

KECK-22

ELEANOR RUTH KENDERLINE LENHART

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ENGLAND, 1921

AGE: 7

SHIP: BERENGARIA

PORT: SOUTHAMPTON

RESIDENCES: ENGLAND: LONDON

U.S.: MT. MORRIS, ILLINOIS

GUMB: This is Dana Gumb, and I'm speaking with Mrs. Eleanor Ruth Lenhart on the fifth day of September, 1985. We're beginning this interview at 11:10, and we're about to interview Mrs. Lenhart about her immigration experience from Scotland in the year 1921. Okay, Mrs. Lenhart, if we could begin with where and when were you born?

LENHART: Oh, I was born in London, May 23, 1913, right at the beginning of the First World War

GUMB: And what was life like in England at that time?

LENHART: Well, because of the war years, it was very difficult for my parents. My mother had six brothers and a sister who was married and all the men went to the World War One, so my mother and my aunt were left with their children, and had to make do as best they could.

GUMB: Your father went to the war?

LENHART: Yes, oh yes. He was, actually lived on the White Cliffs [she laughs] of Dover, living between Dover and Folkston while he trained at Dover, in the barracks at Dover, before he went over to France. And, and then when he went over to France we went back to London and my mother and her sister amalgamated their households and we lived together. Remember the Zeppelin raids and, but I imagine it isn't, wasn't nearly as bad as the Second World War that the British went through.

GUMB: What was the story about the zeppelin raids?

LENHART: The one that I told you about was, um, well, not far from us, you see, each night, the zeppelins came over. My aunt had a oak, solid oak table with a drop leaf that went to the floor. And so they, as soon as the raid came along, why, they would, um, put us babies on a mattress underneath this table and sit up and watch and that would, because that would at least protect us from the shrapnel that might fly through the window or something. And there was a few, short distance from us, a house, a bomb dropped on a house and cut the second house in half. The woman was in the upstairs bedroom, in bed and, of course, the house was on fire. The fireman came to save her and she woke up with a start and saw, the firemen at that time wore spiked helmets, as the Germans did in the, their Germany army, and they, she just went stark raving mad because she thought the Germans had taken over London. [she laughs]

GUMB: So, uh, your mother and your aunt were living together in London.

LENHART: Yes.

GUMB: And how were they supporting themselves?

LENHART: They just, I've forgotten. Their income was absolutely the smallest amount, but I don't know. My father never got a pension, they never, World War One, they army was not paid. I don't know how much he got, it was a few shillings a week that they just managed on.

GUMB: Your father died in the war?

LENHART: Oh, no.

GUMB: Oh, oh, I see.

LENHART: No, no. My father had brothers, several brothers, in America. And after the war, he did not get back until 1919, from the war, he was, had a trade, he was a printer, he had had nine years' apprenticeship in England. And he tried to go into business for himself in 1919, and didn't make a go of it. And his brother, one of his brothers was a Methodist minister in Winnona, Minnesota, and he wrote and said do come to America, there'll be greater opportunities for you. So he sponsored us, and in September 10, 1921, we took the Berengaria, sailing from South Hampton. It was the last trip before they converted the ship from coal running to, uh, oil. The Berengaria, that was the Cunard Line. They always named their ships, ending with "ia," the letters, ending with "ia."

GUMB: Did your parents go expecting ever to come back?

LENHART: Oh, yes, yes. It wasn't, my father's family was gone, and the family he had was over here in America, but my mother, it was not easy for her, because she had six brothers, mother and father and a sister, that she left behind in England.

GUMB: Why had your father's family come here?

LENHART: Well, that's another story. The, when my father was thirteen, both his mother and father died. And the children, no money, they were Welsh, and my father had a scholarship to go to school and had to give it up. They had to just separate the family and the other boys, were sent to Canada and, to make their way and I don't know how, where they were sent in Canada or anything, but the, and that was how my father was apprenticed. Uh, his father was a printer, and so they took my father on to be a printer, and he had really no choice. And he lived for those nine years on the shilling a week, which was incredible, but he, uh...

GUMB: So his brothers were, your uncles, were in North America?

LENHART: There were in America by then. If I say, the brother that sponsored us was the Methodist minister in Winnona, Minnesota.

GUMB: I'm wondering how the family made this decision. It sounds like a real earth-shattering kind of decision. Do you remember family conferences, or how it was...

