

EI-737

RUTH HAGGBLOM

BIRTHDATE: OCTOBER 11, 1900

INTERVIEW DATE: APRIL 22, 1996

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 95

RUNNING TIME: 59:45, 26:31

INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST

RECORDING ENGINEER: PAUL SIGRIST

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ISELIN, NEW JERSEY

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

FINLAND, 1922

23

SHIP: KUNGSHOLM

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Monday, April 22nd, 1996. I'm in Iselin, New Jersey, and Iselin is spelled I-S-E-L-I-N.

HAGGBLOM: That's right.

SIGRIST: I'm here with Mrs. Ruth Haggblom. Mrs. Haggblom came from Finland in 1923. When she finally got to the United States, she wasn't quite twenty-three. She was just twenty-two, almost twenty-three.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And I should also say that she had come from Finland and the quota had been filled and she was sent back for a short period of time in Sweden, correct, before then she was allowed to come back to the United States?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, that's right.

SIGRIST: Good. Mrs. Haggblom, can you give me your birth date, please?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, October 11, 1900.

SIGRIST: And where in Finland were you born?

HAGGBLOM: Åbo. That's a city--

SIGRIST: And could you spell that?

HAGGBLOM: A with a round dot B-O. They also had a Finnish name. Turku, T-U-R-K-U. The original people were Finnish, more of a Slavic type people. Then the Swedish people—Sweden next door, you know—the Gulf of Autnia [PH] separated. It was only a short distance by boat between the two countries. And the Swedish people invaded just like you have the pilgrims. The Swedish people settled in Finland and that was a certain part of Finland where I lived. The town Åbo then was considered the second largest. The largest city then was Helsinki, or Helsingfors [PH] was the capital.

SIGRIST: How do you spell Helsingfors [PH]?

HAGGBLOM: H-E-L-S-I-N-G-F-O-R-S.

SIGRIST: Thank you. So Åbo is the Swedish name of the town?

HAGGBLOM: Yes, that's right. I went to Swedish school public school and high school.

SIGRIST: When you were a little girl—

HAGGBLOM: Yes?

SIGRIST: What was your favorite part of the town to go to, when you were a little girl?

HAGGBLOM: Favorite part? I had no really favorite. We were playing, as we grow up children, we were playing the big courtyard with other children. Different games.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of those games?

HAGGBLOM: Hide and seek. Tag.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any nursery rhymes or songs that you learned when you were a little girl that you could sing for us or recite for us?

HAGGBLOM: I'm just trying to think. [Pause – begins to sing in Swedish; Pause] No, my voice—no, my memory fails me.

SIGRIST: What were you singing about?

HAGGBLOM: “Are you still sleeping, you little darling? You sleep like the bird in the nest. The sun is shining behind the treetops and mother is watering the rosebuds. You sleep amongst—awake with the roses and awake with the sun. Some day the hardship will come.”

SIGRIST: How did you learn that song?

HAGGBLOM: Huh?

SIGRIST: How did you learn that song?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, my mother, she used to teach all of us. We were six children and she would gather us, “Come on and gather around me,” and she would teach us different songs. Yes.

SIGRIST: Thank you. That was wonderful.

HAGGBLOM: You're welcome.

SIGRIST: Do you know anything about your birth? Any stories about when you were born? A story that your mother or father might have told you about when you were born?

HAGGBLOM: No, I was very tiny. They could put me on a dinner plate, I was so small. Small and delicate. My mother had six children, like I said. She did not have much time to fool around with other things. We were growed up like any other children.

SIGRIST: What were some of the rules that you had to observe in your house?

HAGGBLOM: Neatness, cleanliness. Folding our clothes together, not throwing them around.

SIGRIST: What kind of cleanliness. Describe some of the ways you kept yourself clean.

HAGGBLOM: Well, it was big basins or buckets. My mother, when we were little, didn't have any bathtubs. They would dunk us into wooden buckets, and wash us that way. She had—she had a sister-in-law that saying that there isn't a piece of rag or a piece of cloth that she doesn't wash and iron. She was really cleanliness. Very loving, you know.

SIGRIST: What was your name when you were born? Your full name?

HAGGBLOM: Ruth Carlsson. I only had one name.

SIGRIST: What was your maiden name?

HAGGBLOM: Carlsson.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

HAGGBLOM: Well, first we spelled it with a K. K-A-R-L-S-S-O-N. Then later on life when you came up, you know, in life, I figure they write it with a C that it was more stylish.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

HAGGBLOM: Olga.

SIGRIST: And what was her maiden name?

HAGGBLOM: Eh—Nylund, N-Y—N-Y-L-U-N-D. Nylund.

SIGRIST: N-Y—

HAGGBLOM: L-U-N-D, yes.

SIGRIST: L-U-N-D. Tell me what you know about your mother's family background.

HAGGBLOM: Well, she grew up in the country on a small farm. Her mother died when she was very young, so she's sought some kind of work to do. So she got a—she was a governess in home, home care for a doctor's family and he had private teachers. So my mother then growing up, she took advantage and that taught her to read and write, by this teacher, you know. Yeah.

SIGRIST: When your mother was a girl, were women taught to read and write? When your mother was growing up—

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Was it customary for young ladies to be taught to read and write?

HAGGBLOM: Yes, of course. Yes, yes. The Finnish people were considered highly, you know, education—educational. Learn. I learned both languages because there were two there, but my major language, I went to Swedish school, Swedish high school. During the war—

SIGRIST: The First World War.

HAGGBLOM: The First World War, we gathered after school. We gathered in the classrooms and done a lot of Red Cross work. Red Cross work and even we knew how to do a little knitting, making scarves and gloves and all that. I done that even when like I was in high school. I'd do it in my free time. I loved handwork. I donated dozens of scarves and mittens and hats for the Red Cross or the needy, a lot. Always. There was always a lot of people that need help. I also make for our school project, I made afghans.

SIGRIST: How would you make an afghan?

HAGGBLOM: Crocheted with wool. I donated the wool and I crocheted it and they would then sell them on the bazaar and make money. They made a lot that way, because I made a lot of them.

SIGRIST: Who taught you how to knit?

HAGGBLOM: My aunt. I spent—during the summer, I spent my aunt and grandmother, away from city, you know. The nearby village. She taught me how to—she taught me how to sew a button on and how to hem, do a nice job. The same with the knitting and crocheting. I made clothes a lot. I still make them. I still make baby afghans. I have made afghans for the family, you know.

SIGRIST: Something you still enjoy doing?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, I do. If I didn't have that, you know, my time would be frustrating, you know.

