

KM-0045

ELOV BODIN

BIRTHDATE: MARCH 7, 1913

INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 24, 1994

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 81

RUNNING TIME: 1:00:16

INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE

RECORDING ENGINEER:

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: MELISSA PERLZWEIG

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

FINLAND, 1922

AGE: 9

SHIP:

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

FINLAND: VASA

UNITED STATES: SEATTLE, WA

MOORE: Good afternoon, this is the twenty-fourth of June, 1994 and I'm in the Ballard section of sh—Seattle, Washington with Elov Bodin, who was born in the US – in the US, returned to Finland in 1916, and came back to the US from Finland in 1922 when he was nine years old. Could you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth please?

BODIN: Name is Elov Eric Bodin. I was born March 7th, 1913 in Seattle, Washington.

MOORE: In Seattle, Washington. Um, what size – now, you said – your situation is you went back to Finland, ok. Could you tell us a little bit about what led up to that? Were you living here?

BODIN: W—I was living here. My mother and – I – I don't remember my dad too much because after all, I was only three years old. But from what mother said they – they finally split up. They couldn't get along. His habits and methods didn't agree with hers so she – she decided well – I'm surmi—surmising this -- she decided well I'm gonna go home to mother. (laughs) And she took me with her so – three years old – so.

MOORE: And um, ok what was – first of all, what was your father's name?

BODIN: John Eric Eriksson Bodin.

MOORE: John Eriksson?

BODIN: John Eric Eriksson Bodin. I think he used – he used Erikksson too. That's a family name.

MOORE: [superposed] Ok and – alright – and how do you spell Erikksson?

BODIN: E-R-I-C—E-R-I-K-S-O-N – S-S – double S on the S-O-N. [not understood]

MOORE: And what was his occupation?

BODIN: He was a carpenter, more or less, so.

MOORE: And do you remember what he looked like?

BODIN: Well, I remember – I saw him 1926 so I remember then but that's the only time I really saw – s—I've seen him. And – and so I went down San Francisco and met him then. So he was -- he had dark hair and a dark complexion. In fact, some of the Swedes called him the Swedish gypsy 'cause he was dark

complexioned. And his roots are actually in [not understood] but they lived in Hälsingland when – when he was born, yeah.

MOORE: What about his personality and temperament? Do you – did you know him well enough?

BODIN: Hmm not well – not well no. The summer I spent with him um – he seemed to be quiet sort of a person. Not -- didn't smoke and didn't drink. Took a drink now once in a while but didn't smoke or didn't drink so he seemed like a fairly level headed person.

MOORE: Is there a story about your father that your mother told you in your childhood or anything?

BODIN: Well th—the only thing I remember and one the reasons leading up to why she – she left him was a fact that he was a – well let's say I'll – lets – let's put it in general uh – most of those young people that came over from Sweden and Finland – especially the – the single men – they gambled a lot and they drank a lot. Spent a lot of time in – in the pool hall or saloon – whatever they called it. Well, my dad evidently liked to gamble so he – he evidently was in a poker game and lost all the money he – he – he made and then he pawned his watch. That watch, my mother had bought for him for a present – birthday present I guess. This is the story she told me. And he pawned this watch s— and she went and bailed out the watch and took it home and lo and behold a couple of days later he lost it again -- pawned it again. And that – that – I think that's the straw that – that broke the camel's back.

MOORE: And um, when you lived in – in this – did you live in this section of Seattle?

BODIN: I've lived all over Seattle -- north end, mostly.

MOORE: And when you were – when that time when your mother and father were together when you were a child, did they live in a s—in a Swedish neigh—a Finnish neighborhood?

BODIN: I have no idea but th—the address I have is twenty four seventeen and a half, Fifth Avenue. That'd be right down in the middle of town right now where the freeway—where the monorail goes right now. So that's – that's where they lived for a while. Then – then when I was born we lived out – out on the Latona. Let's see I'd say about 64th and Latona. I gotta picture of it somewhere here – in front of the house.

MOORE: Mhmm. What was your mother's name?

BODIN: Ina Holmlund, Ina Sophia Holmlund.

MOORE: Can you spell it?

BODIN: [superposed] She dropped the –lund and she went for Ina Holm when she got to this country.

MOORE: Could you spell Holmlund please?

BODIN: H-O-L-M-L-U-N-D.

MOORE: And what was her mai—that was her maiden name.

BODIN: That was her maiden name, yeah.

MOORE: And what was her occupation?

BODIN: Well h—here in this country she did everything and – and – and that’s one of the reason she – she told me too, she ironed shirts at supply laundry for ten cents a shirt. And she was ironing too darned fast for them. The superintendent wanted to cut her wages. She was making too much money – ‘cause she was too fast. But that’s one of the things that kept them going [not understood] my dad. She earned the money and then he gambled it I guess away and then that -- that’s probably the second straw that – that – that broke the camel’s back, so.

MOORE: And what was she in Finland?

BODIN: In Finland she just was a – well we moved in with Grandpa and Grandma in Finland and they had a little farm and spent time on the farm. Then she went and took s—lessons as a seamstress and she learned how to sew on – do things like that, so, that’s about all.

MOORE: [superposed] So on your passport—

BODIN: [interposed] But she was a domestic – mostly she did domestic work mostly, when she got back to this country.

MOORE: On your passport that you just showed me, it was -- your mother’s occupation was listed as a seamstress.

BODIN: Seamstress, right, yeah.

MOORE: Could you describe what your mother looked like?

BODIN: She was a – well everybody’s partial to their mother. She’s a beautiful lady (laughs). She was a blonde and she ‘bout five feet five I would say and just well built. Nice, nice lady. I know she was a beautiful lady I think.

MOORE: What color eyes did she have?

BODIN: I think they were blue if I remember right. Yeah, blue, I think they were blue -- and blonde hair.

MOORE: What about her personality and temperament? How would you describe her?

BODIN: Personality she was a self-made woman. I—she got hardened by the tragedies and things that happened in this country. She wasn't about to let anyone tramp on her. So she was a s—individual that stood her ground and she made her mistakes but she also r—rolled with the punch and she came back fighting (laughs).

MOORE: What about a story? Do you have a favorite story about your mother?

BODIN: No real story. The only thing I can think of that years ago we had those cast-iron stoves – kitchen stoves. She'd get on the end and lift that stove just like any man would. She was strong so that's -- I remember that. She did – we'd move move those iron stoves around and boy, they were heavy. She could carry or – she could lift anything. She was strong (laughs).

MOORE: What about your brothers or sisters?

