

**KM-4**

**IRENE VANDYKE (RIEMKE VISSER)**

**BIRTH DATE:**

**INTERVIEW DATE: DECEMBER 5<sup>th</sup>, 1993**

**RUNNING TIME: 54:54**

**INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME**

**INTERVIEW LOCATION: COLDWATER, MICHIGAN**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: CATHERINE ROUNTREE, 6/2011**

**REVISIONS BY:**

**NETHERLANDS, 1912**

**AGE: 17**

**SHIP: RYNDAM**

**PORT: ROTTERDAM, HOLLAND**

**RESIDENCES:**

**HOLLAND: ARUM**

**UNITED STATES: MARTINSVILLE, INDIANA**

**ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: There is an unknown man who can sometimes be heard. He is never introduced by either Ms. Moore or Ms. Vandyke. At one point, he is called Charlie by Ms. Vandyke. At one point in the interview, Ms. Vandyke also states that her youngest brother's name is Charlie. This may be the same person as the unknown man, but this is never implicitly acknowledged nor explained.**

MOORE: Good afternoon. This is Kate Moore from the National Park Services. Today is the fifth of December, 1993. And I'm in Coldwater, Michigan at the Maple Lawn Care Facility, the home of Irene Vandyke who came from the Netherlands in 1912 at the age of seventeen. And why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth please?

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VANDYKE: That's not my first name.

MOORE: Your full name, right?

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm.

MOORE: And what, what's your first, full name? What is your full name?

VANDYKE: Now?

MOORE: Yes.

VANDYKE: Irene Vandyke.

MOORE: Right, and your maiden name, what was your maiden name?

VANDYKE: Riemke Visser

MOORE: Fisher. What, how was that spelled?

VANDYKE: V-I-S-S-E-R.

MOORE: Visser? That was... ?

VANDYKE: [interposed] See the "v" is pronounced "f" in Holland.

MOORE: Yes, and how was it spelled here in the United States? Your name was changed wasn't it?

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm.

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MOORE: To what?

VANDYKE: Well, I start to work for a family doctor Hendricks in Martinsville, Indiana, and I had to give them my name. Well, he said "Spell it," and I said "R-I-E." "Oh, that's Irene." That's how I got my name. I didn't go any further.

MAN: It is the same.

MOORE: Ahh. So in Holland, what were you called in Holland? What was your name in Dutch? What is your real name in Dutch?

VANDYKE: I've told you. Riemke.

MOORE: Riemke. Now can you spell that?

VANDYKE: R-I-E-M-K-E.

MOORE: Right, and so they called you Irene here.

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Alright. And um, where were you born?

VANDYKE: Arum.

MOORE: And could you spell that please?

VANDYKE: A-R-U-M.

MOORE: And what size town was that?

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VANDYKE: Mmm?

MOORE: How big was that town?

VANDYKE: Oh, about 1600. Small town.

MOORE: Small town.

MAN: [inaudible]

MOORE: [not understood] And what'd the town look like?

VANDYKE: Well, now just like any... Well, it was a clean town.

MOORE: Clean town? And what was the type of industry? What kind of town was it?  
Was it farming or what was the major industry in that town?

VANDYKE: Mmm. Yeah, what?

MOORE: What was the major industry in that town?

VANDYKE: Well, the biggest was the church, right in the center with a steeple and a clock  
on top.

MOORE: Nice. And what was your father's name?

VANDYKE: Robert.

MOORE: And what did he do for a living? What was his occupation?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: What did he do for work? What was he?

VANDYKE: Farmer.

MOORE: He was a farmer. And what did he look like? Could you describe what he looked like? Your father?

VANDYKE: Well he... What can I say? (laughs) He, when he was in the Netherlands, he wore a beard and looked like a Jew. And, and then he shaved himself and we didn't even know who he was. (VANDYKE and MAN laugh.)

MOORE: Was he dark haired? Was he a dark haired man? (MAN says something to VANDYKE, inaudible. Both laugh.)

MAN: [not understood]

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Was he have dark hair?

VANDYKE: No, he shaved before we come. He knows we come to the United States. He begin to look like a gentleman more than a farmer.

MOORE: What about his personality and his temperament? What kind of person was he?

VANDYKE: [not understood] Kind of grumpy.

MOORE: (laughs) Grumpy?

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VANDYKE: Yeah. You had to do it *now*, and his way. That, he was very much for himself that way. Of course, we all grew up and had our own ways about things, but then um, he was the boss.

MOORE: And um, was there anything, any story about your father that you remember the best?

VANDYKE: Mmm?

MOORE: Any story you have about your father? Do you remember, what do you remember most about him?

VANDYKE: No, I can't tell. He used to be a soldier in the army, and uh, I guess he know how to command more than ask, you know. If you do this and you do it right. That was my dad.

MOORE: What was your mother's name?

VANDYKE: Bertha Andela.

MOORE: How do you spell that?

VANDYKE: A-N-D-E-L-A.

MOORE: And that's her maiden name? Andela?

VANDYKE: That's her maiden name.

MOORE: And uh, what did she do? What was her occupation?

VANDYKE: I'm not sure. She was a housewife.

MAN: Too many kids. (laughs)

MOORE: What did she look like?

VANDYKE: Well, she was a nice looking, very very nice looking person. I got pictures of her so I know. She was a good looking young woman.

MOORE: She had light hair... What colour hair and eyes did she have?

VANDYKE: Well, her hair was medium dark and her eyes, I don't know.

MOORE: And uh, what about her personality? What do you remember about your mother, her temperament?

VANDYKE: Well, she was a, had to be bossy with so many kids you know. She was a good mother. Mmmhmm.

MOORE: And what were her chores around the house? What did she do?

VANDYKE: She what?

MOORE: What did she do at home?

MAN: (laughs)

VANDYKE: Well, with so many kids, what do you do at home? (all laugh)

MOORE: Do you have so many stories about your mother or anything you associate with your mother?

VANDYKE: ....

MOORE: If you were going to tell a story about your mother, what would you say?

