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DR. EINAR BREDLAND
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GREEN: (May 3rd, 1982 at 162 East 80th Street. Immigrants on Tape Project.
Mrs. Amelia Green interviewing Dr. Einar Bredland in Manhattan.)

Dr, Bredland, when and where were you born?

BREDLAND: I was born in the city of Aalesund in Norway.

GREEN: How do you spell that, please?

BREDLAND: A-A-L-E-S-U-N-D, in the city of Aalesund. Now that is on the West Coast of Norway ,right on the ocean. As a matter of fact, some people may know it because the man who founded Normandy, Gina Rolf [PH}, came from an island outside of there. He's the man, he was a Viking and he went down to France and the king of France made a proposition to him if he would protect the country against other Vikings, he would give him a Normandy or, a land which later became known as Normandy. So there's a statue of Gina Rolf [PH] in – in Aalesund given to—to Aalesund by a – a city in France. Which then – in order to – that was a thousand years after the foundation of Normandy -- sent this statue up to Aalesund. But by the time--well, those first years we lived in Aalesund, my father was a sea captain.

GREEN: Excuse me please, Dr. Bredland, when were you born?

BREDLAND: I was born in 1906.

GREEN: How do you remember this town of Aalesund? What do you most clearly remember about it?

BREDLAND: Well of course Aalesund is a fishing town, hundreds of fishing vessels located there, stationed there. And these fishing vessels of course put their seal, or put their impression upon the city, the town, call it a city. It is -- today it has about twenty-five or thirty thousand people. At that time, it probably had about fifteen thousand people. It was a very modern town because back in 1904, it burned to the ground. And so it had been rebuilt over the years. You'll find – you'll find that today it is a very modern city.

GREEN: Since this was a fishing town, was your father--

BREDLAND: Yes. He was a captain on one of the fishing vessels at that time. And I was only a very small boy when he first began to take me along on some of these tours. I had to ask permission from the school to be able to go along but they were ready and willing to give me that permission.

GREEN: Was your mother mostly occupied with housework and domestic duties?

BREDLAND: Yes, she was occupied with housework. I had a smaller brother and so she had enough to do with the two of us for a while -- I think. It was only later that I had a sister born into the family. She was --

GREEN: So there were three of you in the family.

BREDLAND: Well we're -- we ended up by being four because when I was twelve we had a fourth child, a fourth sister.

GREEN: How many years difference between you?

BREDLAND: Well, there were twelve years between the -- myself and the last one, Ruth, who's still living.

GREEN: Were you the eldest?

BREDLAND: I was the oldest. I had a brother then there were two and a half years younger than myself.

GREEN: Do you remember anything about your grandparents?

BREDLAND: I remember my – my maternal grandparents very, very well. I do not remember my ma-- paternal grandp -- parents. My – my – my father's father was drowned. He was a fisherman and he and his oldest son drowned when my father was about four or five years of age. So of course we never saw him. I do remember my—my -- his mother, my paternal grandmother. Not too well. She did visit us when my sister was born but I was about nine years of age, eight or nine at that time when she came to visit with us. That's the only time I can remember her from. She lived very far away, way up north in Lofoten, the islands of Lofoten Sorvagen. But my maternal grandparents lived not far away in a village called Volda.

GREEN: How do you spell that?

BREDLAND: V-O-L-D-A, Volda. And when I was nine years of age in third grade, we moved into Volda. My father bought a house, a large house, and we moved from Aalesund. We lived very -- in a very cramped quarters in Aalesund. I guess it was difficult for everyone to be housed properly, especially after the – after the town had burned down. So we did move to Volda to have a better place in which to live. Now Volda is a--was a smaller place then of course. Today it has a population of about seven or eight thousand people. It is known as a -- you might call it a college town. There are several schools in Volda. There's a district high school. There's a teacher's college and they have other schools. They have what they call a gymnasium, we call it secondary school here, high school, and of course they have junior high. All of these things are – are located in Volda so that communities from far and wide around have to come there to attend to these schools.

GREEN: What was your family like while growing up? You've already begun to tell me about going to sea with your father, we'll get to that later, but what was your family like? Holidays and home life?

BREDLAND: Well of course we had a very good home life. My father was of the kind who liked to be home as much as possible.

GREEN: Even though he went to sea frequently?

