

EI-776

OTTO SCHNELLMAN

BIRTHDATE: JULY 25, 1903

INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 7 1996

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 93

RUNNING TIME: 48:00

INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST

RECORDING ENGINEER: KEVIN DALEY

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

SWITZERLAND, 1928

AGE: 26

SHIP: THE COLUMBUS

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

NOTE: THIS GENTLEMAN'S ACCENT AND HIS SOFTSPOKEN VOICE MAKE HIM VERY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. MUMBLING AND STAMMERING HAVE NOT BEEN TRANSCRIBED.

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Wednesday, August 7th, 1996. I'm at the Ellis Island Recording Studio with Mr. Otto Schnellman.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: Mr. Schnellman came from Switzerland in 1928. He was twenty-six when he came to the United States, and I should also say that Kevin Daley is running the recording equipment that's recording this interview.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Mr. Schnellman, can we begin by you giving me your birth date, please?

SCHNELLMAN: 1903, 25th July.

SIGRIST: July 25, 1903. Yeah. Had a birthday not too long ago, did you?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me where in Switzerland you were born?

SCHNELLMAN: Noulanen, [unclear]

SIGRIST: Okay, can you spell the name of the town?

SCHNELLMAN: N-O-U-L-A-N, E-N.

SIGRIST: And where in the country is that?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, that's [unclear]. That's near [unclear].

SIGRIST: Is that a city?

SCHNELLMAN: City, city. [unclear] little town, sea. [unclear]'s a small town. It's around, I'd say maybe two hundred people.

SIGRIST: I see. I don't know Switzerland very well. We don't find many people to interview.

SCHNELLMAN: No. I know.

SIGRIST: And the name of the larger time was Tree—

SCHNELLMAN: Corchn.

SIGRIST: How do you spell that?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, that's C—C-O-R-C-H-N.

SIGRIST: I see. When you were a little boy, what do you remember about the town that you grew up in? What did it look like?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, that time the school have really—the school was, oh, I say, ten, fifteen minutes' walk. Was real old-fashioned.

SIGRIST: Yeah, what was old-fashioned about it?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, the church is really altogether for old-fashioned. See, they build a new church now.

SIGRIST: But when you were a boy, it was the old church?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah. What sticks out in your mind about that church?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, my father was—my grandfather was—I mean, he was, what he call? High—he, you know, [several words unclear]. Well, that's taxes.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm.

SCHNELLMAN: My gross father was tax collector.

SIGRIST: I see. That's interesting.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: It either made him very popular or very unpopular.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Well, there are not many people, see.

SIGRIST: And gross father is a grandfather, correct?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right, yeah. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Do you have any stories that were ever told you about when you were born? Did anyone ever tell a story about the day you were born?

SCHNELLMAN: Not too much.

SIGRIST: No?

SCHNELLMAN: They always say—one woman say, "That guy don't live long."

SIGRIST: Why did she say that?

SCHNELLMAN: I guess I was skinny.

SIGRIST: You were a little boy.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Huh. Can you describe the house that you grew up in for me?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, [unclear] big house. It's, oh—

SIGRIST: What was it made out of?

SCHNELLMAN: Out of wood.

SIGRIST: It was a wooden house.

SCHNELLMAN: Wooden house.

SIGRIST: How many rooms?

SCHNELLMAN: Three bedrooms and one upstairs. You can say around four bedrooms.

SIGRIST: Four bedrooms. Can you describe the kitchen in the house for me?

SCHNELLMAN: Kitchen was big. I think about ten—ten—ten kids. Ten children in the family.

SIGRIST: Ten children. Wow. Can—how did—how did—how did they do the cooking back then?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, big pans. Copper pans.

SIGRIST: And on what? What did you put the pans on?

SCHNELLMAN: Wooden stove?

SIGRIST: On a stove that ran by wood.

SCHNELLMAN: Wood, yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh, and did you have a fireplace in the house anywhere?

SCHNELLMAN: No, was a wooden stove for heating, you know.

SIGRIST: Is there any furniture that you remember in the house?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, there was one table was made of slate, you know. Was real old already that time. They always played Swiss cards there.

SIGRIST: Swiss cards?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me what—what Swiss cards, what kind of a game that is?

SCHNELLMAN: It's almost like a pinochle game. You know, a pinochle game?

SIGRIST: Yes.

SCHNELLMAN: Almost the same thing.

SIGRIST: I see. What was your dad's name?

SCHNELLMAN: Peter Schnellman.

SIGRIST: And what did your father do for a living?

SCHNELLMAN: He was a butcher.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your father being a butcher?

SCHNELLMAN: When afterwards he was [unclear], what you call, a meat inspector.

SIGRIST: Meat inspector.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. What do you remember about his work as a butcher? What—what sticks out in your mind about that?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, mostly [unclear] the neighbors all—I mean the people outside. You know, in the—the I saw six hundred people around. Farmers. You know, small farms. Then he butchered the pigs and that stuff.

SIGRIST: Do you know how he butchered the pigs?

SCHNELLMAN: They don't shoot them that time.

SIGRIST: How did they do it?

SCHNELLMAN: With an axe. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: And then what would happen? After they killed the pig, what would he do with it?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, then you have hot waters on the trough, put it in there and take the hair off.

