

EI-545/TIPPLES

EI-545

ARTHUR TIPPLES

BIRTHDATE: OCTOBER 21, 1909

INTERVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 1994

RUNNING TIME:

INTERVIEWER: ELYSA MATSEN

RECORDING ENGINEER: PETER HOM

INTERVIEW LOCATION:

ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY CHARLES MITCHELL, 3/2007:

COUNTRY, YEAR: WALES, 1916

AGE:

PASSAGE ON: THE SAINT LOUIS

PORT OF EMBARKATION: LIVERPOOL

OLD COUNTRY RESIDENCE: EBBW VALE

UNITED STATES RESIDENCE(S): ST. PAUL, MN; CHICAGO

MATSEN: Good afternoon. This is Elysa Matsen from the National Park Service.

Today is the fourteenth of September 1994. And I'm in the home of Arthur Tipples. I'm here with Mr. Tipples, Mr. Arthur Tipples and his son, Mr. Donald Tipples, and his wife, Mrs. Josephine Tipples, and Peter Hom whose doing the recording for us. And Mr. Tipples came from Wales in 1916.

Mr. Tipples, can you start by giving me your name and your date of birth?

TIPPLES: My name is Arthur E. Tipples and I was born in-

DTIPPLES: October.

TIPPLES: October the 21st 1909.

MATSEN: Great. Can you tell me a little bit about the town that you came from,

maybe describe this that you have right here in front of you, this picture.

TIPPLES: Well, yes. I always remember going, going out with my, my great--. My grandfather was, was a real friend of mine. And we always went out for walks. And, of course, in Wales there's lots of beauty, green and red ridge lanes and hedgehogs and brooks, bricks, brooks, and pretty white Welsh. And they had their own little pubs. And when we used to go for a walk with my grandfather and, sometimes, my grandmother, they'd stop at the, at the little pub because we couldn't as a kids get in. He always come out after with a big piece of cheese [laughs] and crackers. And we liked the walk. We had a lot of different types of birds over there that we don't have here. One was the [unclear] bird was the cuckoo. He actually used to say cuckoo, cuckoo. [Laughs] And they had others, of course. In the, in the snow time, the winter, we had robins would come. But they were little smaller robins than what we have here. And a very pretty little bird and they were very friendly. You'd usually find them coming on your window sill, you know, looking for food.

MATSEN: What--? Do you--? Can you describe the scene when you're walking? What, what did it look like? When you're walking through Wales what did the houses look like? You said it was very green.

TIPPLES: Well, they were very, very old. The house I lived in was a, the row house, you know. They had two sides. House, house, house, house this way and this way. But we weren't too--. They're only about maybe two blocks because at the end of this was a, was a, was a farm. And the house I lived on was 26 Brook Street, I think it was called. Twenty-six Brook Street. And we had a, had a, a regular house. It was, of course, the walls were all put together. There was a wall here and a wall here. And we had a house. We had our own place to--. Well most of my time it was fireplace or fireplace. My mother didn't have a gas plate back in the, in the, in the back, back, what we called the gullen. The gullen where they used to have a big place for boiling water and stuff like that. But the house was, was such that the front bedroom was always locked. And that was for tops, for-

TIPPLES: Company.

TIPPLES: For company.

DTIPPLES: That's the living room. That's a bedroom. The living room was locked.

PPLES: But it was something that we used to like to do because we had gaslights on it. But at night it'd get pretty dim. And one of the big things was sitting down watching the fireplace, you know. We had a big fireplace. And we used to--. And it had two ovens on it where my mother used to cook on it. We had a backyard and it was two walls. And we had our own little house like, like this. And I always--. The old Welshmen were all interested in having some kind of a little garden, you know.

MATSEN: Do you remember the garden?

TIPPLES: Very simple gardens. Oh yeah. They were-

MATSEN: What did you--? What'd you grow?

TIPPLES: Well they'd grow tomatoes, and lettuce and carrots.

MATSEN: Who would mind the garden? Was that your father or your mother's job?

TIPPLES: Hmm?

MATSEN: Whose job was it to take care of the garden? Was that your mother's job or your father's job?

TIPPLES: Well my father. It was--. You know it was nothing doing on a Sunday. It was--. Everything was closed down on Sundays in Wales. That's to go to church or a chapel. And my, my, my father--. All the males had--. That was part of their lobby, you know. They'd spend a

little bit in the garden. And my, my grandfather had the best garden.
[Laughs]

MATSEN: Why was his the best?

TIPPLES: I guess he spent more time to it.

MATSEN: What was your mother's name? What was her first name?

TIPPLES: My mother's grandmother?

MATSEN: No, what's your mother's name?

TIPPLES: Oh, Maude.

