

EI-197

DORIS LILLIAN SALMON GREENFIELD

BIRTH DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 1915

INTERVIEW DATE: 7/28/1992

RUNNING TIME: 1:23:23

INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

RECORDING ENGINEER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

INTERVIEW LOCATION: CLIFTON PARK, NY

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 4/1993

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 6/1993

ENGLAND, 1951

AGE 36

PORT: SOUTHAMPTON

RESIDENCES:

- **ENGLAND: CLACTON-ON-SEA**
- **THE US: BAY HEAD, NJ**

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday, July 28, 1992. I'm here in Clifton Park, New York at the home of Sue Backshall with Doris Greenfield who is Sue's mother. Mrs. Greenfield came from England in 1951 when she was thirty-six years old and had an extended stay at Ellis Island in that year. There are pool noises in the background, some children I can hear, and an occasional airplane, which you may here on the tape. Anyway, good afternoon, and Mrs. Greenfield, can you give me your full name with

EI-197/GREENFIELD

your maiden name included.

GREENFIELD: Doris Lillian Greenfield.

SIGRIST: The maiden name was . . .

GREENFIELD: Salmon.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that please?

GREENFIELD: S-A-L-M-O-N.

SIGRIST: And what is your date of birth?

GREENFIELD: 9th of February, 1915.

SIGRIST: And where were you born, please?

GREENFIELD: Uh, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

GREENFIELD: (she laughs) C-L-A-C-T-O-N on S-E-A. Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, E-S-S-E-X.

SIGRIST: Whereabouts in England is that?

GREENFIELD: It's the east coast of England.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: And can you describe the town a little bit for me?

GREENFIELD: It's a small seaside town.

SIGRIST: What does that mean? What does it look like?

GREENFIELD: Very small town, very nice beaches, boating. A very nice way of life.

SIGRIST: Is there any industry in the town?

GREENFIELD: Not really. Only really boating and all that kind of thing. It's a seaside.

SIGRIST: Do you know what the population was at that time?

GREENFIELD: No, I have no idea. That's something I can't remember.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about the house that you grew up in. Can you describe it for me, please?

GREENFIELD: Yes, it was three bedroom type of house, you know. Thatched house. Quiet rural in those days. Nice way of growing up. Nice schools.

SIGRIST: What was the house made of?

GREENFIELD: Brick in those days.

SIGRIST: How was it heated?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Stoves.

SIGRIST: What kind of stoves?

GREENFIELD: I mean, not central-heated. Not in those days. We had coal stoves in all the bedrooms and the big coal stove in the kitchen and a very nice one in the, well, we call it the front room, the living room.

SIGRIST: When you say a very nice one, is this stove more elaborate than the others?

GREENFIELD: Oh, no, no. Just a regular house.

SIGRIST: So you have how many bedrooms in the house?

GREENFIELD: We had three.

SIGRIST: Three. And who lived in the house?

GREENFIELD: Mother, Father. I had two sisters and two brothers.

SIGRIST: Can you name your brothers and sisters for me, please.

GREENFIELD: My oldest brother's Victor, my next brother was Vivian. I have a sister Margaret, myself, and my sister Joan. She's the youngest.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about being a little girl in this town. What did you do

EI-197/GREENFIELD

for fun?

GREENFIELD: Well, we went to school. We always had lots of sports. We had lots of friends. In England we had all kinds of games. Rounders, marbles, hopscotch, you name it. All that type of thing, which we don't have here, I don't think.

SIGRIST: So do you think that your leisure time would have been taken up by playing these games?

GREENFIELD: Oh, playing, school, all kinds of things. And, of course, we had the beaches, swimming.

SIGRIST: What is rounders? Could you describe rounders for me?

GREENFIELD: It's like, what do you have here, similar to basketball. Oh, that's net ball to us. Now, what's rounders? It's another game that you run around, you know, you hit the ball and what's similar to that? Baseball?

SIGRIST: Cricket, or something?

GREENFIELD: No, it's not cricket. It's more, but you use a bigger bat.

SIGRIST: I see. Um, what was your father's name?

GREENFIELD: Sydney James.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: And what did he do for a living?

GREENFIELD: He had a business of house decorator and painter . . .

SIGRIST: Describe some of the things that he did.

GREENFIELD: With his grandfather he was, my grandfather was coxswain of the Lifeboat Institution, and my father and uncle were all in it, all voluntary services.

SIGRIST: What did that entail?

GREENFIELD: Lifeboat, going out rescuing ships, you know, small boats, yachts that were in difficulties. Of course, we were on seaside.

SIGRIST: Do you remember him doing that sort of thing?

GREENFIELD: Yes, yes. I remember.

SIGRIST: Did he work for himself, by himself, or did he have other people who worked with him?

GREENFIELD: He had his father and his brother. It was a business.

SIGRIST: What did your father look like if you had to describe him in words?

GREENFIELD: I would say he was about five six, quite a good looking man.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: What was his personality like?

GREENFIELD: Very good, very good with the family. He loved darts, he loved dominoes. He loved lots of sports, you know.

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did he do with the children that you remember very specifically, when he would spend time with you?

GREENFIELD: He was always interested in what we did. I can't say he did a lot of things with us. Of course, we always had a lot of, we were a small town and we always had a lot of friends ourselves. He was a good father, a good mother.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

GREENFIELD: Sarah Elizabeth.

SIGRIST: What was her maiden name?

GREENFIELD: Uh, Faben

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

GREENFIELD: F-A-B-E-N.

SIGRIST: And let me also ask you what did your mother look like if you had to describe her in words?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: She was a little darker edition, I think, of myself. I was the blonde one. My mother had been blonde, blonder. I have two sisters that were darker than me, and one of my brothers was blonde, fair, like me.

SIGRIST: What was her personality like?

GREENFIELD: She was a dear. She was an absolute dear.

SIGRIST: Give me an example of . . .

GREENFIELD: She was kind, thoughtful. Liked to do things for people, yeah. And a good mother.

SIGRIST: Do you remember something specifically that she did for someone that sticks out in your mind?

GREENFIELD: I think she was just a good neighbor, you know, like in those days if people were having children she was always there to help. She liked to do, in a small town you do this kind of thing.

SIGRIST: Did she know everyone in town, basically?

GREENFIELD: Well, you knew a lot of people. I don't say everybody. But what we did we enjoyed.

SIGRIST: Was your house free-standing, or was it attached?

GREENFIELD: It was attached. We were a row in those days, like there was a row of

EI-197/GREENFIELD

us, of about six. I think six or eight houses.

SIGRIST: Was there a backyard?

GREENFIELD: Oh, yes. A nice backyard.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the backyard for me a little bit?

GREENFIELD: Well, it was quite big. We had, even, my mother had a flower bed and she had a vegetable bed, garden. And we had a big apple tree there. I can't remember, I would say it would be about, say, a hundred by seventy-five, something like that.

SIGRIST: Was there a barn or a stable or something like that?

GREENFIELD: No, no.

SIGRIST: So what did it back up to?

GREENFIELD: Well, we did have a shed in the back garden, like a big shed where my father kept all his tools, you know. He used to like to mess around the house and things like that.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what flowers your mother grew?

GREENFIELD: Oh, we grew roses. Nobody grows roses like we grow roses. (she laughs) Isn't that awful? All kinds of flowers. My favorites were violets. We would go into the woods and get violet roots. We had

EI-197/GREENFIELD

woods not too far away, a mile away, and bring them home, plant them in the garden, in my mother's garden. We had all kinds of things in the garden when it came to flowers.

SIGRIST: So your mother was the gardener in the family.

GREENFIELD: My father would do the digging.

SIGRIST: What kind of vegetables?

GREENFIELD: Oh, we grew carrots, peas, swedes, turnips, vegetables maybe we don't have here. And salads, you know, greens. Lettuce, tomatoes.

SIGRIST: What kind of foods did you eat when you were a little girl in England?

