

KM-054

GUÐRÚN EMMA ERICSSON HANSEN

BIRTH DATE: JANUARY 27, 1917

INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 29, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 47:22

INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE

RECORDING ENGINEER: DR. KRISTA VARANTOLA

INTERVIEW LOCATION: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 9/1994

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 10/1994

SWEDEN, 1947

AGE 30

PASSAGE ON "THE DROTTNINGHOLM"

MOORE: Good afternoon. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service. Today is the 29th of June 1994, and I'm in Seattle, Washington at the home of Gudrun Hansen, who came from Sweden in 1947 when she was thirty years old. Why don't you begin, please, by giving us your full name and date of birth?

HANSEN: Yeah. My full name is Gudrun Emma Ericsson. That was my maiden name.

MOORE: How do you spell your full name, then?

HANSEN: Uh, G-U-D-R-U-N.

MOORE:And then Ericsson?

HANSEN:That's E-R-C-S-S-O-N.

MOORE:E-R-I-C . . .

HANSEN:S-S-O-N.

MOORE:All right. And Hansen?

HANSEN:H-A-N-S-E-N.

MOORE:Right. And where were you born?

HANSEN:In Stockholm.

MOORE:And when were you born? What's your birth date?

HANSEN:January 27, 1917.

MOORE:1917. And what was the major, what was your town like? What was Stockholm like?

HANSEN:Uh, Stockholm has always been beautiful. It's one of the most beautiful cities. It's surrounded in water.

MOORE:And where did you live in Stockholm? What section?

HANSEN:Uh, well, it was different places. Mostly on Erik's Bay, Stockholm. I remember the name.

MOORE:And do you know what part of town that was?

HANSEN:Yeah. I can't think about it. (there is a disturbance with
the microphone)

MOORE:It'll come back to you. All right. What was your father's
name?

HANSEN:Josef Ericsson.

MOORE:Could you spell that, please?

HANSEN:J-O-S-E-F.

MOORE:All right. And what was his occupation?

HANSEN:He was a sea captain.

MOORE:A sea captain. And what did he look like? How could you
describe him?

HANSEN:I can't describe him because I never seen him. He died before
I was born.

MOORE:All right. Did anyone tell you about his personality or his
temperament?

HANSEN:No. My mother never wanted to talk about it.

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

HANSEN:Klara Ericsson.

MOORE:How do you spell Klara?

HANSEN:K-L-A-R-A.

MOORE:What was her maiden name?

HANSEN:Berdquist.

MOORE:Could you spell that, please?

HANSEN:B-E-R-D-Q-U-I-S-T.

MOORE:Right. And what was her occupation?

HANSEN:Uh, I don't know. She did different things. During the
Depression she was doing catering.

MOORE:All right. And what did she look like, your mother? What
color hair and eyes? Do you remember?

HANSEN:I remember she had blue eyes. She had brown hair.

MOORE:And was she very tall? How tall was she?

HANSEN:Oh, about the same size as I am.

MOORE:You are what?

HANSEN:Five, five four-and-a-half.

MOORE:Five foot four-and-a-half. What about her personality and temperament? How would you describe her?

HANSEN:I really can't tell too much about her, because I was born in Sweden, and then I was, then I had to stay with the relatives that lived different places. And then I was six years old she went over to the United States.

MOORE:So who brought you up there?

HANSEN:An aunt and an uncle.

MOORE:And who, what were their names?

HANSEN:They were Berquist.

MOORE:Berquist, all right. And what were their first names?

HANSEN:Uh, his name was Magnus, and her name was Maria.

MOORE:Maria and Magnus Berquist.

HANSEN:Uh-huh.

MOORE:And what was Magnus Berquist's profession?

HANSEN:He was a teacher.

MOORE:A teacher of . . .

HANSEN:The public schools.

MOORE:And what was Maria's profession?

HANSEN:Oh, she staying home, you know, housewife. They didn't work
at that time, you know. (she laughs)

MOORE:Yeah. And what about brothers and sisters? Did you have any?

HANSEN:I have one sister.

MOORE:And is she older or younger?

HANSEN:She's older.

MOORE:Older.

HANSEN:Three-and-a-half years older.

MOORE:And what is her name?

HANSEN:Margaret.

MOORE:Margaret. All right.

HANSEN:Housie.

MOORE:All right. And do you remember your uncle and aunt's house
in Stockholm?

HANSEN:Uh, my, they didn't live in Stockholm. They lived in, Grandesberg was the name.

MOORE:How do you spell that town's name?

HANSEN:G, like in George, R-A-N-D-E-S-B-E-R-G.

MOORE:And what was their house like?

HANSEN:There was more, all the teachers lived in one building, so there was more, like, apartments.

MOORE:And what, how big was that apartment? Do you remember?