VANDYKE: Well, she, she was always on time with her meals, and uh, she was very clean. Everything had to be clean. But, we had, to, mark the line, don't worry. She would tell me to go [not understood] just you know, almost. She would tell me go out and play, but take a couple of kids. That's what my play time. Now, she would, gives her a little chance to read or, whatever.

MOORE: And um, you had how many brothers and sisters? How many did you have?

VANDYKE: My mom had three brothers and two sisters.

MOORE: And how many children in your family? How many were you?

VANDYKE: Uh?

MOORE: Many children were you? You were one of fourteen children? How many children in your family?

VANDYKE: Me? I had six.

Man in background: No, her family. Her family!

MOORE: How many kids did you have?

VANDYKE: Oh. Fifteen.

MOORE: Fifteen. Uh...

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VANDYKE: A baby, the only little American died here. But, uh, we come to. My oldest brother was here. And my older sister stayed there. So twelve of us come with us parents.

MOORE: And, could you name all your brothers and sisters?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Could you name your brothers and sisters? What names?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah.

MOORE: What names? Could you give them to me?

VANDYKE: Meldon. The older one Garrett, that's my oldest brother. He kind of made the trail here, you see. He come.

MOORE: How do you spell Garrett?

VANDYKE: And...

MOORE: How is Garrett spelled?

Man: G-A-R-R-E-T-T.

VANDYKE: He comes over...

MOORE: G-A-R-R-E-T-T. Garret.

VANDYKE: Mmm.

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MOORE: And who is next?

VANDYKE: He won a scholarship, and he, in his school. And, my dad sold the scholarship so Garrett could come to the United States to blaze a trail for the gang. That's Garrett for you. He did a lot for the family.

MOORE: And who was the next person?

VANDYKE: That was sister Jew. She didn't want to come. She had a boyfriend. And uh, no argument from really anybody. She didn't want to go, she didn't want to go. So she stayed there, in [not understood]. Had a good husband. She married her boyfriend too and they raised a nice family. They still keep in contact. I wrote her just letter the other day, to my nephew. Most of them can't read English, but she also wants, rather see, the Holland language than not. I still can write to them.

MOORE: Yeah. And after Joe... Is it? Your sister's name was Joe?

MAN: (unintelligible comment about sister's name and America)

VANDYKE: All of this, Jiewka. J-I, all of this. Jiewka did. J-I-E-U-W-K-E.

Man: [not understood]

VANDYKE: (pronounces) Jew-Ka.

MOORE: I see.

VANDYKE: But to shorten it to Jew. Yeah.

MOORE: Uh-huh.

VANDYKE: Well we called her Jew, didn't we Charlie?

MAN: [not understood]

VANDYKE: Oh, you don't remember.

MOORE: Right, and who was after Joe? You were next?

VANDYKE: Mm.

MOORE: Who was after Joe?

VANDYKE: I was. I was number three.

MOORE: Yeah, and after you...

VANDYKE: Otto. My brother. He came with us..

MOORE: Mmm. Otto. And who else was after him?

VANDYKE: And after Otto came Jenny.

MOORE: Jenny.

VANDYKE: And after Jenny came John.

MOORE: Mmm.

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VANDYKE: After John came Alice. After Alice came Pete. After Pete came Frances. And then, there Elizabeth, and then Sadie. And after that came Robert, and then Leo. And finally Charlie.

MAN: [not understood]

VANDYKE: (laugh)

MOORE: Now, describe your house in Holland. Do you remember your house where you lived in Holland?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: How was it, as a child?

VANDYKE: Oh, well. Where we lived or where we worked?

MOORE: Lived.

VANDYKE: Well, it was brick. It was uh, four rooms. Uh, four homes under one, one block. I don't know just how you call it here. But anyhow, we had one of them, and we had...

MAN: [not understood]

MOORE: Row houses. Row houses.

VANDYKE: Brick. Different brick. Yeah. And we had one room, one kitchen, and a hall and an upstairs.

MOORE: How many rooms were there in that house? Do you remember?

VANDYKE: That's it.

MOORE: How many, all together bedrooms did you have...?

VANDYKE: Well, in Holland, beds. The front room for in the living room has built in beds. And, our place had two built in beds and then the rest was upstairs. We had uh, like they have here, you know.

MOORE: Mmm. And how was it heated? The house?

VANDYKE: Stoves, and...

MOORE: Was there a garden?

VANDYKE: Mmm?

MOORE: A garden. Was there a garden?

VANDYKE: No, yeah, my dad was a great gardener. Mmmhmm.

MOORE: What did he grow in his garden?

VANDYKE: What did he grow? Well potatoes first of all. (laughs) And carrots, and carrots, and onions, and name it.

MOORE: In Holland.

VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: When you were a young child?

VANDYKE: That's in Holland, yeah.

MOORE: And how about flowers? Did he grow flowers too?

VANDYKE: Well, he, didn't have very much room for flowers, but, there was, I don't know.  
Whatever was it, dell here. Dell?

MOORE: Dell.

VANDYKE: They called it, had some of them there.

MOORE: And when you look back at this house, what about the furniture? Do you  
remember what type of furniture was in your house in Holland?

VANDYKE: Well the room had a big table, and a lot of chairs and usually [not understood]  
or two.

MAN: (laughs)

VANDYKE: And a kitchen, had it in table and two chairs, and cook-stove.

MOORE: And was this? Was that house in town or out of town? The house that you lived  
in, was it in town, right in town, or was it out of town?

VANDYKE: Yes, it was a little bit out of town.

MOORE: Little bit out of town. And did you keep animals at all?

VANDYKE: Did I what?

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MOORE: Animals? Did you have any animals?

VANDYKE: Oh, dad kept pigs, a couple of pigs, and chickens.

MOORE: And who else lived that house? Just your family lived there?

VANDYKE: Just us, yeah.

MOORE: And who did the cooking in the family? Who cooked?

VANDYKE: Well, guess.

MOORE: Your mother. Did you help? Did you help?

MAN: (laughs)

VANDYKE: No, not too much. She did, she was the best cook for what she had to cook, you know. You never tasted soup or anything like it here like my mom used to cook and, she didn't have the [not understood] to do it there either like we have here.