GREENFIELD: Well, we had roast beef and Yorkshire, steak and kidney pie. All kinds of goodies. Fish, lots of fish.

SIGRIST: Of course, that would make sense.

GREENFIELD: Yes. My father went fishing a lot.

SIGRIST: Do you remember a certain fish dish that your mother made that you particularly enjoyed?

GREENFIELD: Well, I liked sole or place fish. I liked flat fish. You can get haddock. All kinds of things. All kinds of fish because a lot of fishing was done in Clacton.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: How would she prepare the sole?

GREENFIELD: A lot of it fried, or put under the broiler.

SIGRIST: Can you describe your kitchen a little bit for me, in your house?

GREENFIELD: It wasn't as big as this room, that's for sure. I would say to about there.
(she gestures) A nice kitchen, big stove, you know. You could even . . .

SIGRIST: Gas fired?

GREENFIELD: Yeah. Those stoves in those days, yes. And you could cook on the stove, cook everything on the stove. And then you go out that way and there was a gas stove out there and the sinks and everything out there. Don't forget you're going back a lot of years when I was little.

SIGRIST: Would you say that most of the family did their congregating in the kitchen as opposed to anywhere else in the house?

GREENFIELD: Well, yes, because you had, although the table was there and the chairs, and then you always had a couple of comfortable armchairs there and you had a big what you call, we called it a big, uh, stove because it was always very warm. And then in the next room was the living room and there was an open fireplace there in the living room, of course.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: Was the living room used a lot or was it more for special functions?

GREENFIELD: I would think in those days because we were always out, you know. We were a bunch of kids that were always out and you sort of congregated in the kitchen, but then the living room was always open to go in. And my father was a great one for keeping everybody warm, particularly in the winter. We'd put a fire in there, which was nice. It was comfortable.

SIGRIST: Describe your religious life. What religion were you?

GREENFIELD: Church of England.

SIGRIST: And describe a little bit about how that affected your life or how that was involved with your life. Was there a church nearby, that sort of thing.

GREENFIELD: Well, there was a church not far away. We went to Sunday school. My mother belonged to the guild of the church, you know, there's always a mother's meeting or whatever it is, on a Monday, and the Guild on the Tuesday and they had their regular days. And we used to go to the parties at the church, any of the Sunday school outings.

SIGRIST: So the church is sort of providing a social outlet.

GREENFIELD: Yes, oh, yes.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the church?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: St. James.

SIGRIST: And can you describe the inside of it a little bit?

GREENFIELD: Very nice, very nice.

SIGRIST: Was it an early church, or . . .

GREENFIELD: Uh, oh, gosh. I just know it was a very nice church, a very nice altar, a very nice, they used to give very nice sermons.

SIGRIST: Talk to me about school.

GREENFIELD: I went to school.

SIGRIST: How old were you when you started?

GREENFIELD: I think, uh, five or six, something like that. Five, six. I had a school very close by. I would say just up the road a bit. From us there was a big, there was a school. And then, of course, the children started growing up and they built one much larger school, but we had to walk two miles. Yes, it was about two miles. That didn't hurt us. But we, when we got to a certain age we had to transfer to another school.

SIGRIST: Were these large schools or were they single-room schools in this small town?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: A large school. It was a large school called the Holland Road school, a very nice school.

SIGRIST: What did you learn? What did they teach you in school? What kinds of subjects?

GREENFIELD: The basics. Reading, writing and arithmetic.

SIGRIST: What was your particular favorite?

GREENFIELD: Well, I used to like sports more than anything. I was good at it. And I loved, well, we used to do a lot of needlework, things like that.

SIGRIST: Who taught you how to do that?

GREENFIELD: The teacher.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of your teachers, off the top of your head?

GREENFIELD: Oh, no. I remember one, the sports teacher, Miss Everett. No, she was the math teacher. My sports teacher was Miss Lawrence. The headmaster was Mr. Reed. Oh, I don't believe this.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you remember about the sports teacher, because you said you liked sports.

GREENFIELD: Yeah, I liked. Well, we had teams, you know, rounders and running and all that kind of thing. She was good at what she did. She was

EI-197/GREENFIELD

interested in you. That's important.

SIGRIST: Do you remember at that time, for instance, what your sports habit would be or your uniform?

GREENFIELD: Gym slip. Now, what do we call that here, you know, it's a gym slip and a white shirt. I don't see that . . .

SIGRIST: Like a pinafore of some sort or . . .

GREENFIELD: No, it was navy blue with a white shirt, blouse. We call them blouse, you know, long sleeved. And you had a, we had a yellow and royal blue tie that went down there.

SIGRIST: Did you also have a uniform for school?

GREENFIELD: That is the school uniform.

SIGRIST: That is the school uniform. And that's, when you would play sports that's what you would have to wear also?

GREENFIELD: Yeah, you wear also.

SIGRIST: Was this school, did this school exist in connection with the church?

GREENFIELD: No. Oh, no. Church and schools are separate.

SIGRIST: I see. Tell me a little bit about holidays. For instance, describe

EI-197/GREENFIELD

Christmas for me, what you would do for Christmas.

GREENFIELD: Well, I guess like a lot of the kids we all got together, we went caroling. Did, made things, Christmas ornaments, for decoration. We decorated the big tree in the town and at the school. And there we decorated with lots of holly. You see, we have a lot of holly in England, holly trees and bushes. And used to make wreaths and decorate the shelves and everything, the school, with holly.

SIGRIST: What about at home? How would you celebrate Christmas at home?

GREENFIELD: The same way. We used to make our own paper chains for decorating and lots of people came in and out, you know. And we'd go into their place. I suppose being a small town that's how we are, you know, when you know a lot of children you go in and out their homes. And you can't help it, really.

SIGRIST: Did you have other family in the town?

GREENFIELD: Yes. I had an uncle. My father's brother and his wife. They didn't have any children.

SIGRIST: Were these people that you spent time with, or . . .

GREENFIELD: Uh, not as much as families with children. I mean, they were into different things to us. I mean, they liked to play bridge and things like that. Whist, I mean, whist, not bridge. Things, you know, all kinds of different things they were interested in.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: What about grandparents?

GREENFIELD: Yes, my grandfather and grandmother. I don't know too much about my grandmother, she died. My grandfather was like about eighty-six, eighty-seven when he died, but my grandmother had died quite a few years before when we were growing up.

SIGRIST: Is this your father's dad?

GREENFIELD: My father's.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your grandfather?

GREENFIELD: Oh, he was a dear. He had, you see Santa Claus, that's my grandfather. (she laughs) He was coxswain of the lifeboat, like I said, and very generous, honorable man, you know. He had to, you had to do the right thing with him. And he loved what he did, his volunteer work. And his big life, big lifeboats that go out.

SIGRIST: Where did he live?

GREENFIELD: Same town, Clacton-on-Sea.

SIGRIST: I mean, what was his house like? Was it near your house?

GREENFIELD: Oh, not far away. I'd say ten minutes away from us, not far.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: And he lived by himself?

GREENFIELD: Well, he had a daughter, an aunt, that lived, oh, a few doors up the road that kept an eye on him. But then she was, I think she was around seventy when she died anyway, my grandmother. But that's the one in Clacton. I had my mother's, my other grandparents were in Cambridge. My mother was born in Cambridge, university town.

SIGRIST: How did your parents meet?

GREENFIELD: Oh, gosh, I think my mother went on a holiday to Clacton with her sisters or something like that and met my father. You know how it is.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Do you remember visiting your grandparents in Cambridge?

GREENFIELD: Oh, yes. I was there, as a matter of fact, I was in London, of course, during the Blitz. I was married, of course, then, and it was very bad at the time and I had, my son was, we were close to five years married before we decided to have children and my son was ten months old and we were bombed out in London. We lived in the West End, and my husband took me to Cambridge, because my mother had also gone there to Cambridge because she had a big family there. So we went there temporary from London because I lived in London. And we stayed in Cambridge, the baby and I, with my mother for a while. She had gone there from Clacton. She was bombed out because they dropped the first bombs of the war on Clacton-on-Sea, strangely enough.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: How old were you when that happened?