MATSEN: And your father?

TIPPLES: John. John.

MATSEN: Can you tell me what your mother looked like? What did she look like?

TIPPLES: I can tell you what she looked like. You want to see it?

MATSEN: Can you describe it for the tape? Can you tell me what she looked like?

TIPPLES: She was very, very nice looking lady, very, very, very shapely one. And a very good cook.

MATSEN: What would she make?

TIPPLES: Oh she could make anything.

MATSEN: What was your favorite thing that she'd make?

TIPPLES: God I wouldn't know because when she, when she married my father she was a cook, cook in, at what they call them, an L-

DTIPPLES: Boarding house?

TIPPLES: No, it was a, was a little club. In fact, we lived near the sea. And all the ship captains used to come in there. There used to be a nice, nice place. I remember seeing it all. You know, they had a lot of brass on the front and everything. And, and they would let--. They would--. They had living rooms. And then they were fed there. It was called a hotel, like a hotel.

MATSEN: Like a hotel.

TIPPLES: Yeah, like a hotel. And my mother was the number one cook out there. She used to cook, cook for them.

MATSEN: So she was a very good cook.

TIPPLES: Huh?

MATSEN: She would make nice dinners. Do you remember what a dinner would be like in your house, what you'd have?

TIPPLES: Oh I don't know so particularly. Of course beef was important. And-

MATSEN: Potatoes?

TIPPLES: Yes, potatoes and--. I guess they cooked almost anything but-

DTIPPLES: They made a lot of breads.

TIPPLES: For instance, they used to, they used to like--. What I used to like too was pausage, you know, little pausages, sausages.

MATSEN: Sausages.

TIPPLES: Yeah.

MATSEN: What can you tell me about what your father looked like?

TIPPLES: Well, I lost my father, of course, when he was about, oh about five when he went to war. And he was like a lot of early guys. He spent a lot, a lot of hours--. He worked for a gas company. And he was quite busy going in and out. And I don't think he--. They had more other things to do than to have to worry about kids, I guess. Because I didn't have too much respect, too much with him. If it was there I have forgotten it. It was my grandfather who I [unclear].

MATSEN: What was his name? Do you remember your grandfather's first name?

TIPPLES: Willis, I think.

MATSEN: Willis?

TIPPLES: Yeah. He was a great, great, great, great-

MATSEN: So you spent a lot of time with your grandfather.

TIPPLES: --great old man. Yeah.

MATSEN: How about your grandmother?

TIPPLES: Yeah, she was the same, yeah. But, of course, my, my great grandfather he was the one that just--. He liked me real well because I was always doing something that he liked me to do. I was a free--. I always as a kid was a, could draw pictures and everything. And we used to take clay and make models for him. And every time I'd make something like that I'd get a big, big Welsh penny. And they're about that big.

MATSEN: You spoke a little bit--. You told me a little bit about religion in Wales. You went to church every Sunday?

TIPPLES: Oh yes. That, that was--. In fact, when I was back over there I, I went to the chapel. And the priest, not the priest--. They call them the pastor. The pastor was there. And I asked him--. And he had just finished his service that Sunday. And I asked him, I said I was--. Even, even the, the, the library, you know, where they make the baptism, that was still there in the same position. And I asked him about it. I said I was baptized in that church. Oh, he said, I don't believe that. But he went through the records. It didn't take him too long. And he found it and, and, and the pen in there, pen and point in there, was almost like it had just been put on there. It wasn't dated away. It was my--. I, I got baptized when I was about twenty-five, twenty, twenty-five. Because my mother--. We'd been moving around quite a bit and we never got settled down. And my--. In fact, when we were coming down the street called Houghton Road--. And that's where the old church was. It wasn't as good, good looking church as this. It was [unclear] getting into a [unclear]. But it was still--. Inside it was just similar church, or chapels as we called them, were. And my great grandmother--. My grandmother, again, and my mother, decided it was time for me to be baptized. So they just went in there. And I remember getting baptized because I was about four years old I guess, maybe five years old. And so that records are still there in that church in Berry Island.

MATSEN: That's amazing they kept the records that long.

TIPPLES: They do. And they were just ordinary--. Not the chaplain, but his helpers. And he--. We had a little trouble at first. He said--. I, I told him I was born in--. Or I thought it was fifteen, fifteen. Was that right?

MATSEN: I have 1909.

DTIPPLES: That's when he was born.

TIPPLES: Oh yeah. But I mean for my birth-

MATSEN: Oh when you were baptized?

TIPPLES: Yeah.

MATSEN: I wouldn't know that one.

