

EI-643/LJUNQUIST

EI-643
ELSA PLACKOFF LJUNQUIST
BIRTHDATE: APRIL 21, 1906
INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 21, 1995
RUNNING TIME: 1:00:00
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME
INTERVIEW LOCATION: HOLDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, 11/1995
TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

SWEDEN, 1910
AGE 4
NO SHIP NAME RECORDED

LEVINE: Okay is July 21st, 1995. I'm here in Holden,
Massachusetts with Elsa Pack--, Plackoff Ljunquist.
Am I pronouncing it correctly?

LJUNQUIST: No. L-J in, in, is spelled, is like Y. Is, you
know, if you, is L-J-U-N, you know. But L-J is
pronounced like Y.

LEVINE: Okay, so it's...

LJUNQUIST: Like is "Yunquist."

LEVINE: "Yunquist."

LJUNQUIST: Hm-hmm.

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LEVINE: Okay. Thanks for telling me...

LJUNQUIST: But most people really, when they see the L they'll say, so I answer to both.

LEVINE: To both. Okay. Well, Elsa came to this country when she was not quite five years old in 1910...

LJUNQUIST: That's right.

LEVINE: ...from Sweden. And, what is your birthdate?

LJUNQUIST: April 21, 1906.

LEVINE: 1906. Okay, so that makes you eighty-nine at this time?

LJUNQUIST: Yes.

LEVINE: At the time of the interview. Okay, tell me first where you were born in Sweden?

LJUNQUIST: In Hog, Hoganäs.

LEVINE: And would you spell that, please?

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LJUNQUIST: It's H-O-G-A-N-A-S, with two dots over the O, and two dots over the A.

LEVINE: The first A?

LJUNQUIST: April 21, 1906.

LEVINE: And where, did you, did you stay in the same town, in Hoganas until you left for America?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah, that's right. They owned, my mother and father owned a home there. And when they came here it was just, my father's sisters and a brother were here. He was curious, and wanted to see what it was like. And he promised my mother it would only be a short, you know, maybe two years, and we'd go back home. So the home was left there waiting for us. And they rented it to some elderly couple that they knew, and they were going to take care of it while they were gone. So.

LEVINE: Do you remember that home?

LJUNQUIST: I have pictures of it. I, I can't, I've got a

picture of it, but other than that I can't remember it really.

LEVINE: Well, you were quite young...

LJUNQUIST: Sure.

LEVINE: ...so you were only not quite five. Do you have any memories of Hoganas, of the town, of the house, of your life there?

LJUNQUIST: Well, I remember my life there because I used to run down to visit my grandmother, my father's mother who was in, in an old people's home. And I remember running over. My mother wouldn't, we used to, I still have them. We used to wear wooden shoes. You know, you know, you only wear, were dressed up, when you were dressed you wore your, your regular nice shoes. But when you're out playing in the yard you wore your wooden shoes. I don't know how any kid can run around in wooden shoes, but apparently I did. And I used to always run down the bank and, and, to visit my grandmother which was not too far away, but maybe from here down to the end of this street. (she indicates) And so, and, I still have

a postcard that she wrote to me after we came here, which whenever I read it I almost burst into tears, because she missed me so much. And she had other kids, grandchildren there. But apparently I was her favorite because I was an awful talker. (she laughs) And a gossip, I guess, because I would get the news from the neighbors and go tell my grandmother. (she laughs) So, so I was sort of a favorite with her, you know, and because apparently I was full of fun, and, and she had a good time with me.

LEVINE: Can you remember the old age home where she was, was...

LJUNQUIST: Hmm?

LEVINE: ...can you remember the home where she lived?

LJUNQUIST: I can't remember her home. No.

LEVINE: But where she was...

LJUNQUIST: But I, but I can remember the house that I lived. The thing that I remember, the, they're not marble,

but they're white concrete stairs going up into the house. But I don't remember the inside at all. I can't remember what that was like, but I do remember the entrance.

LEVINE: Was it a wooden house, or, or was it a stone house, or...

LJUNQUIST: Brick.

LEVINE: Brick house. Uh-huh. Yeah. And what was your father's name?

LJUNQUIST: His name was Fritz. Fritz Plackoff.

LEVINE: And your mother?

LJUNQUIST: Hilda Peterson. But the reason, I looked into it, because I, it always puzzled me, Plackoff is not a Swedish name. And I couldn't understand why in the world my father's name was Plackoff. So through the Mormon church. You know the Mormon church has thing that look up ancestry. They helped me. And I, I spent a whole year tracing, trying to find out my background. And my grandmother, my great

grandmother was a maid in a, in a very wealthy Russian family, who had flood, there was trouble in Russia at that time. And he had come to Sweden, to the southern part of Sweden to get away from whatever it was that he was trying to get, because there was something going on in Russia, I know that.

So anyway, my, my great grandmother then, she was a maid in that household. And she had a child by that Russian man.

LEVINE: Oh.

LJUNQUIST: And he is, that's how, and so she always went by the name of Plackoff, although that was not her real name. Her real name was, yeah, her real name was Nils, Nils, Nilson.

