

KM-041

NICK FRENDREIS

BIRTH DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 1910

INTERVIEW DATE: APRIL 26, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 1:22:15

INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE

RECORDING ENGINEER: DR. KRISTA VARANTOLA

INTERVIEW LOCATION: BOLINGBROOK, ILLINOIS

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 11/1994

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 12/1994

YUGOSLAVIA, 1921

AGE 10

PASSAGE ON "THE MONGOLIA"

MOORE:Good afternoon. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service. Today is the 26th of April 1994, and I'm at Bolingbrook, Illinois at the home of Nick Frendreis, who came from Yugoslavia in 1921 when he was ten years old. Why don't you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth, please?

FRENDREIS:My name is Nick Frendreis. I was born November 8, 1910.

MOORE:And where were you born?

FRENDREIS:In Matsanabanat[ph], Yugoslavia.

MOORE:Can you spell that?

FRENDREIS:No, I can't spell it, but it was considered at that time
Austria-Hungary. Now it belongs to Yugoslavia.

MOORE:What size town was that?

FRENDREIS:Well, the town was actually in two parts. There was Serbs
living on one end and German people speaking
German-Hungarians living on the other end. So actually
there was two, there was Hungarian-speaking and
Serbian-speaking people in town.

MOORE:And so how much do you think the population would be altogether?
Do you have any idea?

FRENDREIS:No, I have no idea.

MOORE:And what was the largest town nearby?

FRENDREIS:Well, the largest town that we had to go on into would
have been by railroad, which is about a half a day
railroad drive away. And at that time I can't even
remember what the name of it, but I know it was on one
of the big popular rivers.

MOORE:Do you remember what the town looked like?

FRENDREIS:I remember some of it, but not too much of it, because
it was, what it was mostly a town with farms, with the

buildings and people living in town, and the farms, the lands, living outside of town. Every morning you'd see the people with horse and wagon going out to work the fields, and then they'd bring the stuff into their, into their homes, you know, or yards, whatever they had. Like corn, they had corn or wheat or anything, they thrashed it and sold it right where it was at, and corn they'd husk and shuck it and it was sold right away.

But the people that lived in town, and like the house that I was living in had a, it was a three big room house.

The middle was the kitchen where they used to do the cooking in there. In front of the house one family lived, and in the back part of the house another family would live. But they used, both used the kitchen for cooking.

MOORE:We'll get to your house in a moment. Do you know the major industry in that town?

FRENDREIS:There was no industry.

MOORE:What was your father's name?

FRENDREIS:Nick.

MOORE:Nick, or Nicholas?

FRENDREIS:Yeah, Nick. He was Nicholas, I'm Nick.

MOORE:Oh, yeah. And what was his occupation?

FRENDREIS:His occupation was a farmer.

MOORE:What did he look like?

FRENDREIS:Well, I'll tell you, he was, he was more or less my size,
heavier build, and bald-headed like me.

MOORE:How tall are you?

FRENDREIS:I'm about five foot seven.

MOORE:And what about his personality and temperament? How would
you describe your father?

FRENDREIS:Well, I don't have much to remember because when out there,
like I say, I don't remember him, because when I start
remembering him, he went off to war. And he didn't come
back until, let's see, till I was about nine years old.
So I only had him, from the time of living out there
till we come here, it was only about two or three, three
years' time that I could, you know, out there, the
conditions with him out there. When we got over here,
that's, I can remember some of the things there, because
over here he did mostly labor work.

MOORE:Well, what was his personality like here, that you remember?

FRENDREIS:He seemed to be a happy, a cheerful, happy-go-lucky fellow.

MOORE:And is there a story about your father that you associate with your childhood at all?

FRENDREIS:Yes. When I was little, before I was even going to school, my dad went off to war. But when he left, he left with a family of three kids and a wife. Well, he left, actually with two kids and one that was ready to die, because we were all sick, and he never thought, that was me, and he never thought I would make it, he would see me again. While he was off to war, my sister died first. He got the notice that, you know, this child died, the girl.

MOORE:How old was she?

FRENDREIS:I don't know how old she was, but she was younger than me. And then I was, I was the second one, and my brother was the oldest one. We were pretty, within a couple of years apart only. And then the next one to die was my mother. She died, he got the death notice on that. And then finally when my brother died he got the death

notice on that and they sent, they told him, you know, that his son, I don't even know what his name was, so-and-so died. And he couldn't believe it. He says, they got, they sure as heck got this mixed up, because it's got to be Nick, it can't be him, because he was never sick a day in his life. He was healthy all the time. So I remember him coming home from war, because I lived with my grandmother. She raised me while he was in the war. I was living with her, and my grandfather did odd and end jobs to support us and he helped keep the land going that my dad owned. And he told me my dad will be coming home and, you know, where he'd be coming from. So I went out and I sat on the street waiting for him. But when he saw me and I was running towards him, while he knew me, there must have been some difference between my brother and me because when he saw me he knew it was me when he was coming, that they didn't make a mistake. They gave him a death notice on the right kid. He asked my grandmother how did he ever make it. (he laughs) So I, and then, even at that, even at that most of my, I was late starting school, and I never, I can only remember, well, every time we moved out there, you got to remember now, I lived in a Serbian town that was part Serbs and part German.

We moved from there to my grandmother's, to my other grandmother's, that is, that is his mother, we moved to her house, to her town, and that was Hungarian. So when I went to school, I went to school, first I started, well, I didn't spend much time in that, and I was sick most of the time, I had to learn German. I was learning German in that. When we moved forward to the other town that was mostly Hungarian, I had to go to Hungarian school and start to learn Hungarian. Well, I'm telling you, if you ever saw a mixed-up kid, you know. You try to, you've got to try to remember like your math and things like that, and you got to remember what the teacher is telling you, this is some handicap to you.

And then half of the time you're out of school, then from there we moved, from there we come back to the German-speaking town. Then I started school in there, but the school there was for both the Serbian people and the German people were going up, so we had to sit in class and start learning some Serbian. Now, by the time I got, when I start coming over here, when I got over here I went to an American school. Well, that was the only time, after I got in this country, it was the only time where I could go and go to school and went to school every day where I never had to, never, you

know, since I got here I never had to learn another language or anything because it was straight, everything the same, you know. That was some kind of a privilege for me, because there's nobody, nobody told me to do anything different. Because then I went from here, when I was here I went to public schools and Catholic schools.

MOORE:What did you speak at home, by the way? What language?

FRENDREIS:(he coughs) At home, as far as I could remember, because my dad learned how to speak English because he worked on a job all the time. But my mother didn't get out so much, so she couldn't speak English too good. But in, between my sister and me talking, we would talk English.

MOORE:But before, when you were in Yugoslavia.

FRENDREIS:Oh, oh, there we spoke German all the time, even when we were in the Hungarian town.

MOORE:Okay. So at home you spoke German.

FRENDREIS:Yeah, in the house.

MOORE:And your parents spoke German to each other.

FRENDREIS:Yeah. But see now, when we moved to the Hungarian town,

that's where my grandmother, my dad's mother, see, I was raised by my mother's mother. Now, when we went over there she, they spoke German, but they also spoke Hungarian. So that's why they had the store, because where the store was located in that place was mostly in the German section, so most of their business was coming from German people, but they also had to speak Hungarian because they got Hungarian business people in.

MOORE:What was your mother's name?

FRENDREIS:Uh, her, I don't remember her first name, but her last name was Thites.

MOORE:How do you spell that?

FRENDREIS:I have, T-H-I-T-E-S, I guess it is.

MOORE:And what was her occupation?

FRENDREIS:Nothing. Housewife.

MOORE:She was a housewife. What did she look like? Do you remember?

FRENDREIS:I have no idea. I can't remember her.

MOORE:Okay. Do you know anything about her personality or her

temperament?

FRENDREIS:No, I don't.

MOORE:Will you name all your brothers and sisters? You mentioned
you had an older brother and a younger sister originally.

FRENDREIS:Yeah.

MOORE:Do you know their names?

FRENDREIS:No, I never knew their names, I don't remember. Because
I never, you know what I mean, they died at such a young
age that . . .