HANSEN:There was three, three rooms, and a big hall.

MOORE:And did they have children?

HANSEN:No.

MOORE:So they, basically they adopted you?

HANSEN:Yeah, kind of. My mother didn't want them to adopt me.

MOORE:And how tall, how big was the apartment building? How many floors?

HANSEN:There was two floors.

MOORE:Two floors. And how was it heated?

HANSEN:With wood.

MOORE:With wood. And what type of lighting did it have?

HANSEN:Electric light.

MOORE:Electric lights. What about plumbing?

HANSEN:Uh, first, when I was smaller, they had the well. You had to get the water up from it. Then, after that, you had to get, what do you call it?

MOORE:Inside, the water comes inside.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:How about toilets? Were they in?

HANSEN:No, they were outside.

MOORE:They were outside. Did you have a garden at all?

HANSEN:Yes.

MOORE:And what did you grow in your garden?

HANSEN:Oh . . . (break in tape)

MOORE:As we were talking, before the cat was let out, (they laugh) before we had the break, you were talking about your garden

and what you grew in the garden.

HANSEN:Yeah. My aunt was doing all kinds of things, you know.

MOORE:Did you eat what was out of the garden?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And what type of things were they? Can you remember?

HANSEN:It was carrots and cauliflower, and especially strawberries.

MOORE:Especially strawberries, you seem to like the strawberries.

And what kind of furniture . . .

HANSEN:And raspberries, too.

MOORE:And raspberries. Did you have fruit trees or anything?

HANSEN:Only one apple tree.

MOORE:And what kind of furniture did you have in the house? Do you remember?

HANSEN:Well, wood.

MOORE:Was it homemade, or was it bought in the store?

HANSEN:Well, they ordered special from somebody that was making furniture.

MOORE:How about animals? Did you keep any animals?

HANSEN:Yeah. We had cats.

MOORE:Cats. And who else lives in the building? You said teachers?

HANSEN:Yes, different teachers.

MOORE:At what level did your uncle teach? What age children?

HANSEN:There was different, mostly third grade.

MOORE:Third grade?

HANSEN:Over there. I don't know what it would be here.

MOORE:All right. Who did the cooking in the family?

HANSEN:My aunt.

MOORE:What was your favorite food as a child?

HANSEN:(she laughs) That I can't remember. A long time ago I
was a child.

MOORE:Did you help cook at all?

HANSEN:No.

MOORE:And what about the kitchen? What did the kitchen look like?

HANSEN:It was a big kitchen.

MOORE:And what was in the kitchen? Did you have, did you eat in
the kitchen?

HANSEN:Yes, uh-huh.

MOORE:And what about meal time? How many meals a day did you eat?

HANSEN:Oh, three.

MOORE:And how many, did you eat any of them together as a family?

HANSEN:Yeah. We always ate together.

MOORE:You always ate together. What about your grandparents?

Where were they?

HANSEN:Uh, they, at that time they are dead.

MOORE:So basically who were you especially close to in your family?

Who were you closest to?

HANSEN:I had cousins and many aunts.

MOORE:And where did they live?

HANSEN:The cousin I would say I was closest to lived in Stockholm.

I would say Stockholm, Appelviken. That's called.

MOORE:And how do you spell that?

HANSEN:Appelviken? That's A-P-P-E-L-V-I-K-E-N.

MOORE:All right. Do you have any anecdotes you can tell about your sister or your uncle or your aunts from your childhood? Any stories at all?

HANSEN:No, not that I can remember.

MOORE:Okay. What about religious life? What was religious life like?

HANSEN:Uh, my uncle was very strict, I mean they both were very religious.

MOORE:What denomination?

HANSEN:Well, it's Lutheran.

MOORE:They were Lutheran.

HANSEN:And then my uncle was also Christian Science, because he had been in the United States. And he lost his hearing, and he claimed that the doctors had experimented with him too much, and that's why he lost his hearing and he became a Christian Scientist.

MOORE:And did, how did you express this, them being very religious?

Did they worship at church, or . . .

HANSEN:Oh, they went to church, you know, every Sunday, and in between.

MOORE:Did you go with them?

HANSEN:Uh, sometimes. I had to go, I had to go to Sunday school every Sunday.

MOORE:And that was Lutheran Sunday school?

HANSEN:Yes, uh-huh.

MOORE:And how close was the Lutheran Church to you?

HANSEN:Hmm, we always would walked there.

MOORE:So within walking distance.

HANSEN:Yeah, uh-huh.

MOORE:How, what, how big was that church?

HANSEN:Uh, that was a smallish, it was a, what they call a, the regular church was a state church, like where I was confirmed. This other one, where they went, was smaller, so it was (Swedish).

MOORE:Mission church.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:Okay. And did you say prayers at night before you went to bed?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And do you remember any?