GREENFIELD: During the war I was, let me see. War broke out on our first anniversary, wedding anniversary. September the third, quite an anniversary. I was in my thirties then, wasn't I.

SIGRIST: Were you in Clacton at the time?

GREENFIELD: No, no. I lived in London. I was married. I was married September the third, 1938.

SIGRIST: And you got married in London?

GREENFIELD: Yes.

SIGRIST: I see. Well, let's get you to London. How was it that you came to leave Clacton as a young woman?

GREENFIELD: I, we had very nice dance halls, places, ballrooms in Clacton-on-Sea. And I was, I will say a very good dancer, ballroom dancer. And my husband came from London with a friend, I think, on vacation, holiday, to Clacton. And he came to that particular ballroom that night and he asked me to dance, and that's how it started. And we got together after. He was a beautiful dancer, which I liked. And we got to know each other and he went back and I was still there and then I eventually went to London.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: What was his name?

GREENFIELD: Sydney.

SIGRIST: And how, what was, how shall I say? You met him dancing. Was he from London?

GREENFIELD: Yes.

SIGRIST: Okay. How long was your courtship?

GREENFIELD: Oh, I'd say on and off three years.

SIGRIST: Had you been to London before?

GREENFIELD: Yes.

SIGRIST: Before you went you did.

GREENFIELD: Yes. Not very often, you know. I'd gone on sort of day trips or maybe to visit a couple of days, a week here and there.

SIGRIST: Did you know, when you married him, of course, you know, there's already trouble brewing in Europe at that time, in '38. Did you ever have any idea that it would actually come to England?

GREENFIELD: Well, we thought war was imminent, but not when we got married. We had joined, at that time my husband and I had joined where him

EI-197/GREENFIELD

particularly volunteer A.R.P., you know, which is volunteer services for, I mean where you get in an ambulance and lay out on the street, you know. And you're bandaged up and you're injured and the bombs are dropping and all this sort of thing. We didn't think we were going to get it in reality, but we got it. But we did, we married, and war broke out a year to the day. September the third, 1939.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about what it was like to be in London at that time, because that must be a tough time to have been in London.

GREENFIELD: It was a tough time for anybody.

SIGRIST: What did you see?

GREENFIELD: We saw, we were very happy to see most of the children leave, because that was one of the first things, you know, that were taken care of. Plus everybody was joining an organization. My husband was joining into the fire service. And we were in, all in volunteer work, most of us, a lot of us in London. And then, of course, I'm glad we did because it certainly, we certainly needed it.

SIGRIST: Had your father been involved in World War I at all?

GREENFIELD: Yes.

SIGRIST: Because I'm wondering how he felt about World War II.

GREENFIELD: Yes, he was in that and he was on a horse, what is it, in the calvary.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

That was it, on a horse. I'm trying to see the picture of it. Yes, calvary.

SIGRIST: What, how did he feel about World War II, your dad?

GREENFIELD: Not very good, not very much. He, they dropped the first bombs of the war, I think I told you, on Clacton-on-Sea, so they moved to Cambridge. And that's how we were able, I was able to go down there when we were bombed out in the West End. They dropped bombs very close, which shattered our apartment and so I just went down there. But, you know, I was there for a couple of months, but I felt that I was needed in London, so I went back. Maybe as well, but we then had moved elsewhere to Maidavale, which is about, right out of West End, I'd say five miles out of the West End.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the town?

GREENFIELD: M-A-I-D-A-V-A-L-E. Maidavale. West 9, London.

SIGRIST: And why did you move there?

GREENFIELD: You've heard of St. John's Wood, cricket place? Close to there. We were bombed out of the other apartment.

SIGRIST: What does that feel like?

GREENFIELD: Not very good. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: I mean, seriously. What is the, how do you feel about having

EI-197/GREENFIELD

everything destroyed like that, just, I mean, did you have stuff to move with? I mean, was anything left?

GREENFIELD: Yes. We had, oh, yes. We had quite a few things left, you know. I mean it didn't shatter everything. But we, you start off again because hundreds of others were starting off again, so you didn't think you were alone. So you just pick up the pieces and go elsewhere, which we did.

SIGRIST: Did you know anyone who was seriously hurt in any of the bombing?

GREENFIELD: Yes, but fortunately it got better. Broken leg, my husband had a very bad injury. He was on crutches for a year. He joined the fire service, which took a beating, you know, in London. He went full-time into the fire service.

SIGRIST: How did you feel about him doing that?

GREENFIELD: Well, I was glad at what he did, you know. I was there to support him.

SIGRIST: So, let's see. The war, you remained in . . .

GREENFIELD: In London.

SIGRIST: In London, through the duration of the war. Well, what happened when the war was over?

GREENFIELD: I'd say a great rejoicing. (she laughs)

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: Yes, indeed. In terms of your life, how did the end of the war affect your life at all?

GREENFIELD: Well, my husband eventually came out of, like a lot of the service people came out and came home and London, everywhere started getting rebuilt and people were picking up the pieces, people were coming back from all over. A lot of people, I think a lot of children came to America.

SIGRIST: Did your parents leave Cambridge and go back?

GREENFIELD: Oh, they went back to Clacton. Clacton-on-Sea, yes. Everybody wanted to go back where they belonged, mostly. They had evacuated a lot of places that were, they figured, dangerous. They got as many, they got most of the children out of London. And, well, around where I lived they were all taken away.

SIGRIST: What, oh, I'm going to pause the interview. (break in tape) Okay, right now I'm resuming the interview with Doris Greenfield.
Mrs. Greenfield, when were your kids born?

GREENFIELD: David was born July the fifth, 1973. Susan was born the 29th of January. Oh, my God, I've forgotten the date.

SIGRIST: 1943.

GREENFIELD: '43, yeah.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: And then . . .

GREENFIELD: David was born, '43. David, and Susan '47.

SIGRIST: I see. So David was actually born during the war, actually.

GREENFIELD: Yeah. Tail end of the war.

SIGRIST: Talk about that experience a little bit, about being pregnant.

GREENFIELD: When you were pregnant and you, see, when we get pregnant in England, we have to attend a hospital. You go right away, you know, you become pregnant and you are then, you go regularly to see the doctor, and it's a very well done thing. Now because I was pregnant they asked me to leave London. And I said, "No." And they said, "Well, what about the baby?" I said, "Well, my husband's in London, he's having a heck of a time, and I want to be there with him." So that was fine. I managed to get, the beds were very limited because of the terrible.

SIGRIST: Excuse me. I've got to pause here. (break in tape) We are now resuming the interview with Doris Greenfield. Mrs. Greenfield, you were telling us about being pregnant during the war in London in the hospital.

GREENFIELD: Well, they like you to go out of London and like I said I didn't want to go out of London because my husband was also having a rough time. But I did manage to get into hospital. You were lucky if you could get into

EI-197/GREENFIELD

a hospital. But I did, and the Middlesex Hospital in London was one of the best. And then, of course, I came home, and then we started getting what's called the buzz bombs, and the B-2's. I don't know whether you ever heard of those. It's awful. You didn't know when they were coming, no chance of getting out of the way. And when David was four months old we had bombing right next to us, so that's when my husband took me to Cambridge. And then after a couple of months I decided to come back and take a chance. So I came back to London.

SIGRIST: Can you describe these buzz bombs for me a little bit and how, why they were so particularly dangerous?