- SIGRIST: Let me fix your microphone. I'm going to fix your microphone here. It's folding over for some reason. There. Tell me what your mother's personality was like.
- HAGGBLOM: She was a—she was a loving woman. Loving her children and singing to them.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember any other songs that your mother used to enjoy singing?
- HAGGBLOM: No, I tell you, as I grew—when I was—when my father died, I was only seven years old and then she had to look for some kind of a job that she could feed us and take care of us. So she became stewardess on steamers that went between the cities.
- SIGRIST: Boats?
- HAGGBLOM: Boats, yes. Yeah, passenger boats.
- SIGRIST: She was a stewardess on these passenger boats.
- HAGGBLOM: That's right, yes. And then when my father died, we were all separated. An aunt that had no children, she took me, you know. Huh. She took me. I stayed with her five years. Then I got lonesome for the rest of the family, so I went back home. My mother's still working. When she went—the last time she went with a nephew that was a captain on the merchant marine and took his young wife with him. So he asked the aunt to come along, you don't have to do anything. Just going to be companion, but they nearly killed her because they crossed the equator to South Africa. She visited Druban. [PH][PH] Right away she said, "That's a beautiful city." So she came back. I was then married, you know.
- SIGRIST: It was a little bit later on.
- HAGGBLOM: Later on life, yeah.
- SIGRIST: Let's talk a little bit about your father. What was his name?
- HAGGBLOM: Gustav Edward.
- SIGRIST: Gustav Edward Carlsson.

HAGGBLOM: Carlsson. His name—his family name was Sjöstrom, S-J-O with a dot S-T-R-O-M. That was his family's name, but it was the custom that you take the first name of the father for your name, so his name was Carlsson. His father's name was Carl Sjorstrum, so he became Carlsson—he was Carl's son, and the daughters were called stotter. [PH]See, so different, you know.

SIGRIST: What do you know about what your father did for a living?

HAGGBLOM: Well, he was a businessman. He had a shoe store with people working making, you know, custom made shoes. But his health was poor, but he grew up and wanted to become in merchant marine. You did not go to school to learn your trade. You worked it. So for being, you know, starting low and then becoming a—finally, he was a cook on the ship. Well, he had an accident and he spilled a whole big kettle full of hot soup over his body, which scarred his body almost more than one-third. This you know, you breathe with your skin, and being so scarred, he developed—what is it now? He developed tuberculosis. Well, they had a big strike in Finland and his work was—he had no more work in the shop. He could not run the shop anymore, so he worked at home. He had his business at home. He done some private work, you know, still made for the customers, you know, made to order shoes. So he was able to support. He not—my mother had to take photography enlargement, go door-to-door to getting their pictures enlarged, you know. So she earned a little living with that.

Well, he died, he was a young man only. You know, died of tuberculosis and we were all separated.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about when he was sick and when he died? What memories do you have of that experience?

HAGGBLOM: Of what?

SIGRIST: Of when your father was sick and died?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Memories you have of that. What are they?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, I remember that he was home. He coughed a lot, but we had—my mother had a doctor to line us all up and the doctor examined to see how our health was. We had not—we had not contracted any of the disease. We were good and healthy, which today shows. I'm still living at ninety-five years of age.

SIGRIST: That's right. That's right. Do you remember how they treated his tuberculosis? How did they treat his tuberculosis?

HAGGBLOM: How did he what?

SIGRIST: How did they treat the illness?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, well, he just coughed up a lot of phlegm, but there was a blue flask that he put all his saliva and mucous in there and that was taken care of, you know. So my mother took very good care of us, you know, being that we still stayed healthy.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about when he died?

HAGGBLOM: No, I really don't remember. I was too little. I wasn't even seven years old. Just remember that he was laid out, you know. I remember that at the funeral. Yes. Until I was—I remember him playing with us and we going for a visit and he would hold you, sort of. You know, how you take a child and you jump, jump.

SIGRIST: Take them by the end.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, and we would go to parks, you know. They had parks over there and we would go there and play. He was good.

SIGRIST: How did life change for your family after your father died? You said everyone was separated.

HAGGBLOM: Yes, they was. It's very hard because I spent my life with this aunt and uncle and she was very harsh. My other sister that's a year older, she didn't want to go. She said, "Oh, she's like a wolf. Aunt Wolf," because she was very harsh. She wasn't loving and kind, you know. I know that my mother needed help. I said, "I'll go." I was always the meek one. I went instead. I had good days, bad days. I finished school, but I remember she didn't want me to go to high school. She wanted me to go to practical school.

SIGRIST: This is the aunt or your mother? Who wanted you to go to practical school? Who wanted you to go to practical school?

HAGGBLOM: My aunt.

SIGRIST: Your aunt.

HAGGBLOM: See, was my father's sister, but the uncle, he wanted me to get the education. My mother wanted me to get the education.

SIGRIST: I need to say for the tape that your refrigerator has just turned itself on, so it's probably being picked up on the tape, but it will shut off in a minute, probably. Tell me a little bit about going to school in Finland. You said that you went to a Swedish school when you were young.

HAGGBLOM: Yes. Yes.

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did you learn in school?

HAGGBLOM: Well, we had a six hour—six day week. We went to school on Saturdays, too, you know. Not like here. We had—we had arithmetic, reading, writing. We had to write essays. Essay writing. We had songs. We had geometry. We had drawing and gymnastics.

SIGRIST: Tell me about gymnastics.

HAGGBLOM: Oh, we had a big room, you know. You climb up a ladder and go upside down. You swing on the rope, get your legs up. Then we also in the—when the weather was warm, we had baseball, softball.

SIGRIST: For girls and for boys?

HAGGBLOM: No, we were all girls' school.

SIGRIST: Oh, all girls.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, girls' school. That was in high school.

SIGRIST: What did you wear when you were doing the gymnastics?

HAGGBLOM: Yes, we had like a bloomer like pants a jersey, red and white striped jerseys. That we had. Everybody had the same.

SIGRIST: Do you remember any of your teachers?

HAGGBLOM: Yes. One, he was in history. Teacher in history and he was very dark. He was almost like an Italian, an old French in his outlook. Yes.

SIGRIST: Why does he stick out in your mind?

HAGGBLOM: Because he was very—he was a very happy go lucky man, you know. Would always kid with you or listen to you, you know. You were not afraid of your subject, you know, if you failed. He didn't scold you. We had one that was in the religion, you know. We were Lutheran. He was very stern. Then we had one little German teacher that taught us German. She was really cute. We used to kid her and the history teacher that they were sweet on each other. We also had one teacher that taught French, but nobody wanted to take French because he was very stern. But we had the Swedish and we had a Finnish teacher. Swedish and Finnish we had to learn. My Finnish subject was poor. My German subject was better. I had better marks in German because it's almost like Swedish, but Finnish is a very, very hard language. Very hard. You say Gotten taug in German, good [unclear] and good day, good evening, good afternoon. In Finnish you say [unclear]. It was very staccato and a very hard language to learn. They say that the grammar originates from Latin. There's such a big difference in the languages.