BODIN: I have a half-sister. She's eighteen years younger than I am. That's mother's second marriage and she married a Finlander by name of Bill Lax from – from Petalax, if you know where that is, yeah.

MOORE: How do you spell Lax?

BODIN: L-A-X, just plain L-A-X.

MOORE: And how do you spell Petalax?

BODIN: P-E-T-A-L-A-X I think. Yeah, Peta-lax.

MOORE: And – and so your sister's name is--?

BODIN: Bernice S—her married name is Bernice Sleister but Lax was her name –
Bernice Lax Sleister.

MOORE: How do you spell Sleister?

BODIN: S-L-E-I-S-T-E-R, of German descent.

MOORE: Alright so you lived here in Seattle and what was the house that you lived in –
was it an apartment or house? Was it rented or owned?

BODIN: When?

MOORE: When you were a child here with your mother and father.

BODIN: That I don't remember. The only address I had is the one I gave you on Fifth
Ave and that was where my aunt lived and that's where my dad lived for a
while. And I don't know where we lived when I was a child except on Latona
and I don't – I have a picture of the house. The house is still standing, I
haven't been out there to verify the address yet but around sixty four hundred
on Latona.

MOORE: Now what do you remember about going back to Finland and your life in
Finland and from early years?

BODIN: The only thing I remember like I – like I mentioned before is when we got on the boat in New York there was other Fins, there was other Swedes and Fins come back to Finland and – and someone gave me an Easter candy. So it must have been in the spring because I remember that Easter egg they gave me. That was -- I was three years old and I got pictures of – of – on the boat to the [not understood]. But that particular candy – I remember being given that candy. That's – aside from that I don't remember anything 'til we got to Sweden and we visited my in-laws and my – my – my dad's folks in Sweden in – in Hälsingland and I remember getting off the train just by a whistle so it was just one little – little – little station there and they came and met us with a horse and buggy. And that's about all I remember. From then on we traveled up north through Haparanda. That I don't remember but I was told that's way we went – went to Haparanda. And went to Finland.

MOORE: How – how do you spell

BODIN: H-A-P-A-R-A-N-D-A (laughs).

MOORE: So your father was Swedish and your mother was Finnish—

BODIN: [interposed] Finnish Swede, yeah.

MOORE: [superposed] Swede – Swedish speaking Fin.

BODIN: Yes, yeah, right.

MOORE: And um your sister then – was she with you – she was born here.

BODIN: Yes she was born here.

MOORE: She was born here, right.

BODIN: Never been to Finland or Sweden.

MOORE: Ok where did you live – go back to -- what town did you go back to when you went back to Finland?

BODIN: We went back to – to Vasa -- little town – a little village called Voitdy.

MOORE: Could you spell that?

BODIN: V-O-I-T-D-Y.

MOORE: Yeah and Vasa, could you spell that too?

BODIN: V-A-S-A. Yeah, there's couple of spellings on that but that – Finnish has two A's in there – A-A-S-A (laughs).

MOORE: Yeah and – alright you went to that town and what did you – where did you live in that town?

BODIN: Well we – we moved into my grandfather's farm there and it – it was a big farm – he owned a big farm and he was – I guess he was in the process of selling it 'cause we didn't stay long there. We moved to a house close by that he – when he sold his farm he – he – he kept us and grandma and – and we moved over there with him just close by.

MOORE: When you say it was a big farm what do you mean by big?

BODIN: Well t—in – in – in – in – not in today's – today's measurements it's a little farm but it was enough so that to – to feed a family – let's say a family of five or six or something like that and they lived off the one land in those days in 1917 --

'16 – whenever it was. So it was big enough to live off of that and let's say five or six cows and a couple of horses.

MOORE: [superposed] What kind of – Oh did you keep other animals as well?

BODIN: That's all I remember. The horses and the cows – that's all I remember. Oh sheep! They kept sheep. I – I – I – I did go with them out to the – to the – to the – the archipelago in the – in the summertime they s—they sent the sheeps out to island – to put 'em on islands out there and I remember that. But [not understood] tied their legs and clipped their ears so they could tell whose was whose and – I remember that.

MOORE: So they – they marked the sheep and brought them out to the islands?

BODIN: Yeah they tied 'em, put 'em down in the boats and as soon as they got to the island they let 'em loose. All the different farmers in a bunch there and then – then the fall they went down and picked them out – whose was whose and 'course the young ones that were born, they followed the – the female sheep and so they got 'em back. Remember that.

MOORE: And um – describe your farmhouse. What did it look like?

BODIN: In Finland?

MOORE: Yeah.

BODIN: Well, the original one was a big two-story one and -- and it – it -- it was quite large. I would say – oh let's see now – measurements – meters, they call it over there – I would say about seventy five feet long. It was a big one and there's about twenty five feet wide – two stories.

MOORE: How many rooms would you say?

BODIN: Oh, I have no idea. Th—there's a great big front room and then there's a small bedroom downstairs and then there's a other end there's bedrooms or – or fa—or – or guest room they have. And upstairs [recording skips] and storage areas.

MOORE: What was the house made of?

BODIN: Boards put on outside – clap – clapboards on the outside.

MOORE: And was it painted?

BODIN: Painted red, yeah.

MOORE: Painted red—

BODIN: [interposed] Red and white, yeah.

MOORE: Red and white. And how was the house heated?

BODIN: By fireplace – open fireplace.

MOORE: And—

BODIN: [interposed] And in the – in the separate bedroom they had those – what would you call 'em? [not understood] they call 'em there. What do you call 'em in Finnish?

MOORE: Kamina

BODIN: Kamina, yeah. Th—they're – they're crockery built right in a corner and then they would fire 'em up – heat 'em up with a birch wood and the brick would get hot and then stay hot all – all night long – keep you warm.

MOORE: [superposed] Do you mean a tile fireplace?

BODIN: Tile fireplace, yeah.

MOORE: Yeah tile fireplace, right.

BODIN: Only it was built solid to the wall – to the c—to the wall – to the ceiling.

MOORE: And do you remember – you had a garden.

BODIN: Gardens, yeah. Mostly the gardens were big plots of potato patches (laughs).

MOORE: And what about the furniture in the house?

BODIN: Furniture house was simple – simple made four-legged chairs (laughs).

MOORE: (laughs)

BODIN: And four-legged tables – nothing fancy. The benches around the outside the perimeter of the house – I remember those benches, yeah and they're usually those benches are stored all kinds of stuff.

MOORE: Mmm.

BODIN: Yeah, so.

MOORE: So you mean you lift the lid—

BODIN: Lift the lid and there inside could be uh – tools for shoemaking or taking care of the – the tack for the horses and stuff like that was in – stored in those places.

