken they might have asked him to move up, you know, and oversee both the weaving and the hosiery end of it. And I guess he just didn't want any part of that, so in the '20s, in the late '20s, that is before the Depression, the hosiery workers, like the hat band weavers, they made a lot of money. Now, picture this in 1927, '28, '29, somebody making a hundred and

twenty-five dollars a week, that was tremendous. That was a lot of money. A machinist, a plain machinist, was getting about eighteen or nineteen dollars.

SIGRIST: So you think that was part of what was enticing your father?

WIELAND: That was probably part of it.

SIGRIST: What did you, as a small kid, what did you know about America? When you were growing up in Brazil what did you know about America?

WIELAND: Well, I knew a little bit something because when we were living in Sao Paulo I don't know how they met these people, but they were German people. My mother and father and these people became acquainted. And they had come from the United States to Brazil. He was with the Ford Company, and they put up an exhibit down there, and he was part of that. And we got to talking with them, and they had magazines. And I remember they had a trunk, and they had the flag. I remember that.

SIGRIST: How did your mother feel about going to America?

WIELAND: Oh, I'm sure she was happy to come. She figured it

would be an easier life. As I said, the way she had to cook, you know. When you came to the United States you had a gas stove in the kitchen.

SIGRIST: Now, is it just you, or do you have brothers and sisters?

WIELAND: I'm the only one.

SIGRIST: You're the only child. So your father's really looking at America as sort of an economic improvement, I think. Tell me a little bit about the process of getting your papers, and that sort of thing that you remember, or . . .

WIELAND: You mean, to come into this country?

SIGRIST: To come here, yes. Do you remember getting the visa?

WIELAND: I remember we had to go to the German consulate in Sao Paulo, and I guess we got the passport. I don't know, even know whether, I don't know whether you had to have a visa at the time. But anyway, I didn't get involved with that, naturally. But I do remember we stayed, after my father left, we lived with a couple in, on the outskirts of Sao Paulo. Being, my mother was a good seamstress, she made clothing for the wife

of the, this fellow was a tailor. He had a tailor shop. He was also German. He had a tailor shop in Sao Paulo. And we stayed there about, oh, maybe four months. I guess that's about the span between when my father came here and he saved up the money and sent it down, and that's when we came up.

SIGRIST: What, did your father live with your uncle when he came in?

WIELAND: Yes.

SIGRIST: And did he instantly get a job in the hosiery industry?

WIELAND: Yes, right.

SIGRIST: Do you remember at all how you felt at all once your father had left? How you felt yourself about going to America and leaving your friends and whatever situations were familiar to you?

WIELAND: Well, I think I was looking forward to it. I think I figured it would be nice. It was an adventure. I remember aboard ship coming up to . . .

SIGRIST: Did you leave from Rio?

WIELAND: No, we left from Santos. Then we went to Rio, let's see, I think then it's Bahia and Pernambuco or the other way around, I forget. And we stopped in Trinidad, and it was Thanksgiving aboard ship and that was the first time I ever had turkey. We didn't, the menu was in English, and we didn't know what it was, and someone explained it to us, you know, this is turkey, this is for Thanksgiving. There was no Thanksgiving down there, of course.

SIGRIST: What class did you travel?

WIELAND: Second class.

SIGRIST: Second class. And did you take a lot of luggage with you?

WIELAND: No, we didn't have all that much. No, not really all that much.

SIGRIST: All right. We're going to pause right here, and Kevin's going to flip the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: Okay. Do you remember the name of the boat that you

came on?

WIELAND: Uh, Voltaire. And if I'm not mistaken, if it wasn't too much later it sank.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about the boat ride, just off the top of your head?

WIELAND: What I remember the most was the food, and that's where I learned to swim. They had a swimming pool, not a sunken swimming pool, that had wooden sides and then had canvas inside of it to keep the water in. And there are two young fellows aboard ship. My mother and I became acquainted with them. And how I got to learn to swim is I think there must have been about three or four life jackets and there must have been five kids. So one had to do without the life jacket. And, well, I was too late, I didn't have the life jacket, and I was holding on to the side of the pool and these two fellows were over on the other side and they said, "Come on over here." And without thinking I guess I just swam over.

SIGRIST: What were your accommodations like on the boat?

WIELAND: Well, we had bunks. We didn't have beds. I don't

remember. I think we shared the cabin with another lady. It was small. The cabin itself was small. What I do remember about it is my mother became seasick, and seeing her seasick I became seasick. But that passed over in a couple of days, I guess.

SIGRIST: You said you remembered the food, and you already told us about the turkey. Were there any kind of, were there any other revelations, food revelations, on the boat?

WIELAND: Well, it seemed like, to me, at the time, I guess it was gourmet. My mother was a very plain cook and aboard ship, I guess even in those days, they must have had, you know, something different from what I was used to.

SIGRIST: Was there a formal dining room, or . . .

