

EI-642
HILDUR SODERBURG LAWRENCE
BIRTHDATE: JUNE 24, 1899
INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 21, 1995
RUNNING TIME: 48:15
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME
INTERVIEW LOCATION: WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, NOVEMBER, 1995
TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

SWEDEN, 1922
AGE 23
POSSIBLE PASSAGE ON "THE KUNGSHOLM"

LEVINE: Today is July 21st, 1995. And I'm here in Worcester at the Lutheran Home.

And I'm here with Hildur Lawrence...

LAWRENCE: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...who came from Sweden when she as twenty-three years old in 1922.

And I'm delighted to be here, and I'm looking forward to whatever you can remember. (Mrs. Lawrence laughs) I know you came at twenty-three, so you probably remember your life in Sweden...

LAWRENCE: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...in the early days. Okay. Hildur, would start by saying your birth date for

the tape? Your birth date.

LAWRENCE: 192', yeah. (unintelligible)

LEVINE: That's okay. It's June 24th, right?

LAWRENCE: "Ja." [sic]

LEVINE: And it was...

LAWRENCE: 1999. 1899.

LEVINE: 1899. You were...

LAWRENCE: I think, I think it is.

LEVINE: Okay. Okay. So that makes you ninety-six now.

LAWRENCE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay. Where in Sweden were you born.

LAWRENCE: Well, if you can spell. Lysekil.

LEVINE: Lysekil?

LAWRENCE: L-, L-Y, L-, you have it here?

LEVINE: Yes. (she reads) Lysetil [sic]. Lysekil.

LAWRENCE: Ja, Lysekil.

LEVINE: Okay. And do you remember, did you live up until you were twenty-three and you left for, for America. Did you live in Lysekil up until you left?

LAWRENCE: Oh, ja. I, I lived there. I was in Stockholm for two years.

LEVINE: Right before you left?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: No, long before I left.

LEVINE: Oh.

LAWRENCE: But that's all right. That doesn't matter.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, let's start at the beginning when you were a little girl, and then you can kind of fill me in. (they laugh) When you were a little girl, what, who was in your family? How many children?

LAWRENCE: There was, well, (unintelligible) I was the oldest one. There were three after that. And after that I can't remember how many there was.

LEVINE: Okay. So you were the oldest, and then you had what? Sister or brother? Who came after you?

LAWRENCE: A brother. Erik.

LEVINE: Erik. Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: And then there was John...

LEVINE: John.

LAWRENCE: And Robert and Axel and Sven. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Now, were they all born in Sweden? All your brothers?

LAWRENCE: Oh, oh, ja. They were all born in Sweden.

LEVINE: Did you have any sisters?

LAWRENCE: One sister. Anna.

LEVINE: Okay.

LAWRENCE: My grandmother had thirteen children. So you can see what a family that was. And I was the oldest one. The grand, of the grandchildren.

LEVINE: Oh, you were the first grandchild. Tell me about your grandmother. What do you remember about her?

LAWRENCE: Oh, she was the most wonderful person you ever would meet.

LEVINE: Really?

LAWRENCE: She died when she was eighty-nine.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What was, what was so wonderful about her? What did you like about her?

LAWRENCE: Well, you could, you had to like her, because she was the most wonderful person that you would meet.

LEVINE: Did you ever do things with her? Did you go visit her, or...

LAWRENCE: Well, (unintelligible), the family, and I was at my grandmother's house very often and quite a little. Ja.

LEVINE: And what would you do there? When you went to your grandmother's house, what would you do?

LAWRENCE: (she laughs) Well, we was playing, and we, then we, we started school when we were seven years old. And then we have two years in what they call kindergarten here, but first grade. And then there was four years after that in higher.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: And...

LAWRENCE: So there was six years in, in school.

LEVINE: I see. And what do you remember about the school? Was it a big school?

LAWRENCE: Well, we were quite a few. That's, but, but what, what can I say?

LEVINE: Were you, was it different classes in the same room?

LAWRENCE: Oh, yeah. There was different classes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: So there was first grade and second grade. And then we went up to the higher one. I think it was, if I'm not mistaken, it was four, four or six years after that. That all depends on what, what year you wanted to continue your school to.