Lucky I didn't—that's why I was glad when I got my job as a secretary for the church on the [unclear] Island. He was a judge and he came from Finland and settled in [unclear] Island as a judge. The island has about twenty—at that time it had about twenty thousand people.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the island?

HAGGBLOM: A with a round dot, Åland Island.

SIGRIST: So, A-L—

HAGGBLOM: A-L-A-N-D. But the A had an O on it, so you didn't say A, Oland, like oboe, yeah.

SIGRIST: May I ask you a question, the song that you sang, the lullaby that you sang for us a little while ago for me, was that in Finnish or in Swedish?

HAGGBLOM: Swedish.

SIGRIST: What language did you speak at home?

HAGGBLOM: Swedish.

SIGRIST: You spoke Swedish at home.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Were your mother and father Fins or were they Swedes?

HAGGBLOM: They're Finland with a Swedish—see, the Swedish people settled from Sweden into Finland and they were on the coast. They were all Swedish speaking and went to Swedish schools. The Finnish people, they're more inland and more toward Russia, Korean, you know. Korean border. But my home and my people, all my aunts and uncle, they were all Swedish, you know. All spoke Swedish because the education was more Swedish there than in Finnish.

SIGRIST: Tell me what people ate when you were growing up. What kinds of food did you have?

HAGGBLOM: We had—we had plain food. Bread and butter, potatoes and a lot of fish.

PS; What kinds of fish?

HAGGBLOM: They had flounders. We had smelts, a lot of smelts, both pickled and fried. Then we had meatballs. Meatballs and pot-roast.

SIGRIST: Careful of the microphone.

HAGGBLOM: Oh. Yes.

SIGRIST: What was your favorite food when you were growing up?

HAGGBLOM: I think there was meatballs and potatoes.

SIGRIST: How did they make meatballs back then?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, like they do here. I gave them the recipe here, you know. The chopped meat and egg, bread crumbs, spices. Fried and then made a nice gravy with it.

SIGRIST: And when would that be served?

HAGGBLOM: That would be served at dinner time, you know, like five o'clock.

SIGRIST: What was the first meal that you ate in the day?

- HAGGBLOM: That was—that was the breakfast cereal.
- SIGRIST: And how early was that did you eat breakfast? What time did you eat breakfast when you were growing up?
- HAGGBLOM: Oh, imagine before we went to school, you know. About eight o'clock.
- SIGRIST: Eight o'clock.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: And what was a typical breakfast at that time?
- HAGGBLOM: That was the cereal then, bread and butter and milk.
- SIGRIST: What kind of cereal? What—
- HAGGBLOM: Mostly oatmeal. We had some farina, but oatmeal.
- SIGRIST: But it was hot?
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, yeah.
- SIGRIST: Then what was the next meal after that?
- HAGGBLOM: That was the luncheon. You had a—when you went to school you took a sandwich with you, you know. Whatever you had to put on. Wasn't like here with a whole lot of choices.
- SIGRIST: And then what was the next meal that you ate after lunch?
- HAGGBLOM: Then supper at night at home.
- SIGRIST: And what time would that be?
- HAGGBLOM: Well, anytime when we can—five, six o'clock. Like here almost. The things are too much changed. Only thing that the food here is plentiful and so varied and so rich. We didn't have a lot of fruit. We had fruit only once in awhile. Mother would go down to the market and bring it back, a sack full of apples when in season. In the summer times, of course, we got a lot of berries. We picked our own fruit, you know. Also, my mother would cook prunes, stewed prunes. We had a lot of stewed prunes.

Fruit soups. Dried fruit, you know, apricots. Mixed, apricots and pears and dried fruit. All kinds of dried fruit.

SIGRIST: Where did the dried fruit come from?

HAGGBLOM: Well, from the stores. We had to walk to the stores.

SIGRIST: You walked, right?

HAGGBLOM: They had grocery stores where we went to buy, shop.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1
BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 2

SIGRIST: What about milk?

HAGGBLOM: Milk, yeah. Well, we had one store that just sold milk and cream, you know. We got that every day. We went for that every day. It wasn't delivered. You went for it, and during the war the food was rationed. Certain days you go for your potatoes. My sister and I went once and we stood in line. It was so bitter cold, she said, "Let's go into this photographic studio," that we knew, to warm up. When we came back, we had lost our place and we lost the potatoes. We went home without it. The bread that was made was all mixed with the outside shells, you know, in a coarse. The ration, you got so little. You ate it because there was nothing else, but you sort of picked your things out of that.

SIGRIST: It was a heavy, coarse bread.

HAGGBLOM: Coarse, yes. Yes.

SIGRIST: What kind of food would have been served for a special occasion? Like a holiday celebration.

HAGGBLOM: Oh, holidays we did have ham, you know. Smoked ham and we had rice pudding. That was a treat. But the vegetables were mostly carrots and in the summertime you got more of the vegetables. They were not to had in the wintertime. There was dried peas, you know. You made pea soup. My mother made pea soup and then Swedish pancakes, the real thin ones, for dessert. That was a treat.

SIGRIST: Did you keep any animals?

- HAGGBLOM: No.
- SIGRIST: No, because you lived right in the town, right? You lived right in the city?
- HAGGBLOM: Yes.
- SIGRIST: Yes, so it's—
- HAGGBLOM: Regular street, you know. You know what we have? My mother would take us to the sauna bath.
- SIGRIST: Oh, describe that for me.
- HAGGBLOM: The whole—the whole family trotted off fully dressed in winter clothes and would go through the snow. A couple of streets away they had a bathhouse and you get in there, the whole family. The houses have rooms. So there the whole family went. We had our dressing room. We got undressed with a sheet around us, got in there up on shelves to get beat up. You know, they had birch branches that were dipped in hot water and they massaged you with that. They had women come in, you know, to bath you, and after you're all washed up, then you go into the bathtub to rinse off in the cold water. And then into the dressing room and we usually had like a root beer cold drink you know, to drink. So that was really an excursion, you know, for all of us. But while it was warm, my mother would wash us home in the wooden tubs, you know, heat the water up and all that. What a difference in life. What a difference the way the children nowadays are brought up and what they have.
- SIGRIST: Can you describe for me the house that you grew up in?
- HAGGBLOM: It would—they were row houses, you know, I would say. They were row houses. You had your entrance and you had your rooms and you had to carry from the well outside you had to carry the water in, and also take the waste out. They had outdoor houses, you know, to go to. Different all right.
- SIGRIST: So there was no bathroom in the house. You had to go outside. There was no bathroom in the house?
- HAGGBLOM: No, no.
- SIGRIST: What about heating? How was the house heated?