BREDLAND: Even though he went to sea and he wanted to be home as much as possible. Consequently he -- when I was only about four, he thought of getting his own boat and he – he did make the drawings for this and had it built. So then for a while he had his own boat.. He was going to try out a different type of fishing because this was then thought of being something that might become popular. But unfortunately before it -- it really came to that I suppose he didn't make out as well as he had hoped to. So he sold it and went back again to -- to be a hired man, a captain of ships.
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– never did give up that however and when I was eleven, he bought another boat. That's a small freighter. And unfortunately there was very, very little for him to do. So he had to let whatever crew he had, they had to--he had to let them go. But as soon as he had done that, he became so busy. So among others he took me along. And I was only eleven when he first took me along to do real work and that was in the summer.

GREEN: What kind of work did you do on the boat?

BREDLAND: Well, I helped with – with whatever there was on the boat to be done with the loading, unloading and, of course, I suppose I did some of the cooking too. All of these things, of course, this was in the summer when I was free from school. It happened again, there was another season when I was thirteen, he bought the boat -- that boat back again, and I had another – another try at it. But by the time--he gave that up and then he was captain on a large freighter. And at the time when I was twelve, he took me along on a trip.

GREEN: Where did you go?

BREDLAND: To Norway, from all the way up – all the way up the coast we stopped in every city all the way to the Swedish – to the Russian border. And returned. It was a trip that lasted two months and it was a great experience for a twelve year old boy. By the time -- I was-- . You – you – come I should count is -- speak a little about my people at home.

GREEN: Well, this is a very interesting --. Just continue. I'm just curious. You say you left school, what school were you, did you--

BREDLAND: Well this was grade school.

GREEN: Grade school?

BREDLAND: This was grade school. I was finished in grade school at the time -- by the time I was thirteen. I had gotten an early start, starting at six. That was unusual then because children didn't start until they were six-- seven or eight. And I had an early start. And by the time I was thirteen then I was finished. I left school with all my schoolmates who were fourteen and fifteen and maybe some were sixteen, some who had been held back. And these -- some of these were able to continue into what we call junior high. It was called middle school then. But I was not eligible for that, I wasn't – I wasn't even eligible for being confirmed.

Norway is a Lutheran state religion and it's usual for everyone to become confirmed at the age of fourteen or fifteen. Well, I was too young for being confirmed so I had a whole year ahead of me. So I spent part of that time working on a farm, part of that time I spent with my father on his ship and, in the wintertime, he took me along on a fishing boat that he was captain of and fortunately that didn't work so well. I became so seasick that after a week at sea, a couple of weeks anyhow, he sent me back home. So that ended that.

In the meantime, I was very willing to work and I asked a shoemaker if he could hire me to work for him and he did hire me to work for him. And I worked for him quite a while until it became spring and I had promised to help my uncle on his farm. So I went to help my uncle on his farm but I began to think about this. This was ridiculous. Now if I worked for the shoemaker, I could earn a little money. I knew that my uncle wouldn't pay me very much if anything at all and so I went back to the shoemaker. And I worked for him all summer and into the fall into next – next new year when I was fourteen. I was able then to go into junior high, a school that lasted two and a half years. That was all my formal schooling in Norway. In the summers, I worked on the farm, I worked on the ships and by the time I was finished with school, my father then was captain on a passenger ship, one of those local passenger ships, and I worked. I did get a job with him on this ship.

GREEN: You were so busy and occupied, how did the idea of coming over to America come to you?

BREDLAND: Well, it – it -- I had never planned on coming to America. That was not my plan at all. What happened ultimately was that it would come about how I came here but my father planned to take back his boat. He hadn't sold the boat, he had lent it to someone. And this person he had lent it to had kept it for several years without paying him interest or rent. So my father felt obliged to take it back again. So in the winter of '24 when I was going on eighteen, he took back the boat. So he – he left his position as captain of this passenger boat and since he left, I felt I'd better leave too.

And before I left, I had, through my father's influence, gotten a job as a fisherman. And this was quite an experience for an eighteen year old boy and I'm sure that I could not have gotten the job but for the fact that my father knew the captain and the owner of this big fishing vessel that went south and took part in the herring fisheries in the Spring of '24. When the herring fisheries were over – were over, then I was able to get a position on a local, also because my -- they knew me and they knew my father. And I was able to get a position on this passenger boat as a sailor. And I loved that. I delighted in that life. Although it was very hard. For example, the boat--

GREEN: Passenger boat coming—

BREDLAND: No, no, they were on the coast.
GREEN: On the coast.