MOORE:How old were they when they died? How old were you? Do you
remember?

FRENDREIS:Well, my brother was about a year or two older than me,
and my sister was about a year or two younger than me.
I was the middle one.

MOORE:And how old were you when they died, do you remember?

FRENDREIS:I don't know. Because I could just, my sister I can't
remember anything of her at all. She died first. My
mother died second. I can remember vaguely some of the
things, you know, around the house. But my brother,

he lived a little longer, so I had a little more time with him. Him I can't . . .

MOORE:How old do you think you were?

FRENDREIS:Well, wait a minute. When did the war start? My dad went off to war. Well, I never went to, I wasn't even in school yet when they died, when all these kids died, the children and my mother died, I was not in school yet.

MOORE:You had another step-sister?

FRENDREIS:Yes, the step-sister that you saw in that picture I showed you.

MOORE:What was her name?

FRENDREIS:Eva.

MOORE:Eva. And she was born where?

FRENDREIS:In, she was born, she was born out there.

MOORE:What was your step-mother's name?

FRENDREIS:Eva. We only had two names in the family, Nick and Eva.

MOORE:And what was her maiden name?

FRENDREIS:Willing.

MOORE:Willing?

FRENDREIS:Yeah. W-I-L-L-I-N-G.

MOORE:And was she German-speaking as well?

FRENDREIS:Yeah, she was German-speaking.

MOORE:What was her, what did she look like?

FRENDREIS:Well, I'll tell you, looking at her and looking at my wife,
you would say they were sisters. They . . .

MOORE:And what about, what does that mean? I don't know what your
wife looks like, so how would you describe her?

FRENDREIS:Well, I would say average-looking, because my wife used
to say, "Ah, I got common looks, so I look like everybody
else. Everybody takes me for this one or for that one."

MOORE:And how tall or . . .

FRENDREIS:Well, my wife is five foot three, five foot four, and my
mother was about the same height.

MOORE:And what about her personality, your mother's personality and
temperament?

FRENDREIS:Her temperament, they were very, very good. In fact, when I started smoking when I was a younger, a teenager, my dad didn't smoke, he always hollered, "Don't start that stuff. It isn't good for your health," and that. And, you know, well, once in a while my mom, my mother, she saw me with the kids smoking, and she never, you know, for a step-mother she never bothered me. In fact, she sometimes bought a pack of cigarettes and smuggled them to me. (he laughs) That was a step-mother.

MOORE:And what were, is there a story about your, that's a story about your step-mother. What were her chores around the house? What did your step-mother do around the house?

FRENDREIS:Well, hers was just a regular average what they call housewife. That's what, she was just a housewife.

MOORE:Do you remember much about your house back in Yugoslavia?

FRENDREIS:No, except what I told you, that and for an icebox or something they had what they call a cellar underground, you know, they dug in and, you know, you put your foodstuff and that in there.

MOORE:What was your house made of? What . . .

FRENDREIS:That I don't know what it was made of, brick or wood or what. That I don't remember. I know I lived across the street from the cemetery. That I know, too.

MOORE:And how was it heated? Do you remember that?

FRENDREIS:Well, they had it heated with like a fireplace.

MOORE:And was there a garden?

FRENDREIS:No, because we didn't have that much property.

MOORE:Did you have any . . .

FRENDREIS:We never had, we didn't have a garden at the house, but we had a garden out by, you know, where the land was, which was, going on the way home stopped and picked vegetables.

MOORE:Did anyone else live in your building?

FRENDREIS:Yes, in the beginning my mother and dad and I, we lived in the front part, and my grandmother lived in the back part. Now, I know my dad was off to war, and that wasn't such an easy or nice thing either because, as you know, out there the wars, they were one person chasing the enemy. That I remember during the war, because my dad was at war. And today you see one bunch of troops go

by, they would be like, say, either the good people or the enemy. Well, they come through, the officers would come through and they'd see that house in the back.

Okay, you took so many people in there, you had to let them sleep, if they were the enemy or not. Well, if you'd say something wrong, I know my grandmother said something wrong with one of them. He just hauled off and she went flying. There was no sympathy. You know, you did this many people, and this is what you went, and I want these people to have water and clean things.

And then he looked to see how much food you had. If you got a lot of food you fed them, too. And then if they'd finally leave, well, you could tell, I remember one story, one soldier we had was real nice to me. He must have had a kid like me at home. And he was always, you know, real nice, and he'd hug me, and he's crying, and he gave me, he gave me some advice or something.

Now, one day one bunch went through. You could tell what they were, the enemy or the good team. Well, this first day the enemy gone through, then everything gone.

The first thing you know, about five days later, the other bunch comes through that's chasing them. You know, you could always tell who's for you and who's against you by how they treated you. My mother, my

step-mother, my dad knew her because, how did we, how does this go? My step-mother and my aunt, that was my first mother's sister. My first mother's sister married my step-mother's brother. That's how they were related. During the war she was for a land baron in Europe, a land baron. You know, they had the big land, and they had a town where actually the people working.

Like there's a blacksmith, a carpenter shop. Well, my mother was a housekeeper for this land baron, and, see, when they were in the war they were after these guys, you know, to get, to take all this, hoarding this stuff, they took it away from them. And they just, the land baron that she had, that she was boss over, they got word that they're coming through, so he told my mother, "All right, we're going. We don't know where we're going to be, but you run this house the way you want it, and please do not resist. Give them anything they want." And these people come in, she said they had a big piano. And he just took the bayonet, run it right through, cut the strings, cut everything, and they just, what they couldn't carry or do, they destroyed.

It was merciful. While in the, her boss, the land baron, we found out, she found out later on, they went into a, what they did, they put them into a boxcar and

they just hooked it up to a train until they got out, you know, they tried to get out of the country or escape.

She says, "I don't know if they ever came back or not, because when the land was all gone." And you know the people, she knew all the people that lived there. Well, these people just got scattered, or they lived there to try to keep this thing up as much as they could. Well, when my mother found out there's nothing there and they don't know, she didn't even know if her boss was alive any more, so she finally left. And after the war, that's when my dad met her then, and he married her, and that's when she spent her younger days, you know.

MOORE:Very interesting. Do you remember any of the furniture in your house? Do you remember any furniture in your house?

FRENDREIS:No, I don't remember anything.

MOORE:How about, do you remember eating together as children, the meals?

FRENDREIS:Yeah, the meals we ate together, like when we, when we lived in the house like a, when my mother and my, that's my first mother and dad, and even my second mother.

See, we lived the front, and my grandmother, they lived in the back part. But, you know, there used to be a, you used to work together, you know, all the time. Cook together, eat together and that. Oh, that part I remember.

MOORE:Who were you closest to in your family then? Who was the closest person to you? Who do you feel especially close to?

FRENDREIS:Oh, close to? The bestest one I was close to was, when I was there, when I was out there, was my grandmother.

MOORE:That's your father's mother or mother's mother?

FRENDREIS:That's my mother's mother.

MOORE:So you felt closest to her?

FRENDREIS:Yeah, because she raised me until my dad came home from war. And then after that, well, I, we start moving around different towns and different things because my dad was what they call a, what is known as a laborer. And wherever we could get jobs, and whatever we could do.

MOORE:Right. Now, when you said the grandmother lived in the same

apartment, in the same . . .

FRENDREIS:Building.

MOORE:Building. Which grandmother was that?

FRENDREIS:That was my first mother's mother.

MOORE>Your mother, okay. She's the one who lived there. Where did your father's mother live, and father? Where did they live?

FRENDREIS:They lived in that Hungarian town, half a day's wagon drive away. See, in those day you figure wagon days, wagon drive, because that's all there was.

MOORE:Now, what about religious life? Were you religious?

FRENDREIS:Yeah. We were Catholics.

MOORE:And did you worship regularly?

FRENDREIS:Well, I can't remember as a child, or when I was with my grandmother, much of that, but when we come here to this country they, where we got a flat from one of my dad's sisters, and we lived near them. And to go to school I went to a Catholic school because my cousin, that is her daughter, was going to that school, so she took me

to school with her. But then when we moved we used to, you know, we moved somewheres else while, too far to go to Catholic school. When you're a laborer like my dad, and the Catholic school is way, way over there and the public school is next door, a hundred and fifty feet away, you can figure out where you're going to go to school then. (he laughs) It's not a money situation or a walking, it's what you can afford. So that's why I went to school.