GREENFIELD: You didn't know they were coming, you see. They were coming off, you see, the Germans were in France and had control of France and they were right there, they were right on the coast, you know, over the coast of England. And they were letting them off from the coast so they could come and so many of them came into London, too. And you didn't know they were coming, and even the attack guns didn't know they were coming. They can see certain things and hear certain things, but not always those buzz bombs and the B-2's. They were so quiet. They'd come along and you'd think it was just sort of a plane, and all of a sudden it would drop, but you didn't know where it was going to drop. And that was the frightening thing about them. We sort of could take the Blitz because you knew what was happening, and you knew when to take shelter or what, but you didn't know that with the buzz bombs. That's how they killed such a lot of people.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: Can you describe taking shelter for me?

GREENFIELD: Well, we had shelters and we were supposed to go to shelters. My sister and I, before we had my son we used to, I was a cashier in Lester Square, and when I finished work I used to have to go to the night safe, sometimes every other week. And sometimes it could be ten, eleven o'clock before I'd get home. And I was now in Maidavale so I'd have to walk because the buses couldn't run and the trains had stopped running, so I had to walk. And it was frightening because you could hear all the guns, and they really didn't want you on the street. So sometimes I used to go to the subway, well, underground we'd call them, and sleep the night there. A lot of us did that. My sister eventually joined me, my young sister in London. I brought her off the coast where they bombed and she joined me in London.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE B, TAPE ONE

SIGRIST: . . . have to do practice drills and things like that? Were communities gathered together to do . . .

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: They were all doing that. You always knew what you were doing. I mean, there were wardens everywhere, you know, along streets and they were looking for casualties and always when anything dropped, any bombs dropped, there was always the ambulances and wardens there. A lot of voluntary in those days.

SIGRIST: Being in a cosmopolitan area like London in an environment like that what kind of, oh, how shall I say, privation, you know, what couldn't you get in London, you know, in terms of like food or necessities because the war was going on?

GREENFIELD: Well, you got your rations, you know. You got your two ounce of butter a week, you got your so much meat, you got, if you were pregnant you got a little more. You got so much in the way of sweets, and you got a certain amount of rationing. And then if you could you would, there's always the black market because you had a lot of Americans over there, you had a lot of other nationals over there and somehow somebody always had a little bit extra. And fortunately for me my elder sister married a Canadian and he was in the, she was in the office of the Canadian headquarters and so she was able to get a few extras too, and also a few nylons, which we never saw through the war. (she laughs) You know, nylon stockings, which we all liked very much.

SIGRIST: What would that cost on the black market?

GREENFIELD: Well, we didn't delve into the black market much in London because, you know, if you didn't have it you didn't have it. But it did go on in various places. People were desperate for stuff, you know. So, I

EI-197/GREENFIELD

mean, if they could get it and they'd sell it and they'd charge a bit more for it, which was normal. So as long as I could get anything for my, for the baby. And if you had a baby and you went to the clinic you could get the necessary things. If there was anything going it was for the babies. Actually they wanted you out of London, but since I was one that wouldn't go out of London, I still got my rations, of course, for the baby.

SIGRIST: Is there one memory that you have about being in London at the time that really sticks out in your mind, something that really struck you, either seeing a wounded soldier or somebody hurt, but something specific that you remember that really, really left an impression with you.

GREENFIELD: Well, there were a lot of casualties along the way, but I mean you're trying, you have to, if there's help there you have to get out of the way a bit. And there were some bad things that went on in London during the Blitz. But when I had my son, that's when I really started getting frightened. I mean, before you were sort of taking it in your stride. You had to. But you had to protect him. So when we used to get the buzz bombs over and I had come back to London and we thought we would hear them, that's the first thing we went to, his crib, my sister and I. We just laid on the floor, all of us, and wrapped him up and pray we survive. We survived. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: You just kind of lived by your wits, I guess. Well, the war ends, general rejoicing, and then what happened with you?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Well, then, things started, it took a long time to pick up the pieces, you know. And people, my husband was on crutches from a bad war injury, and, in the fire service. And then there was a question, of course, the government helps, but you're not going to get much. And then he all of a sudden decided to start a car hire, a car business. Oh, he started in a taxi first, because it saved him moving around, I mean, and he drove that. And then he thought it would be a good idea to start up the car hire business, which we did. Like people calling up wanting a car for hire for the night, going out to the theater and things like that. It worked out very well.

SIGRIST: Is this in London?

GREENFIELD: This is in London. All this was in London.

SIGRIST: And so it was quite successful.

GREENFIELD: Yeah.

SIGRIST: So where in London are you living, at this point?

GREENFIELD: Maidavale, still in Maidavale.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the house, the apartment, whatever it was, that you were living in at that time?

GREENFIELD: Well, we were on the ground floor. We had a nice, there was three stories. We had a very, we had the ground floor because I wanted

EI-197/GREENFIELD

the garden. We had the garden, you see. And they were nice apartments, big. We got on very well. We were in sort of three good apartments. Nice neighbors. And at least I had a garden for the baby, so it was nice. I enjoyed my apartment there.

SIGRIST: And so then your daughter was born in '47. And so let's see, your son would have been four?

GREENFIELD: Yeah. Three-and-a-half to four. Yeah.

SIGRIST: So tell me a little bit about having two small kids and a husband who has a busy business?

GREENFIELD: Oh, well, that was fine. No problem there.

SIGRIST: Did you work yourself?

GREENFIELD: No, not then. Oh, no, that was fine. I couldn't get, when Susan was born things were still at the stage where they didn't want you to go into hospital. If it was a second baby they wanted you to have it at home, have a nurse and all that sort of thing but I didn't want . . .

SIGRIST: She just went out the door. (referring to Mrs. Greenfield's daughter)

GREENFIELD: I didn't want that, so I managed to get into another hospital and have Susan, a very good hospital.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: Were things easier?

GREENFIELD: They were getting easier, yes. Getting easier, being able to, although hospital, getting into a hospital with a second baby wasn't as easy, but through a little push and shove I managed to get in there, you know.

SIGRIST: What was it that they wanted to keep the hospitals opened for other people, figuring that . . .

GREENFIELD: Yes, yeah. See, they were all trying to get, you know, back on their feet and they figured, well, of course, I mean, London took a beating. Well, England took a beating.

SIGRIST: Did you lose any family members in the war?

GREENFIELD: No, thank God. I lost friends, but thankfully my parents were in Cambridge and my brothers, my one brother was in the Air Force. He was abroad in I think, the Dardanelles or somewhere. I never saw him for five years. And I had another brother that was in. He couldn't go into the service. He had, like, a deformed arm. But he was in some kind of service in a place called Wolverhampton.

SIGRIST: Why did you want to come to America? Who wanted to come to America?

GREENFIELD: My husband.

SIGRIST: Why did he want to go?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Well, he'd had friends come out. We'd had friends come here. And I, we were, we had a nice business, we had a nice home. But they were always saying how wonderful it was here. And he got very interested and got very much interested that he thought we should come.

SIGRIST: Do you know what the friends were doing as a profession here?

GREENFIELD: I think they were, they didn't have a business. They were working in a household taking care of a big house. And when we came we did the same thing until we got on our feet.

SIGRIST: The, how did your husband know these friend?

GREENFIELD: Oh, we knew them from London. He'd known them for many years.

SIGRIST: Is this a husband and wife or . . .

GREENFIELD: Yes. They had two sons, and they came to America.

SIGRIST: When did they come?

GREENFIELD: They came about, oh, I think three years before we did. Two years, three years. They were in England during the war, because he was in the navy, and my friend was in London. But they had a yen to come out. They had, he had been on the ships working and he thought he'd have a better life in America, you know, after, England was very austerity after the war.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: So it was really your husband who wanted to come. How did you, did you want to come, or you were happy in England?

GREENFIELD: I was happy in England, my life in England. I had a nice home and plenty of family and friends. But you think, well, you're a family, you stay together.

SIGRIST: Did you protest, though? I mean, did you make your opinion . . .