SIGRIST: What was your father's personality like?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, he was strong, really. I mean—you mean what—

SIGRIST: His—his—what was he like as a person?

SCHNELLMAN: He was always good. Everybody liked him, you know. That's—uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: Is there a story that you remember about your father, maybe an experience that you shared with your father when you were a boy?

SCHNELLMAN: I don't think so.

SIGRIST: No?

SCHNELLMAN: Not much.

SIGRIST: Was there something that he enjoyed doing with his children?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, he always make the children—I mean, we had to work, you know. Ten children, you know, that's a lot.

SIGRIST: That's a lot of children.

SCHNELLMAN: So we had to work with the wood. You know, with woodland. I mean, not all [unclear] the what do you call? The state, as woodland or [unclear].

SIGRIST: State owned woodland?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: By time you got the dry wood home, he always sent us. We went for the school mill to go get some wood.

SIGRIST: And is that the wood that you would use to heat the house?

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SCHNELLMAN: Heat the house.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's interesting. What was your mother's name?

SCHNELLMAN: Fotp.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that please?

SCHNELLMAN: F-O-T-P.

SIGRIST: And is that—is that her first name or her last name?

SCHNELLMAN: Last name.

SIGRIST: That was her maiden name before she was married.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What was her first name?

SCHNELLMAN: Alicei.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, too, please?

SCHNELLMAN: Alicei, A-L-I-C-E-I.

SIGRIST: And tell me a little bit about what your mother was like as a person?

SCHNELLMAN: She was good. She was hard working woman.

SIGRIST: Yes. What were some of her chores around the house?

SCHNELLMAN: She was in here first.

SIGRIST: Here in America?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What—when did she come to America?

SCHNELLMAN: She was eighteen.

SIGRIST: When she was a young lady.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Was she married then?

SCHNELLMAN: No, no.

SIGRIST: Why did she come to America when she was eighteen?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, they always say they make good money in here. You know, more money [unclear] easier.

SIGRIST: What did she do when she came to America?

SCHNELLMAN: She—what was her name now? She worked for the movie actor in here.

SIGRIST: She worked for a movie actor?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Oh, I don't know the name.

SIGRIST: Do you know what year she came?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, that's—had to be around I guess 19—in the 18 some place.

SIGRIST: Yeah, before you were born even.

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, yeah, had to be.

SIGRIST: Do you know how she met your father?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Well, he come out. When she come out, she can't stand it in here. She always got headaches for the heat, I guess.

SIGRIST: She didn't like it here in America?

SCHNELLMAN: She liked it, but she can't stand it. Doctor says it's better when she goes out. Then her sister come in here, and that's my uncle then, Leonard. She married a Leonard. He was a brewery called [unclear].

SIGRIST: Then how did your mom meet your father?

SCHNELLMAN: Out there, there—oh, they go I guess dancing and then, you know. That's the way he meeted her.

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SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. When you were a little boy, what did you like to do for fun?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, mostly I like to go in what you call—mostly played around, go in the club—we have a club [unclear] not far away.

SIGRIST: A club nearby?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And what did you do in the club?

SCHNELLMAN: Went down, what you call—what the heck they call in here now? You know, wrestling.

SIGRIST: Wrestling, yes.

SCHNELLMAN: That's what we did.

SIGRIST: So—so were you good at sports when you were young?

SCHNELLMAN: I was not bad.

SIGRIST: Yeah?

SCHNELLMAN: I can throw it two hundred forty pounds over the head, when I was young.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: They never believed me, but I did many times. They laugh, always about that.

SIGRIST: What were some of the other sports that you liked to play?

SCHNELLMAN: That's mostly what I did.

SIGRIST: The wrestling?

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Was that—was that a common thing for young men to do back then?

SCHNELLMAN: A lot—lot of men there. My, I have to four buddies come in with me in there.

SIGRIST: I see. So you had a group of friends that—

SCHNELLMAN: That's right. So we went together, you know.

SIGRIST: You mentioned getting the wood out of the forest. What were some of your chores around the house, other than getting the wood?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, me have to chop the wood up.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Who taught you how to chop wood?

SCHNELLMAN: My gross father.

SIGRIST: Did he live with you?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah. What do you remember about your grandfather?

SCHNELLMAN: He always work good. He was a good worker.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what he looked like?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, he looks more like me.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, he was old, and, you know, the same age. Oh, he was eighty-five when he died and he still worked, the second day before he died. He worked outside.

SIGRIST: Was—whose father was he? Was that your mother's father or your father's father?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, my father's father.

SIGRIST: It was your father's father.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: Was there a grandmother, too?

SCHNELLMAN: She died early.

SIGRIST: Do you remember her at all?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No. She died before you—

SCHNELLMAN: She died before—I don't know. Never saw her, neither. Nothing more a picture, I saw.

SIGRIST: What did your grandfather like to do for fun? When he wasn't working, what did he like to do for enjoyment?

SCHNELLMAN: I don't know. I really don't know. He did not much of work, I guess. That's all what he has, you know. That time was bad out there, too.

SIGRIST: Yeah, what was—you say it was bad. What—why was it bad?

SCHNELLMAN: You don't make much money. You know.

SIGRIST: What did most of the people do in that part of Switzerland to make—

SCHNELLMAN: Farming.

SIGRIST: They were mostly farmers?