BREDLAND: On the coast. Now the – the -- the one my father was captain of was called Leif Erikson. Leif Erikson. And we had a hard life. We very often had to get up at four o'clock in the morning to start our run. And we very often were not finished until eleven o'clock in the evening. There was one day a week that the boat did not run and we did clean up and whatever needed on the ship. And Sundays, we did not run -- Sundays. So it was a pretty hectic job, this being on -- on the ships. But anyway, on this other ship that I, it was called Merian, that was sort of a name of the landscape which the boat traveled-- Merian. And I enjoyed that very much.

I was only a temporary man there. I was really too young for it. But it so happened that on a Sunday, the 1st of June, a ship -- a large ship, freighter, came into Aalesund. And the ship was headed for Russia. And one of the men who worked with me on this passenger boat, he was older and he had been a sailor going to foreign countries. So when he heard the ship was going to Russia, he signed on and went to Russia. He was going to Russia with the ship. But then the captain on this boat said to me, "Well," he said, "Now when he leaves I have a position open. You can have that, Einar," he said to me. And I was very pleased. And I was all set to keep working on this ship.

And then the man who did the hiring in town for shipping, he came and he convinced me that "Why should you stay here," he said, "You, too, ought to go to Russia." So it ended up by my leaving the job I had just gotten and hired myself on this ship going to Russia. Now on the ship that I was working I was paid a hundred eighty-one crowns a month which was good pay. And when I came on this Russian ship going to Russia, I

was only paid forty-eight crowns a month. That's quite a difference. We went to Russia and I had--it was an interesting trip, very interesting to see Russia and be in Russia.

GREEN: This was in the 1920's.

BREDLAND: This is 1924.

GREEN: After the Revolution.

BREDLAND: After the Revolution. But they were so strict, they kept us in quarantine for several days and they made a lot of fuss about everything. They made it sound as though we – we couldn't have any literature, they would confiscate it. And I had all my schoolbooks with me and I hid them in one of the lifeboats and we were so careful about not bringing in anything that would disturb these Russians. And after a while they permitted us to begin loading. Discovered that after we had loaded they said," Now, you better unload again."

And so we had to unload all the -- what we had loaded and then go further up the river and start loading another type of [not understood] planks, whatever, building materials. And when we were finished we had the largest load of lumber that had ever left the country. It went all the way up to the third bridge up on top. It was a huge load, tremendous load. It was an unusual thing. Being on Glama [ph] – Gl-- I think it's Dvina the river in Russia up in Archangel, very fascinating, very beautiful river. Very flat lands on each – each river side. We enjoyed that very, very much.

GREEN: How did this lead you to America?

BREDLAND: Well we made, then went to London with this load which was very interesting. I came to London--

GREEN: Did you know English already?

BREDLAND: I had learned English in – in my junior – in my junior – (clears throat) excuse me – junior high school – excuse me, I guess I should have that water.

GREEN: OK.

BREDLAND: Right. Junior high school. And I was very fascinated by London. I was very fascinated by London. As a matter of fact, I had read about London quite a bit and I had seen so many pictures of it that when I saw some of these buildings I knew where they were. And I could take myself around London on foot, St. Paul's Cathedral, etc. You could see these large buildings from distances away. Well, we made another trip to Norway and then with coal from Newcastle -- and in Norway the whole crew left and I was the only one left aboard. Again, I was -- then I was given a promotion so by now I was earning a hundred crowns a month. Well, the ship then went back to England and loaded coal from Medeira.. Well the ship then, Medeira, is beautiful. I was just awe stricken with it, it was so beautiful in Medeira. Have you been there? So beautiful.

We crossed the Atlantic and came into Galveston, Texas where the boat was--

GREEN: Did you have any idea of what America was going to be like before you came here?

BREDLAND: I had, well--

REEN: Did you read about--

BREDLAND: I had very few ideas about America although we had quite a few people I suppose in the community who had come back. I did not know anyone intimately. There was a cousin of my mother's who – who had visited Norway and stayed with us for a while. But we – we did not know much about Norway [sic] except that his wife said to my mother that everything is so great in America. "My doors," she said, "Are more beautiful than your floors are here." Gave -- gave us an idea as to what to expect, that it was a country of wealth and a – a great country. We knew that it was a great country. But besides that we didn't know much about it. And I didn't know anything about it. But when we came to – to Houston, Texas--

GREEN: Excuse me, please. What was your date of entry into Galveston?

BREDLAND: The date was the Septem -- December 4th.

GREEN: December 4th, what year was it, 192-?

BREDLAND: 1924.

GREEN: 1924, so you came into Texas and did--. What, can you remember your first impression?