TIPPLES: He missed it by one year. He missed it by one year when he looked at it but he found it. He was telling me with the records were there. My grandmother's name was in it. My mother's in it. My name and all in there. So that was, that was [unclear]. Even the old church, in the back of the church, where they used to go for Sunday schools, that was still in there. It'd been there a long time and-

MATSEN: Do you remember Christmas or when, when you were in Wales? Do you remember Christmas with your grandparents and--?

TIPPLES: What was that?

MATSEN: Christmas. Do you remember a holiday in your house when you were still in Wales? Do you remember-

TIPPLES: Oh, Christmas?

MATSEN: Yeah.

TIPPLES: Yeah, sure.

MATSEN: What was it like? What did you do?

TIPPLES: It was always [unclear] particular for kids, you know. And we all loved waiting for Father Christmas would come. Father Christmas. And we used to get to bed early because we didn't want him to see us. And what we usually used to get was some toys, maybe small toys. And we used to get nuts and oranges and apples and things like that. That we didn't get them too regular in those times. At Christmas we did.

MATSEN: Do you remember any friends that you had, young children, that you used to play with when you were in Wales?

TIPPLES: I had them but I don't remember.

MATSEN; You don't remember.

TIPPLES: No, no.

MATSEN: Games that you would play as a child?

TIPPLES: I, I can remember that we, we lived so near this, from the house to the church-not the church-to the--. Yeah, the carpet. Wasn't it? No.

DTIPPLES: [Unclear]

TIPPLES: The farm, where the farm was at.

MATSEN: Oh, okay.

TIPPLES: And we used to do a lot of plays, playing of soldiers. You know, we used to--. We were kind of military [unclear].

MATSEN: That makes sense.

TIPPLES: And, and we made a lot of things by digging in the, in the, in the sand. And then we used to like to go down to Berry Island where the sea was. We used to spend a lot of time down there swimming and playing on the, on the sand, sand. We call them the sands.

MATSEN: What can you tell me about this picture of you? Now this was when you were still in Wales?

TIPPLES: Yeah.

MATSEN: Why was that picture taken of you?

TIPPLES: That picture was taken when my dad went, went to war. He was--. When World War I broke out he was, went right, went right over there with them. Because all of them--. All of his outfit belonged to what they called the, like a guard, you know, the guards here in America.

MATSEN: Like the National Guard?

TIPPLES: Yeah, except they had a different name for it. And he was a sergeant in it. Of course, everybody they're so darn patriotic there every, every man through his whole outfit went. They went to, over to France. And this was made to me because I was his-what would you call me?

DTIPPLES: Mascot.

TIPPLES: I was his mascot and for the company. Yeah. And this little outfit was made up that way. And-

MATSEN: Were you the oldest or the youngest?

TIPPLES: Huh?

MATSEN: Were you the oldest? You had a brother?

TIPPLES: I was the smallest.

MATSEN: You were the youngest and your brother was older.

TIPPLES: He was two, six, five years older than me. I had a young sister but she died in infancy, was buried in, in-

MATSEN: In Wales?

TIPPLES: At Ebbw Vale, yeah. So it's years and years ago.

MATSEN: What's the name of the town that you came from? I don't think I asked you that before. The town in Wales? What's the name of the town?

TIPPLES: It was called Berry Island.

DTIPPLES: No, where you were born.

MATSEN: No, where you were born in Wales.

TIPPLES: Oh, I was born in Wales. This is it right here.

MATSEN: What's the name of that? Didn't you just say? Ebuvail?

TIPPLES: No. I, I just know the town where it says Eba, Ebbw Vale. That's the name of it.

MATSEN: Okay. That's what I wanted. Okay. How do you spell it?

TIPPLES: That's the way it is. It's called, pronounced-

MATSEN: E-V-B-W-E-A-L-E.

TIPPLES: Yeah, Ewbweale.

MATSEN: Okay. Now when you decided to--. When your family came to America, can you tell me about that? Why did you leave Wales?

TIPPLES: Well you mean when I was sent to Wales?

MATSEN: No. When you, when you went to America, why did you leave Wales?

TIPPLES: Well we, we were in Berry, Berry dock. And we left there to, on a big sailing ship.

MATSEN: What was the name of your ship?

TIPPLES: I can't remember it. Do you remember it?

DTIPPLES: I don't remember it. I thought it was the Saint Louis.

TIPPLES: Yeah, it was the Saint Louis. Yeah, the Saint Louis. And we got out into one of the big sea lines, sea, sea, sea ships. Ships-

DTIPPLES: Sea lane?

TIPPLES: Yeah. Butaloon, was it? Butaloon, Butaloon?

DTIPPLES: What, what, what are you trying to talk about?

TIPPLES: Where I sailed from. Buta, Buta, Buta. I sailed from Buta, isn't it?