MOORE: What was your favorite food?

VANDYKE: Well, we liked potatoes. And she could make the best pea soup.

MOORE: Pea soup?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: And you didn't help her cook very much then right?

VANDYKE: Say what?

MOORE: You didn't help, cooking?

VANDYKE: No, that was her job.

MOORE: And what was meal time like? What was the meal like? Did you eat together, your whole family or... ?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah.

MOORE: Every meal? When you had breakfast did you all eat together?

VANDYKE: Well, you see, yeah, that was a problem. Now I don't know just how [not understood] did that because the littler ones were fed first, you know. They get something like oatmeal or cream of wheat and things like that, but the older ones just got bread and cheese and [not understood]. That was our breakfast.

MOORE: What about dinner for example?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: What about dinner? Supper?

VANDYKE: Dinner was the main meal, potatoes and vegetables and meat. If they could afford a meat. They usually had, dad usually had a pig butchered, so we had a lot of bacon, I remember.

MOORE: Did you all eat together?

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VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: Supper?

VANDYKE: We tried. Mmmhmm.

MOORE: Fourteen children. Fourteen children. (laughs)

VANDYKE: Well some of them had to sit in the kitchen. But we, we, all the time was together. That's just how us do it.

MOORE: And were there other family members who lived nearby? Did your grandparents live near this house?

VANDYKE: Say what?

MOORE: Did you have family members? Other people? Cousins?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah.

MOORE: Grandparents?

VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: Who lived near by you? Who lived near that house in Holland?

VANDYKE: Well, just us [not understood]

MOORE: Your grandparents?

VANDYKE: We did, you know.

MOORE: Did they live near you? Your grandparents?

VANDYKE: But they had [not understood]

MOORE: How about...?

MAN: Where did (inaudible name) go? Where did she live?

VANDYKE: Mmm...

MAN: Where did (same inaudible name) live?

VANDYKE: Who?

MAN: (inaudible name again)

VANDYKE: Oh well, grandma, yes. He's talking about my grandma this time. Well, they had what they call in my town, widow's row. That's a little, little, oh, one string of houses or all under one room so to speak, but just the same. She had one room and little pantry and an upstairs.

MOORE: Nearby? Nearby?

VANDYKE: Mmm. Oh yeah. Not too far away and on the way to school.

MOORE: Were you... who were you closest to in the family? Who did you, were you the closest to? You

VANDYKE: [interposed] Mmmhmm, well, that is hard to tell. Charlie is here, he might remember.

(all laugh)

VANDYKE: No, no, wasn't him. Jenny, my sister Jenny and I, we were together a lot when we were little. And later on, we got married and uh, lived not too far apart when... we stick together pretty good.

MAN: They married brothers.

MOORE: Ah, they married... you married brothers?

Man: The two sisters married two brothers.

MOORE: Ah, two sisters married two brothers. In Holland, you remember, did you go to the church at all? What was religious life like in Holland?

VANDYKE: Well, uh, Presbyterian is as close as I can tell you, but we were not, um, church going family. Not strictly so. Our church [not understood] call it, was a big brick church and...

MOORE: Nearby? Was it near your house?

VANDYKE: Right in the center of town.

MOORE: And, did you have any religious persecution or prejudice of any sort?

VANDYKE: No, what...

MOORE: Religious persecution. Did anybody, did you have any problems with your religion?

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VANDYKE: Not, so much that I know. I mean the minister would come to see us and mom would say "Behave yourself. Don't um, ... The minister's coming."

(MAN and MOORE laugh.)

MAN: Scare tactics.

VANDYKE: And uh, and uh, his daughters would make us a visit once in a while.

MOORE: When you were little, when you were younger, back in Holland, what was your favorite holiday? What type of holidays did you...

VANDYKE: Santa Clause. (laughs)

MAN: It's tonight.

VANDYKE: That's tonight, yeah. Tonight is a big night in Holland.

MAN: [not understood] Hot chocolate.

VANDYKE: I'd love to be back. They serve hot chocolate, and...

MOORE: [interposed] What was it like?

VANDYKE: .... Just have a social gathering, and have good stuff to eat and uh,

MOORE: [interposed] What did you...?

VANDYKE: .... Santa Clause is coming.

MAN: See, that's their Christmas. Christmas is just religion there. The fifth and sixth of December.

MOORE: The fifth and sixth of December.

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm.

MOORE: That's tonight.

VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: And what would happen when you were little? What happens when Santa?

VANDYKE: [interposed] Well, we were supposed to put a basket or something around a chimney, and they figured good children, Santa Clause would put something in it. And that happened, of course. They always got little something. And, one time, I was in kindergarten, yes. The teacher, I had a teacher's blouses in the back, fastened in the back and nobody could do it. She asked me and I was lucky enough to do it and she said, "You bring a basket tonight and Santa Clause will put something in it for you." So I bought my basket and the next morning in that basket was a beautiful doll and a piece of goods for a pinafore.

MOORE: Uhhh...

VANDYKE: And I had to call, "Thank you Santa Clause up the chimney."

MAN: (Dutch)

VANDYKE: Ahh?

Man: (repeats Dutch phrase)

VANDYKE: Yeah. (replies in Dutch)

MAN: (laughs)

MOORE: What's that mean?

VANDYKE: We had to sing that as little children. (sings Dutch song about Santa Clause)

MAN: (repeats verse) Yeah, I remember that. I didn't sing it though.

VANDYKE: You remember that?

MAN: I remember you singing it, yeah. I wasn't there yet.

VANDYKE: I was the teacher I guess. (laughs)

MOORE: And so, so, Christmas, little Christmas, was your...?

VANDYKE: Well that was more uh, uh, religion. If, the first, uh (pause) what would you call? [not understood] first Christmas day. Uh, church and so on. And second was for visiting and. We had two Christmas days.

MOORE: Right.

VANDYKE: In that respect with no gifts.

MAN: [not understood]

VANDYKE: We got them from Santa Clause.