MOORE: How far from town was this house?

BODIN: Oh, let's see. We were twenty kilometers from Vasa, where we lived, yeah. I think it was about twenty kilometers, yeah.

MOORE: And who did the cooking in the family then there?

BODIN: My grandmother did most of the cooking there.

MOORE: And what was your favorite food?

BODIN: Well, [not understood] you had your choice of potatoes or potatoes.

MOORE: (laughs)

BODIN: Once in a while you get – you get some fish and then you get some – some meat. Maybe meat once a week and fish maybe once or twice a meat. Potatoes and – and then mush made out of – of gar—barley flower or rye flower. And – and on great occasion you might get pancakes – Swedish pancakes. Yeah.

MOORE: What about the kitchen? Could you describe the kitchen?

BODIN: Well the kitchen was that open fireplace and in that fireplace everything was cooked. Later they got insert stoves that they put in there but when I was there those things weren't common. Only the – the – what would I say – only

the ones that had a little extra money could buy those inserts – fireplaces [not understood]. But most of our stuff was cooked on a – what do you call a spit – what do you call those? And i—it was swinging deal at this – that they would – it was on a – on a post like this and it had an arm on it. Ya hang a kettle on that or coffee pot and ya swing it over the fire and when it's cooking ya swing it away – way from the fire. Everything that's usually would be cooked on that except stuff--

MOORE: [interposed] On hinges – you mean hinges.

BODIN: Well it wasn't hinges. It was built right on a piece of iron.

MOORE: [superposed] Yeah – I mean – yeah.

BODIN: I—i-- it was hand forged and then fried stuff ya – ya fried in a frying pan – usually on the coals of the fire -- or right in the coals themselves. The fish you'd just throw right in the coals themselves and potatoes too. Cook 'em right in the coals, yeah.

MOORE: Coals meaning you have the wood fire.

BODIN: Yeah wood fire – when the – when the fire died down, yeah.

MOORE: And what was mealtime like? How many meals a day did you eat?

BODIN: I think we had three meals a day or two meals, anyway. Good breakfast usually was warmed up – fried mush left over from the night before – and milk and that was it. Sometimes we had viili. You know what that is (laughs). That is uh – well it's a form of yogurt. That's a p—that's a -- a – culture – culture was put in raw milk. I mean in – you know – not in – well, unpasteurized milk – call it that. And then cream would rise to the top and then – and then it'd

form a – a – a sour – like a jello sour deal like a yogurt and put sugar on top – if ya had sugar. And – then you – it was good. I like that.

MOORE: We used to call that – we used to call -- American students in Finland used to call it plastic milk.

BODIN: Yeah (laughs).

MOORE: [not understood]

BODIN: Yeah, yeah. Anyway, that – that was – we had that quite often. That came from – because it was a natural product that's raised on a farm – the milks – and of course we had butter and bread. Bread, you know – big round breads. Remember those?

MOORE: With a hole in it.

BODIN: They don't – yeah – hanging in the ceiling. It's—

MOORE: [interposed] You hung your bread from the ceiling.

BODIN: Yup, yeah.

MOORE: With a – with a dial between?

BODIN: Yup, yup. You hang up – put supply there for a – maybe as much as two months or maybe more. And you just get up on a chair and break one off and bring it down, put it on the table and eat it (laughs). Some were pretty tough though. Holy cow [not understood] wear out your teeth on some of those there. They weren't thick like hard – hard tack, they were – they were 'bout a

good half inch thick – maybe even more. And they were hard. The older folks used to soak ‘em in water or milk – get ‘em soft.

MOORE: And um, so did you all eat to—how did you eat your meals?

BODIN: What do you mean?

MOORE: In terms of family.

BODIN: Oh, just sat down together and ate.

MOORE: Everybody ate together?

BODIN: Yeah, yeah. I remember one thing my grandpa did. He had the wooden spoon – they – even [recording skips] he got through eating his mush, leave it there for next time (laughs).

MOORE: (laughs) Alright um – who were you especially close to in the family, would you say?

BODIN: Oh my mother’s [not understood]. She was the closest, yeah.

MOORE: And—

BODIN: [interposed] My grandmother too – grandmother mother was closest, yeah.

MOORE: And do you have any anecdotes about your um – your grandmother, for example?

BODIN: No she – she was a – she was a s—the village psychic, you might say. She – she could foretell things happening and – and she had ways of curing things and stuff like that and --

MOORE: [interposed] Like how?

BODIN: She was even interviewed by -- some professional from Helsinki came up and interviewed her 'bout her – her ability to foretell tragedies and stuff like that.

MOORE: What was her name?

BODIN: Her name is Maria Helena Holmlund. Klemets was her maiden name.

MOORE: How do you spell that, do you know?

BODIN: K-L-M-E-T-S I think. Kle-mets. K-L-E-M-E-T-S, Klemets. It's named after the – the site of the city of Vasa because she's an ancestor of that city of Vasa.

MOORE: And you said she had all cures. Like what type of cures did she have?

BODIN: Well, I'll tell you a story she told me in the – my – my cousin in Sweden told me a couple others too but the one that – that hit me was when her – when their oldest daughter Ida had gotten married – she's ten years older than my – my mother – they usually – well the farmers usually set their daughters up pretty good so they gave 'em I – the way I understand it they gave 'em a – a small farm, gave 'em livestock including a horse or two horses, and they moved away from home. You know, moved out close by. Well this one horse kept coming home all the time. He wouldn't stay where – in the new place. So she says – Grandma says I'll fix that. And she took a little quicksilver and put it underneath the threshold of the – of the stable. The horse never [recording skips] mumbled some sort of magic words, I guess or whatever it

was. And another thing I remember was (laughs) – another thing I remember was he – h—h—he – you get a – a sore wrist or – or an ache in your elbow or something like that so she'll fix that. So she took – she – she says come over here. Put her on the – put her on the stump here. And she got the axe out and she got some chickweed and she put the chickweed on each side and she – she got the axe busy and chopped from one side to the other is chickweed, take away the soreness out of the arm, or something like she cured the soreness in the arm that way.

MOORE: Huh. Was she superstitious?

