

EI-638/SUNESON

EI-638

ESTHER LONN SUNESON

BIRTHDATE: NOVEMBER 15, 1898

INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 20, 1995

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, NOVEMBER, 1995

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SWEDEN, 1929

AGE 30

PASSAGE ON "THE STOCKHOLM"

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: The Swedish transliterations were given by Mark Allen Tobias. John Muriello, transcriber, 11/1995.

LEVINE: Today is July 20th, 1995. I'm here at the Swedish Home in West Newton, and I'm here with Esther Suneson...

SUNESON: "Ja." [sic]

LEVINE: ...who is ninety six years young. And she came from Sweden in 19', well, we're not sure exactly what year, but you were twenty-nine years old.

SUNESON: I was twenty-nine years old. Because, I'll tell you. Two, two candidates and two girls, we played cards on the boat. "Pröva," if you know what pröva was. And when we were through the boy, one of the boys said, "Now we're going to draw for the 'heartes' [sic]." And I drew first and I got the "heartes." So he wrote on my card, "Jätte blödet vi leken om lott, och ansiktet lufte lyssar so gott." And I still have that card.

LEVINE: What does that mean, what he wrote.

SUNESON: It mean that you smile so good because I pull the heart, the "heartehs." (Swedish) Ja, most of us, when smiling, I got the "heartes."

LEVINE: Oh.

SUNESON: Ja. And I still have that card at home.

EI-638/SUNESON

LEVINE: Well, actually, you, you could have come in 1930. If you were twenty-nine?

SUNESON: Ja. It is possible.

LEVINE: Okay.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Well, anyway, why don't you give your birth date for the tape again? Tell your birth date. I know you told it before, but...

SUNESON: The 15th, 15th of November, "Otta" hundred ninety-eight.

LEVINE: So that would be 1898.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, where in Sweden were you born?

SUNESON: I was born in, (Swedish), they were made in Smoland, in a part of the country we name of Smoland.

LEVINE: Smoland.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Is that, is Smoland, Smoland is like a state?

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Okay, and what was the town? The name of the town where you were born?

SUNESON: "Nej," [sic] that I don't, that I don't, where I was born, that I don't remember that.

LEVINE: Well, did you move around from, did you live someplace else when you were growing up?

SUNESON: I lived, no, not that I remember. I lived in Smoland, (Swedish) Almhult.

LEVINE: How, how do you spell that?

SUNESON: A-L-M-H-U-L-T.

EI-638/SUNESON

LEVINE: Almhult?

SUNESON: Almhult, Ja.

LEVINE: Okay. Now when you think about Almhult...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: ...what do you remember about that town?

SUNESON: Well, I just will remember my childhood. How be then, everything was so hard to buy and to get and we were short of money and so forth. So it was no happiness, exactly. But as I had of the care my family, I couldn't go to school. So I have, I was delayed one year from school, but I had to make up that "fulla" [sic] year.

LEVINE: Why, why couldn't you go to school?

SUNESON: To school? Because I had missed too much the year before.

LEVINE: Why did you miss so much?

SUNESON: Because I couldn't go to school. I had to take care of the children.

LEVINE: Oh.

SUNESON: My home. I have to take Mother's place, when she was, had gone. She was dead. I had to take her place. And that's why I missed so much in school. So I had to go through that year.

LEVINE: I see. Now, how old were you when you mother passed away?

SUNESON: Ja. I, it, I think she died the year before. Nineteen hundred something. 19', wait a minute. You know, it's hard to remember those things. Ja. It, it was around 18', "Ne." You know what, I think a year before she, she died.

LEVINE: Well, you were about nine or ten years old when your mother got sick...

SUNESON: Ja. Just about.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: Just about.

LEVINE: What was your mother's name?

SUNESON: Hanna.

LEVINE: And do you remember her maiden name?