MOORE:Well, was there, back in Yugoslavia was there a church nearby your house?

FRENDREIS:Up under that? No, I can't say, when I lived in Yugoslavia, I cannot remember going to church.

MOORE:Did you say prayers daily? Did you say your prayers?

FRENDREIS:Well, I have, yes, as a child we'd pray, yes.

MOORE:Did you experience any religious persecution or prejudice?

FRENDREIS:No, not out there, no.

MOORE:And here in the States?

FRENDREIS:No, in the States, no, we didn't. Not here, not at all, because I was, the part of Chicago that I lived in was

mostly European people like us. In fact, the church that I go to they'd have, they have, in those days the Catholics, they had a Latin Mass, but they called it a German church because the sermon was in German. Now, just like where we lived, at one time there was a church not far away from us. That was a Polish church. The Mass was in Latin, but they'd have, the sermon would always be in English except one Mass. They'd always have all of these churches, Polish, German and Lithuanian, they'd have one Mass on the Sunday where the sermon would be given in the foreign, in the language, see. I went to one that had, where one sermon was German. Otherwise it was all Latin.

MOORE:Did you, what holidays in Yugoslavia do you remember?

Anything special that you remember?

FRENDREIS:I don't remember any of the holidays because I was too small.

MOORE:Right. Did your family keep any animals?

FRENDREIS:No. I, in Europe, yes, I had animals because our place wasn't very big, a big house. But down the street, the fellow that was my godfather, now, he was one of the richer farmers in town, and he had a boy about my age.

So they had rabbits, because when you got a house like a farm, rabbits are nothing, because you've got the straw in the barns for the animals, and the straw pile out there. Rabbits just, this is normal. They run all over. In fact, every now and then when they get a little bit too many of them, why, you have rabbit stew. So the only rabbits that I remember having, I'd go over and play with this kid, you know. We'd play, and then he'd give me, "See where the rabbits are? The rabbits in there are mine." "Let's get them out to see which kind of rabbits I have." "Now, those are your rabbits, now, you try to distinguish them between seventy-five and a hundred rabbits going around there." (he laughs)
But, anyway, they were my rabbits.

MOORE:Did your family keep any animals at all anywhere?

FRENDREIS:No. My family didn't have nothing. Well, those people, those people had no animals outside of a dog and the rabbits either.

MOORE:Did you learn any English prior to coming to the United States?

FRENDREIS:No.

MOORE:What did you do for entertainment when you were a child? Do

you remember?

FRENDREIS:No, I don't remember. The only thing you had out there was playing with each other as far as I recall. You didn't have much toys, because at Christmas toys out there . . . (break in tape)

MOORE:Start over.

FRENDREIS:We decided to come here because my dad and that, they couldn't make much of a living out there, and my one uncle that was out there, he was a carpenter. And my aunt that was out there was the one that had the grocery store. It was getting to the point where, you know, getting tough to make a living.

MOORE:Where was "out there?"

FRENDREIS:In Europe, Austria-Hungary.

MOORE:I see. Okay. And so, did you, who did you know in the United States already?

FRENDREIS:In the United States, there was, my dad had a family of six, six kids, three boys and three girls. What was in the United States was two girls and one boy, two aunts and one uncle to me.

MOORE:And where did they live at?

FRENDREIS:They lived in Chicago. Now, they got over here because somebody sponsored them. They got over here. Now they, my dad wrote to them to sponsor us. Well, the sponsor, you get a sponsor and then you get a permit to come over here. Well, they got, they got the sponsors and the permit to come here, so then that's how we decided to come. Now, to make a, to be a sponsor, your sponsor that's over here has to have, get you a job. You know, they have to, they get you a job, and they get you a place to live. If you, if they sponsor you, that's all right, but they got to prove to the, have proof that they got something, you know, some place, a job and a living quarters for you. Because when we come over here, there's no such thing as welfare. They were responsible for us to have a place to live and, a place to live and a job. Now, that was for the next, I think, five years that run, or until, you know, my dad became a citizen. Well, five years that run, and then we, they were off him. I think they, somehow or other that was off of it, but my dad became a citizen. I think you had to be here five years or six years, I think five years before you could become a citizen. Well, my dad

became a citizen, and the pressure, it isn't pressure, but these people had sponsored us here. A sponsor always sees to it that you become a citizen, so get them off of your identity. You get off their back, as they say, or, you know, they know that you can survive yourself or somebody else is going to supply you with the things.

MOORE:But how about the money for the voyage over here? How did you get that?

FRENDREIS:(he coughs) That was money that was sent to us for the train trip. We had to go by train, and you had to get to a certain place where you get on an oceanliner.

MOORE:But who sent that money?

FRENDREIS:My uncles and aunts in Europe, I don't know. I think we got sponsored by my uncle, the only brother that was here, who was our sponsor.

MOORE:Here.

FRENDREIS:Yeah.

MOORE:That the money for the trip came from the people in the Hungarian town?

FRENDREIS:No. The people for the, the money for the trip came from the people in the United States, the relatives in the United States. They had to send us, when we got the package there was money in there, and there was a boat ticket in there. So we went by train till we got to a seaport.

MOORE:Back up a little. Did you have a medical examination before you left?

FRENDREIS:Nope, you didn't have nothing. You just come the way you were, and that was it. There's no, uh . . .

MOORE:All right. Did your, how did your, now, who, did your father come first? Who came?

FRENDREIS:No, we all came together.

MOORE:You all came together.

FRENDREIS:Yes.

MOORE:"You all" means you . . .

FRENDREIS:Just the three families came together. We all were on the same train on the same . . .

MOORE:Who are the three families?

FRENDREIS:That's my other uncle, and then my other aunt that was out, that they were in Europe. She was strict.

MOORE:Were they from the Hungarian town?

FRENDREIS:Yeah. See, there was three of us lived over there, and three of us lived over here. So these three sent us money so that we could come over here. Now, when we got in here, we got to come by boat, and see, this is how we did it. We got off the boat, and got onto Ellis Island. They got what you call a small boat where they transported you back and forth. Well, I tell you, now, that was a new experience for all of us, because the clothes you had on, there was no such thing as changing clothes every day, you know, on the train or on the boat you can, but when they left that boat, the clothes you had on your back, that's the clothes you lived in. Now, our trunk, our steamer trunk, see, you had a little suitcase along, you could have that. But your steamer trunk had all your possessions, your big trunks, and they took them off the boat and they went into Ellis Island into storage.

MOORE:Now, let's back up a bit. Do you remember packing and getting ready to go?

FRENDREIS:No. My mother and dad did all of that. That, I don't even remember. I remembered that the name of the ship was Mongolia. That I remember yet.

MOORE:Do you remember talking, when's the first time you remember about talking about going to America?

FRENDREIS:Oh, I don't even remember them talking, because my dad told me that something, you know, we were going to go. Well, I was kind of happy because there was nothing going on where I was at.

MOORE:How did your stepmother feel?

FRENDREIS:Well, she was anxious to go, too. You know, everybody out there, when they, the greatest thing in your lifetime I'm out there for my dad and my mother. Up until that, the greatest thing that happened in their life when they got, were notified that they could come, they got a permit to come if they were sponsored.

MOORE:And why was that so great?

FRENDREIS:Because everything out there was so bad and so, what I call, what you would call it, well, you were, it's like a, living in Chicago and living in the back woods down in Arkansas somewheres. (he laughs) I don't feel

sorry, but you know what I mean? Living, it's about what it amounted to in comparison.

MOORE:I see. So you felt your living out in Yugoslavia was like living in nowhere.

FRENDREIS:Yeah, in the middle of nowhere, yeah.

MOORE:Right. And, all right. Now, you talked about that trunk. Now, what was in it, do you know?