BODIN: I [not understood] because she had all these – these things that she could do. Oh another thing that – my cousin [not understood] – she – she had acne quite bad when she was sixteen, seventeen years old and she was supposed to go to a dance that – that coming weekend. And she says [not understood] – no way. So Grandma says to her – well I don't know – I think I can fix you, she said. But we're – we're – we're kinda closely rela—related so she says I don't know if it work. So she said – she says I – I need a little, little, little tiny sliver of a – of a gold ring, she said. And let's see what else was it? Anyway this – this little sliver of gold had to go in a little vile. The vile had to be filled with some sort of special water from somewhere and my cousin was supposed to go down to the river, turn around and face the river backwards, throw this vile with a little piece of gold in it over her left shoulder, and then her acne would be gone. Sure enough it did! Disappeared (laughs). She lost the acne – she could go to the dance the next weekend. (laughs) That – that's about the gist of the story.

MOORE: (laughs) What about religious life then?

BODIN: Oh everyone was Lutheran there and quite religious.

MOORE: And was there—

BODIN: [interposed] More or less, e—e—even if they couldn't go to church they – they practiced the religious fairly well, I'd say.

MOORE: And what did that mean – practiced—

BODIN: [interposed] Well the worshiped the lord and thankful for what they got and stuff like that.

MOORE: Did they – did you say prayers at home?

BODIN: Not generally. Just once in a while I might take out – read a passage out of the book – something like that. Not – not too often. I don't remember saying prayers too often.

MOORE: Before meals or anything?

BODIN: No, not really. Once in a while.

MOORE: Was there a church nearby?

BODIN: No the church was about fifteen, seventeen kilometers away.

MOORE: And did your family go to church on Sunday?

BODIN: No, only in special days like Easter or one's burial or something like that or – or Pentecost or – or Ascension Day or Christmas. [recording skips]

MOORE: [recording skips]

BODIN: Well Christmas is a main holiday and Easter was the next one. Those – those two the main ones and then [not understood] a third one, I would say.

MOORE: Do you remember any of those celebrations when you were a child?

BODIN: Hmm, I remember Christmas in a way – I think it was Christmas. Yeah, we lived next door in the new place or – we moved from the main farm to the new place and my neighbors had two boys – they were older than I am – and of course Christmas time you had to have a Christmas tree and you hang – have candles in it with fire on ‘em and they weren’t no electricity in those days [not understood]. And I remember these neighbor boys a—a—a—tradition they did over there was throwing presents through the door and run. You were supposed to catch ‘em – see who, who gave you – who threw the present in there so – I remember these boys, one at a time came in and threw a candy in through the door and ‘cause I couldn’t catch ‘em – they were older than I am. I figured out who it was so I got one candy each from – each of one of them. That was a treat (laughs).

MOORE: Now the houses you lived in – what kind of plumbing did they have?

BODIN: Outside.

MOORE: Outside plumbing. Outhouse?

BODIN: Yeah. We had two holes – three holes. (laughs)

MOORE: (laughs) And what – what about um, lighting?

BODIN: Lighting was by kerosene lantern back in – we didn’t get electricity in there until 1920 – ‘21 I think [not understood] came in electricity. [not understood] They had a cataract close by and they harness the – the par on the cataract

and started a little generator. I think it was just five horse – the first one they had. And it – it spread a little electricity around the immediate areas. Later on I think they improved and got a twenty five horse generator and then s—and distributed it around a little farther away. But [not understood] still later they came out with a bigger generator and they got electricity all over then so – now it belongs to Vasa. [not understood] – I think all that belongs to Vasa now. It's running conjunction to Vasa.

MOORE: Now back to Christmas. I'm sorry to interrupt about your Christmas thing. You said you remember throwing gifts at the door but what about food and celebration that way?

BODIN: Well the big thing at Christmas we were – we had rice pudding. That was a big thing – you don't get that every day. Made – just cooked on rice, milk, and butter and th-- then you put sugar on top of it. And then we tried to get dried fruit and cooked it into sort of a – a – a – s—what would you call it? M—what –

MOORE: Fruit soup?

BODIN: Fruit soup, yeah. And – and put that over top of the rice pudding. Or, they used blueberries and did the same thing. Just add corn starch to blueberry – cooked blueberry soup.

MOORE: You mean like a topping?

BODIN: Yeah. Topping on – on the – on the rice pudding, yeah. That was a treat.

MOORE: And did you have – what'd you eat as terms of your main course?

BODIN: Probably broke down and had some sort of a meat. I don't remember exactly – pork was better available than beef and so – and 'course sheep – sheep –

mutton was better available than beef too so – the only time we got beef is when somebody's cow died and they went around the neighborhood and sold it piece by piece. They wanted to buy ham.

MOORE: And um, what about midsummer? Today is midsummer and – do you remember that at all?

BODIN: I don't remember too much about midsummer. Not – not when I was little. It didn't seem to – it was more for the teenagers and older I think. S—and – and didn't – didn't have anything to do with when I was only a little tot then, so.

MOORE: Do you remember school life in Sweden? In Finland, sorry.

BODIN: [superposed] Yeah I – I started school – I started school early 'cause all my neighbor kids went to school and I was left home alone and I – I – I didn't wanna go to school so I started actually – I think it was six years old when I was – started school. They start seven, I think over there. And so I started school and – and there was – it's not mandatory – not mandatory to go to school then yet in 19 – 18—1920 – whenever it was. Not until 1922 the – the school system came into – to being in Finland I think so but it was all voluntary sponsored by the farmers in the area – people that lived in the area – they sponsored. [recording skips] So I started what we call kind—kindergarten I guess I would say for – it had two grades in the lower grades there. And then I started that – you – more or less got associated with other kids and learned to do handicraft stuff and – fact I got a handbag here that I made as a – as a – a little handbag I made there. They had – they had the boys sewing things and doing crocheting and stuff like that – yuck. All the boys – there was a lady teacher. She – she couldn't teach anything else so she had us sewing things. We made – we made a knitted um – oh, let's see – we made a knitted container for corks. We put corks in there and made balls out of them. Put the knit—knitted um – knitted around these corks that we had saved up and

that made a ball. That was one of the things we made and then – then this – pen wipers and stuff like that.

MOORE: (laughs) And where was this school that you went to?

BODIN: It was in Voitdy.

MOORE: Uh huh. And – and how big was the school? How many kids?

BODIN: Oh that – that took about a one room house. That's what this was. There was – it was at – used in conjunction with a missionary groups too that – the mavericks religious group that was separate – apart from the Lutheran.

MOORE: Do you remember any specific teachers besides the one who taught you how to crochet?

BODIN: I don't – I don't remember their names. I was told who they were. I was s— one of them was her – but I can't remember her name right now either.

MOORE: Did you learn any English before you came here?

BODIN: Nope. Only – only when I was three years old and then I forgot all that.

MOORE: You forgot it all.

BODIN: Yeah.