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MOORE: Mmm.

MAN: The black horse was [not understood].

MOORE: Oh yeah, Santa Clause came on a black horse. Was that true? Did Santa Clause?

VANDYKE: Oh yes. That little steady, I translated (name of Dutch Santa Clause, Sinterklaas Kapoentje? ), you know. And they think that's kind of cute. Santa Clause comes in and uh, big, little horse. Saint Nick was on his white horse. His as hoofs black as soot. He rides through the whole wide world and spreads a lot of good. He hunts the children, naughty children, too. Oh dear, I'm really scared, should he take me away from mom? (inaudible verse) Well, little man, are you that scared from the old Saint Nick? I'm really surprised at you. You are usually such a brick. (laughs)

MOORE: I'm really surprised at you, what? (laughs)

VANDYKE: You're really such a brick.

MOORE: You're really...

MAN: [interposed] [not understood]

MOORE: ...Sort of brick?

VANDYKE: Such. A. Brick.

MOORE: Soot. A. Brick.

VANDYKE: Ahhh, well....

MOORE: Such a brick.

VANDYKE: You know, uh, that's nearest uh, [not understood] something like bossy.  
You're always such a bossy. You're such a brick.

MOORE: Oh, you're such a brick. (both laugh) Alright, um, what about school life back  
when you were in Holland?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Do you remember your school?

VANDYKE: Oh dear, yes.

MOORE: And, and, what, tell us about that school. Where you went to school in Holland.

VANDYKE: Well, had a here [not understood] too. 'Course we wore wooden shoes. They  
had to put our wooden shoes up in a rack. Each had his number and, we  
weren't allowed to come in the classroom with our wooden shoes. And then,  
we had, well, like here, to read and writing and arithmetic.

MOORE: And where was this school that you went too?

VANDYKE: Mmm?

MOORE: Where was the school?

VANDYKE: Arum.

MOORE: Near home? Was it near your house? Did you walk there?

VANDYKE: Oh yes.

MOORE: And was it crowded, your school? Were there many children?

VANDYKE: [not understood]

MOORE: The school, was it very big school or...?

VANDYKE: Well, that had four big rooms. Yes, was a real good school.

MOORE: And do you remember any of your teachers?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Do you remember teachers?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah.

MOORE: Who was your favorite teacher?

VANDYKE: Well, one teacher. We call her (some Dutch name). She was really (pause) understanding. She understood kids. Then we had an old teacher, Mr. (Dutch name). He was a bore. He was terrible.

MOORE: (laughs) What, what? What was your favorite subject?

VANDYKE: Oh, I always loved to read and write. I guess.

MOORE: Did you learn English before coming to United States?

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VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Did you know English before you came here? Did you learn English in school?

VANDYKE: No, we didn't. All we knew was "Yes, sir," and "No, sir," but we didn't know when to say it.

(all laugh)

MOORE: And what did you do for, for fun, for entertainment when you were a child in Holland?

MAN: [not understood]

VANDYKE: (speaks Dutch, presumably in reply to Man) Well, we jumped rope, and we played jacks, and marbles and something like here.

MAN: Watch television?

MOORE: No, we didn't...

VANDYKE: What did you say?

MAN: Watch television?

(all laugh)

VANDYKE: No! No, television.

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MOORE: What childhood, do you have any childhood stories? What, which, what do you remember best about your childhood days in Holland? What's your most favorite story, if you could tell one?

VANDYKE: Well, I don't know. I like to embroider, cross-stitch. Uh, you mean games?

MOORE: No, just anything you remember. Some funny story when you were a child. Something you did wrong or, do you remember anything?

VANDYKE: Well I, uh, I used to play marbles like here you know. And uh, when they had, ten or so. You could sell ten for penny. Well, I had a sack full of marbles. I was lucky that day. So I had some pennies among my marbles. And I come home with my marbles, and I was so proud I had, I don't know, if it was five or six pennies that sold well. "Well, they're mine!" Mom wanted [not understood]. (all laugh) They didn't go in my bank. No, we liked to jump rope and so...

MAN: [interposed] [not understood] Irene, did you ever skate on the canals?

VANDYKE: Skate? Oh, we did a lot of skating.

MAN: That's what I thought.

VANDYKE: I did. I lost a skate.

MOORE: On the canals?

MAN: They were lost all the time.

VANDYKE: They called the thirteen cities without getting off your skates.

MAN: [not understood]

MOORE: How many cities?

VANDYKE: Thirteen.

MOORE: Thirteen cities on skates.

VANDYKE: My dad was the best skater.

MOORE: Skate a lot?

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm. My dad was really a good, my grandma was really a good skater and my dad was. He would take my brother and me out on these skating trips, you know. Yeah, I liked to skate.

MOORE: Um, do you remember when uh, your family decided to come to the United States? Do you remember... ?

VANDYKE: Would I what?

MOORE: When you family decided to come to America. Do you remember that in, when they prepared to come or when they decided?

VANDYKE: Oh, yeah, I been, I had been working in the city with a family. And, I come home. My mom say "Just stay home, we may go to America and we have to get ready." In April or August, and she said "August was impossible." I didn't know why not it was impossible. I didn't know why not, but any how April suited me fine too. She didn't ask me anyway, but... Anyhow you see.

MAN: (laughs)

VANDYKE: She expected me. In August, but I didn't... We left in a hurry. (TAPE MESSES UP HERE)

MOORE: What did you think about that when she told you? Do you remember your reaction when she said?

VANDYKE: Well, I said "Well, I don't need to go back to the city."

MOORE: (laughs)

VANDYKE: I didn't like the place I stayed. And, well, I'd come home just to help with the clothes in shape, you know, and everything like that.

MOORE: And your, did you know anybody, who was in the States? Who was in the United States? Your brother? Older brother?

VANDYKE: Well, my brother was here, and, we have relatives, but I never, never met them before. But when we arrived in Martinsville, it was uh, family called Vandyke, who helped mom get settled. She uh, in her home. I helped her when I could. But this doctor Hendricks wanted, his wife, wanted me right then. So I uh, arrived a Friday and I start working Monday.

