

1928.

MOSES: My name is Moses Siedler. I was born on November 10, 1931.

SIGRIST: I see. Were you all born in the same town?

MOSES: No.

ARIELLA: No.

SIGRIST: All right. Why don't we do that, then, beginning with Moses.

MOSES: I was born in Helsinki, Finland. And my sister, Ariella, was also born in Helsinki, Finland.

SIGRIST: I see. And where was Leo born?

LEO: I was born in Warsaw, Poland.

SIGRIST: Can you tell us how you ended up being born in Poland?

LEO: My mother was there. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Were your parents visiting or what?

LEO: My mother originally, mother and father, originally came from Poland. My father left for Finland. While he was in Finland she gave birth to me. Then I went to Finland. I was

still a baby.

SIGRIST: I see. What were your parents' names?

LEO: My mother's name, as I remember, was Greta. And my father's name was Herman.

SIGRIST: I see.

LEO: And, of course, the last name applies, as it did in our case.

ARIELLA: However, as they left one country to the other their first names changed. In Poland they had other, first names. In Poland my mother's name was Grincha, which became Anglicized in Finland to Greta. And my father's name was Herschel, which became Anglocized when it went to Finland as Herman.

SIGRIST: Why? Why was this?

ARIELLA: Because the other names were Yiddish names and shtetl names in Poland. And when you went to Finland it was a Christian country and you picked a Christian name, as was done in America very often. Names were Anglicized when they came here.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about how your parents met. Does anyone know?

ARIELLA: My mother, my father was my mother's oldest brother's friend. And my mother, and I'm quoting, "Was the prettiest girl in town," and he wanted to marry her and really chased her for years and years. He was ten years older than her and she really didn't appreciate it. But as she grew up he was more comfortable than she. And in those times you married for a lot of reasons, that being one of them.

SIGRIST: What business was your father in, Leo?

LEO: My father started in the beginning as a tailor. At fourteen years he had his own shop with married men working for him. And he was always a very hard worker, and he continued when he went to Finland and worked over there too and started his own business.

SIGRIST: Was this a family business?

LEO: This was a business that was first taken care of by his brother and him, and I understand other brothers came into it afterwards.

SIGRIST: I see. Did your mother work at all growing up, do you know?

MOSES: Yes. In Finland my mother worked with my father in

the factory. They had a clothing factory there, a men's clothing factory. And they did work. And whether you want to consider it fortunate or fortunate, the children were brought up basically by maids. And my father was very comfortable in Finland. And we basically didn't see very much of our parents.

So I guess I'm getting ahead of myself, but maybe it was a blessing that the war came in our family case.

SIGRIST: Let's talk about being kids growing up. Describe your house for me.

ARIELLA: Well, I saw the house last week. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: All right. Well, tell me about that.

ARIELLA: And it was an apartment in a three-story building and it has wood on the walls. It was, I would think, an upper middle class apartment in those days. And they went to business every day. And, as I said, he said, there were maids in the house that took care of us.

SIGRIST: How many rooms in the apartment?

ARIELLA: Oh, everybody in the family, this was the extended family. I had an uncle that lived with us, a grandmother that lived with us, two maids that lived, and us. There must have been five bedrooms, six bedrooms, maybe. You know, it was one

of these old, large apartments.

SIGRIST: Talk about the environment in the house. Was this a quiet family? Was this a noisy family?

ARIELLA: It was a Yiddish family that spoke Yiddish as their primary language in Finland. And there were a lot of people, so I guess it was very noisy.

LEO: The inclusion of my grandmother, she got us started on the Yiddish. But actually we were brought up in the beginning, almost like in two religions. For example, at Christmas time we had a Christmas tree. My father used to put on a Santa Claus suit. You have to understand that we lived in a society that was ninety-nine and nine tenths percent Lutheran. So we were a tremendous minority over there. But we were unlike anything that you would expect to come out from over there, you know. We were very modern-thinking and everything, yet we knew where our roots were.

SIGRIST: What was the Jewish community like in Finland?

LEO: Well, most of them had their own businesses. There was one synagogue over there, and the fellow in charge was the only rabbi in the area. And, of course, we'd go and pray, but outside we'd eat whatever we wanted to eat. We weren't very,

shall we say, orthodox as a lot of people say coming from Poland or other parts of Europe were. And, of course, most of the Jewish people had dark hair, and the Finns were about as blonde as they come. So you could see that there's a lot of intermarrying and things of that sort.

ARIELLA: There were two thousand Jews in 1940 in Helsinki.

LEO: Yes.

ARIELLA: All of the children went to a Jewish school.

SIGRIST: And does that include you?

LEO and MOSES: Yes.

ARIELLA: Including those two people. In fact, they still do, most of them. And they had a very close community.

SIGRIST: Was there any kind of religious persecution in this neighborhood?

ARIELLA: No.

MOSES: Not in Finland.

ARIELLA: Not in Finland.

LEO: They got along there.

MOSES: They co-existed very well together in Finland.

ARIELLA: They weren't friends, but they . . .

MOSES: They co-existed very, very well. They were good for each other, the people.

LEO: Very fine people.

MOSES: It's interesting, in 1962 when I returned to Finland, I visited Finland. I was thirty-one years old at the time. I left when I was eight years old. And I never had a birth certificate. So I went back to Finland. I was hoping to get my birth certificate. So I went to the hospital and found that the hospital had been bombed during the Finnish-Russian war, and all records were destroyed. So I remember I had gone to school there, so I went back to the old school where I went to school and the interesting thing, as I walked into the front door the receptionist behind the desk took one look at me and yelled out my name, "Moses!" And this is from eight years old to thirty-one. I think the ears were a dead giveaway. (they laugh) But they did have records of my birth and I have a photostatic copy from the school, a record of my birth, so I had been born.

SIGRIST: Tell me about going to school when you were a kid.

MOSES: When I went to school there were a lot of, well, they

were all Jewish and we knew each other very well. Like there was a, I remember a Mary Yakabovich. In fact, the woman that yelled out my name, that was her mother. And she said, "Don't you remember me?" And I said, "No." She says, "Do you remember Mary Yakabovich?" I said, "The name sounds familiar." You know. She said, "Oh, she married a dentist." I said, "That's wonderful." And . . .

SIGRIST: Can you describe the building for me, the school building?

MOSES: It was, I don't know if I'm wrong or not. Everything was exaggerated when I went back there. I was able to walk everywhere in Helsinki and find everything. But distances were very exaggerated, as a matter of fact. I remember it seemed like a long distance to go to school, especially in wintertime on skis. And when I went there it wasn't far away at all. And then there was this huge park. I remember the bomb shelter was on the far end, and I, we had to run for the bomb shelter. When I went over there it was just a tiny little plot of grass, you know, and things like that.