FRENDREIS:Well, that was all our clothes.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

MOORE:You said you can't remember anything that was special. Did anything, does anything survive now that you had, or did anything survive of that trunk that was brought by the family?

FRENDREIS:No. I have no idea. I've never, if that trunk, I can't even remember that trunk being in any of the flats or buildings that we lived in once we got here. That I can't even remember any more.

MOORE:Did anyone give you a goodbye party when you left?

FRENDREIS:No, nobody did.

MOORE:And did you take any food with you?

FRENDREIS:No. We took, no. We took no food with us. We bought it on the way, whatever we could.

MOORE:When you were a young boy, did you take anything special with you?

FRENDREIS:No.

MOORE:No toys or . . .

FRENDREIS:No, because the toys, that's something I, the only toys you had was the make-believe toys that you could get or that your dad made for you. There wasn't much toys out there. Everybody, when they had money enough, they bought food, not toys.

MOORE:Okay. How did you get from your home to the port where you left?

FRENDREIS:Well, we went by train first. And if I ain't mistaken, I think we went to France. That's where we got on the boat. And then we got over here, and we got . . .

MOORE:Right, but wait a minute. Which, what port in France, do you

know?

FRENDREIS:I don't know. I don't remember that at all, because I was too small.

MOORE:Do you remember the train trip at all?

FRENDREIS:No, I don't remember the train trip at all either, no.

MOORE:Do you know the name of your ship? You said it was Mongolia?

FRENDREIS:Yeah.

MOORE:Okay. And do you remember waiting for the ship? Do you remember seeing the ship for the first time?

FRENDREIS:I remember when we were going to get out I seen that it was a ship. To me as a kid it was just a ship.
(he laughs) You don't pay much attention.

MOORE:And do you remember where you stayed on the boat?

FRENDREIS:Well, I don't know what floor, what level we were on.

MOORE:What were the conditions like?

FRENDREIS:The conditions were not what they are anywheres near today.
Just about, a step above poverty. I knew my mother had an awful time. She had a lot of problems, because

my sister was born before we left to come here. She was born before we left to come here.

MOORE:How much before?

FRENDREIS:Oh, I remember her bringing her, wrapped in the arms, wrapped in a blanket. That's about it. And I remember that because there was a picture of her at one time, which one of my uncles or somebody had there, you know, had that, so you saw how big she was when she got here. And then there was another story to that when we get further on. See, we got off the boat in New York Harbor, got on our small boat, and the first time, I tell you, I saw the lady with the torch, that was wonderful.
(he laughs)

MOORE:The Statue of Liberty?

FRENDREIS:The Statue of Liberty. Yeah, that was the greatest thing I'd ever seen up until then in my lifetime.

MOORE:And how did other people react to it?

FRENDREIS:Well, I tell you. We were on Ellis Island. That was a great big building. They had a porch, a veranda, like, where you would go out, with steel bars on it. Now, Ellis Island held five hundred or a thousand people.

Only about, oh, a hundred and fifty, two hundred, could get out on that porch at one time. Otherwise you'd be in. The only way you could get air, fresh air, is to stay near that door. When somebody came in you could see that you could get out. And when we got into Ellis Island, I had one cousin, I got one cousin, he isn't alive any more, he was a citizen before we got into the United States. He was born on Ellis Island, believe it or not. (he laughs) That made him, because he was born on American soil, he was a citizen. So he was a citizen before we got here. Now, that was, that was something, I'll tell you. Your living conditions on Ellis Island were the worst we could expect, and to be in that condition, my aunt, you know, to give birth to him.

MOORE:Let's go back a little bit. On the boat, do you remember anything about that boat trip?

FRENDREIS:No, nothing at all. I don't even remember the top, the bottom or what. I couldn't even tell you if it was an oceanliner or whether it was a sail ship.

MOORE:Okay. Now, you say about the Statue of Liberty. When did you first see that?

FRENDREIS:When we got, when we got on the, on the big boat, when we were going from the big boat onto the smaller boat where they come in, you know. You know, when they have several boats come they just get these small ships lined up in a row like a, and when one pulls away, the other one pulls up and gets some more, and then they bring you onto the island.

MOORE:Were people talking about it on the boat, the Statue of Liberty? Did the other people have the same idea?

FRENDREIS:Oh, yeah. They were talking of it. That was something, you know, just like me. But I'll tell you what I think. If there was five hundred people on that, four hundred and ninety nine felt like I did. And then we got . . .

MOORE:Was there cheering or singing or anything going on?

FRENDREIS:No. No, some, some women were, they were, a couple of people were crying out loud. That was nothing uncommon, you know. They were crying for joy to see this. And then when we got here we figured, well, now it's all over with. Then we got onto Ellis Island while they fed you.

MOORE:What was Ellis Island, as you walked into Ellis Island what

was it like? What were the smells, tell me what the smells and sights and sounds inside were.

FRENDREIS: The smells, I can't tell you the smells. But the sounds sounded like a lot of people, like if you got a roomful of people, more people than what the room could handle, you know, is about what it was. We thought at last now our problems were over because these people talked, that you hear talking about this. You go in, you get checked out, and you get on another boat, and then they take you to New York City, you know. Well, this was all I remember, getting out of that little boat, and now I'm going to get onto this big building and I'm going to stay there, then from there I go out. It wasn't quite like that. When we got onto that building we found out we were over the quota. Now, Uncle Sam has one choice, send us back and pay the bill to send us back, which is boat fare and railroad fare. Well, I guess Uncle Sam finally figured out it's cheaper to feed us and let us sleep. So we had to stay over, which was almost about a week. Now, in that week, in that week you don't change clothes, you don't do nothing, because the only change of clothes we had, like I say, we had like a suitcase which now would probably be a duffle bag or a handbag.

That thing, the most in there could keep was diapers for my sister. And, you know, whatever you could handle in there. Now, come night time, to go in the bed and you go to sleep, they had these beds where like they had years ago. They're steel beds with a flat spring, and the legs folded under on the end. That's what you slept on. They fold them up in the day. They put them away, they take the blankets, and they take them downstairs. They're not washed. They're just deloused. Deloused or, you know, whatever they could, whatever, fleas, lice and everything else. And then at night time come, they put these beds up. Now, there's no way you would take your shoes off or your coat off. They give you the bed, they open them up, it's a flat spring. Then you go, and you come into this room.

MOORE:Why didn't you take your shoes and your coat off?

FRENDREIS:Because it wouldn't be there in the morning.

MOORE:Oh, I see. So stealing was a problem.

FRENDREIS:Oh, yeah, there was some disappearing. In fact, when you come into this room they give you two blankets. They were army blankets. That was one that you open up to lay on. There was no such thing as a pillow or anything.

One you have to open up to lay on, and the other one you covered yourself. They were World War One leftover stock blankets, this is what they were. Now, in the morning you had to turn those two blankets in because they had to take them downstairs to delouse them and to de-everything else you could do. Now, when you, the beds were far enough apart that maybe two feet apart the most, if it was that far. Now, when you woke up at night and you had to go to the bathroom, like I was, my mother and my dad and the three of us slept all in, my sister slept with my mother in the same bed. Now, when I had to go to the bathroom, I'd wake and shake my dad, tell him I'm going to the bathroom. I was fully-dressed, shirt and tie and pants and shoes. And then what he would do was reach over onto that bed and get a hold of that bed and the blanket, and he'd hold onto that, because if he didn't it wouldn't be there when I'd come back. They'd steal it to, you know, cover them or more underneath. So he hold onto that blanket.

Then when I come back I'd, you know, take his hand and let him know that I'm there, then I'd lay down on it.

In the morning you got up, you rolled up your blankets, fold up your blankets, you know, hand it in. Now, that went on for about a week. The food in there, the food

was, the soup lines that are in Chicago here in the, you know, where the bums go for Christmas time for that, or even where the bums go during the week.

MOORE:The soup kitchens, yeah.

FRENDREIS:The soup kitchens, they were superb compared to what we had.

MOORE:(she laughs) What was the food like, then?