- HAGGBLOM: With wood. Wooden fire. Wood heating system. They were usually made out of tile and in order they put the wood, you know, the birch trees give the hottest heat. They put them in there in the oven like. You put it in and you shut the doors, you know, so that the sparkles wouldn't come out, you know. Then after it has all burned, then you shut them all and the heat radiates from that furnace, you know. Usually they're nicely made with shelves, you know, china shelves. They're really a piece of furniture almost like.
- SIGRIST: How many rooms had one of these?
- HAGGBLOM: The apartments we lived in, we could not afford bit apartments. They had some regular apartment houses, you know, those that could afford it. But we had just two and three room apartments, you know.
- SIGRIST: So did one of these stoves heat the whole apartment?
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, in the kitchen when you cooked your food, you know, that would heat, too.
- SIGRIST: It was a stove that—
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, open. Open stove where the heat would come and they could even bake the bread, you know. They had like an oven that would open up and the bread was baked in there, but my mother didn't bake because you could buy all that. You could buy it.
- SIGRIST: It's easier to buy it.
- HAGGBLOM: Yes, sure.
- SIGRIST: How did you light the house?
- HAGGBLOM: Gasoline lamp. Some of them are real pretty, you know, made of china with a globe on. Some of them are really pretty and some were smaller like for the kitchen that hung on the wall, you know. But they all had to be cleaned, you know, because the chimneys, you get smoky. They all had to be cleaned. Well—
- SIGRIST: Did you get electricity while you were in Finland?
- HAGGBLOM: Yes, they get electric heat and they get the first movies.

- SIGRIST: How old were you when you first had electricity in the house?
- HAGGBLOM: Early, early teens, you know.
- SIGRIST: And do you remember how they put the electricity into the house?
- HAGGBLOM: No, I didn't live there then, you know. That was all done before.
- SIGRIST: I see, you moved into a new place that had electricity.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: You mentioned seeing the early movies. What sticks out in your mind about watching those?
- HAGGBLOM: Oh, the first they had it open. You know, where they had the market place there was a big building with a—two story building or maybe three and a half. They had a white sheet, I guess, and the film was transferred over. That was the first we saw.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember what the movie was of?
- HAGGBLOM: Oh, I remember—no, not must of it. I was so little. My uncle, he was very fond of movies and he would take me along, you know. I remember there were some children playing on the lawn. Not much, you know. At that time, you know, seven, eight years old, you didn't pay much attention. They had music, too, you know, somebody at the front were playing some music while the movies was going.
- SIGRIST: Did you have automobiles in this town in Finland? Were there automobiles in Åbo?
- HAGGBLOM: No, we went then by horse and buggy ride. I remember my aunt would take me to go to see a friend of hers. [unclear] there's history during the First World War, you know, when her husband never came back. He was lost. Left the wife. He was a captain on a ship. I have cousins, one was murdered. He was a dentist. His mother had to come and identify him, he was so mutilated. There's so much tragedy, you know.
- SIGRIST: What else sticks out in your mind about World War I? You mentioned the food ration.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, food rationing and—

SIGRIST: And giving the afghans and things to the Red Cross.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, work in high school. Work for the needy and the poor.

SIGRIST: How else did World War I affect your life?

HAGGBLOM: Well, it didn't affect me. I had enough to eat and enough to wear. I had a sister who was very handy. She would make me a new blouse or a new dress and all that. Then I became—when I right out of high school, seventeen, I got a job way in the eastern part of Finland. I traveled two days to get there.

SIGRIST: And what was the job?

HAGGBLOM: It was a governess and a teacher, a tutor—one boy. If he got into the second grade of a public school after me teaching him, you know. This family had escaped from Russia. He was an engineer in Bacu. [PH] Bacu was a part of Russia way in the eastern part. Him and his wife escaped and he was an engineer into this—how can I say, you know? Part of the country where he was, I got a job there but I was so unhappy because it was all Finnish speaking people. I had no friends, so I left the job. I came back to Åbo, where my aunt helped—where my brother had a job and he said “There's a man at church that wants a secretary,” and I was interviewed and got a job. That's how I came to Oland Island.

SIGRIST: Oland Island.

HAGGBLOM: Oland Island and I stayed there—stayed there a few years. I met Albert. He wanted to come to America, you know.

SIGRIST: Albert was the man who would become your husband?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Were you married in Finland before you came to the United States?

HAGGBLOM: No.

SIGRIST: No, it was after you got here.

HAGGBLOM: No.

- SIGRIST: How did you meet Albert?
- HAGGBLOM: At the [unclear] festival, dance. Dance, you know. There were people—they were always having dances [unclear] in the summertime.
- SIGRIST: And what attracted you to Albert? What did you like about Albert when you met him?
- HAGGBLOM: He was happy go lucky and he was nice looking. And he paid attention to me, you know. I guess at—
- SIGRIST: How old were you?
- HAGGBLOM: I was—I was nineteen years old when I got the job as the secretary for the judge, and whenever the people had any youth meetings, you know, they would meet, but not too often because he had no way of travel. He would have to—in the summertime he would have to use a bicycle. He didn't use a horse and buggy. He couldn't use his father's horses. They needed rest, you know. You couldn't—for work. They needed their animals for work. But we managed and he came over and we wrote to each other and made arrangements.
- SIGRIST: What year did he come to the United States?
- HAGGBLOM: He came a year and a half earlier. He came in 1921.
- SIGRIST: He came in 1921.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, him and his brother and sister-in-law. They were married and they settled with an aunt in Newark.
- SIGRIST: When you were growing up in Finland, what did you know about the United States? How did you think about the United States?
- HAGGBLOM: Well, it was something that I guess I had the traveling urge in me, in my blood like my ancestors, you know, because they were seagoing people, you know. Merchant marine. I guess I had the same kind of blood. I wanted to travel and I was excited about coming here. It was nice to see something else than Finland.
- SIGRIST: When Albert got to the United States, how did he communicate with you?