LENHART: Well, I'm sure, it was just, of course, I was too young to participate, but they said my mother decided that it would give me more opportunities. You know, in 1921 there was still quite a lot of class differences in England and, uh, and it was so different here in

America, as we soon found out.

GUMB: What sort of class difference? You mean...

LENHART: Well, uh, complete opportunities. I could tell you, uh, jumping ahead a little bit, when my father took a job in Mount Morris, Illinois, printing, Cable Brothers Company, the Cable Brothers were twins who had a very large printing company there and they, he heard of the job and they wanted him, wanted my father. We arrived, they met us, the owners of the printing place me us, took us to the hotel, got us rooms, and took us for rides in their car on a weekend afternoon and were so kind. And, of course, this sort of thing would never have happened in England then. You'd never find the owner of a company taking an employee round or being...And, of course, educational opportunities for me were so much better, too. Most, the average person, of course, my father was, he was going to have a scholarship, he was thirteen and he was going to go on, so, and, of course, because his parents died, why, he didn't get the opportunity, but, uh, most people go into a trade, or did then, but, uh, around thirteen or fourteen.

GUMB: So you, the family, uh, bought tickets for, for the voyage over.

LENHART: Oh, yes, that, I must tell you about that because, of course, my parents knew nothing about travel and they also, my father could not have a position or job here in the United States, they weren't allowed to have that before you arrived. So, of course, the question of money was very important. And they had been told that the difference between the costs, the difference between second class and third class was not worth the difference, the cost was not worth the difference. So they signed up for third class passage on the Berengaria. When we arrived on the boat, the, um, the situation was incredible, I mean, something that wouldn't happen, nowadays, but instead of having a cabin of our own, the, uh, my father was put in a cabin with three other men and my mother and I were put in with a British colonel's wife and her little boy. Now, it turned out, it turned out that the little boy had nits in his head, and he had to be treated all the way over, while my mother was a little Victorian woman just was absolutely horrified at the situation, but there wasn't a thing we could do about it, and that's, uh, that's what happened.

GUMB: By nits, do you mean lice?

LENHART: Yes, yes. They called it nits then. [she laughs]

GUMB: Um, so, what was steerage? You had individual cabins in the steerage part of third class?

LENHART: Oh, yes, oh, yes. I don't know whether you...

GUMB: It wasn't one big area.

LENHART: No, no. No, no. That wasn't exactly, third class was not exactly steerage. I think steerage was besides for a second and third class. I'm not sure.

GUMB: Okay. Do you remember on the vessel whether there was another...

LENHART: I don't remember. No, no, no.

GUMB: Were the accommodations fairly clean, or...

LENHART: As I remember, they were. Yes. And then, of course, there was the other incident, that the day before, it was, I mean, this wouldn't happen nowadays, either. There was the incident, the day before we arrived in New York we were, message were sent to each room to go to a certain position at the bottom of the stairway, or gangway, what do they call that on the ship, I don't...

GUMB: To the dock? The gangway to the dock?

LENHART: No, no. On the ship. The stairways on the ship. What do they call those? I don't know. I don't know them. Ladder? Ladder, no, no, not ladder.

GUMB: The passageway in the, on the...

LENHART: Yes, yes, it's outside, on the deck.

GUMB: Oh, with the rail along the, right.

LENHART: Yes, yes. And the stairway up to the next floor outside. Anyway, we were told to go there, line up, men, women and children, and everybody, and there were doctors at the top of the stairway, and we were told to strip to the waist, everybody. Well, of course, my mother wouldn't hear of this, so she said we'll just go to the end of the line, and we did. And we got up to the doctors, Mother said if you wish to examine us, you may come to my, to our cabin. [she laughs] So we went back to our cabin, and nobody ever came, so we weren't examined.

GUMB: Do you know who these doctors were, where they...

LENHART: No, I don't. No.

GUMB: At what point in the voyage did this happen?