DTIPPLES: I don't remember what city you left from. I thought you left from Berry dock.

TIPPLES: Well, yeah. But I had to take a train to get over to the, to the-

MATSEN: Liverpool?

TIPPLES: Liverpool, that's where we sailed out of, Liverpool. We left at--. I remember about, at high tide, it was about almost midnight sea, I think, when we went out.

MATSEN: So it was nighttime?

TIPPLES: Yeah, dark. And we 'd got out and got across the, the [unclear] coast of Ireland. And the war was on then, you know. But I

was--. We, we were on an American ship so--. We, we weren't in America yet. My dad had already been killed from, from France.

MATSEN: And that's why you went, right? That's why you-

TIPPLES: That's why my grand, grandmother and grandparents from America wanted us to come. My brother, myself and my mother. And I can say that it was reluctantly that my mother went. She didn't want to go, you know, because she always had the thought in mind that maybe my dad would find out. Because he was called as a--. What do they call that, missing-

DTIPPLES: Missing in action.

TIPPLES: Missing in action. They never found him, never heard anything from him. Anyway, we, we got on a boat. And we were out, off of Scotland--. Was it Scotland? No, Ireland on the Irish Sea going out. And we were out at sea about ten o'clock when we were stopped by German submarines. And everybody had to get out of the boat, get out of bed, get into the rubbers with things on them. My mother and brother and I we stood on the dock, on the, on the deck. And they lost us about, oh, four or five hours, the ship that, the submarine. And then they could see we had nothing of anything going to them, you know, like it was giving them any decent, good stuff, ammunitions or whatever. The ship was clean and empty. And they were going away from the, England, so they said go. So I guess we sailed about seven years going into New York.

MATSEN: Seven hours?

TIPPLES: Yeah. No. We were gone in seven days on the ship. And while I saw the sea line was that we were really immigrants. We had third, third step. Then they got-

MATSEN: Third class on the boat?

TIPPLES: Yeah. Yeah. We were way down in the bottom.

MATSEN: Do you remember what it looked like or-

TIPPLES: In the cheap, you know--. We could get up on top but it wasn't very pleasant.

MATSEN: Do you remember where you slept on the boat?

TIPPLES: Yeah. That wasn't too bad. They had, they had regular, regular little separations, separations. The one we had we had in fact three bunks, three bunks in there with our own door. We could face our face and that. But they were all together off the one deck, one deck. Yeah. I remember we had to get out and go up deck to eat.

MATSEN: What'd you have to eat? Do you remember?

TIPPLES: They had pretty good eats as I remember, almost anything. We had potatoes. And I liked my sausage and a lot of things there. But it

wasn't no fancy table like we had, you know, like you have in a big liner. It was just a long table, wooden table, several of them, where we all sat together, you know.

MATSEN: Do you remember any of the other people on the ship?

TIPPLES: We had two friends of that that left us at New York. And I think they stayed in Lonkers, Lonkers.

MATSEN: Were there mostly British or, or Welsh people on this boat or were there all people?

TIPPLES: There weren't too many of them.

MATSEN: Where were the people from? Do you remember?

TIPPLES: Well, they were Italian. They were everything, all mixtures. They were all pretty nice people but I don't remember all the nationalities they were. But they were-

MATSEN: Speaking English or-

TIPPLES: Yeah, I guess there was a couple of Englishman.

MATSEN: What languages did they speak? Did they speak English or Italian? Do you remember hearing different languages being spoken?

TIPPLES: I don't remember what, what nationalities they kept to other than that I remember their nationalities were different. But they were what we used to think of people that was dressed as--. You know they were dressed different with their bug shoes and shawls and things. Where us in the Welsh, Welsh people, we were dressed pretty good. We always dressed good, you know.

MATSEN: Do you remember what you wore when you were on the ship or what you brought with you?

TIPPLES: Yeah. I brought a little jacket and a short, short--. We always had short pants, long stockings and boots. Very simple makeup, you know, but-

MATSEN: How much luggage did you take with you?

TIPPLES: Well, we, we carried the--. I remember my mother and my brother carried most of them. They had two or three. Most of it was sent out, shipped, sent out, shipped.

MATSEN: Before you left?

TIPPLES: Yes, uh-huh.

MATSEN: What were the seas like on the boat?

TIPPLES: The sea?

MATSEN: Yeah. What was it--? Was it rough or-

TIPPLES: Oh, I'd say it was rough. We had one of the worst roughes I think going over. It was going in December, January-

DTIPPLES: No.

TIPPLES: November, in November. The ship was, was--. When it first left Liverpool I was looking down, up in the boat. The ship was, looked like it was a block down to the ocean, you know. When we got out to sea the water was coming right over the darn ships. And the wind was always one way or the other depending. And that's the only place we could go on. If it was wind, the winds and weather was rough this way, we'd stay on that side. When it got this side we had to go to that side.