- HAGGBLOM: He wrote. He wrote to me.
- SIGRIST: And what kinds of things did he tell you about the United States?
- HAGGBLOM: He told me about work, how hard it was to get used to it. It's so different, you know, because in Sweden he had some kind of other job and he came back to Oland Island and he didn't want farming. So he wanted to come here, you know, where his friends made good money, carpenter. He became an expert in parquet floor laying. His work was considered first grade, you know, and he saved his money and sent for me.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember telling your mother that you wanted to go to the United States?
- HAGGBLOM: Yes, of course I told her.
- SIGRIST: What was her reaction?
- HAGGBLOM: She said, what could she do? She was not able to support. We all had to make our own living, one way or another.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember the process of getting your papers together?
- HAGGBLOM: Yes, it was—
- SIGRIST: What did you have to do to?
- HAGGBLOM: Well, first I had to leave my job on Oland Island. It was too far to my hometown. I had to settle with—I got a room with a friend of mine. Married. She was married and a widow with three children. So I lived there and I got a job in Åbo in order to be close to the office, traveling office. Keep after them. They said the quota was filled, not yet, not yet, and finally after months, they said there was an opening for me to come so I got to papers ready to go.
- SIGRIST: What else did you have to do before you left Finland?
- HAGGBLOM: Not much. I got my papers. I had to show that my—oh, the religious paper. What do you call it? That I was Christian and I had no police record. Everything was clear. Had all that clear and also examined that I had no diseases or nothing, you know.
- SIGRIST: Who examined you?

- HAGGBLOM: The doctors. Had to go to a doctor, you know.
- SIGRIST: Do you know if they were looking for something specific?
- HAGGBLOM: No, they knew that my family had tuberculosis. They were sure that I didn't have any diseases. I think that was the main thing.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember what you packed to take to America?
- HAGGBLOM: Just my clothing. I didn't have much to take with me. I couldn't take, you know, a suitcase, how much can you get into a suitcase? The clothes that you need, that's all.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember what clothes specifically?
- HAGGBLOM: No, nothing specific. Summer clothes. Some winter clothes. Coats. Coat and sweater.
- SIGRIST: What kinds of clothing did young ladies wear in the early 1920s in Finland?
- HAGGBLOM: Well, I don't have any pictures to show you, but—
- SIGRIST: Just describe.
- HAGGBLOM: Just ordinary. I think ordinary. I don't think they have any different. The clothes were the same as they would wear any place, you know. Whether it's United States or anywhere else, they were just the plain dresses, you know. Yeah.
- SIGRIST: So you took a suitcase of clothes. What else? Anything else?
- HAGGBLOM: No.
- SIGRIST: Did you take an object with you that was going to be a reminder of Finland?
- HAGGBLOM: No, I don't—I don't think I had anything. I can't remember right now. There's how many, seventy—
- SIGRIST: It was a long time ago.
- HAGGBLOM: Seventy years.

SIGRIST: Did you have a little gathering before you left with the family or with friends?

HAGGBLOM: No, there was none left. My family was all spread apart.

SIGRIST: Did you say goodbye to your mother before you left?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, I had done that earlier because we lived too far away. You know what it was? It's money was scarce. You only have enough to get along.

SIGRIST: Where did you have to go to get on the ocean liner?

HAGGBLOM: Well, from Oland Island I had to take a boat over to Stockholm. From Stockholm, I'll take a train down to Gothenburg. This is all days, you know. Takes days. From Gothenburg, I stayed in a hotel and then go on the Kungsholm [PH] liner.

SIGRIST: You went on the Kungsholm.

HAGGBLOM: Kungsholm in Gothenburg.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much the passage cost?

HAGGBLOM: No, that I don't know. That was all arranged with my husband to be.

SIGRIST: Mr. Haggblom took care of all of that. Yeah. Had you been on a large ship before?

HAGGBLOM: No.

SIGRIST: I know you'd been on smaller ships.

HAGGBLOM: Smaller sailing ships, yeah.

SIGRIST: But not a big ship.

HAGGBLOM: No, not a—

SIGRIST: Were you traveling by yourself or were you with friends?

HAGGBLOM: No. No, I was alone. I'm a loner.

- SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about going from Finland to Gothenburg? Did anything interesting happen along the way?
- HAGGBLOM: No. No, nothing at all. No. If it did, well, it's all forgotten, you know.
- SIGRIST: Well, you have a good memory, that's why I asked.
- HAGGBLOM: How can a person.
- SIGRIST: Tell me what you remember about being in Gothenburg before you got on the ship. You said you stayed in a hotel there.
- HAGGBLOM: No, I just walked around and looked at the town. I think they had a—not a bizarre, but you had a show, you know, at that time.
- SIGRIST: A show?
- HAGGBLOM: Show, I mean. Oh, see, that's where my English gets stuck again. I can't translate from Swedish everything.
- SIGRIST: Well, what did you see at this place?
- HAGGBLOM: Sightsee.
- SIGRIST: Sightsee.
- HAGGBLOM: Sightsee. There isn't much there, you know.
- SIGRIST: Before you got on the Kungsholm, did you have to undergo anymore examinations in Gothenburg? No.
- HAGGBLOM: No, no, no.
- SIGRIST: How did you feel when you saw this big ship that you were going to have to get on?
- HAGGBLOM: Excited, you know. You're finally going over there, you know. After trying so hard, you know, before you could get prepared to go.
- SIGRIST: I assume that the Finnish quota was very small at that time.
- HAGGBLOM: I suppose so.

- SIGRIST: That's' why it took so long.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, yeah, and so many people were seeking, you know, a better life. I didn't—that wasn't my trouble. Mine naturally was getting to Albert and get together with him, to marry and make a home of our own.
- SIGRIST: Can you describe where you slept on the Kungsholm?
- HAGGBLOM: Oh, we had our stateroom, regular stateroom. We were two. There was another woman and when I was on the ship and my brother wanted to come onboard, the captain saw to it that he could come onboard. We had had such a storm before, you know, and a lot of people were in the stateroom sick, you know. So the captain made the rounds on board, you know, and said, "How come you are not in the stateroom praying?" I said, "Oh, this is exciting." I said, "I'm used to water." So he said, "I'll take you. Come up on the commander bridge way up."
- SIGRIST: The commander bridge?
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah. Well, he took sort of interest in me because I sang solo on the boat, you know, to entertain. So he took sort of an interest because I couldn't—you know, I had to go to Ellis Island and stay, so he showed commander bridge. When you're up there and you see the big waves coming, you know, at you, it really is exciting, you know. When you're on the deck walking, you know, the spray of the water come up, so they had covering, you know. Sail clothes covering. So I wasn't sick, you know. It was just wonderful.
- SIGRIST: You said that you sang on the ship. Do you remember the song that you sang? What song did you sing on the ship?
- HAGGBLOM: I sang the sailor's song. I sang the love song and I sang one to honor my mother.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember these songs? Could you sing of them for us, for me right now?
- HAGGBLOM: I don't got much of a voice anymore.
- SIGRIST: You sound great. No, go ahead. Sing the sailor's song. Do you remember the sailor's song?