WIELAND: Oh, yes, yeah. There was, of course, first class, second class, and I guess there was a third class. There was no steerage at the time. It was, well, it was exciting for an eleven-year-old kid to have all these things, being catered to, more or less.

SIGRIST: Now, you stopped at a variety of different ports, you

said.

WIELAND: Yes. Well, they're, Bahia and Pernambuco and Rio, they're all in Brazil. And then we went to Trinidad. From Trinidad up here to Manhattan.

SIGRIST: Did you get to get off the boat, say, in Trinidad?

WIELAND: No, no.

SIGRIST: Why do you suppose they stopped?

WIELAND: Well, they picked up passengers. You know, I told you about going to Germany in 1921. Not many people know this, but Brazil had declared war on Germany. They probably never sent one soldier, but there was a German ship in Santos and the Brazilian government took it over. And before they left the ship the German sailors must have sabotaged part of the machinery, and not knowing this my mother booked passage on that boat. It took her six weeks to get to Hamburg.

SIGRIST: This was in 1921.

WIELAND: 1921. And I remember we stopped in Pernambuco and then we stopped in Portugal. And a lot of the people,

the Portuguese, must have been going back to their homeland. I don't remember too much about the food on there. I was only about six years old.

SIGRIST: Yeah, quite young.

WIELAND: I don't remember that. But I do remember getting an earache from the continuous wind on board ship.

SIGRIST: How long did it take you to go from Santos to New York?

WIELAND: It must have been about eight days.

SIGRIST: So it was fairly fast.

WIELAND: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember coming into New York at all, coming into the harbor?

WIELAND: Yes.

SIGRIST: And what, what were your impressions of New York and the Statue of Liberty and all of that?

WIELAND: Well, I guess I must have been told about the Statue of Liberty, so I was looking for it. And I came on, up to the deck. These two fellows that I talked about

before, they were up there, and they were all bundled up here. And here I was with the short pants and just a light jacket and one fellow said to the other, "Look at him. See, he's got brains. He didn't come all bundled up. He came up to find out the weather before he put everything on." I do remember coming past the Statue of Liberty. I remember us docking and everybody was getting off. And my father didn't show up, so we were stuck.

SIGRIST: Where did you dock? Do you remember?

WIELAND: I don't remember. It was in New York. It was not in Hoboken. And I do remember when my father and cousin showed up that we were taken aboard ship. And I don't remember how many people could have possibly been in the same situation we were. But then when we did get to Ellis Island it was a little while, and we went, it appears to me to have been a courtroom, like a courtroom. I think there was a judge sitting there. And everything was explained to them, I guess. And it wasn't too long. Whenever the boat left Ellis Island we were on it, and we were on our way home.

SIGRIST: A few hours you were here.

WIELAND: Just a few hours.

SIGRIST: Just kind of back track a little bit. Your father didn't show up at the pier, but then he did eventually.

WIELAND: Yes.

SIGRIST: But you were still brought to Ellis.

WIELAND: That's right.

SIGRIST: But what was your parents' reaction to the fact that you were being brought to Ellis anyway?

WIELAND: Well, everybody was up in the air, confused and worried, I guess. My father couldn't speak that much English because he had only been here for a few months. But my cousin spoke, so he did the translating.

SIGRIST: This is your uncle's son?

WIELAND: Yes. The one we moved in with for a while. Whatever transpired I really couldn't tell you, but I know it was dark when we finally got back to Manhattan. And I'm trying to remember about the luggage. I don't remember how that was handled. We must have gone home

by bus. I'm sure it wasn't taxi.

SIGRIST: When you were at Ellis Island do you remember if there were lots of other people here? Did you have any impressions of the building or any of that?

WIELAND: No, no.

SIGRIST: You just remember being in what was called The Board of Special Inquiry, in the courtroom. All right. So you were here for a few hours, and then you were ferried back to Manhattan. Then what happened?

WIELAND: Well, then we did finally get home. It must have been by bus.

SIGRIST: And where was home? Is this at your uncle's house?

WIELAND: Yes. This is in Clifton, in New Jersey. He had a fairly large home. We, I remember I had to sleep with my cousin, and my mother and father were, they were in the same room, actually. And there was another couple with a son who were related to my aunt, and they stayed there for a few months also.

SIGRIST: Were they immigrants themselves?

WIELAND: They were from Germany. They came directly from

Germany. Yep, they were immigrants.

SIGRIST: Did your uncle and aunt have any kind of dinner for you or anything that first night?

WIELAND: I don't recall that. What I recall about eating was breakfast, I guess, because never in my life did I ever have cornflakes. This was a new experience to me. And of course the fruit, bananas and oranges we had down in Brazil more than they have up here, but that, I remember the breakfast most of all, I think.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about the first month or so. What did you find different about America?

WIELAND: Well, it, the snow.

SIGRIST: What month was it that you came in?

WIELAND: In December.

SIGRIST: What was your, what was your reaction to snow? Did you know about snow before?