MAN: (laughs)

MOORE: [interposed] Well, what...

VANDYKE: And I didn't know a word of English. They said, "Now, if the phone rings, you say 'Doctor's in,' or 'Doctor's out.'" I would say that much. And, so that, when nobody else was around, I had to answer the phone. And then "Doctor's in," and then "Doctor's out."

MOORE: (laughs) Well what, let's go back a bit to when you, when you decided to come to the States. What did you have to do to get ready to come? What did you, how did you decide what to take and what not to take? Do you remember?

VANDYKE: Uh. First thing to do is to check your clothes see. Which were fit to go and which had to be [not understood] then you go.

MOORE: Was it a big deal getting ready? Do you remember?

VANDYKE: Well, uh, well it wasn't a small deal with so many kids to get ready and, trunks to be filled and what to take and. We wanted to take the feather bed, and they didn't mention that.

MOORE: Did they take the feather bed?

VANDYKE: Mmm. Now, she put a lot of dishes in that same trunk so....

MOORE: And did you help pack everything? Did you help?

VANDYKE: Well, I had to check closely to see if the buttons are hooked or... Or... something.

MOORE: Did you want, do you think everyone wanted to come? Did your family want to come?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah. Mmm.

MOORE: And what did you know about America before you came?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: What did you know about America?

VANDYKE: Well, all we knew was what we heard from my dad had a cousin in Indianapolis. And they had a farm there and that's where my brother went to. Anyway, and, telling us how cheap everything was, and [not understood] (laughs) And so it sounded like heaven to us, you know.

MOORE: And.

VANDYKE: America was, land of our dreams alright.

MOORE: How did your mother feel about coming? Your mother?

VANDYKE: Oh, she was anxious to come too. But, in her condition, I guess she was glad to get here too.

MOORE: What, what condition was she in?

VANDYKE: She was expecting Charlie. Uh, Charlie's little brother.

MOORE: Oh yeah.

VANDYKE: Don't, died here too.

Man: Theodore.

MOORE: Theodore yeah. How did your father feel about coming? Your father?

VANDYKE: Well, he's doing, [not understood]. He want to come, he want to go on up on a farm. And he didn't want to work the way it was there.

MOORE: And before you left, did you, did you have a party? Did anyone give you a good bye party?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: When you left, the night before you left.

VANDYKE: No, no. Uh, I had to stay with a cousin. We all had to go somewheres you know. And, I had to sit there, stay with my cousin that night and, I had to sleep three in a bed. The next morning, she said, "Time to go." We had to meet at my grandma's house for the, party that would drive us to the train you know. But she didn't give me a bite to eat or anything. I remember that. (laughs)

MOORE: How much did you pack? How many things were you carrying? Was your family? You had twelve children. And how many suitcases, do you remember what you took?

VANDYKE: Oh, I. No, I don't know. I don't remember. Just, see, my grandma packed one box and she said, "That's for the babies." All mom would need to do is soak whatever she got in a little milk for Charlie, and Leo, and the little ones. Well, the food was gone. We just had to do without. That's all. Except for, there was enough for the little ones.

MOORE: So you took food with you.

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: You took food? Did you take food with you?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah. Rye bread and cheese mainly.

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MOORE: And uh, and, what did you take? Did you take anything personal when you packed your bag? You were about seventeen, what did you take with you?

VANDYKE: Well, uh, as few things as you could, but the best of what you had.

MOORE: And like, what, what was the best that you had? What was it?

VANDYKE: Uh, well, my dress, my uh, underthings. And... you couldn't take anything, what you absolutely need you know.

MOORE: Mmm. And uh, was there anything special that the family took? Was there anything that they brought that, you said the feather bed, and they brought some dishes... and what else uh, did they bring? Anything special that belonged to your grandparents or anything?

VANDYKE: Well, we had... mainly, rye bread and cheese and some kind of, cookie they called... (Dutch name) made from [not understood]. My grandma fixed up two boxes full for us til we got to Rottendam. And then we could... eat something, but the... (Note: At this time, MOORE and the MAN have a short unintelligible conversation while VANDYKE is talking.)

MOORE: Where did you leave from? What port did you leave from?

VANDYKE: Rotterdam.

MOORE: Rotterdam. And how did you get from home to the port?

VANDYKE: We had to take the train to, what did you call, to Harlingen.

MOORE: Mmm.

VANDYKE: And from there change trains to Leeuwarden. Leeuwarden is a [not understood]. I uh, stayed there. My sister, Joe, lives in Leeuwarden. She's supposed to come to the train to say bye-bye to all of us. She never showed up.

MAN: (laughs)

VANDYKE: From then from the train, we went to Rotterdam.

MOORE: Ahhh, I'm sorry. This is, for a second. You were in um... This is great. You, you, you're, um, one of the best. Is this too tiring for you? Is this tired, are you tried?

VANDYKE: No, um, it's alright.

MOORE: Ok. So you were in Rotterdam right?

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm.

MOORE: Right, you left from Rotterdam.

VANDYKE: Well, that's where the men, what, the guide, what, supposed to take us to the boat. He come and he pointed us to certain hotel where we had a couple of rooms. Uh, we made the best of what we had there, you know. For a little to eat 'til we got to the boat. Um, this guide took us to the boat. And when we saw that, we couldn't believe it was that big, you know. Bigger inside than three cabins. Um, of course, divided up as good as we could.

MOORE: What was the name of that ship? Do you remember?

VANDYKE: It was Ryndam.

MOORE: How do you spell that?

VANDYKE: R-Y-N-D-A-M.

MOORE: And um, did, once you got to the port, did you have to wait overnight for the ship? Did you wait? Or did you go directly

VANDYKE: [interposed] No, we had to wait in Rotterdam overnight.

MOORE: Where did you stay?

VANDYKE: That I don't remember. Some hotel that goes with the boat.

MOORE: So did any family members see you off? Any other family members come with you, or was it just your family who left?

VANDYKE: Yeah, just our family.