MOORE: So when you went back there you didn't speak any Swedish at all?

BODIN: Nope.

MOORE: Do you remember that? Learning Swedish again?

BODIN: Don't remember it, no.

MOORE: What did you do for playing games at – at that time? What type of entertainment did you have at home?

BODIN: Well, let's see now. Let me think now. In the winter time there's not much – usually stay outside except to go out in the snow and play in the snow – fool around in the snow when you're five, six years old. There's not – well there's places – some hills where you can use a sled and go down it and I got a pair of skis given to me and there was a – a fellow by the name of [not understood] and he was a – he was a carpenter by trade. He actually worked for my grandfather one time and he had these extra skis. They were long, big ones. I was five, six years old. I remember [not understood] they were big and long, I thought. Probably only about six, seven feet long, but they sure felt big. I had those so I skied on those and – and that's about – all I remember. Oh they did ice skate too. I had ice skates with metal runners [not understood] with a wood top on the metal runners and tied on with leather straps, if I remember that. I d – I – I wanted to have a pair of those but I never did get a pair (laughs).

MOORE: And is there a favorite story told about your childhood – about you back in Finland at all?

BODIN: I don't know of any – don't know of any.

MOORE: H—now – tell how – how did you get back to the United States? What – what happened that made you want – your family want to come back – your mom want to come back?

BODIN: I—I have no idea why – I just have a feeling that mother was – just wasn't satisfied with the economic conditions over there and she just wanted to get back to good USA.

MOORE: Alright so you were saying your mother – you felt that your mother wasn't contented with the economic conditions in Finland.

BODIN: No there's no reason to – for her to stay there I guess if there's no future in making any money or anything like that. At the time – I think at the time we were there – when we left – she was – she was watch person at a toll bridge over the [not understood].

MOORE: Could you spell that?

BODIN: K-Y-R-O in Swedish. How do you spell that? In – in Finnish it's—

MOORE: [not understood]

BODIN: [not understood]

MOORE: You can give that to me afterwards, ok?

BODIN: [not understood]

MOORE: So she was actually a – a – a—

BODIN: She was a watch – she was a watch – yeah they had a boom across the bridge and it was a toll bridge. It's put up by the community and they had to get their money back from spending money on it so – so she was a guard there and day and night she had to be on – on – on – any time of the day or

night she had to be there to – to charge the toll and open the boom – let ‘em through.

MOORE: Hm. And so, do you remember any discussion of her about c—her talking about coming back?

BODIN: No, I don’t remember a thing about that – I don’t.

MOORE: Do you remember having – packing to come back – anything?

BODIN: Don’t remember anything of the packing. I – I – I – it’s – it’s funny, I don’t remember a thing about it.

MOORE: And do – what – what’s the first thing you remember about coming back?

BODIN: The first thing I remember is when we were in New York Harbor and anchored for the Ellis – well for the immigration inspection – let’s put it that way – immigr—immi—immigration inspection or custom inspectors came aboard. And then --

MOORE: [superposed] And you were at Ellis Island?

BODIN: No, not – before Ellis Island. This was aboard the ship [not understood] the boats and then this other – this other tender that took us over to Ellis Island – I remember that one a little bit. It came and picked up a whole bunch of us. I don’t think everyone from the ship went to the Ellis Island though. A lot of my guess stayed aboard – only the ones says questionable I guess went to Ellis Island.

MOORE: Do you remember anything about that boat trip? Do you remember seeing the ocean?

BODIN: No [not understood] the harbor – the – the New York Harbor [not understood].

MOORE: [superposed] Do you remember the Statue of Liberty?

BODIN: No, I don't really remember that and exactly. Seemed like I remember the – the – the pier we came into this – we came into the boat and docked alongside of and – and then that – that's it – that's about all.

MOORE: And what do you remember of Ellis Island then?

BODIN: Well, the only thing I remember is – is – is big open hall that I came into. Seemed to me that that white tile or someplace – either on the floor or the ceiling – wherever it was – white tile it was anyway. Anyways, white tile somewhere. And we were – let's see we were shown are beds – I think they were bunk beds if I remember right and that's where we slept. I think we were there two nights – a record would show how many nights we were there I guess. I don't remember the meals. I mean I think I remember being checked by the doctor after we came in and they – they checked you over – over see if you're – you're still breathing, I guess.

MOORE: Do you remember anything about that checkup? What they did?

BODIN: No, I don't remember it—it was quite rapid. I – it didn't take long at all for my mother and I to be checked and we had no problems, I guess, so there was nothing to check on.

MOORE: What about how many people were there when you came in?

BODIN: Oh there was a lot of people. There were all kinds of people – seemed like they were everywhere. There was just people all over the place and –

MOORE: Were there other Swedish speaking people – other Fins?

BODIN: I – I – I don't recall but no doubt they came on the same boat as I was in.

MOORE: Now did your mother speak English then?

BODIN: She still remembered her English I think so she used her English language so.

MOORE: And do you remember the confusion of not knowing English then?

BODIN: I don't – I didn't pay any attention to it. I did – didn't bother me at all. I spoke my language and that was it.

MOORE: Why were you detained?

BODIN: My passport was not clear because I was born in this country and my picture was on my mother's – we were both together in the same picture on a Finnish passport, which was not quite right because I was an American citizen. I think that's m—one of the main reasons why – why we were detained. Second reason I think my mother had no place to go to, no job for herself or – or anything (clears throat). She just decided on her own she's gonna go back the United States and she's gonna take a chance and do it. That's the kind of person she was. And she just set out – had enough money to pay the fare and got over here.

MOORE: How'd she get the money for the fare?

BODIN: Well she'd earned some in Finland – from her seamstress work – and then maybe borrowed from my grandpa [not understood] that's probably why she got it.

MOORE: Where were you going when you got there?

BODIN: I s—s—I don't know what her ideas were but we w—we – we – we – we went to New York, naturally, just to get to United States. That's a f—that's the first thing in her thoughts I guess and that's where we landed.

MOORE: Well since you didn't – your passport was unusual and since your mother didn't have a place to really go, how did you get out?

BODIN: Well, fortunately we had friends in New York -- sort of distant relatives, too. I remember Dolmans[ph] is the name of one couple that came and s—in the [not understood] and Nesmon[ph] is the other one. And my mother was second cousins with Mrs. Nesmon who is also my wife's aunt. We didn't know that then when we got married but now – I know it now. But she was second cousin to my mother and they h – they s – they went and – that what they called and bond for us to – took us in – in charge. Signed – signed agreement I guess t—t—t—take us in charge[not understood].