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: What would they do—

SCHNELLMAN: They have couple factories there [unclear] that time they make—my brother worked there. The oldest. He got dollar fifty a week.

SIGRIST: Dollar fifty a week?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What kind of a factory was that?

SCHNELLMAN: What the heck they call that? Stink funny in there. What the heck they call now? It's not a sink well. It's another factory that's--

SIGRIST: Hmm.

SCHNELLMAN: What the heck they call?

SIGRIST: But it was a big—

SCHNELLMAN: Big factory.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Was one of—were you particularly fond of one of your brothers or sisters? Which—which—which brother or sister were you the closest to when you were growing up?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, Peter. My oldest one.

SIGRIST: Peter?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And is there a story that you can tell me about you and Peter?

SCHNELLMAN: When we come together in here.

SIGRIST: Here, at Ellis Island?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Oh, Peter came with you to America?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Oh, well, good. We'll get to that then, when we get you to America.

SCHNELLMAN: [Laughs]

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about what kind of food people eat in Switzerland when you were growing up?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, that time, I mean meat, we don't have much [unclear]. You know, that's—meat [unclear]. You know, you butcher them [unclear]. Then you have meat.

SIGRIST: And what kind of meat was it?

SCHNELLMAN: Pork.

SIGRIST: Pork.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-huh, mostly pork.

SIGRIST: Mostly pork. Did you keep cows or did people—

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, we have twelve cows.

SIGRIST: Your family had twelve cows?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Who took care of the cows?

SCHNELLMAN: The father.

SIGRIST: Your father.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Who milked the cows?

SCHNELLMAN: The father—the gross father. I mean, there [unclear], you know.

SIGRIST: So that was one of his jobs.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Your grandfather had to milk the cows.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. How would you store the milk?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, you sold it every day.

SIGRIST: So that was—

SCHNELLMAN: Morning or night, you take it down. Most of [unclear]. Maybe fifteen minutes for place they took the milk in, you know.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. And that was a way that the family could make extra money?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. What do you remember about the period around World War I, 1914 to 1918?

SCHNELLMAN: That was bad.

SIGRIST: What can you tell me about your mem—remembrances of that time period?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, I know my father had the nights watch that they don't steal everything, you know.

SIGRIST: And—and you say he had the night watch. What did he have to?

SCHNELLMAN: He had to walk around the farms.

SIGRIST: Oh, around in the neighborhood.

SCHNELLMAN: Take care, you know. Because they steal the cows. Kill the cows and everything, you know.

SIGRIST: Was there a problem with food at that time?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, then we have [unclear]. Food stamps.

SIGRIST: Food stamps, uh-huh. What kind of food would you get with the food stamps?

SCHNELLMAN: Bread and sugar or meat and cheese.

SIGRIST: I see. And is there anything else about that time period that you remember?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, not much.

SIGRIST: Yeah, it was a long time ago. [Laughs] Mr. Schnellman, why don't you put your bottle up here on the table, so—

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, that's all right.

SIGRIST: Because it will pick up the sound. What religion were you?

SCHNELLMAN: Catholic.

SIGRIST: Catholics.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: And you mentioned the church. You—that you remember the church. How did you practice your religion at home?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, mostly we pray when we eat. Before we eat, we got to pray, you know.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the prayer that you would say before you eat?

SCHNELLMAN: I forgot it already.

SIGRIST: You forgot, okay. [Laughs] What—did they speak Swiss in this part of Switzerland?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yes, you spoke Swiss and not German or French, but—

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, yeah. No, Swiss.

SIGRIST: You spoke Swiss.

SCHNELLMAN: Well, exactly almost the same like German. German, high German [unclear] more a little [unclear]. You know, like Pennsylvania Dutch maybe now.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Like the high German that's just a little bit changed.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Can you speak any of the Swiss anymore?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Would you—would you maybe say a poem or a song or something you remember in Swiss for us on tape?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, that I don't know much.

SIGRIST: Well, what—what—can you—can you say something in Swiss? Could you—

SCHNELLMAN: Good morning?

SIGRIST: Yeah, all right. That's a start. Good morning.

SCHNELLMAN: [speaks Swiss]

SIGRIST: [Speaks Swiss] What—you mentioned school. How old were you when you first went to school?

SCHNELLMAN: Six years old.

SIGRIST: And what kinds of things did they teach you in school?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, first you—what you call? You write one, two, [unclear] ten.

SIGRIST: Did you like school?

SCHNELLMAN: I like it.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

SCHNELLMAN: I was not—I mean, really. Not too much. [unclear]

SIGRIST: Did your—did your parents teach you at all at home or your grandfather try to teach you?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, my mother mostly teach us.

SIGRIST: And what kinds of things did she teach you?

SCHNELLMAN: Mostly reading.

SIGRIST: Yes?

SCHNELLMAN: And spelling.

SIGRIST: Do you remember some of the words that were hard to spell?

SCHNELLMAN: I don't know anyhow.

SIGRIST: Okay.

SCHNELLMAN: I'm sorry.

SIGRIST: That's okay. You're doing a great job. Tell me a little bit about when you were growing up, what you knew about America. Now, your mother had already been here.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Right. What—how did you think about America when you were growing up?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, I like it in here.

SIGRIST: Before—before you got here?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, before in there.

SIGRIST: Yeah, before you got here, how did you think about it?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, you know, everybody tells out there you make more money. Make easy money. That was one [unclear] here. You have to work for the money.

