

EI-405/HOCKRIDGE

EI-405

ELSIE BRIERLEY HOCKRIDGE
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ENGLAND, 1904
AGE 2
PASSAGE ON "THE BALTIC"

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Friday, October 29, 1993. I'm in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in a very nice residential Victorian apartment building (Mrs. Hockridge laughs) on Berkshire Place, with Elsie Hockridge. Mrs. Hockridge was brought from England in 1904 by her grandmother, and she was two years old at that time. Anyway, thank you for doing this, Mrs. Hockridge.

HOCKRIDGE: That's all right. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Can we begin by you giving me your birth date?

HOCKRIDGE: August 22, 1902.

SIGRIST: And where were you born?

HOCKRIDGE: I was born in England.

SIGRIST: Where in England?

HOCKRIDGE: In Chadderton. C-H-A-D-D-E-R-T-O-N

SIGRIST: Whereabouts in England is that?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, that would be up in the northern, north central part of England, near Manchester, around in that section there.

SIGRIST: Was it an industrial town like Manchester was?

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, it was. It was, um, as far as I can remember my father talking about it, there were coal mines there, plus cotton mills.

SIGRIST: What was your maiden name?

HOCKRIDGE: Brierley.

SIGRIST: And can you spell that, please?

HOCKRIDGE: B-R-I-E-R-L-E-Y.

SIGRIST: Okay, good, thanks. Let's, um, let's talk right, about your father. Why don't we start with him.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What was his name?

HOCKRIDGE: His name was Harry.

SIGRIST: And what was his background? Do you know anything about his family, and . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Well, as far as I know, they were, well, they were, I think he had an uncle that worked in the mines. I remember, I think they were coal mines. And then, uh, but his father worked in the cotton factories there, cotton mills. I don't know, I think it was similar to the cotton mills in this country.

SIGRIST: And probably most of the people there either worked in the mines, or . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Mines or . . .

SIGRIST: Or in the mills.

HOCKRIDGE: That's right. And from what I remember him talking about, the young boys went to work in the mines, but

he didn't, because he didn't, his father didn't want him to. It was a terrible life for boys twelve and fourteen years old at that time, which was in the late 1800's, you know? So what he did over there was go into the mills.

SIGRIST: Did he ever talk about that experience later on?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, not too much. The only thing he talked about was that his mother and father came over to this country and, uh, because the living was better, and the pay was better, and they went to work in the cotton mills up in Cohoes, New York, which is up above Troy or Albany. And, uh, so then, from what I understand, if someone was in this country and had work, that they could bring their family over as long as they promised them a job over here. They couldn't come over on welfare the way they do now, you know? (she laughs) But outside of that, that's about all I remember them talking about, that they came over to this country because the living was better.

SIGRIST: Did they leave their children in England?

HOCKRIDGE: No. Uh, when my grandmother and grandfather came over, they brought my father. Well, no. He was married over

in England. I'm getting ahead of myself a little. But there were two of my aunts, two of their daughters, that weren't married, and they came over with them. So there were, and, um, was there one of the sons, and one son.

So there were two girls and one son, which would have been my aunts and uncle. But my father was married, already married, so he stayed over there. He didn't come with them.

SIGRIST: When your grandparents came to this country, did they settle in Cohoes because there were other English people there, or family members there?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, there were other English people. Not family. I think they were the first of the family to come over. And, uh, but there were other English people. I remember them speaking of the Mitchells. And, uh, as it went along, as I got a little older, I can remember them visiting those people. But, as I say, I think the reason they came over was for better living conditions and . . .

SIGRIST: And it would make sense that they would go to a place like Cohoes.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. Where . . .

SIGRIST: Because they came from a mill town. And they went to a mill town.

HOCKRIDGE: A mill town, yeah. That's right. And, uh, see, my father was married.

SIGRIST: Do you know what year your father got married?

HOCKRIDGE: In England. It must be on this here. But my, while he came over with my sister, my mother was to come over with me, but in the meantime she died over there, so that's why my grandmother went over after me. I don't know, let's see where I am here. Um . . .