SUNESON: Hanna. Well, I tell you, they, they didn't use any maiden name in those days. They used Hanna from Smoland, Hanna from "Jok," from (Swedish). So they very seldom used the last name.

LEVINE: I see. Well, where was, was Hanna from Smoland?

SUNESON: From Smoland. Ja. (Swedish)

LEVINE: Wait. Tell me again where your mother was from?

SUNESON: Well, she was born, my mother was born, I can hardly say. She must have been born in Smoland, because there was no other place.

LEVINE: Okay.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: So, so she would be Hanna from Smoland.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Now, what was your father's name?

SUNESON: August.

LEVINE: August.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: And, and what did he do for work?

SUNESON: He was, he was working at the railroad.

LEVINE: Building the railroad or working on the...

SUNESON: No. No. (Swedish) He had a little house in Mafriena [PH], where he, he mends that. Changing the (Swedish), rails and so forth.

LEVINE: Oh.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: So in other words he was in a little in, and he was involved with maintaining the railroad...

SUNESON: Yes.

LEVINE: ...running?

SUNESON: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: And, well, when he died, when your mother died, then who was left? Your father, you, and how many other children?

SUNESON: Who was left?

LEVINE: Yeah.

SUNESON: Well, the children were still small. Young. So we still had the children. But he got married again. That's why.

LEVINE: Your father got married again?

SUNESON: Ja. He got...

LEVINE: Soon after?

SUNESON: He got, well, about a year after, so. So then I could go back to school for that year I had missed.

LEVINE: And how many children were you taking care of? How many children...

SUNESON: Well.

LEVINE: ...did your mother have?

SUNESON: We had four boys.

LEVINE: So it was just you and four brothers?

SUNESON: Four boys. And then I had a sister, but my sister had a job. In the, in the...

LEVINE: Oh, so she was the oldest?

SUNESON: What? She's the oldest. Ja. And she's gone now. She's dead now. Ja

LEVINE: So there's...

SUNESON: And then after that it was only me left. And I had the children that I cared. But then my father married again.

LEVINE: And then his wife took care of you?

SUNESON: Yes.

LEVINE: Well, what was it like for you as a nine and ten year old taking care of four brothers?

SUNESON: Ja. (she laughs) I can hardly explain it. No. I felt it was my duty.

LEVINE: It must have been difficult.

SUNESON: Ja, it was. And, of course, difficult and sorry for the sorrows.

LEVINE: Why was it so sad?

SUNESON: That my mother had died and I had to do her work. And I wasn't used to it, so. Used to help a little, but not to be responsible.

LEVINE: So you must have been very relieved when your father remarried?

SUNESON: Well, yes, I was. I was relieved. I remember that. I thought, now, my, my duty is over. And then I could start school again.

LEVINE: Did you like school?

SUNESON: Before, before I couldn't just miss, miss certain days. I had to stay about a year so, it was, it was (Swedish). You, you had to go. You felt like you had a duty to go.

LEVINE: To go to school?

SUNESON: To school. But you had been free for a whole year, and now you had to back to school, you felt like you were getting in to be a child again.

LEVINE: Yes.

SUNESON: Ja. Well, I kind of say they were the happy days.

LEVINE: They were happy?

SUNESON: Happy days. Far from it. But time goes and we grow up.

LEVINE: What did you have to do? Did you have to do the wash and the cooking and the cleaning and...

SUNESON: Well, I do had to do a little of everything that was needed. But as I say I didn't miss the school days very much. But that's why I had to go a whole year back to, in school again, because I had missed that.

LEVINE: So, the school that you went to, do you remember much about it, what, what it was like being in school?

SUNESON: Well, in a way. In a way, but certain things you do forget.

LEVINE: Like what do you remember?

SUNESON: Ja. I do remember the days that I couldn't go to school. And I felt that I had missed a lot. And I knew what was coming. I had to go over that again. And everything had to be repeated, and go through school again like it was when I was very young.