SIGRIST: What—what was the first job you got in Switzerland when you were a young man?

SCHNELLMAN: I worked in a [unclear].

SIGRIST: In a—is that a factory?

SCHNELLMAN: Factory.

SIGRIST: And making what?

SCHNELLMAN: Furniture.

SIGRIST: Making furniture.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Do you remember how much you got paid in Switzerland for that?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, that time I got—that's hundred francs in two weeks. So that was about twenty dollar in two weeks.

SIGRIST: So ten dollars a week roughly.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And—and what did you have to do to make the furniture? What was your job in the factory?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, mostly I put furniture together like this do.

SIGRIST: Like put the legs on the tables or something?

SCHNELLMAN: [unclear].

SIGRIST: Uh-uh, and what were your hours? Do you remember how long your day was?

SCHNELLMAN: Remember mostly ten hours.

SIGRIST: Ten hours and how many days a week?

SCHNELLMAN: Six days.

SIGRIST: Six days and how—

SCHNELLMAN: Well, six—six and a half day.

SIGRIST: Six and a half days.

SCHNELLMAN: So they take half a day mostly.

SIGRIST: And how old were you when you got that job?

SCHNELLMAN: I was sixteen.

SIGRIST: You were sixteen. And—and when you were in Switzerland and you had that job, what did you do with the money that you made?

SCHNELLMAN: Put it in the bank. Some, you know.

SIGRIST: Did—did your family take any of the money?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Yes.

SCHNELLMAN: I guess. Well, I say, maybe I got twenty francs—ten. No, what? That's ten, four dollars.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. Tell me why you wanted to come to America. You said you wanted to make more money.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: Did you have any other reasons for coming?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, see my uncle was out. See, he has a [unclear]. So he come out and he say he can use some help and he has brewerico in Allentown.

SIGRIST: In Allentown. So your uncle is in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: This is your mother's sister's husband?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: I see.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: And—and, ah, what was—

SCHNELLMAN: And he has a brewerico.

SIGRIST: A brewery?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: A brewery. He was making beer.

SCHNELLMAN: Beer, that's right.

SIGRIST: In Allentown.

SCHNELLMAN: No, Cottysoco.

SIGRIST: Coty?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right for Allentown.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's right near it.

SCHNELLMAN: Near it.

SIGRIST: I see.

SCHNELLMAN: Half hour, that's all.

SIGRIST: I see. Was—did your uncle write you? How did you know that he needed help in the brewery?

SCHNELLMAN: He was out there.

SIGRIST: He went to Switzerland?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did people—did people go back and forth from time to time?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Well, did you want to go?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, I really don't know, but my brother want to go and my two sisters. So I say, "Okay, I go along, too."

SIGRIST: Did you have any other family, other than your uncle and aunt in America?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No.

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: Or did any of your friends go to America before you did?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, [unclear]. Over there, they live in what they call it? Canada. Canada.

SIGRIST: Oh, they lived in Canada.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: I was just wondering if anyone was writing back to you telling you about America?

SCHNELLMAN: No, they never told nothing.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Well, what did you have to do to get ready to go to America?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, see, you have to exam everything, you know. Then you have to Leonard. You know, Leonard] has to stay good. He don't have to pay nothing no, but he has to put what they call a bond up or what is this?

SIGRIST: Leonard, this is your uncle?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Had to put a bond up for you.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Right, right. When you got examined in Switzerland, where did you have to go to get examined?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, we have to go down to city.

SIGRIST: Down to the—down to the—

SCHNELLMAN: Content City.

SIGRIST: And what else did you have to do? How else did you get your papers and things to get ready to leave?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, that don't took long. Two weeks.

SIGRIST: Oh, that was fast.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Two weeks.

SCHNELLMAN: More faster.

SIGRIST: How did your parents feel about you leaving Switzerland?

SCHNELLMAN: They don't like it too much.

SIGRIST: No?

SCHNELLMAN: [Laughs]

- SIGRIST: Who liked—who didn't like it the most? Was your mother the most upset or was your father?
- SCHNELLMAN: My mother the most, yeah.
- SIGRIST: Yeah. Why didn't she want you to go?
- SCHNELLMAN: Well, see, I always got the pay off, you know. And [unclear] she always like us together, though.
- SIGRIST: When you—when you left Switzerland, how many of your brothers and sisters were still living with your parents?
- SCHNELLMAN: Oh, there were anyhow? Three girls and two brothers.
- SIGRIST: So they still had five of their children in the house.
- SCHNELLMAN: Five are there.
- SIGRIST: Were you living with your parents by the—when you left from—
- SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, I was living there.
- SIGRIST: I see. Did—what do you remember about the—the day that you left or the day before you left? What—what—did anything happen right before you left to leave for America?
- SCHNELLMAN: Not much.
- SIGRIST: No? Did—did—
- SCHNELLMAN: I mean, the body say, "Don't go. Stay here."
- SIGRIST: Do you remember what you packed to take to America?
- SCHNELLMAN: Oh, that's all we brought some clothing. Not too much I tell you.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember what—what it was specifically? What kind of clothing you had—
- SCHNELLMAN: Well, couple shirts, pants and two pair of shoes and two pair or socks. Something like that. [Laughs]
- SIGRIST: Did you take any objects with you? Some—like a book or something?