FRENDREIS:Well, I'll tell you. I ate it because I was hungry. I remember one day they had hard-boiled eggs. Well, you know, eggs, when you eat them, one fills you up. So they had hard boiled eggs, and the kid next to me, he didn't want to eat eggs see, so his folks don't eat eggs, so I grabbed it and I stuck it in my pocket, see. The only thing wrong with it was it wasn't quite hard-boiled.

MOORE:Ew! (she laughs)

FRENDREIS:So, but it wasn't very bad. But, you know, my pocket, it took me a while to go to the bathroom and clean out my pocket, so you could see I never took any food from anybody else when they give it to me. But then when we finally had the thing, you know, the chance to come back and come over here they figured, you know, where

they'd put us, in the next month they'd put us in the next month's quota. In fact, I think I was maybe in there over a week because, you know, there was people coming off of that boat to get off on to the first, the day they come off. They come before you were over here, because the only time you got in was when they, when let up. Say during the day there was two boats waiting to go out, and not enough people processed, because we were processed already. We had to go to the last minute, you know, they go, so they tell you you can go. You went. And that steamer trunk downstairs, that was downstairs. Before I left, they'd open that up. And they had to fumigate it, you know, for lice and everything, and they, and the stuff that was in there, to be sure you don't bring no germs and disease to this country, they deloused it, they defumigated. Oh, like us, when we came over here we went through a locker.

We stripped our clothes and we went through one door and handed them the clothes there, and we got the clothes back when we come out the other end. We got deloused, and de-everything else.

MOORE:What about medical examinations? Did you have a medical examination?

FRENDREIS:No, not that I can remember. They looked at you, you're healthy, you got four, two legs and two arms and you can see, that's about it.

MOORE:(she laughs) And was there any entertainment on Ellis Island?

FRENDREIS:The only entertainment was, the biggest entertainment for everybody else was get out on that, get out on, see if you could get out there for two things, fresh air and to look at that lady holding that light. That was enough entertainment for us.

MOORE:Were there other people there speaking German?

FRENDREIS:Oh, yeah. There was people there from all parts of Europe. There was, well, like we were, amongst us my Dad could talk Hungarian. He talked to some of those people, Hungarian or German. They were all from parts of Europe, different parts. You know, where are you from? You know, that's a common thing. Where are you from? Where are you going to? You know, they all went to different, different parts of the country.

MOORE:Were there any things that you had never seen before, for the first time you saw at Ellis Island?

FRENDREIS:Oh, no. Well, I'd never seen what they, you know, Ellis Island was full of boats in that, you know, the harbor in there. We saw different boats because I was raised inland, you know, the first boat I ever saw in my life or been on, that was a monstrous thing that I come over with. And I found out after I got here it's a ship that's just about big enough to cross the ocean.

MOORE:What about, were there any, there were different types of people that you'd never seen before?

FRENDREIS:Well, we saw people with different type of clothing on but, you know, when you get into Ellis Island you get, that's the first thing that you realize, that everybody's dressed different than you.

MOORE:So when you finally got released, what happened?

FRENDREIS:Well, from there we came over. We went to New York and we got on there and they, and they, on the boat when we got off, this fellow took us off, and we went over to a railroad depot. And we got on the train to come from New York to Chicago.

MOORE:Just a second. I forgot to ask you one thing. When you were on Ellis Island, was there ever any discussion about

being sent back that you were frightened of?

FRENDREIS:Well, they told us that we were, that they told us that we were overdue, and that they hadn't made a decision yet as to what to do with us.

MOORE:Now, what did your family, how did your family react to that?

FRENDREIS:Well, that was horrible, because all three of us, all three families, you know, we were grouped and we traveled with the three families grouped together. Well, you know, sent back, oh, my gosh.

MOORE:What was the discussion going on between your families?

FRENDREIS:Well, I don't know what my dad and uncles and aunts were talking about. That I don't remember what they made out, but then they finally told us that we're not going to get sent back, that they are going to go, they've got to wait for another quota.

MOORE:So how long did you have to wait in knowing? Do you remember, was it a very long time before you knew?

FRENDREIS:Well, that I don't remember because my dad got that information. (the microphone rustles)

MOORE:So you went from there, from there you went to Chicago by train.

FRENDREIS:Yeah.

MOORE:Do you remember the train ride to Chicago?

FRENDREIS:No, I don't remember any of that at all, any of that at all.

MOORE:Do you know what your family's expectations about America were?

FRENDREIS:Well, expectation, you can always, if you're willing to work, you'll always have work, and they already knew that. My dad, like I say, he was farming, that you had to make money because everything you got, you know, you had to go and you had to buy. Not like out there, you know, vegetables and fruits and that. That was, you were stuck.

MOORE:So what address did you go to? Do you remember?

FRENDREIS:Well, I don't know, but my, my dad's oldest sister, when we got a flat we got it within about a block from her house. And then we lived there for quite a while, and I, as I say, I started going to Catholic school with my cousin. Now, as you remember now, in the past I learned a lot of German, I learned Serbian, I learned Hungarian. And when I come over to this country I went

in second grade, and I was in second grade.

MOORE:And how was that, starting?

FRENDREIS:And then I had to start learning English.

MOORE:And how was that? I mean, do you have any stories about learning English?

FRENDREIS:Well, I tell you, you know, it's, as far as going to school was concerned, no. Because by the time I got over here they evaluated my education would be in second grade because out there until I come over here I didn't go to school very much because, as I said, I was sick most of the time. And after I got into this country I never was sick. I don't know what it was, crossing the ocean or whatever but, anyway, I was never sick. I was healthy. I, doctors asked me, did you have, you know, all these children's disease. I don't even remember. As far as that goes, having, I must have had them, because I had one of everything else. I must have had them, to be sick as much as I was, and I never was sick over here.

MOORE:Well, in schools, was it easy for you to learn English?

FRENDREIS:No. Because by this time I didn't even learn German good,

good enough to read. And as far as the reading and writing, there isn't one language that I could say, because I'd never spent enough time at one language to learn. Because you figure by the time I got here I was ten years old, and I didn't have much schooling out there. How much could I have learned to read and write.

And I had to, remember I had to do this in three languages. That was, you know, you can go to one language, you go to one school, and you get in the other school, it's the same thing, you know. You just keep going from where you were. But over here you got three languages, you've got to go three different, it's three different things. And when you come into this, learning English, that was a fourth thing. Now, I'm only a kid eleven years, I'm a kid ten years old.

MOORE:Well, did anyone help you?

FRENDREIS:Yeah, my cousin. She used to help me with the, with, you know, doing my homework or this and that.

MOORE:Did anyone ever make fun of you?

FRENDREIS:Well, I tell you. When you come from over there, they, you had, because you were a greenhorn, and people tease, kids, you know, they tease you, razz you and poke fun

at you.

MOORE:What did they call you?

FRENDREIS:Greenhorn. Well, you see, the people that come from Europe in those days, like when we moved into a neighborhood, it's a little sad to say because I went through the same people that the colored people are going through today, you know, they come into a white neighborhood. Because we were about in that category.

MOORE:So you were discriminated against?

FRENDREIS:Oh, yes. You were discriminated against.

MOORE:And, what was about your parents?

FRENDREIS:Not in the sense of, not quite as bad. It was like, my mother couldn't go to the store like going to the store today. You know, I looked the same. I'm white, see. They would wait on me until I spoke. You know, then they have, of course, they could tell that some of our clothes wasn't quite up to what it was. But, I mean, there was a little discrimination, and kids would be kids. And, you know, they'd poke fun at me and made fun of me or anything until you got big enough and wise enough to learn. Once you know you could talk to them

and they knew you, you know what I mean, you spoke the same language they did, and you can talk just as clear as they could. Maybe you had an accent, but still, then they spoke, you know, they were clear to them, just like you and I are talking here, that's when it kind of went away.

MOORE:Did your teachers at all help you, especially?

FRENDREIS:Well, they, I went to, the first one I went to was Catholic school, and then they, you know, they tried to help, and I remember one school I was in I had one of the nuns in the Catholic school, she was German.

MOORE:What was her name?

