

KM-0044

ALMA CARLSON

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**UNITED STATES: DOW CITY, IOWA; PORT TOWNSEND,
WASHINGTON**

MOORE: Good morning. This is the twenty third of June and I'm in Port Townsend, Washington. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service. Today, as I said is the twenty third of June and I'm in Port Townsend – as I said – Washington, at the home of Alma Swanson, who came from Sweden in 1914 when she was sixteen going on seventeen years old. Why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth please? What is your full name?

CARLSON: Alma Augusta Margaret Carlson.

MOORE: Carlson.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Alma Augusta Margaret Carlson. W—how do you spell Carlson?

CARLSON: C-A- (coughs) C-A-R-L-S-O-N

MOORE: C-A-R-L-S-O-N.

CARLSON: (coughs)

MOORE: Alright. And where were you born?

CARLSON: In Ramsult, Sweden.

MOORE: Could you spell that?

CARLSON: R-A-M-S-U-L-T.

MOORE: And what was your birth date? When were you – what was your birthday?
When is that?

CARLSON: Twenty second of July.

MOORE: The twenty second of July – what year were you born?

CARLSON: (coughs) Huh, huh. Isn't that strange – I can't think of that.

MOORE: You have written down here 1896.

CARLSON: That's right, yeah.

MOORE: In 1896?

CARLSON: Yeah, I'll be ninety seven, ninety eight this year.

MOORE: Very good. Ok so 1896 and um, what size town was your town again?
How big was the town that you were born in or lived in?

CARLSON: Well it was a farm. Then the nearest town was Askersund.

MOORE: Askersund – could you spell that for us?

CARLSON: A-S-K-E-R-S-U-N-D, Askersund.

MOORE: Right. And so that your – your farm was the village. What did it look like –
your – could you describe the place that you lived in when you were a
child? You lived in a farm, did you?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: How – could you tell us about it? How big was the farm?

CARLSON: It was quite big. And if I remember right we had [not understood] two
bedrooms.

MOORE: In the house?

CARLSON: Uh huh.

MOORE: What was the house made of?

CARLSON: Wood.

MOORE: A wood house. You say quite big. Could you tell me how many acres would be big? Have you remember any of that? How big, big was? (pause) Um, and what did you grow on that farm?

CARLSON: [not understood] potatoes and rye.

MOORE: Potatoes and rye.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Um, what was your father's name?

CARLSON: Victor.

MOORE: Victor.

CARLSON: Carlson.

MOORE: Carlson. How do you spell Victor?

CARLSON: V – V-I-C-T-O-R.

MOORE: V-I-C-T-O-R, and what was his occupation?

CARLSON: He was a farmer.

MOORE: A farmer. What did your father look like? Was he a t—could you tell us how tall he was or his hair color or--? Do you remember? (long pause) How 'bout – what about his personality and temperament? What kind of person was he – your father?

CARLSON: He was very nice.

MOORE: A very nice person.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: W—and how was he nice to you?

CARLSON: (long pause) How what?

MOORE: How was he nice? In what way was he nice to you?

CARLSON: Well he treated us real nice. And took us place – especially on the fourth of July.

MOORE: When you got to this country on the fourth of July he took you places?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: We'll get to that in a moment. Is there a story about your father that you remember that – anything about him that you tell your children?

CARLSON: No I can't really remember.

MOORE: Ok. How 'bout your mother's name?

CARLSON: Hilda.

MOORE: Hilda. And what was her maiden name?

CARLSON: Persdotter.

MOORE: Persdotter. How do you spell that?

CARLSON: P-E-R-S –D – dotter. Persdotter.

MOORE: Alright. And what was her occupation?

CARLSON: Housewife

MOORE: She was a housewife. And what did she look like?

CARLSON: I thought she looked wonderful.

MOORE: And what color eyes did she have?

CARLSON: Blue.

MOORE: Blue. And how 'bout her hair?

CARLSON: Black.

MOORE: Black hair, blue eyes. Was she a tall woman?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: How tall would you say? Taller than you?

CARLSON: Oh yes.

MOORE: Huh. Taller than me?

CARLSON: About your size.

MOORE: Five foot seven or so?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And um, what was her personality and temperament? How was she as a person? What was she like as a person – your mother?

CARLSON: What?

MOORE: How – what was her personality – your mother?

CARLSON: She was very happy all the time. Everyone loved her.