LENHART: This was the day before we got to New York. And then when we got to New York harbor, the first and second class were allowed to, they just walked off and went on to the mainland, and the third class was quarantined for two days in the harbor and then sent to Ellis Island. And when we, um, when we were put on a barge, jammed in so tight that I couldn't turn around, there were so many of us, you see, and the stench was terrible. And when we got to Ellis Island, they put the gangplank down, and there was a man at the foot, and he was shouting, at the top of his voice, "Put your luggage here. Drop your luggage here. Men this way. Women and children this way." And Dad looked at us and said, "Well, we'll meet you back here at this mound of luggage and hope we find it again and see you later." So he went off his way and we went this day to a building where there were two women doctors standing at the door with sticks in their hands and they grabbed you and rolled your eyelids up on the stick, looking for this infectious disease of some kind, and I don't remember the name of it. Uh, and then we were sent inside and told to strip to the waist. By that time, the smell had gotten to me. See, I had, oh, trachoma, that's what it's called. The, uh, yeah. By that time I had, um, started coughing. See, I'd had diphtheria when I was six and this was seven, and I suppose the smell and everything, and one of the nurses came up to Mother and said, "Stop that child coughing." And Mother blew and said, "For Heaven's sakes, woman, I can't. She's not coughing for the fun of it. I can't stop her." And the nurse said, "Well, you'll be sent back." Well, things calmed down and we were examined, and then we got dressed. I don't remember meeting Dad again, but we certainly did, and we went to, were sent to this building where the church pews were, with desks all along the front. We watched the people that we'd met, of course, the British colonel and his wife, and there was another very attractive lady that my mother and dad had gotten acquainted with. She was an Armenian, and she was very well-educated. She came from a very rich family, had seen, during the Turkish-Armenian War, she had seen the, her house, their house, burned, their money taken, their family were all killed except her, and she was coming to the United States to start over. Well, watched, they were all ahead of us, and we watched them. They went from one desk to the next, to the next, to the next, and then around back of the room. And when it was our turn we went to

the first desk and my father answered all the questions and the mend said, "Okay, you go through the door in back of me here." And Dad said, "Well, what in the world..." He said, we watched our friends go around the back. He says, "Oh, they're going back." He says, "You're going into the United States. You go through this door." So, well, we had to. We went through the door and we found ourselves in a tunnel and we said, well, how in the world are we going to get back to the mainland? We had had our, were carrying our suitcases but the, uh, our crates were on the mainland, we had them shipped ahead, you see, and, uh, a man came up that my parents thought was rather rough looking. He, uh, had a sports jacket on and, of course, in those days, 1921, the English usually wore suits, matching coat and jacket and everything, and he came up to my father and he said, "Do you know where you're going?" And Dad said, "Yes, yes, indeed, thank you very much." And start, we went on down, he left us alone and we went on down the hall. There were rooms coming off this tunnel, and we came across the one room that said "YMCA" and underneath "guides." And Dad said that's what we want. We need a guide to help us get over to the mainland. So he went in and he got the, asked for a guide, and man came up to him, grinning all over, and he said, "You didn't see my badge, did you?" It was the same man that had accosted us before in tunnel. [she laughs] And he turned out to be so helpful and he got us over to, got our crates forwarded on to Minnesota and then got us to Grand Central Station and found everything was jammed full. The train, of course, you see, we were two days late by then. They were expecting us in Winnona, Minnesota, we'd been quarantined for the two days, we were two days late and, uh, there was, all that was left on the train going to Winnona was one upper berth. And Dad said, "All right. I'll take the coach, and Mother and I will use this upper berth." Of course, then, I don't remember how long exactly it took us. I think it was a couple of days to get to Minnesota, then on the train, and they knew nothing, once again, about Pullman cars or anything. And so Mother said, well, we've got to eat. I'll get to the grocery store. So she got a carton of bread and butter and cheese and stuff. [she laughs] And we got on the train. That evening the porter, and, of course, I'd never seen a black man before, he was just lovely, he was great, and he showed us, helped us up the ladder. We got up there, and then he took the ladder away [she laughs] which appalled us, and we sat there all night, we never undressed or anything, the mother said, Eleanor, America must be very, very religious country. Every time we get to a town the church bells are ringing. And, of course, later on we found that that was the train bell. Every city that we came to they rant the train bell.

GUMB: That's quite a story.

LENHART: That's my story.

GUMB: That's quite a story. If we could go back to the, the voyage over, do you remember anything about the food, what you had to eat on the voyage?

LENHART: No, I don't. Isn't that a shame? I can't remember going to a dining room and eating or anything.

GUMB: Do you remember how long it took?

LENHART: Oh, it took about ten days, as I remember, nine of ten days. Berengaria was a big ship then.

GUMB: Do you remember your first impressions when, uh, the vessel entered the harbor, New York Harbor?

LENHART: Well, of course, I remember seeing the Statue of Liberty. That was very, very exciting. Everybody was there on the one side of the ship, all of us crowded around looking at it.

