

NPS-118

SAMUEL SEIFERT

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HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Seifert's wife is also present.

DIXON: Today is September 11, 1979. My name is Harvey Dixon and I am speaking with Mr. Samuel Seifert of New York City. We are on Liberty Island in New York Harbor, where Mr. Seifert is going to tell us some of his experiences being an immigrant to the United States. He came from Poland in 1921. Okay, why don't we have you begin by telling us --where did you come in Poland?

SEIFERT: In Poland, I come from a small town in Galicia, called Turka. And the way I came to the United States is through the invitation of my father, who had been here before, who came here before us. There was a big hassle trying to get to the United States because of the quota system, and we had to go to Warsaw several times before we got clearance and – and a passport.

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You had to get a number first and wait for about three weeks or more. Then they call you back until you finally got your passport. The reason you had to stay there for three weeks is because you had to establish residence in the town. But we finally got started, we got to Le Havre, France, and we boarded a very small steamship called the Roussillon. It was ran – it was run by the company General Trans Atlantic at that time, I don't know if it exist anymore.

But we had a pretty rough ride over. We encountered some icebergs which we steered clear of, and then a child – some – a child died. And we went to Halifax. The reason we went through Halifax is because there was some other passengers who were leaving at Halifax going to Canada, some other parts. And we got to Halifax, a inspector, immigration inspector, or who he was I don't know, came by in a launch. The water was very rough. The launch kept bouncing up; I thought it was going to land on our deck. He did some examination on this ship and he wouldn't let anybody off the ship. And everybody went to Hoffman's Island, including the people from Halifax, including first and second class passengers. Everyone had to go to Ellis Island. And we stayed there for ten days until the thing was cleared, that the child didn't die of a contagious disease.

DIXON: You went to Hoffman Island, not Ellis Island?

SEIFERT: I mean Hoffman's Island, I mean Hoffman's Island. We were there for ten days. Within that ten day period, the Jewish Passover took place. And they brought around boxes of Uneeda crackers (made only by Nabisco, you know) and I thought they were matzos. I thought there were American style matzos. Ehh. But this is not too important. Anyway, after ten days we went to Ellis Island. Ellis Island, one night in Ellis Island was worse

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than ten nights in Hoffman's Island. First of all, they didn't treat us like human beings there. I don't know what was – what -- I – I – it was -- the only thing that kept – kept us going is the fact that sooner or later, we'll get out of there and go -- land on – on American territory-- American soil. Which would – which would be beneficial and that you would like to see come true already. And I remember we got there around noon to look for my father and my father isn't there.

DIXON: You mean you got to New York City?

SEIFERT: That's correct, in Ellis Island.

DIXON: Ellis Island.

SEIFERT: Ellis Island. We got there around noontime. We were fed like slobs, like prisoners. The kitchen and – oh, my God, everybody got a tray and they gave you slop just like in a prison. Maybe in – in a prison they would raise a riot a riot if they got fed like that. And we stayed over night in Ellis Island, and a lot of things --. A lot of things came back to me when I – when I walked around in Ellis Island last summer, when this guide took us around. And every time I came into an area, even though I was there only about 24 hours, I felt a pain in the heart, you know, every time I saw it. And when – when she described the guards that were going around, the wise guys were there. I remember distinctly, they wore like a Prince Albert length coats (that's what they wore) and small hats with peaks.

DIXON: Who were these people?

SEIFERT: Immigration guards -- guards. Don't go here, don't go there, don't stand

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here, don't stand there. You couldn't – you just didn't know where to go. I was going crazy because you look for someone to come and take you where you belong -- where you want to be. Finally, it came, but the next morning. We stayed overnight, overnight we stayed there, about 24 hours, but that night (I'll never forget as long as I live) that night was a lifetime. First of all, we had no mattresses. We slept in – in bunks which had a flat, steel springs, no mattresses. We had some -- my mother had a shawl or a blanket to put under us. I came here with my mother and my sister by the way.

DIXON: I understand.

SEIFERT: And finally, the next day about ten or eleven o'clock, my father came and claimed us. And this was May 2, we finally landed on American soil. So we started out on April 9, we didn't get to the United States until May 2. When we got – when we got clearance in Hoffman's Island, the first and second class passengers went home somewhere, they didn't go through Ellis Island. We went to Ellis Island. And I asked the guard why, she told me why. She told me that – why, because if – if you can afford passage on first or second class, then you could probably afford to keep yourself without becoming a burden to society. And if you became with third class or worse, you may become a burden to society. So until someone comes to take you, and vouch for you, you go to Ellis Island. I remember also the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. They had an office there and they were very helpful, they were very helpful. And that's all I can tell you.