LEVINE: Well, how did the teachers treat you knowing that you had to be...

SUNESON: Well, listen. They were very good. Very, very good. Ja. Of course they knew the circumstances and they knew I had a family, had to take care of. So I can't complain. And, of course, a year after then my father married again, so then I was through.

LEVINE: What was your step mother like? Your new mother?

SUNESON: Ja. I, I really don't remember much of her. But I had a job. And we came home once (unintelligible) just to see them. But as I say, I think she was all right, because I don't remember anything bad about that.

LEVINE: So, when you went back to school, how long did you stay in school then?

SUNESON: Well, I had so many more years to go.

LEVINE: Right.

SUNESON: I, I don't remember how, nine, nine years. And then I started school. Ja, I was in school at least another five years.

LEVINE: And was your family religious?

SUNESON: What?

LEVINE: Was your father religious or your mother?

SUNESON: I think my mother was more than my father.

LEVINE: And what religion was it?

SUNESON: Well, in those days we had just the common religion. It wasn't anything special.

LEVINE: Was it Lutheran?

SUNESON: What?

LEVINE: Was it Lutheran?

SUNESON: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Did you, did you go to church every Sunday, or, or once in a while, or...

SUNESON: Ja. Once in a while. In fact, we had in the "plats" [sic] we lived, they didn't, they hadn't built, they built that church gradually. And then we started to go more.

LEVINE: Oh.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: And were you, did you get, receive Confirmation? Do you know if you did that?

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: And then when you went out for a job, what did you look for?

SUNESON: Well, to tell the truth I really don't remember what I was looking for. The main thing I think was that I would have a job, or something to do.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you did for work in Sweden?

SUNESON: No. I don't remember really.

LEVINE: Did you leave home, or did you stay at home and go to work? Do you know?

SUNESON: It's so many years ago, so...

LEVINE: Yeah.

SUNESON: And, of course, those things we don't take so serious. So I, I don't remember much about that.

LEVINE: What do you remember? When you think back on those years in Sweden...

SUNESON: Well, I just remember my mother was sick. And how I had to take over after. And it was a good thing, and I knew a little cooking. So I could keep them go, living. (she laughs) I can't say that it was anything wonderful.

LEVINE: How about clothing? Did you, did you have to make your own clothes, or did you buy them, or...

SUNESON: Well, I think we had enough. My mother had made clothes to us. So we had enough then, too. And that wasn't so important years ago as it today.

LEVINE: And how about what you did for fun? Do you ever remember having fun when you were in Sweden?

SUNESON: I don't think we had any fun.

LEVINE: Just you...

SUNESON: Because we, we had gone through so much sad things, so they came first.

LEVINE: Yeah. Was that true for your brothers, too?

SUNESON: Well, my brothers, they were little. And, ja, I was a little older than they. So, of course, I had to manage them the best I could, and it was, it was just a year because my father got married again. So, I can't say that I had a very happy childhood.

LEVINE: Hmm.

SUNESON: Happy years. In one way I was well, but a lot of sorrows and troubles.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, how was it decided that you would come this country?

SUNESON: Well, I'll tell you. (unintelligible) told me. I think I had some friends that were, came to this country earlier. They were, they weren't children, they were more grown ups. And then I think one of them said to me, if you go to America, do you know the Swedish money will double for you. So what you have in the Swedish money they will, they will double. So I saved as much as I could and came over here. And what year that was I can't remember, because I think I worked a lot of, in Sweden between. (Swedish) But then I had to brothers that came over, so they used up the money. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Oh, no.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: So they came over first?

SUNESON: What?

LEVINE: Your brothers came over first?

SUNESON: Nej. They came on after me, after I had come over here. And they, they heard that they get, the Swedish money was so, worth so much, so it would double.

LEVINE: When you came over here, did you come here by yourself? Were your travelling with someone?