GREENFIELD: Well, not all that much. It's a new adventure. It meant leaving my family. We were very close. And that he wanted to do it and I said, well, I got enthused as well, because you really didn't know what you were coming to.

SIGRIST: Did you go, did you have the intention of coming back sometime?

GREENFIELD: What, to England? For good?

SIGRIST: That you would go to America for a period of time and then return to England?

GREENFIELD: No, we didn't look at it that way. If you immigrate, that's the way we looked at it, you immigrate, you're there to stay. And if you have young children and they've got to be schooled, you can't keep running back home. They've got to be schooled in one place or the other. I think that's very important. So I came back eventually for vacations when I did eventually come, but I went back. But I knew that, I think America

EI-197/GREENFIELD

had a lot to offer when we came out.

SIGRIST: Describe for me the process of getting ready to leave, what you had to go through to get the papers, all of that sort of thing.

GREENFIELD: Well, we went to the American embassy, and I must say they were terrific. I mean, I think they'd have had us here in three or four weeks. We went through all our exams, tests, everything. Everything, perfect, children . . .

SIGRIST: What kind of tests did they put you through?

GREENFIELD: Well, you go through all your medical tests and . . .

SIGRIST: Were they looking for anything specific, or . . .

GREENFIELD: Yes, I mean (she laughs) I remember the woman said to me, "Do you mind if I open all your clothes? I want to see if you're pregnant." I said, "I've got news for you. I'm not pregnant." I remember that, funny enough. No, they were, I must say honestly very nice. We went to our lawyer first and he said, "Tell everything like it is." You know, and then you'll never have a problem. We don't have anything to hide anyway. We never had a problem. We could have been here in four weeks. They gave us clearance of everything. And no problems or anything. Like I said the only problem I had was when I got here.

SIGRIST: The, how long did it take you from the time that you had all the papers together till the time you actually left?

GREENFIELD: Oh, I think we came within six months.

SIGRIST: So it all happened fairly quickly.

GREENFIELD: Oh, yes. I mean, we got our clearance from everybody, from particularly the American side, when we went to the American embassy, everything was done. We went through all the examinations, tests, everything.

SIGRIST: Do you remember saying goodbye to your mother and father?

GREENFIELD: Yes.

SIGRIST: Was there some kind of a dinner or a celebration?

GREENFIELD: Yes.

SIGRIST: How did you, just describe what that was like.

GREENFIELD: Well, my parents, you know, came to London and I had gone down to Clacton and told them all about it, taken the children, too. And my mother, of course, was very upset. It's something that had never occurred, would have never have occurred to them that we would want to leave England. But my husband was kind of set on leaving and trying so that's why we decided. And they came to London and I have two sisters and brother-in-laws and we all got together and the family and before I left, we left. And my husband's family, of course. And

EI-197/GREENFIELD

they were all very sorry to see us leave. (she laughs) It wasn't an easy departure.

SIGRIST: Did anyone give you a present, a goodbye present of some sort that you might remember?

GREENFIELD: Yes, I think I did have something. I think my sisters gave me pieces of jewelry, bracelets and things like that. And my mother was devastated, I think.

SIGRIST: How did your husband feel, you may not be able to answer this, but how did your husband feel when he saw how upset your family was.

GREENFIELD: They were all upset. His family, too. I don't think, I think he realized that we were going to get that anyway. We all did. Because I have two brothers, two sisters. And all of a sudden one, I think I would have felt the same if one of my sisters was gone. We were all very close. And I was the one, the only one with children, of the whole family. And none of my, my brothers didn't have any, and my sisters didn't have any yet.

SIGRIST: And young children.

GREENFIELD: And young, and that's what tore them apart.

SIGRIST: So it was well understood that this was a permanent kind of thing that you were doing.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Definitely. But my husband always said that, "We'll go, and we're going to like it. And we'll come back again to see the family, never fear." So that was kind of how I felt. I thought, well, I'll see them again. And then my sister and brother-in-law said, he had come out the army, he was a major, he said, "Well, we'll come out and visit you, if not. We haven't got the money yet," they said, "but we'll find the money." (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So at least you knew that this wasn't, this wasn't goodbye forever. I mean, there was always the possibility that you would see each other . . .

GREENFIELD: No question. No question. And they said . . .

SIGRIST: Which was a nice consolation in itself.

GREENFIELD: My family said, "If you can't get to us, we will get to you." You know, and I thought that was wonderful. And that gave you a little bit more heart to go, you know.

SIGRIST: What did you pack when you came?

GREENFIELD: Well, of course, it was just really your personal things. A lot of the children's stuff. I don't say a lot of, of course, a lot of stuff, as you know, would have to be left behind. All furnishings and everything.

SIGRIST: What did you go with all the stuff that you left behind?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Well, we had, we did have a nice apartment, and they were lining up at the door for our furniture, believe it or not. That's how short things were. We did have a lovely home, I have to tell you that, a lovely apartment, and I hated to leave it. But our personal things, like to make sure my, we did have to bring with us a lovely big set of English china from the family. They were going to make sure we had, you know, nice china, English china, particularly English china. And we packed everything that we could, that we thought we would need, you know. We had two big trunks.

SIGRIST: Where did you leave from?

GREENFIELD: We left from Southampton, the Mauritania. We came over on the Mauritania.

SIGRIST: Was that the first time you had been on a large boat?

GREENFIELD: Yes, a ship.

SIGRIST: Of course, you were accustomed to boats, having grown up where you came from.

GREENFIELD: We were accustomed to steamers going across to the, you know, islands and things like that. To London and, I mean, the steamers, as we call them, you know, the smaller ships, we call them the steamers, used to do holiday trips from London to Clacton-on-Sea. We have a big pier there, you see. And they used to come in with a lot of people coming into a seaside town, particularly in the summer. It's a lovely

EI-197/GREENFIELD

seaside town. And very close to Clacton is Friton, and a lot of the American people used to come to Friton.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

GREENFIELD: What?

SIGRIST: Friton.

GREENFIELD: Oh, Friton. F-R-I-T-O-N. Even Douglas Fairbanks had a house in Friton. People like that.

SIGRIST: So the oceanliner is not a novel experience.

GREENFIELD: No.

SIGRIST: You've never been on one, but it's something that you're accustomed to.

GREENFIELD: Yes, because we saw big ships, but not the size of the Mauritania, though. I mean, that was, we went to London, we had to go to London for that. We left from the docks.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the accommodations on the boat for me, please?

GREENFIELD: Well, we had a nice cabin for the four of us, and I was feeling a bit under the weather, you know. First I was feeling upset and on this arm, where I had the vaccination, was acting up.

SIGRIST: When did you get the vaccination?

GREENFIELD: I would say a few weeks.

SIGRIST: It was part of this process?

GREENFIELD: Yeah. What, you have to have the vaccinations, as you know. And also I had caught a bad cold, so when I got on the ship I wasn't feeling so hot. But I was up on deck quite a bit, and my husband and the children were enjoying. And I said, "Well, I'll stick around the cabin and I'll sort of read a book and all that." And I said to the steward, she said, "Don't you feel good?" I said, "No, I've got this cold." And I said, "My vaccination here that I had is acting up a bit." Now, that information could have got passed on to the ship's doctor, I don't know. Because, am I going ahead here?

SIGRIST: No, well, we're on the boat, and how was your arm affected? You say you were having problems, but what exactly happened?