MATSEN: Did you--? Did you get seasick on the boat?

TIPPLES: My mother got awful seasick. My brother got two seasicks. I didn't get a snivel.

MATSEN: So you--. So it was fun for--. Do you remember it being exciting?

TIPPLES: Yes, as a young kid. Because I remember one experience when I was going to go up for breakfast. And we had a pretty good piece of steps up there. And the darn ship went like this. I went down off the top, down into the deck where and all the way down to where all the shelves were, the fire shelves.

DTIPPLES: You fell down the stairs and slid down the hall.

TIPPLES: Yeah, into a pile of [unclear]. What do you call them?

DTIPPLES: Shelves?

TIPPLES: No, these-

DTIPPLES: Life preservers?

TIPPLES: Yeah. They were all stacked up and I fell into that.

MATSEN: You fell right into them.

TIPPLES: But I didn't get hurt so I was all right.

MATSEN: Did you meet kids on the boat that you played with? Do you remember that?

TIPPLES: Did I what?

MATSEN; Did you meet any children that you played with on the bost?

TIPPELS: I remember there was a couple of them but I don't . I mean I know they were there but I don't remember them by names.

MATSEN; Did you meet the captain of the shipe?

TIPPLES: No.

MATSEN: How about when you docked. When your boat docked in New York. Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

TIPPLES: That was something i do remember. We'd come in on a Sunday, and I think my little articles in there tells me that I remember exactly where the Statue of Liberty was.

MATSEN: What did it look like? Do you remember what you thought when you saw it?

TIPPLES: Well, I wanted to--. Just like a cemetery, you know. Like a-

MATSEN: Statue?

TIPPLES: I of course didn't know, you know. I just remember. Anyway, I remembered this in the-

MATSEN: Oh that's fine.

TIPPLES: And then I saw across the other side was the Ellis Island.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE B, TAPE ONE

MATSEN: Do you remember what did you think when you saw the outside of the building? Do you remember?

TIPPLES: Yeah. It looks just like I can visualize it now with the big, big--. This big tower is what I saw mostly.

MATSEN: And what did you think about it? Were you afraid of, of going there or-

TIPPLES: I wasn't afraid of it. But the ship, the ship came in on a Sunday and docked. And all the first and second classes were, were let to go.

MATSEN: How long do you think you waited before they, they got off the boat? Were you on the boat a long time when it was docked?

TIPPLES: Well we, we, we were on a Sunday and it was about [unclear]. And we had to have another dinner there I remember.

MATSEN: Oh, so you were there maybe on the ship a whole day?

TIPPLES: Well, all Sunday.

MATSEN: The whole day of Sunday.

TIPPLES: They kept us all Sunday.

MATSEN: Did you see--? Did you see a doctor? Do you remember seeing a doctor on the boat?

TIPPLES: No. Not too many. They had them there if we needed them. But we didn't get to see the doctors until on the Monday when we took, took us all over to Ellis Island on the ferry. And then they were lined up and headed into this big door. I remember going through that door. And that door, then you saw doctors. They were having some kind of a disease there with their eyes.

MATSEN: I think that's trachoma.

TIPPLES: And they were going to kick us back if we--. If they had it we were going to go back. Well we didn't have that. But it seemed like every, every [unclear].

MATSEN: Ten minutes?

TIPPLES: It seemed like that often they had these doctors here checking here, you know. I know my eyes were sore by the time I got through talking to them because of that. Then the thing that--. We had a woman doctor. And, of course, she had to put the lamp on my mother and said my mother had tuberculosis.

MATSEN: How did she decide that she had, she looked at her? How did she decide that? Do you remember what, how she examined your mother or was she taken away into another room?

TIPPLES: Well, first of all she stopped them, yeah. Then she separated us from, me and my brother. And took her into an infirmary. And they held her in the infirmary until they had a specialist come out to check her.

MATSEN: Now where were you and your brother?

TIPPLES: We were in the big dormitory out there, the big old lime shed. We had no--. We was only there one night but-

MATSEN: So you were detained overnight there. You stayed one night.

TIPPLES: Yeah. Well it was one day and then that night and all the next day until the doctor passed my mother as being okay. He said she wasn't tubercular. She had been researched, seasick. She sure was. By the time that ship left Liverpool back into it stopped in New York she was seasick. She really had it. She couldn't eat. All she was drinking all the time I think was a cup of tea. And we didn't have that but she had some steward that would you'd give him a few bucks and get some tea for her, you know. And anyway, we all got loose out of [unclear] Island.

MATSEN: Ellis Island?