MOORE: And uh, when did the ship depart? Do you remember what day and year? When did it leave, the boat?

VANDYKE: No. No, I don't know that.

MAN: 31<sup>st</sup> of March.

MOORE: 31<sup>st</sup> of March?

VANDYKE: Hmm.

MAN: That's what that boat, that's what my record says.

MOORE: And what was it like on the ship? What do you remember about the ship?

VANDYKE: Well, I remember we had good food and all we needed, we were hungry when we got there. (laughs)

MOORE: And did, um...

VANDYKE: [interposed] Ahh, and one time they were serving macaroni and cheese. And mom says, "We don't like that." And uh, the helper says, "Lady, what do you like?" Said, "We like potatoes." So she, we got potatoes at our table while others got macaroni and cheese. (laughs)

MOORE: And what class, what class were, were you traveling in, what class? Were you in first, second or third class, do you remember?

VANDYKE: Third.

MOORE: Yeah. And, and, um, how about the dining room? How did you eat in the dining room? What was the dining room like?

VANDYKE: Well, that was quite a dining room. It was some people from all different nations, you know. And these voices come out, they told me they come from Belgium. They didn't like that macaroni and cheese. They just threw to the ceiling.

MOORE: (laughs) And what was it like eating with your family, had so many small ones, so many children?

VANDYKE: Yeah.

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MOORE: How was it eating with the whole family there?

VANDYKE: Well, uh, I guess they managed. Mashed potatoes goes a long ways with the Dutch, you know.

MOORE: (laughs) Were you allowed to go up on deck?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah.

MOORE: And, and, what did you see when you go on deck?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: What was it like when you went on deck? Was it, how was the trip?

VANDYKE: Well, you go stairway and then you're on a deck. And uh, all you see is the ocean all around you.

MOORE: And was it a rough trip? Or a smooth trip? What kind of voyage was it?

VANDYKE: No, it wasn't too bad. If not too windy, we weren't allowed on the deck. And one day, we were on the deck and one of the young sailors was going to hoist a flag on top. And it got caught, I guess. Any how, he went over to untangle it and he fell down and, right in front of us, you know. Ah, I think, I don't know if he died. I don't know anything about that. But I can still see that, that fall.

MOORE: Mmmhmm. Did you, did any of you get sick?

VANDYKE: Hmm.

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MOORE: Were any of you ill from the, the voyage? Did you get seasick? Did anyone get seasick?

VANDYKE: Oh, I wasn't seasick. No.

MOORE: No?

MAN: Alice was.

VANDYKE: My sister Alice was very sick. She wouldn't leave the bed. And then the doctor comes around to, you know, get initiated and all. He said, "Well, if you can't get out of bed, you got stay in the boat and go back." Alice jumped out of bed and she was fine.

(all laugh)

MOORE: How long was that trip? How long was the boat trip? Do you remember?

VANDYKE: Well that's a big [not understood]. I don't know how much.

MOORE: Do you remember...

MAN: [interposed] [not understood] Ninth of April.

MOORE: Ninth of April you arrived. Do you remember seeing um, the Statue of Liberty for the first time?

VANDYKE: Say what?

MOORE: The Statue of Liberty?

KM-4/VANDYKE

VANDYKE: Oh yeah, that was a sight. We stayed in, uh, on the deck and sees that the Statue of Liberty come up out of the waves.

MOORE: And how was...

VANDYKE: I will forget that.

MOORE: What was it like? Were people screaming? What, were, were people cheering?

VANDYKE: I guess, we did, but anyway, I remember we saw it rise up from the ocean.

MOORE: Were you with your whole family? Was your whole family there to watch?

VANDYKE: I don't think so, but, my sister and a few of us. The older ones were on deck. But I do, the Statue of Liberty. That's in my (inaudible, own? home?)

MOORE: Um, did you see New York City? What, did you see the city skyline too? Did you see New York? Besides the Statue of Liberty, did you see anything else?

VANDYKE: Oh well, we, did you mean, on the boat you ask?

MOORE: Yeah.

VANDYKE: Yeah, you could see the buildings. But because that Statue of Liberty come up, you know, that took all our attention.

MOORE: Yeah, yeah. Now how did you, do you remember Ellis Island? Going to Ellis Island?

KM-4/VANDYKE

VANDYKE: Well, um, that, to me, in my memory that was kind of a dark place. And, we were sitting on benches and [not understood] of us. We had to bathroom places. We didn't know where to go.

MAN: (laughs)

MOORE: And how did you get from the ship to Ellis Island, do you remember? When you were on the big boat, how did you get in that big hall, do you remember?

VANDYKE: Oh no, I don't. I don't remember just how that went.

MOORE: When you went inside the building then, uh, were you frightened or, what kind of reaction did you have to the darkness?

VANDYKE: You mean...

MOORE: The dark. That building.

VANDYKE: No, we were in America. That's what was all that matters.

MOORE: And um, what, what were you wearing? What were, what were the family wearing then?

VANDYKE: I wore dark blue suit, and blouse. And the kids were all dresses or pants.

MOORE: And um, was it crowded when you got there?

VANDYKE: Hmmm.

MOORE: Was it crowded?

(Note: People speaking in background.)

MOORE: So, Ellis Island, when you got in there, was it crowded with lots of people?  
When you went into that dark place.

VANDYKE: No, I don't remember much of a big crowd. [not understood] was called into the inner rooms. And he stayed away so long mom said "Wonder where father is." And I say, "I wonder why he stay so late. You think, they might think he's a Jew." The Jews weren't, very, uh, popular those days.

MOORE: Hmmm.

VANDYKE: To come to the United States. Went [not understood] for saying that.

(all laugh)

MOORE: By your mom.

VANDYKE: Yeah. She didn't. My dad had a black beard, you now, and, he was dark.

MAN: And a black hat.

VANDYKE: Hmmm?

MAN: And he had a black hat too.

VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: Well, did you, did you have a medical examination? Did the doctors give you an examination?

VANDYKE: Yeah, we all got initiated with sore arms. We walked around with sore arms.  
Before we left the boat we got that.

