

KM-75

LYDIA LOLIGER

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**US: PITTSBURGH (PENNSYLVANIA), OAK HILL
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MOORE: Good Evening this is Kate Moore for the National Park Service and today is 29th of July 1994. And I'm Bucyrus Ohio at the home of Lydia Lolijer-Loliger. Who came to the United States from Switzerland in 1906 when she was 2 ½ years old. Uh why don't you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth please?

LOLIGER: Uh... my full name is Lydia Loliger.

MOORE: And what was your maiden name?

LOLIGER: My maiden name was Witschi.

MOORE: How do you spell that?

LOLIGER: W-I-T-S-C-H-I.

MOORE: Alright and when were you born? What's your date of birth?

LOLIGER: January 25th, 1904.

MOORE: Okay, and um where you born?

LOLIGER: In Bern Switzerland.

MOORE: Okay. Bern Switzerland, can you spell that?

LOLIGER: B-E-R-N.

MOORE: Okay...

LOLIGER: Course it's a capital.

MOORE: (chuckles)

LOLIGER: Switzerland, you want me to spell that ha?

MOORE: No--no that's fine. And what um what do you remember – have you been back or do you remember anything about Switzerland? You were so young when you came.

LOLIGER: I don't remember anything before we came over here, but I've been over there several times.

MOORE: And how would describe Bern?

LOLIGER: Bern—it's a very interesting city. I love the—especially the arcades and the shopping area.

MOORE: And how about the major industry of Bern?

LOLIGER: The industries? I can't tell you too much but I think it's quite varied.

MOORE: Um. What would you say is the population of Bern when you were a child?

LOLIGER: Oh my I don't know. I haven't kept track of those things.

MOORE: Okay what was your father's name?

LOLIGER: John.

MOORE: John, and what was his occupation?

LOLIGER: He was a cabinet-maker.

MOORE: And could you describe what your father looked like?

LOLIGER: Well he was a normal looking man; I think he had nice features. He had a nice-nice pointed nose and not flat like that (laughing) he was a good looking man.

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

LOLIGER: Well I would-gr-I would describe him as a very stern person.

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

LOLIGER: Not in particular, just little things that might have happened around the home.

MOORE: Like for example what would that be?

LOLIGER: Well – we had to walk the chalk line that’s for sure.

MOORE: (laughs)

LOLIGER: Every one of us. (laughing)

MOORE: What was your mother’s name?

LOLIGER: Marie, although over here she was always called Mary.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. By the way, what do you mean by walk the chalk line, what do you mean by that?

LOLIGER: He had strict rules and that was it.

MOORE: And what would a rule be for an example?

LOLIGER: What would a—well-well they were good rules. I wou-would say one of the things he was really strict about was honesty. And believe me if you weren’t honest you it felt it someplace or other. (laughs).

MOORE: Now your mother’s name again was?

LOLIGER: It was Marie, but over here they were told that Marie over here is Mary, but that’s not true.

MOORE: Mmm.

LOLIGER: Those are things-that’s something I found out later.

MOORE: So Marie in the old country and did they call her Mary here?

LOLIGER: Yes, over here they called her Mary.

MOORE: Okay, and what was her maiden name?

LOLIGER: Wildi. W-I-L-D-I. Do you have a record of that stuff?

MOORE: Um no.

LOLIGER: (laughs)

MOORE: Okay um what was her occupation?

LOLIGER: My occupation?

MOORE: You-your mother's occupation?

LOLIGER: Oh she was a seamstress.

MOORE: A seamstress. And wha-how would you describe what she looked like, your mom?

LOLIGER: She was a beautiful woman.

MOORE: How tall would you say she was?

LOLIGER: Well – probably five feet and a quarter. (laughs) Maybe five and half, five feet the—about an inch she was a short like I am.

MOORE: And eyes and hair?

LOLIGER: You know I never paid any attention really do, we never paid attention to physical features in our family. Those weren't important.

MOORE: Mmmhmm.

LOLIGER: But she had long beautiful hair, always long enough to put around in—many-many-two-two braids and could wrap the whole back of her head co-cover the whole back of her head with her braids.

MOORE: And what about her personality and her temperament, how would you describe her to somebody—

LOLIGER: She was a very-very easy going person, she was just very um-um adaptable to most everything. I guess she had to be she had a large family.

MOORE: And what were her chores then? You said she was a seamstress what did she do, housework as well?

LOLIGER: Well she was-she was not seamstress over here. She was a seamstress in Europe. Over here she just take care of her family and did sewing for our family, she made pratic-all of her clothes while were in school and things like that.

MOORE: Now you said for all of us, --brothers and sisters?

(tape goes wonky)

MOORE: In order, in order, in order.

LOLIGER: Well I can't name all the ones of the ones who died. But the ones who grew up, Felix, Werner, um—Lydia, Theodore, Victor, Bertha, I left one out. Felix, Wer-I left one-Felix, Werner, Lydia, Ed, Theodore, Victor, and Bertha. There were seven of us who grew up.

MOORE: And where were you in the order?

LOLIGER: Felix, Werner, Lydia—I was third but then there was some who died in between.

MOORE: And was Ed after you or before you?

LOLIGER: He came after me.

MOORE: Mmhmm.

LOLIGER: Felix, Werner, Lydia, Ed... he was a year, just about oh about 18 months younger than I was. He was the youngest one when we came over he came over.

MOORE: And uh you said you—some children died, what did they die of, do you remember?

LOLIGER: Well I really don't—and uh children's diseases I think, when—as far as I know.

MOORE: And did any children die here in the United States?

LOLIGER: Yes. One in Pittsburgh and one in Mansfield.

MOORE: Mmhmm again do you remember at all what the reason was?

LOLIGER: Well—the first, the one in Pittsburgh, they thought it was malnutrition but maybe it's because we didn't know what too-uh they we tried, she tried I know we gave him special milk. I remember they said he wasn't getting enough nourishment and the doctor recommended them having, giving goat milk. And my father actually bought some goats, so that we would have goat milk for that baby, but the baby did die.

MOORE: Mmhmm. Now um, is there a story about your mom, your mother that you associate with your childhood?

LOLIGER: Nothing particular except that we just worked together. We just—the whole family of us worked. Now for instance, in--in, see when we have, you haven't had where we moved to for that comes later. That comes later?

MOORE: That's alright, but tell us anyways what you were saying.

LOLIGER: Well anyways since you asked about childhood, it's just tha-that we did hard work now. When we first come over here we moved to Pittsburgh. And a my father always um, and that's the one thing I remember. I remember the first house we went into, a friend of his showed us that they made arrangements and showed us where it was. And I remember going there, I really remember going there. My younger brother and I we were little, our parents too they send the little ones ahead and the place up there so we hurried. And the two of us together and all I remember is a big white house. But soon after that I managed to buy a house, he always felt his ha-provide our roof over our heads, and he did. And then he did a lot of remodeling and a, one of the big things he wanted to do was have good water supply and he built a-a I guess we called it a well. Or maybe a spring, it's probably a well because a spring would come naturally right out of the hill. But he had to dig deep and he did, and um, not only that, he wanted it lined, he wanted a good drinking water, so he cemented it so it wouldn't be, you know, wouldn't be a mag-just water out of the ground. And he cemented that and he even built a wall in between where the water came in for it filter through to the other side and that's the part that we drip-that we drank. But—

MOORE: Where was this exactly?

LOLIGER: It was uh-it's a when a place that doesn't exist anymore. It was a—near east Pittsburgh, of course east Pittsburgh is still there and—

MOORE: Pennsylvania?

LOLIGER: Yes, Pennsylvania. And it's also within walking- it was in-within walking distance of East Pittsburgh where my father worked at the Westinghouse there. And Turtle Creek is also within walking distance, now it still exists, but we lived on a hill called Oak Hill. You just a few, a cou-about three rows of houses and it really—

MOORE: Was that the first you went to after you came—

LOLIGER: That's the first place we went-were we lived.

MOORE: Now if we back a bit, did your parents tell you why they came to this country?

LOLIGER: Well I-I think my father was dissatisfied over there, I think it might have been a bad time over there and um, uh probably wasn't getting ahead like he wanted too, and I think just the fact that everybody was talking about coming to the United States and opportunities over here.

MOORE: Um now back home, do you remember anything about it, or do you know anything about the dwelling that you lived in? The house that you lived in or the apartment, whatever—

LOLIGER: I don't remember where I lived, no, I don't remember that. It was an apartment but later on I saw where my father grew up.

MOORE: And where was the place that you came to United States from, what town was that?

LOLIGER: From Bern.

MOORE: Bern...

LOLIGER: We lived in Bern at that time.

MOORE: And uh, do you know how big that apartment was or anything?

LOLIGER: I don't know anything about this-it's probably not too large; none of them are really very large over there. From what I learned.

MOORE: And what was father doing in Bern just before he left? What occupation, was he employed?

LOLIGER: Well as far as I know he was cabinet-maker all the time over there. He was an apprentice, when and learning it as an apprentice and I think he stuck to-as far as I know that's what he did as long as he was over there.

MOORE: Did your parents have anyone over here who sponsored them?

LOLIGER: There must have been someone though-but I don't know who, when the only one that I would know would be this person who arranged for this, where we going to live. But I don't-I don't remember who that was.

MOORE: And who was that person?

LOLIGER: I don't know.

MOORE: Mmhmm. Alright so, d-what-yo-you were only two years old on the voyage over. Do you have anything that remains from what you packed of the voyage. Do you have anything left from your old residence in Bern, that you brought with you?

LOLIGER: Oh we brought a few things over, of course we lot we brought a lot of bedding along. And one of the things I always remember was um the big wicker baskets, we had two big wicker baskets and when I was in Ellis Island a couple a years ago I wanted to see if there was any just like, there wasn't a one like the ones we had. Al-all the ones we had seemed to be larger and the covers were different, the—the—they had a lid, they were wicker but th-they had a co-a lid-a lid that came down about four or five inches over the basket. How I don't remember how they kept them closed shut but my mother used them for years to store her bedding in.

MOORE: Is that – what did she bring over in those baskets?

LOLIGER: Uh-a- I really don't know wh-what they packed, all I know at home then until-till she died we always those baskets just to store linens.

MOORE: And do you have any old pictures or records or anything left from that time in Switzerland?

LOLIGER: We did not. In the first place my father belonged to a religious sect that didn't believe in pictures.

MOORE: And what was that religious sect?

LOLIGER: Well it was-um-a I think they called them, they called them [ph] Noitoifor, it's um, I really don't know. There some have – they probably something like the Baptists, but on the other they—yep they were more like the Amish.

MOORE: Now –err- did your parents ever experience any religious persecution?

LOLIGER: No, not that I know of, no.

MOORE: And you said your father belonged to this religious sect; did your mother come from the same?

LOLIGER: She didn't come from it, but then she also joined for-she we-she went along with him, joined with you know.

MOORE: And what was the, what were the outer forms of that sect? How could recognize that?

LOLIGER: Well there's a branch of it over here, even now, over here in Mansfield. And um in fact um that's where my mother went for years and um, the outer forms as I say, they're um-lim-um-um-limited in the clothing they were. Nothing fancy, no fancy hairdos. No picture shows, not too much education, and uh those were the things that I've that I know was very prominent in that religion that they practiced. And it affected my life too.

MOORE: Well from what I know about the Amish, they were actually Anabaptists and uh—

LOLIGER: What does that mean?

MOORE: Well it had do about adult baptism.

LOLIGER: Oh, well uh do they have baptism at all, the Amish?

MOORE: That I'm not- I think adult baptism if it is.

LOLIGER: Well that-that's what th-this was too; definitely adult baptism. And um um but I'm uh anyways, um you had to be an adult to become a member of that church.

MOORE: Well do you think that your parents, well how can I ask this? The motivation you mention was for opportunities, but do you think it in anyway related to religion, that your parents came here?

LOLIGER: No, I don't think so, because I don't think they even knew whether they'd find this type of-a sect over here. I don't think so.

MOORE: And um-what about your grandparents, what religion were they?

LOLIGER: I really don't know. I don't remember my grandparents at all.

MOORE: So when you were a child um, did you abide by these rules of the sect?

LOLIGER: Well I even joined the church (not understood).

MOORE: And-and you mentioned clothing restrictions, what type of clothing did you- were you allowed to wear?

LOLIGER: We were allowed to wear just plain things, uh uhm, hardly ever anything store bought, um, for instance, my mother would make clothes for me, when-even when I was sixteen out of material that was men-that would be used for making men's shirts rather than some fancy women's designs, you know.

MOORE: So what colors were they basically?

LOLIGER: Well nothing bright, nothing too bright. Especially red, (laughs). I know my mother bought me a red one time, a winter hood, and I had to take it back because it was red. That was a not for a little girl to wear.

MOORE: And when you were, how did you- how did you worship here? How often?

LOLIGER: Well, we went in streaks. He was temperamental when it came to religion (laughs).

MOORE: So did you (laughs) go to meetings, what did you have church, meetings, what types of gatherings?

LOLIGER: Oh yes the-the-they had have nice, they have the church services, morning, was a couple hours in the morning. Maybe two more hours or more so in the afternoon. Had lunch.

MOORE: Everyday?

LOLIGER: Not every day, on Sundays.

MOORE: On Sundays yeah.

LOLIGER: In fact the church in Mansfield was known as the milk can church because farmers would bring in their milk in-in cans and the-there would be committees and they would serve usually bread and a butter and coffee and milk. And that would be it.

MOORE: What did your family tell you um, about your coming to the United States, about the boat trip? Was there any type of stories they told about coming over?

LOLIGER: No they didn't, well the only thing they did, they-they came third class and it was crowded, that I know they told me.

MOORE: Did they mention being sick or not or—

LOLIGER: No they mention that, no they didn't but they were a, um, they were afraid that, when-they a they knew that they would be examined at Ellis Island and they were afraid they might find some little thing that would keep them from being accepted. They had that fear, they tol-they they really had that fear.

MOORE: Were they uh – how long did they stay at Ellis Island?

LOLIGER: I really don't know.

MOORE: You, I say you were a part of they, I mean you were there too so...

LOLIGER: I know, but see, th-the I don't remember what they said actually, I know they went through all this type of thing that we read about, in fact I have an article right there that tells every different things that parents talked about.

MOORE: For example what would you say? What did they talk about?

LOLIGER: Well about being so crowded and um having to wait and in fact they say we were crowded in like animals in these little stalls. I think that must have been where they used ha-have to wait for their examinations. But they did talk abo-I think they mentioned that more than anything else. That's one thing I remember that they did talk about. Well, like I remember they wou-would never complained about the food.

MOORE: Did they ever mention the name of the boat you came on?

LOLIGER: No, but I have the name of it. And I have it on um, they mention it and I always they mention another boat, they were two boats that they mention, I see the Carmonia or Lucania and I have it on my certificate of citizenship which I got for myself.

MOORE: Mmhmm. And what (children can be heard shouting outside) what um, what port did you leave from then?

LOLIGER: Oh well, we left from La Harbor, is that the way you pronounce it in France. We drove through Paris, I remember ah, I just remember one thing there, I didn't like the bathroom there, I thought it was just a great big pipe where I was gonna fall down into (laughs).

MOORE: In France you mean, in France.

LOLIGER: Huh, huh?

MOORE: In France?

LOLIGER: In France, and of course that was on the way after we left was we went through Paris and uh—

MOORE: And how did you go through, how did you get too the—

LOLIGER: As far as I know it was by train, I don't know, I haven't heard of anything else. And then from there we went to Liverpool in England, and that was probably by channel, I don't know how else. And then I know we delayed there for some reason, they talked about that, I don't know how long, but we were- they were delayed for some reason before they left. And I think they talked about um they did experience some rough sea on the way over, my mother talked about that, it just seemed very scary.

MOORE: Did they ever mention anything they had never seen before on that voyage?

LOLIGER: That they never seen before? Not in particular, no it, no you know at that time, did the statue of Liberty exist at that time? They never even talked about that. (Laughing)

MOORE: (Laughing) Well the even-well their account of Ellis Island, how would summarize it in terms of their attitude towards Ellis Island then?

LOLIGER: How would I summarize it? I can't say anything about what I remember there myself.

MOORE: But what they said.

LOLIGER: But-fr-fr-from what?

MOORE: What they told you?

LOLIGER: From what they told us? Well, um, they didn't really complain, that's the way it had to be because so many people, they didn't complain about anything like that.

MOORE: How many were with you, how many of the children went on this voyage.

LOLIGER: Felix, Werner, myself, Werner, myself and Ed. And then an aunt was came along too.

MOORE: Did Lydia come?

LOLIGER: Lydia? I am Lydia.

MOORE: I---mea---sorry. (laughs) Your other, you have another sister.

LOLIGER: Yeah but she was born over here.

MOORE: She was born over here, yeah. Okay. Um did your family ever talk about what your grandparents thought about you coming here.

LOLIGER: They never talked about that. They just, I think just dec-I think my father, I'm pretty sure it was my father's decision to head over here. And the rest, just mother just went along with it.

MOORE: Now when he first came to the co-this country, what work was he given him?

LOLIGER: I-it seems as if he had no trouble getting at work. He was-go-got started as pattern maker right there at the Westinghouse. And um, although a think a year later I think, later that same year I think there was a depression in the United States, and I think um he was laid off part of the time there. I remember when he went from, walked from town to town looking for work at that time. (laughs) It was a cute thing there too, somehow we learned, we all learned to do things ex-for ourselves pretty much and my older brother somehow, he uh found out that there was a bakery someplace where you could get stale bread, and he came home, he found he went there and came home with a nice bag- a big bag of stale bread and rolls and things like that and dumped them on the table and we went after that like little animals like that I guess. (laughs)

MOORE: What, what, what year would that be about?

LOLIGER: Oh about, I think it was right the first year we came nineteen six I think was when that depression was over. You hear about it every once in a while.

MOORE: Now um, how did you're, what language did you speak at home?

LOLIGER: We talked our uh-Swiss dialect at home.

MOORE: Swiss dialect of?

LOLIGER: German-dialect, German-Swiss.

MOORE: And did your parents learn English then?

LOLIGER: Not right away, well my father had too away at work, he just picked it up as best he could and he managed to get along.

MOORE: Uh, your mother, how did your mother manage?

LOLIGER: She didn't, she didn't try, she never got away from home very much.

MOORE: Um, so you spoke most of your childhood life to your parents in—

LOLIGER: As we quite young, yes.

MOORE: In German.

LOLIGER: Yes.

MOORE: When you—

LOLIGER: German-Swiss.

MOORE: German-Swiss.

LOLIGER: The Germans wouldn't understand us, we can understand the German if he speaks a certain, a certain dialects you don't understand either.

MOORE: Um when you went to school first, did you know English.

LOLIGER: No.

MOORE: Did your brothers and sisters know English when they went to school?

LOLIGER: No.

MOORE: How did you learn English then?

LOLIGER: You pick it up without any trouble, you learn the language, you don't mu— they're nobody in a short time and nobody knows you have another language.

MOORE: Were you ever called any names or—

LOLIGER: Sure, we all lot of us were called dagos (laughs).

MOORE: Were there other children in the same boat at school?

LOLIGER: Well yes there were some others, but the thing is, wh-what um once in a while we would for instance receive um, I still remember, once in a while one of an aunt or someone would send us a handkerchiefs and they were bordered, pretty bordered. That wasn't the style at that time over here,

and that was enough to tell you were a little dago and they'd make fun of you. So you got so us—tell your mother the kids make fun of ya, and little by little she didn't make you take them school anymore. Same way with we-over in Europe even now, little girls wear an apron over their dresses, when they go to school. And we had to do that too, I had to do that too. Well they just kept making fun of me and making fun of me, and I don't—my mother didn't realize how bad it was you know, and uh, I finally just used one for a rag and never brought it home again. (Laughs) I remember that.

MOORE: Well were there other children from Switzerland in your area at all?

LOLIGER: Not in the area, I think there was some German people who lived next to us, but there were quite a few Irish in that little burg. But not in—

MOORE: The name of that burg again was?

LOLIGER: Ah Oak Hill.

MOORE: Oak Hill, now did—

LOLIGER: Th-the-the town does exist, but there's an Oak Hill road that goes up there yet. In fact I met someone recently near—who lived in Turtle Creek and he knew about that place. He's the only one I've ever—he's the only one I've ever met who ever heard of Oak Hill.

MOORE: And what about um, okay so you went to school and learned English from school.

LOLIGER: Yes, after all you learn from scratch, you learn your ABCs, you learn your phonetics, you learn your sounds, you learn to read and you memorize everything that you read and like they-they-I do even know. First graders, I think most of them, memorize every word that's in that book and you read two or three or four times in a row.

MOORE: Did the other brothers and sisters have as-easy a time learning English as you did?

LOLIGER: I don't think they had any worse trouble, any more trouble than I did. And it got so we did a lot of talking to each other in English, but not in front of our parents.

MOORE: Why not?

LOLIGER: Well they didn't want us to because we'd be home; they want us to talk-to keep the Swiss language at home?

MOORE: What language did you use at church?

LOLIGER: At church? At that church they used German and for years for years they used to German, and they oh my goodness took quite a long time before they had any English sermons at all.

MOORE: The church that you went to, were there other people from Switzerland in the church?

LOLIGER: Oh yes Swiss and German and also Hungarians. Yeah that was right over here in Mansfield, see we moved to Mansfield in 1910.

MOORE: Mansfield Ohio?

LOLIGER: Yeah right over here, twenty miles from here.

MOORE: And why did you move to Mansfield?

LOLIGER: Well I think my father found opportunity a work over in Mansfield and then there was an established church over here, where there wasn't where-where we were.

MOORE: Describe the house you had in Mansfield then?

LOLIGER: In Mansfield? We had a nice square house in a very nice location at that time. And um, it was on a corner house and my father also bought a lot next to it. And catty-corner from us was a what they called John's Park, it was nothing but um, but an open area surrounded by four streets. But I just recently learned it's quite developed now, it was just in our paper recently.

MOORE: And what was your house made of?

LOLIGER: Pardon?

MOORE: What was your house constructed of?

LOLIGER: Oh it was a woo- it was a frame-frame house.

MOORE: How many rooms, inside?

LOLIGER: Beg pardon?

MOORE: How many rooms inside?

LOLIGER: Oh, well, it probably see now, it had a um had a living room, and a kitchen down stairs, and a bedroom downstairs, and there was a little room that my mother used for a sewing room. And then my father later put in a bathroom, and upstairs we had two large bedrooms, and then sort of a- more of an open room when you first came up stairs. No we had three bedrooms.

MOORE: When you first moved into Mansfield then, did you have indoor plumbing?

LOLIGER: Not right away.

MOORE: Did you have indoor plumbing in your first house that you moved to when you were a child?

LOLIGER: No.

MOORE: How was your house lit in Mansfield?

LOLIGER: In Mansfield? At that time we still used a gas with a gas mantle-gas mantle and we used coal oil, coal oil lamps too before we even had gas.

MOORE: How did you heat your house in Mansfield?

LOLIGER: Heat? Well I think it was mostly, yeah it was coal. Coal. We burned coal.

MOORE: When you think back on your childhood, what do you remember most fondly?

LOLIGER: Fondly?

MOORE: Or what do you remember most, how about just that?

LOLIGER: (laughs) Well I just remember that we were at home, we--we weren't allowed to get- we--we didn't socialize with people much, we weren't allowed too. We never played with neighbor kids or things like that, we were just pretty much of a home, a home bunch, and we just played with each other. And um I think what games and things we learned, we learned at school and then we'd do some of-continue it at home. And then the rest of it was work, we had duties to do.

MOORE: Did you keep any animals?

LOLIGER: In Mansfield we did, yes. Well in Pittsburgh we had the goats I told you.

MOORE: Mmhmm.

LOLIGER: And then in Mansfield yes we had chickens, my father had um rabbits and he also had a—uh uh pigeons. So we had um, that supplied part of our meat. Here we were eating high class s-s-s-swab, isn't that what they call pigeons, swab? That's the high class food and here we had that kind of food. (laughs) But we had chickens and all those things and we had a huge garden, a wonderful garden.

MOORE: Did your parents ever think of going back?

LOLIGER: No I don't think so.

MOORE: Mhmm. And how do you think they viewed their original decision then, to come here?

LOLIGER: Well I think it's rather a—um-a I don't think my father, although, I don't think he regret it, that we come here, and I don't think my mother really did either, because we got along fine. But um but I think she regretted that she was never--- that she was torn away from her family the way she was. My father I don't minded it at all; I think he wanted to be away (laugh/cough) his family. I think that's the way a lot of people came over here for reasons like that, over the years?

MOORE: How did you maintain then, any of your old country ways here? Besides language, you mentioned the food you had. . .

LOLIGER: I don't-I don't think-um-I don't know that our food was particularly Swiss. I think we just kept plain food in and a the kind we have our here, my mother didn't do much in the way of baking, in fact her-her father was a baker but she herself never learned baking you know. And um, so a and then little by little we'd come home recipes. And we-we'd on the way to school we'd get acquainted with, we'd talk to f- we'd talk to people on the way- we kids would do that-my mo-anyways we just did it because we enjoyed talking to other people. Because we didn't get to – except the church people they're the only ones we got too really you know. And anyways so I talk to neighbors and once in a while I would get a recipe from them, I'd bring it home and my mother would try it. (recording goes bad) cleaning wallpaper, and my brother came home one day. We had wallpaper in one of the houses and he came home and said "Oh you know I found out there's a way to clean wallpaper. " He talked to somebody about that, so he told us what it was, wallpaper cleaner. So my mother decided well lets clean the wallpaper. That's how my mother learned things, from over, through our kids, through her kids.

MOORE: Now you mentioned that you weren't allowed to socialize with other people except for people at church.

LOLIGER: And of course the ones - we got the ones at school.

MOORE: At school right, people at church were basically German speaking. How do you think you were viewed as a family by out-by your neighbors or other people?

LOLIGER: Well they--How they looked at us? Well they always respected us, because we didn't bother anyone else's yard, we didn't wreck—we didn't run over other peop—we weren't allowed to do that. We stayed to ourselves and I think-I think that people respected us. They sort of looked out for us too, because (laughing) we weren't model kids—we got to the place where once in a while, I don't mind, when um probably one of my older brothers then had too, would have too- to go uptown with her to help her talk at the store and get what she wanted. And I know some of the younger kids did things we shouldn't do and I remember one time (laughs) we-my father was doing some cementing, he was great at always fixing things up, he had a pile of sand down at the bottom-end of one portion. A couple of us, well my younger brother and I, we both decided to um crawl out of one of windows and we'd walk down the porch and jump down on the pile of sand. And one of our neighbors saw and it didn't take long, she came over and told us to stop. (laughs) Fortunately we didn't break a leg or we would have gotten killed otherwise (laughs).

MOORE: Tell me a little about your life, what happened how far did y-, you said your family's religion didn't really like a lot of education. Did you continue on in school?

LOLIGER: Well a my brother stopped working quite young, let's see my oldest brother finished the eighth grade, my younger, the next one, I think he finished the seventh grade and then he worked for the steel mill over here. Although my older worked for another-worked for another foundry someplace, he was a carmaker. And um, then um, I was the next one in line, and I went too, that's another thing, this church believed, they didn't believe so much in education, but they believed in hard work and as far as girls were concerned. They were supposed to turn out most; they expect them to be a real good mate in some good rich family. And you know that even became one of my ambitions, because you thought well, "They were nice people, but-we-well that's the way it is and I have to stay that way." And um so when I was about, but I finished my seventh grade I saw an ad in the paper for somebody wanting someone to work for them and I answered it. Now I'm surprised that my mother let me do that, but she did, in those days that's what, that's the way you learn, and uh she had no objections to it. And I used to go back and forth by bus.

MOORE: And what was the family that you were working for?

LOLIGER: Their name was [ph] Herkistall; they lived over here in Mansfield. They had a, now they had a big influence on me. They had three grown children, two daughters and a son. The older daughter was a music teacher and she gave music lessons in her home. And I loved it, I just loved to hear those kids come and play that music. And the younger daughter was not home very much she was a kindergarten teacher and then she did – she also had work down in Ken-Tennessee. And their son was a stu-was a medical student at Hartford, at Har-at Harpers when I first went there.

MOORE: And what did the parents do?

LOLIGER: Well Mr. Herkistall was um secretary and treasurer of the Altman Tailor company in Mansfield, which was a um, a-a-a um farm implement factory, in fact my father worked there for a while, in Mansfield. An um it was while I was – well anyways while I was living there (child yelling can be heard), I had – I had- I had to go a different school then, I had to finish my eighth grade in a different part of town. So um, anyways, and then it was during that year that my parents moved to the farm, towards spring and March, March 1918 they moved.

MOORE: What farm was that?

LOLIGER: Farm -a farm down on Possum Run road, hundred and sixty acre farm. And um--

MOORE: Did they buy it, that farm?

LOLIGER: Yeah my father never rented very long anything, he bought it yes. He never – he always said, “I buy my-I buy it where we’re gonna live, nobody can shoo me out with a bunch of kids.” No matter what he says he see to it we had a roof over our head and he did.

MOORE: You mentioned that the family – the family you worked for influenced you, how did they influence you so much?

LOLIGER: Well I think they influenced most in the way of matter of education and in the fact then, in my whole way of living. Because I was living in a very elegant home, they weren’t the richest people in town, but um they had amenities-amenities that I had never known of.

MOORE: Like what?

LOLIGER: Well, uh-just in the way they talked to each other, the way they entertained other people. I had too, and I did all the work there believe it or not, I did

right off the bat I learned to take care of breakfast, lunch and supper. Their full meals all they had to do was tell me what to do and show me what- just tell me and I did it. And it's something I would never have learned at home because I never had to do that much. I'd help with things but never had to do it. And um so I learned things like that, and they had nice parties that I had to help serve. And not only that, they had sometimes huge parties where they have to help other help in, the things that were catered. And so those are things that I would never have learned, and even now a lot of people I know of never lived in surroundings like that. But nevertheless I went to school during my eighth grade there until I removed to the farm, and then I had to split there to go home.

MOORE: Why?

LOLIGER: Well my father said "You're needed at home to help work on the farm." And we didn't say no, we didn't argue with him. So I told the lady I had to go, but (laughs) that's cute, I couldn't sk- I wasn't old enough to quit school, so I ended up going to my country school the last few months of my eighth grade. This is a story that is really amazing, the whole, from there on it's really funny and um and amazing. And anyways it's because of that a-ah-a short time in the country school that I managed to get to High School, which is something that those kids from the church didn't get to do.

MOORE: So you went to High School?

LOLIGER: I did go to High School, and the way it came about was because just during those three months it was going towards spring and the kids were given projects to do. I ended up with I think about a dozen eggs lined up of Wyandotte hens. And then during the summer, the superintendent of the county superintendent came around to see what we doing with our project. And um anyways I was the only one in the eighth grade down there in that little country school (laughs) and I could just go as fast as I wanted and I'd made a good impression. And I enjoyed it because I loved school from the very first day and then we got over it. And anyways he asked my father whether I was going to high school in the fall; he hadn't even given that a thought. For some reason, well, I wasn't old enough to quit school and he decided to let me go, so I did. And in the meantime this Mrs. Herkistall would write occasional to see if I was able to come- if I was coming back, she'd like to have me back. And he always said no. So nevertheless, so when this, when going to High School then- then we just called her and asked whether she could take me back, and she was just glad to have me come back. And doing those- so I did, you know, going to high school I'd get up in the morning, I'd do certain jobs, (laughs) I'd get breakfast for Mr. Herkistall, and I'd a-every morning I'd

dust the dining room, and the big living room, and the big foyer that they had, get the dishes washed up and then I'd run to high school. I'd run.

MOORE: Did you finish high school?

LOLIGER: Well yes this the whole story, and after-eventually did, but that's a story in itself. Then anyways I went to high school and then again when spring came my father came into the high school and wanted me to quit. He thought I could just walk out of there and quit. And um I just said, I just told her I couldn't. For somehow-somehow he let me finish out my freshman year without saying anything more. And they, and then I—kept—I went into the summer a little bit and that's when my brother got typhoid fever out on the farm, I don't know where he picked it up, and then when he was in hospital a couple of weeks and when he went home he thought I should come home now and help with the work, because he had to be in bed and he thought I should help my mother more. I did, I went home. So that was midsummer. Well there was I again, out on the farm helping with the farm work, of course I got a little taste of farm work that way. Which I-I-I'm glad I got it. And I look back, but anyways she kept writing again when I was coming back, and he kept saying no, kept saying no, kept saying no. And um fall came, time for school to start, and I didn't go back and um, it went into the fall, maybe October or something like that. And one of my younger brothers had just by playing had his coat torn while playing, now this is- my father thought we should do something about that, to think that they have a playground where kids get their coats torn (laughs). And so one Saturday when we were taking stuff to this town, milk and eggs and things like that, he had me take that coat, take it to the superintendent's house, he lived right on the way on main street in Mansfield, take it to his, take it to his um, take it to his home and tell him what happened up—now swee-did—now my father wanted to me to bring this in to show you what happened on the playground. You know and he felt pretty bad about it, and um of course he couldn't do anything about that. And he didn't give me much time on that subject, but he wanted to know if I was b-if I was in high school. And I said no. He said, "Would you like to be?" And I said yes. And the following Monday the truant officer was out there after me to get me back to high school, to get back to school. You know what my father did, he sent me back, I wasn't quite sixteen I was going to be sixteen in January, at that time sixteen was the age and not any—he sent me back to the country school till I was sixteen. And believe it or not, while I was down there I picked up a germ and I didn't know I did it. And I picked up diphtheria and that was right before Christmas vacation, and so I was home, there was two weeks. And we three kids marched our little selves, marched down through the woods and down the road to the school and when we got there; the school was closed because of diphtheria. A boy next door had died during the winter, we didn't know it see, we didn't have contact with people. So he uh, so

anyways we came back home, and as we were coming back home he was coming through the woods to go to Belleville with a small load of hogs. And um he was surprised to see us coming home from school, and we told him what happened and so he said "If either-if any of you have a sore throat or anything, I wanna know it right away." You wouldn't believe it, that same day I felt this funny tickling in my throat, like you get when you're getting a sore throat right at the very beginning. And I washed it out and I was very conscious of any changes and by evening my throat was white. And um—so there I was and I told my mother and-uh we gotta tell my father, so we did. And then-and so he had a-had a cure for that, swab your throat with coal oil and use a chicken feather and swab it with coal oil. At least he thought that was a cure – it didn't help any. (laughs) But you know I began to chill and chill and chill and felt miserable, and um I didn't dare tell-didn't dare tell him I was feeling sick. That's something we didn't dare do, but get sick. And um if-if-we-we the most-the most—by having a cold that was a just a cold, well we lived through that. But to really be sick and shivering, I don't remember anybody ever being that sick, but I was. And here I was standing in front of um the wood stove in one of the rooms and um it was a cold day and everybody was-um-in that room in that day and--and um all at once he said, "What are doing there, your apron's burnin—smoking?" And here I was up so close trying to get warm, that I never really realized how close I was and I was, it actually was smoking and I was—was getting myself caught on fire there. I was probably leaning up against it and didn't know it. And anyways, anyways I told him I was shivering and a he said "Well go to bed." That was it and--

MOORE: You mention that you were able finish high school anyways.

LOLIGER: Well this all part a the same story, I was able—because um there again I was sick and I was--that was winter time and it went into spring I was weak, I was weak as a half dead horse, I could hardly lift my hands or lift my feet. And then—when at the time when summer came I couldn't work and I couldn't even sew, my eyes were bad and my throat was bad. And um anyways a it went clear that whole summer went by, and it went clear into fall again, into October and this lady kept writing and gal—every so often a she'd ask-she'd asked for me to come back. But he finally, when he finally realized I wasn't doing the way—well you might as well go back in and work for her. And I went and you know, it was so much warmer there and nicer there, I recovered in no time. But the first thing she said was, "Do you wanna, are you going back to school?" And I said I'd like to. Well before we do anything else you must go back down there and register, I was a mess. But by that time—see I was—I was starting my sophomore year about six weeks late. And from there on I just stayed on.

MOORE: Now huh you married later too, what age did you marry?

LOLIGER: Huh?

MOORE: What age did you get married? Did you marry?

LOLIGER: Did I marry? Oh I didn't get married, I—I went all the way through college.

MOORE: What college did you go to?

LOLIGER: Ohio Wesleyan—

MOORE: And what did you major in?

LOLIGER: Well the thing is that's another thing. I majored in Bible and Religious Education, partly because—partly because my people were such religious people. And then when I—when we had to take one required course and that opened my eyes and thought there's something – realized there's something more to religion than what I've getting-gotten. And—I, I stuck to that. And—and then I also majored in, I had a—had a minor in German because I wanted to read more German but um-um—

MOORE: Were there many women enrolled in college at that time?

LOLIGER: Oh quite a few, by that time.

MOORE: And what did you do as a, did you continue that into a profession then?

LOLIGER: Yes I was, well I—I finally got my job right during the depression. And I—I got a job in a church, oh I—I-I was prepared to do religious education in the public schools but to tell the truth I never liked it. I had my practice teaching in it, but I didn't like it.

MOORE: So you got a job in a church?

LOLIGER: Beg pardon?

MOORE: You got a job in a church then?

LOLIGER: But it was a—um I got a job – now Ohio Wesleyan was a Methodist school – college. I got a job in a Reform church, which was again German and Swiss people. But I made sure it was a type of a church that would stand for the type of thing that Ohio Wesleyan would go along well. And um... in fact in—in fact I was happy to be finished with my interview with a minister and I thought to myself, "I never asked him." And I went right—I went back, I'd already been out of the house and I went back in—back and asked him that question. He said, "Well I'm sure—I'm sure our church would be like

that.” And they were. So I did – and a not only that um, at that time few churches had a secretaries and a-well-a...

MOORE: You worked as what in the church then?

LOLIGER: I worked as secretary and young people’s director.

MOORE: Mmhmm. Now you had- this is your profession, when did you marry then?

LOLIGER: I married six years – or a worked at the church six years then I got married.

MOORE: And did you have children?

LOLIGER: I have three children.

MOORE: And did you marry your husband – what did your husband do?

LOLIGER: He was a railroader with Timken; he was not a professional man. I didn’t want – even know if I thought I’d want a professional man, he’d never fit in with my family.

MOORE: And what was his background in terms of ethnic background? Was he German, Swiss—

LOLIGER: He was from Basel Switzerland.

MOORE: So he was born abroad too?

LOLIGER: Oh yes, I met him in the church.

MOORE: And what did you speak with him as a language?

LOLIGER: As a language we—we that’s amazing. It’s a general of the Swiss people in general, um that is when they’re over here then they don’t try to re-just do their own language like the Spanish sometimes want to or you know some other Italians do more of that. Would they—we-we spoke English together. And the only time we used our Swiss was a the joking around. Besides he had a different dialect than I did, and even over in Switzerland the people – of different cantons they make fun of each other (laughs) we did the same.

MOORE: You’re ninety years old now...

LOLIGER: Yes.

MOORE: ...and you have three children, you came over when you were two—how do you view your parents original decision to come over here?

LOLIGER: How do I view them?

MOORE: Yeah that decision to come here? Was it—

LOLIGER: Oh well, I think its fine as far as I'm concerned. Although when I go over there, when I've been over there, his family didn't do so bad. Um staying over there, in fact he had one of his youngest brother became—he invented something that um that was used on farms and he became quite a wealthy man. Some of 'em remained farmers, but they're all-all in good shape, the ones that I've met. And they put their children through school and college and things like that.

MOORE: Did your children ever learn German or Swiss?

LOLIGER: Not-no that's one of the sad things you know, if um, you don't do that now um, at that time we didn't view languages like we do now. Now we wish everybody had more languages to speak, now I feel I'm one of the unusual ones, I-mean-I-I just happened because I've kept up my German, at least to some extent. I've kept up my Swiss; I can go over there and talk Swiss any time I want to without any trouble. And I've kept up my English and I think I studied my English quite well. And um, so um, uh I'm very fortunate in that but um, but then when you grow up with many-when you go school and kids make fun of you – you try not to have your own kids be in that um—be in that situation.

MOORE: What – how 'bout um, just out of curiosity, you're ninety years old now. What advice would you give young people today?

LOLIGER: What advice would I give? Well I think they have to do what they want to do, but I still think keep up have moral standards, which I think all my grandkids do, believe me I think they're just outstanding. They are because I'm telling you, their-they give me time. They, for instance, this coming Sunday – now they're not going to the reunion, they have other things to do but – (the reunions on Saturday) – but now Sunday they're willing for me to be with them. I'll be in church over there with them. My son will probably take me over there. And um, we-I talked about going out to dinner, now I don't know who will pay for what – I told them I'd-I'll be willing pay for as much as I need too. Now probably the ones who that are working they're rich enough to pay their own. (chuckles) But now there are two at- down at Ruth's family in-who are- are still in school, I'll definitely offer to pay theirs but maybe even some others. But anyways they're willing to spend vis-that time with me; they could have something else to do. I just think the thing is they have good moral, in fact the-one-

one of Ruth's boy, the younger son- the next to the oldest; he has a job over at that church where he does the liturgical part every Sunday. That's his job this summer; he's Hei- he goes to Heidelberg College up here. He's finished his first year.

MOORE: Now you lived a plain life when you were little, when you were younger –

LOLIGER: Yes.

MOORE: Have you maintained any of that plain living?

LOLIGER: Oh in some ways yes, for-for instance I still a wooden table without any tablecloth, something I can wash off. I don't want carpeting on my floor; I want something I can clean usually. I don't-don't go for styles, I wear my clothes forever before I get something new. And um – I don't want-I don't like modern th-things that are too modern. I-I don't buy anymore clothes than I need too. And I ha-and I live a very frugal life. In fact I- I'm not a rich person. In fact since I'm alone, I've never paid social security tax, my incomes that low but, I've been to Europe four times. I've take trips here in the United States. In fact I'm planning one this-I'm going on a short one now, I'm only short trips. Going on one this coming September, and I believe to social organizations over here, like the Current Events Club. I belong to the um AAUW – American Association for University Women. And I belong to King's Daughters which is a-a benevolent organization. And I actually been church –

MOORE: Did you ever think of, ever entertain the idea of going back to live in Switzerland?

LOLIGER: No.

MOORE: Why not?

LOLIGER: Cause I'm satisfied over here, my family's over here. My oldest brother's family moved out to Illinois during the Depression, and he stayed out there. And his whole family and descendants are out there, and on the second of July, believe it or not, there again one of my grandsons drove me out there for the wedding of one of my great-great nieces. What more do I want?

MOORE: I would like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for helping us by telling us your story.

LOLIGER: Oh.

MOORE: And we'll you also a copy of this—

LOLIGER: Oh really?

MOORE: Yourself. Yes.

LOLIGER: Well I've had a interesting life over here and um I have no regrets, my goodness why should I? We're a wonderful country over here. But-bu--- what bothers is-is and I'm not the only one who feels- you hear it on television, you hear it every place you read about, is the fact that we're sort --the uh violence that we're having and a the immorality that we're having and seeing is just too bad. And we're going to be losers if we don't get our sails straightened up.

MOORE: With that I'd like to sign off for Ellis Island.

LOLIGER: Yeah I guess I could talk too long about these---

MOORE: No--no, we're interested in that.

LOLIGER: But I enjoyed Ellis Island. I enjoyed the wall, and I have a certificate of the people whose names on the wall and then one of my nieces is especially and she had her husband's father on the wall.

MOORE: Is your name on the wall?

LOLIGER: Oh yes. But they're-they're not by families. And some other names stuck in between there someplace. He's a Witschi but he's not one of our Witschi. I think--

MOORE: I'll check that out for you.

LOLIGER: I think they should have kept should have kept our family names together without another one in between don't you?

MOORE: Yeah, I th-I'll look it up when I go back.

LOLIGER: Yeah its-its there.

MOORE: Alright, well I'd like to thank you again and this Kate Moore signing off.

LOLIGER: (laughing)

MOORE: In um, where am I anyway, Bucyrus, Ohio on the 29th of July 1994. For the Ellis Island oral history project.

LOLIGER: Oh. Well I wish I could remember about that Ellis Island, but you know when you're that young can't really-you don't remember things.