SCHNELLMAN: I took couple gold pieces along.

SIGRIST: Like coins?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Why? Why did you take those along with you?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, I save to try to get along.

SIGRIST: This was money you had saved from working, right?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

SIGRIST: And what kind of a suitcase did you have or what did you put everything in?

SCHNELLMAN: A regular suitcase. Not too big. I mean, [unclear]. They don't have that much, though. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: Where did you—you said that you left in October?

SCHNELLMAN: Twenty-eight.

SIGRIST: You left October 28th or arrived in America October 28th?

SCHNELLMAN: No, twenty-eight we left.

SIGRIST: You left October 28th, 1928.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: That's right, and where did you have to go to get on the ship?

SCHNELLMAN: Down, what you call? Germany.

SIGRIST: You had to go to Germany.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And do you remember which city in Germany it was? No.

SCHNELLMAN: I don't know. That I can't tell you.

SIGRIST: How did you get to Germany from Switzerland?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, they take the train.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Does anything stick out in your mind about that train ride?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, vaguely. My oldest sister, she don't like to go. She cried already. I say, missing so far. Me have to go now anyhow.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. It's—it's you and two sisters, you said?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Two sisters and your brother, Peter.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: Right. So—and anybody else?

SCHNELLMAN: No. All four.

SIGRIST: Just the four of you.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: Later on, I got another brother in.

SIGRIST: Later, after you got here?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, later. Three years later. No, five years later.

SIGRIST: Before you got on the ship, did you have to stay overnight before you got on the ship?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No.

SCHNELLMAN: Same day. [unclear] after examine. You know, they examine again before the ship.

SIGRIST: They did that all over again?

SCHNELLMAN: You come in there. That's right.

SIGRIST: And what did they examine, do you remember?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, the eyes, nose, ears. Everything, I mean. You had to go, I guess it was [unclear] in a row. You know, one after the other.

SIGRIST: Like in a big line.

SCHNELLMAN: With all the clothing off.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. How did you feel about having to take your clothes off in front of people?

SCHNELLMAN: I have one guy when we come in here, you know, and have to go in here.

SIGRIST: When you came to Ellis Island?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

SCHNELLMAN: One guy don't want to take the shirt off and I ripped it off. I say, "It's the same, right?" [unclear] you don't stay [unclear]. You know, you get behind. You have to go. You finish. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: What was the name of the ship that you think that you came on?

SCHNELLMAN: I guess Columbus.

SIGRIST: The Columbus?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. I can send it to you, you want it.

SIGRIST: No, no, I was just wondering if you remembered.

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, I think it's the Columbus.

SIGRIST: Came on the Columbus.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And where did you sleep on the ship?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, we had see the third, third class. That's—well, the first and second class, third class is the baddest.

SIGRIST: And what did it look like, do you remember?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, it looks like nice.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

SCHNELLMAN: I mean, it looked nice, the ship.

SIGRIST: How many people were in one room with you?

SCHNELLMAN: We were four in one room.

SIGRIST: Your sisters were with you, too?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No.

SCHNELLMAN: The ladies had their own [unclear].

SIGRIST: I see. So there were four men.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You and Peter.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right, and then another from Germany and one was from Italy.

SIGRIST: That's interesting.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: And—and your sisters were somewhere else.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: And me got seasick. Oh!

SIGRIST: How long did the voyage take to get across the Atlantic?

SCHNELLMAN: It took fourteen days that time.

SIGRIST: Fourteen days.

SCHNELLMAN: May should been nine. Nine or the ten days should have been here.

SIGRIST: And did you stop anywhere along the way?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: Once the—once the ship started, it went right across the Atlantic?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Oh, it was so far [unclear].

SIGRIST: Had you ever been on a big ship before?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: What did you think when you saw this big ship for the first time?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, we thought what if the ship goes down? That's the way we feeled.

SIGRIST: Do you remember where you were fed on the ship?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, they have a big room. It was on the—well, three days. We eat good. I mean got good eats there, really. I mean they served nice. Then the fourth day me got sick.

SIGRIST: So you had three good days.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: And then on the fourth day you got sick. Did Peter get sick?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, yeah, he was worse as I.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about being sick? I mean, what happened?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, you know, you got—when you're in bed, you feel not bad. I was about to get up, you're like drunk. Go like that, goes around. Then I have a German guy [unclear] and I told him, "Come on. See the doctor." [unclear] You can't go there, you know. So I told him the second day, "Come on and go now." So me holding him and that way we went. [Laughs] Then he gave me was a whole handful pills. Oh, they're big. Can't hardly swallow. I can't swallow it, so I threwed it away. Then I told the guy, "Come on,

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go drink once a beer.” When we drink the beer, when I told them “Put ice in,” you know, and they put ice in. I don’t know what cost beer. It was not too much, you know. And I drink that, night we then go dancing again. That beer did it.

SIGRIST: The beer was your medicine.

SCHNELLMAN: It was the medicine. [Laughs]

[END OF SIDE A]
[BEGIN SIDE B]

SIGRIST: Do you know how your sisters did on the ship? Were they sick, too?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, they were sick. Ohhh, they were sick. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: So it was a very unpleasant trip, unfortunately.

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, yeah. Really.