MOORE: And what chores did she do around the house? What did she have to do?

CARLSON: The usual thing.

MOORE: Cooking?

CARLSON: Yes. Cooking, cleaning and washing clothes.

MOORE: And do you remember any story or anecdote about your mother?
Anything that y—funny story or anything you remember?

CARLSON: No, not really.

MOORE: How 'bout brothers and sisters?

CARLSON: There was twelve of us.

MOORE: Twelve! And y—and who was the oldest?

CARLSON: My brother Carl.

MOORE: Carl? And who was next?

CARLSON: Emma.

MOORE: Emma?

CARLSON: Carl, Emma, Eric.

MOORE: Eric.

CARLSON: Maria.

MOORE: Maria.

CARLSON: And Ebba[ph].

MOORE: Ebba?

CARLSON: Yeah. Elsa.

MOORE: Elsa.

CARLSON: And Alma.

MOORE: Alma is you.

CARLSON: And Nils and Sven.

MOORE: Nils, Sven.

CARLSON: And Harry.

MOORE: And Harry.

CARLSON: And Elba.

MOORE: Elba.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Hm. And um – so you were in the middle.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What was the age difference between the oldest and the youngest? How many years between you? Carl and Elba – how many years between?

CARLSON: Thirteen.

MOORE: Thirteen? So every year there was a new child. How 'bout um – let's go back to your house. You said it was two rooms that you remember and it was a wooden house. W—how was it heated? Do you remember how your house was--

CARLSON: [interposed] With wood.

MOORE: With wood.

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: And was there a garden?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: You had your own garden. And what did you grow in that garden?

CARLSON: Everything.

MOORE: Everything you needed?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And what furniture did you have in the house?

CARLSON: What you usually have.

MOORE: And what was that? Because it's different in Sweden than it is in Bulgaria, so what was usual for the furniture? You had two rooms--

CARLSON: [interposed] Mhmm.

MOORE: How'd you get twelve children in two rooms? Did you have beds or--?

CARLSON: It was two story.

MOORE: Oh two story house.

CARLSON: [not understood] bedrooms upstairs.

MOORE: Oh I see. So downstairs there were two rooms – and what rooms were
[recording skips]

CARLSON: Kitchen and dining – living room.

MOORE: Kitchen and dining/living room. And what about the kitchen? Did you –
what did that look like? How did you cook your food – on what type of
stove?

CARLSON: Wood stove.

MOORE: A wood stove. And did you have a table in the kitchen?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Did you – how did you eat your meals – all of you?

CARLSON: It was a large kitchen.

MOORE: A very – ah – so you could all fit in there to eat? Did you eat together or--
?

CARLSON: Oh yes.

MOORE: One meal – how many meals did you eat a day?

CARLSON: I suppose three.

MOORE: Three. And all the children together?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Um, did you have animals?

CARLSON: Oh yeah.

MOORE: What kind?

CARLSON: We had two horses [not understood]. Two – two cows, chickens.

MOORE: And did you have a cart – horse cart? How did you dr—get from one place to another – to the nearest farm? How would your father or mother drive there?

CARLSON: Horse and buggy.

MOORE: Horse and buggy. Um did – what about your grandparents? Did they live with you?

CARLSON: No.

MOORE: No. Did you remember where your grandparents lived?

CARLSON: No, I can't remember.

MOORE: Who did the cooking in the family? Did the children help with the cooking? Did you help cooking?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What was your favorite food?

CARLSON: I remember they had – at Christmas I remember they had lutefisk.

MOORE: Lutefisk.

CARLSON: And oh it was good.

MOORE: (laughs) And um – what other things did you have at Christmas special?
What was Christmas like? Was it a big holiday?

CARLSON: Mhmm. It lasted for thirteen days.

MOORE: (laughs)

CARLSON: We really celebrated.

MOORE: Like how? Like what did you do? (long pause) Gifts at Christmas? Did
you give gifts at Christmas?

CARLSON: Oh yes.

MOORE: Uh huh and did you have a Christmas tree or --?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What about food? Besides lutefisk what else did you eat for thirteen
days?

CARLSON: Well, if I remember right we had turkey.

MOORE: Turkey? Especially in this country you had turkey, yeah?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What about um – did – so did you know your grandparents on either side at all? Did you know any grandparents?

CARLSON: No, not really.