HANSEN:Yeah. (she recites a short prayer in Swedish)

MOORE:And how about any, at the table when you ate, before you ate?

HANSEN:Yeah. We always said the (Swedish).

MOORE:Okay. And did your, you said your father became a Christian Scientist.

HANSEN:Not my father, my uncle.

MOORE>Your uncle, I'm sorry, your uncle. And was that unusual?

HANSEN:Yeah. That was there, you know, he had lived in the United States. He could read English, and he got those Christian Science magazines, what you call, from the United States.

MOORE:Did he attend services?

HANSEN:No, there was no church.

MOORE:There was none.

HANSEN:In Stockholm it was but, I mean, he didn't live in , Stockholm,
so.

MOORE:All right. And how far from Stockholm was this city?

HANSEN:Oh, they took about, I was going to say, about four hours
from the train.

MOORE:How about holiday celebrations? What was your favorite
holiday?

HANSEN:I think I liked Easter better than I liked Christmas. I don't
know why, but I never liked to dress the Christmas tree,
and it might have something to do with that my mother was
over here and I was in Sweden. I don't know. Because
my sister said my mother cried every Christmas because
I was in Sweden. I don't know. I'd much rather sit and
read a book than listen to Christmas tree. (she laughs)
My aunt had to nag at me to put the dressing.

MOORE:So you preferred Easter?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And what happened at Easter?

HANSEN:Well, we were writing little, little cards with pictures on, and you run around with them and then say, "Happy Easter," and throw them into the door. (she laughs) So it was, you know.

MOORE:And did you go to church on Easter?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And did you have a special food of any sort?

HANSEN:No. Not on Easter. Not like here, you know. It's different.

MOORE:What about school life? Did you go to school?

HANSEN:Yeah. Sure.

MOORE:And where was the school?

HANSEN:That was there in, in Grandesberg.

MOORE:The same school that your uncle taught?

HANSEN:Uh-huh.

MOORE:How was that, going to school where the teacher was your . . .

HANSEN:(she laughs) Well, I didn't have him very much, just in one grade. So, there was lots of different teachers.

MOORE:Did anyone ever comment on the fact that your uncle was in the same school?

HANSEN:No, no.

MOORE:And how many students were per class in your school?

HANSEN:Oh, I would say probably about twenty.

MOORE:And how big was the school? Was it, how many rooms?

HANSEN:Uh, it was rather big. It had three floors.

MOORE:And was it, what was it made of, the school? Was it . . .

HANSEN:Brick.

MOORE:It was a brick school, okay.

HANSEN:It's still there. (she laughs)

MOORE:It's still there. Do you remember any specific teachers or playmates from that time, their names?

HANSEN:Yeah. I had a girlfriend. Her name was Bregma, and she lived in the same building as I lived, so we are together a lot.

MOORE:And what was your favorite subject?

HANSEN:Uh, I don't know what they call it in English.

MOORE:You can say it in Swedish.

HANSEN:(Swedish)

VOICE OFF MIKE: Mother tongue.

MOORE:Oh, yeah. Your mother language.

HANSEN:Yeah, uh-huh.

MOORE:So you liked Swedish.

HANSEN:Yeah, uh-huh.

MOORE:And . . .

HANSEN:And geography, also.

MOORE:Yeah, geography. And what else? Anything else?

HANSEN:Nothing special.

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

HANSEN:Well, when I lived in Stockholm I went to school.

MOORE:An English-speaking school?

HANSEN:Yeah, uh-huh.

MOORE:What did you do for entertainment as a child? What types of games did you play? Do you remember?

HANSEN:Yeah. We had all kinds of different games.

MOORE:Like could you name one or so?

MOORE:Well, I don't know what they are called. (she laughs) I don't know, they don't have them here.

MOORE:What's one name of one, in Swedish, you can say.

HANSEN:(she pauses) I can't think.

MOORE:That's okay. If it comes back to you, you can tell me. Now, how did you come to the United States? Why did you come? How?

HANSEN:I came because my mother and my sister all (?) me to come, and I didn't want to go because I thought I could, they could come back to Sweden. But then I realized they wouldn't come back, so then I decided to go.

MOORE:So your sister went first?

HANSEN:Yeah. She was fourteen years old when she went.

MOORE:And why didn't you go then?

HANSEN: Ah, I couldn't go then.

MOORE: Why not?

HANSEN: She was supposed to go along with my mother when she left,
but then she got scarlet fever and she had to wait.

MOORE: And why couldn't you go when your sister went?

HANSEN: They didn't want to let me go.

MOORE: Really?

HANSEN: And I didn't want to go either at that time, because that's
when I thought that they could come back. And I was only
about ten years old at that time.

MOORE: And why didn't they want you to go?