LEVINE: What year did you continue to?

LAWRENCE: About four years.

LEVINE: Four years. Now, do you remember your teacher?

LAWRENCE: Ja. Her name was, ja. (she laughs) What was her name. I can't remember.

LEVINE: Her name? Do you, what do you remember about her?

LAWRENCE: Oh, she was wonderful. She was a very, very nice woman. And so, what was her name? Well, I can't...

LEVINE: That's okay. Was she, was she a strict teacher?

LAWRENCE: Huh?

LEVINE: Was she strict with the children?

LAWRENCE: Well, sometimes she was, but otherwise she was a wonderful teacher. Ja.

There was first or second grade, and after that we went higher. And we had, when we got up in the fourth grade we had a cooking school. So we had to learn to cook some of it. And I was up about six o'clock in the morning to clean the stove so we could do the baking and cooking after that.

LEVINE: How come you got that job?

LAWRENCE: Don't know. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Did you like doing that?

LAWRENCE: Well, you had to.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: So. But you learned quite a bit of that, too.

LEVINE: Now, the, did you know what you wanted to be when you grew up? Did you have an idea...

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: ...of what you would do when you got be an...

LAWRENCE: No. I've been working house work all my life.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: Yeah. And I went to Stockholm and worked there for, was it four years? I think it was four years I was up in Stockholm.

LEVINE: And what was your job there?

LAWRENCE: House work.

LEVINE: Well, did you work for one family?

LAWRENCE: Yeah. It was a doctor. And, he was a dentist. And, but you hardly ever saw him. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Did you enjoy it when you were there in Stockholm?

LAWRENCE: Sometime.

LEVINE: What did you like about it?

LAWRENCE: The woman was, she was a terror.

LEVINE: Oh. What did she do?

LAWRENCE: Everything she could to, to the (unintelligible). No, I didn't like her. But you had to (unintelligible). You never did anything right for her. So. But that doesn't make it.

LEVINE: But then, so then you left there and you went back home to Lysekil?

LAWRENCE: Ja. And then I worked house work. And after that I went over here.

LEVINE: I see. Well, you were a little girl, what did you like to do? Did you have games that you played...

LAWRENCE: Well, we were playing little of everything. So.

LEVINE: What do you remember that you enjoyed as a little girl?

LAWRENCE: Ja. That's hard to tell.

LEVINE: Do you remember things that your mother baked or made? Different foods that you liked?

LAWRENCE: No. I won't say that. Well, I did little of this, a little of that. That's, so.

LEVINE: What was your father's name? Your father's name?

LAWRENCE: Ja. Karl Soderburg. Karl.

LEVINE: Karl. Uh-huh. And your mother?

LAWRENCE: Linnea [PH].

LEVINE: Linnea. And what was your mother's maiden name?

LAWRENCE: My name?

LEVINE: Your mother's maiden name. Do you remember that?

LAWRENCE: That, that I don't remember.

LEVINE: No.

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: Okay.

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: And could you describe your father?

LAWRENCE: Hmm?

LEVINE: Could you describe your father?

LAWRENCE: Well, he was a working man. That's all. I would...

LEVINE: What did he do for work?

LAWRENCE: Stone cutter.

LEVINE: Oh. Was there a quarry in your town?

LAWRENCE: Ja. "Det var." And my grandfather was a tinsmith. He had his own business.

LEVINE: Oh. And did your mother work ever?

LAWRENCE: Ja. She was, well, to start with, you know what all the herring come from in? Ja?

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: She was in the factory there. So. But we call them "fabrik". I don't know what it mean anything to you. But when they come in the cans.

LEVINE: That's what they're called?

LAWRENCE: "Sill." (Swedish) Or work, canned "sill." Either one.

LEVINE: And did you eat a lot of fish?

LAWRENCE: Oh, yeah. Yeah. That was the cheapest. So

LEVINE: And was there a market in town? Was...

LAWRENCE: Market?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: Well, but it was small stores, that's all. And every Saturday they had an open market. And all the people around come around with different things. And some come by water and some come by horse. That all depends on where they were living.

LEVINE: Do you remember market days? Did you used to go to the market?

LAWRENCE: Well, we went there, but there was what they call it an open market. That was on the open place. And it was tents just to, to cover up the people that was having the stores.