TIPPLES: Ellis Island in the, in the, in the-

MATSEN: Who came to get you at Ellis Island? Did somebody come to pick you up?

TIPPLES: We, we had a hell of a time. My mother and my brother and I, we were just turned loose with nobody. We didn't know where we were. We followed around. My mother followed herself a way around to the, to the train station because we were supposed to embark to St. Paul where my grandmother was. And finally we got on that one all right and got into Chicago. And then we had another fight to find another train to St. Paul. Then we got to St. Paul. I remember we were getting kind of out of money. All we had was a couple of sandwiches from [unclear] salt fish. What do you call that salt fish? Sardines?

MATSEN: Sardines.

TIPPLES: Sent us a couple of sardine sandwiches. And we got into St. Paul. And my grandmother and grandfather were supposed to be there. They weren't there. They weren't there. And it was getting cold. It hadn't been snowing yet but it was really cold in St. Paul. It was--. Oh, I was going to say that we had our last, our first Thanksgiving off the ship.

MATSEN: Tell me about that, yeah. Tell me about Thanksgiving.

TIPPLES: Off the ship. And that was--. We had a duck I remember. We had a duck dinner. It was a pretty good dinner. It was--. Of course I didn't know what Thanksgiving was then either but that's what it was. It was--. We were out at sea at that time, you know. Now where was I?

MATSEN: Back in Minnesota looking for your grandparents.

TIPPLES: Oh yeah. And they, they, they got lost and couldn't find us and we couldn't find them. So my mother again with her--. It was pretty good the way she got herself around. She got herself a taxi and told the taxi that you take me to this, this house where my grandmother lives.

MATSEN: Do you remember what the house looked like?

TIPPLES: What?

MATSEN: The house that your grandmother lived in, what did it look like?

TIPPLES: Oh yeah. Wait'll I tell you. [Laughs] We finally got there. And this cabbie finally said, well that's got to be it. And what it was was a, a shack actually. And it was just--. My grandfather was making it and winter is coming in. And he was making a cottage. And, and, and [unclear]. He had enough room in it anyhow but it wasn't too big. But anyway he was gone. And some people saw us [unclear] out on the, after we left the, the truck, the car, the taxi. And I was

beginning to feel the cold then because I had no big pants, you know, no socks. I had half socks and high pants. And then the [unclear] was cold. And I said, gee, what's different here? Why is this [unclear], you know. In Wales we didn't, we didn't have any, any froze, froze ground like that. We hadn't had the snow yet but it was frozing. And this young lady called us over. Of course they all knew one another there. And we got in when it was a warm place. And she had--. My son and I said to her, gee, look at that big Chinese lighter, Chinese lantern. It was one of those big old fashioned stoves, you know, that all the other--. Chrome in it and everything. And no, that's not a Chinese lantern. That's a stove. And then we got together with my grandfather and my grandmother. And she had a--. I had two aunts there, too, Violet and another one. And then we had the fun. The house was closed with a stove, you know. And it had oil, oil, oil lights, oil lamps. And no water in it and, of course, no gas. You had to cook everything by fire, fire, fire. Anyway, we--. It was pretty comfortable but it wasn't the, what we had likely to have had, my grandfather had. He was a contractor. And he built his homes. He had some good, good looking homes in, in, you know, in--.

DTIPPLES: Wales.

TIPPLES: Wales. And coming over here--. Of course he comes through Canada. They both come into Canada and down through Canada and got to St. Paul. And my-

MATSEN: So the house wasn't--? How long did you live in that house, do you remember, with your grandparents? For a long time or-

TIPPLES: Well, let me tell you this we--. This is our first night there, sleeping in the morning, and we had no snow when we went there. We got up in the morning. The snow had almost covered the boat or the house. And my mother says, this God forsaken place. I'm not going to stay here. [Laughs] It was--. And we did live there. My mother never did go back. I, I, I've made four trips back when I got older but my mother never did go.

MATSEN: How long did you-

TIPPLES: My brother went once. Huh?

MATSEN: How long did you live in Minnesota?

TIPPLES: In Minnesota?

MATSEN: Um-hmm.

TIPPLES: Minnesota.

MATSEN: Minneapolis-St. Paul.

DTIPPLES: St. Paul.

TIPPLES: No, I lived in St. Paul.

MATSEN: Right.

TIPPLES: Oh, I, I was about nine when I got there and then sixteen when I left there, sixteen.

MATSEN: Where did you go?

TIPPLES: I went to Chicago.

MATSEN: Chicago.

TIPPLES: And then, and then I got educated and-

MATSEN: Yeah. What can you tell me about going to school in America, when you went to school?