BREDLAND: My first impression was of the pilot who came aboard. We had been used to these very austere looking, very stern looking pilots coming aboard in uniforms, all braid. And here is this – and probably middle-aged people--

GREEN: European--

BREDLAND: European, yes. And here is this young man, he could be in his late twenties or early thirties, come aboard.

GREEN: He was as old as you were. The same age as you were.

BREDLAND: No, I was about eighteen, nineteen, but he was at least ten, twelve, fourteen years older than I was. And here he is, it was a cold morning in Texas and he's dancing back and forth and -- to keep warm. Well, we had an open bridge and the mate, who was on watch, I was at the wheel and the mate who was on watch said, "Would like a cup of coffee?". So he said he would. And while he was downstairs the pilot came to me and he said, "This is terrible." he said, "Standing here on this cold bridge, no wheelhouse." he said, "On American ships ,we have

wheelhouses." he said, "It's nice and warm and we pay well and they have good food." He said, "That's what you want to be." This is the pilot. And I was very much--

GREEN: Well that seems like a cheerful introduction.

BREDLAND: Yes, I was very much impressed with him, very much impressed with him. And so we decided that we would stay in America and that was my introduction to America. It wasn't easy to begin with because the first job that I ever got was washing dishes.

GREEN: What cities did you--

BREDLAND: That was Houston.

GREEN: You lived in Houston first of all.

BREDLAND: Yes. And my next, I was very fortunate because we had a great cold spell and this cold spell came along and made a good many people quit their jobs on the harbor. And there was a dredge – a dredge down near Houston at a place called Harrisburg where they were making a new harbor, a new dock facilities. And when all these men quit because it was so cold, I was able to get a job. So that was my first introduction to then working on, digging, making harbors. And I was working on this and making harbors for – for about six months.

GREEN: Sort of change from construction work from crew work.

BREDLAND: Right, from the sea to being working on harbors. Yes. That is digging these dredges, I don't know if you're familiar with the dredges, how they dig out--

GREEN: You were all alone here? Did you live alone?

BREDLAND: Well there were three of us at that time, yes we were three, we knew one another.

GREEN: Were you friends from a long time?

BREDLAND: We knew one another, yes, we knew one another. And I was then working on their dredge for about six months, then I took a job with Sinclair Oil Company on one of their tankers and I was with the -- this shipping, this oil tanker. I was on that oil tanker, for somewhat more than a year. When I wanted to do some -- have some dental work then so I quit for that reason. And after I had that done I, well I was waiting for something to do and I got a job on a salvage vessel.

GREEN: Did you always work with ships and boats?

BREDLAND: Well no, I didn't. I had two more ships and then I left the ships in New York, came to New York.

GREEN: You came to New York from Texas.

BREDLAND: I came to New York really from Norfolk, Virginia. And came to New York and this was pretty difficult. It was quite difficult to get a start here. Didn't know anybody. And the only thing I could, well I didn't know anything or know anybody, didn't know what to do. So in the meantime I had taken into a small man's hotel called the Clinton Hotel in Brooklyn.

GREEN: Weren't you always thinking you were away from your family. And how did they feel about your--

BREDLAND: Well, they did not want me to leave. They wanted me to come back. They did not want me to leave. I thought there was -- I was too young then, didn't know anybody.

GREEN: Weren't you homesick?

BREDLAND: No. I didn't, fortunately I didn't feel that. I was pretty able to take care of myself. I did have a friend whom I met on this last ship I was, an Englishman from Liverpool. And in the end I didn't realize that he was a big faker. So one – so I talked it over with him and I said, he said he had some friends who worked in a garage and he said to me, "Why don't you learn how to do garage work?" And I – I got a job [not understood] 38th Street or 39th Street, learning how to wash cars.

GREEN: You became a jack of many trades.

BREDLAND: Right. Well I didn't know anything about driving a car and I was a very ma—so amazed to see how they could manipulate these cars back and forth. But I didn't know how to drive the cars but I learned how to wash them. Unfortunately--

GREEN: Like swabbing the deck.

BREDLAND: Pardon?

GREEN: Like scrubbing your ship's deck.