SIGRIST: Talk about, you say running for the bomb shelter. Obviously, you know, at the onset of World War II they must have had drills and that sort of thing in school? Is that what

you're referring to, running to the bomb shelter?

MOSES: No, from my apartment. From the school I remember, I don't know, maybe my brother remembers more, but from the school I remember going to, there was a cemetery not far away. And I remember hiding behind the tombstones. I figured when the trains came down to strafe they wouldn't get me that way.

ARIELLA: This was not World War II.

MOSES: This was the Finnish-Russian war.

SIGRIST: Yes, I'm sorry.

ARIELLA: The Finnish-Russian war.

SIGRIST: That's right. The Finnish-Russian war.

LEO: Actually there were two Finnish-Russian wars. We're talking about the first one. What we had all done was go to school. At that time, all of a sudden they had a bomb, shall we say, trainings, you know, air raid training center. Okay. That was over. Suddenly they all tell us to go home. They wouldn't tell us why, but they told us all to go home. So I went home, and I decided since I was home early give me a chance to get a book out of a bookstore. See, you didn't only go to a library. You had a bookstore where you could buy books. Well, I went

across to the bookstore. And as I came across over there I never crossed the street. The bomb hit right near me. A trolley car completely blew up. All the people died on it. I somehow lived. I don't know how. I saw red all around me. I saw my father running. He was running towards the building. I remember they had told us not to. I held him back, and sure enough the building blew up and he didn't go into that thing. Well, that night we left Helsinki. It was all thick with glass and everything. And luckily the family stayed there. We were all over the place, all over Helsinki. They were together. If I remember with my mother, right, and me and Dad came later into the building. I think you were at that big building, that modern building on the corner, right?

MOSES: I can't remember.

LEO: Yeah. See, I can go back. I was a few years older.

ARIELLA: But we were separated. My mother always said Leo was separated, and she worried for a very long time.

MOSES: (he laughs) Yeah. I sleep very well.

SIGRIST: This leads me to an interesting question. What was it like being kids growing up in this kind of atmosphere?

LEO: Okay. First of all you have to understand that living

in Helsinki, in Finland, we lived a hundred years behind your times. We had trolley cars which at that time you don't have here.

MOSES: They had them here.

ARIELLA: We had them in Boston now.

LEO: Just a minute. We used to go and buy milk with, you know, a steel can and a ladle. We used to have schidilitz powder instead of having any other . . .

SIGRIST: I'm sorry. What?

LEO: It was a powder. Instead of taking drugs like we do over here in pills, we'd put that in a spoon and put in some syrup and we ate it, you know.

SIGRIST: I see.

MOSES: I remember my uncle had the first florescent light in Helsinki in 1939. And he also had the first refrigerator without a motor on the top. I remember Uncle Albert had the first one . . .

ARIELLA: Now, I, it's interesting the years have changed. Because I think it was a very modern country.

MOSES: But things changed a lot in the United States from that period of time too, so it wasn't a hundred years behind because the United States was a hundred years behind in those days, too.

SIGRIST: My question was what was it like being a child and, you know, everything that goes with being a child, living in this kind of war environment. I mean, that was a rather traumatic thing that you experienced.

LEO: We were constantly living in the shadow of Russia. And while history would show that Russia didn't think that badly of us, in fact, when Finland was part of Russia they treated the Finns better than they did the Russians. But living next to a country which could swallow you up in no time at all, it was scary, it was scary.

SIGRIST: As a girl, how did you feel?

ARIELLA: I was a child, and I was happy. But I know a story about Leo that I heard for years afterwards in school. He came to school here. He was twelve years old and was put in fifth or sixth grade.

SIGRIST: Is this concerning America?

ARIELLA: Yes, but, no. But it concerns, okay.

SIGRIST: Okay. Well, go ahead.

ARIELLA: Okay. He came and an airplane went over the school. And he spoke no English or very little English, and pulled at his teacher's desk. Because in America during World War II maybe we hid under the desks sometimes when they had an air raid, but certainly plenty of airplanes went through and we didn't do anything, and he couldn't speak English, and he pulled on that teacher, Mrs. Fluger. I remember her telling the story for years later, "Why aren't we hiding? Why aren't we going in the cellar?" Pulling her to put her someplace because to a twelve-year-old he knew an airplane up there was trouble.

SIGRIST: You were so conditioned from living in that environment.

ARIELLA: And in America, obviously, I mean, you know, we played at air raid drills. You know, during World War II we really played at air raid drills.

MOSES: Exactly.

SIGRIST: That it interesting.

MOSES: Being eight years old I think it was more of a game really. You know, this business of running to, hiding

behind . . .

LEO: We had too much anti-aircraft.

MOSES: Running to the basement, and running for this. And hearing about the hero, you know, the one that pulled his father out of a burning building who weighed considerably more than he did, you know, with the excess flow of adrenaline. These were all, it was almost like a game thing, you know. And I don't think the fear was amongst the very young. I think as you got older there was more fear because they knew what they were getting into.

SIGRIST: Talk about your parents a little bit. What little could you glean from their behavior? How do you think they felt living in this environment?

MOSES: They had a big problem there because the separation, that was the biggest thing. The air raids were daily. And my father would be at the factory and my mother would maybe be home and we would be at school. And then the air raid occurred and there was no time for the family to re-unite. And my father would have to find his own shelter, my mother would find. And we would find ours. And Ariella was young then, so she would be with her mother or with a maid. And the family was pretty well-separated, and that was the biggest fear that my parents had,

you know. They never knew if we had made it through the air raid or what. And from what I gather, when I spoke to my mother and father, this was a big fear.

SIGRIST: A very emotionally stressful environment to be living in.

ARIELLA: You don't leave a country that has been very good to you for twelve years to another country where you don't know the language at all unless, you know, you find something so traumatic. I don't know if I would have left. I ask myself all the time.

SIGRIST: Ariella, describe your father for me. Describe, start by describing what he looked like, and then talk a little bit about his personality.

ARIELLA: My father was probably 5'4". He was born poor, built a business once in Poland. Obviously he had a lot of courage, and as I get older I realize how much courage to leave a country where you were born and spoke the language in a very close quarters in Poland, to go to a country which was to a Polish people, like Siberia. Finland, snow, ice and everything, and go, and really do very, very well, and become wealthy. And then bombs come twelve years later, and again you leave to go to another country where you don't speak the language, where

there's no money really waiting for you, with papers that aren't terribly good. And as I get older I think maybe they knew that. But with papers that aren't terrific, and get out and go there. I just, the older I get the braver I think they are.