GUMB: Had you heard about the Statue of Liberty before? I mean, was it a familiar thing?

LENHART: I don't remember that, either. I suppose we had. I'm sure we had.

GUMB: Okay. Do you remember where the vessel, uh, docked, where it went?

LENHART: No, I don't.

GUMB: Okay. But it did, it docked, uh, somewhere on the waterfront. And what happened there? Someone, what happened at that point?

LENHART: Well, they had berths, they docked at the berths, and let off the first and second class. And, uh...

GUMB: The third class, did you get onto the deck and then go to a barge, or how did...

LENHART: No, as I remember it, the barge came up to us and there was a gangplank. We never got on the dock, and we went directly onto the barge. Now, I might be wrong, but that was that I think happened.

GUMB: Did any officials talk to you on the boat, talk to your family on the boat, or did, was everyone just automatically put on...

LENHART: Just, they were pushed. The officials, the workers were so, they were exhausted, there were so many people to be handled and pushed through this, nobody ever talked to us. As a matter of fact, we should have, on the ship, my mother got seasick, was seasick most of the time, on the whole trip over and, uh, she could have had, um, pills that would have helped her, you see. And we'd asked for a doctor, and he never came, until the day before. And they gave her some pills and then she was all right, the day before that they were telling her that she had to come and have that examination that I mentioned on this, on board ship. And they gave her pills, and then she was all right. But that was, that was the whole trip she was ill, she hardly ate anything.

GUMB: Right. So everyone was herded onto the, onto the barge.

LENHART: Yes, just treated like cattle. We really were. It was just an awful experience. But I want to say that, uh, that's, that was inevitable, with the number of people coming in then. We were over the quota, and that was simply inevitable. And, of course, we're, we've never regretted coming to the United States, no, indeed. We feel very fortunate.

GUMB: What was the barge like? Was it, do you remember anything about it?

LENHART: We was, we were just a flat, uh, opened, uh, deck and we were jammed in. I couldn't see anything or, or, I couldn't turn around or anything. We were just jammed in so hard and, as I said, the smell was just incredible. What kind of barge it was, I don't know.

GUMB: Everybody was standing?

LENHART: Oh, yes, yes, everybody was standing. We couldn't move. Of course, it was a short trip.

GUMB: How much time did it take? Do you have any idea?

LENHART: No, I don't. Seven years old, I don't, whatever it was, it was too long. [she laughs]

GUMB: But it was out in the open, you were just standing on this open deck.

LENHART: Yes, yes, open deck, right.

GUMB: What else do you remember about the other people? What did, kind of clothes were...

LENHART: Yes, the poor things, they, mostly Eastern Europeans with the shawls over their heads, and, of course, we couldn't understand a word they said, and they couldn't understand us.

GUMB: What kind of things were they carrying, or how were they...

LENHART: I don't remember that. I don't remember that at all.

GUMB: So, uh, then the barge arrived at Ellis.

LENHART: Yes.

GUMB: And you very vividly described what happened then.

LENHART: Oh, it was incredible, this mound of luggage, I remember. Of course it was. We were all carrying suitcases, you see. And they just, and how we found them afterwards, after the examinations and everything, to come back, we had to pick them up before we went into the building for the, interrogation. [she laughs] If you want to call it that.

GUMB: All the luggage was just piled up in one spot.

LENHART: Yes, yes, yes.

GUMB: And then you separated.

LENHART: Yes. And my father went to the left and we went to the right. I really remember that. Isn't that...

GUMB: What, um, was there a, was it the main building that you went into, the building with the spires?

LENHART: We were, there were, there were two buildings that I remember. I don't know where my father went, and I don't know where he went, but we went into this building for the examination, doctor's examination. And then there was the other building, and I don't remember going there, I just remember being in there, with the pews, the church pews, and the desks up front.