LEVINE: N-I-L-S-O-N?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So, I see. But the name got handed down as Plackoff?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. Uh-huh. Because there, there are not Swedes,

nobody over there in that town now with that name. You know. Plackoff. That's, and of course, being, being Russian, that was taboo over there at that time.

LEVINE: Oh. How, how did the Swedish people feel about Russians?

LJUNQUIST: They didn't like them. They were very afraid of Russia.

LEVINE: Well, what else do you remember about your early life? Were you a religious family?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, we, oh, of course, being, everybody in Sweden belongs to the Lutheran church. Everybody. You're born a Lutheran over there. And so your name is, you know, registered. When you, when your, your birth is registered through the church. So everyone is born a Lutheran. However they have the freedom to choose whatever the religion they want later on, after they have been confirmed.

LEVINE: Which is about twelve or thirteen years old?

LJUNQUIST: Usually fourteen over there.

LEVINE: Fourteen. Uh-huh. So was your family a church going family, or...

LJUNQUIST: Yes, they were.

LEVINE: They were. And what was your confirmation like? Oh, well, you weren't confirmed, because you weren't there by...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. No. I was here when I was confirmed.

LEVINE: You were confirmed here.

LJUNQUIST: Sure. At Zion Lutheran.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

LJUNQUIST: I had a brother.

LEVINE: One brother. Older or younger?

LJUNQUIST: Younger. He was four years younger than I.

LEVINE: And what was his name?

LJUNQUIST: Hm?

LEVINE: His name?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, Fred. Frederik.

LEVINE: Frederik.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. Of course, we always called him Freddy. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh. And do you, do you remember him from Sweden?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, sure...

LEVINE: He was, you must have been just recently born.

LJUNQUIST: No. He was born here.

LEVINE: Oh, he was born here.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. My mother was pregnant when she came here. And that's the one thing I remember was, at Ellis Island, that the lady there was so nice to me, because my poor mother, who, she was pregnant and she felt sick, and everything. (she laughs) And so they sort of took charge of me. And apparently I was wild little kid wanting to see everything and do everything. And so, the attendants, they took me around all over the place, and my mother said they had a great time with me. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Well, do have any other memories of Sweden? Do you have any memories of your grandparents, or going anywhere with your mother, or...

LJUNQUIST: No. I, I can't, because only at five years old, you don't, I don't think you remember accurately anyway.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you have any ways about you that you consider to be Swedish?

LJUNQUIST: I think I'm all Swedish.

LEVINE: You do?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: Uh-huh. I mean, that's my native tongue. And I'm most, I can express myself better in the Swedish language than I can in the English language. And that's why, like I say, I had a problem when I went to school. Especially when I go into the teenage, because, mentally I was fine. But I was afraid to open my mouth and recite, because I, I did have an accent. And, and the kids thought it was funny, you know. So, while I got good marks, but if it was, if it was all, forget it. I couldn't, I couldn't answer the question because I was afraid to say anything, because the whole class would laugh. So that, that was it. Other than that I always had good marks.

LEVINE: Did you, do you, do you still dream in Swedish?

LJUNQUIST: (she pauses) Gee, I really can't say. Huh.

LEVINE: Do you remember your dreams? I mean, some people do

and some...

LJUNQUIST: Some, yeah. I don't, I don't very much. I try to recall when I get up in the morning, you know...

LEVINE: Yeah.

LJUNQUIST: ...you know, what was (unintelligible). But, but as a rule I don't remember what I dreamt.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LJUNQUIST: And...

LEVINE: That would be interesting if you, if you still dreamed in Swedish.

LJUNQUIST: No.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, so how was it decided that you would come to this country in 1910. Do you, did your mother or father tell you that?

LJUNQUIST: Yes, they did. My father's brother and, and two sisters, two of them lived in New York City, and had

been writing back and forth, you know. So, he was curious. He wanted to see what this country was like. And so my mother agreed to go only if we would go back again. You know, come home again. Because that house was there. And my mother who came from money, my father was very poor. But when I look at the pictures I can see it. My father was a handsome young man, you know. And they met at a church picnic. And my father went there, and my mother says, oh, he was there looking, he was there, going to, trying to make it with all the, with all the girls, you know, because he was, he was quite a character. And he, he, my mother said in those days he was, he was a flirt, you see. But anyway, I guess he didn't leave her alone until she finally decided that she would marry him, because by that time her father, her mother died of, of, well, I'm boring you with this.

LEVINE: No. This is, this is wonderful. This is good.

LJUNQUIST: My, my grandmother, my, my grand, my mother's mother got blood poisoning, and died of it. In those days they had no, you know, not like now. You don't hear of anybody dying from that today. But anyway she

got blood poisoning, and, and my grandfather was a sea captain. And he was away at sea when she died.

So when, when he came back my mother was the one that had to take up the upbringing of her three younger, a brother and a sister. And she had to take, bring those kids up because they were young, you know. Much younger than she. And she was only eighteen. So she had to become their mother at that time and help bring them up.

LEVINE: Do you remember them at all? Your mother's...

