

KECK-99

GUSTAV (HUGO) GLASER

BIRTH DATE: APRIL 27, 1899

INTERVIEW DATE: DECEMBER 6, 1985

RUNNING TIME: 1:00:00

INTERVIEWER: DANA GUMB

RECORDING ENGINEER: CONNIE KIELTYKA

INTERVIEW LOCATION: STATEN ISLAND, NY

TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 1986

TRANSCRIPT RECONCEIVED BY: CHICK LEMONICK, 12/1995

TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

DENMARK, 1923 AND 1924

AGE 25 (2ND TRIP)

PASSAGE ON "THE UNITED STATES

GUMB: This is Dana Gumb, and I'm speaking with Mr. Gustav Glaser on the sixth day of December 1985. We're beginning this interview at 5:21 and we're about to interview Mr. Glaser about his immigration experience from Denmark in the year 1924. Okay, uh, Mr. Glaser, if we could begin with, uh, where and when you were born?

GLASER: I was born in Jutland. That part of Denmark is the part that is connected to Germany. It's connected to Germany.

GUMB: Could you spell that, Jutland?

GLASER: Well, the Danish name is J-Y-L-L-A-N-D. In the English you say J-U-T, Jutland. It's the main port of Denmark.

GUMB: And what was the year of your birth?

GLASER: The year and month was April 27, 1899.

GUMB: Okay. And, uh, what do you remember about, well, first of all, what was the name of the village or the town where you lived?

GLASER: The town I was born in was A-A-R-H-U-S, Aarhus. That was the main town in that part of Denmark. Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark. And I lived there until 1909 or '10. Then my father moved to Copenhagen from where I was born. I was born there, and then--

GUMB: What was your father doing?

GLASER: He was a, uh, what should I call it? He was in charge of a whole floor, what you call, people that make clothing? Textile factory. It was a five story building. Each floor had different machinery for different textiles. And he was in charge of one floor. It was, I don't

know how many, maybe four, five hundred girls, all girls, women, women and girls.

GUMB: What, did you go to school in Copenhagen?

GLASER: Yes, I went to school in Aarhus, I went to school in Copenhagen.

GUMB: What do you remember of life in, uh, Denmark? Was life hard there?

GLASER: No. Life was, life was nice until I became about nineteen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty years old. Then there was hard times. I couldn't get a job. I was out of work for a whole year. Of course, the state and the city gave a small allowance to buy cigarettes, and stuff like that.

GUMB: What was the year when you were, when you were, when these hard times hit?

GLASER: 1920. Things started to get a little better, but in 1920, right after the war. The war ended in 1918, and in 1920 there was bad years, no work at all.

GUMB: Do you remember World War One?

GLASER: Oh, yes. I remember. We had a school teacher, and I asked him once, I said, I was about fourteen years old, I said, "Why do people have to fight? Why do we have wars? Why can't we just talk with the different people?" He couldn't really answer me. "Well," he said, "that's the way the world goes," he said.

GUMB: Did you have to serve in the military, or was that a threat?

GLASER: Yeah. I was, you know, we, and when you become eighteen years old you (?) the military and then they would call you when they were, you get a number and then, but I was lucky. They only needed so and so many and I had a higher number than up to what they took into the Army for training. There was so many that they didn't need all those. It was a small state, Denmark. A small country. So they only trained so and so many soldiers. And you, like Lotto, you draw a number. My number was higher than what were needed.

GUMB: So what, what kind of work were you doing there in

Denmark?

GLASER: I was a clerk in a cigar store. I, you know, you became an apprentice and after I grew up and looked at it I could see this was just a poor way for the owners of the stores to, uh, get cheap help because they didn't pay an apprentice as much as they paid, you know. That was just the social way of life, you know. The bosses didn't see that they could benefit. So they had cheap help. They made you an apprentice for four years, to learn to sell cigars, four years. Of course, at that time, I wasn't that smart and thinking that far. My father got me that job.

GUMB: So in 1920 you lost your job in the shop?

GLASER: Well, you know, in four years, I started at thirteen, you know, then four years in apprentice, and the guy had his cheap help for four years. And then, in 1918 the four years was up and my apprenticeship was up and after you've been working at one place for four years you don't like it any more so you, so I just quit.

GUMB: What did you start doing? What did you do after you quit?

GLASER: I did all kinds of work. First I couldn't (?), then I took a job as a (?), a summer job. Three months, or something like that.

And, uh, then I went to a hotel, I was on the island, (?), it was out in the ocean near Germany, in the East Sea there. It's a Danish island, just all rocks sticking up. And it was a big hotel. I got a job there as a waiter and I worked there three months, two or three months for the summer. It was only open in summertime.