FRENDREIS:Her first name was Marie, Sister Marie. But, so she had to, you know, give me some things to help me along, but that was rough. And then I went to a public school. Well, in the public schools they didn't try as much as they, uh, you know, they just taught the basics and they were pushing into them, where it seems like the Catholic school had more patience with you. Now, the parish, the first church I went to, I don't know if that was considered a German church, a Polish church or what, or just a regular American church, but I went to a public

school and I could find out. The public school was a little different than parochial schools. In public schools they were there because of what they did to you.

In Catholic schools, you know, they had one thing, you were the same religion as they were, to start out. And they seemed to have a little more patience with you or anything. Of course, the nuns were a little more strict with you, too.

MOORE:What about your parents? How did they learn to adjust to life here?

FRENDREIS:Well, my dad, he had to go to work every day. He learned it. He learned how to speak faster. But my mother, she never, she never, she could go to the store and get by within a grocery store, shopping, but otherwise when she went to a grocery store shopping you could tell that she was a woman that come over from Europe, where my aunts and, my two aunts that were here, they could go to the grocery store and go shopping. I'll tell you, they were here years before we were. You wouldn't know they were from Europe.

MOORE:What did your father get as a job when he first came here?
What was his first job?

FRENDREIS:Uh, I don't know what his first job was, but I know one job he had was, in those days they had, it was a coal man. Now, remember in those days they sold coal and wood, and in the summertime they'd have wagons on the street that sold ice. Well, his job was that they'd have a load of coal, and they had them on the back. They'd put them in big bags, and you'd put them on your back and carry them around the gangway. And everybody had like a window in the gangway. You drop it by the window, and then they put them into the shed. He did that, and then when they come, then they come and they, they had another outfit they do with coal, the coal truckers bring a load of coal in a wheelbarrow. See, they dump them in the alley. My dad had filled the wheelbarrow up, and then wheel it down the gangway and dump it into the window. You see, what his job was when he got done that alley had to be clean. You had to have everything out of there, and shovel everything and clean it up in the gangway there. And this guy that had the truck, he would go back to the coal yard and he'd get another load of coal, see. Come back and pick up my dad, put him on the wheelbarrow, get on the truck and he'd go to another place and he'd dump it, and he made that a delivery.

MOORE:How long did he do that type of job?

FRENDREIS:Well, as far as I know, for about a year or more than a year.

MOORE:What about the conditions of the apartment that you came to live in? Describe, do you remember that first apartment that you had that was near your aunt's house, about a block from your aunt's house?

FRENDREIS:Yeah. Well, now, that was, that block, that had an inside toilet. They had . . .

MOORE:How was it lit?

FRENDREIS:We had running water, yes, we had running water. But we had no hot water tank. In other words, when you wanted dishes or anything, you had to heat the water on the stove.

MOORE:What about in comparison with conditions in Yugoslavia. Did you have running water?

FRENDREIS:No. The whole thing, when we came to this country, was an improvement, whatever we had here.

MOORE:Okay. But back in Yugoslavia, was your house, how was your

house lit?

FRENDREIS:Oh, kerosene lamps.

MOORE:And how would it, you said it was heated by a fireplace. Was there running water inside?

FRENDREIS:No. You had to go outside.

MOORE:Okay. So when you came to this country you had running water.

FRENDREIS:Yeah.

MOORE:Did you have electricity?

FRENDREIS:Yeah, we had electricity.

MOORE:Right from the beginning?

FRENDREIS:Yeah. Right from the beginning. And we got a gas stove.

MOORE:And a gas stove. So everything was a luxury.

FRENDREIS:Oh, my mother was in heaven.

MOORE:And you had how many rooms?

FRENDREIS:We had, in that one we had three rooms. Two bedrooms, and one big room make a kitchen and everything. And I remember my dad, one job he had where I showed you

that picture where I was taken, that flat we lived in, that was next door to the public school.

MOORE:So how long did you live in this first flat? Excuse me, I didn't . . .

FRENDREIS:The first flat? Oh, we lived in there about, oh, not quite a year, I don't think.

MOORE:And then you moved . . .

FRENDREIS:Then we moved to the other place where I showed you the picture on there.

MOORE:Oh, these were rented flats?

FRENDREIS:Rented flats, yeah, we rent them. That was on, like a, it would be like a basement flat. Now, there we had, we had running water, and we had a, yes, there was a toilet, but there was no thing, I remember in there we had, when we took a bath we had one of these big washtubs, you know, the round ones, the big ones. That's what, we took out, and we heated, no hot water, heated the water on the stove for the tub. And we all, everyone in the family took a bath, and that's the way we took a bath. And then finally my dad moved, we got into a place, they had running water. Not hot water, they had

running water. They had a toilet, and they had a bathtub. No hot water. You had to do the same way with the thing. We had to empty it, you see. Now, that was something. That was an improvement. We were getting better as we go along.

MOORE:What about when you first came here? Now, when you came here to Chicago, what were the things that you had never seen before when you were a kid? Food, or artifacts, anything.

FRENDREIS:Oh, anything was new to me. In fact, at Christmas time, when we first come over, there was no such thing as a kid getting a truckload of toys for Christmas. That's the first, the only two things my dad, for Christmas time, I remember I was ten when I come over up until I, till I was sixteen years old. I got a coaster wagon from my uncle, he had been confirmed my godfather. My dad bought me a pair of rollerskates. I got a job one time with people taking, got firewood, taking it from the alley. It was dumped, it was from a cabinet or a carpenter shop, you know, all the right length. I got a little coaster wagon. I filled the little coaster wagon up by the alley, and I'd take it down the gangway, dump it, and throw it into the window. Well, I'll tell

you, that was all right until I had more slivers in my fingers than there was on the wood. So, anyway, that was, you know what I did all that for? I bought a sixteen-inch indoor ball. That was my own. That what I worked for all Saturdays.

MOORE:Indoor ball? What type of ball? Basketball?

FRENDREIS:No. That's a ball about that big around. (he gestures)

MOORE:Oh.

FRENDREIS:A sixteen-inch indoor ball. I worked, and that thing, in my little hands, that was really huge in my little hands. In fact, when I got done that night my hands were like I had chicken pox on my hands. They were red all over. My mother pulled slivers for about an hour, but I got that ball.

MOORE:(she laughs) What about, um, what about religious life? You said you were Catholic before you came. And did your parents worship any differently when they came here than . . .

FRENDREIS:No, they followed whatever, whatever, you know, was for the church.

MOORE:They went every week?

FRENDREIS:Oh, yeah. We went to that church, we would go every week.

In fact, the first Catholic church I went to was the one in Roosevelt Road near Halstead. That's that Catholic church they just re-fixed. I don't know what they call it. In fact, Bob Newhart, the movie star, him and I were confirmed in the same church, but different years. (Ms. Moore laughs) And that's when they, in Chicago there's, they just re-opened it some time ago. It was one of the first Catholic churches in the big, that's where I went to, the first Catholic church I went to.

MOORE:And you had your confirmation in Yugoslavia?

FRENDREIS:No, in here.

MOORE:You had your confirmation here, your First Communion?

FRENDREIS:My First Communion? No, my First Communion was in Yugoslavia.

MOORE:Yeah. Your First Communion was in Yugoslavia, and your confirmation was here.

FRENDREIS:Right.

MOORE:What was the biggest religious holiday then, for your family, the most important?

FRENDREIS:Well, I don't know if they had any, because we all used to get together all the time on Christmas, New Year's. On Christmas, and Easter, you know, that was the thing.

MOORE:Now, did you, was your family particularly, did any of your family members want to go back to live in Yugoslavia?

FRENDREIS:Nobody ever wanted to go back.

MOORE:Did they ever talk about it?

FRENDREIS:No. Nobody ever wanted to go back.

MOORE:And was your family, did they ever talk about being satisfied about being in the United States?

FRENDREIS:Oh, yeah. We were all satisfied being here.

MOORE:Did any tragedy occur in your family following your coming to America?

FRENDREIS:No. You see, coming here, for us, it was rather hard the first, say, the first five years, and I remember my dad had to work. He had to make enough money to buy groceries. He had to make enough money to pay back the

money that we borrowed to get here. He had to pay that back. And, as I say, the uncles and aunts were glad when we became citizens. You know, not glad, because, you know, not that they denied us anything but, I mean, you can imagine, that takes a big load off of somebody's mind when you sign for somebody and something goes wrong and you've got to support them people. And when they get sick you pay their doctor bills. And if, when they need a flat, you pay. If they can't work, you've got to pay the rent.