GREENFIELD: It was hurting a bit, irritating me. And so my husband said, "Oh, we'll have the nurse or the doctor take a look at it," you know, and he did, and he said, "Oh, well, it's doing fine." But, and then I was, stayed in the cabin for a couple of days. But when we landed the doctor told my husband there were doctors coming aboard, and he wanted me to see a doctor. So he said, "Well, why would she want to see a doctor?" And I remember the stewardess sitting there saying, "Well, she's fine, you know. She's just been for a couple of

days off color with a cold, and, you know, but nothing to warrant a doctor." So anyway, to cut a long story short, the American doctor came aboard, and I was one of the patients he came to visit. And he said, "Well, you look a fine healthy girl to me. What's your problem?" And I said, "I really don't have a problem." He said, "Well, they mentioned something about your arm." And I said, "Well, it's just bothering me, this vaccination." So he said, "Well, all I can say is they passed the buck on to me." Now, that conveyed nothing to me. I said, "Oh, well, that's all right." You know, I'm saying, "Well, that's all right, you know, we'll be off in a minute." He said, "No." He said, "You stay put," he said. "It's not going to be that easy. The buck has been passed to me." And then I asked somebody what that meant, and they said, "I don't think you're getting off the ship right away." So, of course, my husband and I were, couldn't believe this. Why can't we get off the ship? I mean, if there was something wrong with me, fine. And this American doctor had said, "Well, you look fine to me." And we had to wait until everybody was off the ship and there was another young man, I'd say about your age, who had, we had kind of got together all of us. We were now up on deck. And I said, "What's wrong with you?" He said, "Well, they said there's a shadow on my x-ray." So he said, "They're going to detain me." I said, "They're detaining us as well. I wonder why." We naturally thought we were going to be detained for an hour, and then our friends were waiting at the dock. So they said, then they finally said after a couple of hours, "We're taking you to Ellis Island." That didn't convey anything to me, either. But, and then it started, the heavens opened up and it was pouring with rain, and there's my little one, Susan, crying and, oh,

EI-197/GREENFIELD

turning into a terrible state, and friends crying at the dock. And we had these four men come and escorted us on this boat and took us over to the island. And I thought that was the most disgusting thing I had ever experienced in my life. The crew was standing, a lot of them on the gangplank, and I said, "Well, why can't I just go back? Put me back on the ship. I'm going to go back to England. I've had enough of this." A terrible thing to say, but I was devastated. I was put on that island, to me, for nothing. And then taken across to the island, and my husband was taken and they said, "Well, take him away." We got there and I couldn't believe the enormity of the place. And I said, "Why are we here?" You know, we were all asking that question. And they said, "Well, we're taking your husband." And it was like we were being taken to jail. But they said, "We are giving you a private room." And so I said, "Where else would you put me?" Not understanding the situation. They said, "Well, most of the women and children are all together, but we'll give you a private room." And I went up there, I was just, when I think of it now I can't believe what I went through, I was so devastated. I thought, "Why?" And my friends were, they didn't know what to do, what to say, and my family, we were going to call them directly. We didn't phone them, call them, anything. They were ready to fly over here. But then we were there for day after day on the island. You know, the bell would ring, the men would come to the floor eight o'clock in the morning and then we would go down. And then, oh! The hall there for eating and it was the most terrible thing I've ever experienced.

SIGRIST: How long were you there for?

GREENFIELD: Ten, eleven days. The twelfth day was when things started happening. We used to get talking, there were ten other English on there. Four of them didn't know what they were doing there. One of the girls was a model and she said, lovely girl, she'd come over on a modeling assignment. And they had said to her, "How long are you here for?" She said, "Well, I really don't know. I can't tell you that. I don't know how long it's going to last." So they said, "Well, we'll give you time to find out." And she got on the island, too. "That's not good enough." Two more were put over there because they weren't sure what had happened to them. And I told all this to the governor of the island when I was, you know, when I think I told you the story, that when I did see him, when this cop said to me, "There's the governor." And I made one dash through the crowd over there and just got hold of his arm and said, "I have to talk to you." And he said, "Well, what is it about? Are you English?" I said, "Yes." And I explained very quickly what had happened and he said, "Well, I'll go back to the office here." And he said, "You will be getting a call over the mike. When you hear it, come with your husband and children, and you will be called into my office. And I got the call about an hour later and I went, my husband and I and the children, we went into the office there on the island. And he said, "We owe you an apology. You should have been off before. Your papers were in with Displaced Persons, and we hope you won't hold it against the country. And we wish you all the luck in the world." And I'm saying, I didn't say this, but I'm thinking, "You've got to be joking. After all I've gone through here for twelve days." This was on the twelfth day. If I had done something, my husband couldn't believe it, he was so upset for me.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: Where was your husband during all of this? Was he on Ellis Island, or did he . . .

GREENFIELD: Oh, no, no, no. He was on Ellis Island with us, with the children. You go as a family. I had to go into New York. They took me, there were two Swedish girls, lovely girls. And I'm saying, "What's the matter with you?" And they're asking me the same question. I said, "I don't know." And I told them about my arm and my sniffles, and there was a couple of young fellows about your age. We all went into New York. I wouldn't know where we were taken. We were taken for another medical. Stripped from top to bottom again. All these checkups. I said, you know, "Why not," I said to the doctor, "you've got all this in front of you from the American Embassy, from the English Embassy, I've had examinations on board ship. What more do you want?" He said, "Well, this is something we have to go through. It's not my fault." I said, "I can understand that." We were gone, I said, "Well, at least I've come to New York and I'm seeing New York." (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Well, what a way to see it.

GREENFIELD: Yes. We were having a laugh about this, but none of us were laughing. And then I think we were there for a couple of hours, and then we were taken back to the island.

SIGRIST: Let me ask you some very specific questions about Ellis Island. For instance, describe where they fed you and what they fed you.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Well, you know, we were in the hall, you know, where you eat. And we were, we had, my husband was with me and the children. Somehow I had to make them eat something. As long as my children ate, I didn't care if I didn't, but they were going to eat. And the food wasn't gourmet, let's put it that way, but it was edible. I'm a very fussy eater, unfortunately. But I did have something, and we made sure the children were looked after. I did appreciate the fact that they let me have that room. And they also asked me if I would let, I don't know whether it was the Swedish ambassador's wife, there was a wife of one of the ambassadors. They asked if they could put a cot in my room, another bed. And I said, I wondered who I was getting and they said it was this ambassador's wife and a child. And I said, "That's fine with me." The room was big enough. And plenty big, and we got together, the two of us, and she was an awfully nice lady, and with a little boy, and the kids played together. And she said, "Oh, are they going to hear about this," she said. She said, "I'm from one of the embassies." And I said, "Well, why are you here?" And I was telling her about myself, and she said, "Why are we both here?" And, you know, it was like, "Why are we there?" But I think I realize, when I come to think of it, what one of the cops, do they call them cops on the island?

SIGRIST: The immigration guards?

GREENFIELD: The guards were very nice. One of them said to me, "You know, that's what happens. They take somebody off every ship, every plane." And somebody's got to come here so they can keep the island open. That's one way of putting it, and that's what people were going through. There had been people. I was talking to these two women,

EI-197/GREENFIELD

well, they said about forty-ish maybe, had been there for three or four months. And some had been there longer. And a lot of Chinese.

SIGRIST: Was the place crowded?

GREENFIELD: Oh, yes. Crowded. My husband had to go in with all the men.

SIGRIST: What stories did he tell you about being there?

GREENFIELD: Not very nice. He didn't like that setup at all. He said it wasn't right. It wasn't right to people, you know. But, however, he said, "What can I say?" As long as I was looked after. It didn't bother him.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE A, TAPE TWO

SIGRIST: Were there women guards as well as men?

GREENFIELD: I don't recollect any women, no.

SIGRIST: Do you remember where your room was?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: You go, yes. You go up the stairs, and I can see the room now. Here's the big room. And I was up on that first floor there. I could come out of my room and look down, and that's when I used to look down for my husband in the morning, and he would be standing there looking up, waiting for us to come out the door.

SIGRIST: Off of the third floor balconies.

GREENFIELD: Uh-huh. Up there. But . . .

SIGRIST: What was the room furnished with?

GREENFIELD: I really can't tell you that much. I'd be telling a lie. I mean, at least we had a bed and we had a bathroom.

SIGRIST: What problems did you have with the kids in this situation?