SIGRIST: What was his temperament like?

ARIELLA: He was loving of his daughter. He was, I think quiet mostly. His job, as was with men those days, was to work, earn a living for his family. Mother really took care of home and house and family.

SIGRIST: He was very focused.

ARIELLA: Yeah. And we always say he made the big decisions and she made the little ones like what the children should do and what house they should live and stuff like that. He decided, you know, when to leave Finland.

SIGRIST: Gentlemen, why don't I ask you to sort of give me the same kind of description of your mother. Let's start with Leo.

LEO: Okay. My mother, she was easier to talk to than he was, a typical man of the times. Men in those days was a very dominant person. For example, even at night when we had our dinner nobody would eat until Dad got home. And then we'd eat, in the dining room. We never ate in the kitchen like they do

over here. But he had a good heart. He tried to do everything within his power.

SIGRIST: I see. What was your mother's temperament?

MOSES: My mother was born in the wrong generation. If she had been born in the present generation she would have been a genius. She had a super mathematical ability of adding columns of numbers together. She was very bright. She was the brains behind the family. When we came to the United States neither my mother or father had much of an education, maybe to a second or third grade education. They both spoke semi-fluently about seven languages, which is quite common in Europe, though. My mother went to night school and graduated high school in the United States. She hungered for education.

SIGRIST: Had she been educated in Europe at all? Had she had those opportunities?

MOSES: No. In Poland, where they grew up, they didn't have the opportunities to be educated, no. And in Finland they were too busy making money. And my father started night school with my mother, and after a short time he left, he quit. It was just too much for him. But my mother considered, continued on, and got a diploma, a high school diploma. And she was very brilliant. She was really the brains behind my father. My

father had this knack, which evidently I acquired, of handling people. He was very good with people. That was his thing. He was a bad businessman. He had an uncle, Abram, who was a good businessman. He could lie, he could cheat. He would never tell you what the price was. My father, if you asked him, he would tell you, you know. And that's not what you do in business within how much profit you make. But he, but the people in the factory loved to work for him. He was very good with the people. He had that knack. My mother was really the brains, the bookkeeper, the one that kept the accounts, and . . .

SIGRIST: So they made a good team.

MOSES: They were an excellent team.

ARIELLA: As most women, she was the strength in the family.
(they laugh) Except those years you weren't allowed to say so.

LEO: Things haven't changed.

SIGRIST: You were going to say something, Leo.

LEO: Things haven't changed at all. Actually the fact of it is, okay. You have to understand we lived in a total man's world. She could say whatever he allowed to be said, okay. That's what it amounted to. That's what it did. They're

talking about what they read. I'm talking about what I remember, because I was a teenager. So I'm talking what I saw them do, okay. (they laugh)

MOSES: The truth is that my father didn't want to leave Finland.

LEO: But he learned, she learned very fast. She wanted education and everything. He was happy just being a good man that he was. He was a very good inside man. He knew how to get things out. He knew how to take care of the workers and things like that. And my uncle was the salesman of the thing.

MOSES: My father didn't really want to leave Finland. He loved Finland.

SIGRIST: This is a good time to start talking about this.

MOSES: But my mother felt that it was his obligation, he had a family. My uncle Abram did not, he was not married. He did not have a family.

SIGRIST: Could you spell his name for me, please?

MOSES: Abram? A-B-R-A-M.

SIGRIST: Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

MOSES: Or, in English, Abraham.

SIGRIST: Sure.

MOSES: Abram was single. My mother, my father had a family of three children, and my mother just laid the law down, says, "We're going to leave and we're going to go to the United States where the children are going to be safe. It's your obligation." And so forth.

SIGRIST: Was there one specific event that precipitated this? Something that . . .

MOSES: Yeah, it's called bombings. (he laughs) It was dangerous.

SIGRIST: But was there one specific incident that.

MOSES: Well, the separation of the family during the bombing raids. It must have been terrible for my parents. You know, like, for me, I was eight years old. You know, to me it was a game. My sister probably doesn't remember, and my brother probably does remember, and he's sort of half way between me and my parents in remembrance, because he's older. And my mother was really the one that really ran the house. And, uh . . .

SIGRIST: What did your mother know of America?

MOSES: Nothing, except that she had a sister here. She had a sister Ruth over here.

SIGRIST: What was Ruth doing here?

MOSES: Uh, she was married.

ARIELLA: And she was working in the garment center.

MOSES: And she was working in the garment center. She was . . .

ARIELLA: She knew America was safe. She always said that, way back when they were in Poland. Rumors had gotten there that America was safe. There were no pogroms there. There were no wars there.

SIGRIST: What did you as children know of America?

MOSES: Interesting.

LEO: Well, when we heard, in Finland, we had mixed reviews of America. We felt, from my studies anyhow, that Abraham Lincoln was the greatest president you had, okay? However, there was another thing, too. You have to remember that Finland hasn't had capital punishment since 1937. So when we read about your electric chair, or America's electric chair, we sort of frowned on that. We felt it was barbaric. And, of course, the

reason being we didn't know that this has so many ethnic groups, you know. When I was in school in Finland we had once a play where there was a black fellow. They had to paint him and put him in a grass skirt. They felt that was a black fellow, you know.

SIGRIST: Sure.

LEO: I never realized what it was until I came here, and then I did my own study in learning and understanding about things that I knew nothing about.

SIGRIST: What, Moses, did you know of America?

MOSES: When we were children we were allowed to go to movies, but there were only two types of movies we could go to see. One was Shirley Temple, and the other one was Tarzan. And to me a black person was a man with a hoop through his nose, carrying a spear, wearing a grass skirt. When we first went to Stockholm and I saw a black person in a suit wearing a Hamburg carrying a briefcase, you know, I was surprised. You know, it was really a big surprise. And when we came to the United States and we moved into Brooklyn and there was a park across the street. I remember we went across the street and they had all these black kids playing there. And my father rounded them all up and put us in the middle, there must have been about fifty of them, and

took a photograph of us. I mean, to us it was something very strange, something different.

SIGRIST: Sure.

MOSES: And we weren't born with inherent fears that most New Yorkers had, you know, of the different ethnic races.

SIGRIST: Ariella, did you as a little girl have any pre-conceptions of America?

ARIELLA: No, not really.

SIGRIST: You just didn't . . .

ARIELLA: No. I went wherever my mother went, and they brought me a big doll to come here. That I remember. I had it for years. It was like a baby.

SIGRIST: Was this sort of an appeasement? You know, how did you feel about leaving?