GUMB: So when did you decide to come here, to come to the United States?

GLASER: Well, after I had been walking around without work for some time in Copenhagen, I said I better do something. And, uh, I had a brother who had been over here. And he knew a man inside the Danish shipping lines, the Danish American, Danish, uh, Danish American Lines. Well, the line that goes between Copenhagen and New York, you know. So I asked him to introduce me to this man and I asked him to give me a job in one of the boats because, I said, wait. I said, uh-- "Yes," he said, "I'll see to it you get the job." And, uh, I got a job in a boat called The United States was the name of the boat, a ship, I think they call it ship, not boat. And now I said fine, now I'm going to make some money. So I came onto, the ship was going to leave and he started out, the head man, so, "Well," he said, "I'm sorry, but there's no table for you. The man that has been sailing back and forth for some time they are entitled first, and there's not enough passengers for you to get any tables to serve." So there

was, I was going to make money, no money. So he said, "Well, you serve the waiters in their cabins, in their place where they eat, you know, the dining room. They set it up, bring food in, clean it." That's the way I got over here.

GUMB: So you, you came, the vessel sailed over to, uh, to New York?

GLASER: From Copenhagen, yeah. It's a Danish American Line.

GUMB: So you were a seaman. You were an employee of the line.

GLASER: I was employed by the shipping line, right. But when I came here in April, a week before my birthday, I landed here, in Hoboken, and, uh, so when I got free I had, I took the ferry on 23rd Street and walked up 23rd Street and there was all the cafeterias all along up to Broadway. Busboy wanted, porter wanted, counterman wanted, twenty-five dollars a week. So I said, oh, oh, there's plenty of work. I'm going to stay here. So I stayed.

GUMB: So technically you were illegal?

GLASER: Yes. Well, at that time it wasn't really. There was no

law against. You could, if you were on a ship and you walked out there was nobody, there was no, no law against it. Later it came, yes, because, uh whenever a fellow walked off the ship, the foreign ships, they had to pay ten dollars. So they, so, it was made the law, that was illegal who walk off the ship. So that's the way I came here.

GUMB: So how long were you working, uh, in this country before you went back to Denmark?

GLASER: Well, I came in '23 and I went back in 1924 because I had a brother, the oldest, was here. I had two brothers. They both was here in different times, but they both went back. But this brother, my second after me, he was the second brother, he was on a different shipping line and, uh, so he got ashore, but he was not too bright. He was a nice boy, but he was - So he worked on the railroad gang, you know, you put those pieces of wood underneath the rails and all that. So, and he, he didn't make out here. So I found him over in Hoboken in a little room. I was looking for him. I knew he was here, and I went over there. Oh, there are different people on the ship and you ask and they say, "Yeah, yeah, he's here." He had gotten in some kind of hotel, cheap hotel and I went up there and said, "What's the matter? Why are you here? Why don't you go back to Denmark while you can?" "Yeah, well, I can't get out. Somebody stole my pants." So he couldn't get out of his room. So I said, "All right." I went home, got a pair of

pants. "Now, tomorrow you go down to the shipping line and get a job working your way back to Copenhagen." Yeah, yeah, he was going there. So, he went back, went to the ship.

GUMB: Why did you go, you had to go back to Copenhagen, right, in, uh--

GLASER: Yeah, well, you see, he went back, he didn't get off in Copenhagen, my brother. (?) Because the ship he goes with don't go into the dock. It lays out in anchor and unloads everything into (?). And he was supposed, I told him to get off and go home, but he didn't. He kept going. Because that ship was running between New York and Danzig. That's why, when it came to Copenhagen, he laid outside and whoever had, it took people, you know, to Copenhagen, but it didn't bring them in to small boats. People had to port, put them into the harbor, and then it continued down to Danzig.

GUMB: But then, you went back to Denmark, right? You had to go back to Denmark?

GLASER: See, this is (?) with my brother there, (?). So he was supposed to, he didn't. So he went to Danzig, then he stayed on. And then when they were on their way back to New York there was, uh, some kind of a

little fishing boat that was in trouble and they sent, a steamer went over and tried, and this was bad weather, rain. And so he stood by the railing all the way and watching this and later on I found out from the other members of the crew. And then when he came back here he had pneumonia and they rushed him to Kings County Hospital. And they called, the police came to where I was living and said, "You have a brother?" I said, "Yeah." "Well, he's in--" I thought he was in Copenhagen, and he was in Kings County Hospital. So I went out there and so on. Well, anyhow, to make a long story short, he died there. So I made arrangements through the shipping line that they were going to cremate him and send the ashes, they would take it on their ships back. But my mother, when she heard it, I had sent her a telegram that he passes away, she went up and begged and begged the shipping company to send her son home to her. And--

GUMB: Your, your--

GLASER: My brother. My brother that lived in Hoboken.