MOORE: Oh, but um, once you were in that hall, in that dark place,

VANDYKE: [interposed] No, I

MOORE: did you?

VANDYKE: I don't think we got any, anything then.

MOORE: Did you have to stay overnight at Ellis Island at all?

VANDYKE: No.

MOORE: No. Alright. Um, was there any entertainment for the children?

VANDYKE: Uhhh....

MOORE: What happened in that room basically? You just waited for your father?

VANDYKE: Well, I really, I don't know that. But I did know that, remember, we met a family later that had a cabin in [not understood]. And we had three of, of the cabins and they had a fourth one. And they had only child where we had so many. And we come around the table, and the table was filled you know. When my gang got there. (laughs)

MOORE: Um, when you got out of Ellis Island, was there, where did you go after you went through Ellis Island? What did you do after that? What did, where did the family go?

KM-4/VANDYKE

VANDYKE: After that, to that, left to train.

MOORE: You went on train.

VANDYKE: We ride to Martinsville.

MOORE: And Martinville, Indiana?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Indiana.

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MAN: We left Hoboken.

MOORE: Left Hoboken, ok. And what did you, what were, what did you expect about America? What did you think were going to happen you?

VANDYKE: Oh, I think we were in paradise.

MAN: (laughs)

MOORE: You think, um... Did you remember seeing things that you never saw before? When you got there, was anything new? Was everything new?

VANDYKE: Well, it was kind of, completely different, you know. My mom had no help, much until, the Vandykes come to call. And, they helped her get started in the house. But, like I said, I was, over at doctor's place already, so I don't, just, how long it took to get settled.

KM-4/VANDYKE

MOORE: So you got there on a Friday and you started work on a Monday.

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm.

MOORE: And, where, describe the house you went to Martinsville. What kind of house did you go to?

VANDYKE: Well, had no lights, had no running water. But was a house.

MOORE: And how many people, how, your whole family lived there? How big was it, the house?

VANDYKE: Well, I don't remember how many rooms it had upstairs. Downstairs, the kitchen, I remember. [not understood] of course, a living room. And there was 'nother room.

MOORE: How did you like the house if there was no... how, what, what lights did you have?

VANDYKE: Well, I'll tell you. Um, we were in America, we could take a lot of knocks. That's all there was to it, but must have been hard on the folks though.

MOORE: It was a step down then?

VANDYKE: Hmm.

MOORE: It was a step down from Holland? Was the house not as nice as in Holland?

VANDYKE: Well, not, I didn't think, at the time... You know, that comes later when you get to know everything better.

KM-4/VANDYKE

MOORE: Did you get along well with your neighbors there?

VANDYKE: Oh yeah.

MOORE: And um, what, what job did your dad or mom? What job did your father get when he got there?

VANDYKE: Well, he, he, the reason we went to Martinsville, there was a big, what do you call, Van Camp Dairy and they needed four families. And, um, we, we were one of them. And the Vandykes were number two. And number three were a Dutch family (Dutch name). I don't know who the other one was. But it was the Vandykes, what helped my mom get straightened. Get her fire started and get her seated. She get a cup of hot tea.

MOORE: What, did you go to school? Or did go to work then?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: You went to work?

VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: You didn't... did you go to school?

VANDYKE: Not then, no. That come later.

MOORE: And um, when did you go to school?

VANDYKE: Uh, I went to Nappanee and I went to Coldwater mainly. Night school.

MOORE: Night school. How did you learn English then?

VANDYKE: Well, you learned that mighty fast when nobody else talks, speaks anything.

MOORE: Was it difficult? Was it hard to learn English?

VANDYKE: Well, I suppose it was. (laughs) Might have said things backward a little bit, but everything was so wonderful that...

MOORE: How about your family members? Did they all, did your brothers and sisters learn English pretty quickly?

VANDYKE: They what?

MOORE: Did they learn English fast? Your brothers and sisters? Did everybody learn English? Everybody in the family? Did everybody learn English?

VANDYKE: Yeah. Oh, I don't know, the younger ones went to school, you know. I didn't go to... I went to night school where I learned my English. And, and, in Holland I went to night school, finished eighth grade.

MOORE: And uh, did you find anybody being prejudiced against you for being foreign? Did anybody think any badly of you for being Dutch?

VANDYKE: Oh, I don't. It was your own countrymen more than the, uh, the Americans what made fun of you.

MOORE: What, the other, the other Dutch made fun of you?

VANDYKE: (laughs) Well...

MOORE: What about religious life? Did you go to the church here when you came here?

VANDYKE: Yeah, I went to Nappanee, to the Presbyterian Church that the lady I stayed with. And she was a Sunday school teacher, so. Well, I went Presbyterian Church in Nappanee and then...

MOORE: Did that church, was that near that place where you lived? Was it real close?

VANDYKE: Well, Martinsville was south of Indiana and Nappanee is north. We had to this streetcar.

Note: Background noises. A door opens and shuts.

MOORE: Were your mother or father religious at all?

VANDYKE: Uh.

MOORE: Did your mother and father go to church?

VANDYKE: No. I think mom did, but my dad didn't.

MOORE: Did they learn English, your mother and father? Did they learn to speak English? Your mom and your dad?

VANDYKE: No, uh, they didn't. Oh, I guess they learned a little bit, you know.

MAN: Just a little.

VANDYKE: Not too much is it. Mmmhmm.

MAN: I couldn't talk to them.

KM-4/VANDYKE

MOORE: How did everybody adjust to living in this, America? Was it easy... did everybody adjust pretty well, to living...

VANDYKE: Oh yeah. Mmm.

MOORE: And um, did anybody return to Holland to live? Did anybody go back?

VANDYKE: I have been back for a visit, but...

MOORE: Just for visiting?

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm.

MOORE: But everybody stayed here basically. But your...

VANDYKE: Oh I. No I wouldn't... I wouldn't want to go back to live.

MOORE: Um, would you say your, the family was, how would you feel the family was either satisfied or dissatisfied with living in America? Do you think your parents were happy they came here?