MOORE: Had your mother contacted them before she came to the United States?

BODIN: I don't think so. S—she – that's one of the reasons I think we spent two nights on Ellis Island. She had to process a contacting I guess, so. They came and I remember they came and bailed us out, you might say.

MOORE: And where did you go then? Do you remember where you went?

BODIN: We went to Dolman's – their apartment in Bronx – I think it was someplace. I'm not quite sure. Started school there somewhere.

MOORE: In the south Bronx?

BODIN: I – could've been. I – I'm not sure.

MOORE: You mean the cooperative housing – the apartment houses there?

BODIN: I – I – I don't recall in 1922 – I don't know what they had that time, yeah.

MOORE: [superposed] There were two apartment buildings – [not understood]
Cooperative Housing – across from Yankee Stadium.

BODIN: No, we weren't that close to Yankee Stadium, I don't think. I forget the school that – I think the school had a number. They don't – they don't have a names on 'em. [not understood]

MOORE: [superposed] PS

BODIN: [superposed] PS number yeah.

MOORE: Yeah.

BODIN: I started school then. I went up to second grade – I was in the second grade and – and – and then later – this was in the Fall, I guess it was – yeah, I only stayed there little while 'cause the Dolmans had two boys and we were always fighting – fighting over the skates and skateboard or whatever it was. (laughs) And it was too crowded I guess, in that apartment. Anyway so then we went over and lived – lived in Lyndhurst, New Jersey with my – my wife's aunt or my – my mother's second cousin – Nesmons. [not understood] they lived in Lyndhurs. And there I stayed all winter long and started school there again and went to school there in Lyndhurst. Till the spring when we came out here to Seattle.

MOORE: Now what did your mother do in Europe then?

BODIN: She got a job as a domestic – she was a domestic so for lawyer up at Gramercy Park. S—she live in – she had to live there. So I didn't see her only on occasion but I would take the train from Lyndhurst to Hoboken, take the ferry across from Hoboken, catch the street car, and go up to Gramercy Park and meet her. I was a – I would guess I was still nine years old then – maybe ten. (laughs) Yeah.

MOORE: And so she worked as a domestic for a family?

BODIN: [superposed] Yeah – yeah, right – yeah.

MOORE: And so that went on for about a year you said right?

BODIN: [superposed] No I think it just turned to winter. We came back here's snow I think in the spring of '23.

MOORE: And why did you come to Seattle?

BODIN: 'Cause evidently that's where she wanted to be. And that's – I surmise she had some of her valuables stored here yes, because I had remnants of her wedding gifts that she got when you got married here and they probably stored with her – with her – her sister-in-law. And so she wanted to come back here. And she had lots of friends back here – that's where she'd been for five, six years, so.

MOORE: Um, why don't you t—what happened then? Did you come back – did you see – you came to Seattle – did you get – contact your father again? Was he out of the picture?

BODIN: He was out of the picture. He'd already gone down San Francisco.

MOORE: I see, ok. And what happened in Seattle then? What was your life like here in Seattle?

BODIN: Well, oh here we go again.

MOORE: Hold on, it's alright -- that's alright.

BODIN: The mic fell off (laughs). I don't remember exactly coming back Seattle – I don't remember the train trip or anything like that. And I know it was a train trip but I remember my mother told me and I remember we came to – I was eight – nine oh eight Pine Street now – Mrs. Pierce's rooming house. Mother said she had two dollars and fifty cents when we got to Seattle. She's paid two dollars and twenty five cents for the housekeeping room. The very day or the very next day she went to—down to YWCA and she got a job right away and two dollars a day in carfare. And she worked for odd people like uh – Carol the Jeweler, Fry the Bu—Fry the Meatpacker – she did domestic work. In those days there was no w—washing machines. She did all the – all the laundry and all that stuff, so. W—washing and ironing, two dollars a day in carfare is what she got.

MOORE: And you went to school then here?

BODIN: I started school – summer school in 2B.

MOORE: Do you remember having to learn English again?

BODIN: Don't remember – no came – seemed to come natural.

MOORE: And um – did your mother have any difficulties with English?

BODIN: She did quite well, I think. She – she – she was a – she was a learner. She wanted to learn, she only had three years of school Finland that she said and – well she was – she was a go-getter, yeah.

MOORE: And do – did you experience any bigotry or persecution because you were foreign here?

BODIN: There always was. They called me Swede a lot. Just derogatory – Swede. I had some accent because I – they spoke Swedish at home and I didn't pronounce my words correctly and – made fun of [not understood]. Seemed like uh – they took great pleasure in making fun of the Swedes (laughs).

MOORE: Did you ever correct them and tell them you were Fins?

BODIN: Never bothered let – let it bother me.

MOORE: And so they –

BODIN: [not understood] It bothered me but I didn't let it – I didn't show it (laughs).

MOORE: They called you Sewde – anything else they call you?

BODIN: No that's about all.

MOORE: Did they ever call you square-head?

BODIN: No, no not that. That came out later (laughs).

MOORE: Um (laughs), right. What about religious life here?

BODIN: Ah we – we'd been no practicing religious people. In other words we'd go to church just once in a while. We believe in religion but we believe um – each and every one should decide how much religion – much belief he has himself. And live with that.

MOORE: So you didn't – your religion was basically – your religious habits – were they very changed coming to the States?

BODIN: No, they were just loose. I'd say just loose. We'd go – go to church on – on the big holidays and stuff like that. Or when there's somebody had a wedding or some death – something like that [not understood]. Not any – not any definite pattern going to church, no.

MOORE: Did your mother ever talk about her life here in this country and how she felt about it?

BODIN: No, she never m—never revealed. I wish she would've. She never revealed too much about things.

MOORE: How would you characterize her adjustment here?

BODIN: She had her struggles. She was – she was tough. She – oh, I – the feeling I got – she felt that her sister got the gravy and the old country by getting that farm and stuff like that and that – and 'cause there was ten years different between her and her sister and – and she felt she got cheated. She came alone, she was sixteen years old the first time, you know and – and she left home and decide to seek her fortunes in this country and then she was bound to do well. That was the driving force down on her. She's gonna show 'em she gonna do well and she did – she did well. No matter what came up she did well.

MOORE: And what happened to her in her life then she – she worked hard most of her life.