WIELAND: I guess, maybe in 1921 I might have experienced it in Germany. I, what I do remember, which was a big thing for me, the Sears Roebuck catalog. And when I looked through the Sears Roebuck catalog I saw this electric

train. The biggest, of course. And I ding-donged on that, I guess until I did get it for Christmas. And that was phenomenal. That was something out of this world.

SIGRIST: Did, how long did you stay with your uncle?

WIELAND: I would say about three or four months.

SIGRIST: And then where did you go?

WIELAND: Then we moved to Paterson, directly across the street from the mill where my father was working.

SIGRIST: And what was, did you have your own house, or a flat?

WIELAND: Well, it was a flat. There were four families. As a matter of fact, the house was brand new when we moved into it, and my mother and father had bought furniture, kitchen furniture and the bedroom furniture, and the dining room came later.

SIGRIST: Talk about, your father has already been in America for a little while. Talk about your mother getting adjusted to America, and what did she really like about America, what did she find difficult about America?

WIELAND: Well, of course, she had German people around her who sort of told her what to do, shopping and so on and so forth. There were no supermarkets at the time, but there wasn't, I remember an A&P about four blocks away from there. And the shopping, of course, was entirely different. You had, everything was packaged. And it was, it was an easier life for her. She didn't have a washing machine. I know that. And she still boiled the clothing on the stove. We had, this was a gas and a coal stove. The, in the wintertime that was the only heat we had in the flat was that coal stove. But my mother cooked on the gas stove. I guess she used the coal stove in the winter time.

SIGRIST: Did she ever learn English?

WIELAND: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: How did she learn English?

WIELAND: Through The Daily News. She would look at the picture and read what it said, and she learned English in that respect. My, let's see. I guess you had to be in this country one year, then you got your first papers. And then I believe you had to wait five more years for your second papers. I don't know whether my

father had delayed something, but eventually he became a citizen. And then my mother went ahead and became a citizen. And I was, I must have been over twenty-one, and my father wasn't a citizen yet. I'm trying to remember why the delay, because I had to take out my own papers. I got my own citizenship papers. A lot of people are born in this country, they have to be accepted. Well, they okayed me. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you help your parents study for their own citizenship test?

WIELAND: Not that much, no.

SIGRIST: Was there something about America that either your mother or your father really didn't like, something that they found very hard to adjust to?

WIELAND: I can't think of anything really that was that distasteful in any way. No.

SIGRIST: Did your mother have, or your father for that matter, continue communications with their family in Germany at all?

WIELAND: Yes, oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Did any of their family come over here?

WIELAND: Well, I had two uncles in this country. One was in Milwaukee, and then the one we moved in with. And then I had the cousin that we moved in with, and then there was the son from the uncle in Milwaukee. And that's all the relatives I had.

SIGRIST: But not to your knowledge as a, when you were growing up, do you remember them bringing any of their family to America?

WIELAND: No. None at all.

SIGRIST: Did your parents, did either of them ever want to go back to Germany or to Brazil?

WIELAND: In 1921, as I said, my mother and I went to Germany.

SIGRIST: But, I mean, once you were in America did either of them ever want to go back to where they had come from?

WIELAND: My father left Germany in 1913 and never went back. He never went back to Germany. In 1937 it was my grandmother's and grandfather's golden anniversary, and the brothers and sisters over there got money together and sent money to my mother so that she could

attend. And she went over there. She went alone. And, see, in 1937, at that time Adolph was making noises already.

SIGRIST: Bad time to be visiting.

WIELAND: Yes. So she visited all her relatives. She stayed a couple of months, and then she was happy to get out of there.

SIGRIST: She's lucky she got out of there. Well, let me ask you two final questions. One is were your parents happy that they had made the decision to come to America?

WIELAND: Oh, sure, sure.

SIGRIST: Their life was substantially different than it had been had they stayed in Brazil?

WIELAND: Oh, yes. No doubt.

SIGRIST: And I ask you the same question. Are you happy that you came here?

WIELAND: Well, if I said no my wife would probably kill me because we, (he laughs) this is where we got married. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

SIGRIST: How do you think your life would have been different had you stayed in Sao Paulo or anywhere?

WIELAND: I have no idea what my vocation would have been, and the government down there is not that great.

SIGRIST: Well, and you lived as a child through various skirmishes that were going on.

WIELAND: Well, yes. As a matter of fact when I was living in that house I told you about, the flat. They were on either end. The Federalists were here, and the opposition on the other end of the street, and they were shooting back and forth. And I remember one of our front windows had a bullet through it.

SIGRIST: And yet when I asked you the question before you said this was not a threatening atmosphere to live in.

WIELAND: Well, outside of that we weren't hounded by the police or anything like that.

SIGRIST: Right. But you were ultimately safer here, I suppose.

WIELAND: Well, depending if you walk, where you're walking, right? (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Well, Mr. Wieland, I want to thank you for taking a few minutes, you know, from your visit here at Ellis Island to just come in and do this oral history for us.

WIELAND: You're welcome.

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist signing off for the National Park Service.