LJUNQUIST: I seen them. Oh, sure. So they, later on they came, they came over here, you know, and lived with us for a while, both my two uncles. And my one uncle went out to the west coast, but, and so did my mother's sister. But they've been back here to visit. And my mother used to go out there. She'd, she'd been out there two or three times to visit them, you know, after that. Yeah.

LEVINE: So your mother was not anxious to come to this country...

LJUNQUIST: No.

LEVINE: ...but only agreed to come thinking that you, she would, the family would stay a few years.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. That's right.

LEVINE: So what actually happened? Did you stay more than a few years?

LJUNQUIST: Here?

LEVINE: Yeah.

LJUNQUIST: Oh, sure. I didn't go, I never went back.

LEVINE: They never, did they go back, your mother and father?

LJUNQUIST: My father went back to sell the house, to sell our home. But (she pauses), but he said that it would be, oh, he said that, well, we were too old then for him. He didn't have, in fact, in fact, he said he couldn't, I had a mind of my own, and I said I was never going to go back there ever. But, of course, I have been there since, because my husband was in

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the war. He was an ex-P.O.W. And, so we went back to Europe, because he wanted to see where he was captured in Germany. And also to visit some friends in Germany who befriended him at that time, kept him covered, because the allies were going through, you know. And if they had, if they thought that my father, was...

LEVINE: Here.

LJUNQUIST: That's all right. My father was out of line or anything, you know. So he, he never, now what was I talking about? I, I, I've never been back...

LEVINE: You didn't want to go back. You never wanted to go back.

LJUNQUIST: Never. No.

LEVINE: Well, tell me about leaving. What was it like when the family, do you remember the departure? Do you remember like when the family left Sweden to come to this...

LJUNQUIST: When, when I left Sweden?

LEVINE: Yes.

LJUNQUIST: I, now I don't know whether I remember it. I probably do, but I know that my grandmother, I was five years old, and she was a little woman, and she picked me up and carried me all the way to the train station, which was quite a long walk for her. And, oh dear. (loud traffic noise in the background)
Now what do they want?

LEVINE: We'll just wait a minute. (pause) Truck.

LJUNQUIST: Okay. Well, I...

LEVINE: Your grandmother...

LJUNQUIST: I remember that my grandmother carried me all the way to the station. They told me this, the tears going down her face, knowing, she felt, you know. But they said, so, she, they said to me, "When are you going to come back?" And, and there was a shelf in my grandmother's house that was quite high, you know. Probably the height as I am now. And I said to her, "When I'm as tall as that, I'm coming back."

And so, so she always, she used to always write to em and I used to write to her. You know, until I learned to write, my mother, I'd scribble, you know. And my mother would, of course, correspond with her. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LJUNQUIST: But I remember her as a, a wonderful grandmother.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything that you yourself brought, or your mother or father took with them when they came to this country?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. Those dogs that are sitting up there. (she indicates)

LEVINE: Oh.

LJUNQUIST: Those, those were made, those were made, there's a, you know, Hoganas is like Norton Company here. That's why a lot of people that were born in that town came here to here, because Mr. Jeppson who owns Norton Company here, used to get his good workers from over there, because that, they, that's what

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they did. They made grinding wheels.

LEVINE: Oh. So, so the Norton Company that was a big company in Worcester...

LJUNQUIST: Sure. It wasn't then. It was a small company then.

LEVINE: Oh, it was a small company.

LJUNQUIST: But Mr. Jeppson was the head of it. The old Mr. Jeppson. And I remember him, because, I remember him because he had whisk, long whiskers.

LEVINE: How do spell his name, Elsa? Do you remember, how do, Mr. Jeppson. Is it G-...

LJUNQUIST: Jeppson. J-E-P-P-S-O-N.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh. So he, he was well known to the Swedish families...

LJUNQUIST: Oh.

LEVINE: ...who came over and worked in his factory.

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LJUNQUIST: Yeah. He, yes. He, he want, he liked workers to come over from that particular town, because they were familiar with grinding wheels and stuff like that. And that's what Norton Company did at that time. He started the business here.

LEVINE: Now, would people work making grinding wheels over there?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: They would work over there doing that...

LJUNQUIST: Sure. Sure.

LEVINE: ...and then when they wanted to come here...

LJUNQUIST: That's right. Sure.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: Then, then he brought, had, would ask, and, you know, them to come over here and work. And then my father being the purest type of person, you know, thought, well, won't do any harm, and I'd like to go

over and, you know, see what it's like. Because he did have sisters and a brother here in the, in the United States. But they weren't here in Worcester, really.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, now, would people know that they had a job in Norton Company before they left Sweden?

LJUNQUIST: Yes, they would. They know that, they would, they had said that they would take anybody that came over, because they were looking for that type of person at that time. And Mr. Jeppson, of course, being from that town, he favored them, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. He had come originally.

LJUNQUIST: Yes. Right. Yes.

LEVINE: I see.

LJUNQUIST: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Well, apparently there was a sizeable Swedish population here in Worcester.

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yes. Yes, there was. More so than anywhere else, I think. There are more Swedish people now of, of the Lutheran home. I don't know if there were any native, I'm not sure about that if there any native Swedish people up there. But I don't think so. I think there...

LEVINE: Well, I, there are a few.

LJUNQUIST: Huh?