BODIN: She worked hard and – because I was a – a – a – an anchor driving behind so she went into rooming – rooming house – the rooming business and rented a – a – a place that two – two minor and we rented out housekeeping rooms there to single men and women – whoever happened to come along. And then from then on she went up – finally wound up at fourteen, fifteen East Holy when she had a seventy six room apartment up there that she rented and rented up apartments there. Until the Depression came and broke her – broke everything. Lot of people owe lots of thousands of dollars yet never paid their rent. But in the meantime she – she happened to sell it – sell the business. You don't sell the property 'cause she lease the property – and she sold all the furniture to somebody and they – they couldn't make it. In the trade she got some property out of lake city and I think that was the start of a – a good things. Got about an acre land out then and she started building some houses out there. During the Depression we lived – we lived on raising chickens and the food we raised in our own land out there. We never were on welfare or anything. We d—we – we lived off what we had.

MOORE: So she was basically entrepreneurial?

BODIN: Right. We sold eggs door to door and stuff like that just to make a go – lived off what we had. [not understood] washing machines and TV's and stuff like that. We had outside plumbing and [not understood].

MOORE: [recording skips] [not understood]

BODIN: [not understood] build a couple houses out there and –

MOORE: [interposed] Yourself?

BODIN: No, no. She contracted – contracted. She had the property so she contracted a cost plus – I guess what you call it, so. So then she sold the property. She even built apartment house – complex out there. Actually it's chicken house first of all that converted to apartments later on when chickens got old fashioned so they converted the chicken houses to apartments and then later on she built a complex of – of a cottage that's out there too right on the same property and even later she built a motel out on Bothell Highway.

MOORE: And what – (laughs) wow.

BODIN: Triplex.

MOORE: You -- what about your life? You went on to school, did you – you finished high—

BODIN: [interposed] Went through high school, yeah.

MOORE: Went through high school? And then what'd you do?

BODIN: Well I – I – I got job as a bellboy at Vance Hotel – actually started as elevator operator. I was there – bout I was going to high school there. 1930 I think I started a – an elevator operator at Vance Hotel and it – Depression hadn't hit too hard then yet so we – we did pretty good and I made two or three hundred dollars during the summer there on tips and whatnot. Put it in the bank – West Lake – what the devil was the name of that – anyway. West Lake Mutual – something like that. 'Course the bank went broke and I lost all my money. So 1931 I was there a--again as – as – in the summertime – high school. And I worked at – as an elevator operator and once in a while as a bellhop. And I hurried up and I – I got out of high school in three and a half years so I could get a job – I could – job was open for me in January down at the Vance Hotel

as a – on the elevator again. See was it, fifty dollars a month I think we got? Or was it sixty five dollars a month? I think it was sixty five dollars a month we got. ‘Cause on the elevator you don’t have a chance at making any tips but anyway sixty five dollars a month. Lot of guys going to college couldn’t even get jobs – no jobs at all available 1932. So I [not understood] for a while then it opened up -- a bellhop job opened up and that was twenty five dollars a month and tips and no tips. I didn’t get any tips. I think the best I ever made on any one day was when the shriners were in town in 19—end of 1932 I think it was. I made nine dollars tips one day. That was the best I ever made. Usually days went by you’d make a dime. Well you couldn’t get along with twenty five dollars a week – a month so – so I decided well I’ll I got a hundred dollars in the bank yet so I’m gonna go to Finland and visit my grandmother. So I did. I hopped a freight train and went to Albany, New York on the freight train (laughs).

MOORE: You mean you went on – you – you did the hobo thing?

BODIN: Right.

MOORE: (laughs) Went across the country?

BODIN: Yup. Saw the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago (laughs). I was gonna get a job on one of the boats – work New York Harbor and get over to Finland or Sweden. I’d met friends in New York and I went down steamship companies try to get a job [not understood] oil or anything onboard ship – anything. [not understood] no jobs. Finally friend of mine says hey what – why bother looking for a job? Everybody’s getting on ships nowadays they don’t even get off, he said. S—s—s—why don’t you try it? Ok. John Backbone was his name – he’s dead now. He talked me into. Said ok I’ll give it a try. So I – I got on the Gripsholm.

MOORE: What do you mean you got on the Gripsholm? Well how'd you get on?
(laughs)

BODIN: Well as the visitors. Say goodbye to all the friends – they – that was common those days.

MOORE: So you went on to say good—

BODIN: [superposed] Oh yeah you get right on the boat – all everybody on. And then – then they say all ashores going ashore – they'd ring a bell or something like that. All visitors off – off the boat. Something like that. I forgot to get off.
Darn it (laughs).

MOORE: (laughs)

BODIN: So I – I stayed on and I went – there's no control on – actually on the boat at that time so I went and ate in the dining room like the rest of the passengers and I was part – (laughs) well you're twenty years old, you do crazy things.

MOORE: (laughs) So you went back to Finland to see your grandma?

BODIN: Yeah but then I – I – I slept in an empty cabin there for a couple of nights and nobody's – nobody checks it. There's no bedding there and – and then one of the fellas there talked me into coming in with them in their cabin. Of course right away the – the steward has to make a report how many people he's got in his cabin so then I got caught. That was the third day and we're off the coast of Nova Scotia. So they put me to work in the kitchen and I worked in the first class kitchen and boy I never went to – I never [not understood] after that. I just ate the food that was in the first class kitchen. (laughs) Baked Alaska and half a chicken and (laughs) all kinds of good stuff to eat (laughs). I

helped the night man. I was on the night shift. Just two of us were on the night shift. (laughs)

MOORE: So you (laughs) – so th—that's how you got to Finland?

BODIN: Well yeah we got to Gothenburg Sweden and then we were herded in – I don't know what it's called. I know it's – it's – it's some decks in the back there – the cabins in the back. I called it the poop deck. And there were eight of us – were eight stowaways on the boat that year. Ah, see five of 'em I think were Swedes. They were coming back from the United States bad times, depression, no money, no nothin' – just trying to go home to the homeland to mom and dad or on to farm, whatever. Three of us were Americans. I had my passport all clear -- visa – had visa all stamped and everything so it was all prepared ahead of time. Two of the other boys who worked with me – they just were joy riding. They were scared to death they were gonna get stranded in Sweden. They just wanted to get back. But one of the representatives from police commissioner came and met us took us to – to the police office – whatever you want to call it. And they called us in one at a time in there – asked – first of us have you had -- guys had anything to eat? No, we haven't had anything. So they set out [not understood] got us some food and fed us real good – a real good meal.