- GUMB: For examinations, did you have to, uh, go upstairs for that, to be examined, or was it the same...
- LENHART: No, it was all on one floor.
- GUMB: And you remember the eye examination. Do you remember anything else about...
- LENHART: We were scared to death because they didn't explain anything to you. You see, they didn't have time, and they just grabbed you and rolled up, grabbed you and rolled your eyelids up on a stick.
- GUMB: What did you that feel like?
- LENHART: Oh, I was petrified. [she laughs]
- GUMB: Did it hurt to have your eyelids...
- LENHART: I suppose it really didn't hurt. I don't remember crying about it. All I remember is this incident of the coughing.
- GUMB: Um, so, uh, do you remember anything else about the, any other examinations other than the eye examination, anything else that they did to you, or...
- LENHART: Of course, before we left England we had to be, uh, vaccinated and, uh, I know I had four places on my leg here, vaccination, um, I can't remember anything else, though.
- GUMB: Okay. Then to get to the area where the interrogation took place, where the paws were, did you have to go upstairs to get there, do you remember?
- LENHART: Don't remember that we did.
- GUMB: The room with the, uh, pews, uh, do you remember any details about what that room looked like, or what sort of...
- LENHART: Well, it was wooden. All was wood inside, and wood, hard, wood pews like they have in most churches and, uh, and then these desks, like pulpits, all the way along the front, with a man at each place.
- GUMB: This is the end of side one. This is the beginning of side two.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

- GUMB: Okay. I wanted to ask you, Mrs. Lenhart, about this quarantine. The vessel arrived in New York and it docked, and then you were quarantined, or exactly when did it happen?
- LENHART: Well, we could go anywhere on the third class, on the boat, we just couldn't get off, and that's what I mean by quarantine. The, I think the reason they were, we were quarantined was that, uh, they were so busy processing everybody through Ellis Island that they couldn't handle us and so it took the two days. That was my understanding now.
- GUMB: So the vessel was sitting at the, at the pier.
- LENHART: Yes, at the pier. And, uh...
- GUMB: Did the shipping company continue to feed you for these two days?
- LENHART: Oh yes, oh yes. We had to, they had to take care of that. And, I don't know how eventually paid for it, whether it was the personnel, the government of the United States, because they couldn't take care of us, or whether it was the shipping company. I don't know. The Cunard Line that had to pay for it. But we certainly were there for two days.
- GUMB: We were talking about, uh, the quarantine, being quarantined on the boat. Do you remember what you did for those two days?
- LENHART: No, hardly. I had an idea, something I hadn't mentioned before, was that I brought my scooter, which was my dear love, and I never loved dolls, but I loved my teddy bear, and uh, I had had my teddy bear tied on the scooter, and had that on the ship. And so I supposed that I spent a lot of time riding around the, uh, the uh, on my scooter, riding around the decks on my scooter.
- GUMB: Okay. We were, we were back at Ellis Island and, uh, in the, in that room where you were waiting to go up to the pulpits to be interrogated, remember anything else about that room? Was it a high ceiling space, or, do you remember?
- LENHART: Well, to me it was, yes, seven years old, I don't know. I really don't remember how high. Uh, we used to have pictures in a civic, at a school, in civic studies we had a book that had a picture exactly the

way it looked and I thought then that the immigrants were in the pews and facing the uh, the men. And they were facing us, that were sitting at the desks.

GUMB: They were facing the men at the desks.

LENHART: Yes, and, uh, I thought that was, uh, the picture that they had too.

GUMB: This picture that I had of that room, that's the same room, that's where you were, do you remember?

LENHART: No.

GUMB: Oh, that wasn't where you were.

LENHART: Well, I suppose it must have been, but it doesn't look like it in my memory at all.

GUMB: It's a picture of the great registry hall.

LENHART: Well, that must be where we were, but I surely don't remember it like that at all. I don't remember, that's too bad, isn't it, I don't remember the balcony around the room.

GUMB: Is there anything else different about that picture from what you remember other than...

LENHART: Well, the pews are going the wrong way from the desks because we definitely were facing, sitting facing, just like in a church, uh, sanctuary. The, uh, but, uh, I must be wrong, my memory must be wrong, I don't know. Because here they are line up quite differently than I remembered.

GUMB: Do you remember, you remember this area being very crowded?

LENHART: Oh, yes, oh yes. We had to wait in line, you know, quite a while, because, there were just mobs of people the whole time, from the time we got on the boat in Southampton until we got to Winnona, Minnesota.

GUMB: Did you have your luggage with you at this time?

LENHART: Oh yes, yes, I'm sure we did.

GUMB: Okay. After the medical examinations, then, uh, your mother and father, how did they meet again?

LENHART: Well, we met, we said, we told, uh, they said that they would meet at the, uh, at the luggage, at the mound of luggage, you see. So, uh...

GUMB: So they were free to wander around after the examination. They could come back to the luggage?

LENHART: As far as I can remember, yes. Oh, yes. We were, yes. They were glad to get rid of us out of the building. [she laughs] And, of course, there was a man there at the luggage, you know, all the time, directly everybody and, uh...

GUMB: He was the man who told you right at the beginning to go there?

LENHART: Yes, I suppose it was the same man. Yeah.

GUMB: How much luggage did you have?

LENHART: Well...

GUMB: I'm just, you know, sort of...

LENHART: Yes, just, suitcases, uh, they weren't as, uh, they weren't as convenient as what we have nowadays, certainly, but, uh, I think probably I don't remember that I carried anything. I had my scooter. And I don't remember what happened to that scooter. Uh, I know I had to, I had that, and then, I suppose, my parents had a suitcase each, I think that's probably what it was.

GUMB: Uh, so you, you came up and all, you sat in the pews in that room...

LENHART: Yes, and waited.

GUMB: Do you remember how long you had to wait?

LENHART: No, I don't. But it was, most of one day. First, first of they, I mean, the whole thing, the trip over to Ellis Island, started in the morning, and it was late afternoon when we got the train. So it took, that took most of one day.

GUMB: From the barge trip to...

LENHART: Yes, from the barge trip...

GUMB: ...getting to Grand Central.

LENHART: Yes.

GUMB: Um, do you remember how did you parents know to come up, you know, that it was their turn, or...

LENHART: Oh, well, they went, um, just like you do in any church service. [she laughs] When you go up to, well, for instance, if you were going to take Communion, there are certain churches that take pew by pew and, and take your turn going up, and that's the way this was. And the people that we had known were, were ahead of us.

GUMB: Yeah. Was everyone on the same vessel, together in one group? Is that how it was done, or do you remember whether the, all the people who were in the same vessel, in the same ship, were they all together in one, in one section of the pews.

LENHART: As far as I, oh, I don't know. I supposed that, uh, the whole roomful of people that were there at the time we were there were all from the Berengaria, were the third class. And, uh...

GUMB: And, uh, so, your turn came up to go before the, uh, officer. Was he wearing a uniform, do you remember, the person asking the questions?

LENHART: You know, I don't remember that. I think he was wearing, it was in shirt sleeves, but I'm no sure.

GUMB: Okay. Do you remember anything about what sort of questions he was asking or what kind of, you know, anything about his attitude or anything?

LENHART: Yes, the poor guy, he was quite gruff, really, uh, and there was no chit-chat, believe me, because there was so much pressure on them, you know. And he had a certain questions, he had forms he was filling out. And, and, of course, you see, we were being sponsored. I think the two things to our advantage, we were being sponsored by my uncle, and then the other thing was that Dad had a trade. But I think they had to give the amount of money that they were bringing into the United States and the, I can't, the whole history, all our history.

GUMB: Do you remember how long that took? How much time the questions took?

LENHART: No, I don't think it really took very long. I betcha it didn't take more

than fifteen, twenty minutes, half an hour. I...

GUMB: Do you remember if the man asked to see any money? Did he, do you remember your father having to show money or anything?

LENHART: No, no. I don't. I don't remember that. My goodness, I wish I'd always, I'd talked to my parents more about that and never thought of it. No, about all these things.

GUMB: I'm curious how, how did you, how did the family present itself? Did you, did the, did your mother be sure that you were looking, that you looked well, you know, that you were nicely dressed, and so forth?

LENHART: Oh, yes, she was very careful about the dress and, I can't remember what I wore, of course, but, of course, September we didn't need coats, quite probably and, I don't remember...

GUMB: But your father probably made a special effort to look...

LENHART: Yes, to be, to look decent. He certainly had a suit, as I said. He, probably his only suit, I don't know.

GUMB: Sort of, to go back a little bit, though, you were only seven, so. But, in England, before coming over, do you remember anything about the arrangements or, you know, did, if your father had to go to the consulate, or...

LENHART: No, no. Unfortunately, I don't. I don't remember how they happened to, I had no passport. My picture was on their passport and, do you have that, their passports, I bet you, I wish I'd thought of it, somewhere upstairs I think they still have their passports.

GUMB: Maybe we could look at that.

LENHART: All right. I'll look and see if I can find it, but I don't remember.

GUMB: But there was a quota, you remember that, uh...

LENHART: We came over the quota, yes. We were outside the quota.

GUMB: You were outside the quota.