ARIELLA: I'm sure it was an appeasement. I'm sure it was very much an appeasement. We were going to another, they thought the war would be over in three months and they'd go home.

SIGRIST: And you're talking about, at least Moses is talking about, being in an environment which is potentially dangerous

for adults, but actually kind of fun for kids.

ARIELLA: Well, in a way it was.

SIGRIST: Yeah. So how did you as kids feel about leaving your home?

MOSES: Well, we left our school, we left our friends, we left our ski holidays, we . . .

SIGRIST: How did your parents approach this? Did they round you up and say, "We're leaving."? Is that what they did?

ARIELLA: You know what? In 1940 and '45, you were younger, and I have children your age, you did what your parents asked you. We didn't discuss things as a family. Things that were bad were kept from you, you know. Problems were talked about behind doors. Everything had to be quiet for the children and happy. Now, you know, it's almost you can't understand. We discuss things, the whole family knows about every tragedy in every family. That's not how it was in America, in Finland, or any place in 1940, '42, '44. You went where your parents took you, that's all.

SIGRIST: I see. Leo?

LEO: We were going to school. You've got to understand.

It's like seeing Hitler Youth. We sat in school with our hands in front of us. You couldn't look at the girl that sat next to you. If you did the twitch, your hand would be hit. If you as much as spoke out, they'd tell your parents and you got another twitch. In other words, the parents had absolute control of the children. In school I think we had one kid once that failed something. They all looked at him like he was retarded.

There's something drastically wrong. Maybe he had to go and see a doctor or something. It just wasn't done. I mean, the daughter failing was so scary that you just didn't do it.

SIGRIST: And so when your parents said, "We're going to America," I mean, you simply accepted this and acquiesced.

LEO: Same thing at home.

ARIELLA: I mean, they tried to be nice about it. I remember this doll well. I'm sure the doll was something to keep her happy across the trip. And I'm sure they got the equivalent of the doll in something else.

LEO: I remember that doll. It was a beautiful, big one.

MOSES: Since we weren't expected to go to the new world, the United States, we were kind of ignorant of the United States, really. And I remember the sailors on the ship would tell me

stories. You know, they're talking about the first English word, "fifty-fifty."

SIGRIST: Well, we'll get to that when we get on the boat.

MOSES: Okay.

SIGRIST: Do you remember packing? Does anyone remember packing?

MOSES: It was done in a rush. The streets were full of glass. I mean, from the windows. It was done in a rush. My father had, I recall my father had to go all over looking for somebody who would take us out of Helsinki to get us into the country to begin with, get us out of Helsinki. And he finally was able to buy somebody off that would take us there, a taxi. And they took us out, and eventually we got a train. And I remember then a train that we took north going towards Sweden. And I guess that comes in later also.

LEO: This is what I remember. First we went to a little town north of Helsinki named Nummela.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

LEO: N-U-M-M-E-L-A. And there was no place to put us, so they put us up in a gym over at the school. Picture that, where

they just put the bedding right on the gym floor. And we sat there and we, you know, slept and whatever. And they tried to feed us and things of that sort. But then later, and that goes to his part, we went. We had heard that one boat had come across from Hango, which is the edge, to Sweden, to Stockholm. But they had bombed that boat, so Dad and Mom were afraid to take that boat across, although it was a very short trip. And we took the train all the way up north, all the way up to where the Bothnian Gulf closes up. And there's a town on the Finnish side called Tornio. We went from there to the Swedish side and took the train all the way down to Stockholm.

SIGRIST: Which is a very long train ride.

LEO: It is.

ARIELLA: Yes, it's long.

SIGRIST: How long are we talking about?

LEO: We're talking about old trains, not trains that go the speed that we have today. And we stayed in Stockholm. I don't remember how long, but it wasn't that long.

MOSES: It also stopped and went, there used to be air raids. And every time there was an air raid the train would stop.

LEO: That's right. You'd go back in the woods.

MOSES: Everybody would have to get off the train and lay down in the snow. We had these white robes, you know, so we'd be sort of covered up by this.

ARIELLA: I have a story about the white fabric. You had to bring white fabric, and most people probably brought white blankets. But my father was in the clothing business, so we had white, bolts of white wool, white . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: Talking about the white wool.

ARIELLA: Yes. Why buy when you could take bolts of beautiful white wool and take that instead? (her brothers laugh) And so the beautiful white wool . . .

MOSES: I remember that.

ARIELLA: . . . covered us every time you had to go over. Well, the white wool came to America with us, and need I say that for twelve years until I was twelve years old I had white winter coats.

MOSES: And white dresses.

ARIELLA: And those were the bolts of wool. Of course, you didn't waste. And I remember so well getting my first red coat at thirteen.

SIGRIST: Your father then had already arranged papers before you left Helsinki of some sort, some sort of traveling papers. Talk to me a little bit about that. How did he go about getting them?

ARIELLA: We don't really know. I know what I probably think now. Papers were not easy to come by, and they did get papers. I don't know. There were other Finnish people on the same boat, several other families.

SIGRIST: Coming from Helsinki?

ARIELLA: Coming, with the same problem.

SIGRIST: Oh, I see.

ARIELLA: So there must have, I don't know. I know what I would think today.

SIGRIST: Which is?

ARIELLA: They were Polish refugees. They had to get on the Polish list, you know, get a visa from the Polish list, because

they were Polish citizens, I'm sorry. My guess is that there was money passed for the papers. To say that that's fact, I couldn't say it. My mother and father never told me that. Maybe I'm an American and I, I don't know. But we certainly got papers.

SIGRIST: I see. How long did you stay in Stockholm?

MOSES: I can't remember, I'm sorry.

LEO: Stockholm, we stayed at a hotel over there. I still remember the name of the hotel. It was called Hotel Regina, that was right close to the palace. We were very close, and they liked to live good, so it was a nice hotel, at that time. I understand that that hotel still exists. However, from there we did take the train, finally, over to Oslo.

SIGRIST: How long were you in Sweden, in Stockholm?

LEO: Would I say a week, two weeks?

MOSES: I don't think it was that long.

ARIELLA: A week or two. The thing took a while, until we got to Bergen. I don't know where.

LEO: It's funny, I have a blank about that. I can rely on her historical knowledge.

ARIELLA: We stayed in the country and we stayed in Stockholm, and we arrived here, I guess, in March, and it took about ten days to get here. So if you sort of count when we left and all I would say that the trip from Helsinki to the boat probably took about ten days.

LEO: Exactly. Ten days, I don't know.

ARIELLA: Twelve days, between. I don't know where we stayed along the way. It's a very long way on the map if you look. It's really going . . .