LEVINE: Would you ever go to market and buy things?

LAWRENCE: (she laughs) If I had any money. Money was scarce at the time, so. But if you get five cents, that was a big, big. So.

LEVINE: Well, now you were the oldest child.

LAWRENCE: I was the oldest one, ja.

LEVINE: Being the oldest one, did you have certain responsibilities or duties that...

LAWRENCE: I had, after the children came, ja, I had to watch (unintelligible). Then I had to do little of work beside that, too. When I went to school, there was two, two old ladies what living alone. And at noontime when we had a recess, I had to go there and empty the water and bring in water and (unintelligible). And then I got my lunch there.

LEVINE: Was that your payment, or did you get also money?

LAWRENCE: Yeah. No, that was the payment. You didn't pay anything if you didn't...

LEVINE: Uh-huh. They paid you by lunch?

LAWRENCE: Ja. (she laughs)

LEVINE: That was your payment.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: So, a different life when you...

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: ...when you think of it. You wouldn't, you wouldn't know anything of what, what we had to go through when we was.

LEVINE: Yeah. What other things can you think of that were different when you were growing up in Sweden? That...

LAWRENCE: Well, there was all the different things that we had to do, and all the, you started working very young. We had to. And by the time we grow up we had the different places and the different work that we had to do. So I was working in a bakery. Well, no. In the store.

LEVINE: Was...

LAWRENCE: After, the bakery. And selling. And then sometime I had to work in the

bakery. So, it was a different life.

LEVINE: Did you have fun as a child? Do you remember times that were pleasant?

LAWRENCE: Oh, ja. We had, well, we had such a big family with the grandmother's all. I don't how many great grandchildren, how many grand, grandchildren there was. That I can't remember.

LEVINE: But a lot?

LAWRENCE: After such, such a big family, you know, so. So. Ja. Otherwise it was, and after I came here I had the best life.

LEVINE: Oh, so your life changed for the better?

LAWRENCE: Ja. And a wonderful, wonderful husband.

LEVINE: Oh, good. Well...

LAWRENCE: No drinking. No smoking.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, was your family religious in Sweden. No?

LAWRENCE: We, well, if they had a chance to go to church they did, but otherwise, no.

LEVINE: Were you closest to any particular brother that you had, or were you close to your sister?

LAWRENCE: My sister was, we were close. So, but then my oldest brother he came here. So he was here, and he get married. And, but he went to Florida and lived in Florida. So, I didn't...

LEVINE: So...

LAWRENCE: ...I didn't see too much of him.

LEVINE: Now, was your brother the first one to come to this country?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how was that he happened to come?

LAWRENCE: Huh?

LEVINE: Why was it that your brother came?

LAWRENCE: He just wanted to come, that's all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: And so then after he came, did he write to you? Did he write about this country and let you know what...

LAWRENCE: Well, he lived in Worcester for, for a time. (unintelligible) he moved on to Florida.

LEVINE: I see.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Do you remember getting letters from him?

LAWRENCE: (she laughs) No.

LEVINE: When you were still in Sweden? No.

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: Were you the next to come after your brother came? Your brother...

LAWRENCE: I was the first one.

LEVINE: Yeah. But after your brother came to America...

LAWRENCE: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...then did you come after that?

LAWRENCE: My brother?

LEVINE: No...

LAWRENCE: He, no, he come after me.

LEVINE: Oh, you came first?

LAWRENCE: Oh, ja. I was here long before him.

LEVINE: Oh. How was it you decided to come?

LAWRENCE: My uncle was home. And he send the ticket. So I came back here, I come here. My uncle, and then we lived in Hyde Park in Boston. And then I started house work down there, and then they moved to Worcester, and he got work here in Worcester. My uncle. So we moved up there. And then I started working with families here. If you heard about name of Daniels.

LEVINE: Daniels?

LAWRENCE: Daniel. Was a very rich family.

LEVINE: In Worcester?

LAWRENCE: Ja. So I was there for almost, almost two years.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, now, did you remember your uncle from Sweden? When you were still in Sweden did you know that uncle?

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: Oh, you never knew him?

LAWRENCE: Not, not until they come back here.