LENHART: Yes. Everybody that came then was outside the quota. [she laughs]

- GUMB: So there was a real possibility you could have been turned back.
- LENHART: Yes, I suppose so. It never occurred to us, I don't think. [she laughs]
- GUMB: Okay. Then after the questions were all done, did you go down steps or did you...
- LENHART: No, no. We went behind his desk, and right back of his desk was a door, and he said, "You go through this door." And it was just a tunnel, and rooms off the tunnel. And there we were, on an island, and we knew we had to get over to the mainland, but nobody to tell us how or anything. It was incredible.
- GUMB: Were there anybody, were there people in those rooms or was there...
- LENHART: Yes, I don't remember the other rooms. I only remember this YMCA and the guides and there was a light, you see, and the rooms were lighted, and that's where we went.
- GUMB: Uh, okay.
- LENHART: And then I don't remember how we got back, got from the island over to the mainland either. I don't have any recollection of that at all.
- GUMB: But that time the YMCA guide was helping you.
- LENHART: Guide, was with us, you see. Yes. I suppose it was a ferry, I imagine.
- GUMB: So you spent about the full day there, almost all day. Do you remember about, what you had to eat there, or did you have lunch or, what did you do about lunch?
- LENHART: No, I don't remember that at all.
- GUMB: Okay.
- LENHART: I can't remember even getting a drink of water. [she laughs] I don't think they provided food, did they? I don't remember that.
- GUMB: There was some food service there.
- LENHART: They did? I don't, unfortunately.

GUMB: I wonder if the, after the interrogation was over, was there any statement like "welcome to the United States," or...

LENHART: On, no. No, no. Because, uh, all were so surprised about the people, our friends, that had gone around the back and, and it was so abrupt, he said, "Okay, you go through this door." And, uh, and Dad said, "Why? What do you mean?" And he, he said, "Oh, you can go into the United States." He said, "Your friends are going back." And that was just, must have been heartbreaking for that Armenian woman. Yes. And I just, we've often wondered what happened to her. But there was no opportunity, you see. We were just herded along. We had no...

GUMB: Did you have any idea what the Armenians lady's problem was?

LENHART: No, no. Because, uh, certainly, you see, she spoke English very well, she was well-educated. She would have been an asset to America. But once again I suppose the quota was full and they had to make a decision, the officials. So.

GUMB: Okay. With the YMCA fellow, uh, yeah, was there any charge for his service or...

LENHART: Oh, yes, yes, I'm sure. I don't remember what it was, but you paid before you got it, you know, when you signed up for him. Yes, and, and I don't remember his name or anything about him. I don't remember that I ever heard it. But he was awfully nice and very helpful, very kind.

GUMB: Do you remember if your father had to change money there?

LENHART: Oh, I don't remember my father, but my mother went and shopped for these groceries to take with her on the train, and the people, she had a hard job. I wonder if, I don't know this, but I just wonder if she didn't, uh, go to the shop where the were foreign speaking people running a grocery store because they had an awful, awful job understanding her. She wanted butter and, and she would ask for half a pound of butter, and they couldn't understand her. They even showed her postage stamps before she finally got them to understand what it was. But they were very kind to her and she said this, told me this, that they were very kind to her about explaining the money, and very honest about it. So that was her first experience with the money.

GUMB: Where was the grocery store?

LENHART: Well, right near Grand Central.

GUMB: Oh, near Grand Central.

LENHART: You see, we went out and found, she went out and found the nearest place.

GUMB: Oh, she bough groceries before getting on the train.

LENHART: Yes, yes. Oh, yes. We didn't have any idea that there were dining cars on the train.

GUMB: Did you, did you, where did you, did you buy the ticket on Ellis, the railroad ticket on Ellis, or...

LENHART: On, no. No, no. When we got to Grand Central, the man helped us, and he found out about, there was just one, he and my father, I guess, went to the ticket office at Grand Central, and there was this one train leaving for Minnesota and it took us right through Winnona. But I think we were two nights, I don't remember whether it was one night and two days or whether it was two nights, the time that it took then.

GUMB: Do you remember if there was a sense of relief, uh, with your parents or, do you have any sense of how they felt?