BREDLAND: Well, almost like that. I paid five dollars for that -- to learn how to wash a car. They kept me working for two – two days and then they gave me a little certificate that he can wash cars. So I got a job washing cars but I didn't stay at that very long. But in the meantime this friend of mine (I called my friend from the ship) he took off with all of my -- the things that he could lay his hands on. And I had lent him money and when I came back he was disappeared, gone, he had disappeared. I never saw him again. And I called up the people who he knew who -- I had been with him in the telephone booth when he talked with them -- so I knew all about them. So I went to see them. And then I said, "No-- has Jack been around?" They said, "Jack? How come you know so much about us?" they said. "Well, Jack told me all about you people." "He did?" "Yes." "Well, where is he? Where is he?" "Jack would never dare come back here," they said. So here is a man who had taken advantage of a young greenhorn, taking everything he had, and – and disappeared.

There were also some other locations that he had been working at and I went to check with them there and they said, "No, he would never come back here." So that was an experience that I didn't forget. In the meantime, I got a job at a labor base as a laborer. I figured this was very awkward to live downtown in Borough Hall and then travel all the way out to South Brooklyn. I wasn't used to going on the train. So I got a room out there in South Brooklyn. And one day walking on the street there I met a man whom I had met on the boat. He was a Norwegian and he said that there are so many Norwegian people living out there and I had no idea, I didn't know that. That was an introduction to the Norwegian colony or group in Brooklyn.

GREEN: You must have been very happy to find—

BREDLAND: Delighted, I was delighted to see --. But he -- this poor man was pretty deaf. It was hard for him, he couldn't get work. It was impossible for him to get work. So one day I -- this work as a laborer for the army didn't work very long, last very long. I got a job with a factory, American Foundry, a machine company. It didn't pay me very much, forty-two cents an hour, but at least I had a job. So one day this man who I'd met had been on the boat – this man from – I met [not understood] in Brooklyn -- said that his sister had found out – found that there was a place where they needed painters. And they were paying eight dollars a day. Would he, could we go and see if they would hire us? So I said all right, I'll take a day off from my job and we'll go and see what happens. You know, we were hired. Eight dollars a day.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

GREEN: Second part of the interview with Dr. Bredland, May 3rd, 1982, American Museum of Immigration.

Dr. Bredland, you were talking about the first kinds of work you did when you came over from Norway.

BREDLAND: That is a very interesting experience. It doesn't really mean much that we got this job. It – it didn't take long for the man who hired us to discover that we didn't know anything about painting. Now we thought like everyone else very often thinks, that when you can dab a little paint around, then you are a painter. But he soon discovered that we didn't know mu-- anything about painting at all. He took us up to the Bronx where he had a big job and a lot of plastering was to be done. And we had never seen plastering being done, didn't know anything about it. And as I said, it didn't take long for him to discover we didn't know anything about painting. And we thought that we knew, that we did very well. And we were so happy we were going to make eight dollars a day and figured out that we would make forty-eight dollars a week and that we'll be able to do so much with all this money, maybe be able to buy a car and we'd have a fine life after this. America couldn't be more beautiful.

Well, that evening he fired us. He said, "I discovered that you didn't know anything about painting. Now if you'd told me," he said, "now that other man I can't use him at all but I could use you if you had

told me to begin with that you didn't know anything about painting. I could have used you as a helper." And I said, "Well, is it too late?" "No." he said, "Yes, I think it is," he said, "because the job that I took is so far away that I think I'll have to give it up." So that job ended and the next day I just went back to my job at the factory.

Well, a lot of things happened over the years. I did learn how to paint. As a matter of fact, I became a contractor in my own right and had several people working for me. When it was very slow, I had nothing to do; then I had to work in garages and do different things. But in the meantime I felt that it was time I -- well, skipping over some of this, by the time I – I was, --. I'm sorry, this is kind of trite. But by the time 1930 rolled around, I had met a woman I thought, a young woman whom I thought I'd like to know more about and in 1931 we married.

GREEN: Was she from Norway?

BRED;AND: She was from Norway. She was--

GREEN: How did you meet her?

BREDLAND: Well, I – I met her at a –at a festival of her city. At that time, most -- there were so many different local groups in Brooklyn, New York, they had a group from every city, so to speak. And her group was the Haugesund's, the city of Haugesund's group.

GREEN: How do you spell that, please?

BREDLAND: H-A-U-G-E-S-U-N-D, the city of Haugesund's group. That society had the third anniversary and I had been invited to entertain.

GREEN: What type of entertaining did you do?

BREDLAND: Well, I tell -- told stories. So. So she was very impressed. And that is how I met her. I think if I – if I hadn't been on the program she wouldn't have paid attention to me at all, I guess.

GREEN: Her name?