GUMB: Right. Okay.

GLASER: And she begged them, and so they gave in. They said, "All right, we'll see that your son comes back to you."
So I got that message, through letters or whatever, that

he was not going to be cremated here, he's going to be sent back. So I found out on the day he was taken. I went out there. I brought him some, my brother here, and I'd see my brother. "No, he's not here. We had to send him to another, because the coffin, the shipping lines sent him to another, they didn't want to take him, because my mother interfered and they promised her that they would ship him back to Copenhagen.

GUMB: You went back with your brother's body, right?

GLASER: Yes. That's it. When I heard that he was going to go back I said to them, well, I have to do something. And I went to the shipping lines, they were to let me work my way back to Copenhagen to be with my brother's body so I can soothe my mother, you know, make it more nice, you know, not so hard, you know. And, so eventually I got a job there as a waiter. I waited and I had dated with three Polish ladies. And they found out everything, but, so when we came to Copenhagen I, and the three ladies, they gave me five dollars each. So I had a few dollars. And, uh, then they opened the hatches and took out, there was a big box like a machine, and the casket. And they hoist it up, the flag in the back of the ship was lowered down. Then they put it up the deck. And then the postal department, the postman came over, he came up and stood next to me. He was

going to see that all the mail that was in the hold was taken, you know, put, put down the box. So he sat down on the box. So I went over and said, "Excuse me, sir. There's a body in that box." "Ohhhh!" (He laughs.) He got over--

GUMB: Okay. So then eventually, uh, how long was it before you decided to go back to America?

GLASER: Well, that was very, this was 1924, right? I came '23 and went back with him in '24. Well, then I stayed a few weeks in Copenhagen and I met my wife there while I was there. I had dollars in my pocket. So I went around, good times, dancing, I met her. And then in, uh, I got a--

GUMB: So in a few weeks you decided to go back?

GLASER: Oh, yeah. I had taken out my first papers. I came here in September and had taken out my first papers.

GUMB: What do you mean, papers?

GLASER: Well, you had to, uh, if you want to become a citizen, you

had to take out what they call first papers. And that you kept for five years. After five years you could apply for citizen papers.

GUMB: Was the economic situation in Denmark better when you came back, or was it still bad?

GLASER: I wasn't interested any more in Denmark.

GUMB: Why not? Why weren't you interested?

GLASER: I like America.

GUMB: Why?

GLASER: I like the way things were here, the way, the freedom. In Copenhagen, well, if you stayed there, you never been out, it's all right. But when you have been out of the country and you see different things, different ways and different-- There was more freedom in the United States than there was--

GUMB: Even in Denmark? You don't think of Denmark being a, at

that time, anyway, a repressed--

GLASER: No, no. But they had different laws for the citizens. Now I understand, I don't remember how it was when I was there, but now in Copenhagen, if you live here and you want to move over to there, you've got to go to the police department, tell them "I'm moving from there and I'm going, moving to there." And then you go to the police department over there and say, "I used to live over there and now I'm moving over here, I'm going to live here." So all those kinds of nuisance laws, that didn't go with me any more. When you're in it, it's all right. When you, when you have been out and not, and see different, it's no good.

GUMB: Any more examples you could think of, of, uh, well, any kind of, any other examples of things that, uh, uh, you could do in the United States that you couldn't do in Denmark that, that you notice?

GLASER: There's so many.

GUMB: Yeah, so many.

GLASER: Well, there was another thing. When we went back, my wife and I, in 1928 we went back for Christmas. In fact we went back to stay there because I promised my wife that

when she had been here five years we would go back to Copenhagen. So we went for Christmas on 1928. We came back there, we had been there maybe a week and we got a big letter from the tax department, they wanted tax. So then they said different things, things what you could make without paying tax. So I put down that amount. I figured let them figure how much I made over here. I just put it down the tax that you didn't have to pay tax.

GUMB: So, so you only--

GLASER: And then there was another thing. I got a letter from, uh, I don't know what you would call it here now, department. They had regulations where you could live. In what apartment you could rent. There was different rents for different years and if you lived in there, in that apartment, you couldn't live in there. You had to have a higher price, you had to pay higher price. All kinds of laws that you just, nuisance.