LEVINE: I see.

LAWRENCE: They come back here. I didn't, can't remember what they look like or anything.

LEVINE: So, so he, this uncle sent you money to come to America?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: And did, were the one because you were the oldest one? Is that why you were the one to come?

LAWRENCE: Ja. I was the oldest one, so. And then after that my brother, it was a few years after that he came. So.

LEVINE: Do you remember leaving Sweden?

LAWRENCE: Me?

LEVINE: You remember saying good-bye to your family?

LAWRENCE: (she laughs) Ja. And, but they, we went back, after I got married we went back a couple of times. After the, the Depression here, my husband didn't want to go on welfare, so we sold everything that we had went back to Sweden and stayed for two years.

LEVINE: Oh. Okay...

LAWRENCE: There, there was man that worked for (Swedish) Sweden. And he said, I'm going back, he says, why don't you go, too. So we sold everything and back we went. And I enjoyed every single day of it after that.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, tell me about when you first, where did you leave from? When you left your, your home, home...

LAWRENCE: Lysekil.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: And then how did you, how did you go to the port? How did you get to the ship?

LAWRENCE: Well, we, in the little town that I, we had to walk down to the water there, ship, to the, where the water's laying.

LEVINE: Oh, you walked there?

LAWRENCE: Oh, ja. It didn't take more that five minutes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what was the name of the ship that you came...

LAWRENCE: Kungsholm. Kungsholm.

LEVINE: Kungsholm. And what, what, were you, when you were on the ship, do you remember anything about the crossing, coming to this country?

LAWRENCE: Yes. We were four in, in a room. And it was two that were very, very sick. We had to take them up because we couldn't stand it. It was too much. And we had quite a bit of a storm. So the boat was rolling. But otherwise

everything was fine.

LEVINE: Now, you were travelling alone?

LAWRENCE: Yes.

LEVINE: You were by yourself when you came?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: How did you feel about coming to this country when you were coming here?

LAWRENCE: Well, it was, I don't know what it, well, kind of different I would say. And when I come to Hyde Park, my aunt there, she worked in a factory sort of making man's clothes. So she get me in there. But my eyes started to get bad, so I, I had to quit. So I took a house work with a family with four children. One morning I get up quite early, did the washing, hung it out. And when the man come down for breakfast, he looked out, said, "Did you wash?" And it was fourteen below zero, and I didn't know. That didn't mean anything to me. Fourteen below zero. I put the clothes on the line and it was hanging there stiff as can be. (she laughs) If you know what I mean.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: So when, when, in the afternoon I had to take them in. I could have stood, but the man used to wear union suits. I could have stand it in the corner, and it was all stiff. (she laughs) But everything was fine.

LEVINE: Well, you were used to the cold.

LAWRENCE: Well, we had cold in Sweden, too, so, that didn't make a difference to me. When you're young you don't think about anything like that, so.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: So, and then they moved to Worcester, went to Worcester.

LEVINE: Well, do you remember when the ship came into the New York Harbor? Do you remember when you were on the ship...

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: ...and it came into New York?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Do you...

LAWRENCE: And then we went into Ellis Island.

LEVINE: What do you remember about that?

LAWRENCE: Well, all I can remember is that quite a few of us went down, down there.

And if I'm not mistaken we had a cup of coffee. And after that there was a boat to, outside Worcester. We had a boat ride from Ellis Island to Boston, but I can't remember the name of the boat.

LEVINE: Do you remember being examined at Ellis Island?

LAWRENCE: No, not that I can remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: And, did, no one met you? You were just put on another boat...

LAWRENCE: Yes.

LEVINE: ...directed to another boat to go to Boston?

LAWRENCE: Ja. It was a small boat. It wasn't far from Ellis Island to Boston.

LEVINE: Do, do you have any other impressions of Ellis Island?

LAWRENCE: No. We didn't stay long (unintelligible). We just was in, in the room when we had a cup of coffee and that's all.

LEVINE: Now did you know anybody else who was on your ship...

LAWRENCE: I have no idea who they were.

LEVINE: Yeah

LAWRENCE: It was all stranger to me.

LEVINE: Yeah. Did you speak any English?

LAWRENCE: (she laughs) You can hear my English now?