MOORE:Well, tell us a little bit about your life, briefly, what you did. Now, you went through, did you finish high school?

FRENDREIS:No. I'm a sixth grade dropout.

MOORE:Oh, you dropped out of sixth grade. Why did you drop out in sixth grade?

FRENDREIS:Because I was getting to the age I was getting too big for in school for where I was at, and my dad had a heck of a time, you know, making ends meet. And I had an opportunity to get a job which was, you know, good, so.

MOORE:And what job was that?

FRENDREIS:I, oh, the first one I went to, the first time I was an assistant to the window trimmer in a department store.

Now, they paid me pretty good, and we got a discount in the merchandise in there, some of it. So from that, I didn't like that because, well, you know, my dad didn't, he found out I'm working and I'm not going to school, but I wasn't making what I thought I was. So then a friend of my uncle's, my one uncle, he knew, he worked out. They needed a kid, an apprentice, in the machine shop, and he had my, he had my, a good friend of my uncle, the one that was there, see. There was one boy there. And he wanted, he says, you know, he had, my cousin just got out of high, well, it wasn't high school, but it was what they call the tenth grade parochial school. They have a different name for that. I don't know what it was. Anyway, he graduated from that. So then this guy, you know, it figured through my uncle he'll send my cousin there. Well, my cousin refused it. He didn't want it. He had already had in mind that . . .

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

MOORE:And this guy got you a job, you said.

FRENDREIS:And I, I got this job as a machinist apprentice, which was a big step up. Now, the only thing that I can remember is, you know, with that job in those days, you had to be, like I was the best in, I didn't have much of an education, but the best subject I had was mathematics, believe it or not. Well, of course, that was the same in every school that I went. You know, I didn't have to worry. You give me numbers and I knew what to do with them all. It wasn't like, you know, learning history and learning, you know, before you got history, they'd ask you questions. You had to learn the language. Well, arithmetic was the same in all of them through. So, well, my dad only went to sixth grade grammar school. That's all that was required of him when he went to school. That's all he did when he came here. So you couldn't see, you know, how things were, where things were tough, and I had to quit, that's all.

MOORE:What kind of job did you settle into later in life?

FRENDREIS:Well, I became a machinist apprentice, and that's what I worked in, and that's what I retired from.

MOORE:And where did you work as a machinist?

FRENDREIS: At that time I was lucky. I got into what they call a jobbing shop. It's a small shop, and they do a little bit of everything. And then I got out of that, then the Depression come. And I got out of that, and then I had to go, like, in the Depression, whatever I could get. Sometimes it was machine shop work, and sometimes it wasn't. Then finally I got to, oh, where I was at, that was the union shop. I got into that. So there I made pretty good money because, you know, then I got my advances as I did, because they have rules, so long here and so long, doing this and that. And then I met a fellow in the first machine shop I was in that took a liking to me because, you know, well, I was always willing to do and help him, you know, go out of my way for some of the fellows. So he told me he had two jobs for me. He says, "I can get you in the Goss Company, or I can get you into, in the CTA." CTA is Chicago Transit Authority. And the Goss Company, those two at that time were the biggest, the biggest and the best machine shops in the country, in Chicago, that you could get into. Now they're almost, you can't get in either one of them. The Goss Company made printing presses. Sometimes I seen pictures of The Tribune where they're showing, where they show our presses running, the

printing presses.

MOORE:How do you spell the Goss Company?

FRENDREIS:G-O-double S. All your papers, at that time, when I retired in '75, all your newspaper presses for the Chicago papers had Goss presses. Time magazine, Playboy, Women's Home Journal, they all were printed, they all were printed on Goss presses. Goss printing press at that time was the, say, eighty percent of the papers printed in this country were printed on those presses at that time.

MOORE:And is that where you went to work then?

FRENDREIS:That's where I went to work.

MOORE:And that's where you worked most of your life.

FRENDREIS:That's where I retired from.

MOORE:And you married at one point, right?

FRENDREIS:Yeah.

MOORE:And did you have children? I saw, you said a grandson.

FRENDREIS:Yeah. I have children. I have one daughter. And I married, I married my wife Bernice, who passed away last

November. We were married fifty-eight years.

MOORE:How old were you when you got married, then?

FRENDREIS:I was, now somebody, you look at me, how old do you think I am?

MOORE:I don't know. I mean, I know because you gave the year. You came here in 1921 at the age of 10.

FRENDREIS:All right. I'm fifty-three, I'm eighty-three now. We lived together fifty-eight years. I met her in River View, of all places, which was in those days, you know, big, I guess you've got an idea what River View is like, Coney Island. Anyway, I didn't meet her there, because I was, you know, I was just a common pick-up from River View. (he laughs) No, in the, a fellow I knew was going out with his girlfriend, and they had me, you know, I was in the carnival at that time, in the fall of the year, late in the summer. And he says, he come over. He says, "Nick, Blythe brought her girlfriend along," he says, "for you." He says, "I just thought I'd better call and tell you. Can you get extra tickets for her?" You know, because I got, see, when you come in you got a sheet of tickets. He did, his girlfriend did, and my wife did. Now, I got a card of tickets. What they

got, I says, "You know what color she's got?" He says, "Yes." So, anyway, when I went in to get my card, the card from, you know, the guy that gives them out for you before the carnival gets out, I told him what color I wanted, and told this guy, I met him at the gate. I says, "Here's a dime. Go over there and get me a cigar, will you?" So he went over and got a cigar, and he says, "You can't smoke while you're working." (there is a rustling sound heard on the tape due to a disturbance with the microphone) I says, "Never mind, give me the cigar." So then the guy gave me the card. I says, "Can I have another one?" He says, "Yeah." He took the cigar, stuck it in his pocket, and gave me another one, the same kind. So that's how we met. And she got, we were . . .

MOORE:I don't know if I got this right. Okay.

FRENDREIS:Now, when I met her, she was going the last year of high school, and she graduated in February. See, she was one of those, you know, when you graduate in the middle of the year. So we weren't going out. Just now and then I'd see her, because she was going to school, she had homework to do. And she come from a poor family. She had, her mother, there was two boys and two girls

in the family, four kids. And her mother was on welfare, widow's welfare. Now, that was an education in itself to learn. That welfare is altogether different than what it is today. She went to high school. She got a streetcar tokens. She got, they already had it figured out how many she needs for the next month, and you had to bring your report card when you got tokens again. If you missed one day of school, oh, you should have two tokens left. You didn't go to school, so you've got two token left. You better have them left. Now, you got clothes, you needed clothes? Okay, you bring the report card. And, I'm telling you, the stuff was handed out. The kids went to school, because if they didn't go to school, they got no welfare.

MOORE:Well, when were you married, you were older than your wife, were you?

FRENDREIS:Yeah. I was about two years, two-and-a-half years older. We were married. I met her in, sixteen, '26, no, wait a minute. It wasn't around '30 because at the '33 the Chicago World's Fair, I met her in around 1930, somewheres around there is where I met her. We got married in '35, so it must have been the beginning of '30, because we went out for four years. And in the

meantime she got out of high school. There was no such thing as finding a job when she got out of high school.

That was a thing of the past. She went and took a job as a housekeeper, a maid, you know, for some rich, well-to-do people on the south side. Now, the only time I saw her was on, she'd have off on Sunday, after Sunday dinner she was off for the rest of the day on Sunday.

And weekdays, one day a week, one day in the evening she'd be off. Now, she'd come home, take a streetcar and come home, and then I would always have, take her back. See, in those days streetcars were only a nickel or seven cents. Now, I'd go back with her, walk her to her house, and we'd, see, I had the bus schedule figured out. I knew when that bus was coming, because in the night time they only run once every hour. You got on that corner. So I'd take her home, then I'd go over and sit on the curb and wait for that bus to come.

Then from there I'd get home about one thirty, two o'clock in the morning.