TIPPLES: Oh, I enjoyed it. It was--. The teachers I thought were all very nice, not like it is today. We had to have a lot of respect for them. Yeah. And we didn't dare thinking some of the things they pull off around here.

MATSEN: What was your favorite subject?

TIPPLES: What?

MATSEN: What was your favorite subject? Grade school, subject, school.

TIPPLES: Favorite?

MATSEN: Yeah.

TIPPLES: Oh what I did? Well, my biggest import was art. And I was very good at art. But I got by with some of the other stuff. But I wasn't a million dollar expert. But I, I, I, did get into high school for one, one trade, one, one trade in high school.

MATSEN: Now once you, once you were finished with high school what did you do? What was your occupation?

TIPPLES: Well she went--. They, they, they ruined my life practically again by going to Chicago. And I had to go in there. And I just, I wouldn't start school again.

MATSEN: You didn't want to move again.

TIPPLES: Too, too dismal. I didn't want to--. But I was, I was fortunate. I did get luck with International Harvester Company as an office boy. Right at about sixteen I was. And I spent with them for a couple of, couple of years. And I happened to be--. In those days the offices, office boys, were, were did a lot for all the, all the big, big, big [unclear]. [Unclear] are the biggest people, you know. And I, I happened to be in one division, one floor where all, all the top people were running, running the show. And I had one guy like me real well.

And he said if I go back to school I'll see if I can get you signed into what they call the junior--. What did they call theirselves?

DTIPPLES: Foreman?

TIPPLES: No.

DTIPPLES: [Unclear]

TIPPLES: No. We were like junior, junior-

MATSEN: Interns? Like an internship?

TIPPLES: No, it wouldn't be that, that-

MATSEN: Apprentice?

TIPPLES: No. No. It's just like being-

DTIPPLES: It's a training group.

TIPPLES: Well, it was, it was with a training but they were training us--. They put us--. They set us up in a three-year program. And we were studying towards to be top, top, tops, like a showman.

DTIPPLES: Foreman.

TIPPLES: Foreman and so on see. And so by gosh I got my--. I got credited for it. And got on the ship. On the ship again. I got a credit and went through the whole three, three years, three years. And I was the--. I and one other fellow was the only two that weren't college people. The rest were all college people. We had eight of them. And only two of us, only two of us were not [unclear].

MATSEN: College.

TIPPLES: College. Anyway, I made it. And I got a good, good start. I got in--. I was doing special welding. I think I left five days, five months working on welding people, doing stuff that I could make, make a change from old-fashioned way to welding. And I almost walked any place I wanted. They thought I was pretty good that I, I had made them a lot of money, a lot of money, you know. And then I, I got into welding again. They took--. We was running out of work trying to make changes. And I became a foreman then for a production department. And then the war was coming on again [unclear] war, the bigger war, three.

MATSEN: The seond..

DTIPPLES: World War II.

TIPPLES: And everything was--. You know everything was [unclear]. The whole, whole system was changing and having a lot of actions. And I ways always interested in my own department of safety. And superintendent called me up one day and he said, you know, he said we had this job for many, many people, all fighting for it. He said I've never

had anybody who was given such a recommendation. And all the general foreman said, you are the man to be the safety director of a plant of about--. We started at about sixteen thousand people and we went up to [unclear] eighteen hundred people, eighteen thousand people. Yeah. Because we had a big, big factory. We had factories. We had--. Well anything that--. There all big stuff. We had our own steam shops and everything. But they went into the wells making all the, all the tractors were mostly Navy and Marines. And then they had the--. They had dissembled all the, all the farming trucks from--. And it was all set into military-

DTIPPLES: War work.

TIPPLES: War gun, war gun. And I--. They were having bad, bad safety there. And I, I, I was fortunate enough in stopping them. They had a real good safety, safety program. And we, we really ironed it out. We had the safety shoes. We had girls, the girls had to wear uniforms and everything. We went from three [unclear] stationery, in station, in stations. We wound up with about eighteen hundred and we had them all in uniform. [Unclear] I was set up by the top people in, in Chicago. They all told me that I was--. All, all the other men big, big companies that was safety program safety people--. No, they were--. They had the same program as I did only in the different plants, you know. And he said, oh, we don't believe it. And I said well any time you want to come here you just come here. You don't have to call me. You just come.

MATSEN: It sounds like you did a very good job.

TIPPLES: And they got in there. Everybody had their safety goggles on. Everything was done right. And they said if I didn't see it I wouldn't have believed it.

MATSEN: Can you tell me how you met your wife?

TIPPLES: Wife Josephine?

MATSEN: Yeah.

TIPPLES: Have I got the right name Josephine?

MATSEN: Yeah.

TIPPLES: Josephine. Well, Josephine was always a very beautiful woman. Her hobby was like to dance, you know. In the good old days dance, big shows they had-

DTIPPLES: Big band.