- HAGGBLOM: Oh, yeah, that was [unclear].
- SIGRIST: Go ahead, sing the sailor's song.
- HAGGBLOM: And in fact, the poem that he wrote about me in the music room, the superintendent, my brother and the captain were there and I surprised them by singing it. Singing melody to that poem he wrote. He was so, so impressed. But so recently out of high school, you know, where you learn the squares [unclear] to the music, you know. So that music filled the song and I sang, and I think my brother was kind of surprised, too. Yeah, one was—it's a seaman loves the ocean waves. [Sings in Swedish] It says, "For a real, for a real beautiful lady, we'll come back again to you."
- SIGRIST: Thank you. Was that Swedish that you were singing?
- HAGGBLOM: Swedish.
- SIGRIST: Your brother is with you on the ship? Your brother—
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: He's traveling with you on the ship?
- HAGGBLOM: No, no, no. He only came to visit because he worked in New York.
- SIGRIST: Oh, I see.
- HAGGBLOM: White, Kendall and Company. And the captain got him onboard for the visit, yeah.
- SIGRIST: I see. How long did the ship take to go from Gothenburg to New York?
- HAGGBLOM: Eleven days.
- SIGRIST: Eleven days, and does anything else stick out in your mind about traveling across the Atlantic that first time?
- HAGGBLOM: It was nice meeting all other people that were bound for the same thing. Not the same thing. You know, looking for work. We had a troop there. There were midgets and they done their act.

EI-737/HAGGBLOM

SIGRIST: Do you remember where they fed you on the ship? Where did they feed you on the ship?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, we had delicious food, special when I got to the captain's table, being that my brother was there. They had all kinds of food.

SIGRIST: Did you see anything on the ship that you had never seen before?

HAGGBLOM: Of course, I hadn't seen they really had their own machine, you know. Could go all the way down, you know, down to the bottom. Oh, they also had bath on board. They prepared a bath so that the waiter or whoever, the servant said, "What do you want, salt water or fresh water?" I think I settled for salt water to get the ocean water in the tub. Yeah, it was exciting, you know, and everybody sort of took to me. I don't know what it was because of the singing, I guess. They all felt that they knew me, you know.

SIGRIST: Did you enjoy talking to people?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, sure. Sure. I still do. I could be meeting—we have people that come from different part of the world, you know. They tell me some of their habits. They have one lady around the corner, she's my age, just six months younger than me, and she lives there and takes care of the house for her granddaughter and grandson. She's able to. At ninety-five, she's able to do the cooking and the laundry.

SIGRIST: Wow, and you enjoy talking to her?

HAGGBLOM: And she comes for visits. She's able to walk. She doesn't—all the medicine she takes is vitamin in the morning and at night. She doesn't use a cane like I have to. I had a slight, slight stroke. That's why I have to use.

SIGRIST: We're going to pause just for a second. We're going to take a little break and I'm going to put another tape in the machine and we'll get you to Ellis Island.

HAGGBLOM: Oh.

SIGRIST: All right, we're just going to pause for a moment.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2

- SIGRIST: All right. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. We are now beginning Tape Two with Ruth Haggblom who came from Finland in 1923, when she was just about twenty-three. Twenty-two, almost twenty-three. Mrs. Haggblom, how long did you say you were on the Kungsholm? How long did the trip take?
- HAGGBLOM: Takes eleven days.
- SIGRIST: Eleven days.
- HAGGBLOM: Yes.
- SIGRIST: Tell me about coming into New York that first time. Did you see the Statue of Liberty?
- HAGGBLOM: Yes. My brother—oh, when I saw Statue of Liberty it was all so great and wonderful. Stupendous, you know. So different from the little country. The difference was so great, you know. Well, that shows, you know, the human race, you know, how they develop and how they enlarge themselves. Enlarge their own views and your own ideas about living in different countries.
- SIGRIST: Now, when the ship came into New York—
- HAGGBLOM: They took—my brother had a taxi. We went—I don't know when it was we went to see in a taxi to Columbus Circle and all that.
- SIGRIST: Well, before that happened—before that happened, how did you end up at Ellis Island?
- HAGGBLOM: Well, they have their people taking you over there on the ferry over and you settled there, you know. You got assigned to a place, to a room where you stayed, you know, and they served you meals.
- SIGRIST: How long did you stay at Ellis Island?
- HAGGBLOM: Five days.
- SIGRIST: Five days. Tell me—
- HAGGBLOM: Didn't I have a—

- SIGRIST: Well, we'll look at that—we'll look at that later.
- HAGGBLOM: No, I don't know. I put everything down, you know.
- SIGRIST: Yes, but I'm asking you these questions so we have it on tape, too. So you were at Ellis Island for five days. What sticks out in your mind about being at Ellis Island?
- HAGGBLOM: Well, it was depressing because you had expected something else, you know, to go direct to where my husband to be was, and I was detained. What happened then, you know, my brother brought basket of fruit for me. They would not allow me to get it because they were selling the products there. So he had to take the fruit back. Also, the food wasn't always to my liking.
- SIGRIST: Tell me where you slept at Ellis Island. Where did they put you?
- HAGGBLOM: They had—they had open beds, you know. More or less like cots, you know. I can't really remember, but there was more than one person in that room, you know. Maybe couple a women, you know, but didn't pay much—there were details that I didn't pay much to, you know. Figure, but the days went by, you know.
- SIGRIST: What did you do during the day?
- HAGGBLOM: Nothing. Well, what could you do? Just sit around. Didn't even have anything to read or anything, you know.
- SIGRIST: Was anyone allowed to visit you?
- HAGGBLOM: Well, see, my husband lived over in Newark section there. I guess he had his work to do, so I can't recall that he was there more than the once and then when I left—left the Kungsholm, I guess, those are the only times I remember that I saw him. I sort of lived in a fog, so to speak, because everything was so different, you know.
- SIGRIST: How did you feel when you were held at Ellis Island? How did that make you feel?
- HAGGBLOM: I felt low, I guess. Just settle down and take it easy. Better days are coming.

- SIGRIST: When did you find out that they were going to send you back?
- HAGGBLOM: Oh, the next day, I guess. That I don't even know, you know. It seemed to be like in another world. That's the way I felt, it was like in another world. Everything was so unreal, you know.
- SIGRIST: Like you were dreaming.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, more or less, you know, you felt. Yes.
- SIGRIST: Tell me what happened when they told you you were going to have to go back. What did they do?
- HAGGBLOM: I can't remember anything this. I guess I felt so sad, I think I was crying, you know. How would you feel if you were held back, not able to go?
- SIGRIST: Was Albert allowed to visit you while you were at Ellis Island? He was working.
- HAGGBLOM: He was working. I don't think he was—no, he wasn't there. I was more or less left along, you know.
- SIGRIST: And your brother was around, yes? Your brother—
- HAGGBLOM: No, he was in New York. You know, he was working, too, you know. The only time he came then, when I was leaving, you know. He came there. My husband then, too, and Harold, my brother. That's when we had got in the taxi and gotten me home that way.
- SIGRIST: That was when you came back.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: What ship did you—what ship did you go back—
- HAGGBLOM: The same ship.
- SIGRIST: You went back on the Kungsholm.
- HAGGBLOM: Kungsholm, yeah. Yeah.
- SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about going back? You went back to Sweden, correct?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, yeah, to Sweden. No, no, just lucky that I didn't get seasick, you know. So many of them were sick.