LEVINE: I interviewed a couple of ladies there this morning.

LJUNQUIST: There, oh, really?

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah.

LJUNQUIST: They were from Sweden? Yeah?

LEVINE: Well, actually one was from Finland and one was from Sweden.

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yeah. Okay. Uh-huh. Because I nev, I didn't meet anybody up there, you know...

LEVINE: Oh.

LJUNQUIST: ...that was Swedish.

LEVINE: Let's see. Hilda Lawrence. Did you ever meet her?
She came from Sweden.

LJUNQUIST: Hilda Lawrence?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: I was the name on, you know, once in a while they'd
have a get together, and I'd see the name, you know,
on the list.

LEVINE: Well, she's there, and she came from Sweden.

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yeah. And she's still there?

LEVINE: Yes. So do you remember, well, well, let's, let's
go back to, you left, and then you, you went to the
port to get the ship after you said good-bye to your
grandmother, and...

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: And...

LJUNQUIST: We had to go to Eng, England.

LEVINE: England?

LJUNQUIST: Hm-hmm.

LEVINE: What was the...

LJUNQUIST: But I don't know the name of the ship we came on. I don't know that.

LEVINE: Did you leave from Southampton? Do you know?

LJUNQUIST: I real, I, I couldn't say for sure. I suppose. I don't know.

LEVINE: Well, it was your mother, your father, your brother.
No. Your brother wasn't born yet.

LJUNQUIST: No.

LEVINE: Just the three of you travelling.

LJUNQUIST: Just three.

LEVINE: And do you remember the ship? I mean, do you remember being on the ship?

LJUNQUIST: No. (she pauses) No, I can't remember really being on the ship. But I do remember, I don't remember being at Ellis Island, because we had to stay there until some sponsor would come and pick us up, which was my aunt who lived in New York City. And she came. And we had, I remember my mother not feeling well at all, and waiting for her to come. You know.

LEVINE: What do you remember? Do you remember what Ellis Island looked like, or what you did there, or anything about that?

LJUNQUIST: No. (she pauses) No. You see, I've been there since, because we, one time we went down in New York. And I said, and my husband wanted to see what it was like down there, too. So, so went down there, and went out on the, one of those ships that, you know, that, what do you call...

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LEVINE: A ferry?

LJUNQUIST: A ferry. Over to Ellis Island. So I could stand there where, where I first landed. That what I said.

LEVINE: Did anything come back to you when you went there? Did you remember anything?

LJUNQUIST: I, I really didn't. No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah. Well, you were very young.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, so, in other words, you had to stay overnight, you think?

LJUNQUIST: We had to stay in, yeah, we had to stay, not to sleep or anything, you know...

LEVINE: Oh.

LJUNQUIST: ...but we had to stay there overnight until our sponsor showed up, which was my aunt who lived in

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New York. And she came down. Of course, she spoke the language and everything.

LEVINE: Now did you know her at all?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yes. Very well.

LEVINE: You knew her from Sweden?

LJUNQUIST: Well, she visited us there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: But she, she had an interesting life, too. She came over here as a young girl and worked for a millionaire family, and travelled all over the world with them. So she, she'd been everywhere. And, so I always sort of admired her, you know, because she, she knew so much about the rest of the world, you know. I, I only knew one place where I came from. So, but she used to come here to visit quite often.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What was that aunt's name?

LJUNQUIST: Her name was, she went by Nelson. See, their

father's name was, and people do this in Sweden a lot. Their father's name was Nels Plackoff. So they take the "Nels" and put "son" on it. Usually the boys do. And the girls as well, really. So they take the name Nelson.

LEVINE: And what was your aunt's first name?

LJUNQUIST: Frida. F-R-I-D-A.

LEVINE: Frida Nelson. And, and so, you looked up to her?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, I thought she was the greatest. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you think she influenced you in any ways?

LJUNQUIST: I think she did because she was very, well, she'd been so many places, and she was very sophisticated.

And sometimes you'd meet some of these Swedish people that came over. Not that there's anything wrong with them, but they weren't as, she seemed like a very well educated person based on the travels she had been on I suppose.

LEVINE: What did she do for this millionaire family that

she...

LJUNQUIST: She was the ladies maid to the, the lady was, took care of her clothes, got her clothes out. She told me she got her clothes out everyday what she was going to wear, and everything, you know. And saw that they were always kept clean and things like that. Yeah.

LEVINE: So then...

LJUNQUIST: So she was with, she was with this woman wherever she travelled.

LEVINE: I see. So then, did she have an apartment or house in, in New York?

LJUNQUIST: No, she had a room in, they lived in a mansion. And, so she had a room there, you know.

LEVINE: Well, then, she met, do you actually remember the meeting when she came to Ellis Island, when you and your mother and father were arriving from Sweden?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. I can remember, in fact, I've got a, I've got

a picture in there of me when, when we stepped off the boat. (she indicates) It's in there.