DIXON: Well, just kind of--how old were you when you actually got on...

SEIFERT: I was 15 years old when I landed on -- in the United States.

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DIXON: And the people with you, how old?

SEIFERT: Well, my sister was 6 years younger.

DIXON: Right.

SEIFERT: And my mother, I'll tell you exactly how old my mother was. Twenty-one and six--- fourteen, thirty-five. [not understood]

DIXON: Okay. And when you sailed over to Halifax, do you know what the girl who died, died of? Was she a young woman?

SEIFERT: She was a child.

DIXON: She was a child.

SEIFERT: A child. And they didn't know themselves what the child died from, and that's why the quarantine because they were wondering whether the child died of a contagious disease.

DIXON: Well, when you got to Hoffman Island, did you stay on the boat or did they just anchor?

SEIFERT: Oh, no, no, no, we stayed on the Island. No. We didn't -- we got off the boat.

DIXON: You got off the boat where?

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SEIFERT: We got off the boat on Hoffman's Island.

DIXON: You got off the boat at Hoffman's Island.

SEIFERT: We didn't see our boat anymore.

DIXON: So when you were on Hoffman Island, what was Hoffman Island, what do you remember about Hoffman Island?

SEIFERT: Not much, isn't that funny. I was there ten days and I remember less of that than I do of Ellis Island.

DIXON: But there were buildings on Hoffman?

SEIFERT: There were buildings, sure there were buildings, there were dormitories there. It was, I don't know what department of the government ran it, but it was--. Oh, there was a hubbub of activity there at that time.

DIXON: Everyone on the ship, how many people would that be? That would be...

SEIFERT: Well, I would say – maybe six hundred or so.

DIXON: But they all went to Hoffman's Island.

SEIFERT: They all went to Hoffman's Island.

DIXON: And they were all there for the whole ten days?

SEIFERT: That's correct, that's right.

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DIXON: And did they give you tests or how did they decide to let you go after ten days, what did they do?

SEIFERT: They kept examining the – the remains of that child.

DIXON: Right.

SEIFERT: That's why. That's what they doing.

DIXON: And then after ten days...

SEIFERT: It took ten days.

DIXON: Ten days, what did they do, put you on a...

SEIFERT: Just told us we could go, they put us on a launch.

DIXON: Right.

SEIFERT: And brought us to Ellis Island.

DIXON: Let's see, was there a hospital on Hoffman Island? Was it a hospital you were in or just a dormitory?

SEIFERT: No, just a dormitories, we – we walked around the is-- on the Island.

DIXON: There were trees and things like that?

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SEIFERT: That's right, sure there were.

Dixon: Do you remember seeing the location, was it in New York Harbor, could you see Ellis?

SEIFERT: I remember seeing tugboats just around – all around -- all around me. And I felt so sad that here I am in the United States and yet I am not. And it felt very, very bad, you know. I -- I felt very bad. After all that struggle -- and we struggled, after the First World War we struggled plenty. And then we come to the United States and we start to struggle again. What's the sense of the whole thing?

DIXON: Could you see the Statue of Liberty when you came in or did you see it?

SEIFERT: Yes, we saw it from a distance, yes.

DIXON: But when you were on Hoffman Island, you could see it or...

SEIFERT: Yes, sure, yes. We could see it.

DIXON: Okay, let's see. Why did you leave, because of the hard time after World War I?

SEIFERT: Oh, no. Well, the reason we left, we planned to come here. When my father left for the United States in 1912, he left with the idea to save up money to bring us over there. He wasn't going to come back to Poland.

DIXON: Right, so he brought...

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SEIFERT: So, he brought us, yes. He brought the whole family over.

DIXON: His wife and two children.

SEIFERT: Yes, that's right.

DIXON: Why did your father leave?

SEIFERT: Well, because of the hard times. My father left because of hard times. The times were hard and then, too. And when he came here they weren't so soft either. There wa—there was a crisis at the time we got here, there was a big strike in the garment industry – he was looking for a job in the garment industry. But he somehow manage. It wasn't easy to save up enough money to bring three people over to the United States.

DIXON: Right. And you said Ellis when the Immigrant Aid Society that aided you, what was the name of that?

SEIFERT: They didn't aid us at all.

DIXON: Oh, they didn't.

SEIFERT: They would aid anybody who needed aid. We told them right off that my father is coming to pick us up, so they stayed clear.

DIXON: What in general did they do, I mean what...

SEIFERT: Oh, they helped many people. There were some people who came here and there were not -- nobody came to claim them. They helped them.

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DIXON: I mean, did they actually give them money?

SEIFERT: They actually took them off – off Ellis Island and brought them to the United States and kept them going for a while until they established themselves.

DIXON: They sponsored the individual into the country.

SEIFERT: That's correct, that's correct.

DIXON: Okay. Let's see. When you were on Ellis, you said the food was not served. What did they give you, what kind of food did they give you. Did they give you --?

SEIFERT: I'll tell you one thing, first of all let me tell you how they--they woke us up at four o'clock to have breakfast. The craziest thing, you know. And then they gave you – they gave me oatmeal that you could use to lay bricks on. Well, the rest of the food wasn't too bad. They gave us scrambled eggs, well, we ate eggs. It wasn't too – it wasn't too bad. It was just seeing the plight of so many different people which made you feel bad, too. You see people wondering around, they were lost, they are like up in the sky somewhere. They don't know where they are going.

DIXON: Sure.

WIFE: Weren't there very many people who were on Orthodox diets and they could not eat there? Was there any provisions made for them?

SEIFERT: The HIAS took care of that. The HIAS took care of the people who had

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special diet problems.

DIXON: Was it just Jewish or were there other special diets?

SEIFERT: Oh. There are --. No, no, no. That I don't know. All I know is that they took care of Jewish people who eat only kosher food. And they managed to get them kosher food. I think -- I believe that they brought it in from the outside; I don't think that -- I didn't think that Ellis Island had kosher food at all.

WIFE: That was on Hoffman Island.

SEIFERT: On Ellis Island, I'm talking about.

DIXON: Was Ellis Island busy when you were there? Were there a lot of immigrants coming in?

SEIFERT: Yes, oh yes.

DIXON: How many would you say? A thousand?

SEIFERT: Oh, that was a busy place, that was one busy place, my God.

DIXON: They brought you by launch, did you see any other launches come while you were there or did you notice other people ?

SEIFERT: No, I -- I was indoors, I was afraid to go out to tell you the truth. I was afraid to go out, they wouldn't let me in again. (laughs)

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DIXON: When you got to Ellis because you had been on Hoffman, did you have any more physical examination?

SEIFERT: No, no. We were through because we got all of the examinations on Hoffman's Island.

DIXON: So what did you actually do on the days --?

SEIFERT: Wait, we waited, that's all. We sat on benches or walked around inside and waited.

DIXON: In other words, you were waiting for your father to come.

SEIFERT: That's right.

DIXON: You weren't processed anymore?

SEIFERT: Oh, no, no, no.

DIXON: That was all done on Hoffman's Island.

SEIFERT: That had all been done on Hoffman's Island.

DIXON: Well.

WIFE: Just one more thing.

DIXON: Sure.

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WIFE: The child died and they had suspicion because of the – I don't know – the cargo.

SEIFERT: Oh, well, the cargo. I don't know why -- they made us go down into the cargo hole at certain times, and I think when that inspector came. Why, I don't know.

DIXON: Who made you go down?

WIFE: On the boat.

SEIFERT: The fellows who ran the boat, the sailors.

DIXON: Alright, they made all the passenger?

SEIFERT: Not all the passengers, just from the third class, it's your brig, the third class was one big hole down in the top, you know, right below the main deck. And over there they had, what do you call these things you sleep on that you tie up to a tree?

DIXON: Hammock.

SEIFERT: Hammocks.

DIXON: Hammocks, right.

SEIFERT: We slept on hammocks. And when this inspector got on the boat, they made us go down below.

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DIXON: You mean in Halifax?

SEIFERT: Yes. And when we got down there, I saw maggots crawling around in there. And it seemed to me like they were from rawhides, you know, wet hides. They must have had a cargo of wet hides in there and that's why the maggots. Maybe that was the reason that the crew wouldn't let anybody...

DIXON: But they put all of the third class passengers in with the cargo.

SEIFERT: That's right, that's right, but they didn't, so they shouldn't see us, he shouldn't see us. I don't know why.

DIXON: Did he see you?

SEIFERT: I don't know.

DIXON: When did you come out of the cargo hold?

SEIFERT: When they told us, when they told us. We were there about a half an hour.

DIXON: But you already left Halifax or just the man.

SEIFERT: No, no. We were still in Halifax. When he left, that's when they let us go out.

DIXON: Well, let's see. When you stayed on Hoffman's Island, were there separate accommodations for the men and the women?

SEIFERT: Yes.

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DIXON: For the children and the families?

SEIFERT: There were. Children stayed with mothers, and men and boys were separate.

DIXON: That was true also on Ellis Island?

SEIFERT: That's correct. That's correct.

DIXON: Okay, when you got, well, I am interested more, I mean Hoffman Island, hearing more about it. Is there anything that you remember about, were there other people from other ships there? You say it was busy.

SEIFERT: I don't know, I -- I don't think so.

DIXON: It was just your bunch.

SEIFERT: I think only our ship. I don't think they could accommodate many more people than what they had there.

DIXON: That's what I am trying to get a feel for.

SEIFERT: Yes. I don't think they had enough space for more -- anymore than that one boat.

DIXON: And you said too, you were well treated on Hoffman Island.

SEIFERT: Yes.

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DIXON: Better than you were on the...

SEIFERT: Better than Ellis Island.

DIXON: There were doctors on Hoffman Island?

SEIFERT: They were doctors.

DIXON: They were doctors. You don't remember any names of any of the doctors?

SEIFERT: No.

DIXON: No.

SEIFERT: No.

DIXON: Okay, when you were on Ellis, did you come across anyone that turned out to be famous or someone that you saw later on. Or that you met later on, or that you remember from later on?

SEIFERT: No.

DIXON: Okay. Let's see. I have some questions down. Well, maybe we will go a little beyond that. When you actually went to New York City, did you work at fifteen or did you go to school?

SEIFERT: Well, I'll tell you, do you want me to tell you that? I will tell you that too. First of all, let me tell you that my father didn't have the apartment ready. He

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had the apartment, but the furnishings were not there so he took us to a cousin that lived in Harlem. He rented an apartment on Gorig [ph] Street in New York, which is not existing anymore. It's called Borum Street or, what is that famous philanthropist?

WIFE: Baruch.

SEIFERT: Baruch Place it's called. And we stayed for about a month with a cousin of my father's.

DIXON: This was in Harlem.

SEIFERT: This was in Harlem on East 116th Street, when Harlem was mostly Italian and Jewish. And we lived in a brownstone house. I remember her apartment was on a high stoop on the first floor. And she had rooms from the front all the way through the rear. And we had a room and it was very nice, it was very nice. An after about a month, they moved into our own apartment, which was not so nice.

DIXON: Where was, oh you said that was...

SEIFERT: This was in Garlug Street n the east side. Just two blocks from the East River. Two blocks west of the East River. We lived in a basement apartment. One good thing about it, it was nice and cool in the summertime.

WIFE: Cold in the winter.

SEIFERT: And cold in the winter, of course. But after a – after a -- less that a year, we

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moved to a second floor apartment across the street. This was 141, we moved to 134. And my father, as I told you, had hard times when we got here too. So I had to get a job to supplement the income of the house. I remember having a job in a clothing shop where I was pulling bastings when I was inside. When I was outside, I would be carrying jackets to be finished by seamstresses in their homes. And they would – they would be – be mostly Italians – seamstresses. Because I remember the neighborhood was Elizabeth Street, around that area. And I knew the houses so well already, that I went from one building into another over the roof, you know. That's right. And when they were finished, you know, I picked up the finished goods and left so many jackets to be finished. And every time I was inside and the truant officer would come around, my boss told me to take a walk and I was wondering why. "Take a walk", he said, "Take a walk." I said, "I don't want to walk." "Listen, take a walk."

DIXON: So the truant officer was coming to look. He knew you were supposed to be in school?

SEIFERT: That's right. Well, I was fifteen year at school. I did the job in night school; after all, I had some education in Europe.

WIFE: He finally caught you.

SEIFERT: Huh?

WIFE: He finally caught you.

SEIFERT: He finally caught me, so I had to go -- first I had to go to continuation school and night school together. Then I just went to night school and finished the

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job over there. And I worked all the time that I -- since I came here. I worked everyday since I came here.

DIXON: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory strike was that before then.

SEIFERT: That was before.

DIXON: That was before.

SEIFERT: Sure.

DIXON: Okay. And then there was something I thought about. When you came on the boat from Europe here, the other passenger that you met in La Havre, were the other people, I mean were there other nationalities like they were different?

SEIFERT: Yes, of course. They were Polish, they were Polish nationals, they were Ukrainian nationals, and of course, we were Austrian, really -- really we were Austrian, we became Polish after the First World War, which I only knew for three years. That's all. Because I was in Germany, personally I was in Germany during the First World War. I was a refugee. We ran -- the Russians were chasing the Austrian Army and we ran ahead of the Austrian Army, and we wound up in Germany.

DIXON: So you were actually born in Austria?

SEIFERT: I was born in Austria, certainly.

DIXON: Do you remember where in Austria?

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SEIFERT: Yes, in Galicia.

DIXON: Oh, that was in Austria.

SEIFERT: Yes, that's right. I was an Austrian.

DIXON: And another thing. When the people were on the boat, did they wear, I mean, not costumes, but did they wore the dress...

SEIFERT: No. They – they – they wore ordinary dress, ordinary dress.

DIXON: No costumes then.

SEIFERT: No, no.

DIXON: Let's see. When you got to Ellis, did anyone take photographs of you? Were there any photographs...?

SEIFERT: I believe there were photos taken.

DIXON: Because there was a gentleman named Augustus F. Sherman on Ellis and he took a lot of photographs of immigrants. You don't remember being...

SEIFERT: No, I don't.

DIXON: You didn't see anyone like that .

SEIFERT: No.

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DIXON: Let's see. There is something else about Ellis we need to know. The physical condition of Ellis, there was the main building where you were in the hospital...

SEIFERT: There was the main building in the hospital and there was a room to the right of the main building. There were a lot of rooms there.

DIXON: Right.

SEIFERT: There were a lot of rooms. But I – I tell you the truth, I looked at it this past summer, I couldn't recognize it, most of it.

DIXON: Well, when you got off the boat at Ellis, did a guide meet you and show you around or, I mean, how did they take people, they put six hundred people on a launch or did they break you up in groups?

SEIFERT: They took us -- they took us in groups. They took us in groups. You stay here, and then they got another group, you stay here. They kept us apart, I don't know for what reason, the groups were separated.

DIXON: But the family group was kept together?

SEIFERT: The family group was kept together.

DIXON: Were there people...

SEIFERT: The people were very nice on Ellis Island except for these uniformed guys. They thought they were Jesus Christ or something, you know. They were

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holy, and some of them were nasty too, you know. They wise crack, you know. And some of them could speak different languages too.

DIXON: That's what I was going to wonder, the languages they spoke.

SEIFERT: That's right.

DIXON: Well, when you came, did you speak English or you didn't speak English?

SEIFERT: No, I did not.

DIXON: They talk to you in Polish?

SEIFERT: No, they spoke to us in Yiddish. They had a good – they had a -- that's why they separated these groups. They had the Yiddish speaking agents who spoke to the Jewish people and so on.

DIXON: You didn't have any test at all to get in, I mean, literacy tests or anything like that?

SEIFERT: No, no.

DIXON: But you had to go through the quota system in order to get...

SEIFERT: Yes, that's right.

DIXON: When you were on Ellis, did you see any people who didn't get in, I mean, did you hear of people who were turned back?

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SEIFERT: I sa-- yes, yes. You could see, you don't have to ask them. You see the – you see the – the fellow go over there and make some – some kind of a mark on the – on his coat or dress and they started crying. You knew what was happening.

DIXON: Do you remember what the marks were; I mean did you see...

SEIFERT: I don't remember. I think mostly an X. And these people – they were sent back.

DIXON: They put them on the boat and took them away?

SEIFERT: I don't know how they got back.

WIFE: They were segregated.

SEIFERT: They were separa – segregated from the others, from the rest of us.

DIXON: Was there any trouble on Ellis Island when you were there, I mean, everything went smooth?

SEIFERT: None whatever. Everything went smooth, yes.

DIXON: I am trying to think. There is always lots of questions you don't think to ask. Is there any memories you have that we haven't talked about or something that happened to someone you knew, or that you heard while you were there? We talked about the Aid Society, we talked about the sleeping. The sleeping on Hoffman Island was the one where you just had the springs, not the...

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SEIFERT: No, Ellis Island.

DIXON: You had mattresses and it was better at Hoffman Island.

SEIFERT: Yes, Hoffman Island was better.

DIXON: That's right. And when you were in the dormitories like, how were the dormitories arranged, were there whole bunches of beds like bunk beds or were there...

SEIFERT: I think there were three-- one on top of the other. Three.

DIXON: Three.

SEIFERT: Yes.

DIXON: There were lots of groups of three bunks. Was the women's the same way or did you hear, or did they have different...

SEIFERT: Yes, they had the same thing.

DIXON: They had the same. It was just a big room.

SEIFERT: That's right.

DIXON: With bunks of three.

SEIFERT: That's right, that's right, that's right.

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DIXON: Not much of –

SEIFERT: As a matter of fact, it was a -- the same thing on the boat in third class, the same thing. It wasn't any better, it was just that they were hammocks, it was a little softer then, but otherwise it was the same. It was a great big hole with hammocks one on top of the other.

DIXON: Was Ellis Island clean when you were there, was it clean?

SEIFERT: I would say yes. I would say yes.

DIXON: Did it seem like it was well run, or smoothly, did things go smoothly, or were there a lot of obstacles?

SEIFERT: Obstacles, I don't know. And I really also don't know really how smoothly they were.

DIXON: Right.

SEIFERT: How could I tell whether the thing was run smooth?

DIXON: Well, when you were, when they took the passengers from your boat, did most of them leave the first day or did most of them spend the night?

SEIFERT: Most of them left the same day.

DIXON: Left there the first day.

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SEIFERT: Yes.

DIXON: So you just stayed over.

SEIFERT: Yes, we stayed overnight. We have a -- we had a miserable experience of staying overnight.

DIXON: Did he not know you were coming that day and whether...

SEIFERT: I think he just couldn't make it somehow, he just couldn't make it.

DIXON: Well, when he came how did he come over to Ellis Island? Did he come on a special boat?

SEIFERT: There was -- they were. They had special boats going to Ellis Island.

DIXON: Right, but I mean he told them he was going to pick somebody up and they let him come over?

SEIFERT: Yes, sure. He had the -- he had the notice from the steamship company that the boat came and the passenger were detained on another island. He couldn't see us until we got to Ellis Island.

DIXON: Another thing. You mentioned the name of the boat. Do you know how to spell the name of the boat?

SEIFERT: Yes. R-O-U-S-S-I-L-L-I-O-N.

DIXON: Okay, and the name of the town you came from in Austria you mentioned.

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SEIFERT: In Austria, Turka.

DIXON: Could you spell that for us?

SEIFERT: T-U-R-K-A.

DIXON: Right.

SEIFERT: On the River Stryh [ph].

DIXON: Pardon?

SEIFERT: On the River Stryh. Stryh is the name of the river that the city was on

DIXON: Okay, spell that too so we will get the names spelled right.

SEIFERT: S-T-R-I—Y-E. Y -- not Y, Stryh S-T-R, I think it's Y-H.

DIXON: But that is in Austria?

SEIFERT: Yes.

DIXON: Okay. Are you glad you came?

SEIFERT: (laughs) By God, that's no question, no question. What a question. I went down on my knees when I got off – when I got off the launch in Battery Park.

DIXON: Was Battery Park a lot different now. Was there a park in Battery Park?

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Or where did you get off when you got off the boat?

SEIFERT: Yes, on a pier I remember, but there was -- it was a downtown—it was in the middle -- in the Battery area.

DIXON: Was the Castle Garden thing still there, the circle where the aquarium was and I mean there was a circle on the edge of Battery Park now .

SEIFERT: There was the aquarium was there.

DIXON: Right, that was there then.

SEIFERT: The aquarium was there. And maybe you knew a little bit more about history than these people.

DIXON: Maybe.

SEIFERT: I am telling my wife, when you walked out for a minute, that Castle Garden was on an island at one time and it was filled in. The land was filled in and it was connected with the Battery Park.

DIXON: I don't know, but I think that is quite possible.

SEIFERT: It is true. I have the document and I'll show it to you.

DIXON: Right, I think that is quite likely that it was that way, I mean, I don't know, but in other words, it was an island and they filled in the --

SEIFERT: That's right. They filled in to unite it with the Battery Park.

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DIXON: I think that's very possible.

WIFE: It was built originally as a fort.

SEIFERT: Yes, that's right.

DIXON: Because all of Ellis, except for a very small has been built, they built all of Ellis. It was just a little bit and they kept filling it. So Ellis is largely land filled also.

SEIFERT: That's right.

DIXON: You saw the Statue when you came into New York Harbor. You said that.

SEIFERT: Yes, oh yes.

DIXON: Was it a sight?

SEIFERT: I was very much impressed.

DIXON: Right.

SEIFERT: Very much impressed, very much impressed.

DIXON: When you go into Ellis Island, do you remember, did something stand out on your way to Ellis? Did you see what you saw, I mean, or the first thing you saw?

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SEIFERT: Well, the buildings-- when I saw the buildings at Ellis Island, they looked very nice. As a matter of fact, they even look good now. You look on the outside, they look very impressive. And it's a disappointment when you go inside.

DIXON: Well, they are working to fix it.

SEIFERT: It was a disappointment then to me too.

DIXON: Well, are you glad you came?

SEIFERT: I wouldn't – I wouldn't go back to tell you the truth. I will go back on a trip and hurry right back, too.

DIXON: Right. It still holds memories though when you go back I guess.

SEIFERT: Yes, oh yes, yes. That's what got me talking to this guy, you know, I just – I just couldn't hold it in.

DIXON: When you were on Ellis, there was a library or anything for you to do. You just wondered around or did they have concerts or a movie, or did they do...

SEIFERT: Oh, yes. They did have some entertainment that evening. They did have some.

DIXON: Was that in the main hall?

SEIFERT: Yes, the main hall, they had a movie, a silent movie, I remember.

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DIXON: Do you remember any?

SEIFERT: I don't remember what it was.

DIXON: Anybody in it like...

SEIFERT: A comedy, a Charlie Chaplin, I remember, that's right. Now it comes back. And another movie which I don't remember.

DIXON: A lot of people came to the movie or just a few?

SEIFERT: Yes. No, a lot of people came.

DIXON: The movie was in English and the people could understand or -- oh, it was silent.

SEIFERT: Silent.

DIXON: Silent, right. (laughs) That eliminates that, you didn't have a problem with the sound.

WIFE: Did you have any friends with you?

SEIFERT: Well, I met -- we met -- a young man and his sister, friendly. We became friendly and we stayed friendly until -- until we got married practically.

WIFE: That your friend that you roamed around the boats with?

SEIFERT: Yes, yes, well, we roamed around. We couldn't be -- couldn't get to -- we

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couldn't go into second class. It was barred for us, we couldn't go to second. We couldn't even go on the deck of second class.

DIXON: You mean you had to stay...

SEIFERT: Down below, we had to stay down below.

DIXON: But you could go outside somewhere?

SEIFERT: Yes, there was a little bit of an open deck there. That's how we saw the--there was open deck around the holes, that's where we were able to go. We were allowed to go there, but the superstructure which starts around mid ship that was second and first class, we couldn't go in there.

DIXON: You were right where the engines was probably.

SEIFERT: On the deck, no on the deck, on the main deck around the holes we could walk around.

DIXON: Did people get seasick?

SEIFERT: Oh, yes, my God (laughs). They got seasick alright, but I didn't. I never got seasick.

DIXON: How about food? Was the food there alright?

SEIFERT: Yes, the food was okay. The food was alright.

DIXON: What did the people do when they got seasick? There were restrooms;

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they would go up on deck?

SEIFERT: Restrooms up on deck. Those that couldn't make it did it wherever they were.

DIXON: It was really rough though, I mean.

SEIFERT: Oh, it was a rough voyage.

DIXON: Even in April?

SEIFERT: I'll tell you the truth; it was the roughest part of the voyage was between Halifax and New York. It took two days only, but that was the worse part of the trip. And those two days almost everybody was sick, except me and my friend.

DIXON: Did it snow and rain.

SEIFERT: No, no, no. It didn't rain. It was --

DIXON: April.

SEIFERT: It was -- was cloudy, but the sea was so rough it almost threw us out of the boat.

DIXON: When you were on the boat, did you meet any of the people or sailors or stuff?

SEIFERT: I couldn't speak to them. They spoke French.

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DIXON: Oh, I see, that's right --different. Okay. Well, is there anything else that you would want to say about it or your experiences?

SEIFERT: Well, all I can say is, thank God for America. I am glad I am here and all the experiences I had were only good – were only even – they – even, even that I had the experiences; I appreciate it so much more.

DIXON: Okay. Well, I have enjoyed speaking to you. Thank you.

SEIFERT: And thank you, Mr. Dixon.