LENHART: No, it must have been a very, very tense time for them. Mother had been sick all the way over, seasick, and then all these delays, and then, there probably wasn't much lessening of this tension because she had to meet these, this, this brother and sister-in-law and they were the minister and his wife and we went to, going from London to the Methodist parsonage was quite an experience, actually, quite an experience for us all. Because, uh, I do remember, Dad, my father, was out of work only two days, so we were very fortunate that way. And we spent about a month at the parsonage before we got an apartment of our own in Winnona, and I remember the food is so different, you see, between, from England to, and breakfast, particularly. I was, used to get so hungry, and Mother sneaked boxes of crackers, or cookies, which are called biscuits in England, up in the room, so we wouldn't hurt anybody's feelings. I'd come home from school so hungry. [she laughs] And they had, for instance, cereal, for breakfast, and that was all. Well, that's fine now, I mean, it's, we're quite used to it, of course, but then it just wasn't enough. We always had eggs and bacon or something, I've forgotten how what we did have.

GUMB: Are there any other...

LENHART: Dry cereal was not the thing in England then, for breakfast. And there was so much, so many differences, of course, living in a parsonage.

GUMB: You mentioned the, your problem with the accent.

LENHART: Oh, yeah. My father had a difficult time where he went to work. That's why he was so very unhappy where he went to work at, in Winnona. The people were very unkind, really, with, he got a lot of razzing and I guess it was difficult for him to take.

GUMB: But why? Why were they unkind?

LENHART: Uh, because of his accent. Uh-huh, because of his accent.

GUMB: Kind of making fun?

LENHART: Yes, oh, yes. Uh-huh.

GUMB: How long did it take for you to lose yours?

LENHART: Oh, I don't know. I don't remember. When I went back to England when I was eleven, ten really, because I was there for about nine months, visited. Of course, then they were teasing me over there about my American accent. [she laughs] But, so, it didn't take long.

GUMB: Do you have any idea what your future would have been in England? Do you have any thoughts on how, how this move changed your life?

LENHART: No. If I was fortunate to get a scholarship I could have gone on after fourteen. Uh, I don't know. I don't know. Of course, that's about, you had about the equivalent of high school, I would say, education, by fourteen or fifteen. And then I don't know what would have happened, if I could have gone to college or not

GUMB: Was there any, ever any regret or remorse expressed by your parents or any...

LENHART: No, no. They never did. No, they were happy. They, we lived in a place up, it was Ogle County, Illinois in Mt. Morris, Illinois. It was seven miles from the county seat. And they walked seven miles

and back to get their citizenship papers. They, they really...

GUMB: There was no turning back.

LENHART: No turning back. They severed their relations. Of course they, oh, we kept in touch, of course, all those relatives. I still have two cousins, two or three cousins, I have a cousin living in Belfast. One of my mother's brothers went, uh, to Belfast, and after the first World War to open offices for his firm in Belfast, and so I have two cousins that were born there and they visited here. Yeah. And then I have one cousin, one of the cousins that I swept under the table is still in England. But I, the last time I was there was 1936, which was a long time ago.

GUMB: Do you remember what, those years you were in England, what you heard about America, and what sort of expectations you had?

LENHART: No, I had no memory of that at all. There was no question. They didn't discuss it with me, I guess. [break in tape]...and Mother's signature and my father's signature...

GUMB: This is your parents' English passport.

LENHART: Eighth of August, 1923.

GUMB: What's that date? '23? The expiration date, maybe?

LENHART: Oh, yes, the validity of this passport expires eight of August 1923. I see.

GUMB: Is there any mark there for Ellis, you know, that they did at Ellis Island?

LENHART: Oh, I'll have to see.

GUMB: This is the American consulate one.

LENHART: London, England, this was the 13th of August that they did that, 1921. No, there's nothing else there.

GUMB: Maybe there's a stamp here on, on the, I guess this is a permission to come, whatever. Yeah, this is the visa and I guess, do you see, you can go ahead, what do you see there? You also have your citizenship papers, and your parents' citizenship papers.

GUMB: Yes. That was, that's a very kind of an interesting story too,

because my, at that time, that they took out their papers, I was a minor. I was thirteen years old, and so my name just appeared on their papers, and I had no papers. Well, in, when the Second World War came along, my parents were living in Florida then, and I was doing a lot of volunteer work in the, uh, in different departments for the war, and I had to be fingerprinted, and I had to prove that I was a citizen. So I wrote my mother and asked her if she would send me the papers with my name on it and she said, "I will not." She said they might get bent in the mail. [she laughs] So I went to the State Department and got own papers.

GUMB: This is the end of side two.