BREDLAND: Her name is Ingrid. Ingrid. Ingrid Michelson [PH], her mai—maid—maiden name At that time having married, I felt it was time to go back and see the people in Norway. It was seven years since I had been over there.

GREEN: And introduce your bride.

BREDLAND: Yes, and introduce my bride. We had a beautiful trip on the Cunard Line. That is, we went over -- Aquitania, went over to France, spent some time in Paris and then we went over to Berlin and spent a few days in Berlin. And then from there to Copenhagen, spent some time there and crossed to Malmo in Sweden and then to Oslo and spent some -- I had never been to Oslo. And then over to Bergen and down south to Haugesund to see her people. And from there we went north to my people in Volda. Well as it were we spent two years in Volda, two great years. I was

working with my father, he had two boats. For a time I was skipper on one of them. He also had a coal business, coal and coke, and I worked with him on that. I also did some painting and decorating and some of the work I did then was very beautiful work that I had -- some of it I picked up myself, some of it I had learned in the trade – trade schools and it -- it is still standing up after all these years, fifty years now. This same, this work is still standing.

GREEN: It must have given you a good sense of satisfaction.

BREDLAND: It gave me great satisfaction but what surprised me was the fact that in Norway they had such poor paint. It was very awkward. They got the paint in powders and they mixed the powders and the oils and the turpentines and driers and it was very awkward. They didn't have ready-made paints as we have here. And I said I would like to get into a paint factory and learn something about making paints. And it was only seven years later that I worked in a paint factory and learned all about how to make many, many different kinds of paint. But then it was too late, I didn't want to be bothered with it. When I came back from Norway after two years. It was very, very hard to get work. And so I got a job in a blacksmith's shop, became sort of a blacksmith helper.

GREEN: Another skill.

BREDLAND: Another skill, something I had, I -- they came and asked me, well, They -- we were a long line of people and they came and --. It was hard to get work and they came and asked if there was someone there who – who had worked in a blacksmith's shop or knew about blacksmithing. Now I had not worked in a shop but I had been, as a boy I used to stand and watch the blacksmith's work. And I figured well, I'm big and strong and I can always work a hammer, surely. So when I came down to the blacksmith's shop the chief there said to me, "Do you know how to handle a hammer?" I said, "Oh yes, I can handle a hammer."

And it was late in the afternoon when he took me over to a big machine and he said, "Do you know how to handle this machine?" And I said, "No, I don't think so." And I didn't know what the machine was. And it turned out to be a big steam hammer that he was talking about. Big, huge steam hammer. And he said, "Well, we'll see if you can learn." And so he put me to see – to see if I could learn it and it was an amazing thing. I was used to the steam winches from the ships and in a very short time I could learn to use that hammer and use it in such a way that you -- one could have put a hand under it and I could lower it so gently that it wouldn't have hurt the hand. He said, "You learn fast," he said. So he kept me on there for seven, eight months until there was another slowdown.

Over the years then I did many things. I worked for the Chase Manhattan, a thing that I regret very much. It was pretty rough. They put us to the kind of work that really ruined my nails. You didn't have much choice, you did it or you didn't. Or you were out. We had a very – [pause] And as I said, it was pretty rough then. This was in the early '30's. And we were working in these rooms, in the offices, painting. It was pretty rough. We were not allowed to open the windows and the air

became very, very foul. But we were told that if you don't like it there are plenty of people over in the park. So we just took it. But later on I began to work for myself again. And I knew they paid very well. And at one point I met this man who had fired us twenty-five years before. The man we worked for one day who said we didn't know much about painting.

And how I happened to meet him was that I had to do defense work. It was during the war and I had to do defense work. And I was a rigger in a shipyard. And some people I had worked for in Great Neck, I had done some very, this was the time before we had all the beautiful paneling we have today. And I had grained walls in – in a study. I'd grained the walls in beautiful, I think it was oak. And they called me to do some work for them and I said, "I'm sorry but I just can't. I have to stay at this defense work and I'm not able to any work for you now until the war is over." "Can you recommend somebody?" "Yes." I said, "I can," and I recommended this man who had fired me that twenty-five years before. And he had a truck (he used to do a lot of church work, fine work) it said 'Painters for three dec—three generations of painters and decorators.