GUMB: Okay, so, so after a couple of weeks in Denmark you decided to go back to America. Uh, under, as a, were you an employee? Were you a seaman, employee, well not a seaman, but an employee of the shipping line?

GLASER: No. You mean in 1924?

GUMB: Right.

GLASER: Yes. Now, how did I get back in 1924?

GUMB: Were you a passenger on the vessel? Did you buy a ticket?

GLASER: No, I never paid. I crossed the Atlantic five times. I only paid once. In 1928, Christmas, I went back with my wife and child, daughter. And my wife was pregnant that time, and she got a son who was born in Copenhagen.

GUMB: So somehow you got back, you went back to New York and it's then that you landed in Ellis Island, right?

GLASER: Yeah. When I came back I did. 1924.

GUMB: Do you remember, uh, uh, where the vessel docked in, uh--

GLASER: It docked in Hoboken.

GUMB: Okay. Do you remember how you got to Ellis Island from

Hoboken?

GLASER: Well, the immigration officers comes on board. And they had changed the law in Washington so, uh, whatever, as I told you, the shipping line had seen to it because anybody walked off the ship, I told you before, it was ten dollars that they had to pay. So they had made the law that we were not allowed to get off the ships. So then I came, well, I told you, when I went back, I went down there to the, on town, what is that big place, the Battery place, the customs house.

GUMB: The customs.

GLASER: I went in there. I says, "I'm going to leave the country, but I'd like to see if you can give me some kind of paper that I can come back in." She said, "Well, you pay the eight dollars that we call the head tax." And she gave me a slip of paper that I had to pay the eight dollars.

GUMB: This is when you were going back to Denmark with your--

GLASER: With my brother.

GUMB: With your brother's body. Okay. All right. But, uh, if we could get to Ellis Island, you landed at Ellis Island and, uh, you know, when you came back to the United States, uh, you, first you landed at Hoboken and then you got to Ellis Island.

GLASER: Yeah.

GUMB: What was the first thing that happened at Ellis Island?
What was the first thing that occurred?

GLASER: Well, I came over, the Danish, yeah, Danish ship. And the immigrant, he took me aside, and a girl, a French girl, he pulled us aside. And then whatever his work had to be done. Then he came and picked us up and took us down to Battery Place. And from there we went to Ellis Island. Of course, I didn't have any papers and, oh, I got in, all this business, except this piece I had paid eight dollars head tax. I showed him. "No, no," he said.

GUMB: You had no passport or anything?

GLASER: No, no. Nothing. So he took us over to Ellis Island and we got in front of a judge. The judge was a lady and she was Danish. She

could speak the language. They had, each country, there was--

GUMB: You couldn't speak English?

GLASER: Oh, I could speak English but, no matter. They all had a translator, you know, in French, whatever. So, uh, I came in front of this judge. She said, "When, what ship you come over?" "United States." "Oh, let me get the records, The United States, ship." I said, "No, no, I was not a passenger. I worked on the ship, and I just walked in." "Oh," she said. "Then there are two things I can do for you," she said. I said, "Yes." "Uh, I can send you back to the ship you came with the day it leaves. Over there, we'll put you on the ship and you go back again. Or you can stay here in Ellis Island and we'll put in an application to the government." I said, "Yes, I'd like to have, put that application in." So she asked me different questions and I answered them. I had a few dollars in my pocket, so she said, "You know, there's a quota, you know. There's a quota for how many from each country can come in here. But being you have been here before we can send an application down to let you in again." I said, "Couldn't you just--" And I said, I scooped down into my pockets, I would bribe her. I said, "--fifty dollars, couldn't you just put me on the list." "no, no, no, my son. I can't do that here." I said--

GUMB: So you took the money out?

GLASER: Yeah, I took it up, and had it up there by the desk and I said, "Couldn't you just put me on that list?" "No, no, no."

GUMB: This is the end of side one.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

GUMB: This is the beginning of side two.

GLASER: So I was in Ellis Island now, right. In front of the judge. She told me I go back, or she would keep me there. I said, "I'll stay here then." "All right, she said, "then we'll send down an application." Fine. And then I was put in, in a big room. So, (?). And, uh, maybe four or five hundred people from all over the world. Every nationality was there. And, uh, I got friendly with a Cuban boy. Somehow or other we, he could speak a little English, I couldn't speak any Spanish, but anyhow we got along. And, uh, so I told him, "I'm from Denmark." He's from Cuba. "I know Denmark," he said, because his father was a lawyer, see? He said, "Yeah, because we eat Danish butter, you know. My father bought Danish butter." "That's nice." And, uh, so the life over there, I was

there a month.

GUMB: One month?

GLASER: From August 13th to September 13th.

GUMB: 1924.

GLASER: 1924.

GUMB: How old were you at this time?

GLASER: Well, I was twenty five. I was born April 27, '99.

GUMB: So did you stay in this one big room? Were there beds in this one big room, or--

GLASER: No. This was a room where we just would sit. There was a guard on sight with a key, we'd get in, make sure everybody was in there, lock.

GUMB: What kind of, did it have a high ceiling, this room?

GLASER: Yeah. It was a high ceiling, but it was all wire in front of the windows, heavy wire, that kind, you know--

GUMB: Criss-cross.

GLASER: --diamond, diamond wire. Heavy, over the windows. And we were in there, some washing socks, some washing, you know, things, shirts.

GUMB: Where did you sleep?

GLASER: Well, we slept in a big room, great big room, double beds, iron beds. One down there, one up there.

GUMB: Do you remember where that room was in relation to the big room with the high ceiling? Did you have to go down stairs, or--

GLASER: No, we had to go up stairs. Upstairs, and there was, you know, it's a big thing. A lot of--

GUMB: Did you feel like you were in prison?

GLASER: Yes, you did. You didn't feel like you were free. They treated you like you were prisoners. I mean, why did they have to lock the door with a key and have a man standing outside watching? We couldn't, it's an island, Ellis Island is an island. We couldn't walk anywhere. I understand it is very hard to swim in the Hudson River. You know, it runs fast, you've got to be a good swimmer. Well, we probably could have got over to the Jersey side. That was not so far away. But anyway--

GUMB: Did the guard have a gun?

GLASER: No. No guns. I never saw a gun over there.

GUMB: Did you get any impression of the attitude of the guards?

GLASER: No. They were very, they didn't bother anybody. They may (?) and go there, this was and that way, but otherwise they didn't bother. Nobody bothered us. It was, uh, it was kind of, not pleasant because, you know, you felt like you were in prison because this locking up business. But then we were all there, and then we got to the dining room and that was the first thing in the morning, of course. We got out of bed, six o'clock they came and woke us up. There was a big iron post and the

guard, he came six o'clock with a big iron pipe and he banged, "Get up, getup, you're all getting up." He hollered. And then we went up to, the dining room was upstairs, and had coffee or whatever. And you could but food. They didn't serve you bacon and eggs, but you could buy it. So (?).

GUMB: Oh, they didn't give you free food?

GLASER: Oh, yes. They give you food. Oatmeal and toast, coffee and tea and milk. But id you wanted bacon and eggs they had you could buy it. Or ham, whatever, the different things. You could buy food.

GUMB: What did the, what did the dining room look like?

GLASER: Oh, that was a big room, long tables, and we all sat down. It could hold four or five hundred people. It was a big, big, big thing there.

GUMB: Was it cafeteria, cafeteria style? Were you standing in line or--

GLASER: No. We, no, no. We just sat down. I think somebody came

with food. Well, when we came, the whole meal was already there. Somebody didn't want it, they just put it on the tables. Then they drank the tea or coffee or the toast, something like that. Or some fruit.

GUMB: Uh, uh, in the dining hall was there a place where you could buy food?

GLASER: Yeah. Well, I didn't know. There was ladies and women, they served us, served us. And you just told them, "I'd like to have bacon and eggs." And they would collect whatever you came with, say it's, I forgot the price.

GUMB: Oh, you would pay the, the waitresses?

GLASER: You would pay. That's the way it was when I was there.

GUMB: How did you, uh, I mean, you were there for a month, one month.

GLASER: Yes. August 13th to September 13th. One month.

GUMB: How did you, how did you occupy your time? What did you

do all that, all that time?

GLASER: As I told you, they had one big room. And there was all kind of games, you know, what you call it, checkers, even the other one (?). One with a king and--

GUMB: Chess.

GLASER: Chess, yeah. Chess, and different games. So we could play with--

GUMB: Yeah. You mentioned you got to know a Cuban boy.

GLASER: Yeah.

GUMB: Why was he being detained?

GLASER: Well, that I really don't know why. His father was a lawyer. He told me, "My father is a lawyer." So whatever. something wrong with his papers. Some people, uh, they went to the Consul in the country where they were, the american Consul and got papers, and when they came here they said there was something wrong with them. They was not filled out right or something. Just any little thing, and they would put them in Ellis

Island. There would be immigration officers. Yeah.

GUMB: So you never really got a sense of why these other people were there?

GLASER: No. But I remember this here, after we were finished eating, you went down to this room. But, in the afternoon, they would let us out on the porch, an open porch. You can still see it when you go to the ferry. Sticking out, and there's a big, big grassland, you know, what they call it--

GUMB: Lawn?

GLASER: Lawn. Very large, the whole width of the island. Through the (?), tall, tall, flat (?). And it was the summertime when I was there. And they let us out in the afternoon. You could sit out there.

GUMB: This was a porch? What could you see from the porch?

GLASER: You could see all of New York. You could see up and down the river, see all the ships come and go.

GUMB: Okay. Uh, uh, did, uh, you were just restricted to the one island, the part of Ellis Island, uh, on the other side, on, you didn't, you never, did you ever go to the hospital?

GLASER: No, the other side is the hospital. No, I never had to go-- But then, of course, on Sunday they had service, Catholic, whatever, whatever nationality, Jews, and this here Cuban guy, he was Jewish, you know. And one Sunday I said, "I'd like to go with you and see how your service is." "Yeah, yeah, yeah, just come with me." So I was waiting, in through the, there where they had this, it was not like a church. It was a room, a priest or one of those Jewish fellows.

GUMB: Were there social workers, anybody there, anybody there to help you?

GLASER: No. That's just there wasn't, there's no one to give you advice, any way, or, the only thing that came to me was the minister, the Danish minister. He had a church up in the Bronx, a little church. He came over. Said if there's anything I needed, if I would like some, if I needed any money. I said, "No, I don't need money." I said, whatever I had I didn't want to inconvenience anybody, I said, "No." So he came over a couple of times, just talked with me. But that was really the only one. There was, well, then I, the first thing when I came here was too was I

joined the Danish (?). I'm still a member. And, uh, the fellow that was in charge of my lodge, the president of my lodge, he came over and talked to me and said the same, "If you need any money I'll give you some." I said, "No, I don't need any money."

GUMB: Your overall impression of the place was that, uh, was it crowded?

GLASER: No, I wouldn't say it was crowded, no.

GUMB: And do you have any idea how many people would be in that big hall at one time? You know, any idea, numbers that were there when you were there?

GLASER: Well, if I filled this long hall, room, with all those double beds, there must have been about five hundred people in there, at least. It was double, you know, as I told you. And I met a Dutchman, he was sleeping down below, and I was up. I talked with him. You know, we would talk a little bit, Dutch or something.

GUMB: Was there a reluctance to talk about your situation with other people?

GLASER: No.

GUMB: So you did exchange stories with people, why are you here?

GLASER: I didn't anyhow. I mean I, I was just, I was here. That was where I ended up. One night I ended up somewhere else over there. I don't know what I did. I did something and the guard put me in with the criminals as a punishment.

GUMB: What did you do?

GLASER: (He laughs.) I don't remember what I did, but I remember,
"No, no, I'm going to put you in here with the
criminals. You sleep in there." I said, "All right."

GUMB: What sort of criminals were in there?

GLASER: I don't know. I don't know if they were murderers, or, I don't think they were murderers, no. Whatever. But that's what he said with me, maybe it was a lie, but he said, "I'm going to put you in with the criminals."

GUMB: Did you ever have any-- Uh, yeah. You don't remember

what you did?

GLASER: No, I really don't remember. You know, I was a young boy, whatever--

GUMB: You were twenty-five.

GLASER: I was twenty-five. I probably said, maybe said something, whatever I had done, anyhow he's going to punish me.

GUMB: While you were there, did you get angry?

GLASER: No. I took it was that was the way my life went. I didn't, I figured I'll get out some day. They're not going to keep me here for life.

GUMB: Did you ever think you might have to go back to Denmark?

GLASER: No. Not after I had been by the judge. The judge told me she'll put in an application and it came back let him in. I was happy. And the guy that stood there, see, my name is really, my name is really Hugo Gustav Glaser. But when I came here I said, "I don't like this Hugo.

I'll slice it off." So I never used it here. But it was recorded in my official papers, whatever papers I had, they had. So the day I was going to get out of there we got, we stood outside, you know, and he started hollering, "Hugo, Hugo." And I didn't, he's calling me Hugo. Then all of a sudden I said, oh, Hugo, that's me. You know, my name was always Gustav. I never used that first name. I always used my middle name because I had a brother, that was another quirk of my father's idea. I was Hugo Gustav Glaser, and my brother that died over here, he was Gustav Hugo Glaser. (He laughs.) What idea he had with that I don't know. You see, the wives didn't have much to say in the olden days and there was the men that was the-- They said what had to be done and how.

GUMB: In that big room, uh, where you stayed, was it all men?

GLASER: Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure. We were all separated. Except when we came out there on that porch. The women was on this side, the men was on this side. There was a lot of men there that had a wife and kids. Of course, as soon as you got out there and the women were out there, and there was a big fence, wooden, about this high, and the rest was wire, that heavy wire. And all the married men loop over there to that fence. And

kissing and kissing with the kids and with the wife and n, na, na, all those Italians and all the people who do those. And you go over there, if you ever go to Ellis Island you see that wall, if it's still there, there's all carved in with God help me and God this and God that and other sayings, it's carved in there with knives.

GUMB: So, I wish I, can you, where that wall would be--

GLASER: On the porch.

GUMB: On the porch.

GLASER: Yes.

GUMB: Okay.

GLASER: It separates the men and the women. The two should never get together on Ellis Island.

GUMB: Husbands and wives were separated.

GLASER: Yes. They were. One section of the building over there with their kids, and the men had it nicely. They were just all by

themselves. They didn't have to take care of the kids. Yeah.

GUMB: I'm trying to visualize where that wall would be. It was on this porch--

GLASER: Yes. In the middle. Let's say this is the porch. Right here. Here's the women, here is the men. And here is the wood, here is the wire.

GUMB: Where was the ferry slip?

GLASER: It's right between the hospital and the place where the people are.

GUMB: Right. And so where was this porch in relation to the ferry slip?

GLASER: Well, when you, if you go to--

GUMB: As you get off the ferry--

GLASER: --if you go from New York over here to Staten Island it's on the right side of the ferry.

GUMB: Oh, just as you get off the ferry? Yeah. Okay, anyway, we'll have to--

GLASER: This is the ferry, right?

GUMB: Yeah, this is the ferry. The ferry boat comes in like this.

GLASER: It goes up over to Staten Island, so you're on this side of the ferry.

GUMB: And the porch is over here?

GLASER: Yeah, the porch is there.

GUMB: Okay. Right opposite the ferry slip, between the main building on Ellis Island, the ferry slip. Okay. All right.

GLASER: You can see it when you go with the ferry. You see it. You see the wire. It's, uh, well there's a big flagpole. You see, there is an army over there. There's some kind of military over there, post, whatever you call it, military. And there is, the first, when you come from

New York, the first thing you see is this, uh, post. You can see it. And then there's all this grass. In the summertime they let us out there, lay down, play ball, too. Yeah, it was nice being in the sunshine.

GUMB: All right. So, uh, how did you get word that, uh, your application had been accepted?

GLASER: Well, this fellow came to, said something, with a key, opened up, hollered, he hollered, "Hugo." And it didn't dawn on me before, who's he calling, this guy. Hugo? Oh, oh! So I said, (?). He says, "Yeah, they're letting you in." Oh, fine, fine. I got up to --

GUMB: That's all you said was just "fine?" You weren't?

GLASER: That's all I said. What else could I say?

GUMB: How did the other people react, the other, uh, detainees?

GLASER: Well, you know, they just, in groups and playing. They didn't pay attention to each individual that way. They were called over to the door. That was, sometimes somebody else was called on, but we didn't say, "Oh, no, he goes." We were not that close together, you know.

GUMB: So, uh, once your application was accepted, uh, how did you get, how did you get to New York? How did you get to-- What did you do after, after you were--

GLASER: They, I don't think I got up to a judge, I got to some kind of a desk where there was a man. And he said I had to pay eight dollars head tax again. Again, I mean, I had paid once. I said, oh. I paid again. But I got it back later from the department. I paid once up in Portland, Maine. I'd paid the eight dollars. But when they found out through their books there, well, he has paid many years ago so they sent it back . Eight dollars. Refund for you taxes. Has been paid.

GUMB: So that was it. You were admitted?

GLASER: Yes. I just, they took me on the little boat, Battery Place, over to Battery Place and--

GUMB: Did you have any family in New York?

GLASER: Well, yes. I had, uh, not in 1924, 1923, no.

GUMB: The first night as a free man where did you, how did you find a place to stay? Or where did you stay? You know, how did you get

settled in New York?

GLASER: I just, what year we talking about now? 1924?

GUMB: 1924. September 13, 1924.

GLASER: What did I do? That's just the thing. I don't know.

GUMB: What was your first job? Do you remember?

GLASER: Yeah, I remember my first job.

GUMB: Your first job as an admitted citizen.

GLASER: Huh?

GUMB: Your first job as an admitted immigrant.

GLASER: Oh, as an admitted, no. I remember the first job when I was ere, when I just walked into the country.

GUMB: Yeah. But how about after Ellis Island?

GLASER: Yeah, after Ellis Island.

GUMB: Do you remember?

GLASER: I don't remember.

GUMB: You don't remember. Okay.

GLASER: I must have had some friends--

GUMB: Do you remember it being difficult adjusting, or--

GLASER: No. I'd been here before.

GUMB: Did you feel, did you, after being in Ellis Island for a month, did you feel any kind of bitterness at all, or any--

GLASER: No. No. I was happy that I was allowed to come into the country. I was allowed all right. It was not, when I went off the boat it was allowable at that time. It was just when I went over there that they changed the law that you couldn't get off the ship, you had to get permission to, whatever way you had to do it. And that's why they kept me over there for a month.

GUMB: So when you told the judge that, uh, you know, you had just walked off the ship, he didn't act like it was a crime or anything, right?

GLASER: No. I says, no. He, he didn't respond to that at all.

GUMB: Okay. Uh--

GLASER: He just said what he could do for me, and that was two things. He could send me back, take the boat, or keep me on the island and apply to Congress. It has to go to Congress, he said. They have to put a bill up in Congress to allow so and so to enter the United States.

GUMB: So, uh, Mr. Glaser, when did your wife come over?

GLASER: She came in 1925. In, uh, July 1st.

GUMB: She came through Ellis Island too, didn't she?

GLASER: She had to go over there, yeah. But the minister went over there and, uh, I don't know, but anyhow, whoever he talked to over

there. But my wife was put in his charge, in the minister's charge. He had to sign, what he had to do. But anyhow, that he was, had told him that he was going to marry this girl and boy here, the same day.

GUMB: The minister had to go to Ellis Island?

GLASER: Yeah. He had to go over there and tell them over there that he was going to marry this girl here and this boy here, her boyfriend in New York.

GUMB: Did hem did he do it?

GLASER: Oh, yes, yes. He had to. That was the law. And , uh, otherwise she couldn't come out of Ellis Island.

GUMB: She was traveling alone?

GLASER: Yes. And she came over and made, made the (?). And then he said no, you've got to go over there, and there. We had to go to City Hall. It still was there, of course. On the subway, go up the elevator on the eleventh floor, whatever floor it was. And then we got our marriage license. Down again, down the subway, and that was July 1st, nice and hot, and the priest said the subway, all the way up to the Bronx. That's where

his church was. And he married us up there, and his wife and daughter were witnesses to our marriage.

GUMB: Where did you meet your wife?

GLASER: Copenhagen, while I was there with my brother's body.

GUMB: But I meant on, after Ellis Island, after she went through Ellis Island, where did you meet here?

GLASER: Down at Battery Place on the dock where the Ellis Island ferry comes in.

GUMB: Okay. All right.

GLASER: They took her off there and the minister was there to take her.

GUMB: Okay. Uh, so you became a citizen five years later, five years after being--

GLASER: No.

GUMB: When did you become a citizen?

GLASER: I didn't become a citizen before 1941.

GUMB: Why the delay? What--

GLASER: Well, there were different things. You know, my wife was so and so. I couldn't come here. And, I don't know. It just passed. Well, then, one time, there was a congressman, he wanted to jack up the price of getting citizenship papers to twenty-five dollars. Then, of course, it didn't pass. They knew that was, it was usually eight or ten dollars to become a citizen.

GUMB: Did it feel different being a citizen? Was it a, did you have a change of attitude about the country or anything?

GLASER: Well, you felt, well, now, you were an American. You're not, you swear off, also, to the king, or whatever it was then, whatever country you come from. Yo swear off allegiance to the king of Denmark or whatever country it is.

GUMB: While you were on Ellis Island that month could you see

the Statue of Liberty from Ellis Island?

GLASER: Yes, of course, when you go outside on the lawn you could see it, yeah.

GUMB: When ,when you first saw the Statue of Liberty the, uh, did you have any impression or feeling about it?

GLASER: Not really. In fact, I didn't have any feelings about America at all when I was in Denmark. America, that was so far away from me, so many thousand miles away. I knew there was a country by the name of, but otherwise I was not really thinking about it, except sometimes the papers in Copenhagen would have something hot and they'd have a big train next, you know, like a fire or some big thing, it would be printed in the Danish paper. Otherwise I didn't think of the United States at all. It was not in my mind.

GUMB: This is the end of side two, the end of the interview with Mr. Glaser.