MOORE: Mhmm. Um, who were you closest in the family? Who was your favorite person? Did you have anybody you liked best in the family?

CARLSON: I loved them all.

MOORE: Oh. And um – do you have any stories about your brothers and sisters? Any good stories about things they did?

CARLSON: No, I can't remember.

MOORE: Ok hold on. What about your religious life? Did you go to church?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What – what type of church was it?

CARLSON: We went to Sunday school (coughs).

MOORE: In Sweden?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: How far was the church from your house?

CARLSON: About a mile.

MOORE: A mile. How far was your nearest neighbors?

CARLSON: A quarter mile.

MOORE: A quarter of a mile. And what type of church denomination were you – Lutheran or what religion were you?

CARLSON: Lutheran.

MOORE: Lutheran. And did you say prayers at night?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Every night?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Before meals?

CARLSON: Mother always did.

MOORE: Your mother always did, huh? Um, you said – describe – we already describe Christmas. Um, you said Christmas was your favorite. Christmas was your favorite?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Did you – did you have other animals? You said you had cows and chickens and you had horses. Did you have pigs?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: You had pigs. And did you eat any of these – any of the animals for Christmas?

CARLSON: Yes we slaughtered pig.

MOORE: You slaughtered a pig for Christmas.

CARLSON: Uh huh.

MOORE: And uh, how 'bout music? Did you sing?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: What – special songs?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And um, Sweden – school then? Did you go to school in Sweden?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: At what age?

CARLSON: Well I start school at six.

MOORE: At six.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And where was the school located? Where was it?

CARLSON: That's strange, I can't remember.

MOORE: It'll come back to you. It'll come back. You have to wait a bit sometimes. But um, w—tell – tell me about your school. How was it organized? Did you have many students in a classroom? How many were in each class?

CARLSON: Oh there was a lot of them. I remember the teacher's name was Ms. Holman.

MOORE: Holman?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And when you say a lot of them – how many would that be of students? About, would you say? Was it crowded?

CARLSON: Yes.

MOORE: It was a crowded school, huh?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And do you remember any playmates, any friends?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Could you name any?

CARLSON: Oh yes. I had girlfriend by name Sarah.

MOORE: And what was your favorite subject in school?

CARLSON: I like it all.

MOORE: And did you learn any English before coming here?

CARLSON: No.

MOORE: No. Did any family member know any English? (pause) What about playing? Did you know any games?

CARLSON: [inaudible]

MOORE: What about – what did you do for entertainment?

CARLSON: Living on the farm and having all that work to do there was no time for play.

MOORE: Ah so you did a lot of work – farm chores.

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: Do you have any stories from your childhood that you tell your children? Anything?

CARLSON: Not really.

MOORE: Ok. How did you come to America? Who decided to come to the United States?

CARLSON: Well I had a sister that came here first. She was thirteen years older than I and [not understood]. We wrote letters back and forth. And so one day I told mom I wanted to go. She says no you can't. She said it's bad enough to have one girl over there. So then I went to my dad and he said oh – he said mom let her go. So these people send me the money. It cost seventy five – I think seventy five dollars to get to the city I want. And you had to have another seventy five with you. So if you – when they questioned you about certain things if you didn't pass that test then you had to go back home.

MOORE: Now what was your sister doing here – your older sister?

CARLSON: She was a cook for rich people.

MOORE: She was a cook for rich people. And you were very young. You came by yourself?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: You did the whole trip by yourself?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What were you going to do here when you got here?

CARLSON: Well I was looking for work in private families.

MOORE: And did you have work before you came?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: Where?

CARLSON: You mean when I got here?

MOORE: Yeah. Before you got here, did you know you were going to work somewhere? Did you have a job before you came here?

CARLSON: No not really because it was so much work to be done on the farm.

MOORE: Yeah. So when you got here – alright. So you decided that you wanted to go.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Why?

CARLSON: Well I just had the urge to go.

MOORE: And w—why did you have the urge? Did – what did you hear about America?

CARLSON: Well my sister wrote and then too my parents were very poor. So I thought if I came over here I could send home money, which I did. And I think that one dollar made seven – seven k—s—kr—kronor. Seven [not understood] – so that helped.

MOORE: So what did your sister write to you in her letters about America? How did she describe it? What did you know about America before you came here?

CARLSON: Well not really but she – she was very satisfied here.