HANSEN: That I don't know. (she laughs)

MOORE: So you finally came when you were older.

HANSEN: Yeah.

MOORE: And you were, hold on were you?

HANSEN: Thirty.

MOORE: Thirty years old. And you came because you thought that they

would never come back.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And . . .

HANSEN:I thought I can at least go for a visit.

MOORE:What did you do up to thirty years old then? Tell me about
your life up to then.

HANSEN:Yeah. I was a pedicurist, in Stockholm and also in a west
coast town named Uddevalla.

MOORE:How do you spell that?

HANSEN:Uddevalla? U-D-D-E-V-A-L-L-A.

MOORE:And so you were a pedicurist. And then, did you marry there
in . . .

HANSEN:No, over here.

MOORE:Over here.

HANSEN:I met my husband here at Broadway High School, learning
English.

MOORE:Oh. So, okay. So, you had a profession in Stockholm.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:Where did you live, then? Did you live by yourself, or with family members?

HANSEN:Yes. No, I lived by myself.

MOORE:In Stockholm?

HANSEN:Uh, yeah. When I lived in Stockholm I lived with my aunt, and then I lived in Uddevalla. I had my own apartment.

MOORE:Now, at what point did you realize, how did you know your mother and your sister wouldn't come back?

HANSEN:Well, I had a feeling that they wouldn't come back. And also, you know, the times are not so good, either. It costs lots of money to go.

MOORE:Yeah. So you, tell me what happened once, did you just decide all of a sudden to come to the United States.

HANSEN:Yeah, uh-huh.

MOORE:Was there any event that made it . . . Okay.

HANSEN:No, no. I just decided I wanted to go, you know, before I got too old. (she laughs)

MOORE:And, so, who paid for your trip?

HANSEN:I paid it myself.

MOORE:You paid it yourself. And how did you arrange it? What did you have to do in order to come here?

HANSEN:I had to go to Goteborg to get, I don't know. It must have been for my pass, but I can't remember.

MOORE:And did you, what about packing in your apartment and everything else? What did you do?

HANSEN:I sold some of the things, and some of them I stored with my aunt and uncle.

MOORE:What did you sell?

HANSEN:I sold (she laughs) a table and a bed, and a medicine cabinet.
(she laughs)

MOORE:And what were you thinking this whole time? Were you enthusiastic about going?

HANSEN:Yes.

MOORE:And what about the war? What happened in the war?

HANSEN:Well, this was after the war.

MOORE:And what happened during the war?

HANSEN:Well, we had, also had dark at night.

MOORE:Did you work during the war?

HANSEN:Yes.

MOORE:And where did you live during the war time?

HANSEN:It was in Uddevalla.

MOORE:And what happened, what about life in Sweden, in Stockholm, well, in Sweden, at that time?

HANSEN:Well, yeah, it was pretty good. We got a lot of people, refugees, coming in, and we helped them they could stay in the schools in the summertime. And they were so happy when they came to Sweden and could see light. We had dark, too, but not that much as they had.

MOORE:And, so it was after the war that you decided to come.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And . . .

HANSEN:Well, I had wanted to go before, but then the war came, so I couldn't go.

HANSEN:I see. And do you remember packing to come here?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:What did you take with you to the United States?

HANSEN:Oh, my mother wrote that it was hard here to get sheets, for instance, and I should take that pillow, and I took silverware and towels and things like that.

MOORE:Anything with memories from Sweden, anything that was special?

HANSEN:No, just some gifts I got.

MOORE:What gifts did you get?

HANSEN:Oh, just things to remember people.

MOORE:Did you remember any of them, what that would be?

HANSEN:Well, one was an (?), and just knickknacks.

MOORE:And, okay. So you packed your bags, and what was your family's reaction here, I mean, in Sweden. What was their reaction to you going?

HANSEN:Well, I didn't say anything about it.

MOORE:And where were your, where was your mother and your sister living? Where were they living at that time?

HANSEN:They were living in Seattle.

MOORE:In Seattle. And what was your mother doing here then?

HANSEN:I think that was when she was doing catering. I'm not sure, because she did different things. She also had kind of a restaurant. I know, she said that was right beside a cleaning establishment, so they just came in for coffee and had their own sandwiches, so she couldn't make any money on that.

MOORE:So what, did you know any English before you came here?

HANSEN:Yeah. I had gone to school in Stockholm, but it isn't the same, you know. You don't get any practice.

MOORE:Where in Stockholm did you go to school?

HANSEN:It was close to where my aunt lived, in Stockholm, (Swedish).

MOORE:It was private teaching.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:How long did you study English, then?

HANSEN:Oh, that was, I don't think it was more than about four or five months. I can't remember.

MOORE:So you packed, you went. Where did you leave from to come to the United States, what port?

HANSEN:Uh, I left from Goteborg.

