

EI-815
ELLEN FLINK YOUNGREN
BIRTHDATE: JULY 30, 1901
INTERVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 4, 1996
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 95
RUNNING TIME: 30:18
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, Ph.D
RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE, Ph.D
INTERVIEW LOCATION: STATEN ISLAND, NY
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

SWEDEN, 1907
AGE: 6

SHIP: THE HELLIG OLAV
PORT:
RESIDENCES:
- SWEDEN: STOCKHOLM
- US: NEW YORK, NY

LEVINE: Today is October 4th, 1996. I'm here in Staten Island with Ellen Youngren, who came here from Sweden in 1907 when she was six years of age.

YOUNGREN: Right.

LEVINE: At the time of this interview, Mrs. Youngren is ninety-five years of age, and she looks wonderful.

YOUNGREN: Thank you.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. Let's start, Ellen, if you'd start at the beginning and say your birth date and where you were born.

YOUNGREN: Uh-hmm. My-my-I was born in Stockholm, Sweden, on July the 30th, 1901.

LEVINE: Did you live in Stockholm right up until you left for this country?

YOUNGREN: Yes, we did. We lived there until we left.

LEVINE: Oh. Now, what was your father's name?

YOUNGREN: Werner.

LEVINE: Werner and his-your mother's name?

YOUNGREN: Alfrieda.

LEVINE: And Alfrieda's maiden name?

YOUNGREN: Christianson.

LEVINE: Christianson. Okay, and did you have brothers and sisters while you were still in Sweden?

YOUNGREN: Well, when we came over here, we came together, the family. It was my sister and my brother and myself and my mother and father.

LEVINE: And what was your sister's name?

YOUNGREN: Marie.

LEVINE: And your brother?

YOUNGREN: Bertil.

LEVINE: Bertil?

YOUNGREN: B-E-R-T-I-L.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yes.

LEVINE: And-and were you the youngest or in the middle?

YOUNGREN: I was the oldest.

LEVINE: You were the oldest.

YOUNGREN: No, my brother was the oldest.

LEVINE: Brother was the oldest. You were second and-

YOUNGREN: And my sister Marie was third.

LEVINE: The baby.

YOUNGREN: Right, she was born in 1905.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay.

YOUNGREN: And she died now.

LEVINE: Oh.

YOUNGREN: July the 1st, 1996.

LEVINE: Oh, just this year.

YOUNGREN: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: This year.

LEVINE: Hmm. Okay, well, now, what did your father do for work while he was-

YOUNGREN: He was a machinist.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: He was a dye and tool maker.

LEVINE: Oh.

YOUNGREN: And in fact, when we came to this country, he had a job already for him.

LEVINE: Oh, where was that?

YOUNGREN: In Jersey, to begin with.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: And we went there, but my mother-something affected her. She had a headache all the time and they thought it was the climate, so we came back here to Brooklyn and he got a job at the American Machine and Foundry.

LEVINE: I see. Well, how about your mother in Sweden, did she do any kind of work besides taking care of the house and children?

YOUNGREN: No. No, she didn't. No.

LEVINE: She didn't, and did you have grandparents that lived anywhere nearby that you saw them?

YOUNGREN: No, my grandparents lived in-can't remember the name.

LEVINE: In Sweden?

YOUNGREN: Yes, they were in Sweden, too, yeah.

LEVINE: Did you ever see them?

YOUNGREN: I think I-I went to visit my grandparents once, yes.

LEVINE: Do you have any memory of that visit?

YOUNGREN: I-yes, I have a very vivid memory. I was standing by a little pool and I was-I had a stick in my hand and I was poking the water and I tripped and fell in. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Oh.

YOUNGREN: That was my memory of visiting my grandmother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, you were how old then do you think?

YOUNGREN: Well, maybe about five perhaps. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember your grandmother, how she responded or anything about her.

YOUNGREN: That I don't remember. Of course, we have pictures of her so I recall the pictures, of course, but actually I don't just exactly remember her. Really, I mean.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: I know that I was there and that's what happened.