MOORE: And what did she tell you about America? Did she say anything about her conditions of work or did she tell you any—did you have any notion in your head what was going to happen to you?

CARLSON: No.

MOORE: Um, ok so you went to your father and your father said to your mother let her go. What happened after that?

CARLSON: Well, I got my ticket the people [not understood] that funded me send me the money. So when I got there I – they lived on a big, big farm. And at noon, which was the big meal, I had to help Martha to serve the dinner.

MOORE: Your sister? The same people as your sister? Help Martha – who is Martha? That's not your sister's name.

CARLSON: That's the people that I went to work for.

MOORE: Ok so you got your ticket and do you – did they give you a party – goodbye party or – what did you pack? How did you get ready?

CARLSON: Well I didn't have much clothes so that was no problem.

MOORE: But – alright so did you take anything special with you here?

CARLSON: I remembered that my sister wanted some – her records for to play.

MOORE: Swedish records?

CARLSON: Mhmm. So I brought some of those.

MOORE: What about – anything special that – remember home from? Did you bring anything with you?

CARLSON: No.

MOORE: And did your mother ever like the idea that you were going to go?

CARLSON: Uh uh.

MOORE: Did she tell you that she didn't want you?

CARLSON: Yeah. I didn't like to hurt her but after I've came here and send them money, then she didn't mind too much.

MOORE: And so – alright so the night before you left, did they give you a big dinner?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What happened?

CARLSON: Well everybody – friends and everybody was there.

MOORE: And they had a – for you? Because you were leaving?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: Did you think you'd ever go back?

CARLSON: I went back twice.

MOORE: But to live, did you ever go back to live?

CARLSON: Uh uh.

MOORE: But when you left did y—did you think you were going to come back?

CARLSON: No. I wasn't sure.

MOORE: And what was the feeling at sixteen years old, taking off like that?

CARLSON: (laughs) Well I remember when we got into Ellis Island and I saw the Statue of Liberty and then I thought what in the world am I doing here?

MOORE: (laughs) And what was the Statue – what was the Statue of Liberty like to you?

CARLSON: But then I – I decided to go to employment office and get work. I was lucky I got work from two elderly people. They were awfully good to me.

MOORE: And where was this?

CARLSON: In Dow City, Iowa.

MOORE: Mhmm.

CARLSON: And I remember that (laughs) one time she had ordered – she always came in the kitchen and ordered groceries on the phone. And I can't remember what it was but I misunderstood her and I served something else. She got real angry but the man sat at the other end of the table and she sat here. She got so angry that she took his food and threw at him, and he did like this. And so he took and put some on his plate. And then (laughs) I really felt that I was crying and I thought, this is it. I thought shoot they're gonna fire me. And I went out in the kitchen – I was crying. And then the old man came up and when he saw my tears he go like that no, no, no tears. And then he took out his purse and he gave me fifty cents (laughs). So then I called my sister and I told her and I said I'm sure that they'll fire me. And she said you dumb fool she said – make another mistake and you get another fifty cents!

MOORE: (laughs)

CARLSON: So that kind of shut me up.

MOORE: (laughs) W—let's go back a bit to the boat trip. So where did you get on the boat?

CARLSON: Well we couldn't board a boat in Sweden so we had to go to Oslo, Norway.

MOORE: How did you get there – to Oslo?

CARLSON: Went by train.

MOORE: Mhmm. So you went by train?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And you went alone?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And what was that train – what do you remember from that train trip?

CARLSON: Well, I remember that the conductor was a Negro and I had never seen.

MOORE: Not in Oslo – in Oslo?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Hm. So – wait a minute you had to leave the boat from Oslo—

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And when you got on the boat in Oslo -- do you remember seeing the boat for the first time?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: What was it like?

CARLSON: I think the name of it was United States.

MOORE: The boat?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And how big was it?

CARLSON: Very large.

MOORE: And what type of – did you stay overnight in Oslo? Did you have to sleep there?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: Do you remember where you slept then?

CARLSON: Some hotel.

MOORE: Some hotel. And what kind of conditions in the hotel? Was it nice hotel?

CARLSON: Very nice.

MOORE: Now the boat – where – what type of – what was it like on the boat? Where did you sleep in the boat?

CARLSON: We had a special cabin.

MOORE: You had a cabin. How many – who's we? Who was with you?