MOORE:And how did you get from your home to Goteborg?

HANSEN:Train.

MOORE:Train. Did anyone send you off, come to say goodbye to you?

HANSEN:No, no. But my boss sent me flowers, to the boat, and I never got them. She told me, you know, she had sent them. I never got them.

MOORE:And did you see your family members before you left?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And what, all right. So when you went on the train ride and you had, how much, how many things did you have with you? What had you packed to take?

HANSEN:Oh, I had a trunk that was, you know, sent, and a suitcase.

MOORE:And you go to the boat, and the boat's name was, do you remember?

HANSEN:Drottningholm.

MOORE:Drottningholm. And what was your impression of this trip?

Did you have second thoughts during this time?

HANSEN:No.

MOORE:Before you left? You were sure.

HANSEN:I was very seasick.

MOORE:On the trip, on the boat.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And so what type of accommodations did you have?

HANSEN:You mean on the boat?

MOORE:Yeah.

HANSEN:We were, I think we were four persons in the cabin, yeah.

MOORE:You had a cabin with four persons. Was it first, second or
third class?

HANSEN:The third class.

MOORE:Third class. When you got to Goteborg, did you have to sleep
overnight?

HANSEN:No.

MOORE:You went straight to the boat.

HANSEN:Yeah. That eight hours from where I lived.

MOORE:Who were the people in the cabin with you? What were . . .

HANSEN:One was Canadian, and one was from Austria. And the other two, I don't know.

MOORE:And why were they going to the United States?

HANSEN:That I don't know.

MOORE:Did you talk much with these people in your cabin?

HANSEN:Yeah, except that the first day I was so seasick.

MOORE:And why were you seasick? What was happening?

HANSEN:Well, it was real stormy.

MOORE:And so how long did that last on the trip?

HANSEN:Oh, probably I can't remember how long it lasted. I remember I went out in the bathroom and I fainted and broke my watch.
(she laughs)

MOORE:Oh.

HANSEN:And then I stayed in bed.

MOORE:Were other people sick, too?

HANSEN:Yeah. Some of them, some of them.

MOORE:In your cabin. Well, finally, when it stopped being stormy,
did you eat in the restaurant, or what type of . . .

HANSEN:Down, you know, in the dining room.

MOORE:In the dining room. What was that like?

HANSEN:Oh, it was nice.

MOORE:Did, describe the accommodations. What did they offer? Did
you, how did you eat?

HANSEN:I have no, I cannot remember at all what kind of food it was.
(she laughs)

MOORE:Are there any stories you have about your boat trip at all,
anything that happened unusual?

HANSEN:No. There were stories about the one time we went, my husband
and I went in 1951. (she laughs)

MOORE:Okay. So, let's go back on the trip. Do you remember, were
you allowed on deck? Did you walk on deck?

HANSEN:Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.

MOORE:And who was on this boat? What type of nationalities were

on this boat?

HANSEN:Oh, that I don't know. Swedish people, I imagine. I was, honestly, I don't know.

MOORE:Okay. Do you remember seeing land for the first time?

HANSEN:Yeah. We saw New York. We were standing outside on deck and look.

MOORE:And did you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty at all?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And what was that like?

HANSEN:It was exciting.

MOORE:Were other people excited too?

HANSEN:I don't know.

MOORE:You don't remember. Okay. So you came to Ellis Island eventually. How did you get from the ship to Ellis Island?

HANSEN:I was taken there.

MOORE:Taken by, how?

HANSEN:There came, somebody, to meet me. I think he was an agent,

you know.

MOORE:An agent?

HANSEN:Yeah. And he should take care of me. Then he just left me because I had to go to Ellis Island.

MOORE:Okay. So did you have a medical examination before leaving Sweden?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And what did they do in that medical?

HANSEN:They ask me if I ever been in the hospital, and I said, "Yes." And I had been in a psychiatric hospital, and that was the whole trouble.

MOORE:When had you been in a psychiatric hospital?

HANSEN:I had been there earlier.

MOORE:How old were you then?

HANSEN:Oh, I was there when I was sixteen years old.

MOORE:Uh-huh. For how long?

HANSEN:I think I was there about, probably three months.

MOORE:So when you were in Sweden they asked you if you'd ever been
in a hospital?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And you said, "Yes, I was in the psychiatric hospital."

HANSEN:I didn't say it before they asked. (she laughs)

MOORE:Yeah.

HANSEN:Because I knew it was what's going to happen.

MOORE:Okay. So then they wrote this down.

HANSEN:Yeah. And I didn't get, when my past came, I lived with my
aunt and uncle then. It was denied. So then I went back
to Stockholm, and I went to a doctor there, and he said
he couldn't find anything wrong with me. And I had seven
appointments at the consulate. And finally I got
permission to go.