LEVINE: Right, and how about aunts and uncles, did you-did you know any aunts and uncles that-

YOUNGREN: All my aunts and uncles were in Sweden and all we did was write to one another, that's all 'cause I hadn't seen them at all, and my cousins. 'cause we never went back to-to Sweden.

LEVINE: I see. Did they live outside of Stockholm then?

YOUNGREN: Yes, they was-they live in various places in Sweden, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you have any memories of Stockholm at all?

YOUNGREN: No. The only thing I remembered where we lived, there was a park opposite where we lived. Krunaberrs Parken and I played up there in that park and it was a-they say it was a beautiful park. And as far as I can remember, I played there, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and say the name of it again?

YOUNGREN: Krunaberrs Parken. Krunaberry.

LEVINE: Kro-like kro-

YOUNGREN: Crown, like.

LEVINE: C-R-O-

YOUNGREN: No, it was-I guess it's K.

LEVINE: Oh, K-R-O-N.

YOUNGREN: Yeah, I would say so. Kronaberrs Parkin.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. And how about your brother and sister, do you have any memories of them from when you were still in Sweden?

YOUNGREN: No, I really don't. No.

LEVINE: Okay. How about the main street? Do you remember the main street near where you lived?

YOUNGREN: Yes, we lived in Krunaberr's Garten.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And-and-do-did you ever go to shops or to-

YOUNGREN: That I can't remember.

LEVINE: Can't remember. How about religion, do you remember anything about the family's religion in Sweden?

YOUNGREN: No, I don't. Don't remember too much about that. I mean-

LEVINE: Yeah, well you were-you were young, so-

YOUNGREN: Yes.

LEVINE: It makes sense that you wouldn't remember.

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: Do you know why the family decided to come to America?

YOUNGREN: Yes, they had a f-- a friend here that lived in Brooklyn, and he wrote to my father and said, "We have a job for you, if you'd like to come over here." And they decided maybe that would be the better thing to do. So we did, and we've been here ever since.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything your mother and father ever said about coming here?

YOUNGREN: I know they were talking about it between themselves, you know, and they thought maybe we'd be best here. Being that he was offered a job when he came here, we didn't have to worry that he didn't get a job. And so they thought it best, and I think the family-their family, too, thought it best to go.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: So they did.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and do you remember where the ship left from? The Hellig Olav?

YOUNGREN: I don't.

LEVINE: Do-so do you remember leaving? Do you remember leaving your house?

YOUNGREN: I don't even remember leaving my house. Isn't that odd?

LEVINE: No. Well-

YOUNGREN: I guess I-I wasn't-I was just going places and that was it, I guess.

LEVINE: Right, and your parents were making the decisions.

YOUNGREN: Right.

LEVINE: You were a little girl. Well, how about the ship itself, do you have any memories of the ship?

YOUNGREN: Yes, I had very pleasant times on the ship. I-I know we had-they had all kinds of little games for us that we played, and I know we got goodies and things like that. I can remember that. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and can you remember the ship when it came into the New York Harbor?

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: No.

YOUNGREN: Isn't that odd? I don't remember that at all.

LEVINE: And how about Ellis Island?

YOUNGREN: Well, that I have faint memories of Ellis Island 'cause we had to stay there. My brother was sick, so they kept us there. Maybe we were there for a week or so. I can't tell you exactly the length of time, but I know that we were near a doctor's office there and we had those bunk beds, you know. And we were interested 'cause he had a blackboard and chalk and, oh, we loved to see that. So he-he took us in there and gave us each a piece of chalk and let us scribble on the blackboard. [Laughs]

LEVINE: [Laughs] The doctor did that?

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, could you tell the story for the tape of what-what happened with your brother and what kind of sickness he had?

YOUNGREN: He had something wrong with his lungs, and-but he got better they thought, so we left Ellis Island and we came to an apartment in Brooklyn. And-but he didn't live too long after that. Maybe a month or so 'cause his lungs were affected.

LEVINE: Ah-ha. Had he had problems with his lungs prior?

YOUNGREN: No, not that I can remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: I never knew that he was sick at all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: But the doctor picked it up. Do you-do you remember anything about the examinations that you had?

YOUNGREN: No, nothing.

LEVINE: Or your brother?

YOUNGREN: No, that I don't.

LEVINE: And your brother was then in the hospital?

YOUNGREN: No. Well, he was in the-you mean onboard the ship?

LEVINE: Well, I-

YOUNGREN: I mean Ellis Island, I should say.

LEVINE: Yeah.

YOUNGREN: Not on the ship, but on Ellis Island.

LEVINE: On Ellis Island he was in the hospital.

YOUNGREN: Yeah, he was in-well, I imagine. I can't exactly say hospital, but they kept him there to see that he would get better, you know, and when he got better, that he would-it would be all right for us to come in and land.

LEVINE: I see. Was he separated from you and your sister and your mother and father when he was at Ellis Island?

YOUNGREN: No. No, he was with us.

LEVINE: Oh, the doctor just kept checking him.

YOUNGREN: Right, exactly.

LEVINE: I see.

YOUNGREN: As far as I can remember 'cause he was never out of our-my sight that I remember.

LEVINE: I see.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. So you remember the blackboard and during the day-

YOUNGREN: Isn't that odd, in the daytime. I guess we were bored, I guess, and didn't know what to do so he thought-well, maybe we were noisy or something, so he thought he'd quiet us down by giving us a piece of chalk and let us write on the blackboard. Yeah.

LEVINE: And when you got to Brooklyn-is that where you went first?

YOUNGREN: Yeah, Brooklyn. Uh-hmm. Yeah.

LEVINE: What-do you remember any things that you saw that were different?

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: Any new things?

YOUNGREN: I can't remember, no. It's just that we got there and we had the apartment and they-and I went to school.

LEVINE: Oh, what was that like for you, when you went to school?

YOUNGREN: Very nice, yeah, 'cause I had to learn English in school. But I managed pretty well.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

YOUNGREN: Of course, when I came home and told my mother all the things that I had to do and what was expected of me, you know, but it worked out all fine. We all managed very well.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and your-so your sister and brother started school, too?

YOUNGREN: Yes, uh-hmm. Not my brother 'cause he died shortly after we came here, but my sister started school. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh, and you were still speaking Swedish at home, were you?

YOUNGREN: We were, yes, and of course now, between my sister and I, when my mother and father died and all that, and her husband died and my husband died, so then she moved with me. And so funny enough, in something you want to express and at that moment you couldn't think of the English word, so you express it in Swedish. (laughs) It's odd.

LEVINE: This is much later, when you and your sister were living together again.

YOUNGREN: Yeah. Yes, right.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah, when we were married then. We were both widows, you know, at the time, yeah. But it's funny how you revert back to the Swedish language for a certain word that I couldn't express in English.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: So what was it like learning English for you?

YOUNGREN: Do you know, it doesn't seem that it was anything hard for me to--because I think I picked it up quite quickly.

LEVINE: Was there a time when you and your sister were learning English and your mother--and you knew more English than your mother and father?

YOUNGREN: My mother was going to go shopping, you know, and she said, "I don't know what to call it," so I said to Mama, "Pigg [not understood Swedish] point to it, whatever you want and she'll never forget that expression. So she says--when she went to the store, she says, "Ya pink--ya pigg a poda ." and so on. Then she pointed at it, so that she could get what she wanted. Funny how you remember these little things.

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah. Do you remember any things that your mother or father tried to teach you and maybe your sister, too, about ways that you should be or--you know, about life or any values they had or attitudes they tried to get across to you?

YOUNGREN: Well, I think we were pretty much brought up in the Swedish fashion.

LEVINE: Which would be what? What kind of things would be Swedish?

YOUNGREN: Well--well, I mean, to respect your parents and to do as your told. And I think we obeyed pretty regularly and we--everything worked out very well for our family. Yes.

LEVINE: So you started out in Brooklyn with your father having the job, or you started out in Jersey with your father having--

YOUNGREN: In Jersey we started.

LEVINE: So--

YOUNGREN: Then he came back to Brooklyn.

LEVINE: So when you came from Ellis Island, you went to Brooklyn?

YOUNGREN: Yes.

LEVINE: Did you then move to Jersey?

YOUNGREN: Yes, we moved to Jersey.

LEVINE: Where in Jersey were you?

YOUNGREN: Watsessing. [PH]

LEVINE: Watsessing?

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: I never heard of it.

YOUNGREN: Near Bloomfield.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And-and your father had that job there.

YOUNGREN: Yes, he did.

LEVINE: And you started school there?

YOUNGREN: No, I started school in Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Oh.

YOUNGREN: 'cause we came back to Brooklyn 'cause, as I mentioned, that the climate, I don't know what it did, but my mother had a perpetual headache and they thought maybe it was the climate there where we lived. So we came back to Brooklyn. We had an apartment here and we came back here.

LEVINE: And did that help your mother's headaches?

YOUNGREN: Yes, it did.

LEVINE: Huh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: So your father already had a job waiting for him when he came back to Brooklyn?

YOUNGREN: Yes, he did. American Machine and Foundry.

LEVINE: Well, he must have had a good reputation.

YOUNGREN: He did. He had a very good reputation. He was very clever in his work.

LEVINE: What else do you remember about your father from when you were a little girl?

YOUNGREN: Oh, [pause] he was like a regular father, I guess. I mean he didn't-I can't remember anything bad about it or anything like that, no. Everything-

LEVINE: What was he like? What kind of a personality or how was he with you? Was he easy-going? Was he strict?

YOUNGREN: No, he was easy-going. Very easy-going, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: And if he said something, we obeyed, of course, you know, and that helped. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about your mother? What was her personality like?

YOUNGREN: She had a very nice pers- she could meet anybody. She's the kind of person that would fit in anywhere, you know. Yes. She was interested in different things and when she became a little bit more acquainted with America, she joined the organization and she was interested in that, too.

LEVINE: In a Swedish organization?

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So the-so your mother and father stayed sort of close to other Swedish people here in this country?

YOUNGREN: Oh, always. Always, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What kinds of Swedish get-togethers can you remember them having?

YOUNGREN: Oh. Well, we belonged to Vassar Order, you know, both my mother and father, and I joined, too, when I was old enough. And we had all kinds of parties that they had. We attended all those parties that they had, the various occasions like for Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter and like that.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

YOUNGREN: And we were always there together, yeah.

LEVINE: And was this in Brooklyn?

YOUNGREN: Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Was it in Jersey as well or not?

YOUNGREN: No, I don't recall too much about Jersey. I don't think I was there, too long.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: No, but this is all in Brooklyn.

LEVINE: I see. What area of Brooklyn were you living in?

YOUNGREN: Well, in that time we were living on-on 49th Street between Third and Second Avenue.

LEVINE: And there was a large Swedish-

YOUNGREN: Population.

LEVINE: Population there. Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Right.

LEVINE: So did your mother and father actually know many people from Sweden?

YOUNGREN: No, no, they got acquainted here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah. Of course, we knew the family that sponsored us. They lived on 53rd Street. They sponsored us. You had to have a sponsor at that time.

LEVINE: And do you remember that family?

YOUNGREN: Yes, I do.

LEVINE: What do you remember about them?

YOUNGREN: I can remember them very nicely. They were-it's a man and wife. Hult was their name, H-U-L-T, and they had a son and they met us at Ellis Island and all that. So we were with them quite a-a good deal, you know, while we were getting adjusted. Yeah.

LEVINE: So they had already come and-

YOUNGREN: Oh, yes, they'd been here a while, yeah.

LEVINE: So you were like the greenhorns.

YOUNGREN: Right, we were the greenhorns.

LEVINE: They were the ones that were here.

YOUNGREN: Exactly, that's right.

LEVINE: Did they-do you remember if they pointed out things to you or helped you get-find out about what it was like to be here in America?

YOUNGREN: I can't remember that. No.

LEVINE: Yeah, and how about the living conditions, the housing? Do you remember any differences between Sweden and here, as far as living?

YOUNGREN: No, that I-no. Of course, the living here was very nice. I guess the living in Sweden was as well, but I don't remember too much about that.

LEVINE: Right. Right. Okay, so you went to school and after you-how long did you stay in school?

YOUNGREN: Oh, I graduated from school.

LEVINE: UH-huh.

YOUNGREN: And then I went to high school after that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And did you stay in high school up until the end or-

YOUNGREN: No, I didn't because I-I had gotten a job in the bank. I had a friend that worked there and she said to me, "Come on. Come in there and make some money." So we did.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: So I did.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: And that bank was on Union Street on the corner -- Mechanic's Bank.

LEVINE: Oh, and did you work there for a long time?

YOUNGREN: Mon-it was Montaug Bank.

LEVINE: Montaug

YOUNGREN: And I worked there for a long time, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So did you-were you-did you meet your husband while you were working at the Montaug Bank?

YOUNGREN: No, I met him in an organization. He belonged-

LEVINE: Vassar?

YOUNGREN: Vassar, uh-huh. He belonged to Vassar.

LEVINE: And do-

YOUNGREN: And I-

LEVINE: Do you remember your meeting?

YOUNGREN: Well, we had a-it was an occasion where both his lodge and my lodge met, you know. They had an affair together, some party of some kind and that's how I met him there. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember what it was about him that you liked?

YOUNGREN: Well, he was a very lovely man and he was a gentleman at all times. Yes.

LEVINE: And what was his name?

YOUNGREN: John.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. John Youngren.

YOUNGREN: Right.

LEVINE: Okay, and was his family-had his family come from Sweden?

YOUNGREN: Yes.

LEVINE: Or did he come from Sweden?

YOUNGREN: Yeah, he was born in Sweden as well.

LEVINE: OH.

YOUNGREN: And they came here, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Were they from Stockholm?

YOUNGREN: No, they weren't from Stockholm. They-they came from Kalmar. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So were you particularly wanting to meet a Swedish man to marry or-

YOUNGREN: Not necessarily, no. It just so happened that I did and it was the best thing for me 'cause he was a wonderful man.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yes, we were married fifty-five years before he died.

LEVINE: Oh. Now, did your mother and father have the attitude that they wanted to become American or did they have more the attitude they wanted to hold onto the Swedish ways?

YOUNGREN: Well, I think once you know the Swedish ways, when the occasion arises like for holidays and things, you want to continue that and we did. And we still did when we got married, too. We continued those-the same festivities that we had before, you know. Yeah. Maybe not as much of it, but certain things we did.

LEVINE: Can you think of any Swedish occasions or events or-where-where you do things that are strictly Swedish, even when you were in this country?

YOUNGREN: Christmas time.

LEVINE: What-what did you do?

YOUNGREN: [Swedish not understood]

LEVINE: What is that?

YOUNGREN: On Christmas Eve afternoon, I know, all these friends that we had came to our house and my mother had made korv [sausage] and everything, [Swedish not understood] and everything for Christmas. And then before they sat down to the table, they got a plate and a-and a piece of limpa and you took the kn-- the fork and dipped the limpa [loaf] in the stock of the-of the cooking, of the ham and all that was cooked in. And you had that first and then you had the other goodies later.

LEVINE: What's the limpa?

YOUNGREN: That's-it's in -- Swedish bread. You can buy it-we can buy it now, too. We have limpa quite often. Where I came from in Brooklyn, there's a styore where we could buy the limpa. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: It's not a rye bread as such, but it-it's a little dark bread but it's a little sweet, as well.

LEVINE: I see.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: And knäcke bread].

LEVINE: What's that?

YOUNGREN: That's hard tack. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: If you want to call it that. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, and so-so you look forward to these Swedish celebrations.

YOUNGREN: Yes. Yes, I still do.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Of course now it's not-it's not as festive as it was. Everybody's gone, you know.

LEVINE: Right.

YOUNGREN: That we-all the friends we had, they're all gone. I think I'm the only one that's left of all that-the friends we had there.

LEVINE: So you and your husband had friends, many of whom were also Swedish?

YOUNGREN: Oh, yes. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yes.

LEVINE: Now, you had-did you have children?

YOUNGREN: No, I had no children.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and what did your husband do for work?

YOUNGREN: He was in an office. He did office work.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And did you stay in Brooklyn?

YOUNGREN: Yes, we've always been in Brooklyn.

LEVINE: I see. And how about satisfaction in your life? What-what can you think of that has brought you a great deal of satisfaction in your life?

YOUNGREN: Well, he was the type man that he got along with everyone and what I liked, he liked. And so we belonged to societies together and we participated in all the different affairs and all that. So we got along very, very nicely. Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

YOUNGREN: And it was-was no such a thing as an argument about this or the next thing 'cause we-we agreed with one another and everything went very lovely. I had a very lovely married life.

LEVINE: Why do you think you-you got along so well? I mean, that's unusual to get along really well.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: In a long marriage.

YOUNGREN: I don't know 'cause it's the only young man that I went out with, I guess, and he was the one and only. [Laughs] Yeah.

LEVINE: Right, yeah.

YOUNGREN: And maybe he felt the same way about me.

LEVINE: And when you think back about coming to this country as a little girl and-and living out your whole life here, what do you think about it? What sense do you make of it or what-what perspective do you have on the fact of that?

YOUNGREN: Well, I think when I grew up things were so different and it was a beautiful way of growing up. When you realize what they do today, these youngsters, it's terrible. We never heard of anything like this when we grew up. You grow up. You went to school. You went to Sunday school and all that and you lived like a normal person. Not the way they do today. So we all enjoyed growing up. There was nothing that we could complain about.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

YOUNGREN: Naturally, we didn't have as much as they have today, but we made do with what we had. Was happy about that.

LEVINE: And did your mother and father ever want to go back to Sweden?

YOUNGREN: No, they never mentioned that they wanted to go back.

LEVINE: Did they become citizens?

YOUNGREN: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and then you, did you become a citizen?

YOUNGREN: On my father's papers.

LEVINE: On your father's, uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Uh-hmm, right.

LEVINE: Do you remember that day when the family became citizens?

YOUNGREN: Yes, it was September the 17th, 1917.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and-and can you say anything about it? About the-

YOUNGREN: Well, we were very happy that we were citizens, that's for sure. My father was especially happy, too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: So did you work at the bank until after you were married?

YOUNGREN: No, I had several positions. I worked in the bank to begin with. Then I worked over in Gimbel's.

LEVINE: Oh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then after you were married, did you continue to work for Gimbel's?

YOUNGREN: No, I didn't. No. Yeah.

LEVINE: How about this time in your life? Do-how do you-how-how is this time for you, when you're-when you're older and your husband is gone and-

YOUNGREN: Well, it's a time to reminisce. When you think of all-you sit by yourself and you think of all the things that had happened, you know, and what you did at certain times and all that, it brings back a lot of memories.

LEVINE: Do you find that you think differently about those memories now?

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: Than you did earlier?

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: No, uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: Well, it sounds like you have a lot of nice memories.

YOUNGREN: I have.

LEVINE: To think about.

YOUNGREN: Beautiful memories. Very nice memories.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, is there anything else you can think of? I suppose we might as well talk about the fact of the king and queen coming to Ellis Island and your meeting them. What was that like for you?