CARLSON: I had a [recording skips]

MOORE: And – and she went over too? To the United States?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: So your friend Sarah from childhood came too? (pause) Now alright um, did you travel on the train? Now what was Sarah gonna do? What did

Sarah do? (long pause) Did she work? Ok let's back up. Ok so you went on the United States boat, ok, and you had your own cabin. Are you ok?

CARLSON: No I hurt terribly.

MOORE: W—wanna stop? [recording skips] – when you first saw the Statue of Liberty?

CARLSON: Well, I thought it was beautiful. But at the same time realizing that I was in America and couldn't speak the language – I felt frustrated.

MOORE: Now you got to Ellis Island. What do you remember of Ellis Island?

CARLSON: Awful lot of people.

MOORE: And very crowded. And did they – were they polite to you?

CARLSON: Hm?

MOORE: Were they nice to you at Ellis Island?

CARLSON: Oh yeah.

MOORE: What happened there? How long were you there?

CARLSON: About – it took several hours before we could get a train.

MOORE: What else – did you have a medical examination?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: What did they do?

CARLSON: They examine my eyes.

MOORE: Mhmm.

CARLSON: My chest.

MOORE: Your chest, yeah.

CARLSON: And my ears.

MOORE: And your ears. And did they ask you any questions at all?

CARLSON: Not really.

MOORE: And did you ever – were you ever frightened that they would send you back?

CARLSON: No.

MOORE: You had seventy five dollars with you.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Now you went by – you – you were on Ellis Island. Did anything else happen? Did you eat there? Did they give you food?

CARLSON: Yes.

MOORE: Were there other Swedes? People from Sweden – were there other people from Sweden?

CARLSON: No, I can't remember.

MOORE: How did you do this without understanding English? You don't know? Well, alright so then you went on to your first job – was with this family, right?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Tell me a little about the rest of your life – what happened. W—before that – the family that you lived in – how big was the house? The one in – you first worked in.

CARLSON: [not understood]

MOORE: The big farm, you said. Was it a farm?

CARLSON: Uh uh. You mean where I worked when I came in?

MOORE: Yeah.

CARLSON: No, no that was in a city.

MOORE: Ah, was in a city. And who were the people?

CARLSON: It was just a couple.

MOORE: A couple.

CARLSON: No children.

MOORE: No children.

CARLSON: No.

MOORE: And you – what did you do exactly?

CARLSON: Well I had to clean the house, do the cooking, wash the dishes.

MOORE: And how did they treat you?

CARLSON: Well v—she treated me real nice when I did what I was supposed to do but when I misunderstood her and didn't do what she wanted then she was real cross with me.

MOORE: But how did you understand when you didn't speak English?

CARLSON: Well you just had to do the best you can.

MOORE: And how long did you stay there at that house?

CARLSON: Not very long.

MOORE: Not very long?

CARLSON: No, I didn't like it.

MOORE: Oh. So you stayed – how long was that, a year?

CARLSON: 'Bout a year.

MOORE: And – and then where did you go?

CARLSON: Well I got another job.

MOORE: What was the best job you had?

CARLSON: Well I always did housework.

MOORE: You always did housework.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And was there one family that you stayed with a long time?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Who were they? What were their names?

CARLSON: I can't remember.

MOORE: That's ok, that's ok. Um, well d—w—tell us a little bit about your life then. Did you marry and have children? How did you meet your husband?

CARLSON: Well it was during World War I.

MOORE: World War I.

CARLSON: And he was in France and I had a sister here as I told you but she – she didn't have time to write so she asked me to write. And because I didn't know English I remember I sat up one night writing a letter to him. It was

twelve o'clock at night and then I wrote -- underneath I said -- please Axle, I said, tell me how many mistakes I made. And he wrote back and he said the only mistake I made was when I -- I said something about we had an awful lot of r--r--rain and in Swedish it's rain.

MOORE: Mhmm.

CARLSON: So then I felt pretty good about that (laughs).

MOORE: So Axle -- this is the man you wrote in World War I -- did he turn out to be your husband?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: How d--from the letters?

CARLSON: Pardon me?

MOORE: Because you wrote him letters?

CARLSON: Mhmm. Yeah we got -- (laughs) we got kind of acquainted that way.

MOORE: And is -- he was Swedish?

CARLSON: He was born here.

MOORE: He was born here. But was he Swedish too?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: So he understood Swedish?

CARLSON: Yes.