LEVINE: Well, your English is fine now.

LAWRENCE: So.

LEVINE: Well, now, so, what was it like for a young, a young woman of twenty-three to be travelling alone to this country and going to Boston on...

LAWRENCE: Well, you didn't think much about anything like that. You just think that you were coming to another country. That's all. And the first Sunday I was here, they took me down to Revere Beach. (she laughs) And I was, the women were, were dressed in union suits, almost...

LEVINE: They were like bathing suits?

LAWRENCE: Bathing. (she laughs) I couldn't believe when I saw them. They had almost dress, with long stockings and union suit that went way. (she indicates)

LEVINE: What, what kind of bathing suits had you seen in Sweden? What was the

difference?

LAWRENCE: Well, we had the bathing suits, of course. And many times we went without. That all depends on where we were. So, when it was warm we never heard of any bathing suits. But after a while we had the bathing suits on. So. It's a different life.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: But I had a wonderful life here.

LEVINE: Can you think of anything else struck you as different when you were first, when you were new to this country?

LAWRENCE: Well, well, first there was the language, of course. You didn't know anything, if it was telling you anything or whatever it was. I didn't know what (unintelligible). That's all.

LEVINE: And how was it for you learning English?

LAWRENCE: Well, you had to pick up like a little here and little there. You can hear it now, how I can't express, explain everything even now, either. But I'm

doing the best I can.

LEVINE: You do very well. I, there's no problem.

LAWRENCE: And I have two wonderful daughters.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, first tell me how, you got a job right away. First in the factory and then you went to work for the family, right?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: And then, when along the way did you meet your husband?

LAWRENCE: In Sweden. We went together for four years, two years in Sweden.

LEVINE: Oh, so he was your boyfriend when you came here?

LAWRENCE: He, ja, he came here two years after I did.

LEVINE: Ah. Okay. So you, you planned that you would come here and then he would come here?

LAWRENCE: I didn't know that he was coming, but he did come.

LEVINE: Did he come because you were here?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: What was his name?

LAWRENCE: John.

LEVINE: John. And, so John Lawrence?

LAWRENCE: Well, we say it was Lowrenson [PH].

LEVINE: Lowrenson?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: How do you spell that?

LAWRENCE: L-O, Lo, L-R-N, C-, C-, or what it's call it [sic]. S-O-N. Lowrenson.

LEVINE: Lowrenson. Uh-huh. And then when he came here he changed it? He changed his name...

LAWRENCE: Ja. Because his name, I don't what happened, but he, he called himself Johannson. Johannson.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: But he changed that when he came here because there was too many Johannsons. When he was working and so forth, he went over to his father's name. Lowrenson. But he changed that to Lawrence, instead of to Lowrenson, because it was harder to spell Lowrenson than it is to spell Lawrence.

LEVINE: And so he had changed his name from Lowrenson to Lawrence before you married him?

LAWRENCE: No. After.

LEVINE: After. So for a while your name was Lowrenson, too?

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then, tell me how you met him.

LAWRENCE: Huh?

LEVINE: How did you meet in the beginning?

LAWRENCE: In Sweden?

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: Well, (unintelligible) that's a small town, so almost everybody knows everybody else. And we had a big party going to get money. And...

LEVINE: What was the money for?

LAWRENCE: Huh?

LEVINE: What was the money for?

LAWRENCE: Well, for different things. They gave to charity and they gave to this and that and, can I say it?

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: That we belonged to the Temperance Society, if you know what that is.

LEVINE: Yes.

LAWRENCE: No drinking, no smoking. So that's, that's what we were doing. Little of everything like that.

LEVINE: So you met, you, you were both involved with the Temperance Society? You were both...

LAWRENCE: Oh, ja. And we had a big, large ham in Worcester. Eggs. Two, two or three of them. Temperance. So there was no drinking here in our house. No smoking, either, for that matter. So, but all those is gone. There's no more temperance anymore.

LEVINE: Well, it sounds like...

LAWRENCE: Which is too bad.

LEVINE: It sounds like that was very important to you.

LAWRENCE: You said it. Ja. No. We just (unintelligible) like that.

LEVINE: Were there Temperance Societies in Sweden as well?

LAWRENCE: Oh, ja. Oh, that's a big, there still are. Oh, there, that's a big organization.

The temperance. I wish it was here, too. Ja, we had a quite a, we had three temperance lodges here, Temperance Society. One on (unintelligible), and one at (unintelligible) and one on, I think it was Fairmount Street.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: Can you remember when your husband first came here to this country and you, and you saw him for the first time.

LAWRENCE: Well, the first. (she laughs) He came, I was working, so I didn't know, I

know he was coming. And then I was on the street car, riding, and there was somebody walking down the street. And that's the first time I saw him when he come back here.

LEVINE: And what did he say? What did he, did he say that he had come back for you?

LAWRENCE:No. We were happy to see each other after two years. So. No. And after that it was (unintelligible).

LEVINE: Did you get married then soon after that?

LAWRENCE:No, we get married two years after that. And then I had the first babies two years after that.

LEVINE: What were, what was your first babies name?

LAWRENCE:Lillian. Did you go to the museum up here?

LEVINE: Yes.

LAWRENCE:She was one of the, the big workers up there.

LEVINE: Oh.

LAWRENCE: All her translation from Swedish to English or from English to Swedish, and all that papers, it's in the library up there. She work for John Jepson quite a bit.

LEVINE: Now did you have other children, too?

LAWRENCE: I have one other girl. And she works at Astra (unintelligible) Pharmaceutical. She is sixty years old, and Lillian, the oldest one is sixty-eight.

LEVINE: And, and what's the younger one's name?

LAWRENCE: Ingrid.

LEVINE: Ingrid.

LAWRENCE: She's been at Astra Pharmaceutical for four, four years. No. More than that. She's been forty-six, forty-six years I think it is at Astra. We know the owner that started the Astra. Jarla, if you heard about him.

LEVINE: What's his name?

LAWRENCE: Jarla.

LEVINE: Jarla.

LAWRENCE: You don't remember Ivan Johnson, the dentist? Well, they started the Swedish pharmacy. The Astra.

LEVINE: How do you spell that, Astra?

LAWRENCE: A-S-, A-S, S-T-R. Astra.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: Pharmaceut, that's in Westborough. That's a big com, I'll get, they have the medicine here, too, I would believe.

LEVINE: So, did you work after you had your children?

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: No.

LAWRENCE: My husband didn't want it.

LEVINE: And what was your husband doing for work?

LAWRENCE: He worked at the Norton Company for, for, where was he? Well, he worked at Norton Company.

LEVINE: Northern?

LAWRENCE: Huh?

LEVINE: Did you say Northern Company?

LAWRENCE: No, Norton.

LEVINE: Oh, Norton.

LAWRENCE: Norton Company. Ja.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And when did you and your husband go back to Sweden?

LAWRENCE: The Depression here. Was it 192'...

LEVINE: It could have been '29 or '30's.

LAWRENCE: Ja. See, he sold everything because my husband didn't want to go on welfare. He didn't want that on his record. So we sold everything and went back to Sweden and stayed for two years. And then come back, because there was a man from Chicago that told my husband, I'm going back. He says, why don't you do the same. So here we are.

LEVINE: Now what was it like for you going back and living in Sweden again?

LAWRENCE: Well, it was kind of different.

LEVINE: What was different?

LAWRENCE: But you get used to it after all, so.

LEVINE: What were the differences that, that you had to get used to again when you went back?

LAWRENCE: Well, that I can't really say. There was much...

LEVINE: Well, did you live in the same, I mean, was the way you lived different? I mean, the house and the...

LAWRENCE: Well, we had to have the tenement. You only get one room, and it was a real small one. And then the kitchen. That's all. That's not like here. So. But.

LEVINE: How about like electricity and water and all the things that...

LAWRENCE: Well, that's are all was the same as here.

LEVINE: It was all the same.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: So.

LEVINE: And what was it like being around your family again after, after all that time?

LAWRENCE: Well, it was different. Just had to get used to again after so, being away for a quite a while. Ja. But it was nice to see them. But you don't what it means when you say I'm happy when I come back here. (she laughs)

LEVINE: You mean you were happy to come back to the United States.

LAWRENCE: You said it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Well, do you know why you were so happy to come back?

LAWRENCE: Well, the living is different. So we had a wonderful living here. And still have for that matter. Now I won't say it, but we had a wonderful, wonderful home life. Two very nice children. So.

LEVINE: Was there a large Swedish population in Worcester when you were...

LAWRENCE: There was, ja, there was, there was quite a few Swedish people here then. We had three, I think it was three Temperance Societies here.

LEVINE: Were they mostly Swedish people in the Temperance Society?

LAWRENCE: Ja. Ja. Well, you can, maybe somebody else. I, I wouldn't know. But the one that I belonged to were all Swedes. So. Ja. (unintelligible) I had a wonderful life here.

LEVINE: Now, what do you feel proud of?

LAWRENCE: Huh?

LEVINE: What do you feel proud of?

LAWRENCE: Well, everything is nice. I won't say anything. The people is nice, but, (unintelligible) that we belong to, well, you know what I mean.

LEVINE: The people that you belong to?

LAWRENCE: Well, I mean, nice, the Swedish people, and a lot of things that they have

had. Sorry.

LEVINE: Did, did you and your husband becomes citizens at some time?

LAWRENCE: Oh, ja. Oh, ja. We were citizen here. Ja. Ja. And he worked at Norton for many years. He was a wonderful worker.

LEVINE: So he was happy in this country, too.

LAWRENCE: Ja. Ja. So, that's the story.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, now, what do you, how do you think it made a difference to you, the fact that you grew up in Sweden and you came here when you were twenty-three years old and...

LAWRENCE: Well, it's hard to tell. It's an awful lot of difference in working conditions, there and here. I had wonderful places here that I worked. So. As I say, otherwise, it's. (she laughs) You're recording all this?

LEVINE: Yes. Yeah, it's all of interest. Now, let's see. Is there anything else that you can say? Are there qualities that you have that you consider Swedish, and are there qualities that you have that you consider

American? How do you think about yourself that way?

LAWRENCE: Well, I would almost say they're about the same. I would say. Ja.

LEVINE: What kinds of things do you carry over from Sweden? Are there any customs, or any ways of doing things...

LAWRENCE: Well, there are a lot of, lot of Swedish customs that, it's here, take them over here many times. Like they, they made similar parties that they have here. You don't know anything about those, do you?

LEVINE: No. Tell me about them.

LAWRENCE: Well, they dress up in costumes, and have different dances and different, they all (unintelligible) is very important in here in this count, in Sweden. And they carry over. So there are a lot, a lot of Swedish things going on here, too.

LEVINE: Oh.

LAWRENCE: You can only look at the museum up there at the, ja, what's going on there. So.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you and your husband and children, did you, did you participate in these Swedish...

LAWRENCE:Huh?

LEVINE: Did your, did you participate in these Swedish festivities?

LAWRENCE:No, not much. Well, we were, it made similar things that we have down there. The Temperance Society did quite a bit of doings at midsummer and so forth.

LEVINE: Did they have parties? Did they have, where people dressed up in costumes and...

LAWRENCE:Some of them were in Swedish costumes. Ja. So.

LEVINE: How about cooking? Do you still cook some Swedish dishes?

LAWRENCE:Oh, some, oh, ja. We do that, too.

LEVINE: Yeah? What kind of Swedish cooking did you continue making in this

country?

LAWRENCE:(she laughs) You heard about "sill?"

LEVINE: Sill?

LAWRENCE:Herring?

LEVINE: Yes.

LAWRENCE:That's, that's good.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE:And otherwise it's about the same. So.

LEVINE: Swedish meatballs?

LAWRENCE:You said it. (they laugh) Ja. That's all the daughter is what doing now.

She had the house now when I moved out. So, she had, so happy to, she had to do her own cooking now. My mother did before. So. Ja.

LEVINE: And, when you look back over your life, what makes you feel very good?

LAWRENCE: Well, I would say that I have a very nice home life here the whole time.

So, a wonderful husband and nice children, and so forth, and a wonderful son-in-law, if I can say it.

LEVINE: Oh, good.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Did your children marry Swedish men?

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: No.

LAWRENCE: She married to, he's German. Born here, of course. They met while playing together when they were two years old.

LEVINE: Oh.

LAWRENCE: And after, after a few years, they get marr, after we come back from

Sweden, they started to get together again. He is a wonderful, wonderful person.

LEVINE: So when you and your husband went to Sweden, your daughters were already born? They went with you?

LAWRENCE: One, one was born here. And, the oldest one was born here. The other one was born in Sweden.

LEVINE: Oh.

LAWRENCE: Ja. Well, we didn't want a, well, as I said before we didn't want to go on welfare. So we went back home.

LEVINE: And what did your husband do when you went back home to Sweden?

LAWRENCE: He worked in the big factory. So.

LEVINE: And did you work when you went, no, you, you had your child.

LAWRENCE: My husband didn't want me to work. He said you stay home, and, so. Ja. So now you know my life.

LEVINE: And how is your life now? How is your life at this stage?

LAWRENCE: Well, now, it's different for me here, but otherwise at home, we had a wonderful home life. Ja. The children was very good, and the son-in-law as I said. And, but now, no, the oldest one was working with General Electric for forty-seven years. And now the youngest one is at Astra for forty-four years.

LEVINE: And do you have grandchildren?

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: No.

LAWRENCE: No.

LEVINE: And how about life here in the Lutheran home? How is that?

LAWRENCE: It's, it's different, but it's all right. So.

LEVINE: You feel well cared for?

LAWRENCE:Huh?

LEVINE: You feel well cared for here?

LAWRENCE:Ja. So. We have to. That's all.

LEVINE: You have to. Right.

LAWRENCE:Ja. No, they, I can't complain. Everything is fine.

LEVINE: So, to what do you attribute such an old age that you've, that you've managed to live to?

LAWRENCE:Huh?

LEVINE: I say, you've lived to quite a ripe old age.

LAWRENCE:Yeah.

LEVINE: Is that, does that run in your family?

LAWRENCE:No.

LEVINE: Did your mother and father live to be in their nineties?

LAWRENCE:No, no, no. My grandmother was eighty-nine. My mother was sixty-seven, I think, when she died. I can't remember when my father died. I thought that maybe it was after I get here, so. So.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE:Ja.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else you can think of about life in Sweden and coming to this country and then marrying your husband and going back to Sweden and...

LAWRENCE:(she laugh) Well, there are a lot of different things. So. No, we had a wonderful life here, and we had a, when we're back there, we had a wonderful home life there, too. So, but that's not, you can't compare.

LEVINE: What would have been different if you had stayed in Sweden, if you had never left?

LAWRENCE: Well, they had, get used to it, that's all.

LEVINE: You would have gotten used to it? Yeah?

LAWRENCE: Yeah. But I had two wonderful brother-in-laws and a sister-in-law. She is ninety, and one of the boys is eighty-nine, eighty-seven, and the other one, well, he is over eighty, anyways [sic], so. Wonderful people.

LEVINE: And do you see them? Do you still see them?

LAWRENCE: No, I don't see them, but we write and we call.

LEVINE: Oh, good.

LAWRENCE: Ja, so we contact with them. So.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: No, he had, my husband had a wonderful family, too, so.

LEVINE: Well, good. Well, I think maybe we can stop here. I thank you so much.

Very, very interesting.

LAWRENCE: Well, if there is anything to you, that's, I mean.

LEVINE: Well, now this tape will be at Ellis Island. (Mrs. Lawrence laughs) And it will be preserved so people can listen to it now and in the future.

LAWRENCE: Ja. So.

LEVINE: It's people like you that made this country what it is, and so you...

LAWRENCE: Well, we had tried to. No drinking, no, not smoking and not destroying anything, if I can say it. Ja. Well, you hear what's going on now, that's sickening. Isn't it? Ja.

LEVINE: Would you have any advice to give to somebody who was just coming to this country?

LAWRENCE: No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't. But that's, can I say it?

LEVINE: Sure.

LAWRENCE: You wouldn't dare to go down to Worcester nowadays with all what's going on there. Isn't it true?

LEVINE: Yes.

LAWRENCE: Ja.

LEVINE: Okay. We're going to stop here. And I've been speaking with Hildur Lawrence, who is ninety-six. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm signing off. (Mrs. Lawrence laughs) Okay.