TIPPLES: Big bands and, you know, they had all the big bands there.

MATSEN: I love that music.

TIPPLES: And she's--. Her and her parents and mothers they were very clean, very [unclear].

DTIPPLES: Strict.

TIPPLES: Were strict, yeah. They were very strict. But she was always a very beautiful woman and still is. But she fell down and I had to get her. And she had to fall down on the patio and almost busted her face open. She's still all busted and swollen and-

MATSEN: How did you meet your wife?

TIPPLES: Where did I meet her?

MATSEN: Yeah, where?

TIPPLES: In the, in the dance ball.

MATSEN: So you went to a dance and you met at a dance.

TIPPLES: No. That's what--. When I was a teenager-and I guess my wife-that was all we did in those days was dance, the big fancy, fancy dancing hall places.

DTIPPLES: Ballrooms.

TIPPLES: The ballrooms, regular big ballrooms. And in fact we'd dance all the time because we didn't have no t. v. You had no, nothing that, other than the dance itself. And we used to dance boy. We danced a lot. And we never had-

MATSEN: This was in Chicago? Was this in Chicago that you met your wife?

TIPPLES: That was in Chicago, yeah.

MATSEN: How--? Where did you move from Chicago? How did you get to California?

TIPPLES: Not before I retired.

MATSEN: So you retired to California?

TIPPLES: My son was a marine and his brother was a marine. And they got into California, into California and they loved California. And they wouldn't come back to Chicago. And so when I retired they, that was the place for us because, you know, my, Donald had already had a, had some, given us some grandchildren already.

MATSEN: Well how many, how many children do you have?

TIPPLES: I myself?

MATSEN: Yeah. How many children do you have?

TIPPLES: Just Arthur and-

DTIPPLES: And Donald.

TIPPLES: And Donald.

MATSEN: Two boys, Arthur and Donald.

TIPPLES: Yeah. And then-

MATSEN: How about grandchildren?

TIPPLES: Oh yeah he has--. Donald, Donald has three. And I guess my other son has three.

MATSEN: So you have six grandchildren.

TIPPLES: Oh we got great children now. That's, that's-

MATSEN: Great grandchildren, too.

TIPPLES: We got--. How many? We got three, haven't we, three great children, yeah, two girls and one boy.

MATSEN: Well if I ask you the question whether you're happy that you came to this country what would your answer be?

TIPPLES: If you did what?

MATSEN: Are you happy that you came to America, that your family decided to move here instead of staying in Wales?

TIPPLES: Uh-huh. I'm so Welsh it squeezes. And on my trips that I've visited there with my old, my, my cousins, my cousins, if I had it to do it over and had my right, I'd stay in Wales.

MATSEN: You would?

TIPPLES: Yes. America is not like America anymore. It's rough. Everything is rough. But I love Wales. I love Wales.

MATSEN: When was the last time you were back to Wales?

TIPPLES: Oh, what was it, about three months ago, three years ago when I was there?

DTIPPLES: No, it was maybe about, about almost ten years now.

TIPPLES: On my last trip?

DTIPPLES: Yeah.

TIPPLES: Yeah. I've been back four times since I was retired, since I retired. I retired at sixty-

DTIPPLES: Two.

TIPPLES: Huh?

DTIPPLES: Sixty-two. When you were sixty-two you retired.

TIPPLES: Yeah. I retired when I was--. I failed when I--. I retired when I was sixty-two. And then a couple--. From then till now in between the four different times I was back. And the funny part of it is in Wales the town, Berry, where I lived, hasn't changed one minute. They haven't even put a new buildings in there. [Laughs]

MATSEN: Well, Mr. Tipples, thank you very much for letting us come here and, and do this interview with you. You've really told us a lot and, and your memory is incredible, what you can remember from being a small child. It's amazing.

TIPPLES: Well I could have tell you a lot more if I wouldn't have this darn sick that I got.

MATSEN: You certainly did a wonderful job and I thank you very much.

DTIPPLES: Why don't you tell them about your--? What was your favorite toy?

TIPPLES: Huh?

DTIPPLES: What was your favorite toy?

TIPPLES: Toy?

DTIPPLES: Toy. What was your favorite toy?

MATSEN: Tell me that.

TIPPLES: The English soldiers, toy soldiers. Toy soldiers, I had them all the time. You want to see them?

MATSEN: Well, well, one minute. Let me sign off and then we can go see them. I would really like to see them. This is Elysa Matsen. I'm signing off with Mr. Arthur Tipples and his son, Donald Tipples and Peter Hom and his wife, Josephine, right behind us, on September 14th 1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History project.

END OF INTERVIEW
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