MOORE: (laughs)

BODIN: And then they called us in one at a time into the office and talked with us in – and course my turn and says – says well what are you gonna do? I said well I'd like to go home see my grandmother. Either one up in s--in -- grandma and grandpa they're up in s—in – in – in Hälsingland or else go to Finland. I'd rather go to Finland, I said. So how you gonna get there? Well I – I got a little money. I had money hidden on me see, so. I think I had a hundred and fifty dollars for emergency use so – so k. T—I had to show 'em the money. So

they sent a man with me down to the – to the Swedish American line the Scandinavian [not understood] – what is it? Gripsholm -- anyway. And I caught up with the passengers that I'd been associating with across on the Gripsholm They were just ready to catch a train to go to -- to Stockholm. So he went into the office said to the managers – he says hey I got another passenger for ya. Says – says he came over as a stowaway on the Gripsholm but he wants to buy a ticket now to go to Finland (laughs). I – I remember that manager getting kinda burned. Said hey come on what you want a free ride across the Atlantic now you want to pay for the rest of it? He says well, well this – this police detective, whatever he was – plain clothes man. He – he talked him into selling the tickets – I bought the ticket. I went with the rest of the guys [not understood] and from there on I bought ticket up to my grandpa, grandma's place. I got – got home to [not understood] – that's a little station outside of Vasa on the train. And it was the middle of the night. I remember walking all the way home – three kilometers all the way to my grandmother's. I knocked on her door about two o'clock in the morning says here I am. (laughs)

MOORE: And what was her reaction?

BODIN: Oh it – I don't even – I don't think she expected me but there I was.

MOORE: (laughs)

BODIN: So I stayed there almost two years then.

MOORE: (laughs)

BODIN: (laughs) Yeah.

MOORE: Then what – what happ—you stayed there two years?

BODIN: Yeah, worked at odd jobs.

MOORE: And then—

BODIN: [interposed] Got – enough—nough to live on. The – the – the depression was a lot less in Finland than it was in the United States. They didn't fall so far. They had a long way to fall here than over there. It was – depression was bad th-- I – I figure that by living out there in the countryside by my grandma not paying any rent and just living – I could live on a hundred dollars a year. So that's pretty cheap in those days, yeah. Back in nineteen thirty – thirty three, yeah. And I worked – helped the farmers. I worked the farmers, I worked on the highway, I ran the thrashing machine one year, I – I – I cut – I cut oats and barley by hand, ya know. Learned how to do that.

MOORE: And why'd you come back then?

BODIN: Well my passport was running out and I had gotten married over there, so.

MOORE: You got married to a Fin?

BODIN: Yeah to my – to my – to Diana my – my second cousin [not understood]. So – so I had to come back then and—

MOORE: [interposed] Well you got married – you could've stayed there if you wanted to.

BODIN: I could've stayed there by just extending my passport but I – I'd extended it once already. Th—there was not much future there at that time either so I decided to come back here and try – try it here.

MOORE: And what'd you do – how – did you come -- pay for a ticket that time coming back?

BODIN: Yeah, yeah – paid for a ticket coming back, yeah. Yeah I went to Germany then and came back on the U.S.S. United States and –

MOORE: And did you go through Ellis Island again?

BODIN: Nope.

MOORE: Why?

BODIN: Well I'm an American citizen.

MOORE: Oh that's right.

BODIN: (laughs) And the passport – I've still got it here.

MOORE: And so what did you do for a profession then in the United States? You got –

BODIN: I was a mail carrier. I – I first in Depression time, like I said we lived off – we lived off what we had here in – in Seattle and made it a go and then I did odd jobs as little as twenty five cents an hour and – and so on. And then I got a job down at CR Watts and at fifty cents an hour and working with the highway material. We did odds and ends [recording skips]. Then [not understood] sixteen fifty a week. There were six hours shifts and then there's no – they had six hour shifts – I think it was sixteen fifty a week, yeah. And we had money to spare. You couldn't spend it all. And –

MOORE: This is after you came back from Finland?

BODIN: Yeah. Yeah well this is quite a while -- 1937-'38 -- you know, like that. And about that time -- 1937 -- I took the test for the post office -- I took this test for border patrol and I had number other civil service -- everybody was looking for civil service jobs in those days. That was the only steady job available, so. I think we were over seven thousand that took the test for the post office job in Seattle at that time. Two different high schools gave it at two different times. I ended up with ninety point two score, I think it was. But it took me two years before I got the job. I was called up for temporary jobs a couple times but wasn't called up for steady job until 1942.

MOORE: So you're a mail carrier?

BODIN: Mhmm. I worked for the post office thirty years.

MOORE: Wow.

BODIN: Thirty years and retired. I've been retired twenty two years now, so.

MOORE: And did you have children?

BODIN: Yeah I have -- we had two sons. I lost one son for -- to hemophilia or HIV 'cause he got infected with bad blood. That's 1990 -- February first he died. My other son is a civilian engineer for the navy, I guess you'd call it. And he -- he's always at Silverdale -- he lives on Silverdale.

MOORE: Silverdale, Washington?

BODIN: Yeah, right, yeah.

MOORE: And what did your wife work as?

BODIN: Well she – at post office we were caught in the bind of inflation at times so at times she works as a waitresses and you know, I guess that's what you call – two different places she worked as a waitress as to augment our income when things were kind of bad. Mr. Truman and stuff that they – we had to go begging on our knees to Congress to get a raise in pay so – it was hard to get a raise. We finally got it [not understood] back in the '50s and '60s. Nearly all letter carriers either had their wives working or else they had other jobs – moonlighting job. They had two jobs to make a go.

MOORE: And you said that your wife then just recently passed away?

BODIN: Yeah she died seventeenth July 1993.

MOORE: And when you look back on your life now, how do you feel about your mother's decision to come here?

BODIN: It was good for me (laughs).

MOORE: Did you ever consider going back to Finland to live?

BODIN: It's a nice place to be. It's – [not understood] like it anywhere, I think. Either Sweden or Finland. I think Finland's better than Sweden. Inflation in Sweden is terrific.

MOORE: What about – have you ever considered going back now and living there?

BODIN: No I have no reason to go back anymore. Most of my friends are gone. The only place there are enough I want to visit them they're in the graveyard. So that's the only place—

MOORE: [superposed] So you're – you're—

BODIN: [superpose] [not understood] Only have two, three left. I don't – I only have one second cousin left in Finland and I have three cousins left in Sweden. That's all I got left.

MOORE: And so basically you feel pretty c—happy about your decision to come back to the United States?

BODIN: Oh yeah, yeah.

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

BODIN: It's a long story. I didn't think you were gonna interview me that much (laughs).

MOORE: No, no. It's alright. And we'll send you a copy of this—

BODIN: Oh, ok, alright.

MOORE: So this is Kate Moore in Ballard – the Ballard section of Seattle, Washington on June 24, 1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

END OF INTERVIEW