SIGRIST: Just the train, you going up and going down.

LEO: We criss-crossed across. (voices garbled) Here's what I understand . . .

ARIELLA: It's going to Canada to come to New Jersey from here.

LEO: Here's what I understand what happened. This ship was called the S.S. Bergensfjord.

SIGRIST: I'm sorry. It was . . .

LEO: S.S. Bergensfjord.

SIGRIST: Bergensfjord.

LEO: Yes. There was a Norwegian line that at that time had the Oslofjord, the Stavangerfjord and the Bergensfjord. The Bergensfjord was the ship we took. We took it from Oslo. And I remember going through the fjord into Bergen, and we stayed there maybe a day. And then we continued from there and came straight to America.

SIGRIST: I see.

LEO: Then I understand that they were trying to dodge the submarines. Now, that's where I'm confused. Either our boat, or when the Bergensfjord made the next trip, they took the gold from Norway, because they knew that the Germans were going to conquer Norway.

MOSES: But we don't know about that.

ARIELLA: We don't know about that.

LEO: Well, that's what I forget.

MOSES: The thing is, the Sweden trip, go back to Sweden again. The Swedish trip was interesting because that's sort of the area where you did the contraband turnover. You know, all the silver that we brought from Finland that we were going to take to the United States, we had to have it all monogrammed to make sure it shows up as personal so no one has this tremendous

set of sterling silver and half the, part of the things had my initials and part had her initials and some had his initials, some my mother's, some my father's, you know. It, everybody in the family's initials are on the silver, but they had to be done fast. And they had to, they couldn't take money with them so, you know, those Finnish markers, so they bought things like that. Diamonds, and they brought over. And, of course . . .

ARIELLA: They took what, one diamond. Let's not make them . . .

MOSES: But the diamond was a, well, the Swedes knew what they were doing. They charged us top dollar probably, on a very low-grade diamond. But, you know, it was better than nothing. And as far as coming over they did a zig-zag pattern. And I think I mentioned earlier it was the busiest people on the ship were the painters that changed the colors on the stacks. And as we went into various color waters, you know, there would be the German colors and the English colors and the American colors and whatever it was. And I don't know if that fooled the submarines or not, but we made it. And they did do a zig-zag pattern. That's why it took longer for the ship to come from Norway to the United States.

SIGRIST: Were there safety drills on the boat that you

remember?

MOSES: Yes, continuously, yes.

SIGRIST: Can you describe that to me?

MOSES: Well, they used to make us wear these vests, you know, orange things, you know, like cork or something. And we had to wear those things. They had those safety drills continuously. And . . .

LEO: I remember on the trip. I don't know if they would have remembered. We had a terrible hurricane. If you ever saw Hell, take a boat in the middle of a hurricane in the middle of the Atlantic. I was so sick that they had to tie me outside of the ship to keep me from just completely. And I was watching waves that were over a hundred feet long, you know, the boat looked one-quarter the size, you know. And it was a terrible experience in itself.

SIGRIST: Do you have memories of this storm, either of you?

MOSES: No.

ARIELLA: No.

LEO: See, they were too young.

SIGRIST: Can you describe your accommodations on the boat?
Where did you sleep?

ARIELLA: We had first class tickets because those were the only ones, obviously, available. And so except for the war time and that, I guess that's the only time we've ever been on a first class ship. We did have good accommodations.

MOSES: And I remember the captain had us over and we ate meals with him a lot of times. The sailors were very friendly with us and they sort of watched over us.

SIGRIST: And they taught you some English.

MOSES: One, "fifty-fifty." That's probably all he knew. (he laughs) And they played games with us on the ship and they pretty well babysat with us. They were very friendly people, the sailors.

SIGRIST: Talk to me about the dining room on the boat. Where did you eat?

LEO: Well, okay. On that boat there were three classes. There was first class, as my sister says, and you ate pretty good over there, lobster, whatever. You ate good. And then they had the second class, which was down below a little bit. And of course there was the tourist class, which was way on the

bottom. We used to get movies. I guess they would get a second-rate movie, and the guys in the bottom didn't get no movie. But, you know, we had it good coming across except for storms and the boat wasn't that big a boat by standards you're used to hearing about, the Queen Elizabeth II and things like that. This was a boat that was about eleven thousand tons.

MOSES: That's right.

LEO: Huh?

MOSES: That's about right.

LEO: Yeah. It wasn't a big boat. So anything that they could have weathered with no trouble at all, you know, you hear them coming here in five days. There was nothing like that.

SIGRIST: I see. What do you think your parents are thinking while they were on the boat.

ARIELLA: They were afraid.

SIGRIST: Talk about that.

ARIELLA: My mother was afraid. She didn't know what would be waiting for her. She didn't know if they'd send her back. She knew that she was going to New York with papers for Haiti. She didn't want to go to Haiti.

SIGRIST: Which we haven't really talked about. Maybe this is a good time. Tell me why there were papers to go to Haiti.

ARIELLA: Because the Polish list for America was closed up.

SIGRIST: The Polish quota?

ARIELLA: The Polish quota. And the Haitian quota obviously was not closed. And what you wanted to do was get out of Finland, and that's why we had papers to Haiti.

SIGRIST: So it was simply a pretense.

ARIELLA: I would guess so.

MOSES: Yes. And I would think that they had no feeling about leaving the United States. My father did have a bank account in the United States, as he had one in England, too. And how much was in there I don't know.

ARIELLA: But it wasn't enough to . . .

MOSES: But whatever it was he did have an account here because it wasn't like he was coming in to absolute nothingness. And my mother had a sister over here in New York, and it wasn't as if, you know, we were coming, going into a totally strange country, that nobody's ever been here before.

SIGRIST: Sure, sure.

ARIELLA: And they thought they would soon be back. They really thought . . .

SIGRIST: And that was their intention.

ARIELLA: . . . the war would be over in three months.

MOSES: My father, definitely, and my mother, too.

ARIELLA: My mother, too. They both thought that the war would be over in three months. They could not believe that the war would last five years.

MOSES: Well, the first Finnish and Russian war did not last very long, you know.

ARIELLA: But then Germany went in.

MOSES: Then the second Finnish-Russian war, and the Germans went in . . .

LEO: Well, you had to understand that over here he would have been a plain person, possibly working for a living, and over there he lived a very good life.

SIGRIST: Very privileged.

LEO: You know, it's like saying that Greek person who lived in Russia. If you got money you can live a good life in Russia too, you know.

SIGRIST: Sure.

LEO: So that's what it was really all about.

ARIELLA: And he was right, because he was never again a wealthy man. He was really a garment center laborer for the rest of his life.