LEVINE: Oh, great.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: After we're finished I'd love to see it.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. Okay. It's hanging in there. I always hang it there. And I look at it, because I can see why I was a popular kid, because it's a cute little kid that's standing there, really cute, I thought. So, but that's the first I really remember. Then I remem, my aunt's were great Salvation Army people. And the even wore the bonnet. You know, in those days they wore a bonnet, and they'd tied it under here. And so Sunday nights we all, my, my mother was strictly Lutheran, you know. But my father was brought up Salvation Army. And that is because I think in Sweden the Salvation Army were very kind towards people who didn't have that much, you know. So my father was all for the Salvation Army. Always.

LEVINE: Well, did the Salvation Army have their own church?

LJUNQUIST: They, they never had a church, they had a hall. And there was a hall here in Worcester up on Belmont Street. And so Sunday nights, usually at five o'clock, and also at the top of Belmont Street here in Worcester, they had like an outdoor park, like camp place. So in the summertime they had services there. And so we used to go there like on, my father would want to go there around four o'clock and everything. And then they served refreshments at that time, and then had a meeting, you know, that would be through probably eight o'clock, so that we all could get home safely in the light, they said, by the light.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: Well, now, was the, was the service, what particular religion was the service?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, that's all Christian, you know. Oh, of course.

LEVINE: Yeah. But it wasn't Lutheran per se? It was some...

LJUNQUIST: No. No. They didn't, they, the reason they didn't like Lutherans, because Lutherans, Lutherans, the, are the exact Catholic service. The exact Catholic service. And the other churches like, I have relatives that belong to Cong, Salem Congregational up here and everything. Their service is, you see, like in the Lutheran church the mass is the same every Sunday. It's always, it varies a little bit, very little. And, you know, the pastor says some words and then you answer, you know. And the congregation. That's, that's the Lutheran way. But the Lutheran, the Lutherans are exactly like Catholics, except they have, don't believe in the pope, that's all.

LEVINE: And, but aren't a lot of Swedish people Congregationalists?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, a lot, after they come here they choose whatever they want. But they're always brought, that, they're registered in the Lutheran Church, which is

the church of Sweden. They, they considered that. Yes, but you have to regist, be registered in the Lutheran church. Because I know when I had to have some, some, some papers. I've forgotten what they were for really. But I had to write to the Lutheran Church to get my baptismal papers.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So when your aunt met you, and you left Ellis Island with her, where did you go?

LJUNQUIST: Well, she had gotten an, an apartment down on Third Avenue in New York City. And, a, a small apartment. And we stayed there for a couple months before my father found a job here in Worcester. Because he had, he, my father also had some relatives in Reading, Pennsylvania, and he went down to see them. And he was, didn't know whether he was going down to Pennsylvania or he was going to come here to Worcester.

LEVINE: And were there relatives here in Worcester as well?

LJUNQUIST: Yes. My mother's brother. Two brothers.

LEVINE: So you, so, let's see. So do you remember anything

about being on Third Avenue for a few months?

LJUNQUIST: No. I don't remember that at all. No.

LEVINE: And then your father lined up a job at Norton and Company?

LJUNQUIST: Nortons, yeah.

LEVINE: Norton. And then, do you remember the trip to Worcester?

LJUNQUIST: No. I, I don't.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well...

LJUNQUIST: We went, came on a train. I know that. And I remember Union Station. And I remember there, when you get off the train, there was a long step to go down into, you know. And I always, I, I thought it was awful when Union Station got so dilapidated, because it was really a beautiful station down there.

LEVINE: How did you feel when you saw Ellis Island restored,

when you went to visit Ellis Island?

LJUNQUIST: Well, we went there just that we could look across the bay and see, you know, which way I came and all that, you know. But, I guess for the most part I was happy that I was here. (she laughs)

LEVINE: So...

LJUNQUIST: There's the doll that came with. That my doll.
(she indicates)

LEVINE: You brought that with you?

LJUNQUIST: That, that came with, yeah. I...

LEVINE: Wow.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. I got that when I was one year old. And I got it from that aunt who, I told you, my Aunt Frida who travelled all over. She bought it in France, that doll. And I brought it into some, a doll, a doll maker. And it came in that trunk full of clothes for the doll. (she indicates) In that trunk. So when they came to the United States, my,

my mother packed two trunks of, of her, our belongings, and one of them was lost in New York. But it so happened that that trunk and that doll was saved, you know. So she still, so that's...

LEVINE: Hmm. Well, now, what kind of an outfit is that on the doll?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, that's a Swedish outfit. One of the, you know, they have different costumes for different places in Sweden. And that's the one where I come from, you know. That the costume. They, this is what they wear on holidays. Like, if they have, a May, usually when they have a Maypole dance they dress up in their, which refers to the, the place where you come from on Sweden.

LEVINE: Well, is this from, this is from a larger, larger than Hoganas, right? It's, it's a larger area in Sweden than the...

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: ...than the town that you came from?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yeah. Sure.

LEVINE: What's the area that it, that it represents?

LJUNQUIST: That's in Sweden, Skane they call it. Like a state.

LEVINE: How do you spell that?

LJUNQUIST: S-K-A-N-E, with an O over the A.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, so you had the clothing...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...from Skane made for this doll?

LJUNQUIST: It came like that.

LEVINE: Oh, it came like that?

LJUNQUIST: But I, it's been in moths, that's all.