VANDYKE: Yeah, mom said she never had it so good. And, she sure had little to do with, but milk was cheap, butter was cheap. And later on, my dad worked in creamery. He bought back home cracked eggs and buttermilk and mom said "I never had it so good." (laughs) You remember that?

MAN: I remember.

MOORE: Did you have any family tragedy that occurred? Anything that happened in the family during

KM-4/VANDYKE

VANDYKE: [interposed] Yeah, my younger brother, my brother, Pete, drowned at, trying to save a little boy. That was years later, he was married. And, of course, what we first encountered was when it, the baby died. And that was kind of terrible because mom found him dead in his bed, in his [not understood].

MOORE: They, they don't know why?

VANDYKE: She found him dead.

MOORE: Yeah.

VANDYKE: The next morning. She said, "Ah, I guess he's down."

MAN: I heard he had open spine.

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MAN: I heard he had over that spine [not understood].

VANDYKE: I don't know what

MAN: Where he was buried and [not understood].

VANDYKE: Well, he wasn't. He was never a well baby. Is that what you mean, that uh, we never expected this either, you know. That night, my sister, Jenny, and I, we stayed home. It must have been around Christmas time, and uh, uncle John from Iowa. He was just over at our place that night and he said he heard that baby cry loud for a long time. But Jenny and I, we slept on a Davenport [sofa brand] and we never heard that baby cry so I think, he just died in his sleep.

KM-4/VANDYKE

MOORE: Hmm.

VANDYKE: We named that baby Teddy. My dad liked President Theodore Roosevelt so well, we named him for that. He was buried in Nappanee.

MOORE: And um, then, do you think about [not understood]. Oh yeah, then when you, when you finally married, what, what happened? You went, you worked for that doctor and then you moved to Coldwater.

VANDYKE: I went, I worked for another doctor.

MOORE: Ah.

VANDYKE: First, Doctor Hendrick. Next, doctor, ehh. Oh, that doctor I forgot. Then, I lived uh, another place in Nappanee... in Coldwater... ah, Indianapolis, I worked for Doctor Adams. And I had to go, I had a hay fever so bad so they advised me to go north. I went to Grand Rapids. Went to work for another doctor. But that was a dentist.

MOORE: How did you meet your husband?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: You were married? When did you marry?

VANDYKE: When did I get married? In 1918.

MOORE: [not understood] 1918. And who, did you marry another uh, who did you marry? Someone Dutch?

VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: Because your last name is Dutch.

VANDYKE: He's a Vandyke. That, his sister Elsie helped my mother so well, getting started and... when we still lived in Martinsville.

MOORE: And you married one of the Vandyke boys?

VANDYKE: Mmmhmm. And Jenny married one too.

MOORE: How did you meet him? Did you remember what

VANDYKE: [interposed] Well, I worked in Indianapolis then and uh, the Vandykes had, were farming outside the city, of course. But John, that's my husband's name, he was home to help his dad. That's how we got acquainted. Then... he moved... he was... went to Iowa. Lot of the Dutch went to Iowa this days, those days. And, we kept writing to each other. Later we got together again.

MOORE: You, you had children?

VANDYKE: Mmm?

MOORE: Did you have children?

VANDYKE: Six.

MOORE: Six kids.

VANDYKE: Mmm. The oldest daughter died. But I had three daughters first. That's funny, in... When my third daughter, my husband said, "You got to move to Indianapolis to get divorced." And his dad had a farm there, so John could get

to work with his dad. So we moved to Indianapolis and sure enough, ten months later had a big boy.

MOORE: (laughs) And uh, your children lived near you now? They live here in this area?

VANDYKE: Well, one, one lives... The one that passed away, they lives in West Virginia. And one was [not understood]. And the rest live around here.

MOORE: Do they speak Dutch at all? Did you teach them to speak Dutch?

VANDYKE: No, we weren't in favor of that. Because we know it's, it's a handicap and we didn't teach them Dutch. But they learn anyway. (laughs)

MOORE: Because, did you talk to your husband in Dutch?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Did you talk to your husband in Dutch?

VANDYKE: Sometimes.

MOORE: Secret language. Was it a secret language for the children?

VANDYKE: Ahh... they know some how or other. They understand it. Most of it. You can't fool them.

MAN: You know, there... In Holland when you go to school you learn Dutch. When you go home, you speak Frisian [another language spoken in Holland].

MOORE: Yeah, yeah.

MAN: So.

MOORE: Different language did...

MAN: They have, have a... haven't learn Dutch at all. They learned Frisian.

MOORE: Yeah, appreciate it.

VANDYKE: Well, when I was in Holland, I had to go to night school to finish eighth grade. And... my brother Otto and I, we walked home one time and it was dark. I said, "Look at that." And you've heard of the Halley Comet. [Short period comet known as Halley's Comet visible to Earth approximately every 75 years. Appeared in April of 1910.] Well we saw that thing drop down to the Earth. It was scary. I saw it anyway.

MOORE: Ah. Well um, in conclusion, you're happy, are you happy that you came to America?

VANDYKE: Oh sure.

MOORE: And uh, do you think your family and your parents were happy?

VANDYKE: Yeah.

MOORE: Your whole lives?

VANDYKE: No regrets.

MOORE: Do you have any story or anything you want to add? Anything more you'd like to say? Anything else you'd like to say before we end.

KM-4/VANDYKE

VANDYKE: Well, well... I don't know about that. We make so many crazy mistakes that.

MOORE: (laughs)

MAN: Tell them that great prohibitionist that dad was. He didn't like liquor of any sort.

MOORE: He was a prohibitionist your dad? Your dad was a prohibitionist?

VANDYKE: Mmm.

MOORE: Your dad was against liquor?

VANDYKE: He's against it.

MOORE: Yeah. We'll get to that later then.

VANDYKE: No drinks. You remember that, don't you?

MAN: Even Coca Cola [not understood].

MOORE: Well that's good place to end this interview. I'd like to thank you on behalf of the Ellis Island Project for your experiences and letting us talk here. And this is Kate Moore signing off on the fifth of December, 1993 with Irene Vandyke for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.