KECK-114
JOSEPH WOHLBERG
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HUNGARY, 1921
AGE 11
PASSAGE ON "THE AQUITANIA"

DANE: This is Debbie Dane, and I'm speaking with Joseph Wohlberg on Friday, January 10, 1986. We're beginning the interview at 10:20 AM. We're about to interview Joseph Wohlberg about his immigration experience from Hungary in 1921. He was eleven years old and this is Interview Number 114. Mr. Wohlberg, let's start at the beginning, and if you would tell me the date that you were born and in what town.

WOHLBERG: I was born August 26th, 1910 in Budapest, Hungary.

DANE: And you grew up in Budapest by, as a single child.

WOHLBERG: Right.

DANE: Tell me about what your father did for a living.

WOHLBERG: My father, uh, had a custom tailor shop in the heart of Budapest. It was one of those fashionable, uh, custom tailor establishments. But, uh, World War One came and, uh, he was drafted into the armed services. So there was, uh, the thing went completely bankrupt.

DANE: Uh-huh. Did he have employees? Was it a one man shop, or was it--

WOHLBERG: No, No. He, he had a lot of employees. Uh, my mother tried to continue that, but she was not a tailor and, uh, it just couldn't be done.

DANE: And the clientele? Fashionable people?

WOHLBERG: Oh, they were all fashionable people, and we had members

of Parliament and, uh, lawyers, uh, physicians and so on.

DANE: Uh. As a young boy, were you ever brought into the shop to work? Did you have anything to do with the shop?

WOHLBERG: Oh, no. I visited, I visited my father's shop with my mother sometimes in the afternoon. We stopped by to say hello, but that's about all.

DANE: Was it a profitable business for him?

WOHLBERG: Oh, yes. It was quite profitable, but it was established in 1911 and, uh, 1914, when the war broke out, all hell broke loose.

DANE: Uh-huh. And staying with your youth for a minute, before we go to the war, did you go to school as a child? Did you go to Hebrew school, or--

WOHLBERG: Oh, yes. I went to, uh, I went to a private school, uh,

in Budapest and, uh, then, uh, after four years I was, finished one year of gymnasium, which meant that I used to read some Latin.

DANE : What kind of school was it, the private school? Was it a, a Hebrew school, or was it a Hungarian--

WOHLBERG: No, it's, it was simply an ordinary private school.

DANE: Uh-huh. Any jobs as a child?

WOHLBERG: No.

DANE: Did you work at all? Did you have a carefree childhood?

WOHLBERG: No. Uh, I, I was very free. The only thing, just before coming here to the United States, I started to have a little bit of extra instruction in English.

DANE: Uh-huh. Oh, in English.

WOHLBERG: Uh, because we were already planning to come to the United States but, uh, we felt that I had to know some English. So the first English I ever learned was

British English and I'm afraid it's still there as a trace in my speech.

DANE: Yeah. You can hear the accent. That's true. Your mother, oh, okay. The war came, you were a young boy when the war--

WOHLBERG: Yes. I was four years old.

DANE: Uh-huh. And when you were four to eight years old, do you remember how the war affected your life?

WOHLBERG: Oh, very much. I know that, uh, it was, everything was rationed very strictly, and even with rationing, it was almost impossible to get food. I remember a time when, we, uh, you must remember that we had the Communist regime in Hungary in 1918, in 1919. And there was no food. And, uh, since my father was an employer he was down at the bottom of the list for rationing. And, uh, we once went out, three of us walked out to a village, beyond the last trolley line. And, uh, waited, waited, waited until we got to get past the sentry and we went to a peasant house and asked for, uh, wanted to trade

things for food. And they refused to do it because they said if they are caught they'll be shot. So that's one of the things. I also remember the fact that, uh, in, uh, we had a lot of problems with, uh, employment. My mother had a maid and, uh, it was, during the war it was almost impossible, at the later part of the war, to get anyone. Uh, I remember also when my father went off to Russia, uh, with the soldiers. And uh, my mother and I were at the station saying goodbye to him.

DANE: Was he being drafted into the army then?

WOHLBERG: Yes. Everyone was drafted. He was with what was called the rather famous Thirty, uh, Thirty-Second Division. This is my father's, uh, dugout in Russia.

DANE: And this is, as a soldier, is this where he stayed, or did he--

WOHLBERG: He stayed there as a soldier. He made that dugout himself.

DANE: It's just beautiful. And it's dug out and it's covered

with snow. It looks like it's terribly cold and--

WOHLBERG: Well, they--

DANE: Going back to pick up a few points. When you went out to the village to try and get food from the peasants, what were you taking to trade? Clothing, or--

WOHLBERG: Uh, for example, uh, the peasants did not have, uh, things like thread or needles or, uh, little bits of, uh, remnants of cloth. And we hoped that we could trade that for some food. But the only thing we got was to get back, uh, three ears of corn, one for each of us.

DANE: Amazing.

WOHLBERG: Another thing that I remember which is rather funny in a sad way is the inflation. Before the war, when my father was still single, he had a, he made a life, had a little life insurance. Uh, well, to view it comparatively, it was a thousand, uh, dollar insurance, which he paid out in, with, like gold, it became due in 1919 and, uh, it was paid out to him. My mother took

the money and bought a Christmas goose.

DANE: That's all she could get with it?

WOHLBERG: That's all she could buy.

DANE: Oh, my word. It's incredible, isn't it.

WOHLBERG: So this, of course, is atypical, uh, example.

DANE: Uh-huh. What kind of food were you able to get during the war? I mean, you had corn. Did potatoes, or--

WOHLBERG: Well, potatoes. Uh, during the Communist regime we had beans. That was the standard, uh, fare. Uh, once the three of us, uh, contracted ptomaine poisoning, we almost, three of us almost died of it. But we survived.

DANE; And clothing. Was that rationed also? Was your father able to get fabric?

WOHLBERG: They just couldn't get fabric. So there was no need of rationing because there was nothing to ration.

DANE: How long into the war was it before your father was

WOHLBERG: Well, my father went, uh, war broke out, uh, in June of 19, uh, 1914. And, uh, my father was drafted in the fall of 1914 according to age. And, uh, by August of 1914 he was completely trained and, uh, put on one of these cattle cars, you know, uh, either eight, eight horses, or thirty men, whatever. And we saw him off at the freight yard.

DANE: Your father's friends, were they also being--

WOHLBERG: Everyone. And, uh, for a while, one of the very funny things I remember is, uh, my father was certainly a, very much of a civilian, even though he wore a uniform. And the, this is, was about the most fashionable street in Budapest, like the Fifth Avenue and, uh, his store was there. He was going to his shop in uniform for a few, a half hour or so, and he happened, he didn't notice that he passed an officer without having saluted. Whereupon, with everybody knowing him as the, uh, owner of this fashionable shop, the officer stopped him and,

uh, said, "What are you doing, soldier? Not saluting an officer?" And he made him parade up and down, up and down, for fifteen minutes, practicing saluting, and everybody else was howling.

DANE: Huh. Awful. Did he come home and tell you? Was it a humiliating experience for him?

WOHLBERG: No. We saw it.

DANE: Oh, you were there.

WOHLBERG: We were there.

DANE: Were these Hungarian soldiers, or--

WOHLBERG: They were all Hungarian soldiers but, of course, the, at that time it was still the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and all the commands were in German. And some of the people who did know German, fortunately my parents knew German, but, uh, all the soldiers who didn't know anything of German had to, were forced to obey German commands, which they did not understand.

DANE: What were your father's views on the war? Did, was, did he want to be involved in the cause and felt, or was he Hungarian and didn't want any--

WOHLBERG: No, not at all. Uh, he felt that the whole thing was, had nothing to do with the people themselves. And, uh, he would have been just as happy not to have anything done. But, uh, there was no means of reasoning.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Before I forget, what was the name of your father's shop?

WOHLBERG: Uh, well, it was the, his name, David Wohlberg, uh, and Custom Tailor.

DANE: Wohlberg. Uh-huh. Was there talk, when war broke out, of going to America immediately, or did that idea--

WOHLBERG: No. No. It was never dreamt of. You know, actually, this was rather funny. Among the Hungarians mostly, going to America was considered part of those people who couldn't pay their bills. Or, who were, who wanted to

get out of military service. They just skipped off. And America was a place which was sort of beyond the pale in a way. All the people who didn't fit into European society went to America.

DANE: In the social circle of your parents went around in, then, it was almost sort of looked down upon.

WOHLBERG: It was, definitely.

DANE: So how did the notion, was it, tell me, explain to me--

WOHLBERG: Well, actually, what happened was that a, uh, first of all, we had the Communist regime where my father, as an employer, was in a very bad situation. He couldn't even go near his shop. It was taken over. Uh, and then the inflation, uh, went on and, uh, there was nothing to work on. And the same time a rather distant cousin of my father came to visit, uh, Budapest from America. And, uh, when he heard that my father was a tailor he said, "You could make, you could do very well in America." And that planted the seed in my father. And, uh, finally he got in touch with some of his distant

relatives here in New York and, uh, he managed to finance, sold his, or liquidated his store, and for that he bought a steerage passage to the United States. This was, it all transpired around 1920, so that by February, February 3rd, 1921, he was ready to leave.

DANE: Again, staying Budapest for a moment, do you remember the day, was there a particular day when the government officials came in and took the shop over, or was he given notices that--

WOHLBERG: Oh, he was given notice. Otherwise, nothing. And, uh, he was there, I remember, uh, when, uh, this group came over. His own workers. And said, "Don't you dare to take anything from this store. This all belongs to us." And, uh, with that they just cut him out.

DANE; Could your father believe that the people he'd been, had been working for him, did he expect that from them? Did he have that kind of working relationship that he thought that they would--

WOHLBERG: No. Uh, my father also understood that these things

were sort of forced on most, many of the workers. Uh, they were not, uh, against him and he was not against those people. But, uh, they were made to do this because an official from the government was along with them and they had to toe the line.

DANE: Was there talk in your house, over the dinner table, or in the mornings, about what was going on politically, do you remember? Discussions with friends, or--

WOHLBERG: Oh, yes. I mean, uh, and as a matter of fact, uh, particularly under the Communist regime we had a terrible situation because we thought that mobs could break into the apartment house. We heard them. Uh, once, uh, when there was what they call a putsch, or a rebellion against them, we heard the machine gun outside our apartment house, and we heard the rioting. We were wondering when they would, uh, break in and, uh, during the summer, uh, of 1919, uh, there was, uh, when all these, uh, things were taking place, there was a terrible, uh, feeling of tension and all the neighbors, uh, on our floor, sort of huddled together, the, this open courtyard, exchanging gossip of what had happened

and so on, and what they heard. And it was, uh, very nerve wracking. That I remember very clearly. That's one of the reasons that my parents decided to come, because, uh, this was not conducive to a healthy atmosphere.

DANE: How do you spell the word putsch?

WOHLBERG: P-U-T-S-C-H. Putsch. That's a German word, uh, meaning a coup d'etat. There is no English word for it.

DANE: And, were they Hungarian soldiers and street people, or, who were at odds?

WOHLBERG: Well, there were, there was the government, uh, so=called government which had what people called the Red Soldiers, and then there were the mobs too. And, uh, they went, worked hand-in-hand. I even remember a, a May Day parade of 1919. Every statue in, uh, Budapest was painted red and the bases were with red cloth. And as they paraded, uh, we even saw a group of Russian, uh, soldiers, who had gone over and formed the Red Army came as a visit, uh, to Budapest. In the school we had to

learn, uh, the Communist, uh, anthem, "Rise Ye Workers," and so on. I can still hear it. And, uh, everything was, uh, taught forcibly. By our regular teachers, but they were made to teach things which were, uh, absolutely the dogma of the regime.

DANE: As a child, did it mean anything to you?

WOHLBERG: Well, it, it simply meant to me something very unpleasant, uh, because everybody was scared and scandalized. And, of course, children just take the cue from the parents.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Then, by 1921, your father had arranged for passage for himself.

WOHLBERG: Right.

DANE: Was there discussion at home that, "I'm, I must go to America now. I'll set up a place, and then come, call for you." Or, were you brought into the process of decision making?

WOHLBERG: Well, I was always there. Uh, my parents and I were always together at every discussion. There were almost no discussions where I was outside of it. And, of course, as little pitchers have big ears, I remembered most of it. Uh, actually, my parents very quickly decided. It was really my mother's idea that it would be much better, in every way, to get to America, which is, uh, free of all these upheavals and, uh, it, we would be able to have a better, uh, means of livelihood. And my father, at first, uh, was very much against it because he said, "What, should I put on some bag on my shoulders and go to a place which I don't know? After all, here I'm known." But, uh after a while conditions and my mother prevailed. So he decided, and we got some, uh, documents from our relatives in America and my father managed to get the visa, which I still have, and, uh, also we managed to, managed to buy passage going through Belgium.

DANE: And you, as a young child, did you think it was a good idea, whose--

WOHLBERG: Oh, I was excited. Uh, because, first of all, I've

never been out of Hungary, and the idea of traveling in a foreign country was something, uh, fantastic. And also America. Because, as a child, I read Huckleberry Finn and, uh, Fennimore, for example, all the works of Fennimore Cooper in Hungarian and to me this was terribly exciting. I, in my geography book I could see, uh, pictures of skyscrapers and, uh uh, New York harbor and I could see that and it, and it was, uh, just fabulous.

DANE: Huh. And Indians. Did--

WOHLBERG: Oh, I expected Indians, yes. But, uh, I knew enough that they wouldn't be walking around on Broadway.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. The day your father did leave, was that an optimistic occasion, or was it, uh, sad?

WOHLBERG: Well, it was mixed. Uh, it wasn't very happy. Uh, he that point. But, of course, that meant that it was a sort of fateful step. And from that point on, uh, there was no return. Also, my grandparents were very ill, were left behind, and I remember that last occasion, the

day before he left, and he had to say goodbye to his parents, who were already over seventy and ill, and he knew perfectly well that they would never see each other again. And it was very sad. And it was a real wrench, because we were so much a part of, uh, Hungary and the way of life that we used to have. And it was a little bit terrifying.

DANE: Do you think your father thought he had a choice?

WOHLBERG: No, I don't think so. Uh, this was it. Uh, there was no way of, uh, retracing your steps.

DANE: Uh-huh. And he was here for six months before you came over?

WOHLBERG: Yes. Well, from February to August. It's about six or seven months.

DANE: Those six months, were you lonely for him? Were you worried that you would never get the funds to go, or was it always set that, of course, you would be following soon after?

WOHLBERG: Well, you see, there was a little bit of planning that went into the, uh, mu father's departure. You see, in tailoring, all over the world, there are two seasons. The early fall, where they get all the winter clothes, and spring, when they get their spring and summer clothing, uh, to be made up. Now, my father left in February hoping to get to New York by March and then the full season would be in swing. He would find employment immediately. Because during the summer and mid-winter there is a slack in the season so that, uh, he hoped that he could start at the beginning of March and, uh, get into work full swing and, uh, manage to, uh, make enough money to get us out quickly. But it didn't work out, unfortunately, because of his experiences getting into the United States.

DANE: What happened?

WOHLBERG: Well, he was, uh, he came to the red Star Line, on the steamship Kronland, K-R-O-N-L-A-N-D. But when he got into the New York harbor on March 2nd, the ship was held up by health authorities. They claimed they found a

case of typhoid in steerage. They took the whole third class off the ship, before it docked, and he was sent to a place in the outer bay called Hoffman's Island, for quarantine. And he spent five weeks in quarantine. That ruined the plans for the season. Uh, my father wrote postcards from quarantine. He didn't tell us very much about it, but after we came out, uh, to the United States, he told us that the situation on Hoffman's Island was worse than what he experienced, uh, in the trenches. Uh, they were very badly treated. It was, I suppose, something like a concentration camp, as far as he was concerned. Uh, and so much so that relatives of passengers who were there, uh, brought it to the attention of newspapers and I understand that some time in April of 1921 some of the New York papers, uh, wrote about this as a scandal of how they were treating men, women and children, giving them kerosene baths and, uh, hitting them if they didn't turn around fast enough and so on.

DANE: Other descriptions of how he was treated? The food? Were they fed?

WOHLBERG: Well, uh, he said that the food was awful, it was filthy. Uh, every few, every few days they had to take what they called delousing baths and it was practically prison matrons and, uh, old sailors cursing everybody and so on. It was, uh, very bad. Now, we didn't know anything about it. My father kept it from us. But, uh, finally, around the middle of April, he was able to, they let him go, and the reason, he was not taken, he was taken directly, I should say, to, uh, New York City, because he was traveling with a cousin of his whose father, uh, and mother were living in New York. So that he had a place to go to, or immediate lodging. So they didn't take him to Ellis Island, but directly, uh, they took him to Manhattan.

DANE: And on that ship it was just the steerage passengers that were taken to Hoffman's?

WOHLBERG: Just the steerage passengers. And one of the things that my father vowed then was that no matter what it cost he's not going to send for us that we should travel third class. We'll travel on a good ship, and second class. So we traveled on the Aquitania, second class.

DANE: Leaving from--

WOHLBERG: Cherbourg.

DANE: Cherbourg. I suppose he wouldn't have told you, right when he got back out of Hoffman's Island, but do you suppose he ever thought, "I've made a terrible mistake. This is, what am I doing in this country that would treat me as such?"

WOHLBERG: No, no. He liked it immediately. Uh, the whole spirit of, uh, the United States, appealed to him tremendously. Uh, it was very much in, in line with his own ideas of the way the world should be run.

DANE: Uh-huh. How was it? Can you be more specific?

WOHLBERG: Well, you see, first of all, there was no aristocracy. Uh, I mean, he took very literally the fact that all human beings are created equal and, uh, he liked the feeling of abundance here. Uh, he couldn't get over the fact, and that was one of the first things that he

showed us, the first day we arrived. And he took us to an Automat, a Horn & Hardart. And on the table was a huge bowl of sugar. Which is unheard of, even in peacetime Europe, because people would just pocket the sugar, the sugar cubes. Here you would take as much as you wanted and nobody thought anything of it.

DANE; This is the end of side one, Joseph Wohlberg, Interview Number 114, it's 10:55.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

DANE: This is the beginning of side two, Professor Joseph Wohlberg, Interview Number 114, it's 10:56. We were just talking about when you first arrived in America, and your father was struck by, one of the things was the abundance in America. Were there other specific impressions that you can recall?

WOHLBERG: Well, for example, just, uh, just going, taking a ride on a subway. He could, you could ride practically from

one end uptown to the other, which was a considerable distance, again, for five cents. Uh, also, no, I think my father mistook something. This was, of course, the beginning of the era of the twenties, the breaking away from the Victorian morals and women were beginning to wear very short skirts and of course my father did not realize the same thing was happening in Europe. He said, "Well, American women are so daring." So, of course, he thought that was wonderful.

DANE: Huh. Interesting. And your mother?

WOHLBERG: Uh, my mother had a different point of view. You see, we always had a servant at home and here, and a rather nice apartment. And, uh, when we got here, first of all there was no such thing as an apartment to be had. Apartment shortage was as bad as it is now in New York. And, uh, it was something beyond our means, so we had to live in a furnished room and my mother had no servants. She had to do everything all be herself and with very bad situation. For example, we lived in a house which had no electricity. It was still gas. And mt, in Budapest we had, uh, electricity all over the

place, and a rather nicely designed bathroom.

DANE: And you had running water and--

WOHLBERG: Oh, sure we had running water and so on. But, uh, this was a sort of comedown for her. But she, too, felt that in the long run it is a very good choice to have come here.

DANE: Did she have any notion that things wouldn't be as comfortable?

WOHLBERG: No. I think she quite expected that. Uh, and certainly, uh, when we got here, uh, my parents, especially my mother and, to some extent, myself, after a day or two we were ready, if we could turn back, for the simple reason that we got, because of the sudden emergency of coming without any preparation, we were brought into a furnished room on East 13th Street, which was little Italy. The pushcarts were all over the place, filthy and smelly and noisy and, uh, well we just thought that this was beyond the pale. Fortunately, in a few days, we were able to get away and get to, uh, we

moved to the Upper West Side, West 87th Street, which was more like it. It was much more like the atmosphere we were in at home. And, uh, later that fall, going out to Central Park, you could still walk in Central Park at, uh, dusk, it was really beautiful and peaceful.

DANE: Before we do too much of when you're here in New York, your father had arrived, and finally gotten off Hoffman Island, had presumably found some work and sent you passports, tickets--

WOHLBERG: He sent us tickets. Actually, there was a, a little bit of something ironic about the tickets. My father, actually, had to borrow some money to get second class passage and he could not quite make it for a super luxury liner as the Aquitania. He got it for a smaller ship on the Cunard Line, the Saxonia. And we were all set, my mother sold, uh, her furniture. It was being taken away. And she had, uh, the railroad tickets, uh, through Austria, Switzerland and France to Cherbourg, when suddenly the Cunard Line changed the schedules, and the Saxonia was slated to sail a week later than we had planned, and we had no place to go. Whereupon my mother

went down to the Cunard Line office in Budapest and explained to them, "Look, you have got to do something because we have no home anymore. I did, we planned this, I got, uh, rid of my apartment and furniture, and we have no place to go to." So finally they booked us, even at the same price on the, the super luxury liner Aquitania, which sailed at the time we were supposed to sail. So my mother was very happy and we took a very, we traveled first class from Budapest to Vienna. Uh, one of these reserved seat, uh, express trains. There we were met by ny aunt and uncle, who were living in Vienna, and then from then on we went, we stayed with them overnight, and then we went on through the Austria, Tyrol, Switzerland and France.

DANE: As a young boy, the day you left Budapest and you knew, possibly, probably, that you wouldn't be back for some time, was the excitement of the trip overwhelming, or if you get sad that day?

WOHLBERG: No, I wasn't sad at all. I was just terribly excited. I had, I had memorized the map, on how we were to travel, so that in every station, uh, I knew by heart,

everything I knew by heart. I, also, to me the travel was so exciting, I probably, uh, pilfered all the booklets from Cunard Line of the various ships. I knew every ship's name. And I began to study the various, uh, ship's names and they provided the, a clue. For example, all the ships of the Cunard Line ended in "IA." Mauritania, Lusitania, Aquitania, Berengaria, Scythia. And all were "IA." Whereas the White Star Line had endings in "IC." Olympic, Titanic, Adriatic, Baltic. They were, that's specific of that. All the ships of the Red Star Line ended in "LAND." Lapland, the Finland, Kroonland, Zeeland. All the ships of the Dutch Line ended in "DAM." Ryndam, Amsterdam, and so. And all these I quickly memorized. To me it was all very exciting.

DANE: Huh. Huh. When you got to the boat in Cherbourg, were you expecting a ship so large, or was it disappointing to see?

WOHLBERG: Oh, no. Uh, first of all, let's remember, Hungary is a land locked country. I had never seen the ocean. And, uh, to me, arriving in Cherbourg itself was something

fabulous because after traveling for five days on the train, sitting up at night, uh, we got at six AM to Cherbourg. It was misty. Uh, and through the, on the streets, looking through, I could see the mist, which is the sea. And also very much the sea, in the sense that it smelled of fish. And, uh, to me that was a wonderful experience. Uh, and we had to stay in Cherbourg for a week. It was required of all immigrants, because every day you have to report to medical authorities who examined you and gave you inoculations to make sure that you're not carrying any, uh, communicable disease into the United States, so that we stayed at a pension for a week.

DANE: In some cases I've, people I've talked to, they're all, the people that were being taking the ship all stayed in the same place. You, was that your case, or did you stay independently from other passengers in Cherbourg?

WOHLBERG: Well, actually, this was all spread out, uh, because, uh, through the Cunard Line, uh, they, they would take us into various pensions. Some people were assigned here, some people there. But, of course, it all cost

money. It was, we had to pay for all that.

DANE: Do you remember anything specific about the medical exams in Cherbourg, what--

WOHLBERG: Well, it was just, uh, when we first came we each, well, everyone got a fairly thorough examination and, uh, vaccination.

DANE: On your arm?

WOHLBERG: On your, on my, on our arm. And, uh, after that it was like just routine check every day for any possible symptoms of anything. And it took about a few minutes each day. And the rest of the time we could just spend, uh, roaming the town, at will. Which was interesting, to me. Of course, uh, it was, I know my mother would have preferred to stay in Paris instead of Cherbourg because for the one day that we spent in Paris we just enjoyed it. My mother was interested in watching the fashion. Uh, and we sat in, we got a cafe, watched the world go by, it was very wonderful.

DANE: I don't want miss the story from you, when you come into New York harbor, so we'll come back if we have time. The day finally arrived that the boat was to be departing. Excitement?

WOHLBERG: Yes. We went to, we went to the tender. You see, they have a tender, you cannot dock in Cherbourg as such. We went to a tender, around four o'clock in the afternoon. And, uh, there we had to show our passports, and waited in the, uh, there, until the boat train arrived from Paris where all the tourists came through. And then we, uh, were taken out to sea. It was, the sea was a little bit choppy, and there was no Aquitania. Uh, this was around six o'clock, and we circled for about three hours. The Aquitania was late in coming from Southhampton. Well, we went around, since the Aquitania was so late, we went around in circles, uh, for about three hours, in the choppy seas. And, uh, as a result, quite a few passengers on the tender became sick, my mother and myself excluded. But then, I happened to be on the wrong side of the ship when suddenly, in the dark, this huge ship, that I've never seen anything like it, all lit up, appeared. And I said, "My God. Is this

what we're going to travel in?" The four smoke stacks, and all the decks lit. And, uh, then slowly, one tender after another, uh, was connected with the Aquitania and we were all helped up into the bowels of the ship. And the first thing they did, uh, we were, this was nine o'clock, we hadn't eaten yet, the first thing they did before they even took us to our cabins, they took us to the second class dining room and, uh, we had a sumptuous meal. And then we were led down to, again, to our cabins. We were on "F" deck, which was fairly low. Uh, were all down. But anyway, it was still second class. We had two berths, uh, it was small but, you know, comfortable enough.

DANE: In private. You didn't share it with anyone.

WOHLBERG: Oh, we didn't share it with anyone.

DANE: When you looked up from the tender and looked up at the boat, did it seem just massive to you?

WOHLBERG: It was tremendous. Uh, the sight was, I guess, you'll see it, with all the string of electric lights. It

almost looked like a Christmas decoration, uh, along the masts. It was just incredible.

DANE: Was there an excitement? Were people out on deck also, or--

WOHLBERG: Oh, yes. But usually those people were fairly seasoned and this was one of those ho-hum affairs. Uh, they were used to it.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. The trip itself, was it rough for you? Was it, uh, was the, did you get seasick, as so many do?

WOHLBERG: No. It was very quiet. Uh, and, uh, very pleasant. And even though, uh, they put, this was one thing which was interesting, in order to assume seats for dining, they put the whole Hungarian contingent at one huge table, uh, so that we could all, uh, speak to each other. Uh, and as it worked out, most of the Hungarians were on the same deck, because I suppose they allotted seats in the various capitals of the, Europe to one particular place so that people from Budapest or from

Hungary almost all got onto "F" deck. There were very few outside of that. Uh, the whole, uh, arrangement was rather interesting because we became quite well acquainted with all the Hungarians since they were both table companions and deck companions. Uh, then, uh, but we managed to get away from that, too, because my mother did not want to stick exclusively with Hungarians, and I wanted to practice my English. So, as a result, uh, we would very often go into the, uh, lounge and, uh, I learned how to ask, uh, for, we always took part in the English tea, and I learned how to say, "Tea without milk, please." And, uh, if any steward forgot to serve us, uh, somebody always reminded them, with whom, whoever was sitting, you know, "Oh, you forgot this lady and this little boy." So it was all worked very nicely.

DANE: Did you meet other children on the boat, young boys?

WOHLBERG: Uh, not really. There were very few children. I don't think there was anyone. Maybe, I think there was one little girl, uh, among the Hungarians. But that was about all.

DANE: Were you aware of steerage passengers on the ship?

WOHLBERG: Yes, we could see them. Well, they were completely isolated. They were at the stern of the ship, and we could look down from the higher decks and they were all huddled together. And, uh, we were saying occasionally, "This is how daddy traveled." And we felt kind of bad about it.

DANE: Uh-huh. Were you all, all the passengers, immigrants? Were they, the people that you came into contact with were planning to move to America on this voyage?

WOHLBERG: Well, uh, with us there were, and this was our saving thing. Uh, they were not all immigrants. There were a considerable number of people who had gone back to Hungary who were Americans, naturalized Americans, who had gone back to Hungary to visit relatives for the first time after World War One. And they were with us, they were sitting with us, and so on. And, uh, actually this was a very, very, uh, mixed crowd, citizens and immigrants.

DANE: Would they tell you what America was like? Would they talk about their lives?

WOHLBERG: Well, uh, they were telling us, my mother asked questions and what sort of place this and that was, but, uh, it, uh, they didn't really tell us very much. Just, you see, they wanted us to find out for ourselves.

DANE: Uh-huh. The trip took how long?

WOHLBERG: Uh, we left at dawn, about 2:00 AM or 3:00 AM on, uh, the 13th, the 14th of August, and we docked at dawn on the 20th of August, so it was six nights. Which was a fairly good time.

DANE: Your's is an interesting situation. When you came into New York harbor, uh, I guess I can ask you about the Statue of Liberty now and then you can give me the story of how you finally set foot on Manhattan. Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty when you came in? Were you aware of her existence?

WOHLBERG: Uh, I saw it, uh, not, you see, first of all, we did not

stop in the inner bay. We stopped in the outer bay where, around 6:00 AM on the 20th we rushed upstairs, uh, to see what it was like, because we realized the boat was, had stopped. And we saw, uh, freighters, uh, anchored, but also a lot of destroyers, because this was still the aftermath of World War One. And, uh, we tried to make out, in distant lights, we didn't see anything else. As the, uh, day began to dawn, uh, all we saw were ships and, uh, uh. distant, I suppose it was Sandy Hook and, uh, Staten Island and, on one side and Sheepshead Bay, or something like that, on the other side. But it was mostly just ships. And we just stayed anchored, uh, all through the day. The only time I saw the Statue of Liberty was on the, uh, ferry from Ellis Island to the Battery, or to South Ferry, and that was really exciting because it was something I heard about and, uh, looked out for.

DANE: Was she bigger than you expected, or smaller?

WOHLBERG: No, it was just about what I expected.

DANE: Did you have any notion of what she stood for at that

point?

WOHLBERG: About?

DANE: What she represented? Or would that come later?

WOHLBERG: No, uh, I never read about the Statue of Liberty as such, except as something of a peculiarity, uh, of New York. And, uh, actually I read, at one time, before I came to America, a bit of science fiction where it described that some, uh, some celestial body came close in to earth and drew away a lot of things and one of them was the Statue of Liberty, and some of the parts of New York skyscrapers were drawn by gravity to the other celestial body. And, uh, I looked at that, it's still here.

DANE: (She laughs.) That's wonderful. When you, when the ship was just staying outside New York harbor for the whole day, did people come and tell you what the story was, why?

WOHLBERG: No. There were just rumors circulating that we were

going to move around noon, we were going to move around one o'clock, two o'clock, and we didn't know why. And, uh, we knew that health authorities had come up, and they, we had to go, one of the, uh, salons we had to go through and checked us off, uh, and counted us. Around three o'clock in the afternoon, maybe a little earlier, uh, they announced, uh, they were around the ship, and every person must go to their own cabin. So we went down to "F" deck, as everybody else went to their own cabin, and we waited. And all of a sudden we heard hammering and we began to realize that they put some board, boarded up our access to the rest of the ship. And then another ship, door, opened in the corridor, which was almost like a trap door, somebody told us that we are to come out, leave our luggage, which will follow us, and we are to follow that person. We were led down various staircases, went through the, uh, close to the engines, and then came out, almost, just a little bit above water level, uh, to the outside. They put a gangplank on, and we, uh, went on to a tender. Uh, by that time, we were told that we're going to be in quarantine at a place called Hoffman's Island. And, uh, my mother and I, who already had heard about Hoffman's

Island, were horrified. And, of course, I must confess that I was, uh, started to bawl, because I wanted to see my daddy. And my mother was upset, and so was everybody else. There were two tenders waiting. One was for us, the second class passengers, on "F" deck, who were taken off, and the other was for the third class passengers who were taken off and also brought to Hoffman's Island. Actually, I could never understand, I, and I cannot understand to this day the reason for the quarantine. If we were exposed to typhoid because somebody in our neighborhood was suspected of having typhoid, what good quarantine did? Because we were mingling will all the passengers throughout the ship. We even went over to first class to see, uh, the ship's quarters. We went through second class, and we were eating in the same dining room with everybody else. Why we should be quarantined and the rest of the second class should not, I couldn't see.

DANE: Was it just the Hungarian second class contingent that--

WOHLBERG: Well, as it turned out, most of them were Hungarians, because it was "F" deck. But, uh, there were others who

were not Hungarian. Now, by the time the luggage was taken aboard, it was after four in the afternoon and it was quite a sail to get, uh, to Hoffman's Island, uh, in the outer bay which was, uh, the island was characterized by a rather interesting sight. There was an ocean going liner beached, uh, one side, and slightly atilt. And that was the headquarters, or the quarters, for the personnel. And there were some low buildings which looked like, uh, offices or hospitals on the building. I understand--

DANE: On the island.

WOHLBERG: On the island. And I understand that the, uh, island, that has long been dismantled, the last I heard of Hoffman's Island, it was a place where they used to make blue movies. Sufficiently separated from the rest of the world. Uh, the island itself, uh, we had to register when we got to the island, there was a commander. I think it was run by the U.S. Army, or certainly one of the armed services.

DANE: There were uniformed--

WOHLBERG: He was in uniform, and there was another man in uniform who was head of the pharmacy. Now, it turned out that the man, the head of the pharmacy, was Hungarian born, so we were very happy that we could talk, uh, with him. But, uh, my father hinted to us, he didn't write the full details, but hinted to us that he was very unhappy at Hoffman's Island, so we were looking for trouble. And we sure found it soon because, uh, before they served us meals, uh, we went to the dining room, uh, which was supposed to be the mess hall or whatever, and we found it filthy. Everything just thrown together. We also inspected the place where we was to stay and we were, there was a huge hospital ward separating the men and woman. Of course, I went with my mother since I was only eleven. Uh, and whereupon a number of the people who were transported, about, out of the forty there were about ten who were American citizens, and they formed a committee and went to the commander.

DANE: End of cassette one, side two, Joseph Wohlberg, Interview Number 114. It's 11:30.

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

DANE: Beginning of tape two, side one, Joseph Wohlberg, Interview Number 114. It's, uh, 11:30 on January 10th. We were just talking, before the tape changed, about the Americans that were on the boat and being detained on Hoffman's Island and that they formed a committee and had gone to see a commanding officer.

WOHLBERG: Well, uh, they, they absolutely demanded that they asked to do something about better quarters and, uh, they demanded some civilized place to eat in. And, and they were also second class passengers, and the commander acceded to it and, sure enough, an hour later, when we came to the dining room the large tables, there were about, uh, eight to a table, uh, with five tables, they were absolutely cleaned up, snow white, uh, tablecloths and, uh, everything arranged in the proper way and the food was out of this world. Uh, and then we were given little, uh, just as in the hospital, there were rooms for two and rooms for four and rooms for, uh, six, and

that was all. And, uh, from that time on we were very comfortable.

DANE: I think we erased the part, missed the part on the transfer of tape, when they went to make their demands, you were saying that they had read about Hoffman's Island and were ready to take their story to the newspaper.

WOHLBERG: Yes. Uh, actually, uh, apparently it had come out in the papers that similarly, uh, people in my father's group were rather brutally treated and, uh, some of the papers wrote, wrote that up. Especially, I think, the American Hungarian newspaper in New York, Nepszava, Amerikai Magyar Nepszava.

DANE: Could you spell that? Do you know how?

WOHLBERG: Amerikai, A-M-E-R-I-K-A-I and M-A-G-Y-A-R- and N-E-P-S-Z-A-V-A.

DANE: Thank you. So they had threatened, they had--

WOHLBERG: They threatened to bring this to the attention, again, of the papers. They can't do that to American citizens. So, anyway, we all profited by that. Now, I don't know what happened to the third class people because they were off limits, they were at another end of the island in places of their own. So, uh, we never spoke to them or saw them.

DANE: How many of you were there, then, in the second class?

WOHLBERG: About forty of us.

DANE: Forty. Would you be specific about the filth and the dirt? Were there, the tables just were grimy, or--

WOHLBERG: They were grimy. There was no such thing as tablecloths. Everything was just thrown together, whatever is was. Uh, and, uh, there was a lot of, uh, dust everywhere on the floor. Uh, it wasn't swept properly. But they did a good job of it.

DANE: Hmm. And the menu even changed? They--

WOHLBERG: Yes. We didn't have a menu, but certainly everything was in great abundance. Uh, now, the following, uh, the following morning my, uh, mother managed to put through a telephone call to, uh, one of my father's cousins. And, uh, he got quite excited. He said, "You know, Dezso--" That's my father's name, uh, D-E-Z-S-O, Uh, "dezso just left. He is terribly dejected. He went over to another cousin a block away," he said, "but I'll be able to get hold of him." And sure enough, a half hour later, the phone rang and we were called. It was my father on the phone. And he just breathed a sigh of relief. You see, if I may tell it from the point of view of my father, my father could hardly wait for the day that we arrived. He had arranged that evening to be able to take us to a new place, our own place, to stay, our own apartment, with, uh, managed to get some furniture and so on. And instead, he went out, it was a Sunday morning, he got up early, by nine o'clock he was at the Cunard Line pier waiting. And they finally put on the big blackboard, "Due at ten o'clock. The Aquitania is due at ten o'clock." And waited, and waited. Ten o'clock came, they put up a new sign, was due at noon. Then at three o'clock, then at five

o'clock. The Aquitania finally pulled in at six o'clock and he waited, as the passengers came down the gangplank from second class, and we weren't around. Everybody, after a while, had left, and the officers began to come down. So my father didn't know what to do. What happened to us? So, showed, stopped one of the officers and showed our photograph. So the officer said, "Yes, I remember that lady and the little boy and they were taken off with others and sent to quarantine on Hoffman's Island." My father said he didn't know how he got home. The next morning he was with some, someone he knew who spoke English fluently. He went down to, uh, the, uh, place, began, and found, uh, he was told that some of the passengers were still on the Aquitania, but were not allowed to leave, so that if he wanted to he could take a motor launch and be driven around the Aquitania and you can, uh, get, at least see your relatives. So my father did just that. It cost him quite a bit of money. And there were some people on the ship, but it wasn't us. And from that point on he didn't know what happened. Uh, but fortunately, next morning, he found out. And he was very much relieved. So we stayed on and on. We had no idea how long. Uh,

and, if it weren't for the fact that we missed, uh, I know my father and other people, their own relatives, it was a very pleasant sojourn and, uh, it was like staying at a seashore resort. We had nothing special to do. I spent my birthday on the island, my eleventh birthday, and there was one crowning irony. We were supposed to go on the Saxonia. The Saxonia we saw sailing past us three days before, uh we finally came out. And afterwards we found that the passengers of the Saxonia made, uh, paid a special tribute to the captain and the crew for an absolutely delightful voyage.

DANE: That's fate.

WOHLBERG: That was the crowning irony.

DANE: Huh. On, when you were on, uh, Hoffman's Island, when was contact made, the third day, with your father?

WOHLBERG: Uh, no. It was the second, uh, the day after we arrived.

DANE: So the anxiety really was kept to a minimum.

WOHLBERG: Kept to a minimum. It was around noontime, by the way, we could get through and, uh it, uh, that's when, twelve thirty in the afternoon, my father was on the phone already. And it was wonderful to speak to him. Uh, I missed my father very much. And, uh, we had been there,Saturday, we arrived on a Saturday, the 20th, on Sunday the 28th we were awakened at 6:00 AM. "Come on. Everybody out. We're going to New York." So very quickly we had to, uh, throw everything into our valises and off we went on the tender. Everybody, all forty of us. Then they put all the immigrants on one side and the, uh, all non-immigrants, that is, citizens, on the other side. They separated us. And instead of going to Manhattan, the docking place, we stopped and I noticed an island looming up which turned out to be Ellis Island. That's where we, as immigrants, were let out. And then the ship sailed off to Manhattan, uh, with the citizens.

DANE: Were you informed as to this process? Did you know that you had--

WOHLBERG: Well, we, uh, everybody told us, "This is Ellis Island." And we found that it is just a formality that we have to go through. They'll check us in, and then they'll take us through, uh, back to New York. But my father, we had to contact my father. He did not know that we were coming. So we were herded into a great hall which was an absolute bedlam of noise. Just about every language, I think, was spoken there. And we were hustled from one place to another. And one, uh, one was, a medical officer looked us over, and, uh, I suppose this was considered a psychiatric examination. Uh, one man, uh, asked, asked me, so that I could be, uh, distinguished, perhaps, from a cretin idiot, uh, he said in words, "(Hungarian words.") Which was an incorrect way of asking, in Hungarian, how old are you. Which I was able to answer in English. Uh, so that really relieved him. Uh, then we had customs examination of our hand luggage. Now, I must remind you that this was 1921 when the Volstead Act and Prohibition were enforced. In Budapest, my mother bought a bottle of cognac. Uh, she was a great believer in using cognac with tea if you got a cold. So, she, uh, used that and other people, she gave to other people this, a little

bit of that, during our stay in Cherbourg so that we had a half bottle of cognac. And the officer looked, saw this half bottle of cognac, and my mother and I were sure he was going to take it away. But he very calmly replaced it and passed it on.

DANE: That's incredible.

WOHLBERG: Well, actually, he was right, because it was the sale of spirits that was forbidden. To possess spirits was not forbidden, or a crime.

DANE: But surprising he didn't pocket it himself.

WOHLBERG: No, he was perfectly nice about it. Uh, and then they asked us about our relatives and so on, so my mother explained that my father is coming and my father had no telephone. Uh, few people did. So my mother sent immediately a telegram to him. This was around eleven o'clock in the morning, which was delivered to my father. For a moment let me go back to what happened. I found out about my father. My father sat in his place all week waiting for some message. And, uh, there was

none, uh, because we weren't coming. So finally, Sunday morning, he had been cooped up all, all week. he finally decide to stretch his legs, go for a little walk, around ten o'clock. By the, he came back around eleven thirty, only to find that a message was there from us, "Please come and get us immediately, come to Ellis Island." So he ran like mad down to South Ferry, only to see the last ferry leave for the day because it was Sunday. So here we were stuck on Ellis Island in this bedlam. You couldn't hardly speak to each other, to be heard. And, uh, the only, and they weren't serving, they weren't giving us any food. We had no food. Uh, my mother found a, there was a little stand where a man was selling fruit. So my mother bought, she had some American, uh, currency. She bought some pears and, uh, at least we had that. But that was all. And then around four o'clock in the afternoon they hustled us out into a courtyard where there were chairs set up, that we should all be entertained. A vaudeville show. And, uh, the thing that amused me very much, even though I was eleven, was that I saw a few women in sort of parading in uniform with sort of military style caps. The thing that amused me was, I thought it rather strange, they

all had white hair, but they all had a little bluish tint. And they were, they looked very handsome, and they were very proud of wearing uniform. I, afterwards, speculated that they must be sort of society ladies who are doing something for the poor, benighted, immigrants, showing the wonders of amusement in America. Uh, as a result, uh, we, we went through all this, uh, magician's tricks and, uh, singing and so on, comic acts, most of which we did not understand. And then when I was a little bored with all that I turned my head to look back and I stayed that way, because behind us was New York harbor, the skyscrapers. And I just couldn't, I was mesmerized by it and I told my mother, she reacted the same way.

DANE: It was your first glimpse.

WOHLBERG: It was my first glimpse of Manhattan. Uh, we were herded back and then finally they served us dinner, so called. We were seated at long tables in a passageway, covered with paper, which was, and all things, all sorts of things were spilled already on the paper. Uh, we had something, a brownish liquid, which they sounded, they

called coffee, which wasn't. Uh, some melon, some, uh, ham, or bologna, I think. Ham must have been too expensive, but bologna. And some sort of mush. And that was about all.

DANE: Was it served on china or on tin?

WOHLBERG: On paper plates.

DANE: Paper plates.

WOHLBERG: Uh, and there were some tin cups, something like that. And then we were herded, a little later on, to sleeping quarters. The sleeping quarters were really something. There were, actually it was cages of wire, cages with units, divided into units, two upper and two lower berths. No bedding, just an absolutely filthy sort of straw, uh, mat, uh, on each. And, uh, they turned the lights out. We were, just a little low light was burning, and we were supposed to sleep there. My mother couldn't sleep at all. I dozed off, but my mother tells me that she saw the place infested with rats and, uh, she was ready to scream. Uh, also there was one woman

above her and, uh, it's not a pleasant thing to mention but, uh, the woman urinated over her. Uh, it was quite disgusting.

DANE: Was this in, the cages, were they in the Great Hall, or were you led into smaller rooms?

WOHLBERG: It was smaller rooms.

DANE: And then the cages were with it?

WOHLBERG: That's right. In the rooms.

DANE: This was used exclusively for sleeping.

WOHLBERG: Then while it was still dark, it must have been five thirty or six, uh, sort of a prison matron came in with a metal stick, and she took the stick and rattled it on the, uh, cage mesh. "Everybody up." And nobody slept, everybody was up anyway. And, uh, we marched out. It was Monday morning.

DANE: Approximately how many people in that room?

WOHLBERG: There must have been about two, three hundred.

DANE: In the place where you slept? No kidding. Blankets? Were you given blankets?

WOHLBERG: No. Nothing, absolutely nothing, just the cage and that straw mat, whatever.

DANE: And smells? Did it smell? Was it--

WOHLBERG: I don't remember any of it, whether it did or not. I don't think so, uh, but it was very creepy.

DANE: And were you locked into those cages, or were you allowed to go--

WOHLBERG: We were allowed to go out because there was a ladies room, apparently, but, uh, we weren't locked in. Just the room itself was locked. Well, then, we were let out and by, we had again a so called breakfast, a piece of bread and, some, again so-called coffee and then we went into the Great Hall and waited. Now, I noticed one

thing that every time I, there was a bell, which they rang, that meant that somebody was, an announcer was coming out into the Great Hall to call out names of people whose relatives had arrived. And they were taken in through the door and we were anxiously waiting till we should be called. There were one or two announcements, and then in, I think the third or fourth announcement, uh, my, our names were called and I started to scream, "Oh, daddy is here. Daddy is here." And we rushed in and we were led to, up to a clerk, and all this behind grating. And suddenly I could see my father past the clerk. The clerk was very pleasant and said, uh, "What is your name," and so on, identifying us. My mother burst into tears, because she thought my father looked terrible. He had lost a lot of weight. Apparently he was not fed on her cooking and we didn't realize he had been ill. But there he was. And the clerk was very much amused at my anxiety to hug daddy. So that was, finally we were, we rejoined. And we were immediately taken on to the ferry to South Ferry. And there we were. My father came with his landlady, who spoke English fluently. And there we were, looking at South Ferry, and it looked to me as if I had stepped

into the future because looking along Battery Park I saw the El's snaking out. You see, the South Ferry at that time had a joined station of every El in New York, or in Manhattan. The Ninth Avenue coming from far west, then the Sixth Avenue, then the Third Avenue and the First Avenue or Second Avenue El all joining at South Ferry, and they were all coming from every angle from the midst of the skyscrapers. Mind you, at that time, the tallest building was the Woolworth Building, and next to it the Singer Building. Uh, and to me that was something which, I stepped into a new century. And we were left there watching that while my father and his landlady, got a taxi.

DANE: Hold on just a second. (Addresses sound engineer.) How are we doing?

WOHLBERG: And then, uh, then we went by taxi, uh, at, through the business district. But we turned off into a place which I thought was dreadful, namely the Lower East Side. The, uh, on First Avenue and 13th Street, which was very smelly and full of pushcarts. You couldn't cross the streets. except at intersections because of the

pushcarts. Uh, people eating on the street and, oh, it was just dreadful, filthy.

DANE: Loud?

WOHLBERG: Very loud. Every where, also shouting and all sort of singing or music, whatever, uh, hawking things. And then we walked in and the first thing that we had was, uh, my father made me drink some, something to clear my system because everybody, it was citrate of magnesia, a physic. Because you adjust, you had to adjust to a new climate, a new type of food and so on, it's best for you. But anyway, I had some rather interesting things. Sort of first, since World War One began, I was able to have bananas, which were not in existence since 1914. But I remembered them. And things like, uh, smoked salmon, which I never seen in my life. Oh, that was marvelous. Then my first trip, because after we had rested a little bit, we had decided, my decided to take us to his cousin's on the Upper East Side, and we got into the subway. Budapest has a subway which is a one car affair, of about ten stops. And this we went into such a thing as an express, from 14th Street to Grand

Central. Then you get off on Grand Central, walk a lot, take a shuttle train, then walk a lot again and you get to another subway. And to me that was bewildering. Uh, it is elaborate. And I just couldn't get over it. I was delighted. And then we saw a part of New York which was much nicer. Uh, all the, those beautiful brownstones where the stair, going up to the first floor from the street, and then there's sort of a semi-basement apartment below. That was more like it. And we felt that, that was a rather civilized way of living.

DANE: I'm going to have to wrap this up, I'm afraid, because we need to go on to the next one. We've just started with your life here.

WOHLBERG: Right.

DANE: I wanted to ask you, quickly, looking back, as an adult, as someone who came to America, would you have done it any other way? Would you, up to this moment, it sounded like it was just excitement, the whole trip, that you, did you ever wish you were back in Hungary? Did you miss that culture?

WOHLBERG: No. It seemed to me, never as an adult, it seemed to me only a month or two later, when I was in American schools and first of all I had a very British accent, and I was in the neighborhood where the British were not very popular. It happened to be an Irish neighborhood. And I was not well received.

DANE: This is the end of tape two, side one, Joseph Wohlberg, Interview Number 114. It's 12:05.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

DANE: This is tape two, side two, Joseph Wohlberg, Interview Number 114. It's 12:08. We were just cut off from the fact that you were, actually, a little British Hungarian American boy in an Irish neighborhood. How were you different?

WOHLBERG: Well, first of all, in Budapest, all the urchins go out on the street. Other people go to the park and, uh,

under the supervision of their, of a maid or a parent, they play with each other. Uh, but only urchins play in the street, and that I thought was really a terrible thing to do. And also every boy wore knickers here and I had short trousers with my knees bared, and all the children thought it was absolutely, uh, it was ridiculous. Uh, they called me a sissy. And as a result I began to feel very lonely and nobody spoke to me. The, uh, and I, I began to feel isolated, so much so that after a month had passed and I had no friends, I once burst out on a Sunday afternoon, "It's so boring. I wish I were back in, with my friends in Budapest. Is this the wonderful America that was promised to me?" So my father was very sorry and he immediately sat down with and played a game of chess.

DANE: I'm afraid we'll have to end it here. Why don't I slate it. This is the end of tape two, side two, Joseph Wohlberg, Interview Number 114. It's 12:11.