MOORE:And the original reason when you were sixteen that you went
in was that, were you sick then?

HANSEN:Well, I was, what should I say? I couldn't, I had to quit
school, for instance, because I couldn't concentrate.

MOORE:And so the pressure got to you when you were sixteen.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And when you got out in three months were you able to go back to school?

HANSEN:Yes.

MOORE:Okay. So all you . . .

HANSEN:No, I didn't go back to school, because I had become so far behind.

MOORE:Oh, I see.

HANSEN:So I took some correspondence courses.

MOORE:Okay. So you had a period when you were sixteen in which you were sick.

HANSEN:Uh-huh.

MOORE:And now you were thirty, and they were asking you about that.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:Okay. So you went to doctors, and they said you were okay.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And so did you have any certificates for this? Did they write

you anything?

HANSEN:No, no. Then when I came to Ellis Island the first thing, I came to the hospital there.

MOORE:Wait a minute. So you're on Ellis Island, and you said, what happened on the boat? You're on the boat, the big boat.

HANSEN:Yeah. Well, somebody, whoever it was, took me to Ellis Island.

MOORE:You were personally escorted to Ellis Island.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And what did they do then? How did you get, with this person, how did you get from the boat to Ellis Island? Did you go straight, or did you go on another boat?

HANSEN:That's a ferry over there.

MOORE:Okay. You were ferried over to Ellis Island. And what happened then?

HANSEN:Then they took me in, and I came to the hospital.

MOORE:And did they tell you why you were going?

HANSEN:Well, I knew why. Because I had the trouble in the past again,

you know.

MOORE:And so did they explain anything to you?

HANSEN:Not as I, I can remember.

MOORE:Okay. And then what happened?

HANSEN:Well, I was in the hospital a few days, and the doctor couldn't find anything wrong with me. So then I came where the other people were. It was a big, big hall. Everybody was, you know, in.

MOORE:A very big hall.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And then what . . .

HANSEN:And the German people had them kind of, what did they call it now? Anyway, they sold different things. They sold coffee and, yeah, a canteen, it's called.

MOORE:The German people had a canteen.

HANSEN:Uh-huh. So we shopped there. And I met many nice people there.

MOORE:You said it was interesting before you started the . . .

HANSEN:Yeah, that was interesting. If I had, you know, I would have liked it if I had known the outcome, but I didn't.

MOORE:How long did you stay at Ellis Island?

HANSEN:I came the 24th of March, and I can't remember if it was the third . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

MOORE:All right. Before we had a break in the tape, I asked you, and I'll ask it again, how long were you at Ellis Island?

HANSEN:I was there from, I came the 24th of March, and either it was the third or eighth of August, I can't remember the date.

MOORE:So you were there for four months.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:What did they do to you in the hospital in terms of a medical examination or medical treatment?

HANSEN:I can't remember that any more, when they examined me.

MOORE:Did they give you any treatment at all?

HANSEN:No.

MOORE:So then after you were in a couple days for examination, they put you in the regular dormitory.

HANSEN:Yeah. Uh-huh.

MOORE:And what were the accommodations there like?

HANSEN:There was like a great, big hall and there was, the people came in from all over. You know, sometimes they come from Italy, or different places.

MOORE:How many people were in that hall?

HANSEN:I really, there was quite a few people there. I don't know how many.

MOORE:And what did you do all the time there?

HANSEN:Oh, I visited with the other ones, and I was reading. And we were embroidering. And the first time, the first night I stayed with, we were four in the room, and there was two Jewish girls. And the other ones, I don't know what they were. And then I came to another room, and there was a girl. I was bunched together with her. She was a Christian Scientist, too. (she laughs)

MOORE:Did they ever tell you why they were detaining you?

HANSEN:I can't remember the, I had a lot of hearings, and the last time, I had to go into New York for a hearing. I bought a bag with chocolate chip cookies, I think it was, or some lunch along, anyway.

MOORE:And what were the hearings like? What did they ask you? What happens?

HANSEN:That's just a blank. I can't remember.

MOORE:So where did you get the books to read and the materials . . .

HANSEN:They had a library there.

MOORE:They had a library.

HANSEN:Uh-huh.

MOORE:And what about the food and accommodations?

HANSEN:Well, most people complained about it, but especially the German people, you know. And you'd think they hadn't had very much food during the wars. At that time margarine wasn't called, you know. It's odd that the color makes so much difference in the taste. (she laughs) Because it was white.

MOORE:Oh, yeah. And so, but what did, what was the dining, what was the dining room like? How was . . .

HANSEN:Oh, there was benches, and sitting on each side.

MOORE:And did you have enough to eat?

HANSEN:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:And what were the conditions like?

HANSEN:The food was kind of starchy. (she laughs)

MOORE:Were there any foods you had never seen before?