MOORE: And where was he from when he was born – where was he born? What state?

CARLSON: In Port Townsend.

MOORE: In Port Townsend. Here, in Washington. Now did you stay out – how did you get to Washington state?

CARLSON: Because of my sister. She wrote to ask me if I would come and spend Christmas with them.

MOORE: And this is – which sister was this?

CARLSON: My sister Emma.

MOORE: Emma, who came here.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: So you came out to Washington—

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And you ended up here because Axle –

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: So that's a v—that's wonderful. And did you have children?

CARLSON: Two boys.

MOORE: Two boys. Now what are their names?

CARLSON: Vernon.

MOORE: Vernon?

CARLSON: And Harry.

MOORE: And Harry. And how old were you when you married?

CARLSON: Twenty two.

MOORE: Uh huh. And how old were you when you had children?

CARLSON: Vernon was born in 1924.

MOORE: And what did y—what did your husband do for a living?

CARLSON: He had a (clears throat) wood business.

MOORE: A wood business.

CARLSON: Uh huh.

MOORE: Doing what in wood?

CARLSON: He sold wood.

MOORE: Ah, he sold it or sawed it?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And when you look back over your life now, w—what were the best things – well first I'll ask you did you have a f—did you have any tragedies? Did your family have any tragedies there or here?

CARLSON: Any what?

MOORE: Tragedies. Anything bad happen in the United States?

CARLSON: No.

MOORE: No. Did um – when you look back over your life, how do you feel about coming to the United States now? Was it a good decision?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Did you have – were you very homesick for your family?

CARLSON: I was at first.

MOORE: Mhmm. How long did that last, about?

CARLSON: [inaudible]

MOORE: And so now when y—your—in your older – you think it was a good decision to come here?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: And did your mother ever think it was a good decision?

CARLSON: Yes. She finally did.

MOORE: And do you still have family in Sweden now?

CARLSON: Yes.

MOORE: And you said you went back twice.

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: To visit?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: What years? Which – when did you go?

CARLSON: 1948.

MOORE: 1948 – and that was a long time after – you waited thirty years to go back.

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: What was it like to go back?

CARLSON: It was wonderful.

MOORE: Was it?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: I—i—was it – had everything changed?

CARLSON: Oh yes.

MOORE: If you were to advise young people today of anything what would you a—
what would you give as advice?

CARLSON: Well of course it's up to each person but I adv—my advice would be to go.

MOORE: To go where you want to?

CARLSON: Mhmm.

MOORE: Well I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for talking with us today
and for giving us this interview.

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: Alright this is Kate Moore in Port Townsend, Washington with Alma
CARLSON on a twenty third of June, 1994 signing off for the Ellis Island.
Twenty fourth – sorry – of June – signing off for the Ellis Island Oral
History Project.

CARLSON: That's what I said.

MOORE: That's alright this is Kate – this is Kate Moore for Ellis Island again and we
have a – a postscript for this. Tell me about what – when they asked you
at Ellis Island about where you lived—

CARLSON: [interposed] Yeah.

MOORE: [interposed] What they did.

CARLSON: They wanted to know my destination and I told him Dow city, Iowa. So they asked the people's name so I gave it to 'em and then [not understood] (muffled noises).

MOORE: [interposed] A tag.

CARLSON: And for every station that we passed between Ellis Island and Iowa, there was only one piece left [not understood].

MOORE: So it started off as a long tag down to – how far did it go down?

CARLSON: What?

MOORE: How big was that tag? How far did it go?

CARLSON: It was way down past my knees (laughs).

MOORE: It was all the train stops on it?

CARLSON: I remember we traveled at night and they had a thunder storm.

MOORE: On the boat?

CARLSON: Mhmm. And it was scary. Heaven [not understood].

MOORE: And what happened during that storm? Were you sick?

CARLSON: Hm?

MOORE: Were you sick on that storm?

CARLSON: Yeah (laughs), yes.

MOORE: It was frightening?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: Is it still one of the more frightening things that ever happened to you now when you look back?

CARLSON: It what?

MOORE: Is it one of the most frightening, scary things that's happened to you?

CARLSON: Yeah.

MOORE: And what about the other people? How did they take that storm?

CARLSON: Just like—

MOORE: Well I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for talking with us. Again this is Kate Moore on the twenty fourth of June, 1994 in Port Townsend, Washington with Alma CARLSON for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.