SIGRIST: What did you see on—we’re going to just take just a moment pause, just for a second. And we’ll start up again in a minute. [tape off/on] Okay, we’re now returning with Otto Schnellman who came from Switzerland.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: We were talking about being on the ship.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And you were sick the whole time.

SCHNELLMAN: That’s right.

SIGRIST: Everyone was sick.

SCHNELLMAN: Everyone.

SIGRIST: Everyone was sick. The ship took about fourteen days you said.

SCHNELLMAN: That’s right.

SIGRIST: To get to New York.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about the ship approaching America?

SCHNELLMAN: When we come in?

SIGRIST: When—when it first came in, what sticks out in your mind?
Before the ship docked, what sticks out in your mind about that?

SCHNELLMAN: I'm really glad to see land again. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: When did you start feeling better?

SCHNELLMAN: Afterwards. Well, I feel way better when we drink that beer.

SIGRIST: Right. Right. Going dancing. [Laughs] Do you remember seeing
the Statue of Liberty when the ship came into New York Harbor?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No.

SCHNELLMAN: Probably saw it when we come out here.

SIGRIST: When you came out.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, they showed it to us.

SIGRIST: Oh, you mean when you were at Ellis Island?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Okay. How did you get at Ellis Island? Can you tell me how—
when the ship first came into New York, how did you get out to
Ellis Island?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, the—what you call? When we got out the ship, everyone
have to stand of one side, the third class. See, second class
don't have to come over here. It was the third class. So they took
us on a ship.

SIGRIST: On another boat?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

SCHNELLMAN: It was an old boat. Was water in come like that.

SIGRIST: Water coming into the boat?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah?

SCHNELLMAN: Was an old one, really.

SIGRIST: Tell me what happened when—when you go to Ellis Island?

SCHNELLMAN: Then everybody have to get out and make [unclear] a room. Then a doctor come out, say everybody take the clothing out. So me took it off, but one guy don't want to take it off. So I ripped it off.

SIGRIST: So you ripped it off of him?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: I say, "Don't worry about." He thank me afterwards.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: And afterwards, you know, I guess there were, oh, I think six, seven doctors. You know, one for your ears. One for your eyes. Throat. Everything. They took everything they examined good.

SIGRIST: And it was a different doctor for each—

SCHNELLMAN: Each thing.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh, and what else happened at Ellis Island? After the examinations were over, then what happened?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, then they took us with the back.

SIGRIST: They took you back to the mainland?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did anyone—did you eat while you were at Ellis Island?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No, didn't eat.

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: Were you with your sisters?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right. Now, always together now.

SIGRIST: Together.

SCHNELLMAN: All four.

SIGRIST: Until you had to start taking your clothes off, probably. Then—

SCHNELLMAN: Right. Then—then they had to changed.

SIGRIST: That's right. Is there anything else that sticks out in your mind about being here at Ellis Island? Anything that you saw for the first time or—

SCHNELLMAN: Wasn't like this, though. I know that. Was old—little old-fashioned, you know. A little nice, too. I mean.

SIGRIST: How is it different now?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, hundred percent different. [Laughs] Really looks nice now.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Yeah. Nicer than it did in 1928, I'm sure.

SCHNELLMAN: Ohhhh.

SIGRIST: When the ship brought you back to New York—

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Then what happened?

SCHNELLMAN: Then we wait for Leonard. I mean, for my uncle.

SIGRIST: For your uncle.

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SCHNELLMAN: He don't come around until it was ten o'clock, I guess, on the railroad, you know. Then the thing comes off, he say, "Make your mind up. That's the last goes to Allentown."

SIGRIST: The last train.

SCHNELLMAN: The last train.

SIGRIST: That was going to go to Allentown.

SCHNELLMAN: So, we wait last Leonard. Then he say, "You better go on, or you're lose it." So we went on there. When we come Allentown, we took the taxi up the home, you know. Me know.

SIGRIST: You had his address with you.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Nobody was home. Then that they have a shanty back and it was cold. So me moved in there. About let's see, ten minutes later, police got up. Got us in jail. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: Because you were in this guy's house—in your uncle's house.

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, yes. He was rich, though.

SIGRIST: Well, how did you feel about that?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, me feel awful. That's something. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: Welcome to America. [Laughs] Being arrested.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, I mean that can't help it. You know, I mean.

SIGRIST: And your sisters are with you, right?

SCHNELLMAN: Right, all—all four.

SIGRIST: So the first night in America you spent in jail?

SCHNELLMAN: In jail the whole night.

SIGRIST: What—what do you remember about being in jail? What—

SCHNELLMAN: Well, I tell you. Well, I guess around ten o'clock they took us upstairs to sleep, you know. That's something, they had cot we laid on. I mean, they treat us good. I mean, not bad, you know. That was still—that was terrible that.

SIGRIST: Did you speak any English when you got to the United States?

SCHNELLMAN: No, not a word.

SIGRIST: So when the police came to take you away from this shanty behind the house, how did you try to communicate?

SCHNELLMAN: We can't say nothing anymore. Well, one Pennsylvania Dutch were there. Pennsylvania Dutch [unclear]. But he don't understand really good. See, me can't talk so good no Pennsylvania Dutch. Me can a little bit understand. I understand him, but he don't understand me.

SIGRIST: So how did you get out of jail?