HANSEN:Oh, I don't think so.

MOORE:And so you slept in a facility with four people per room.

HANSEN:Uh-huh.

MOORE:And did you have sheets?

HANSEN:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:How about washing your clothes and those things? How did you do that?

HANSEN:Isn't that odd, I can't even think about that. I suppose we washed it by hand, I don't know.

MOORE:All right. So you had hearings, and you stayed, what happened that you got out finally?

HANSEN:My sister and my mother really worked on it. My mother even wrote to President Truman. And my sister had worked for Senator Magnuson. So he had, and then I had a cousin that came from Stockholm and she worked in (?) in New York. And she knew the Swedish consul, so they got together and got me out.

MOORE:And just, what happened? One day you got news? You never knew what was going to happen?

HANSEN:No, no. I didn't know. I don't know if, if they hadn't worked on it, if I'd come out. They might have sent me back. I don't know. There was also a minister, a Swedish minister and his wife. They were very nice. They came and took me out, you know, for rides.

MOORE:Where?

HANSEN:In New York.

MOORE:So you were allowed to leave now and then?

HANSEN:Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:And they took you in their custody.

HANSEN:Yeah, yeah.

MOORE:So they allowed you to leave the island in the four months.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And were you allowed to go to their house?

HANSEN:Hmm, they took me to restaurants and it was, you know, used to go to their house. There also was a, what do you call, social worker? Is that what they're called? She was from, I don't know how to pronounce it in English now. Latia, not . . .

MOORE:Latvia.

HANSEN:The one besides there that's three countries there.

MOORE:Lithuania?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:Lithuania.

HANSEN:Uh-huh. And she was very nice. And before I left for here she let me stay in her apartment. She took me to different things in New York.

MOORE:Oh, I see. Like what things did she . . .

HANSEN:Well, we went to a city, what is it called? Radio City, is it called?

MOORE:Yeah, Radio City.

HANSEN:Yeah. And she took me shopping.

MOORE:Did you, were you allowed to stay overnight in New York when you went there?

HANSEN:I don't know. This was when I was out of there, before I went to Seattle.

MOORE:Oh, I see.

HANSEN:So I don't know if I would have been allowed or not.

MOORE:Okay. But the minister, did he come when you were in there?

HANSEN:Yeah, and his wife.

MOORE:Yeah. And did you ever stay overnight?

HANSEN:No, no, no.

MOORE:You went back the same day.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:All right. So you were let go at one point. Where did you

go? What happened then, when you found out that you could leave?

HANSEN:Well, then I, my sister had arranged a trip so I should see more of the United States, but I changed it and took a plane out here.

MOORE:A plane to where?

HANSEN:To Seattle. I had to change in, I think it was Milwaukee. It took fifteen hours at that time.

MOORE:How were your English skills when you were on Ellis Island? Did you, how did you find your English proficiency? You had studied.

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And . . .

HANSEN:Well, everybody (she laughs) you know, talked more or less broken, so. (she laughs)

MOORE:And how about when you arrived in Seattle? What, were your, was anybody there to meet you?

HANSEN:Yes, uh-huh. There was my mother, my sister, my brother-in-law and the kids. (she laughs)

MOORE:And so what happened? Were they, was it a very, what was the moment like?

HANSEN:Oh, it was a happy moment.

MOORE:And where did you go to live then?

HANSEN:I lived with my mother.

MOORE:And do you remember the address in Seattle?

HANSEN:Eighth Avenue, 23. I think it was 2309, I'm not sure. It was long ago.

MOORE:And what did you do for work when you got to Seattle?

HANSEN:She took me to the University of Washington, I mean, my mother did. And I got a job there at the Commons, and the first day all I did was clean spinach. (she laughs) It took the whole day. I thought, "I must stay a month. I can't quit right away." And then we cleaned peeled one day. And I asked if I could change, so they put me to make, cook vegetables and things like that.

MOORE:And what had you expected about the United States before you came? What had you heard about?

HANSEN:Oh, I really hadn't heard too much.

MOORE:And what was it, how was it in relation to, how did you find life here when you first came here? Was it easy to adjust or . . .

HANSEN:Oh, yeah, it was easy to adjust.

MOORE:And so tell me about the course of your life then, since then. How did you end up here and . . .

HANSEN:Oh, well, I met my husband, as I said, at Broadway High School.

MOORE:What year was that?

HANSEN:Let's see now. It was 1948. I come in '47.

MOORE:And was your husband, what nationality was he?

HANSEN:Danish.

MOORE:Was he from Denmark?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:And he went to learn English.

HANSEN:Yes.

MOORE:And you were there, too.

HANSEN:Uh-huh.

MOORE:And how did you know he would be your husband? I mean, how long . . .