So they called him and he came to look at the work and the house and he said, "My," he said. He was so surprised when he saw the work. And he said, "Who did this?" "Well the man who recommended you did this." Well, why didn't you call him?" "Oh well he can't. He couldn't come so he recommended you." So that evening, he came on the telephone and he called me up and he said, "I was over and looked at the Drake's place and, my, what beautiful work. I have a proposition to make for you. I have two propositions to make for you. If you want to be a partner with me, I'll take you in as a partner. Or if you don't want to be a partner, I'll take you in as a foreman." "I'm sorry," I said, "But I just can't. I'm just too tied up and I wasn't able to take it." I didn't want to take it anyway. But the point was this that here was a man who had fired me twenty-five years before wanting me to be a partner with him. I never told him, I never did tell him. But all these years--

GREEN: In spite of the fact that you were a greenhorn you seemed to be doing quite well. But how come you left all these skills to go into educational psychology?

BREDLAND: Well, I was always willing to try something else and to learn. When they opened the World's Fair I heard they would do --. (and I belonged to a painter union, I was secretary of the union). And I heard there were these big, huge phone poles. And a man who was a steeplejack was telling me how he did that. So I said I'd like to learn that. So I -- became a steeplejack. Among other things I'll painted the tallest steel pole in the world. It was at the World's Fair, the tallest steel pole in the world.

GREEN: You never got dizzy?

BREDLAND: Pardon.

GREEN: You never got dizzy painting so high?

BREDLAND: No, there were some difficult jobs, that poles were so small and thin. But I was very, and if those ropes (they were wood) - and if those broke -- would go down then and that would be the end of it. I didn't like that part of it. But I did it anyway. I like to tell another little story?

GREEN: Go right ahead, Doctor.

BREDLAND:: I used to be with a paint shop that was called Dovers Paint Shop. And he had everybody come and ask him when they wanted something special done they'd ask him who could do it for them.. So this man came in once and he said he had a flagpole and he didn't know offhand, "Did you know anyone, Mr. Dover, who could do the flagpole? This one is so tall -- it's a hundred foot tall and it is huge and I don't know anyone who could do this pole." There's no possibility of taking it down at all. So he says, "Well," he said, "I know -- the only one I know," he said, "Who could do it is Einar Bredland. "Could you contact him for me?" Yes, he could do that. So he did.

Well, it was some time later that he, I was not doing very much and he came into Mr. Dover and he said, "You know, I have some paper hanging to do. Do you know someone who could do it for me?" "Well, I can think of Bredland who could do it for you. I saw him the other --, he's not very busy now, why don't you check with him?" So I did his pa-- paper job for him. Well, I was getting-- then I was working in the shipyards and he went to Dover again and he said, "You know, I have this beautiful marbleizing job to be done. Do you know someone who could do this marbleizing for me? I have this beautiful home in Great Neck and it has such a -- a mantelpiece of marble, black marble and now they want everything around it in black marble and they have to have someone who could do it. Do you know someone who could do it?" "Well," he said, "the only one I can think of is Bredland." He said, "Tell me Mr. Dover, don't you know anybody but Bredland? Is he the only man you know?" So anyway through all of these years I had been going to school.

GREEN: When?

BREDLAND: In the evenings. In 1938, I started to go to school.

GREEN: Where?

BREDLAND: City College.

GREEN: City College, what did you study?

BREDLAND: I studied economics, sociology, education. I took some courses in psychology but not enough. But I had all the background.

GREEN: What were you hoping to do with it?

BREDLAND: Well, I was going to go into law. But you see it -- I worked seven days a week; seven days a week, twelve hours a day. On Sundays we only worked eight hours.

GREEN: And you had a home and a family too.

BREDLAND: Yes. They lived in Little neck and I had to stay in Brooklyn. I didn't travel. I couldn't because there was gas rationing so there was no – no traveling.

GREEN: This was all during the war.

BREDLAND: Yes, this was during the war. So when I left the college -- before I left the college, I left to go to law school. But I didn't do so well because I wasn't able to study.

GREEN: What college did you graduate from?

BREDLAND: City College.

GREEN: City College. Did you only go at night?

BREDLAND: At night.

GREEN: At night.

BREDLAND: At night. But you see I took law before I – before I was finished, before I graduated. And worked all this time, seven days a week, twelve hours a day. I was not able to study. So I didn't do too well. I thought I'd pick it up anyway. But in the meantime I went back to City College and finished my work there. In '47--

GREEN: You went during the day?

BREDLAND: No.

GREEN: You continued to go at night.