LEVINE: I see. She bought it in France, but it's, it was...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...a Swedish...

LJUNQUIST: But it, yeah. But, she bought it in France, and came to visit me, my mother and father, and brought me that doll, which was, you know. And, let's see, I had it to a, a woman who can, you know, she says it's a kidbody doll, which haven't been made for years and years and years.

LEVINE: What does that mean, a kidbody?

LJUNQUIST: Kid, the, well, you can pick it up and look, the legs and everything, the body. The head and far down as here is porcelain. (she is indicating) But the rest of the body is kid, you know?

LEVINE: Oh.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Maybe for the tape...

LJUNQUIST: Sure.

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LEVINE: ...could you describe the doll so that somebody listening to this could have a, a picture of what, what it actually looks like?

LJUNQUIST: All I can tell you is she's blonde, blonde and blue-eyed. And, and the, like I say I've had the clothes off of her a couple of, oh, more than a couple of times to wash the shirt. You know, it had gotten kind of grey and dusty. It probably is now a little bit. But, and the underwear on it, I get a kick out, it's, the regular underwear on it with all lace, and, you should, pick it up and look at it. I love that doll.

LEVINE: (she examines the doll) And how about the little chair? Did that come, too?

LJUNQUIST: No, not the chair. I bought that for her, for her to sit in. But the thing that, the trunk, she came in that trunk. That's how she...

LEVINE: With your name on it?

LJUNQUIST: Yes.

LEVINE: Wow. What a...

LJUNQUIST: My father put my name on.

LEVINE: What a present for a little girl. My goodness. And then she has on these shoes.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Were these typical, kind of high...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...high shoes?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. High shoes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: Oh, sure.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. And she has lace. Woops.

LJUNQUIST: Even the pants.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh. Kind of pantaloons...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you call them?

LJUNQUIST: Well, yeah, you know.

LEVINE: And, then, a little ap, I guess the apron is part of the whole dress.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. That's part of the cost, yeah.

LEVINE: And the hat? Is that, that's typical?

LJUNQUIST: That goes, yeah. Yeah. That represents, every, now that's, that part, every, every state has their own hat to wear, different kinds of hats. So the costumes for each state over there may be slightly different than what this one is. So.

LEVINE: And this is like a little purse around her...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. That's where they...

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LEVINE: ...her shoulder?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow. Well, she's beautiful.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. It's, it's really, it's really a collector's item.

LEVINE: And in, and it came with a trunk with other clothes for her?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. Clothes for her. Hm-hmm.

LEVINE: Wow. I can...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: I can imagine how excited you must have been when you received this.

LJUNQUIST: Oh, I'm telling you. I thought I, so, but like I say, I, I really, I, I guess I was a spoiled little kid, you know, because everything was done for me. And my grandmother thought I was just about it. And

I had a, a cousin over there. And even to this, she died a few years ago. But even then she used, she was jealous of me. She used to say they always paid more attention to you than they did to me. She used to always say. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Well, can you...

LJUNQUIST: But my mother, my mother said the reason for it was that she was always crying about something. But I was always a happy go lucky, so they had fun when I was around. (she laughs) That's what my mother told me.

LEVINE: Right. Uh-huh. So, let's see. So after you came here, your father decided to take the job with Norton.

LJUNQUIST: Norton's, yeah.

LEVINE: And you moved to Worcester.

LJUNQUIST: Hm-hmm

LEVINE: And where in Worcester did you live?

LJUNQUIST: We, we lived on, we lived on Borne Street. And that's up in the Greendale area. And...

LEVINE: And where there was a large Swedish community there?

LJUNQUIST: Yes, there was. They, they all came from that particular town in Sweden to work at Mr. Jeppson's place of business, which was Norton Company. That's why they all came here.

LEVINE: So did they, this community that came to work for Mr. Jeppson, was, was this community near the factory where they were going to be working?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, sure. Walking distance for all of them, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: I see. So, and then the factory must have grown significantly.

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LJUNQUIST: Oh, yes. Of course. Sure. And then finally it was moved down to, I don't know, was it New Jersey, or, it was sold finally and everything. It wasn't Norton, really Norton anymore.

LEVINE: And do you remember social clubs or Swedish, Swedish places where people gathered to...

LJUNQUIST: Yes. My mother, my father was not one to socialize a great deal with, they had a, a lodge out here called The Progress Lodge. And, but they asked my father, too. But he was not that type of person. But my mother was. She, she belonged to, I think she belonged to two Scandinavian lodges. And, was very active in them, you know. She, she loved that sort of thing.

LEVINE: What were...

LJUNQUIST: But my father wasn't too interested.

LEVINE: What were their activities? What would they do?

LJUNQUIST: Oh, they'd have card parties, and they'd have all kinds of, they'd have, for instance they'd have, I

remember one time they had some kind of entertainment. And invited their lodge members, and, and then of course served coffee and, you know, later on in the evening, or after it. And I took less, I was, took lessons in piano. And so I played the piano. In fact I used to play for other, because they had a ritual that they went through, and I used to play for them once in a while. So then my best friend and I, they had some kind of social there. So we were part of the entertainment. We, they had some singer sing Swedish songs. And then she and I played a duet on the piano. I can't imagine these fingers playing the piano, but I did in those days. So that's about the size of it, I guess.