HANSEN:I didn't know that. (they laugh) Then we worked, I, I worked at the University Commons, and then I got another job, so I had two jobs. I made sixty-five cents an hour at the University. And then I got seventy-five cents an hour at Kungson's Dining Room. That was a Swedish smorgasbord. And then my husband knew somebody, that he wanted both of us to work for him. He had a, that isn't there any more, but it was called Selandia. That was on the waterfront.

MOORE:How do you spell that?

HANSEN:S-E-L-A-N-D-I-A.

MOORE:And so in what year did you marry?

HANSEN:1949.

MOORE:1949. And what was he doing at that time?

HANSEN:He was baking, he worked at Frederick and Elson first, and then we opened our own bakery.

MOORE:And where was that bakery?

HANSEN:Here in Magnolia.

MOORE:In the Magnolia section of Seattle?

HANSEN:Yeah. There was, it's a Chinese restaurant right there now.

It was here in the Magnolia District. But they had, there was no parking space, and we were there only four-and-a-half years because there was no parking space, there was a beauty shop upstairs, and you know how long time cars sit there. (she laughs) And then also they raised our rent, and they would demand to change, there was pipes in the building and they had to be covered up.

They also had to put in another bathroom. And we didn't feel like doing that. The building wasn't ours.

(she laughs) So then we moved to Mercer Island.

MOORE:To Mercer Island. And you had a bakery there?

HANSEN:Uh-huh.

MOORE:For how long?

HANSEN:Uh, fourteen-and-a-half years. Then my husband worked too much, and the doctor told him he had to get out of it, so we sold that.

MOORE:And how many, working at a bakery, how many hours a day is

that work?

HANSEN:Oh, that's almost a year, almost, well, he started first at three o'clock in the morning, and then he started two o'clock in the morning and he worked long, long hours. He went home and had a nap, and then came back.

MOORE:And did you help, too?

HANSEN:Yeah, I worked in the store. I didn't think.

MOORE:And did you have children?

HANSEN:Yeah, we had one daughter.

MOORE:And what's her name?

HANSEN:Mariana.

MOORE:Is that a picture of her?

HANSEN:Yeah, when she was five years old.

MOORE:Beautiful. And what does she do now?

HANSEN:She works for Fred Hudson Sons.

MOORE:And what does she do?

HANSEN:Oh, she, I don't know, she does different things. She, right

now she is working on putting together, they are going to have a get-together with people that had bone marrow. Having a party for them, and that's going to be pretty soon, so she's busy with that.

MOORE:And when was she born? What year?

HANSEN:She was born 1955.

MOORE:1955. And did she speak Swedish?

HANSEN:Yeah, she went to Sweden for six months. So, of course, she never practiced it any more. You start talking it, and then you forget, you know. She got her credits for high school, so that was in (?), and then she took care of children in Sweden, and she went to evening school.

MOORE:In Swedish.

HANSEN:Uh-huh. And then, before she came home here, she went all over in Europe, trips. And she didn't want to come home. (she laughs) After that she went to Whitman College.

MOORE:Oh, yes, I know Whitman. And what did she major in in college?

HANSEN:I can't say it again. Ahh! Psychology.

MOORE:Psychology. Yeah. And so when you look back now on your life

and your decision to come, how do you feel about your coming to the United States?

HANSEN:Oh, I'm glad I came.

MOORE:How about your sister and your mother? How did they feel?

HANSEN:My mother died several years ago. You mean, how did . . .

MOORE:What they felt about their decision to come here, was it a good one?

HANSEN:Yeah, uh-huh.

MOORE:And as it, how do you feel in terms of nationality now? Did you get citizenship here?

HANSEN:Oh, yeah.

MOORE:And what year did you get citizenship?

HANSEN:When I'd been here five years.

MOORE:And how do you feel, what nationality do you feel? Now, you grew up . . .

HANSEN:Tell you the truth, I don't know. I can't figure out if I'm thinking in Swedish or not. (she laughs) Isn't that awful?

MOORE:You don't know . . .

HANSEN:No, I don't know. (she laughs)

MOORE:How about your identity? Do you feel Swedish still?

HANSEN:Oh, yeah. My sister laughs at me because I said, "Back home."
You know, and I've been here much longer than I've been
in Sweden.

MOORE:And you call Sweden back home.

HANSEN:Yeah. (she laughs)

MOORE:But do you feel American, too?

HANSEN:Yeah.

MOORE:Have you ever thought of going back to Sweden to live?

HANSEN:Not to live, no. And my husband won't go back to Denmark
either?

HANSEN:And why not?

MOORE:Well, I think we have it better here.

MOORE:Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the Ellis Island
project for letting us speak with you and hearing your
story. This is the 29th of June, 1994, in Seattle,

KM-054/HANSEN

Washington, and this is Kate Moore signing off for the
Ellis Island Oral History Project.