SIGRIST: And where did you stay in Sweden when you went back?

HAGGBLOM: Well, at the hotel in Gothenburg.

SIGRIST: In Gothenburg.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And how long were you there?

HAGGBLOM: Five days.

SIGRIST: And how did you find out that you could come back to the United States?

HAGGBLOM: Well, they just the report. They give you the report and saying So and So left. Nothing so elaborate. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: But that must have made you happy.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, after that. Takes a little bit longer than you expected, you know, naturally. But it all had a happy ending.

SIGRIST: Well, tell me what happened when you got back to New York? Okay, you came back on the Kungsholm again?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you have to go to Ellis Island when you came back? Did they bring you to Ellis Island again?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah. Well, gee, I had it all down on the paper here.

SIGRIST: That's okay. That's all right. If you don't remember, that's okay.

HAGGBLOM: Back and forth, you know.

SIGRIST: Back and forth. You're happy; you're sad. You're going back and forth.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, yeah.

- SIGRIST: Tell me about some of—when your brother came to get you, you said he took you on a taxi ride. What do you remember about New York City when you saw it for the first time?
- HAGGBLOM: Oh, all the traffic. The traffic was immense and the way—they way they maneuvered, the cars go back and forth and the way the traffic. They had this traffic signals and they starting in Finland to have traffic, too. When the farmers come in—when they come in, [unclear] because they were told, you know, either to go or not go. So it was all new arrangement for them, too. People all over the world, I guess, it's a regular, you know. What do you call it?
- SIGRIST: Well, it's all becoming modern.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah, modern. Yeah.
- SIGRIST: Your brother was already here in New York, right?
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: Did he look different to you in any way?
- HAGGBLOM: No, he hadn't been here long. He only came here to study. He was only here about a year and a half. He had the same job for the same company, you know. Wholesale imports of carpets and wallpapers and all of that. That's the kind of job he succeeded in, you know. No, he didn't look—he was always very suave. Very good looking. Very good looking.
- SIGRIST: Now, your birthday, your twenty-third birthday happened soon after you get back here.
- HAGGBLOM: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: How did you celebrate your birthday?
- HAGGBLOM: Nothing. Nothing was mentioned, even. Nobody even mentioned it. They just—the days just grew on me, you know. That's all.
- SIGRIST: Just another day.
- HAGGBLOM: Another day.
- SIGRIST: Tell me about seeing Albert.

HAGGBLOM: Oh, was exciting. He had changed. He had gotten so much thinner. He looked—he looked so thin because his work learning the trade, you know, the hardwood floor, you know. He done a lot of floor scraping by hand. They didn't have the machines then like they have now. And it's so hot, you know. He could not eat the meals when they were served, you know, and he lost a lot of weight. So I couldn't wait until I got hold of him so I could take care of him.

SIGRIST: Now when did you marry? How long after did you get married?

HAGGBLOM: Well, I did not marry right away until I came—was it October I came over? I went to spend time with my aunt and uncle in Newport, Rhode Island and she taught me different things, you know, about household and shopping and cooking and preparing and all that. And also learned English because she had two teenage sons, you know, my cousins. I guess I learned pretty quick.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the first word that you learned?

HAGGBLOM: First word, no. I guess very nice, thank you, pleased to meet you. Those are the words because at the office, my brother would take to the office and introduce me to the co-workers. So he said, you tell them, you know. He told me "Say very nice and pleased to meet you."

SIGRIST: Did Albert speak English?

HAGGBLOM: Yes, I guess a little, but he didn't have much social life. Working, resting. Working and resting, and I guess their friends were all on the same speaking, Swedish.

SIGRIST: That's right, he was from Sweden, right? Albert was Swedish?

HAGGBLOM: Yeah. Yes, he was Swedish, yes.

SIGRIST: So when did you finally marry Albert? How long had you been here?

HAGGBLOM: Well, there was—we did not get the minister. The minister that we were going to have, this Lutheran minister, he had his church in East Orange. He had a good friend of him who died and he had to go to the funeral. So our marriage was postponed for a couple of weeks. So the first chance to have

him was December 22nd, 1923 and we had a nice little service in church. His relatives, aunts and uncles, there were ten of us, all the gathering. We had ordered dinner in a restaurant in Newark. I remember Stetter's [PH] Restaurant in Newark on Broad Street.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you ate?

HAGGBLOM: Huh?

SIGRIST: What did you eat?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, yes, we had—we had—they had oysters. We had steak and we had chicken and the things that goes with that. But we had no wedding cake. After that, we went to the Longark [PH] Avenue home and we played victrola. He had gotten—he had bought—his favorite record was a wedding waltz, La Golandrina [PH], you know, The Swallows, and we played that and we danced and we had refreshments until finally it broke up, you know.

SIGRIST: And where did your wedding gown come from?

HAGGBLOM: From Newark. You saw the picture of it.

SIGRIST: You showed me the picture.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: I'm just wondering who bought it and—

HAGGBLOM: Well, I had some money. I had worked, you know. I had saved some money and he had some. Whoever bought it, it was a minor thing, you know. I guess he gave some money and I had some money. It was all mixed up, you know.

SIGRIST: Did you get any presents from anyone?

HAGGBLOM: Yes, I must have gotten some, yes. Yes, my aunt and uncle. He was a tailor in the Bronx. Him and his wife had come earlier. Before they wedding they had come and picked out my wedding present. It was a coffee set. Cups and saucers, and I still have it. My granddaughter has the set now. It's gold. The gold trim, you know. Cups and saucers and cake plates and a big cake plate and a sugar and a creamer and a teapot. So they still have some of that left. Then I got something else, something in

chrome. I think a coffee set in chrome and not too much because money was scarce and I didn't have an apartment yet. Shortly after then, we got an apartment in Irvington.