SUNESON: How did I come over here? Ja, I can't tell you. No. Yes. I must have come by myself, because I had another girlfriend and two boys, we played cards.

LEVINE: On the boat?

SUNESON: On the boat. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Ah. Now, did your father ever come over? Your father with his new wife?

SUNESON: No. But he came later. But not on the boat. He came later.

LEVINE: Okay. So when you left, do you remember leaving home to come...

SUNESON: I had some friends that I came to. Well, I'll tell you. They had, they had a boy. And I was a little more grown up then. And I, so they invited me to come over and stay with them. And I did for a little while. But then I really broke off with the boy, because I wanted a little more freedom. So we never got married. And he took a job after that in a bakery.

LEVINE: This was where? What town?

SUNESON: (Swedish)

LEVINE: That's the name of the town?

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Could you spell it?

SUNESON: Huh?

LEVINE: Can you spell it? The name of the town?

SUNESON: No. No, I don't remember. (Swedish) The bakery was there. Milton.

LEVINE: Milton?

SUNESON: Ja. So, (unintelligible) over there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, so you were staying with his family? No?

SUNESON: (Swedish) No, I think I had a job, got a job.

LEVINE: With, in someone's, in someone's home?

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Okay.

SUNESON: Because I remember that I worked in Hingham, if you know where Hingham is.

LEVINE: Oh, you're talking about this country now?

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: In this country?

SUNESON: Ja. I was here then, and worked in Hingham. And I was there four years. And I took care of two children. And the one of the children had convulsions. So I had to be careful with him. So I was sitting there, they were wealthy people. So I was sitting there and just looking at the walls, because there was nothing else for me to do. The children were mine to take care of. And he didn't have any convulsions when I was there four years. I even had to sleep with him in the same bed when they were on vacation. Just to be awake enough to know when (Swedish). Well, anyhow. Ja, I said to the lady there one day, I had been there four years. I said to her, "I think I like to change to (unintelligible) job, and take a good job." And she just look at me, and she wanted me to stay. I know she did. But I didn't. I was tired of it. Because they even had, when they got the laundry in, they even had a woman come from outside to go through the laundry and see that everything was all right. Mending and so forth. So there was nothing for me to do. And then, I had the man, but I think the girl I took care of that was I think nine years old. So she walked with me to the train station. And then she came with a big bouquet of forget-me-nots, and did I cry. Ja. (she cries)

LEVINE: Yeah. So then you looked for another job?

SUNESON: Well, then I, then I got another job in Quincy. And, but I was never really happy. Those flowers bothered me. When I saw her stand there with the big bouquet of forget-me-nots.

LEVINE: Well, she probably really liked having you in...

SUNESON: In, even now when I think of it I could cry.

LEVINE: Yes. Uh-huh. Well, so, when did you meet your husband, then?

SUNESON: He worked for the railroad.

LEVINE: Oh, he worked for the railroad, like your father worked for the railroad.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: In this country?

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: He worked for the railroad.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, getting back to Sweden, when you took, when you got ready to

EI-638/SUNESON

come to this country...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: ...you, did you know that there were going to be friends of yours on the same boat?

SUNESON: Yes.

LEVINE: Oh, so you planned...

SUNESON: Nej. No. Not on the same boat. I didn't, but I knew we would be friends here in this country.

LEVINE: Ah. Uh-huh.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: But then when you got to Stockholm, no. You took the, you think the name of the boat was The Stockholm?

SUNESON: Yes, I think it was. Because it was only Stockholm, and I it was only a couple of boats there.

LEVINE: Okay.

SUNESON: And one was Stockholm.

LEVINE: Okay. So when you got on The Stockholm, you thought you were going to be by yourself, but it turns out you...

SUNESON: No, I didn't. I know I was coming to this family, lived, lived in Milton. I know I was going to come to them.

LEVINE: And how did you know about that family?