LEO: The tragedy is if he would have stayed here he probably would have been all right over here, too.

ARIELLA: Well . . .

SIGRIST: Let's talk about seeing the Statue of Liberty. Who remembers seeing the Statue of Liberty? Leo?

MOSES: We all did.

LEO: Well, when I first saw it I had tears in my eyes, as I did today when I got very close to it.

SIGRIST: How did you know the boat was coming by the Statue of Liberty? Did they bring you up on deck?

LEO: Well, I had read about that, and as I told you I was a

teenager already. So I more or less, you know, over there in school you have to learn a lot more than we did over here because the school we went to was a private school. You know, eight, nine years old you were learning foreign languages besides learning math, which was much more advanced than the public schools, like over here. But I saw the Statue of Liberty, and I had read about it. It was like a symbol of, "Hey, we're here, we're away from all that, what was going on."

SIGRIST: Sure. Moses, do you remember seeing it?

MOSES: Yeah. The sailors told us a lot about it and talked about the United States. And, of course, the biggest disappointment I ever had was realizing that the streets of New York were not paved with gold, as the sailors told me. I really expected them to be. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: When you pulled into New York Harbor what time of the day was it?

MOSES: I can't remember.

ARIELLA: We pulled into Ellis Island. We were never allowed to go off.

MOSES: No, you can't. The ship they couldn't pull to Ellis Island. It had to come into New York and we were taken to Ellis

Island.

ARIELLA: We were taken immediately to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: But I was just curious what time of the day.

MOSES: I can't recall.

LEO: I think it was early, around ten in the morning or something like that. What we were able to do was get off the boat, stay right by the, I think the boat came around Canal Street. That's where the Norwegian-American line used to land. From there we were watched, and we came on a, we went on a tugboat in that day. It wasn't like today where you see these boats coming in now. It was just an ordinary, like a Moran tugboat. And we were put on the, and we stayed on the backside of that. We were brought over to that old slip that's now not being used, see. And we were brought over here to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: Why did they take you to Ellis Island?

MOSES: We were aliens.

LEO: Well . . .

ARIELLA: Because our papers weren't good.

LEO: I think because, you see, in those days when people

went to Ellis Island it was because they wanted to check further to see if the eligibility was. Because now you'd have to make Ellis Island fifteen million times as big as it is because with all these, you know, aliens that are coming.

ARIELLA: Okay, they're no worse.

SIGRIST: But you ended up here because the papers were not . . .

ARIELLA: That's right.

MOSES: Well, also you have to go through health . . .

ARIELLA: No. First class . . .

SIGRIST: At that time they wouldn't have brought you here.

ARIELLA: No, they would not.

MOSES: No medical?

ARIELLA: First class people would not have come here for health reasons.

SIGRIST: In 1940 no one would have come here unless you had something wrong with the papers.

ARIELLA: Yes, with the papers. The only people that were here

were here, in fact, I like to tease him, he was a criminal.

SIGRIST: No. You're absolutely right, Ariella.

ARIELLA: That's the only people that came in 1940.

SIGRIST: And you didn't even swim the Rio Grande or anything. All right. Let's, now that we're at Ellis Island let's talk about that experience, because you were all here for an extended period of time, and I suspect you all have some recollection of that. Let's start off by talking, where did you stay when you were on Ellis Island?

MOSES: I think my brother could tell that.

SIGRIST: Leo?

LEO: Okay. There was dormitories set aside for us. It was more or less on like an army. We didn't have individual rooms. And we were separated from our parents. I'm quite sure my father wasn't . . . What?

ARIELLA: The little ones went with the mother.

LEO: The little ones went with the mother.

ARIELLA: That was, Mo and I went with my mother and grandmother, and Lenny was a man, so he went with his father.

SIGRIST: Can you describe this dormitory, what did it look like?

LEO: Well, let's see. It was a pretty big size dormitory. It wasn't at all like the type of materials we have today. Oh, boy.

SIGRIST: That's fine. Just go ahead.

LEO: Everything was regimented. You ate when they wanted you. You had a lot of time where you got bored, so they did try to help us. They gave the children toys which they were able to keep. We looked forward to those times, you know. You'd get a game or something else, and you were told you could keep it, see. And then, of course, we ate in a giant area where everybody ate there.

SIGRIST: Can you talk about the dining room for me?

LEO: The dining room was I would say the equivalent of what I seen in the movies, a prison dining room. You went there, you sat down, you ate, and then you went away from there and you were put back in always this dormitory that you stayed in. Your biggest problem was keeping yourself, because there was nothing really to do except the toys. They gave you one hour every day to go to the backyard. Now, the backyard was composed of giant,

of maybe fifteen foot high cyclone fencing. But the cyclone fencing was closed, the whole thing, so even if you could go to the top and climb out you couldn't get out because the whole top was covered with cyclone. They gave you an hour of fresh air. And boy, the way this was stagnant, I remember that part too. You looked forward to that hour like it was heaven. And when we got out of here I was happy. I was happy.

SIGRIST: Moses, what do you remember about being here?

MOSES: The most, the biggest thing, the main thing I remember really is the outside, being outside and looking through this wire fencing and noticing the segregation where the Orientals were segregated from us, and they were almost like prisoners. They were really out there. They had to work. We sort of hung around, you know, and did nothing, but they really had to work.

SIGRIST: What were they doing?

MOSES: They were just working. Raking, cleaning, moving rocks, things like that. And they were totally separated from everybody else. And I couldn't understand why. Later on they said, "Well, there's a lot of diseases that come from the Orient. You have to be careful." I don't know, I was eight years old. I didn't know about these things.

SIGRIST: Were there a lot of people here?

MOSES: Yes. There were, I remember Orientals. I can't remember about us. I don't know how many people were of ours.

LEO: There was quite a bit of us.

MOSES: It seemed to be like there were a lot.

LEO: I bet there was a couple of thousand people in here, you know. I don't know if you could think. It seemed to me it was a lot of people.

SIGRIST: I see.

LEO: I'm sure it was over a hundred.

MOSES: And we were here for a long time, so I guess we saw it, saw more of it. And maybe they sort of multiply, you know. I don't know. Like I said, from that age everything's exaggerated.

SIGRIST: Ariella, do you have any memories of being there?

ARIELLA: I just remember what my mother told me, really.

SIGRIST: What did she say?

ARIELLA: As a child, I was with my mother, you know, Heaven.