MOORE:And you had, eventually you had a child, you had a daughter?

FRENDREIS:Yeah. For a while her and I, then she went from that job, she went to Montgomery Ward, where she worked until she retired. She worked at Montgomery Ward until she quit,

and she quit working and retired. And then I was, at that time I was working at, well, whatever, you know, machine shops that I could get. But we, our daughter was born after I was, I started working for the Goss Company, for the machine shop. That's when she was, my daughter was born, we had, we were married ten years before we had her, because my wife couldn't hold a pregnancy. She was what they call today (?) they do, inseminate them, or whatever you call it.

MOORE:Inseminate, yeah.

FRENDREIS:That's what she, how she became pregnant.

MOORE>Your daughter, what did you daughter do professionally then?

FRENDREIS:She went to, she went to Catholic grammar school and went to high school. And she met a fellow in there that was a, that took a liking to her, and, uh, one of the teachers. And he was her math teacher, and he told her, you know, at the end they, you know, they come along and they take you for anything. You know, good teachers are (?). (there is a rustling sound heard on the tape due to a disturbance with the microphone) She asked him, you know, what he thinks, he says, "Well, definitely something in the field where there's some mathematics

involved, because you're good at that." And he says, "I would advise you." She says, "Well, how would teaching be?" He says, "Well," he says, "I'll tell you what." He says, "I'm just going to tell you something. I'm a schoolteacher." He says, "My son is a scientist." His son was the, you know when they discovered the atom in the Chicago, in the University of Chicago, underneath that thing? His son was a junior physicist.

MOORE:What was his name?

FRENDREIS:I don't know what his name was, but he was a junior physicist. He says, "When my son started working, he made the salary that I'm making today." He says, "I'm a teacher ready to retire." He says, "Now, this is a young kid coming out of college." He says, "You got an idea what salaries are." So he says, "What is the, what type . . ." She says, "I can't be a physicist." He says, "No. But there's a coming thing that's going to be really easy, a lot of people are don't think it's much. But," he says, "I think the world is going to go to it." She says, "What is it?" He says, "Get in computers." So she studied, she went to get the computer, and that was what she learned in, and she got

a job working for Brunswick Corporation first, and then she worked for another big outfit computering for them.

And she finally, she eventually became a computer programmer/analyst is what she worked herself up to, and then she wanted to teach. She did that, and she worked at that until she got married. After she got married she just was in computer now and then, doing things. And she started doing things at home with the computer, and she still does that now. And then she wanted, they wanted her in one of these junior colleges, Joliet Junior College, like as part of it, Boilingbrook is, part of it, is a (?). They wanted somebody to teach computer in night school two nights a week. So she applied for it, and since she left the programming, you know, they got another subject they brought in, something else, and she didn't have that. So she didn't get the job as teaching, because she couldn't teach that because she never had it. But the guy that got the job was also from Lamont. She knew him. He says, "Why don't you go to night school so she can take that course, and at the same time take some more things that you could teach?" So she went through college and she got that, and she got more, a bigger computer, and she started doing computer work. Well, right now she is in charge

of the Lamont School High School computer program. Everything that goes through her, breaking in the people, to teach it. This computer needs fixing, this needs that, she can do it. You know, she can take that thing apart, put all the nuts and bolts on the table and put them together. She could, so she's in charge of it. That's broke down? This is that, she's got, it's her job to see that it gets fixed.

MOORE:Are you pretty proud of her?

FRENDREIS:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:Well . . .

FRENDREIS:And then she still says, then she still does, you know, like I say, in computer things, you know, at home. And she, and she, before she got this computer programming she, you see, they wanted her, she volunteered this program, computer in school, it was a volunteer thing. She took that all on her own. It was all volunteer. And at the same time she applied, she applied for a substitute teacher, because she was a substitute teacher, I think, in three schools, and that's how they got, they wanted to get it in there, and they knew she had it, and they'd ask her if she'd be willing to take,

you know, try it out on a volunteer basis. She says, "They still got your substitute teaching, but we wanted to put it in on a try-out basis to see how it will go over." So she did and I don't know how many years she did it. And she says, "Well, by now it should be a part of education." She says, "Okay. The program is over with. Now," she says, "now they got to get the Board of Education, and everybody needs to get their heads together." And when . . .

FRENDREIS:When you look back on all this, I mean, you talk about your daughter's successes and what she's done, and you talk about your life and your wife. How do you feel about coming to this country?

FRENDREIS:It's the best thing my dad ever did.

MOORE:And what, do you think that you passed anything down to your daughter in terms of your own heritage from there, from your . . .

FRENDREIS:No, I don't think, no. Because she went to school here and that, and she never, and I got to the point where, from out there, I didn't carry any of the habits or traits or anything. You know what I mean?

MOORE:Do you think that, would you have stayed in your own country and had a daughter there she would be able to have attained the same things she did here?

FRENDREIS:No, she never would have, never would have.

MOORE:So you feel pretty good about this.

FRENDREIS:Definitely. Because being a sixth grade dropout, to be able to go through, you know, what they, well, incidentally today my wife, see, when I got married my wife did one thing. She says, "I'll be the bookkeeper," and I'll be the math. She was good at bookkeeping and mathematics. So she says, "I'll be the bookkeeper." She says, "You go and earn money." And I, well, well, I earned money, but she always complained I never earned enough. I says, "You've got to balance those books better." So that's what she did. So all the time we always had a budget. She liked that, because that was her job. And how she died, and before she died, she was getting towards the end, I guess, she knew she had to have her daughter to help her, Blue Cross and Blue Shield and all that comes through. Well, the daughter helped her for the last year, and thank God she did, because I never could do that. She comes over one day

a week and takes all the bills, the Blue Cross, Blue Shield. She's my, my secretary, my advisor and my doo-dad fixer. (Ms. Moore laughs)

MOORE:Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island . . .

FRENDREIS:Now, you see, in the fall what I did here. My dad and my, there's a little story to this that my dad, when they brought me over, remember I said my dad married my mother's sister, you know. All right. That sister that my, that was in Europe, now, she was a woman that was my aunt. She had two daughters, and they lived in Europe, they stayed in Europe, and they had two daughters that lived through the war. And, of course, they went, you know, from one country to another. And finally they wanted to come over here. Well, it was two girls. (microphone disturbance) One of the two girls, her husband had a brother in the United, in Detroit. And he had, his wife's brother, his wife's brother, so they wanted to come to this country, so they, they were their sponsors, just like we got sponsored. They brought the two girls over, but now they had a mother that was over sixty-five. They had to leave her behind. The mother says, "Go, it's the only chance you'll ever have in your life, and I only got a few years left. Don't worry about

me." She says, "Go." So they come over, they were sponsored like we were. See, each one of those two fellows had a trade. One was an electrician, he had an A card. That's about as high as you go. He's the guy that figures out these big boxes, what is in what. Now, they come over and they had the two girls. The two girls, they were married. They had a husband, so they had to sponsor, you know, one sponsored one and the other and they left them out there. Now, the aunt is out there, and they're writing to her, then these two girls are starting to feel sorry, that's my cousins, for their mother. So they finally come over, and I was able to pay back my debt. I sponsored her.

MOORE:The mother.

FRENDREIS:The mother. Now, remember, same thing. They come over here. This is an old woman. I had to have a place where she lived, she had a place where she lived with the kids. I had to have no bills, doctor bills. Now, remember, I don't remember, I don't know what kind of character these girls were, because I don't even remember out there, but I knew I had cousins. I took a big gamble, but I never had to pay anything. They took care of her. She come over here, she come over here, and she lived

two years until she died.

MOORE:And was she happy she came?

FRENDREIS:Oh, it was the greatest thing in the world to her. Well, by that time she had grandchildren, you know, she saw her grandchildren and she saw, could be with her kids.

MOORE:I would like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for taking time with us today, and we'll send you a cassette in the summer time, in, a copy of this, for your family and for your daughter.

FRENDREIS:Yeah.

MOORE:And this is Kate Moore signing off in Bolingbrook, Illinois on April 26, 1994.

FRENDREIS:Thank you.

MOORE:Thank you.