SCHNELLMAN: Next morning, you know, my uncle—my uncle's daughter got [unclear] and he come. See, he didn't know. That had to phone call ups down. They may have told him about the [unclear], you know. Then I guess they call him. Then he come, but he can't talk no English. I mean no German either. Oh, he took us out anyhow.

SIGRIST: Well, how did you spend the first night with him in the house? What did—did they do anything for you when you first—

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, they got really nice treated now. I mean me still don't like that jail business. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: But it's a great story.

SCHNELLMAN: I know it. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: And I keep thinking of your sisters, you know, and what they must have been thinking about all this.

SCHNELLMAN: Ohhhh. They cried all the time.

SIGRIST: I'm sure.

SCHNELLMAN: I say it's no use crying. That don't help anyhow.

SIGRIST: They'd been sick the whole way over and then they get arrested the first night in America. Ha ha. Tell me a little bit about how long was it before you went to work when you got here?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, next day already.

SIGRIST: The next day. How did you get a job?

SCHNELLMAN: He had the [unclear].

SIGRIST: Oh, that's right, you were going to—to work in the—

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, he [unclear].

SIGRIST: This is the uncle that had the brewery, right?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And is that where you got the job?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: The next day.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me—tell me what it was like to—to be literally right off the boat and put into this brewery to work?

SCHNELLMAN: I don't like it [unclear] too much, first. You know, you had to do what you—

SIGRIST: What was—what was your job there?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, that's mostly corn husker. By hand that time. Husk corn by hand. [Coughs]

SIGRIST: And then what was the—what did they do with the corn?

SCHNELLMAN: They sold it.

SIGRIST: They sold it?

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: This is—I'm confused. Is this—is this the brewery that you went to work with? This is a farm, you're saying.

SCHNELLMAN: No, the farm. The farm.

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SIGRIST: I see. So—so your uncle had a farm.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. He has, was I guess ninety acre farm.

SIGRIST: I see, but this is the same uncle who brought you to America because he wanted to work in the brewery, right?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, the same. That's right, yeah.

SIGRIST: So did you eventually go to work in the brewery?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No, stayed on the farm.

SCHNELLMAN: Well, he sold the brewery afterwards.

SIGRIST: I see. Well, tell me some of your first impressions of the United States and—and what was different?

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, me liked it, though. But only me don't make no money.

SIGRIST: Working on the farm?

SCHNELLMAN: On the farm you make that time, oh, I guess five bucks a week is good, see.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm. Did you live with your uncle?

SCHNELLMAN: No. He has a farm house. Go out there.

SIGRIST: So you lived out at the farm house.

SCHNELLMAN: At the farm house.

SIGRIST: And what about Peter, what work did he do?

SCHNELLMAN: He was the same.

SIGRIST: He did the same.

SCHNELLMAN: We worked together.

SIGRIST: And the sisters?

SCHNELLMAN: And one sister. One sister went to my uncle, took care, you know with the what do you call? Housework.

SIGRIST: So she worked—she lived with him in town?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: And then you and Peter and your sister lived out at the farm house.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: What kind of work did your sister have at the farm house?

SCHNELLMAN: That's all what she did, clean up and cook and things. That's all.

SIGRIST: Were there other people who were there who were hired to work?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: Just you?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You all. Huh. Tell me a little bit about your uncle. What was—what was he like as a person?

SCHNELLMAN: Ah, he was a little tight. Then we were I guess seven years there.

SIGRIST: Seven years, wow.

SCHNELLMAN: Then we bought a farm ourself.

SIGRIST: That's a long time to work for one person. Are you communicating with your mother and father in Switzerland after you got to America?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, I went three times out.

SIGRIST: Oh, you went back and forth three times?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Did—what did you tell them about your life in America when you were writing letters to them?

SCHNELLMAN: I never write nothing.

SIGRIST: Never write.

SCHNELLMAN: Nah.

SIGRIST: I see. So you just went to visit.

SCHNELLMAN: First they were getting [unclear]. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: I see. Tell me how you learned to speak English?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, I went night school for a while, for citizen paper.

SIGRIST: Was that in Allentown?

SCHNELLMAN: Allentown.

SIGRIST: Tell me about what it was like to go to night school.

SCHNELLMAN: I like it.

SIGRIST: Yeah?

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: What did they do there?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, you know, you write. The spelling, you know, so many words. You have spelling. You write it down. That's the way I learned.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what some of the first words you learned in English were?

SCHNELLMAN: [Laughs] That's a long time ago.

SIGRIST: Yes. Yes, it was. Do you remember in your night school class, the class that you were with, what some of the other nationalities were?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, there were [unclear] German, [unclear]. The four, five kind. What the heck is the other one? Polish, that's right.

SIGRIST: So it's quite a mixture of different people.

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, they all mixed, see.

SIGRIST: How did they all get along?

SCHNELLMAN: Ah, they get good along. Some don't learn hard, you know, and some easy.

SIGRIST: And who taught that class? Do you remember what the teacher was—anything about the teacher?

SCHNELLMAN: Teacher name I don't know.

SIGRIST: No, but anything about what he or she was like?

SCHNELLMAN: He was a fairly husky guy, see.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

SCHNELLMAN: But a good guy. He always have [unclear]. I mean he really show you how learn, you know, English.

SIGRIST: So you would work all day.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Right, and then you would go to class at night.

SCHNELLMAN: Night class.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. What did you do for fun in those early years?