SUNESON: Because they had been home, and they told me somewhats [sic] of the son they had there. He, no, he had a brother. And he wanted the brother to marry a Swedish girl, religious Swedish girl. And, so that's why he came around me. So they, me, they invited me over there.

LEVINE: Ah. So you thought you were going to meet this man in Milton, who wanted to marry...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: ...a young Swedish woman?

SUNESON: Then I never married him because he was too much religious.

LEVINE: Too much what?

SUNESON: Religious.

LEVINE: Oh. Too religious.

SUNESON: Ja. For, for a young girl.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: You know, we were a little more fun. Ja. So I never married him, but I was there quite a while. And I got another job soon after that. Where that was I don't remember.

LEVINE: Well, now, tell me about your, your passage over on the ship between Sweden and the United States. You, you had, you met some young people on the boat?

SUNESON: Yes. We were, we were four, we were four of us. We played, they "kallade" [sic] the card "pröva." And "det var tva studentar."

LEVINE: There were what?

SUNESON: "Tva studentar." They, they studied in the college.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

SUNESON: Ja. And they came over here to this, in this country. And they wanted to play cards. And we played every day, because we liked it. All four of us. And then, then when we came to the last day, then one of the boys said, "Now we are going to draw for the 'heartehs' [sic]." See who gets that. I got it. So that's why he wrote on my card. "Jätte blödet vi leken om lott, och ansiktet lufte lyssar so gott." I still have the card at home. Still have it. So anyhow, in, and the date was marked 1929.

LEVINE: Oh. (she is reads from the card) March, 1929.

SUNESON: I think the date is marked 1921. '29.

LEVINE: 1929.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Okay, so you would have been thirty when you came.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Okay. Now...

SUNESON: And then after that, of course, I got married.

LEVINE: How soon after you were in this country did you meet your husband and get married?

SUNESON: Well, I can't say really, because he went to, to his church. He had so many friends in his church. And I wasn't that religious, see. So I was (unintelligible) for a good time. Ja.

LEVINE: Did you, when you came to this country, where there any Swedish organizations or clubs or social activities that you...

SUNESON: No, I can't remember that. I was so young anyhow, so I was too young for them. Well, you know, when at twenty-nine, if you, if you are only twenty-nine years, you come to a strange country. You can't really rush out in the, among the people. No. (she laughs) So...

LEVINE: So then, when you, where did you meet your husband?

SUNESON: Well, where did, well, he had a brother. He had a brother in Quincy I think. And that was his brother I married.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: Did you know, in other words you knew his brother first...

SUNESON: What?

LEVINE: ...and then you met your husband?

SUNESON: Well, ja, no. I, I married his brother, the, the one what lived in Quincy and he

visited us. I married him.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: And he was the one who died. Later years.

LEVINE: So did you work up until the time you got married?

SUNESON: I did. Plenty to do.

LEVINE: You were working usually for families...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: ...in their homes?

SUNESON: Ja. Well, I was working more for children.

LEVINE: Oh, you were working with children.

SUNESON: Ja. Ja.

LEVINE: And how was learning English for you?

SUNESON: Who?

LEVINE: How was it for you to learn English?

SUNESON: Oh, I don't think that was so hard. I think that when you are, when you are young, you learn quicker than when you get older. No, I think that was pretty good.

LEVINE: Did you, did you talk with the children when you were taking care of them?

SUNESON: Did I do what?

LEVINE: Talk with the children in English?

SUNESON: Yes, I did, if it was something then with the hair and the food and so forth. Nothing else. Or clothes or something.

LEVINE: So, did you ever want to do something else?

SUNESON: No, I didn't, because you know when you have had a hard childhood, you appreciate what you've got. And they had, they had, I had, ja, (Swedish). So "Jag var"

grateful for what I had to get. And that's why when, when I got the job in this family we were, ja, I was there four years, and took care of the two children. Youngest children. A young boy and a girl that was nine years old. And then that was the time when I wanted to leave. And she gave me the flowers.

LEVINE: What, what do you consider sort of the high points in your life. When, when was your life happiest?

SUNESON: (she laughs) Did I have any? I don't know.

LEVINE: Well, after you married, did you have some happy years then?

SUNESON: Well, I say but a yes and no to that. Because, you know, when you come from another country, and your mother is gone, you haven't got much left to be so happy over.

LEVINE: Were you very close to your mother when you were...

SUNESON: Well, I think all the children are close to their mother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: The mother comes first.

LEVINE: So then, did you have children when you married?

SUNESON: Yes. I have a daughter, Ingrid. And I had, have, had, no, Ing, ja, Ingrid. And I have a, had a son. Bertil. Those two children.

LEVINE: And did they have children?

SUNESON: Pardon me?

LEVINE: Did your children have children?

SUNESON: Yes. They have children now. And, the have a, a little one now, with name of David. And he calls me up sometimes and he says, "Hi, Moma. I love you." (she laughs) And then he says, (unintelligible), "I love you." Ja. I've forgotten. He's so cute, so.

LEVINE: Is this Ingrid's son?

SUNESON: That's Ingrid's, Ingrid's son. Ingrid's daughter's...

LEVINE: Son.

SUNESON: ...son.

LEVINE: He's your great grandchild, then.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: So you have one great grandchild?

SUNESON: So, ja. So, anyhow he calls me Moma. And he always says, "Hi, Moma. How are you?" And then he says, "I love." And that is all he needs to say, because that is enough for me.

LEVINE: Yes. That's a lot.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: So, what do you feel proud of in your life, satisfied...

SUNESON: I don't know if I have anything, really, I'm proud of.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything that makes you feel satisfied that you did...

SUNESON: No. No. I can't say. I can't say. But I, I had to take the day as it came. Make the best of it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: So I can't say that I...

LEVINE: Do you feel like there's, because you were born and raised in Sweden, that you have certain characteristics that you have carried over into this country that are Swedish?

SUNESON: No.

LEVINE: No.

SUNESON: No.

LEVINE: You became americanized, you would say?

SUNESON: Ja. I have been here so, many years now, so that is, oh, no.

LEVINE: Do you, do you cook? Do you make any Swedish kinds of dishes?

SUNESON: Yes. Listen. I did a lot of cooking before, but not anymore. When we get old we forget about it.

LEVINE: Do you have any favorite Swedish foods?

SUNESON: Any favorite what?

LEVINE: Foods that are Swedish?

SUNESON: Well, I have lots of them when I think of it.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SUNESON: But, ja, I have to always have to go through the cookbook now, but I didn't years ago. So.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SUNESON: Times have changed, all right.

LEVINE: How, how do you think your life would be different if you had stayed in Sweden compared with...

SUNESON: If I had what?

LEVINE: If you had stayed in Sweden, do you think your life would have been a lot different?

SUNESON: Ja. I had, Ingrid has a cousin there. A son to my brother. And he died. He died now this summer. And, of course, she's very close to him. And this is still (unintelligible) just a few old friends that. I don't write to them anymore, but they call me up.

LEVINE: Did you go back to visit Sweden?

SUNESON: I have been back ten times. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Oh, oh. Oh, so that's how Ingrid knew her cousin so well.

SUNESON: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: I see.

SUNESON: I have been back ten times.

LEVINE: Do you have any desire to go back there now?

SUNESON: No. No, I'm feel I'm get, I have a heart, my leg is bother me. And it is so many objections. So now I think I, I'm satisfied.

LEVINE: Are you satisfied with your life at this time?

SUNESON: Yes. I am, because I felt like I couldn't have done any better.

LEVINE: Well, you did, you did quite a bit.

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: You raised two children, and...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: So those are my grandchildren, now. (she indicates a photo)

LEVINE: And did you live here around in Newton? Is that how you happened to come to the Swedish Home? Were you living in this area?

SUNESON: Ja. Nej. I don't know how I came over here. Well, I have, for many years I have known about the Swedish Home. And (unintelligible), and then, you know, if you go to a nursing home or so forth, I said that I think I prefer a Swedish home. I think that that's because I'm Swede. So it perfectly all right. A lot of things we, missed the, years the same. Why do want to know all this?

LEVINE: Well, I was asking you mostly about Sweden and coming to this country because the tape then, your story...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: ...will be, will be at Ellis Island. Ellis Island has a library.

SUNESON: Yes. Yes.

LEVINE: And it's, it's important, I think...

EI-638/SUNESON

SUNESON: Oh, ja.

LEVINE: ...to have people tell in their own words...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: ...their story...

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: ...of coming to this country.

SUNESON: Oh, ja. Ja.

LEVINE: So that it will be preserved there, and whenever...

SUNESON: I see.

LEVINE: ...and it will be there forever and people can come and listen to you telling about...

SUNESON: Ja. Well, I was only there in, about, a very short time, when I heard they called my name. And then this man came up, came out in a uniform and he said, "I'm going to take you to the Boston train." And he did. And then my friends here in Boston just said he'll pick me up from there, for, of course, I couldn't call them and tell them. So it was easy enough.

LEVINE: Yes. Do you remember Ellis Island, anything about it?

SUNESON: Nej. No, I don't. I only saw the building.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SUNESON: And then, and then, of course, we were, we were three, four, that had played had so much to talk about. So I really didn't notice it much. And then that man came that was going to take me to the train.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you travel on the train by yourself?

SUNESON: Yes. I'll tell you, I, they put me on the train between two colored fellows. Oh, the, the, you, you know, we aren't, we aren't used to them. And, oh, they were old men. One on each side. "Jag fitta" in between. I was scared blue until I came to Boston. I never forget that trip. Looking at first at one and then the other one, and. (she laughs) Oh. Colored fellows.

LEVINE: Did you talk with them at all?

SUNESON: No, I didn't. I never spoke, spoke with them or said anything.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SUNESON: Because I didn't wanted to be involved with anything.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SUNESON: So I never did.

LEVINE: So then your friends were at the station?

SUNESON: What?

LEVINE: Your friends were at the train station when you got to Boston?

SUNESON: Ja. I, I, when I got to Boston, then my friends then met me. And then I stayed with them for a while.

LEVINE: Oh. And these were friends because you had known them?

SUNESON: Ja.

LEVINE: Good. Yeah. Do you think that made a big difference, your coming to this country, in your life?

SUNESON: Well, I don't know. I think it was more than money, they, when they said you can get, I think it was six, six hundred dollars for every hundred...

LEVINE: Oh.

SUNESON: ...of the other money. And, of course, that I thought was a lot of money. So, I mean, I did it for the money's sake. But then when my two brothers came over, they used it up. See, I didn't get much of it myself.

LEVINE: Did you have a lot of contact with your brothers in this country?

SUNESON: No. I wouldn't say. Boys, they don't care for to write [sic]. Once in a while they can send a card. And that, that, they don't sit down in, and write a letter.

LEVINE: No.

EI-638/SUNESON

SUNESON: No, so I didn't.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, it sounds like you started out with a hard life in Sweden, and you...

SUNESON: Ja. (she laughs)

LEVINE: ...you made a good life of it here.

SUNESON: To tell of the truth, I think many times when I think back, it wasn't easy.

LEVINE: Well, it's, you're a delightful person, and it's been very nice to talk with you. I thank you very much.

SUNESON: Ja. (she laughs) You aren't going to print that now?

LEVINE: No. We just have it on the tape.

SUNESON: I see. I see.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I've been speaking with Esther Suneson who came in 1929 when she was thirty years old from Sweden.

SUNESON: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And she's today at the time of the interview ninety-six years. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm signing off.