SIGRIST: Let's see. Your father . . .

HOCKRIDGE: This is my grandfather, Robert. And now . . .

SIGRIST: He married, your mother's name is Mary . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Wardle.

SIGRIST: Wardle. W-A-R . . .

HOCKRIDGE: . . . D-L-E. And isn't it the date there . . .

SIGRIST: Yeah, down here. They were married, they were married February 12, 1898.

HOCKRIDGE: In Mackelsville[ph]. (Macclesfield) ?

SIGRIST: Cheshire, England.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, Cheshire, England.

SIGRIST: Do you know how your parents met?

HOCKRIDGE: No, I really don't. Unless it was, I never heard my father speak too much about that part of it, because, um, when I was five he remarried, and these three brothers or half brothers, because it was, I think it was something about an awful shock to him, you know, to think she was sick and ill and died, and I was left over there with him. And there were very few, I remember him mentioning there was an aunt over there, but she had quite a big family, and so he didn't want to leave me over there to be brought up by another family. He'd rather I would, so my grandmother went over after me.

SIGRIST: What little do you know about your mother?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, only that . . .

SIGRIST: Do you know anything about her background?

HOCKRIDGE: No, I didn't. But my father did write, and this aunt of mine that gave me a lot of this information, she used

to write. But, you know, we were young, and, you know, when my father remarried I was five. My sister was seven.

And there wasn't much talk going on, you know? And my grandmother didn't speak too much about it.

SIGRIST: Do you know what your mother died of?

HOCKRIDGE: Yes. She had, she got a cold. You know what, this cold that goes to the brain? Uh, what do they call it, encephalitis or something like that?

SIGRIST: Encephalitis?

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. And that's, and, of course, there were no antibiotics or medicine like we have now. And she was a thin woman, very thin. And, uh, so I guess she just, you know, just couldn't, uh, survive it or something.

SIGRIST: So you have an older sister.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, I did. She, she is, she died at sixty-two.

SIGRIST: But, of course, she would have been alive then.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Um, how much older? She's two years older than you.

HOCKRIDGE: Two years older than I was.

SIGRIST: So she was born in 1900's?

HOCKRIDGE: 1900, and . . .

SIGRIST: And you're born in 1902.

HOCKRIDGE: In 1902, yeah.

SIGRIST: In what year did your mom die?

HOCKRIDGE: In, uh, well, let's see.

SIGRIST: She died September 3, 1904.

HOCKRIDGE: Yes.

SIGRIST: So you had just turned two when she died.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, I really had. And I came over to this country in, well, it's down here somewhere anyway. Uh, here it is.

SIGRIST: In 1904.

HOCKRIDGE: I came in 19 . . .

SIGRIST: November of 1904.

HOCKRIDGE: July 8th.

SIGRIST: It says July 8th on here.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, July 8th. I thought it was in November that I came over.

SIGRIST: Yeah, that's what you had written on it before.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, on that.

SIGRIST: So maybe your nephews got it confused.

HOCKRIDGE: Maybe my son.

SIGRIST: Or your son, rather. Because if you came July 4th . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Let's see here.

SIGRIST: If you came July 4th and she died in September 8th, you would have come before she died.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. That, no, that wasn't, I'll tell you, I've got, I've kept the old paper. Ralph said to me, "You'd better keep . . ." See, it's, my Bible was getting such a mess, you know?

SIGRIST: My goodness.

HOCKRIDGE: Um . . .

SIGRIST: Well, of course, we can check all this later.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. (she pauses)

SIGRIST: For the sake of the tape, Mrs. Hockridge is looking for . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yeah, November, yeah. November 16th. It's up in . . .

SIGRIST: You came on November 16, 1904.

HOCKRIDGE: 16th, yeah, that's it. My son did that wrong. I'll correct that.

SIGRIST: So your father, did he come to this country right after she died?

HOCKRIDGE: No. She died while he was in this country.

SIGRIST: Oh, she was alone.

HOCKRIDGE: He expected her, as soon as he got an apartment and got settled, that he would send for her. And so in the meantime all this came up, and so then my grandmother went back after me.