She was frightened all the time. There were people here that wanted to sell you things. She always said of the social service agencies the HIAS really helped you. And for years later she always said that they were really here to help the Jewish immigrant help. Otherwise there were people that really wanted to trade money and things like that. It wasn't all that. And they were frightened. She didn't like the idea Leo was separated from her, and they were afraid they'd be sent back. That's the only thing. I don't know if this comes at a good point, but when Ellis Island first opened, I've been here several times. And when it first opened, before they did it over, my mother was still alive. And I says, "Ma, how about coming with me and my children. You could really show us everything." And she said, "In my life I'll never set foot in there again." I mean, that I think says more than anything she ever said. She would never, ever come.

LEO: I had that same fear.

ARIELLA: Here again.

LEO: I had tears in my eyes when I just . . .

ARIELLA: And Leo had trouble coming here again.

LEO: Yes, I had trouble coming here.

MOSES: He lives in New York and he hadn't been here. I came from Maryland to come.

LEO: I had never been.

SIGRIST: Because it had such an emotional . . .

ARIELLA: I'm sure his was the most . . .

LEO: I had a traumatic thing I can't understand in my head today why a lot of people, and I see them coming through immigration, and by our standards they don't come even close to us. I mean, here you're looking at three people that, children that came over here. Every one of us is a professional.

ARIELLA: But that's America. That's not any of us. That's the America of the '40s and '50s.

MOSES: That was the opportunity.

LEO: And we came here speaking a very difficult language, harder than English even is. And the first thing we tried to do when we came here is learn how to speak English.

SIGRIST: Did they try to teach you that here at Ellis?

MOSES: Yes. There were classes here for English.

SIGRIST: That's right. You mentioned that on your form. Talk

about the classes.

MOSES: There were classes. They did try to teach you English over here. Of course, you know, I mean, it was limited. The biggest class for speaking English was the class of hard knocks, growing up as a kid in Brooklyn.

ARIELLA: Pacific Street.

MOSES: You know, "You dirty foreigner." "You greenhorn." They made fun of you and they fought with you.

SIGRIST: So you didn't learn a lot here.

MOSES: I remember going, not really. But I remember going to my mother and saying, "I don't want you to speak Finnish to me. Speak only English so I can learn how to speak English." And as a result I learned how to speak English with a great New York accent, and I forgot my Finnish.

SIGRIST: You mentioned medical exams here at Ellis Island. Did, tell me some of the things that you were subjected to while you were here.

LEO: Well, they took a lot of tests of us to determine that we didn't bring any sicknesses into this country. See, that's, the way things were in those days you never could have had AIDS

in this country.

SIGRIST: What specifically did they do?

LEO: Well, they checked you for, for example, in Poland they had cholera. Finland was a very modern country as far as medical things and everything. That little fellow, he, well, the little fellow, he's not a little fellow now, he had asthma, and they took care of it. Oh, I remember I was crying sitting on the sidewalk, "I'm going to lose my brother."

SIGRIST: They did that here.

LEO: No, that was over there. And he, you know, we used to always think of him as a weak, you know, he was very apt to get sick and everything. But he, God bless him, he's all right.

SIGRIST: All right. Well, in our final few minutes let's talk about, let's get you off of Ellis Island. Talk, I'm sure your father is busy trying to get you off of Ellis Island somehow.

ARIELLA: That's right.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about how it finally came to pass that you got off of this island.

ARIELLA: The HIAS allowed us to come, arranged for legal help that allowed us to come to America as tourists, which didn't

allow them to work. However, we could stay there, because by that time the war in Europe was really blowing up.

SIGRIST: So your father was constantly in contact with the HIAS division that was here.

ARIELLA: The HIAS, yes.

MOSES: Yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember leaving the island?

MOSES: I remember taking the, there was like a boat that took us, a little ferry boat.

LEO: We were glad to get off it.

ARIELLA: People visited us here. We were not . . .

MOSES: My aunt came.

ARIELLA: My aunt used to come, and cousins came and, you know. People did come here to visit us.

MOSES: To visit us, yes. So they told us about the United States and so forth.

SIGRIST: All right. Well, let's let you experience the United States first hand. Tell me what happened the first night after

you left here. Where did you go?

MOSES: Well, the first thing . . .

ARIELLA: We had an apartment on Pacific Street. It was waiting for us.

MOSES: Remember Pacific Street.

LEO: First when we left here we had to be separated. Different relatives took us in until we could get a place to live.

ARIELLA: Really?

LEO: Yes.

MOSES: I don't know.

LEO: I stayed with your Aunt Ruth, if you remember.

ARIELLA: I didn't know that.

LEO: Yes. And I think Mo stayed with somebody else.

SIGRIST: Why was that?

LEO: Because we had to live somewhere, and there was no place until we found an apartment.

MOSES: And furniture and all.

LEO: Then finally Dad got the apartment.

SIGRIST: How long were you all separated?

MOSES: I can remember it wasn't for that long.

SIGRIST: A couple of nights?

LEO: I'd say a couple of weeks maybe.

MOSES: We must have had twenty suitcases. I remember that.

LEO: Try thirty.

MOSES: Thirty, maybe. I don't know. It was like a, we
packed like a . . .

ARIELLA: We had suitcases all the years. (voices garbled)

LEO: Fancy suitcases. You could never believe it existed.

ARIELLA: They saved them for many years, because we were going
to go back with those suitcases. (they laugh)

MOSES: All I remember is we must have had a ton of suitcases.
Half the ship must have been suitcases of ours.

LEO: Finally we did get together and we moved to an

address. It was 2041 Pacific Street.

SIGRIST: And this is in Brooklyn.

LEO: Which is in Ocean Hill. Now, of course, it's a pretty bad area.

ARIELLA: There was a cousin living in that building, and he found the apartment.

LEO: Dad wanted a home across from a park. See, he remembered the way it was in Finland. What he didn't know was that that park was a hell of a park, I'll tell you. It taught us how to fight, not how to live with other people.

ARIELLA: We learned English. We went to the New York city public schools.

LEO: And unlike where I see a lot of the Russians they stay with their old language, we divorced ourselves completely to talking to, you know, instead of moving Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn over there where there's a lot of Finns over there, we wanted to learn how to be American, and we worked about it.

MOSES: The children made friends.

LEO: And we all became American.

SIGRIST: Ariella, Moses told us how he learned English. Tell me a bit how you learned English.

ARIELLA: I also learned on the streets. I have a friend who I'm still friendly with, and the story is that she ran home to her mother and said, "A little girl came here and she can't talk." Her mother thought that here was a speech-impaired child. (they laugh) And I soon learned, I talked, "Yoo-hoo." And I went to school. This happened in March or April, we came. I went to school the following September speaking English, because we did speak English. And we must have been rotten kids, but we went to our mother and said, "We don't want to speak that language. We want to speak what everybody else does." And my mother spoke English well. And so did we.