LEVINE: When you say they had a, a ritual? Is that what you said?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: What, what, what kind of ritual was it? Do you know?

LJUNQUIST: Well, it was a...

LEVINE: What was it like?

LJUNQUIST: Well, like, well, I was never a member of those things, so I can't say actually. But it was a service that they, that they had. They, let's see how, what can I compare it too. (she pauses) Well, it was a, it was a lodge. And in those days, well, they have lodges here for the men. What do you call them?

LEVINE: Like fraternities? Like, like, oh, I can't, Oddfellows?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. Well, not Oddfellows. My neighbor up there was very active in, in...

LEVINE: Shriners?

LJUNQUIST: My father never joined any of those things. But...

LEVINE: Were they secret, secret meetings? Like, I know some of the mens lodges, they have these...

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...secret meetings.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. I would say...

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: ...that this, that it was, part of it was secret, you know. And...

LEVINE: But some of them were Scandinavian, so they included Danish and Finnish...

LJUNQUIST: Oh, yeah. And Finnish.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: How, just, if, I don't know if you can answer this, but, like, how did the Swedish people as a group differ from the other Scandinavian groups?

LJUNQUIST: I don't think there's any difference.

LEVINE: No?

LJUNQUIST: I think Danes and Swedes are very much alike. And Finnish people also. Although there's one thing about the Finnish people. They consider themselves a little bit better than the Swedes and the Danes. So.

LEVINE: And how about your mother? She didn't want to come here. She only agreed to come here for two or three years.

LJUNQUIST: No. That's right.

LEVINE: Did she change her mind or did she...

LJUNQUIST: No, we couldn't, we couldn't go back because the first world war broke out. Nobody could go back. So by the time they were going to, could go back, I was fourteen years old. All my friends were here. No way was I going to Sweden. No way. So my father said, okay, I have to go back to Sweden and sell our house, and get, and they had, at that time also, they couldn't take their money out of Sweden and bring it over here at that particular time.

LEVINE: When you were fourteen, or earlier?

LJUNQUIST: No. When I was...

LEVINE: Fourteen.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: So they couldn't, you couldn't take the, you had to leave the money there. So, so it took, I don't when it happened, but finally they could get their money out of there. But my father had a retirement that went into the bank, you know, every week.

LEVINE: Until you could take that money out?

LJUNQUIST: Until he could take it back here.

LEVINE: And how about your mother? How did she feel? By the time you were fourteen, how did you mother feel about going...

LJUNQUIST: Oh, she went back.

LEVINE: She went back?

LJUNQUIST: Well, she went back and stayed with an uncle for about a, well, a couple of years, to stay with him, because, you know, he was old. And she was his only relative, really. So she went over and stayed with him a couple of years.

LEVINE: And then she returned?

LJUNQUIST: Then she came back here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And when she went back, did, did you had your brother and your father stay here?

LJUNQUIST: My father was dead by that time.

LEVINE: I see. I see.

LJUNQUIST: He died when he was only forty-three.

LEVINE: Oh. So then your mother went back and you and your brother stayed here?

LJUNQUIST: We stayed here. But she says, the only reason, she would have stayed in Sweden because she loved it. But, and also, she, she'd been there a couple of years, and they would take her back as a citizen, you know, after she'd been...

LEVINE: In Sweden?

LJUNQUIST: ...after she'd been there for two years, she would, you know. And she'd be entitled to income and other things that older people get over there. And she would if she stayed, but she came back here, because, mostly because of my brother, I think. He wasn't married at that time, and she felt that he needed her to be over here.

LEVINE: But did she still have relatives left over there?

LJUNQUIST: All I have is, I still correspond with, it's my cousin's wife. My cousin's widow. And I correspond with her. In fact, I'm waiting for a letter, because I wrote to her while I was at the Lutheran Home, and told her where I was. Because I know, she, she probably, because I had been sick quite a

while and hadn't been able to write, so she probably wondered what in the world happened to me. And if I wasn't old I'd love to make another visit to Sweden, but I, and my...

LEVINE: Well, you might feel strong enough after a while.

LJUNQUIST: My, my niece would love to go. She'd love to see what it was like over there. She liked that. And, and that'd be fun, you know, but I don't know if I dare at this point in my life. I'd better stay put.

LEVINE: Well, how do you think your life would be different if you had never left Sweden? If you had grown up there and married there?

LJUNQUIST: Well, I, I really don't know. But I think I'd be just as well off as I am here.

LEVINE: How did you meet your husband when you were here?

LJUNQUIST: Let's see. Oh, we belonged to the same, same group in our, at that time I was always a Lutheran. But the kids that I hung around belonged to the Salem

Square Congregational Church. And they had a young people's society which was very active. They were, they'd go skiing, they'd go, you know, on all different things, you know. So I like, so I used to hang around with those kids. So that why I was with that group quite a bit.

LEVINE: And then your husband was also with that group?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. He belonged down, that's where he belonged. And his parents belonged there, too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And was he, was he coming from, did he come from Sweden?