SIGRIST: Where was your father, um, living in this country. Was he in Cohoes also?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, he lived there for a little while, and then he lived in Waterford, New York. And he worked at Cluett, Peabody, which they made shirts, and which was cotton,

you know, the cotton mill. He worked there at Cluett Peabody's until, oh, I don't know. I was about thirteen.

And then he was offered a position up in North Adams at **ok** the Arnold Print Works up there. So then we moved to North Adams, but in the meantime he worked, and we lived in, we didn't live in Cohoes. Yeah, we did live in Cohoes, but not near my grandmother, when he remarried. But he worked at Cluett Peabody's, and they were in Troy.

SIGRIST: So, so your father was in this country when your mom died.

HOCKRIDGE: Yes.

SIGRIST: And then you're staying with your grandmother.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes, we were.

SIGRIST: And it's just the two, just you and your sister, right?

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, just the two of us. And then he remarried.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about, well, he remarried after you were here, though.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Before we get you over there to America, can you talk a little bit about your grandmother and what her personality was like.

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I'll tell you, she was a very prim, as you can see by that picture there, but she was a very good person, I mean good-hearted. And we used to visit her a lot, even when we came over this country. And, uh, she lived in Waterford, and I can remember my grandfather. And, you know, just things, when we'd sit, when we'd be there to eat, different things that she would make him that I think they made, they had in England, like pickled tripe and all this. (she laughs) It was, none of us children would eat it, you know? And, um, and even as we got older and we lived in Massachusetts, I used to go and visit her and stay over with her and, uh . . .

SIGRIST: Were there other ways, when you were growing up, ways that she had that struck you as being very English, not only what she served on the table, but maybe other things that she did?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes. Her, her clothes, as you can see by that picture, very, very prim. And, um, and she loved family. You know, and her daughters came over, they both

married, and, uh, so we were with a lot of cousins.
You know, families were always together then.

SIGRIST: What was her name?

HOCKRIDGE: My grandmother was Anne Wooley.

SIGRIST: Her maiden name?

HOCKRIDGE: Her maiden name was Anne Wooley, yes.

SIGRIST: Wooley.

HOCKRIDGE: W-O-O-L, I think there's one L into it. Two O's and
one L. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Okay.

HOCKRIDGE: I always have to be sure I spell it right.

SIGRIST: So now you came in November to this country.

HOCKRIDGE: Yes.

SIGRIST: And the ship was, we just saw it here on the sheet, it's
the Cedrik, I think.

HOCKRIDGE: Yes.

SIGRIST: The Cedric, right.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. This, as you can see why I had new ones made up.

SIGRIST: Your son also has here on the sheet that you came with your dad, and you were actually with your grandmother, right?

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. Where'd he put that down?

SIGRIST: See where my finger is?

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. That's right. You know, he's, he's got this, this is from my sister, and mine goes on the other paper.

SIGRIST: I see.

HOCKRIDGE: I'll have to . . .

SIGRIST: Did your sister come with you and your grandmother?

HOCKRIDGE: No. He came, she came with my father.

SIGRIST: Oh, okay, well, then that's . . .

HOCKRIDGE: See, that I'll have to draw a line to separate that.

SIGRIST: Yeah. You know, he's right, because it there's November 16th.

HOCKRIDGE: There it is.

SIGRIST: You came on the Baltic, not the Cedric.

HOCKRIDGE: That's it.

SIGRIST: All right. Now we have all that straightened out. (they laugh) So your sister came, came a few months before you did.

HOCKRIDGE: Yes.

SIGRIST: Did your grandmother ever relate to you any stories of the crossing, or anything like that?

HOCKRIDGE: No, she never did. I tell you, I don't know whether she, whether it was just matter-of-fact with her. You know, they'd come over here and got settled, and then to go back again, whether she enjoyed it or not, I don't know.

SIGRIST: Well, was her intention to just bring you over, or was she actually coming to relocate here?

HOCKRIDGE: No, she was here.

SIGRIST: Your grandmother was here.