SIGRIST: In Irvington, New Jersey.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah, and then had a very good friend and they gradually became member of the Second Reform Church in Irvington, which my husband later on he was on the consistory for twenty-five years. He was honored with a dinner when he retired and a sum of money because he done all, all this. He was on the property committee. He done all the painting in the church and the rooms, and he took care of the floors there. The people said, "Who's taking care of your floor, of the floors?" because that was his job. They were shining and beautiful. He done all this for years and years, gratis, you know. Then later on in life when he gave up his work, he couldn't do it no more. He was getting old, you know. He would—he would still take care of the church as a sexton and he would get a little pay and he could choose his own time. Not having a car or driving around or going any place, he was glad to have something to do because when he worked, his boss would always pick him up, you know. And he never did like driving in cars. It wasn't that much fun, anyway, to drive around in the heat or in the crowds, right.

SIGRIST: What was the hardest thing for you to get adjusted to here in the United States?

HAGGBLOM: I have to think. I don't think I found anything hard because I could chose my own diet food. I had all the equipment I needed, a washing machine.

SIGRIST: Did you get a job when you came here?

HAGGBLOM: No, I was going to, but—later on, I got one. I was a salesperson. Sales lady, but to get any domestic work, my husband didn't want me to do that. He said, "You're not used to that hard work. I don't want you to do it." So we married and we raised a family. We did have our own home in Merchantville. That's north of Camden.

SIGRIST: What is the name of the town?

HAGGBLOM: Merchantville, Camden, New Jersey.

SIGRIST: Camden.

HAGGBLOM: And him and his partner went in building and building. Building, and we also built our own colonial home there, which we had to sell with a loss of profit in the 1928-29, to get through the Depression.

SIGRIST: Oh, when the crash—

HAGGBLOM: Depression. So we lost a lot that way. Then when we came back here to Newark. When we sold the house, we had to— they wanted a garage built there. He had to put that on. He paid off his partner his share, but we were left without profit. So there were a lot of hard hardships to take, you know. My son got very sick, was a baby.

SIGRIST: How many children did you have?

HAGGBLOM: Two.

SIGRIST: And what are their names?

HAGGBLOM: Ralph Haggblom. He lives in Branchburg, New Jersey. Has a beautiful home. He married a girl who was in touch with you, Joan.

SIGRIST: Yes, the woman who sent me the letter.

HAGGBLOM: You haven't met her?

SIGRIST: Yes, I did meet her. She's here today, isn't she?

HAGGBLOM: Oh, yeah, she's a very gracious, very highly educated. But she grew up from a big family.

SIGRIST: So Ralph is the oldest. He was the first?

HAGGBLOM: No.

SIGRIST: No.

HAGGBLOM: Florence is the oldest. Florence is seventy. She's seventy— Wednesday's her birthday. She's seventy-one.

SIGRIST: Florence was the first child.

HAGGBLOM: Huh?

SIGRIST: Florence was the first child.

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And then Ralph.

HAGGBLOM: Then Ralph. There's a year and a half difference.

SIGRIST: When you first came to the United States, did you miss Finland?

HAGGBLOM: No, I can say I was all anxious to make good in America in every which way.

SIGRIST: Were you in communication with anyone in Finland?

HAGGBLOM: Yes, my family, of course. Yeah, with my family.

SIGRIST: Did any of them come to the United States?

HAGGBLOM: No, only for a visit.

SIGRIST: Did your mother come for a visit?

HAGGBLOM: No, no, no, no. As I said, you know, she was still working, you know, as a stewardess. When she gave it up, then she had her own apartment and then she lived with one daughter once and then another daughter. She had, you know—yes, she had a hard life, but still a very interesting life.

SIGRIST: Did you ever go to Finland for a visit?

HAGGBLOM: Yes.

SIGRIST: What was the first—what year did you go, the first time?

HAGGBLOM: 1967 we went home for ten weeks' visit.

SIGRIST: And that was the first time you had been back since 1923?

HAGGBLOM: No, I had been—I had been back in 1928, '29 when my son was sick. He was put into a hospital, something a rare stomach disease. He used to chew the varnish off the furniture and this here Professor Ilkman [PH], you know, years later when he said—I'm going away from the subject. When he said, "How long as he been sick?" Well, he's been sick a long time. I had

him to the doctors over here. They could not find a reason. If he didn't eat his food, give it to him cold the next time, but he was too far gone. His stomach would swell up, so he was put in the hospital in a special diet and I had to leave him there. He was there three weeks, I guess, and this doctor, he was one of Europe's known doctor. He was a Professor Ilkman and years later he wrote to my sister and asked, "How is that boy that—how is your sister's boy?" She said, "He's healthy and they got him on a special diet."

SIGRIST: When you were in Finland, when you went back that first time—

HAGGBLOM: Yeah.

SIGRIST: In 1928, how did you feel about being in Finland? What did it feel like to be back in Finland for the first time for years?

HAGGBLOM: Well, it was sort of a mixed feeling, you know. Glad I was home, so my son would get the care, which he did get. But also frustrated that I left Albert over there, you know. But what could I do? I was in between with him, you know, so sick and then leave Albert. But God really—everything went fine. He got well and years later when I was back here, my sister wrote, you know that—she showed a clipping of him. He was celebrating hundred years.

SIGRIST: This was the doctor?

HAGGBLOM: The doc, and you know, it doesn't show outside, you know. The appearance. He was built short, you know, no significant marks on him. He was just a simple man, you know, and he was the professor known all over Europe as the [unclear] doctor. Your knowledge is not shown outside.

SIGRIST: That's right. That's right. Let me ask you one final question and then we'll be all done for the day. What advice would you give to a young person nowadays about how to live to a happy, ripe old age? What kind of advice would you give to a young person?

HAGGBLOM: If you still have your parents, take their advice because they have experience and live each day with the prayer of God in your heart. My mother lived by that. She had hardships, but with God willing, everything worked out. Take one day at a time and don't try to outdo somebody else or use force. Use a lot of love and care. The love that brings us all together. Love is the

greatest thing and God willing, we shall live to the end, all of us, with a thankful heart. Thankful for the family I have, for the love they give that holds me up, holds me together. They look up to me sort of as an example. They say, "Nana. Nana, we know what you go through and how you hold up." It's not always easy. It isn't easy always. You know, sometimes you feel up to here and you want to cry, but when my husband was so sick, you know, he said, "When I'm gone I don't want you to sit and cry." I said, "No, I promise I will hold up. I won't cry." He said, "I know you will. I know you're so strong."

SIGRIST: Thank you. Mrs. Haggblom, thank you very much. I want to thank you.

HAGGBLOM: Thank you for listening to me.

SIGRIST: Oh, it was my pleasure. It was really my pleasure.

HAGGBLOM: And I wish you lots of luck and happiness.

SIGRIST: Thank you.

HAGGBLOM: And remember, God is with you and love always overtakes everything.

SIGRIST: Thank you. This is Paul Sigrist signing off.

HAGGBLOM: You're not married?

SIGRIST: No, I'm not. This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Ruth Haggblom on Monday, April 22nd, 1996. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW