

EI-866

DR. LEONARDO VINCENTE DOS REMEDIOS

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INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST

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RESIDENCES:

SIGRIST: Good morning, this is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Wednesday, April 9th, 1997. I'm in the Recording Studio at Ellis Island using the portable equipment, and I'm here with Dr. Leonardo Vincente dos Remedios.

REMEDIOS: Very good.

SIGRIST: Thank you. Dr. dos Remedios came from Shanghai. You were born in Shanghai. You have to this country in June of 1937.

REMEDIOS: No, June of 1939.

SIGRIST: Excuse me. Thank you. In June of 1939. You were eighteen years old, almost nineteen at that point. You were detained at Ellis Island for one night. I should also say for the sake of the tape that we are up by the computers up inside the Recording Studio and the listener may hear a very low drone from the computer sound.

Dr. dos Remedios, can you give me your birth date please, on tape?

REMEDIOS: 5 July 1920.

SIGRIST: And you said you were born in Shanghai.

REMEDIOS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Do you know anything about the circumstances of your birth? Or anything about the birth itself?

REMEDIOS: Ah, no, not really. The—what happens is Macau in the 19th century was an important seaport and a financial base in Southern China, but as Hong Kong opened in the middle of the 19th century, the shallow waters of the Pearl River became less important and so the people who were interested in doing well in general moved onto Hong Kong and then from then later on Shanghai became the financial basis for that part Europe. At that time, of course, we had the so-called foreign settlements where there were portions of Shanghai where actually Chinese were not permitted to live and these were called extra territorial sites, mostly by French, American and British and quite a few Portuguese, too. This was—these were parts of Shanghai that were self-governed by these foreigners, so-to-speak.

SIGRIST: Shanghai is in what part—it's lower China, correct?

REMEDIOS: Yes, in—it's in the south of southeast China, yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about your family background and how they ended up there.

REMEDIOS: Well, we're not quite sure who the first ancestor was, but we can go back to around about 1800 when my great, great, great grandfather, Jose Antonio dos Remedios was a shipping—show owner and he had these relatively shallow draft ships that went up and down the Pearl River carrying goods.

SIGRIST: You're saying the Po River?

REMEDIOS: No, Pearl.

SIGRIST: Pearl. The Pearl River.

REMEDIOS: Yeah, P-E-A-R-L. Pearl, yeah.

SIGRIST: Thank you. Where did you—where was he born? Where was Antonio born?

REMEDIOS: In Macau, yeah.

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SIGRIST: In Macau.

REMEDIOS: See, everybody in my family were born in Macau until my parents were born in Hong Kong.

SIGRIST: I see, and did you—did I hear you say earlier that they were originally of Portuguese extraction?

REMEDIOS: Yes, because Macau was a Portuguese colony since the middle of the 16th century, about 1556, I think.

SIGRIST: I see, but they were all born there and—

REMEDIOS: Yes.

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

REMEDIOS: He was Victor Otelo dos Remedios.

SIGRIST: O-T-E-L-L-O?

REMEDIOS: One L. O-T-E-L-O.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh, and tell me a little bit about what you know about his growing up, his family background.

REMEDIOS: Well, he was, as I said, born in Hong Kong and went to school there but then both he and my mother—I don't know exactly when—probably in beginning of the 20th century moved to Shanghai and he became a vice president of a paper company there and my mother worked in real estate and then in banking in Shanghai. Shanghai being the big—the biggest financial center of Asia at that time.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about your father's personality?

REMEDIOS: Well, he was a very easy going man. Honest, I think to a degree that surprises me. You want me to tell you a little incident of that?

SIGRIST: Yeah, please.

REMEDIOS: Well, when the Japanese came to Shanghai, they were rounding up all the enemy aliens and of course being British, having been born in Hong Kong, the Japanese captain rounded him up and he said to my father, "Mr. Remedios, obviously you are Portuguese and not of English or Scottish extraction, even though you hold a British

passport. Why don't you renounce your British citizenship and go to the Portuguese consulate and be sworn in as a Portuguese citizen? Portugal being a neutral country you can go free. You can live as you please in Shanghai." In the meantime, my parents had been divorced and he married a Russian woman, so-called White Russian and he had a small girl who's my half sister. But my father, I think with a rather misplaced sense of loyalty said, "No, the British have been good to me and I will remain a British citizen," resulting him being into some kind of a—well, concentration camp for three years. Now, I think my aunt, on the other hand, who was also a British citizen, readily renounced British citizenship, became Portuguese and went free. Of course, my father lost everything.

SIGRIST: What year would have that—the mid '30s at the time?

REMEDIOS: Yeah, that would be 19—I don't know exactly. Probably 1932 or '33.

SIGRIST: Did your father ever speak to you about his experiences in the camp? What that was like?

REMEDIOS: Yes, he was a relatively intelligent man. I mean, so he said he first realized when he went into the camp that little things became very important. In other words, a nail, which you ordinarily wouldn't stoop to pick up, he realized that you put the nail in the wall and you can hang a sheet and you have privacy. And—and he said, "Well, you know, in the camp we'll need food, so I'll offer to work in the kitchen," which he did. And so he was always able to have enough food, one way or another, for his wife and his daughter. And so he managed to survive quite well in this camp, although he did lose about twenty pounds altogether.

SIGRIST: What—what were you doing during this time? You would have been a young adolescent or—

REMEDIOS: Well, yes. Well, my history is rather unusual. When I was nine years old, in 1929, I contracted Scarlet Fever and in those days, of course, there were no particular treatment like penicillin. So you were quarantined for four weeks and during the quarantine I remember receiving some injections in my abdominal muscles, presumably anti Scarlet—antitoxin made from horse serum. And a few days later my left knee swelled and remained swollen for quite sometime and painful, and the doctors in Shanghai at that time couldn't decide whether it was Rheumatic Fever or whether it was arthritis from the serum sickness or whether it might be tuberculosis because everybody in—who lives in China, of course, was positive for TB in those days. So it was decided in 1929 that I should go to a

tubercular sanitarium in Switzerland. So my father took me with my knee in the cast by ship. I don't quite remember the name of the ship, but we went via Manila and Ceylon through the Suez Canal to Genoa and then took the train to a little town in Switzerland called Leysin, L-E-Y-S-I-N, where Dr. Rollier had a clinic.

SIGRIST: Can you spell Rollier?

REMEDIOS: Rollier is R-O-L-L-I-E-R, a famous TB man from that early time, and Leysin at that time had a whole series of sanitarium and I was put in one of them. Dr. Rollier felt that fresh air was important for bone, non-pulmonary tuberculosis, so we were kept outside, and most of the people there, even though Leysin is in the French part of Switzerland, most of the patients were young boys who came from Austria and Germany. So the main language they spoke was German. They arranged for an instructor to come once a week to give me lessons and I had lessons in German and—and French, but mostly German. So German actually became my second language and eventually became my—my first language. So after about three years in—in Leysin my mother came out at that time and decided that I was perhaps too frail for public school and she didn't want me back in Shanghai. So she arranged for me to go to a private school in Kitzbuhel in the Tyrols in Austria.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

REMEDIOS: Kitzbuhel, K-I-T-Z-B-U-H-E-L.

SIGRIST: Thank you.

REMEDIOS: And so I spent three years there with a German tutor, who had graduated from Kloster Neiburg, which is a suburb of Vienna and he taught—he was a graduate of the Gymnasium, which is the highest level of secondary education and in those days, Greek and Latin were compulsory. So there I was learning Greek and Latin, translating directly from German to Greek and Greek to German, and pretty much forgetting—not forgetting my English, but not using English very much because I was surrounded by German speaking people. Although—

SIGRIST: Was that the language you grew up in as a child or was it—

REMEDIOS: Was English.

SIGRIST: English.

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- REMEDIOS: Was English, yeah. I went to Shanghai Public School, which of course is not public. It's a private school and British based, so my earliest memories of history was King Kanuten keeping the seas back.
- SIGRIST: [Laughs] I would love, just for a couple of minutes if you'd talk about being in the sanitarium in Switzerland and, for instance, the different kinds of treatment that they gave you for TB and other experiences that you might remember, being a child of that age.
- REMEDIOS: Well, they believed in fresh air, like I said, and they had these big verandas, and if it wasn't snowing, we were kept outside most of the time, unless it became very cold. And then there really wasn't every much except, you know, good food and that, except for one horrible treatment, what they called points de feu, P-O-I-N-T-S D-E-F-E-U, where a platinum needle was heated white hot and touched on the skin over the knee, so you had dozens of little burns, third degree burns, of course, and this was supposed to cause counter irritation and increase blood flow to the effected area and thereby improve it. Whether it did or not, I remember being a very stoic little boy and not crying during this ordeal. [Laughs]
- SIGRIST: That's very interesting. You mentioned good food.
- REMEDIOS: That's about it.
- SIGRIST: You mentioned good food. Was there a specific type of food?
- REMEDIOS: No, I don't think so. It was just what the Swiss ate in general, yeah.
- SIGRIST: I see. I ask these questions because we've recently had a lot of researchers who are interested I tuberculosis and the treatment.
- REMEDIOS: I see.
- SIGRIST: So it comes at a very oportune time.
- REMEDIOS: Yeah.
- SIGRIST: Let's talk about your mother because we haven't talked about her. What was her name?
- REMEDIOS: Well, my mother was actually a first cousin of my father's, so she was Aurea, A-U-R-E-A, Cristina, which is C-R-I-S-T-I-N, T-I-N-A dos Remedios. Her father were the younger brother of my father's father.

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- SIGRIST: And what—what can you tell me about her growing up and her background, a little bit?
- REMEDIOS: Well, as I said, she—she grew up in Hong Kong. We were fairly well-to-do and we had our—even when we lived in Shanghai, we used to have our summers in Tsing Tao, which is northern China, a German—I mean it used to be a German colony in northern China.
- SIGRIST: What was the name?
- REMEDIOS: Tsing Tao, T-S-I-N-G T-A-O. The name's different today, but that's how we knew it, and we would—we had lots of family in Hong Kong and we'd go down to Hong Kong. So she—
- SIGRIST: [unclear]—I'm sorry. Go ahead.
- REMEDIOS: She was a very intelligent business woman and so she rose up from secretarial jobs to managerial positions in a variety of companies.
- SIGRIST: What was her personality like?
- REMEDIOS: She was very assertive would be the term that you would use today. I would perhaps call her aggressive, which is all right in a male, but especially in those days was rather nerve wracking for men, which is one of the reasons why my father divorced her. Because she was always criticizing him for spending too much money.
- SIGRIST: Do you remember what year they divorced?
- REMEDIOS: I'm not quite sure because I was living in Switzerland at the time.
- SIGRIST: You were away at that time.
- REMEDIOS: But it was probably somewhere around 1931 or so.
- SIGRIST: Prior to their divorce, is there a—a story about some experience that you shared with your mother or a certain occasion or an incident that you remember about your interaction when your mother—with your mother when you were a child?
- REMEDIOS: Well, not really because in those days in Shanghai, parents would have relatively little contact with their children. Most of the time I had a Chinese amah, which is a personal servant and so the amah—
- SIGRIST: Could you spell amah, please?

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REMEDIOS: A-M-A-H.

SIGRIST: Okay, thank you.

REMEDIOS: And it was the custom in those days. It was basically a nanny and she spoke some English and so I only saw—my mother was a busy business woman, in the evening. Of course, in Shanghai we lived quite well. We had a nice house and a—

SIGRIST: Can you talk about the house in Shanghai?

REMEDIOS: Yes, it was a three-story home surrounded by a brick wall, and we had a cook who also had a daughter as a helper. We had a chauffeur and a gardener and my—my amah. So that was our household, and—

SIGRIST: What were some of your favorite things to do as a child, say prior to age nine when you were taken off to Switzerland?

REMEDIOS: Well, we had a bicycle. I had a bicycle and I loved to ride around Shanghai. It seemed to be quite safe at the time. I rode it to school and I remember very clearly that the crystal radio became available and that my friends and I had a lot of time putting those little whiskers in the crystal to try to—and I was always—to this day it's a time of wonderment for me how you could hear sounds just sort of magically coming through the air, through the ether, so-to-speak.

SIGRIST: Was there a specific part of Shanghai—

REMEDIOS: Yes.

SIGRIST: That was your favorite to go to when you were a kid?

REMEDIOS: Well, we lived in the French settlement and like I said, we really didn't have too much contact with the—with the Chinese because we lived in the French settlement and most of the people there were of European extraction, and in Shanghai Public School, of course, there were no Chinese. And we had a country place called Henle, H-E-N-L-E where the company had a powerboat and my dad used to go hunting. He'd just hunt pheasants and quail and go fishing, and I remember those excursions. Also, in those days they didn't have water skis, but they had a water board, which they put. You held onto this board and then you could—well, you could stand on it, too, if you wanted to. Yeah.

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SIGRIST: Can you talk a little bit about the—the relationship and interaction of the native Chinese with the other people? People such as your family and the European families? What—what kind of interaction did the two groups have?

REMEDIOS: Well, commercially, of course, you had the Mandarins that you reacted to because if you were in business, you had to deal with them. They were the intermediaries for the—for the Chinese companies. Shanghai had Indian Sykes mostly as policemen. So they were the ones that maintained order there. The highest levels of Chinese, like my family was friendly with was Mrs. Chang Kai Chek and her sisters, the Sung sisters. They were quite friendly with them, but otherwise, other than with our servants, we had relatively little—at least I had very little contact with Chinese as a child.

SIGRIST: Were you required in school to learn Chinese as a language?

REMEDIOS: No. No, English was always—English was my primary language at home. It was the only language used. Shanghai Public School was run by the British.

SIGRIST: Could you talk just briefly about going to school in Shanghai?

REMEDIOS: Well—

SIGRIST: School was run by the British.

REMEDIOS: British, yeah, and for—when I was small, I was driven there by the chauffeur and dropped off and then I remember, you know, learning to read and write in—in English and I remember history being—having to do with the early days of—of England. The early kings and Norman invasion, 1066 and all that.

SIGRIST: Were there other children born of your mother and father?

REMEDIOS: No, I was the only child.

SIGRIST: You were the only child. Did your family have a religious life at all?

REMEDIOS: Well, we were Catholic, of course, but we—my parents and I never went to church regularly. I was baptized and I was—went through first communion, which was sort of mandatory. Both my parents were married in the Catholic Church and—but that was about it.

SIGRIST: Was there some unique way that your family, for instance, celebrated Christmas in Shanghai or—

REMEDIOS: I don't think it was unique. We had the usual Christmas tree and presents. I remember all kinds of toys. In those days there was a British speedster called Malcolm Seagrave, who drove very fast cars, and I remember him breaking two hundred miles an hour with the Golden Arrow, and I had a model of the Golden Arrow that I was very proud of. It zoomed around on the floor a lot. [Chuckles]

SIGRIST: [Laughs] All right, well, let's speed you up. We—we got you to Switzerland and then from Switzerland you went to Austria, you said.

REMEDIOS: Well, I took my exams every year at Kloster Nerburg, so that we would have some way of validating these private teaching and the—after three years the professor said, “Mr. Remedios, you speak German exceedingly well.” I was a bright kid and I had excellence in physics and math and—and history and so-forth, but he said, “I'm going to give you a gut in German,” which is a C,” and he says, “You're a long ways to be speaking as an intellectual German,” you know. “The idiom of really upper class German is beyond you at this stage.” So then I realized, even though I was extremely fluent in German at that time, dreamt in German and—so when you start dreaming in German, it becomes your primary language. I realized I was a long ways of being really, really proficient in it. That's why I'm always surprised that Joseph Conrad could write so well in English.

SIGRIST: How did that make you feel when he said that to you? That you wouldn't be proficient in high German?

REMEDIOS: It didn't bother me. I was—I could speak English better than he could. [Laughs] So, I mean, German wasn't my native language.

SIGRIST: Well, so what happened? Did that propel you to the next [unclear]?

REMEDIOS: Well, of course, I was living alone. I mean I was living with these ladies, English ladies, actually, and I was—my communication with my parents was by correspondence, and they noticed my correspondence was becoming less grammatical and so they had a friend who had a son in a Scottish public school called Dollar Academy, in Dollar, Scotland, and they thought—my nickname was Sonny. They thought, well, here this Eric would look after Sonny and—let's see. Who came over? My mother came over again and took me to Scotland from Austria, and—

SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about the trip going from Austria to Scotland?

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REMEDIOS: No, but I was very impressed when she left Austria to go—when she took me to Kitzbuhel, she took the Trans Siberian Express to go back to Shanghai via Vladivostok and I was very impressed with that trip. Took two weeks, apparently. But there was nothing special. Oh, yes, we—we—we flew across the channel. I remember her getting airsick and I was getting airsick. It took quite a long time with those prop belly prop planes. By now we're about 1936 or '37.

SIGRIST: We're going to pause. [tape off/on] Now resuming. We were in Scotland. You—

REMEDIOS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You flew over the channel, which—what year is this?

REMEDIOS: 1936. We're in 1936 now.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Do you know how you felt about getting on the airplane in 1936?

REMEDIOS: I didn't—I didn't feel nervous at all. I was just excited, you know. I was sixteen at the time and was excited, a new experience. Anyway, we—Dollar Academy—Dollar is a very small town.

SIGRIST: You're saying Dollar?

REMEDIOS: Dollar, just like the—

SIGRIST: D-O-L-L-A-R.

REMEDIOS: Yeah, right.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

REMEDIOS: And it's a small town and they had very severe discipline in the school, so that smoking in the john was grounds for expulsion. I didn't smoke. They had a nice golf course and Dollar happens to be the home of Dollar Castle, which was the home of the Campbells, Campbell Castle in Dollar. So all the Campbell clans, Scottish people know that. And had a very experience because of my knowledge of German and Greek and Latin. I took—and French. I took an usually large number of subjects, so I was able to do, you know, English, history, physics, chemistry, German, Greek, Latin, French and do very well in—in all of them. And so actually I graduated as the valedictorian from—from Dollar.

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SIGRIST: How long were you there?

REMEDIOS: I was there three years.

SIGRIST: For three years.

REMEDIOS: From '36 to '39.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me what the differences were between attending school say in Austria and attending school in Scotland?

REMEDIOS: Well, of course, I was in private school in—in Austria, so you really can't compare a Scottish public school. There was a certain amount of anti-foreign sentiment. I mean, I'm fairly short and dark and, you know, look more like Portuguese. The Scottish people are very parochial. They even look down on—on the English. They particularly look down on the English.

SIGRIST: Is there a specific instance where—where you were confronted?

REMEDIOS: Yes. We were all obliged to join the Officer's Training Corps. They call it the OTC. That happened to be the Argyle and Sutherland Regiment, so I'm entitled to wear that kilt, and the answer is that you do not wear anything under the kilt, if you wanted to know about.

SIGRIST: [Laughs]

REMEDIOS: So they can swing better.

SIGRIST: [Laughs]

REMEDIOS: And I did extremely well in the written examinations and also in drilling squad. I was a medium good shot. We were using the Lee Enfield 303 rifle at that time, and I shot at Bisley, which is B-I-S-L-E-Y, which is where the competition of schools—in fact, gun people from all over England and Scotland go to annually for competition. And I became a corporal because of my ability to shoot well, but I could never rise above the rank of sergeant because they said, "You know what? You can't have this little shrimp commanding a—a platoon or a company." And—but, you know, I didn't feel badly about it. There were—the Scottish in those days were very narrow-minded, especially in a small town in—in Scotland, right in the middle between Edinburgh and Glasgow. But I'll say this much for Dollar, it taught me a lot of discipline in terms of doing what you had to do and getting your homework done on time and so-forth.

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SIGRIST: How was it decided that you would go to the United States?

REMEDIOS: Well, in the meantime my mother had divorced my father and she had—and she immigrated. She was a very intelligent woman. She realized that the Japanese threat was becoming worse and worse, so she decided to get out of Shanghai. So she got rid of everything and immigrated to the United States, landing in Palm Springs. Being a very remarkable woman, she opened—bought an ice cream store in Palm Springs and ran a very successful business for about a year or two.

SIGRIST: So she crossed the Pacific when she came?

REMEDIOS: Yes, Pacific. Right.

SIGRIST: And where would—where did she land, do you remember?

REMEDIOS: She landed—I'm not sure. Probably in Los Angeles.

SIGRIST: In Los Angeles.

REMEDIOS: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

REMEDIOS: And in the meantime, I was in school in Scotland at that time.

SIGRIST: Right.

REMEDIOS: So I actually visited her, came over by ship from Southampton to New York and then by train. Twentieth Century limited.

SIGRIST: Was that some sort of school holiday that you—

REMEDIOS: Yeah, summer holidays. Yeah. So I spent a long time going over to LA and I remember coming back on the train reading—Gone with the Wind had just been published and I was very impressed with that.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

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[BEGIN SIDE B]

SIGRIST: Well, when you—did you graduate from Dollar? Was that—you were there for three years.

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REMEDIOS: Yes, uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Then—then how—did she make the decision that you would come to live with her?

REMEDIOS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. How did you feel about that?

REMEDIOS: Well, I felt fine. I was actually, you know, ready to go to medical—I was always interested in medicine as a little boy because I was, you know, sickly with the knee and all, and I always looked up to doctors and I figured, “Well, heck, I could be a doctor.” So I was pretty much accepted at the University of Vienna Medical School, but that didn’t work out. So then I went—as I graduated from Dollar Academy, I was actually accepted to the University of Edinburgh Medical School. But as I said, then I decided to—to come to this country and that has to do with why I spent a night here because I came over during summer holidays in ’39, ostensibly to visit my mother, but because immigration was fairly complicated, being born in Shanghai, I came under the Chinese quota. But in those days they had the Oriental Exclusion Act, so you had to be non-Chinese and you had to prove it before they’d—they’d let you immigrate. I think the quota was a ridiculous thing. I was eleven or something, or sixteen on the quota. So rather than doing that long distance, she thought it was more important that I come as a visitor and then go to Tijuana—I mean, go out in Tijuana and immigrate through San Isidro, which is a point of immigration, which is actually what we did at that point. But what happened here was, as the Immigration Officer was talking to me and they said, “Well, how long are you going to be here?” “For the summer holidays,” I said, you know, “a couple of months.” He says, “Well, why do you have a hundred pounds of books and skis? I mean, where are you going to ski here?” So I couldn’t give a logical answer to that and he said, “Well, we better detain him and see,” but my mother and the lawyers—she sort of anticipated this and so we had a hearing the next day and—

SIGRIST: Well, when we get you to Ellis Island, we’ll talk about that.

REMEDIOS: Oh, yeah. Oh, I’m sorry.

SIGRIST: Talk about leaving Scotland for me. What did you pull together to take with you?

REMEDIOS: Okay.

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SIGRIST: Obviously books and skies.

REMEDIOS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What else did you take?

REMEDIOS: Well, you know, just about everything I owned, which is—I didn't take—well, I didn't own bagpipes, but I took all my clothes. I was interested in photography. I'm interested in photography now, but even then I was interested in photography and I brought cameras over.

SIGRIST: Let me just make sure I'm clear. Your mother—her intention was that you would come into New York. That there might be trouble, but that you would get to the West Coast and at some point then--

REMEDIOS: That's where she was living, yeah.

SIGRIST: Down across the Mexican border.

REMEDIOS: Right.

SIGRIST: And then come back up.

REMEDIOS: Right, exactly.

SIGRIST: I see. Okay. Did you remember what ship you came on? Oh, you think it was the New Amsterdam.

REMEDIOS: Yeah, it was the New Amsterdam. Yeah. In fact, I'm pretty sure that was—I don't remember the ship I came over on. It may be the Mauritania in '37, but that was for holidays.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm.

REMEDIOS: And probably the Aquitania coming or going, I forget. Mauritania and Aquitania, but New Amsterdam was the ship I took.

SIGRIST: So where did you have to go to get on the ship?

REMEDIOS: Southampton.

SIGRIST: And how did you go from Dollar to Southampton?

REMEDIOS: By rail. You go—

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SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about that?

REMEDIOS: Well, not that trip, but coming back in '37, going back to Dollar, I didn't plan it exactly right. I mean, I'd finished reading *Gone with the Wind*. I guess *Gone with the Wind* was that time, yeah, and I got into Edinburgh and then I ran out of money. So my ticket was for the following day and I didn't have enough money to stay in a hotel, so I remember wandering around Edinburgh in the middle of the night and sleeping on park benches until I—until the morning. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: When—when you left in '39, did—were you traveling alone?

REMEDIOS: Yes.

SIGRIST: Or was there someone with you?

REMEDIOS: No, I always traveled alone.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. How long did you stay in Southampton before the ship left?

REMEDIOS: I don't really remember. Just a few hours, I think.

SIGRIST: I see. Do you remember any kind of examinations or anything prior to getting on the ship?

REMEDIOS: No, because I wasn't planning to immigrate. I mean, I—in fact, I wasn't even—she didn't even say that—

SIGRIST: Right.

REMEDIOS: Didn't even tell me that we were going to—

SIGRIST: Right. How long was the trip across the ocean?

REMEDIOS: About six days, I think.

SIGRIST: And what do you remember about being on the *New Amsterdam*? What do you remember about that trip, specifically?

REMEDIOS: Not much, really. I remember having a lot of good food and sharing the room with an English, young Englishman who asked me one night to not come—come in 'til fairly late because he had a young lady there, I guess. So—

SIGRIST: Do you remember—

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REMEDIOS: I don't remember much about the ship, really.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Do you remember what class you were traveling?

REMEDIOS: Tourist.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much it cost?

REMEDIOS: No. I—I have no idea.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. The ship—alright, so the ship takes six days, you said and lands in New York. What—before you go to America, before you had ever been here, what did you know about America? What did it mean to you?

REMEDIOS: Well, don't forget, I'd been here on vacation two years before.

SIGRIST: But even—even before that, what—like when you were—when you were a kid growing up, how did you think about America? What did it represent to you?

REMEDIOS: Well, I really didn't think much about America one way or the other. My father, once he had dropped me off in Switzerland, went around the world. So he had continued on across the Atlantic and went across the United States by train and then by ship across the Pacific back to Shanghai. He sent me a lot of photographs that he took with his Leica, and so I had some idea of what—pictures of New York, the Grand Canyon, of things like that. And also when I was a—an invalid at the hospital in Switzerland, I was allowed to order a book a month from England. So I read a lot. I read many books and some of the books dealt with America, and so I knew something about it. But I had never really expected to immigrate particularly, but—originally, I had expected to go—to go to medical school in Edinburgh.

SIGRIST: When the ship came into New York, what time of the year is this?

REMEDIOS: June.

SIGRIST: June. What happened exactly, when the ship came in and it docked? How did they actually get you out there, that you remember? Or how were you informed that you would be coming out here? To Ellis Island.

REMEDIOS: Well, I—the only part I remember clearly was an Immigration Officer being very skeptical that I was here only for summer vacation because of the large amount of baggage I had, and the skies

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particularly made him suspicious. So that—he wanted to have that sorted out, so he said, “Well, until that happens we better hold you,” and we had a hearing I think right here in—on the Island the following day, and—

SIGRIST: What sticks out in your mind about that, the hearing?

REMEDIOS: Well, the only thing I remember on the Island was seeing a Chinese, an elderly Chinese person here, which sort of surprised me and I asked around and they said, “He’s been here for years. He is stateless and we don’t know what to do with him,” because China didn’t want him, and he was on the East Coast, instead of normally would have been in the West Coast. That I found very impressive and rather frightening. [laughs] But I don’t—everything, you know, went very smoothly, so that—

SIGRIST: Do you remember where you slept for the night?

REMEDIOS: Yes, it was a—it was a large room with several beds. Not stacked on top of another, but little cots, iron cots in some dormitory of some sort. Male dormitory, yeah.

SIGRIST: And do you remember eating at all while you were here?

REMEDIOS: I don’t remember eating, so it probably was neither good or bad, I would imagine. I would have remembered a bad episode, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember—you mentioned the one elderly Chinese man. Do any other people stick out in your mind or maybe the number of people who were here?

REMEDIOS: There really weren’t very many. This was in ’39 and most people that were held here, you know, were—in those days, I imagine most people who were planning to immigrate had been processed. I would have been processed in England, if I had planned to immigrate, but I only had a visitor’s visa, so the whole thing became irrelevant and I was somewhat surprised when they—but I could see the logic of the—of the Immigration Officer by saying, you know, “You’re bringing all your earthly goods here just for some holiday seems rather strange.”

SIGRIST: When you went into the hearing, was there someone who was representing you or—

REMEDIOS: Yes, my mother had a lawyer who specializes in immigration. Yes, he was a friend of a Hollywood lawyer that dealt with a lot of actors

and actresses and they also had immigration problems, too. And so he knew lots of lawyers from Chicago that specialized in immigration matters and so I was well represented, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how you felt about having to be here over night?

REMEDIOS: Well, I was obviously disappointed. I didn't get to see my mother and her friends, who were—who I knew were with her, and—but I didn't feel the anxiety because I knew that she was going to work things out pretty well.

SIGRIST: Where were you intending to meet your mother along the line? Were you going out to California before you saw her or was she in New York?

REMEDIOS: No, no, no, she—yeah. Yeah, we were going to meet at the bottom of the gangplank, I guess.

SIGRIST: I see. Did you—did you see her at all during this process or—that you remember?

REMEDIOS: I don't remember, but I probably did and she probably talked—yeah, I must have met her and then she said, "You know, don't worry, we'll deal with it, but tomorrow." Yeah.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about being released?

REMEDIOS: Well, I remember after the hearing, you know, we just went to—went back to New York and she had bought a Nash. I remember it was a straight eight, double ignition. I was very impressed with the double ignition. Sixteen sparkplugs and we drove across—

SIGRIST: That's a car, a Nash.

REMEDIOS: Yeah. Nash, yeah. We drove across the country back to Los Angeles.

SIGRIST: How long did that take?

REMEDIOS: Oh, probably about two weeks.

SIGRIST: And were there things that you saw along the way that you had never seen before?

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REMEDIOS: Well, it was '39 and the New York World's Fair was on, and then when we got to the other side, we had the San Francisco World Fair. So that was interesting, and I remember that and—

SIGRIST: What—what were some of the specific things that you particularly liked? As you were driving across the country, what were some of the things that—that you found particularly interesting and unusual?

REMEDIOS: I really don't remember anything, you know, particularly spectacular. I think the Grand Canyon, which I had seen the time before, I already had seen.

SIGRIST: That's right, you had been here once already.

REMEDIOS: And we just drove on the Lincoln Highway, I remember, and it took all—of course, there were no freeways in those days so—

SIGRIST: Had America changed your mom in some way?

REMEDIOS: Don't forget, I hadn't seen her in three years.

SIGRIST: Right.

REMEDIOS: Not really. I mean the sense of business and—and the whole ethics of business and everything was pretty much the same in Shanghai as it is here. So in the meantime, she had sold that ice cream parlor in Palm Springs and bought a—a boutique in—in Los Angeles and that time she lived in Beverly Hills, in a very nice home. So it was—it was a very nice experience to live with her and then she—she and I both decided that Berkeley was the place I was supposed to—

SIGRIST: Was this before or after you had gone back down to—to Mexico to—because I'm very interested in that aspect of this, too, if you can talk about going south of the border and waiting and then coming back up.

REMEDIOS: Well, that took about two, three weeks before we got all the papers together and everything because they had to get permission to go on a British passport, enter Mexico within and Mexicans, you know, they tend to need a certain amount of lubrication before they'll act, to say the least. And so that had to take place before I could even get into Mexico in order to get out.

SIGRIST: And how long—how long from the time you arrived in California—how much time had elapsed before you—

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REMEDIOS: About two weeks or so.

SIGRIST: Two weeks. Oh, so it was done fairly soon after you—

REMEDIOS: Yeah, uh-hmm. It was just getting the papers ready and getting the permission. The main thing that held us up was permission to enter Mexico.

SIGRIST: And you were entering as a visitor, as a tourist?

REMEDIOS: Yes.

SIGRIST: The permission to get into Mexico?

REMEDIOS: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Where did you live once you went down there? How long did you stay?

REMEDIOS: I don't think we—we might have stayed in Tijuana over night.

SIGRIST: I see. So your mother was with you during this?

REMEDIOS: Yes, uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Oh, I see.

REMEDIOS: Yeah. She and I went down to Tijuana and then immigrated, as I said, through San Isidro.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

REMEDIOS: Yeah, there were no problems in that.

SIGRIST: Then did you become an American citizen somewhere along the line?

REMEDIOS: Yes. Well, it normally would take five years, but when I was in the—well, you see, everything was accelerated because in—in '39 we were—well, of course, Europe was at war in later '39 and then Pearl Harbor happened while I was in—in undergraduate school, and then everything accelerated, so that I'm one of the few people that entered university in '39, got my Bachelor's Degree in '42 and got my MD in '44. So it just took five years or so to go from entry to MD.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm, and you went into school very quickly when you got here.

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REMEDIOS: Yeah, I went to Berkeley and because of my Scottish education, they actually gave me my entire freshman year credit. So I entered as a sophomore and then they had the rapid, the speed up and I did, you know, quite well on the MEDCATS and the—

SIGRIST: What struck you about the American education system? You've experienced all these different types of educations.

REMEDIOS: Well, I thought it was relatively easy because most of the students really didn't study very hard. I mean, so that I didn't have much trouble. It didn't require much effort to get A's. So I was pretty much an A—a straight A student, although I didn't make Phi Beta Kappa, which bothered me. One of the reasons was because I hadn't been a student long enough as an undergraduate.

SIGRIST: Was there anything about America you didn't like? Now that you were actually living here.

REMEDIOS: Well, I remember my days in—in Berkeley where I lived in International House, which was a treat in a way. No, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the intellectual activity that Berkeley had in those days and the—I didn't have a car, but we had very good transportation so that we could get to San Francisco on the C Train and the F Train very easily, across the bridge. And it was quite safe to walk the streets at night and it was—I found it a very, very vital experience and I enjoyed being in America and—and wanted strongly to be an American citizen. So then when the war started, and then we were brought into the—what they called the—that part of the army sent you to school. They were very nice because they paid your tuition, bought your books and gave you—and gave you something. I was a private first class in what they called the ASTP, the Army. And so because I was in the army then, I could become an American citizen faster.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what the process was? You know, was there—how is it different doing it that way than it would be if you had gone as a civilian and—

REMEDIOS: Well, I had already done the preliminaries because I'd indicated my intent and so they said, "Well, you've got to pass the"—what is it called? American—there's a special term for that. American Institutions was a special course, and I think they had a proficiency thing in those days, too. So I had already done those and I'd had what they call the first papers with intent, and so going in the army because I had to take the Oath of Allegiance—Oath of Allegiance, I think that accelerated it.

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- SIGRIST: Did your mother become a citizen, too?
- REMEDIOS: Yes, but she—took her five years. But of course she had been two years ahead of time.
- SIGRIST: Right, right. In our last couple of minutes do you want to just sort of give me a quick rundown of what happened for the rest of your life?
- REMEDIOS: Well, as I said, I—I graduated from University of California Medical School in San Francisco. I interned down in LA County and met my wife, who was born in Los Angeles.
- SIGRIST: What's her name?
- REMEDIOS: Lucille Florence Diemer was her maiden name.
- SIGRIST: Would you spell Diemer please?
- REMEDIOS: Yeah, D-I-E-M-E-R and we were also interested in doing her family. Her family, both sides came from Germany, so she's a hundred percent German. And so we got married and then—
- SIGRIST: What year did you get married?
- REMEDIOS: 1944, and—no, excuse me. She'll kill me.
- SIGRIST: [Laughs]
- REMEDIOS: 1945, yeah. 1945, and after my internship and we—in those days you had gasoline rations, so I have a C Coupon, being in the army and being activated and we—for our honeymoon we drove all the way from Los Angeles to Carlisle Barracks where I went through Medical Field Training School and then—then the bomb dropped and the war ended and—
- SIGRIST: Did you have children?
- REMEDIOS: Yes, we have four children and—
- SIGRIST: Can you name them please?
- REMEDIOS: Well, the oldest is Steven Marriott dos Remedios. No, the oldest is Denise Aurea who is now married. She's a police officer at Madison, Wisconsin, married to a professor of zoology, Baylis. Jeff Baylis in University of Wisconsin at Madison.

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SIGRIST: Is that B-A-Y-L-I-S-S?

REMEDIOS: Yes. No, one S. B-A-Y-L-I-S.

SIGRIST: And her middle name is the same as your mother's?

REMEDIOS: Yes.

SIGRIST: O-R—

REMEDIOS: I gave her that, yeah.

SIGRIST: O-R-I-A?

REMEDIOS: No, Aurea, A-U-R—golden one. A-U-R-E-A.

SIGRIST: That's right.

REMEDIOS: Denise Aurea, and so she's Baylis now, and then my son is Steven and his middle name is Marriott, named after a famous pediatrician in nutrition.

SIGRIST: Marriott, two R's and two T's?

REMEDIOS: Yeah, like the hotel. Right. [Laughs] And he was—he was married to a girl who came over on the Mayflower, actually, but he—

SIGRIST: Her family did.

REMEDIOS: Right. [Laughs] But they got divorced and he's remarried a—a lovely Jewish girl, actually.

SIGRIST: Two more kids to go here.

REMEDIOS: And then Pamela, who married a businessman, a very successful businessman. Her last name's Litke now, L-I-T-K-E. She has two children who are my grandsons, and the last is Christopher Scott dos Remedios, married to Betsy and we have a grandchild. And I'm here today with Steven's daughter, Jennifer and her daughter, Madeleine, who's my great grand daughter.

SIGRIST: Wow. I hope they all enjoy listening to the tape when you get it.

REMEDIOS: And so I'm sort of padre familias to a large crew of people.

SIGRIST: What's your proudest—proudest accomplishment in life?

REMEDIOS: I think getting my medical degree, you know. It was something I had always aspired to and I had my eye on the ball the whole time and it all fell into place quite nicely. I didn't have any mishaps on the way.

SIGRIST: And when you think of yourself in terms of nationality, how do you think of yourself?

REMEDIOS: Well, that's kind of interesting because recently I met some people through the camera club who were also from Macau and I never identified with them particularly. They have a—in the Bay area they have a Macanese Society where people from Macau meet and gather and they had a big meeting last October in Macau and—but anyway, he—I was interested in family history and he told me there was some poor guy in Macau spent six years studying every single Portuguese that had lived there for—people that he had access to and mostly church documents, and he'd published three volumes, which I've bought, but I haven't gotten yet, of the family history of every Macanese that he could lay his hands on. So—

SIGRIST: But when you think about your nationality, how do you define yourself?

REMEDIOS: Well, I'm very pro English because of my background and I consider myself a Westerner. That's why I'm a little bit upset about the push for diversity that they seem—all the university's seem to have because I feel that we're—I always think of the United States as a Western country. Our forefathers had Western traditions and I hate to see it diluted too much. I think diversity is fine, but I think—and I also believe very firmly that we should have a national language and that should be English. So I also belong to English First and I've contributed money to that because I see in Canada that you know how the French have tried to pull away, and if we have a Spanish speaking area, then there'll be somewhere along the line a push to separate out parts of Texas and parts of Southern California. And I think not having a—a unified language, which in my point of view should be English, and all our official documents should be in English. To me to be an American is to be able to speak English, and I think you're not much of an American if all you speak is Chinese or Togaloch or something. I mean, how can you really learn anything about American institutions if you can't speak the language? I mean, I don't quite—I don't understand why President Clinton seems to be against it.

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SIGRIST: Hmm. How do you think your life would have been different if you'd never left Shanghai?

REMEDIOS: Oh, well, I have no idea. [chuckles] I mean, you know, so much has gone on with the Japanese occupation. If my mother had—you know, they were divorced, of course.

SIGRIST: You might have ended up in the camp with your father even.

REMEDIOS: Well, we probably would have gone to Hong Kong, I would think.

SIGRIST: Yeah.

REMEDIOS: But Hong Kong was taken over, too. A lot of people went to camp there, you know. Yeah. So it's very hard to speculate now.

SIGRIST: [Laughs]

REMEDIOS: I hate to even think about it. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: Well, this is a good place for us to end. Dr. dos Remedios, I want to thank you very much.

REMEDIOS: Well, thank you.

SIGRIST: It's been a pleasure. I'm glad that Mary Morano, our librarian, brought you to my attention. This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Dr. Leonardo Vicente dos Remedios. Today is Wednesday, April 9th, 1997 and this is Paul Sigrist signing off at the museum.

REMEDIOS: Thank you, Paul.

[END OF INTERVIEW]