GREENFIELD: I didn't. Shall I tell you something, the kids didn't know what it was all about. They couldn't understand why we were all together, why, particularly my son, who was seven-and-a-half and a very bright boy. Susan was small, you know, this one. It was very hard for them. They couldn't under, but there were a lot of other children there as well. So the children would sort of get around each other. We kept our's very close to us.

SIGRIST: I was going to ask, you know, did you allow them to fraternize with other children?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Only around us, because we didn't know anybody, you know, until we knew the Swedish and we got talking to some German people. And one, you know, and another. But they were telling us, some of them, how long they'd been there. But, you know, when you think of it, if our papers, if after twelve days, if I hadn't have spoken up, he told me himself we could have been there indefinitely. Now, that could've happened to a lot of those other peoples, and that's what's kept Ellis Island going. If we're on Ellis Island, who's paying for it? Who's paying for all those people in Ellis Island in those days? Because I can understand, I mean, people, if they're displaced and they haven't got a country, is that what it's all about?

SIGRIST: The government must pay for it.

GREENFIELD: Somebody must be paying for it, you know. It's quite an upkeep. Because there was a lot of people there.

SIGRIST: Did they supply any kind of entertainment, or movies, or anything of that nature?

GREENFIELD: No, nothing.

SIGRIST: Were you allowed outside at all?

GREENFIELD: Oh, you could go outside.

SIGRIST: What month was this that you arrived?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: June. The weather was good, at least, see. We could walk outside, but you were all behind, you know, it was all guarded. Everything was guarded. A big high gate, you know. Well, the wrought iron, I think they were, something like that.

SIGRIST: Was this more frightening or more frustrating?

GREENFIELD: Frightening and frustrating. I was frightened to begin with. I thought, oh, you know, what's happening? Why is it? Ellis Island to us was something frightening, where they put all the prisoners. Well, this was all we could conjure up, you know. But so this is why, why are we going over there? We're not prisoners. And this is why one of the fellows on the ship was saying, "Well, why don't you just come back again? We'll take care of you on the ship, all of you, until the ship turns around and goes back again," and that's just what I would have liked to have done. It was frightening.

SIGRIST: I never did ask you, how long was the boat ride?

GREENFIELD: Oh, I think six days, no more.

SIGRIST: Well, tell me a little bit about how you got off the island, finally.

GREENFIELD: Well, we did. We called our friends in New Jersey and they said, "We're leaving today." They said, "We'll be right over, you know, and we stayed with them for a week.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: How did they, how did you actually get everything cleared up?

GREENFIELD: On the island?

SIGRIST: They allowed you off.

GREENFIELD: They allowed us right away. They said, "You have friends to go to." Right away our papers were given to us. And he said, "I hope you don't hold this against the country. I wish you all the luck in the world." And he was very, very nice. I have to say that. And I couldn't complain about any of the fellows, you know, the guards, as you say. They were all very nice. We didn't have any problem there.

SIGRIST: So you were there twelve days.

GREENFIELD: Twelve days. I think it was eleven or twelve days.

SIGRIST: And your friends came to Ellis Island to get you?

GREENFIELD: Oh, yeah. They were allowed to come. Oh, yeah. And then you go across on the boat.

SIGRIST: Did you have any other visitors while you were there?

GREENFIELD: We had the customs, English customs. And I think somebody on the island had come over there when they know there's, different nationals, I suppose, come over there to interview. And we told them the situation and they said, "Well, right now we're not sure what we can do,

EI-197/GREENFIELD

but we'll investigate this, you know." But we got off before they probably could do anything about it.

SIGRIST: Did you have access to a television or a radio when you were at Ellis?

GREENFIELD: Nothing. We had nothing. Well, you know, in those days, you're going back forty years, there's not the television there is today. I mean, I think in those days they would have insisted on it, but I don't think there was anything in those days.

SIGRIST: Where in New Jersey did you go to?

GREENFIELD: The Oranges. West Orange.

SIGRIST: And who were these friends?

GREENFIELD: The Harrises, Nettie and David Harris.

SIGRIST: And how did you know them?

GREENFIELD: From England.

SIGRIST: These were the friends . . .

GREENFIELD: English friends.

SIGRIST: These were the English friends.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Yeah. They lived in Maidavale, where we did.

SIGRIST: I see. So tell me about those first couple of days. What did you do?

GREENFIELD: When we came off? Oh, we just wanted to sit and relax and talk. And then I had to write letters home to let my parents know because we communicated very little and they were worried sick. We told them, we didn't tell them, we told them we had had a few problems. We didn't tell them right away. For us to write and say we'd been on Ellis Island I don't think would have conveyed quite the thing. They would wonder what that way, you know. They'd heard of it, I mean we'd all heard of it, but you don't think we're going to be there.

SIGRIST: Well, at this point it's been, what twenty plus days since you left?

GREENFIELD: That's right. That's right. So, and my sisters were beside themselves. I know when we did get letters and that, they just couldn't believe. And then I finally wrote, my husband and I wrote to our families and told them exactly what happened. They couldn't believe what they listened to. As a matter of fact, one of them, we had a very good friend, a lawyer who my husband had gone to school with, and he was telling him about it, you know, in a letter. He wouldn't believe what had happened, that such a thing could happen. Nobody believes things like that when you tell them that. They believe you're there for a reason, but they don't believe you're there because you've got a sore on your arm or you're sniffing a cold. And I, I mean, I was upset because I was the one that put us there, too, you know.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: Well, you had no control.

GREENFIELD: I didn't have any control over that, but then there were ten other English. And I also mentioned, I'd taken a lot of information. I've made notations of the others that were on there, you know, the couple of girls, and then there was another couple of young fellows, you know. And some more people, and there were ten more. And I said, "You know, maybe their's are in Displaced Persons, too." You know, in the wrong place. He said, "Well, it will be investigated." Shows you how easily these kind of things can happen, and shouldn't happen.

SIGRIST: Well, so you were glad to get off (he laughs). So, now these, this is the couple that are working in a household, who are working . . .

GREENFIELD: Yes, well, he took a job as, like, you got to get into something when you come here because, you know, I think you already come, you couldn't bring money out in those days. I think we came out with something like two hundred pounds, would be about three hundred dollars in those days. That's not going to take us far.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much the ship tickets cost?

GREENFIELD: I can't remember that. I wouldn't be able to remember that. I've lost my husband, you know. You probably knew that. I mean, my husband died eight years ago.

SIGRIST: So you just had a small amount of money with you.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: It was all we could bring.

SIGRIST: It was all you could bring.

GREENFIELD: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me about how you got a job, or your husband got a job.

GREENFIELD: We knew some show people. We had this business in England where we, you know, we had drivers that took people out, you know, we knew some show people. And people like that that we were going to contact when we came here if we, because you've got to find a job somehow to get a hold of some money.

SIGRIST: Did you have working papers? I mean, was that . . .

GREENFIELD: Oh, we had everything. There was no reason at all that we couldn't get a job. We had everything that was required. This is why this governor on the island said, "I don't understand." He couldn't understand the setup at all. Even he couldn't. That's why he said, "Don't hold it against the country and get on the next boat back." (she laughs) So there you go.

SIGRIST: So anyway, you knew show people, so what . . .

GREENFIELD: Oh, yes. So they said, "Well, you know, if there's anything we can do if, you know, in the way of a job." Of course, my husband did call them, you know, because they asked us to call them when we arrived,

EI-197/GREENFIELD

and they knew we had arrived, and they were in New York. So we said, well, we had arrived, when we finally did arrive and get to New Jersey after a few days. And they said, "Well, if there was anything we could do." And we did, and my husband did the same as our friends. He got a job as a chauffeur. That got us a roof over our head, you know, because you, this is what a lot of them did coming up from England.

SIGRIST: Did you work yourself or just your husband?

GREENFIELD: Yes, I did housekeeping, you know.

SIGRIST: For the same family?

GREENFIELD: The same family, cooking.

SIGRIST: What exactly would you have to do? What were your duties?

GREENFIELD: Cooking. I wasn't a bad cook. I mean, I'd cooked for my family, and they thought we were great. We went to Bay Head, New Jersey.

SIGRIST: Bay Head.

GREENFIELD: New Jersey. Uh-huh. And I loved it there. We were back on the seaside.

SIGRIST: Who were the people that you were working for? What were their names?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Paul Hay. He was I think on the stock exchange.

SIGRIST: H-A-Y-E?

GREENFIELD: H-A-Y. No, I think it was H-A-Y. Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: And did they have a big house?

GREENFIELD: They had a big house in Bay Head, New Jersey, right by the water. And they were delighted. They didn't have any children, and they would have somebody coming in to clean house and everything and they said, "Well, we can . . ." People were like that in those days, lovely Americans would offer people, immigrants coming over, jobs. So we fell into that one. And they loved the kids. And they were right by the water, and right away we got, there were lifeguards on those beaches, and right away my husband went to them and said to them, well, they knew we were strangers, you know, they said, "Could you teach our children to swim?" You know, he had an arrangement with them, and the boys were glad to earn some cash. They were great, the boys. They said, "Sure, no problem here." So they, they could, David could swim a bit, but when we looked at those big waves we thought, well, we talked to the boys about it, and they said, "Fine. We'll take care of them." And they went to an inlet somewhere there and taught Susan and David to swim, and then they would throw them into these big waves. I was dying of shock. And . . .

SIGRIST: Did you live in the house, or did you have your own house?

EI-197/GREENFIELD

GREENFIELD: Yes. We had like a separate little apartment. It was great, fine.

SIGRIST: How long did you stay with them?

GREENFIELD: We stayed with them for two years, and then we came up, and they were very sorry, we came up to Long Island. We went up to Long Island.

SIGRIST: Doing the same sort of thing?

GREENFIELD: Yes. We did a lot there for a while. We had a nice apartment. And then we got ourselves a nice apartment.

SIGRIST: The first family, Paul Hay, do you remember what kind of car he had that your husband drove?

GREENFIELD: He had a nice station wagon and he had a very old, which might date it, and old, a very old, old car, with a seat at the back. An old classic, I think. And then he had another, like, oh, what would you say, like say like a Buick or something like that. I don't know whether it was, I don't know the names of the cars. I didn't in those days. I didn't drive, even, then.

SIGRIST: Did you drive in England?

GREENFIELD: Nope.

EI-197/GREENFIELD

SIGRIST: What struck you when you got to this country as being very different from England that was hard to get accustomed to?

GREENFIELD: Well, I think everybody was more free, if you know what I mean. Everything was plentiful. I mean, we had come from austerity England that was tremendous shortages. Don't forget, we're a small island and everything has to come in. I mean, they grow as much as they can, and do everything as much as they can, and it's a very lovely place, but I have to say I did like it. And then going into New York and seeing the lovely stores and things like that.

SIGRIST: What, so you would say the freedom and the plenty would be the things that struck you as being most different.

GREENFIELD: Yes. Coming, you know, naturally coming, like, as I said, from austerity England in those days and not that I didn't like England. I mean, I loved it and didn't want to leave it, but when you're making a new life you have to, you know, really get used to it.

SIGRIST: What, how did you feel the first time you went back to visit England? What was that, was that kind of a strange feeling?

GREENFIELD: It was. I said to my sisters, you know, I said, "You know, where I've been everything is plentiful, beautifully clean, and there's such a lot of difference in it." It was hard to describe even to them. I said, "You know, it's entirely different." Of course, we being from London, and in the west end, and the business and everything like that, and going to a place, say, like down to New Jersey, Bay Head. Although I am from a

EI-197/GREENFIELD

small town originally, you know, Clacton is a small town, there still was a vast difference.

SIGRIST: When you were in England, how long of a time was it before you went back? How many . . .

GREENFIELD: Two years.

SIGRIST: Oh, so it wasn't that long.

GREENFIELD: No. My husband sent me back with the children. He I think felt that I wasn't yet adjusted and settled. But when I went back and I got around and went various places and I came back I said, "Yes, I'm adjusted." I felt that I was going to really like it. I liked it when I got here, you know, I mean, after a time I really did.

SIGRIST: What was it like seeing your parents?

GREENFIELD: Ah. (she sighs) That's the only thing that you miss, your family. But I have been fortunate. My sister has a condominium in Florida, and my brother-in-law, not far from me. They come out for four months. And my other sister, she comes out on a visit. And I've lost two brothers in England. But I have gone back several times.

SIGRIST: And your family comes here.

GREENFIELD: And then my family comes here. So, I mean, it doesn't hurt so much any more. And, of course, I lost my parents years ago.

SIGRIST: Those first couple of years in America, did you ever feel any kind of prejudice or some kind of, people didn't like you or didn't want you around because you had an accent and so you were clearly from another country, you were an immigrant. Did you ever feel any kind of prejudice because of that?

GREENFIELD: No, actually I didn't. In fact, they would stand and say, "Well, keep talking." And I didn't quite know what that meant. I thought they thought I was a busybody or what. "No, we like to hear you talk." I can't say, and my husband was Jewish. I had no problem. I can't say that, I mean, we made friends. We had a lot, several friends in America. And the children were, David started school. Susan I had to send to a nursery school because they don't get them in here until, I think she was five or six when she started. They start them earlier in England. And although she wasn't in a school in England. She was in a nursery school. But I have to say they were way ahead of the game when they got here. I mean, they, it was like David was kept back a year. But however, he adjusted very well. There was no problem there.

SIGRIST: I have a final question for you. How do you think your life would have been different if you had not come here?

GREENFIELD: Well, that's, I suppose, hard to say. I was having a nice life in England. My husband had a nice business, was doing well. My family were all around me. And that's what makes you happy, in those days. I don't regret coming here. I mean, through the years. And my children, of

EI-197/GREENFIELD

course, love it. They don't know it any other way. The only one that knows it's another way is me. But, and I'm lucky. I'm blessed with five lovely grandchildren, these ages, of course. I have one just, Jonathan, the oldest son of my son down in Long Island, he's just graduated Tulane after five years, architecture. And then there's Danny, who's in college, and Peter. He's a senior. And then . . .

SIGRIST: Have you ever encouraged your grandchildren to visit England?

GREENFIELD: Oh, they will. Oh, yeah, they will. I want them to get their schooling done, and they've had a few things along the way, but they will. They go other places, you know, I mean, they've been all over. And they, of course, met all the family, most of my family, because they come, they come to Florida, too. And when I lived up north my family from England still came when we lived up north. And now they like Florida very much. They come there. And, of course, soon Bob and the girls come every Christmas, and David my son is coming up here this weekend.

SIGRIST: Yes, I'll give you an oral history form to fill out, actually. Well, this is a good time to end. I want to thank you very much for your time. We've been talking for an hour-and-a-half actually.

GREENFIELD: I hope I haven't bored you.

SIGRIST: No, no. It was wonderful. It was wonderful. I'm especially interested in your descriptions of being in London during the Blitz, and especially the Ellis Island information. It was wonderful. I'm very happy I found

EI-197/GREENFIELD

you.

GREENFIELD: Well, I think when you think of Ellis Island I suppose we didn't get treated all that badly. I mean, I can't say we were treated badly in any way.

SIGRIST: Well, it could have been worse. (she laughs)

GREENFIELD: It could have been worse.

SIGRIST: But then again, you didn't have to be there at all.

GREENFIELD: No, we didn't. This is, like I said, I don't know. We were all asking ourselves why are we there. Some of them might have had a reason, but . . .

SIGRIST: Well, this is Paul Sigrist signing off for the National Park Service with Doris Greenfield in Clifton Park in her daughter Sue Backshall's home.

END OF INTERVIEW