SCHNELLMAN: We don't have no fun.

SIGRIST: No fun. [Laughs]

SCHNELLMAN: The fun was over. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: Well, who—who—how did you socialize back then? You know, was there a club that you went to or did you—you liked to wrestle. Was there an athletic group?

SCHNELLMAN: Not in here me.

SIGRIST: No?

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: No. Did you miss that from—

SCHNELLMAN: I missed that.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

SCHNELLMAN: Oh, but you can't do nothing over here. You don't have the money either.

SIGRIST: Were there other Swiss people who lived in that part of Pennsylvania?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No. How did your uncle ever end up in Allentown, do you know?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, first he was—what the heck he was? I don't know my—I know it, but I forget the state.

SIGRIST: It seems like a funny place for him. Of all the places he could go, why he would have chosen Allentown.

SCHNELLMAN: [unclear] he was.

SIGRIST: Right.

SCHNELLMAN: Uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the first trip back to Switzerland that you took. What year was that?

SCHNELLMAN: That was in '60, 1960.

SIGRIST: 19—

SCHNELLMAN: My mother died.

SIGRIST: Your mother died in 1960.

SCHNELLMAN: Was sick, so we went out.

SIGRIST: I see, and that was the first time you had gone.

SCHNELLMAN: First time, yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me what—how it looked to you when you went back after all those years.

SCHNELLMAN: Looked the same almost. Not much changed in that time. But then the second time we went out, I took my wife. The first time I went on my alone. The second time was '70, '76 or maybe not. That look much different.

SIGRIST: Yeah, a lot had happened probably.

SCHNELLMAN: Built all this up, too, you know.

SIGRIST: How old was your mother when she died?

SCHNELLMAN: Eighty-four.

SIGRIST: Oh, she was—she was elderly. And they—did they live in the same house all those years?

SCHNELLMAN: Same house.

SIGRIST: Really?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Had it gotten—

SCHNELLMAN: That's gross father was living there already.

SIGRIST: That was—it was your grandfather's house originally?

SCHNELLMAN: That's right.

SIGRIST: I see. So they moved in with him.

SCHNELLMAN: That's right, yeah.

SIGRIST: And it was really his house.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, uh-hmm.

SIGRIST: Did you marry here in the United States?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And what was the name of your wife?

SCHNELLMAN: Stella Schreiner.

SIGRIST: Can you spell Schreiner, please.

SCHNELLMAN: That's Schreiner, S-C, S-C-H-R-E-I-N-E-R.

SIGRIST: And can you tell me how you met Stella?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, I went at school, in high school. I mean night school, and her father want a citizen paper, too. So he say, "Come on with me home," and he have good wine. He make wine himself. So I say, "Okay." So he give me wine, that's the way I meet her then.

SIGRIST: And what did you like about her when you met her?

SCHNELLMAN: She was nice looking. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: Was her father from the old country?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

SCHNELLMAN: From Austria. Austria.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh, but was she—he was from Austria, but was she—

SCHNELLMAN: But she is in born in here, my wife.

SIGRIST: But she was born in America.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Her father had come from Austria. What year did you get married?

SCHNELLMAN: It's 1931.

SIGRIST: 1931 and you had children, obviously. Your daughter's here. Can you name your children for me?

SCHNELLMAN: Stella, Otto and David.

SIGRIST: Stella, Otto and David.

SCHNELLMAN: David.

SIGRIST: And have any of your children been to Switzerland?

SCHNELLMAN: No.

SIGRIST: No.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, that's right. Daughter was once. That's right. Two years--

SIGRIST: Is that Stella who's out there?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: So Stella went.

SCHNELLMAN: That's two years ago she went.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh, and—

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, two years ago.

SIGRIST: And did—did she visit the house that you lived in?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah, she was there.

SIGRIST: Yeah?

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's—that's interesting.

SCHNELLMAN: Yeah.

SIGRIST: When you think about yourself, what—what do you think is Swiss about you? What—what aspects of your personality are typical of Swiss people?

SCHNELLMAN: That's really nice out there. You should go out there once.

SIGRIST: Oh, I'd love to go sometime. But—but about you, what—what part of your personality do you think of as being really Swiss?

SCHNELLMAN: Well, I really don't know.

SIGRIST: It's a hard question.

SCHNELLMAN: Hard question.

SIGRIST: Yeah, it's a hard question. Do you—when you dream at night, do you dream about Switzerland when—when you were a kid?

SCHNELLMAN: First. First in here, too.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

SCHNELLMAN: No, [unclear] that's—

SIGRIST: What—I was—I was hoping to get you to say a little more Swiss on the tape before we end the interview. Would it be possible—do you know maybe like a Christmas carol in Swiss? No.

SCHNELLMAN: I forgot that stuff already.

SIGRIST: I know, it was long—

SCHNELLMAN: Too old already.

SIGRIST: You haven't had to use it for a long time. Well, look, Mr. Schnellman, this has been a wonderful interview. It's a pleasure to interview someone from Switzerland.

SCHNELLMAN: Okay.

SIGRIST: We find them so rarely. I thank you very much.

SCHNELLMAN: That's all right.

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigris signing off with Otto Schnellman on Wednesday, August 7th, 1996 here at Ellis Island. Thank you, sir.

SCHNELLMAN: That's all right. [Laughs]

[END OF INTERVIEW]