YOUNGREN: Oh, it was a-a thrill, really it was. It was an honor, absolutely. Very nice and I even spoke -- sat and spoke with the queen and she said to me, "Can you talk Swedish?" and I said, "Yes, I can." So we spoke to one another and she spoke very well, too. And so it was a very nice get together and it-it was so comfortable, you weren't excited or anything about anything. You spoke like it was-like I'm sitting talking with you.

LEVINE: Oh, that's wonderful.

YOUNGREN: Yeah, so it was a very lovely feeling. Very, very nice.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: And I got a very nice invitation to come to Ellis Island, too. I want to show you that.

LEVINE: Okay, now, wait. Don't forget you're-you're-

YOUNGREN: Oh, I've got the thing on. I'll get it-I'll get it later.

LEVINE: We'll do that afterwards. Yeah.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, when you visited Ellis Island, did it bring back any memories?

YOUNGREN: No, it really didn't. I pictured Ellis Island as I came and it was entirely different now. It was huge. Everything was so big and everything. I can remember the little bunks we slept in and all that, you know, but other than that, it-

LEVINE: It was a lot bigger than you-

YOUNGREN: Oh.

LEVINE: Than it was when you saw it this time.

YOUNGREN: Oh, very much bigger. Yes, yes. Yeah.

LEVINE: Of course, you were a lot littler.

YOUNGREN: [Laughs] Right. That's right.

LEVINE: Okay, is there anything else that you can think of that pertains to your life here in this country.

YOUNGREN: Well, I can tell you, as we left Sweden and we got on the train in Stockholm, we met a family by the name of Bergman and they were coming to Brooklyn, as well. And they came here and we've been lifelong friends since we came here.

LEVINE: Wow.

YOUNGREN: Yeah, but now they're all gone, too.

LEVINE: This was a mother and father and children?

YOUNGREN: Father and-yeah, three children. Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow.

YOUNGREN: Yeah, it's odd. So we were together like relatives actually, you know. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Oh, that's wonderful.

YOUNGREN: So-so now the grandchildren or great grandchildren, we get together once in a while, too, yeah. So we haven't forgotten our relationship.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, did your-did your sister Marie-did she have children?

YOUNGREN: Yes.

LEVINE: In this country?

YOUNGREN: Yes, she had three children, two boys and a girl.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, do you have contact with your nieces and nephews?

YOUNGREN: Oh, yes. Yes, they-in fact, Edward was-he's going to go back. He and his wife come up here for the summer to Long Beach, but in the wintertime, they're down in Fort Lauderdale. So he talks with me all the time. He's been here many times now while-in fact, he's going back to Fort Lauderdale on Monday. Yeah. Yes, and then my niece, she lives in-she's down in Florida, as well. And my other nephew, he's in Arkansas.

LEVINE: Oh.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow, uh-huh. Oh, that's nice.

YOUNGREN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, is there anything else before we close that maybe we haven't touched on? Any early memories, either in this country or in Sweden?

YOUNGREN: To tell the truth, I don't remember too much about Sweden.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: It's only-the only thing I remember was going to the park and play, you know.

LEVINE: Did you ever go back to Sweden?

YOUNGREN: No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

YOUNGREN: I never did.

LEVINE: Did you have the desire to?

YOUNGREN: Well, my husband and I were going to go back to Sweden and his cousin. We were going to go back and it so happened that someone took sick in Sweden, so we never went. And after that we-naturally, there was no cause to go.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And how is the Swedish home where you are?

YOUNGREN: Very nice. Very nice indeed.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

YOUNGREN: Everybody's very friendly. Very nice.

LEVINE: Yeah , it seems very nice..

YOUNGREN: I like it very much.

LEVINE: Good. Okay, well, I think this is a good place to close.

YOUNGREN: I think so, too. Thank you. [chuckles]

LEVINE: I want to thank you so much. I've been speaking with Ellen Youngren who came in 1907 when she was six years of age from Sweden.

Today she's ninety-five years of age. It's October 4th, 1996 and this is Janet Levine signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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