HOCKRIDGE: My grandmother was already here, and my grandfather, because that's why my father came over here.

SIGRIST: I see.

SIGRIST: Yeah, and, uh, and he was going to, of course, he had a job waiting for him, because they wouldn't let them go through Ellis Island unless they did. And, uh, so then when he could get settled here, then he was going to send over for my mother and myself. So that's the, but in the meantime, with all this happening, then we did stay with my grandmother in Cohoes. I can remember one little section of it. See, her house seemed to be on a hill, and it was a middle house. You know how the, well, they have them in Adam's, they're brick, and they're . . .

SIGRIST: All attached?

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, all attached. And I do remember that, a little bit of that. And then I don't remember too much, I remember being there and the family being there, you know, the aunts and so forth. But it seems to me it went along until I was about five, and then I'd begin remembering more, but by that time we were away from my grandmother, but we visited a lot.

SIGRIST: When, when any of your family left England, did anyone take with them something to remember England by?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I tell you, my grandmother did have a lot of dishes and things, and she brought two of those, you know those dogs that you see . . .

SIGRIST: Staffordshire dogs.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. She brought those two with her, and the family just, the children just loved them. And we could look at them, but we couldn't touch them, you know? (she laughs) And then when my youngest uncle got married, his wife didn't like them, she gave them to the Salvation Army before anyone could claim them, you know? (she laughs) So all in all, yes, she brought quite a few little things with her.

SIGRIST: Well, and, of course, those dogs in England would have been sort of a symbol of respectability.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes, I guess so, and they were beautiful. They really were. I have a couple of pieces of, two little pictures that came from England. One has a chip out of it, but I kept it, and my grandmother had given them to me. And, um, my sister had quite a few little odds and ends, you know, dishes, and I think that's what they brought with them mostly, dishes, and like those dogs, and, yeah.

SIGRIST: Right. Do you know anything about the house that you lived in in England, or anything?

HOCKRIDGE: No, I don't. I really don't know. It seemed to me that my father mentioned once that they were double houses, but he never mentioned whether they were brick or anything. But I've seen pictures of that section, you know, and they're, they look almost like mill houses to me, they really do.

SIGRIST: Well, it's, you're going from one mill town to the other.

HOCKRIDGE: One mill town to the other. And . . .

SIGRIST: Can you, um, can you tell me a little bit about if your father or your grandmother, if they liked to talk about England.

HOCKRIDGE: England.

SIGRIST: Or when they came to this country, did they just kind of put it all behind them, and this was their life?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, no, I don't think so. I think they, they reminisced a lot about England, and, you know, I think after a few years, though, it kind of gets behind them, you know?
(she laughs) But, uh, outside of relatives, I can't

tell you too much about relatives. I know my, most of them came over to this country. As I say, most of them settled around Troy, Albany.

SIGRIST: And doing the same kind of work?

HOCKRIDGE: No. Um, my grandfather worked, now, who did, where did he work? He worked for the railroad quite a while before he retired. And, because in Waterford the railroad went right through First and Second Street, and they lived on Second Street. And, uh, he worked for the railroad. He never went into the cotton mills, but he had a job, it seemed to me he always worked on that railroad. And then, of course, they built that new, they built that canal up through there, that barge canal, and quite a few of the men worked on that part-time or spare time.

SIGRIST: To make extra money?

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, building there. Then in Waterford my father worked, well, Cluett and Peabody's had a plant in Waterford, and he worked there, and they called it the bleach house where they worked on the cotton, and he was a foreman there, because I remember that he would come home and he'd bring a rabbit or a fish or something, and the men that worked for him would give him, you know,

my mother used to say, well, as long as they skin it, that's the main thing. (she laughs) But, uh . . .

SIGRIST: Can you talk about your father's work with the Cluett Peabody factory, and maybe, and, of course, as you were getting older . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What you remember about his work?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, the only thing I remember about his work, from going from the cotton mills, you know, when he first came to this country and worked a year or two, that was much nicer work. See, the men wore separate collars. They didn't have collars on the shirt. And he used to work on those, and had to inspect them. And I know he'd come home, he liked his work. They were good people to work for, and he really liked his work there. And, um, I never heard him complain about it. But then when he was offered another position up in North Adams, which was with the printworks up there, he decided he, you know, he wanted to advance a little and better himself, and I was, I know I was thirteen then when he, we moved up there.

SIGRIST: When you moved up to North Adams.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Um, I wanted to ask you what you remember about your father's remarriage?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I'll tell you. The only thing I can remember about that, as we left our grandmother's, my sister and I, we, and went into another household, you know, and I think it was very upsetting, it was. And then a year later the first brother was born, so I was going on six when he was born. And there were three brothers, but there was that one there, and then five years later it was another one, and seven years later it was another one. And that brother, I still call him my brother because we were all brought up together, he's still alive. He lives in Rome, Georgia. And, uh, I talked on the phone to him just a week ago.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about the first brother being born?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, it was . . .

SIGRIST: When women were pregnant at that time?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, we didn't seem to, you know, people, young children

didn't know what it was. (she laughs) And, uh, he was born the 28th of December, which we had a very slim Christmas that year, because they said, well, that was our Christmas gift, a new brother. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: A doll would have been nicer. (he laughs)

HOCKRIDGE: And I think there was a little upheaval. From what I can remember, a few things that, um, it took us a while, you know? We were five and seven, and it took us a while to get adjusted. And I, as I say, my stepmother was very good to us. We, but there was never that feeling. But I . . .

SIGRIST: What was her name?

HOCKRIDGE: Her name was Nickelson, Margaret Nickelson. (Nicholson?)

SIGRIST: And how did your father meet her?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I think it must have been at work. That's all I can think of, that he was working at Cluett's. And she came from a big family.

SIGRIST: Was she American born?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes, yes, she was. But her, her people were Canadians. I think her mother was Canadian. Her father

was born out in the Black Hills of Dakota. But, um, that's about, you know, from the start, that's the beginning of it. It was an upheaval, because we'd been with our grandmother so long.

SIGRIST: Right, and she was really the only mother that you knew.

HOCKRIDGE: Well, that's right. And, uh, and then leaving that home and going into another one. But her sisters were awfully good to us. We called them our aunts, and they were very good to us.

SIGRIST: What was her personality?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I'd say, she was a little stern, but I always had this feeling that if there hadn't been any other children, it would have been a little different. But my father was very easygoing. You know, he would take things in his stride, and if things didn't go just right and she'd complain to him, he kind of passed it on. But anything, our homework or anything, he was, he was the one that made sure that we did our homework and that our lessons were good, and that we went to school and everything.

SIGRIST: Was there something that your father enjoyed doing with

you specifically when you were kids, some kind of an activity that you shared with him?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, not, well, as I say, he helped us with our homework.

That was one thing. And, uh, he was interested in photography. And, you know, he, so we had a lot of pictures taken. (she laughs) And, but he used to develop, now, I can remember this. He used to develop them outdoors in the sun. You know, we'd have the dishes of solution and the sun and everything, and we used to love to join him in doing that. And that was the thing I think we enjoyed more. And we had a lot of cousins, and we, there was a lot of visiting, so it was good.

SIGRIST: Do you know what kind of camera he owned?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes. It was one of those little brownie box cameras.

(she laughs) I don't know what's happened to it. And it took, it did, it did take good pictures. But he developed all his pictures himself. But outdoors, you know, the sun and something, anyway.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about what it was like growing up with, you're sort of in two worlds, aren't you?

HOCKRIDGE: Yes.

SIGRIST: Your father is an immigrant, and came as an adult. And, of course, you're so young when you come that you're really sort of an American.

HOCKRIDGE: Well, that's right.

SIGRIST: Tell me what it was like to grow up in that kind of an atmosphere.

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I don't, I don't know as I, I think he had to do more adjusting than we did.

SIGRIST: Were there things that he had a hard time adjusting to in this country?

HOCKRIDGE: I don't think so. Uh, I tell you, he was the type of man that even though he didn't get a lot of schooling, he kept on, you know? He just, he loved to read, even do crossword puzzles, not even have a dictionary with him. He was really a self-taught student, he really was. And, uh, I think he was, he was interested in, I can remember him talking politics, you know? But he was. He was interested in things. He just didn't sit back and . . .

SIGRIST: Was he interested in what was going on in England at that time?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I don't know as he really was so much. At that time, oh, I don't know really. Well, yes, he used to speak of Queen Victoria. (she laughs) I remember that. And, uh, but I think he, he got used to being in this country and getting, you know, he was working and being with Americans and, well, most of them were from other countries anyway, you know.

SIGRIST: You say he used to mention Queen Victoria. Was he critical of the monarchy in England, or . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Well, no, I don't think he was, no. I think the reason he might never have come to this country if his mother and father hadn't come over. And things, I think work was bad over there in England at that time. I think there was not so much work, and things were, the country wasn't quite as good as it could have been, and I think that's why he decided, and they, my grandmother must have talked to him and said, "You can do better over here," and make a new start and so forth.

SIGRIST: And it sounds like that's indeed what they did.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, I think so, yeah, because it was people, even, wasn't there a lot of people came in Poland and worked

in the . . .

SIGRIST: Eastern Europe.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, and German, Germany, and so forth, yeah. They came from all different countries, yeah.

SIGRIST: Was there something, um, we haven't really talked about your father's personality. You said he was easygoing.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Was there something inherently British about your father that sticks out in your mind?

HOCKRIDGE: No. But I'll tell you, he got away from that British talk, you know, that language. But my grandfather, I could hardly understand half of what he said, because he kept that, what would you call it, that brogue, not brogue, but an accent, you know? And he kept it right until the time he died. But my father didn't. It seems as if he very easily got into the American speech, and, uh, and way of life.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: Did he become a citizen?

HOCKRIDGE: Yes, he did.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what year that was?

HOCKRIDGE: No. Let's see, it must have been, I do have his citizenship paper, but my son has it.

SIGRIST: Were you an adult when he became . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes. I, now, I was made a, yeah, I was eighteen.

I was made a citizen through him. Remember they kept changing it? Well, you don't remember, but they kept changing it. Now, my sister didn't come under him because she was over eighteen, but she became a citizen when she got married, through this man she married. He was an American. But I became a citizen through my father. Now, I was eighteen, so when he died I made sure that I got his papers, because it covered me. And, uh, when I came in here I had my son take these things to put in his safe deposit box, you know, rather than . . .

SIGRIST: Having them lying around.

HOCKRIDGE: And have one of my own that he may have trouble getting into and so forth.

SIGRIST: What about your grandparents? Did they become citizens?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes, they did. Here I'm playing with this and I shouldn't. (referring to the microphone) Yeah, they became citizens also, even before he did. Because, and, uh, now the two girls and the son, I don't know how they become citizens, whether they became citizens on their own, or whether they were through their parents. But my father wasn't, so he became, I can remember we were, we were living in North Adams then.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your father getting his citizenship papers, and what he had to go through to do that?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes. He, you know, he used to go and, well, didn't they have, not like classes, but they had to go two or three times, and he had to have people vouch for him, and I forget what it cost, but anyway, but he, he really wanted to become a citizen, and he worked at it, you know.

SIGRIST: Talk a little bit about your sister, because she's a little bit older than you.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And her adjustment to all of this.

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I don't know. She never spoke too much about it.

SIGRIST: What was her name?

HOCKRIDGE: Edith.

SIGRIST: Edith.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. Edith Anne. She had a middle name, and I didn't. But, uh, well, she was, I think when these children came along from the second marriage, she was old enough to want to take care of them, you know? That was her, where I wasn't. The two years didn't seem to make that much difference that I wanted to take care of them, you know? (she laughs) But she adjusted fairly well, I think, yes.

SIGRIST: Did she have any trouble in school, uh, because she might retain a bit of an accent, or . . .

HOCKRIDGE: No, she didn't. Because, uh, not that I can remember, no. And my father was so good about helping us, you know? He made, he wanted to make sure that we, we took advantage of everything in school, that we didn't waste our time and everything, which I think was a help for us. If we'd had a father that didn't care, you know?

(she laughs) But he did. You know, he believed in getting ahead, and he wanted us to do whatever we could, and so.

SIGRIST: Would you say that, that you felt no difference really between yourself and other American children at that time?

HOCKRIDGE: No.

SIGRIST: Just because your father happened to be British, it didn't really seem to make any kind of difference.

HOCKRIDGE: No, it didn't seem to make any difference, because there were so many children going to school that were from other, their parents were from other countries, see, at that time. And, uh, I don't think we thought we were any different, you know. (she laughs) That didn't seem to make any difference at all.

SIGRIST: Did your father ever speak about any kind of prejudice, maybe in the workplace?

HOCKRIDGE: No, he never did, because he just felt, I think when he first came over, he felt that they were pioneers, that a lot of these people over here didn't know anything about working in mills, you know? And the cloth and

all this. No, he never did. He, he was always up and at it, you know?

SIGRIST: Yeah, it sounds like a very smooth transition.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: I mean, the way they came to a place that was similar to where they'd left from.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, well, that was it. That was good, I think.

SIGRIST: And you speak English. (Mrs. Hockridge laughs) So that was never a problem.

HOCKRIDGE: No, it never was. And, uh, even my, well, my grandfather was, oh, he never lost it. My grandmother, there'd be certain words she'd say that I wouldn't know what she was talking about. But otherwise, uh, my grandfather, I couldn't understand half of what he said. And, of course, we were just growing up, and he was a very quiet man. He didn't, you know, he would sit back and let my grandmother talk and do things. And, uh, so I think my father was more like his mother, you know.

SIGRIST: More adaptable.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, that's right, too.

SIGRIST: Do you, um, did your grandparents ever want to go back to England?

HOCKRIDGE: I don't think, I never heard them speak of it. They may have, I don't know, but they never seemed to, my grandmother just loved it in this country, and my grandfather had very little to say, so what he was thinking . . .

SIGRIST: Who knows.

HOCKRIDGE: Who knows. (they laugh) Yeah, that's right, too.

SIGRIST: What about your father? Did he ever want to go back to England even to just visit?

HOCKRIDGE: He never, he never talked about it. Maybe he might have if he hadn't remarried. That's the way I feel, that once you're married and you have another family, you know. And, uh, but he never seemed to.

SIGRIST: Well, and there may have been bad memories for him, too.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes, and not wanting to go back, that's probably it.

SIGRIST: Do you remember some of your father's views during World

War One, how he thought about the war, and what he thought?

HOCKRIDGE: Well, I do remember, on the World War One business, he was, he'd read the paper, you know, and find out, and, of course, at that time, let's see, what was World War One? We were fighting Germany, was it? Yeah, Germany. Well, I think . . .

SIGRIST: England was, England got in the war almost from the beginning.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. That's right, too. And then we, our . . .

SIGRIST: Somewhat later.

HOCKRIDGE: But, uh, he used to talk about it, but I don't know as he was ever really bitter about anything, but I think all, all men were, in a way, you know? It was so many terrible things happening.

SIGRIST: Yeah. I just wondered if he had strong feelings about some aspect of the war.

HOCKRIDGE: No. He, well if he did he never talked about it in front of us, you know? Of course, maybe when the men got together, (she laughs) you know, at work, they may

have, too. But, uh, no, he, uh, he wasn't that type of a man that, he never seemed to get too worked up about anything, you know? He'd talk, and he was very calm about talking about things and so forth.

SIGRIST: Um, what do you think is inherently English about you?

HOCKRIDGE: Well . . . (she laughs) I really don't know. Um, well, I don't know, unless it's the way I was brought up. And, um . . .

SIGRIST: Some sort of a behavior, or . . .

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah. Well, that's it, you know? I sort of like to have things kept smoothly and, uh, and I think it's a way, you know. And my husband was English, and his mother and father, I want to go through his records pretty soon. I've got a sister-in-law, and I'm hoping to get some from her.

SIGRIST: When did he come to this country?

HOCKRIDGE: My husband was born in this country.

SIGRIST: He was born, but of English parents.

HOCKRIDGE: But I really feel the English parents looked out more for their children, and that's where I feel as if I,

maybe I picked up more of that.

SIGRIST: Well, when I asked you what was inherently English about your grandmother, one of the things that you said was the love of family.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: So, I mean, is that similar for you?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes, it really is, even though I only have the one son, but I have two grandsons and a granddaughter, and a great-grandson.

SIGRIST: Well, let's get everyone's name on tape. Let's see. Let's start with your husband. What was his name?

HOCKRIDGE: His name was Clarence.

SIGRIST: Clarence Hockridge. And what year did you marry?

HOCKRIDGE: In 1925.

SIGRIST: And you had one son?

HOCKRIDGE: One son.

SIGRIST: And his name?

HOCKRIDGE: His name is Ralph.

SIGRIST: And then he had children?

HOCKRIDGE: Two sons, Thomas and Brian, and a granddaughter, Anne, one daughter, Anne. And they live in Pennsylvania. Now, the Brian, he lived in Illinois ever since he got out of college. He has been transferred to France for four years, so that's why I was in Pennsylvania for the month of July. We had all these big reunions.

SIGRIST: I see.

HOCKRIDGE: And, plus, I celebrated my birthday, which wasn't until August, so we had all this good time together before then. So even though I'm here, they had lived in Pittsfield. He married a Pittsfield girl. But then he went with G.E. in Pennsylvania. And, uh, all my friends and church and everything were here.

SIGRIST: So it's nice to stay here.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, I wanted to stay here. They wanted me to go, and I said no. I could just go down there, and he'd be transferred out to California somewhere.

SIGRIST: That's right.

HOCKRIDGE: So that's, um . . .

SIGRIST: Are you glad that your grandmother brought you to America?

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, yes, I am. Oh, yes, I am.

SIGRIST: How do you think your life would have been different if you had stayed in England?

HOCKRIDGE: I really don't know how it would be. As I said, there's one aunt, that was my mother's sister. At that time she had four or five children. And I don't know how I would have fitted in there.

SIGRIST: That's right, because it would have been a sort of foster home for you.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, well, that's, and, uh, and knowing that my family were in America, even my sister, you know. I don't know, I'm glad I came to this country. I really am.

SIGRIST: You know, you have to, you have to be sympathetic towards your father. He's in this country with one of his children.

HOCKRIDGE: One.

SIGRIST: And his wife died, so his family split in two. It must

have been a terrible dilemma for him to be in.

HOCKRIDGE: Oh, I think it was, I think it really was. Only that my grandmother was such a good person, that she would, perhaps he paid her fare, I don't know, he never said.

But to think she would pick up and go over to England and get me and come back with me, you know? So she was a good woman. As I say, she's very prim. (they laugh)

But she was a really nice woman.

SIGRIST: She had a good heart.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, that's right.

SIGRIST: Mrs. Hockridge, I want to thank you very much for letting me come out and ask you all these questions about your . . .

HOCKRIDGE: (she laughs) I don't know how I answered them, but that's all right.

SIGRIST: Well, your father and your grandmother come off as very interesting.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, it was.

SIGRIST: Very complex people.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, it really was. You know, when someone would say to me years ago, "Well, how come you didn't come over with your sister?" Well, then, you know, there's all this explaining to do. (Mr. Sigrist laughs) But it wasn't, you know, at that time there wasn't the medical things there are now where she could have been saved probably now.

SIGRIST: You're talking about your mother.

HOCKRIDGE: Yeah, my mother, yeah.

SIGRIST: It happened the way it happened.

HOCKRIDGE: That's right. We just don't know.

SIGRIST: Well, this is Paul Sigrist signing off with Elsie Hockridge on Friday, October 29, 1993, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at Pittsfield, or Berkshire Place.
(they laugh) At 89 South Street.

HOCKRIDGE: South Street.

SIGRIST: Thank you very much, Mrs. Hockridge.

HOCKRIDGE: Well, thank you very much.

[End of Interview]