LJUNQUIST: No.

LEVINE: No?

LJUNQUIST: He was born here.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

LJUNQUIST: Didn't even know one word in Swedish. (she laughs)
My mother used, my mother and I used to talk
Swedish between us, which was very natural, but, but
he didn't like it when we did, because he says,
"Hey, you could be talking about me," you know.
(she laughs) But it was very natural for me to talk
Swedish to my mother.

LEVINE: Now did your mother and father become citizens?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. Oh sure.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, let's see.

LJUNQUIST: In those days, when he became a citizen, and my
mother all, we were all citizens.

LEVINE: I see.

LJUNQUIST: I don't think it's that way today. I don't know
whether...

LEVINE: I think it depends on what age you are.

LJUNQUIST: Probably. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, when you look back over your life now, what makes you feel satisfied or proud of?

LJUNQUIST: Well, I don't know. (she pauses) I don't know. I guess, I don't know if I, oh, I guess I done all right when you think of it, you know. We, well, what I'm proudest of is that, see, my, my husband was a great golfer. He loved to play golf. And I would have, I thought that was just nonsense. That was a waste of time as far as I was concerned. So I said to him one day, well, oh, and we lived in, in an apartment downtown on Oberlin Street. And it was a very nice and very cute apartment. But it was hot as hades in the summertime. So I said to Harry one day, "Well, if you're going to be out every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday," and that's when he played golf those three days, every week. "If you're going to be out there, I'm not going to be sitting in a hot apartment." So he said, "Well, well, what do you think?" Well then one day we, one of the women that Harry worked with was always, we used to go and visit her, and also she worked with

him very closely. So she said, "You should come up and live on Brottelle Street. That's where you should live." So one day I convinced him, and I said, I said, "Let's go look at land up there." (she laughs) And I had to laugh, you know. So we get a hold of the guy that owned, all these houses weren't here, you know. It was all empty space. So the guy came down, and so he said, "Well, I can sell this one cheap, because nobody wants it. It hasn't got enough area to it." And my husband said, "That's for me. I'm no gardener." So that why we put this little bitty plot of land. And I didn't care what it was. As long as I could put my feet outdoors, you know. So I said, I don't care what it is. As long as I can step, take a step out the door, and walk on, on grass, you know. It was, you know, it wasn't paved or anything then. The street wasn't paved even. No. So, so that's when we bought this property. And I thought if he's going to play golf, I'll stick around here, you know, and plant my garden. So I was, that's what my main occupation in those days, was planting the yard.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you ever work?

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LJUNQUIST: Oh, sure. I had a good job.

LEVINE: What did you do?

LJUNQUIST: Yeah. I worked at a, a wire company. Thom,
Thompson Wire Company. And so I was secretary to
the president of that company.

LEVINE: Wow. And...

LJUNQUIST: So, I mean, I gave, I made good money, anyway.

LEVINE: Did you work right up until retirement age?

LJUNQUIST: No, not retirement age. No. I quit when we came up
here.

LEVINE: When did you come up here?

LJUNQUIST: 1940.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh. And did you have children?

LJUNQUIST: Hm?

LEVINE: Did you have children?

LJUNQUIST: No. We never had family.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So you were content when you had your little house, and...

LJUNQUIST: Sure. Oh, sure, I was happy with this.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah. Is there anything, how about this time in your life, this old age time? I mean, you, you've had a trauma. Here, let me take this, because it's going to pick up...

LJUNQUIST: Well, I don't know whether, I can't say much about it, because. (she pause) For one thing I'm, I'm lonely living alone, because night times are terrible I think. But it's because, it's because I miss my husband. I'm sure that's what it is. And, so day time's not so bad, because it's a friendly neighborhood. My next door neighbor's, you know, in and out. And, and, and all of that. But come night time I really, that's when I really feel alone. But I think everybody's, has that feeling I suppose.

LEVINE: Well, it's also fairly recent that, that you lost your husband.

LJUNQUIST: That's, that's true. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LJUNQUIST: It's not even a year ago.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, well, we're just about at the end of the tape. Is there anything else you can think of that has to do with immigrating to this country, and...

LJUNQUIST: No.

LEVINE: ...being Swedish, and living your life here, and anything else that you can think of that you want to say?

LJUNQUIST: No. I can't remember anything except that, the thing that I remember, I remember the, see, we always spoke Swedish at home. And my father insisted because he used to always say, "Nothing wrong with knowing two languages." And we speak

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Swedish at home. So that's how, I, I won't answer you if you speak in English. So, but I remember the first day of school, because one of the little girls that I had played with was killed right in front of the West Balston Street School that very day. And I guess I cried and acted up for some time after that, and didn't want to go to school.

LEVINE: Okay, well, the tape is just about over, so I'm going to close here...

LJUNQUIST: Okay.

LEVINE: ...and I want to thank you so much for a wonderful interview.

LJUNQUIST: Oh, you're welcome.

LEVINE: I've been speaking with Elsa Ljunquist, who came from Sweden when you were just about five in 1910.

LJUNQUIST: Uh-huh. Sure.

LEVINE: Today is July 21st, 1995, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service signing off.