SIGRIST: Did your parents try to retain, uh . . .

ARIELLA: The Finnish? No.

SIGRIST: The Finnish?

ARIELLA: Twelve years doesn't make you very loyal. Maybe in truth they were not Finns, and maybe that was why. Because we speak Yiddish, because my grandmother lives with us, and they did speak Yiddish.

SIGRIST: And that's all she could speak was Yiddish, so we had

to be able to speak Yiddish.

ARIELLA: We did not retain Finnish at all. He knows a little bit, and that's . . .

LEO: We used to use the Yiddish to fill in. When we couldn't talk to people in English, we would fill in with Yiddish.

SIGRIST: The neighborhood in Brooklyn, was this a Jewish neighborhood?

MOSES: Yes.

LEO: Yes.

ARIELLA: Yes.

MOSES: Well, it was a ghetto.

LEO: There were three buildings that were Jewish.

MOSES: It was a ghetto neighborhood.

ARIELLA: It was very, the next street was Italian.

LEO: A lot of Irish, Italians.

ARIELLA: And this, but by street, it was Jewish on our street.

SIGRIST: And interesting question is most of the other people, the other Jews in this neighborhood obviously would not be Finnish. They would probably be from Eastern European countries and . . .

ARIELLA: Or they were American born, second generation Jews.

SIGRIST: Exactly. Did you feel any kind of being an outcast in a way for being Finnish Jews at all?

MOSES: I think the only outcast I felt was having an accent, you know, when they make fun of you.

ARIELLA: We dressed differently.

MOSES: We dressed differently, I mean, uh . . .

SIGRIST: How? Explain how.

ARIELLA: Well, I wore woolen woolies and no other girls did.

SIGRIST: And a white winter coat.

ARIELLA: And a white winter coat. And I also had a little fur coat that Americans don't have.

SIGRIST: And this did not go unnoticed by your peers?

ARIELLA: No. I hated it. And I remember well. We were

dressed warm when they weren't. They wore socks and I wore long, ugly woolen stockings. We really were dressed differently.

MOSES: And those kids were lucky enough to be able to go to go to a store and buy clothing when my father made all our clothing for us.

SIGRIST: This was a source of some sort of shame for you?

ARIELLA: To grow into.

MOSES: (he laughs) Yeah.

LEO: Picture a kid coming in with Buster Brown knickers.

ARIELLA: That was in the years before handmade was good.

SIGRIST: Yes, sure.

ARIELLA: It's gone through now. (all laugh)

SIGRIST: Leo, talk a little bit to me about how your parents adjusted to America in the last few minutes.

LEO: Well, my mother made it her business to adjust to America.

ARIELLA: She loved it.

LEO: She was a marvelous woman.

SIGRIST: Driven to do this.

LEO: Yes. Dad was like men were from Europe at that time. He decided whether he needed it or not. And whatever he said, that's the way it was. So when Mom went to school, "I don't have to go to school. I'm a businessman. I'm the one that made the money, not you." Right? So he wouldn't go to school. Then when she get a diploma, he became a little jealous of her, you know. "Hey, you're my wife. You're not supposed to be smarter than me." You've got to understand you lived in a day when a woman was nothing. The man was everything.

ARIELLA: But we all became an American, Americans. My father always stayed a foreigner, always.

LEO: My father would have like to have gone back to Finland to live his life out.

ARIELLA: Always.

LEO: He didn't . . .

SIGRIST: He talked about this?

ARIELLA: Oh, and he tried to go back. They went back for a little while in 1948.

MOSES: '47 to '54.

ARIELLA: Yeah. No, but my mother even went back, and by that time we were all Americans.

LEO: He wanted to bring us back over there.

ARIELLA: You know, even then she said America was safe. She went to Finland and there were Russian soldiers all over the place and she said, "I can't bring my family back there."

MOSES: My mother found her dream here in the United States.

LEO: She really felt that the schooling was good over here.

MOSES: She felt, the one thing she said was she had here what she never had in Finland, although in Finland they had a lot more money and all that, position, she had to work in the factory with my father all the time. Here she worked in a bakery, she made, she was the chief breadwinner, by the way.

ARIELLA: For a long time.

MOSES: For a long, long time. But she had her children, you see.

ARIELLA: And she was independent.

MOSES: This was something she didn't have in Finland.

LEO: Exactly.

MOSES: There were no maids. She took care of her own children. She brought them up, and she loved it. She said, "This is the only way to live." All the money in the world didn't mean a thing if she was not happy with it. She was far happier in the United States. She loved it here. She thought it was the only place to raise children. And I feel the same way. I feel, I've been traveling for many, many years now. I spent over ten years traveling with my family. My son was born in the Philippines. I've been offered some very good positions in various countries outside. This is the only place to live. I honestly feel that Americans should travel outside the United States a little bit more and live outside the United States to realize what they really have here. They have a wonderful country here.

LEO: It's true.

ARIELLA: You know, it's very interesting. We have traveled on vacations, and my mother never, never understood why you had to go. She just thought that America was very opportunity they ever had.

SIGRIST: Well, everything she ever wanted she realized here, I guess.

ARIELLA: If it's the ending, I have a very funny story.

SIGRIST: Sure. Go ahead.

ARIELLA: A true blue American.

SIGRIST: We have about a minute, a minute left.

ARIELLA: A true blue American, and I am that. I have two daughters. One was born on the Fourth of July, which was the day the Declaration of Independence was written, and the other was born on September 17th, which was when the Constitution was signed.

SIGRIST: Well, on that rather . . .

MOSES: I was born on November the 10th, Marine Corps Birthday.

ARIELLA: Nothing compares, it doesn't happen.

LEO: And also (?) day.

ARIELLA: And those are my Yankee Doodle children.

LEO: I'm just a nobody.

ARIELLA: They're my American children.

SIGRIST: Well, on that rather patriotic note . . .

ARIELLA: Isn't it?

LEO: Nothing's like America, believe me.

SIGRIST: I want to thank you for coming out to Ellis Island. This has been an absolute pleasure and very atypical of the interviews that we do. And I'm very glad you all came from parts unknown, you know, from a variety of different places to come out here to be with us, so thank you.

ARIELLA: Thank you for being here today.

LEO: We all love America. Always had and always will.

MOSES: It's a super country. We lived in Brazil, in the Philippines, in Trinidad, in Turkey. My family and myself. And we lived there for quite some time. We spent ten years outside the country. And let me tell you something, it's fabulous. Right now I have a job going in Greece. I love going there for a week, but I love coming back.

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist signing off for the National Park Service.