BREDLAND: It was at -- all night. Well, the war was over and I did not want to, I left the shipyard and I wanted to try something else. And so I became a sales representative of a the fastest calculating machine in the world, it was that time called – was called a Marchant . Today, of course, that is slow. Today there's no such thing. But then it was the fastest machine in the world. The Marchant Calculating Company. We had offices on 43rd Street and Fifth and – and I worked for them for quite a while until it was time for me to go to Norway. I sent my family over in '47 so they could be over there in the summer and in the fall I went over because my father was ill. And this was in September.

But he had some friends, a professor, he had a professor, a neighbor of ours who was a professor at the teacher's college. And this person invited me to come and lecture at the college. and he was so impressed with me, he asked me what I planned to do. I said I planned to become a lawyer. He said, "I'll tell you what. If you don't become an educator, you are going to miss your vocation for life. You're going to get onto the wrong show because you belong in the classroom. I have had hundreds of candidates for teaching and I know what I'm talking about."

So I decided that I would see what happened when I came back. In the meantime I taught as a guest lecturer at one of the teacher's colleges in '48 and we, then, as a family came back in the fall of '48.

END SIDE TWO,TAPE ONE BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

END MP3 ONE BEGIN MP3 TWO

GREEN: Side three, interview with Dr. Bredland, May 3rd, 1982.

Dr. Bredland, we were talking about how you became to be a, go into psychology and education.

BREDLAND: Well, since Dr. Stemnitzers [PH] or Professor Stemnitzers [PH] had advised me that I would do well in education, and since my experience as a guest lecturer as well at teacher's college had developed an interest in me for education; I decided that I'd look into it when I came back to America. And so in the fall, then I sort of -- one of my friends who was a psychologist and he again recommended me to another friend of his, another psychologist. We were discussing what I could possibly do or – or what I could start that could lead into something that would be interesting and valuable for my future. Well I was advised that you -- you'd be wasting your time. "I don't see how you can make a go of it here in America. I think you can use your education to a worthwhile purpose if you go back to Norway and continue it there. But right here, I'm not sure that you could do much with it." And my other friend said, "No," he said, "You – you talk about going into law but I wouldn't recommend that at all. Law is for the birds," he said. "Why don't you become a psychologist. That has some future, that is something worthwhile. Become a psychologist."

GREEN: Was this advisor a Norwegian?

BREDLAND: He was a Norwegian friend. He was a psychologist. And he gave me this advice. Well, I -- I was recommended to go to one or two institutions and find out what the possi—what the possibilities were for enrolling in graduate programs. And among the institutions that I went to was New York University School of Education. I met a very, very friendly man, a Dr. Charles E. Skinner. Now I had heard of him in Norway because in Doctor -- one of Dr. Stemnitzer's [PH] books, the man who had recommended me for education in the first place, he had mentioned Dr. Charles E. Skinner in his book. So I knew a little bit about Dr. Skinner. He turned out to be a very, very friendly man and he sat down and we talked what the possibilities were for me to enroll in the School of Education and the various courses, psychology and other courses, that would lead on to something in the field of education.

GREEN: When did you get your Ph.D.?

BREDLAND: That was back in 1955. But he – he suggested that, "Well you can either come here or you could come to Columbia University." So I liked him so much that I enrolled with him and the very first class I had was with him. He had a class of fifty some students and the next time the class met I had to give a report. He was so impressed with me that he said, "I want you to apply for a teaching fellowship. I want you apply -- you to apply. There's only a statistical possibility that you with your background can get it. But I'm very impressed with you and I want you to apply." I applied and I was given--

GREEN: What year was this?

BREDLAND: This was in 1950. And I was given this fellowship. I taught classes then with them for ten years. In the meantime I received my M.A. in '51 and my Ph.D. in '55 and continued to teach with them, partly with them evening classes and all along I had been studying. I continued my studies after, it was postgraduate after '55. I taught at the Reading Institute -- also at New York University. And then when Dr, Skinner and all his colleagues left, retired, I left as well and I was with Staten Island Community College for a year. That we thought it would be good to leave New York and find a place where we could park the car without any problem.

And so we moved out to Susquehanna University, that is north of – in a – north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in a place called Cedars Grove.. I was offered an assistant professorship there but I said no, I couldn't take anything less than Associate Professorship. I had enough experience for it. And so they agreed to give me an associate professorship. Well I hadn't been there a year before I got a call from Westminster College and they said we have a professorship open and well, we like it very much here in Cedars Grove and I'm not so sure that I'd like to leave. Well, come and see us anyhow. Well, they did so much for us that we finally decided that we would move out there. And we stayed there for twelve years until I retired at the age of sixty-eight.

Now then at the age of sixty-eight we moved back, we wanted to be closer to New York where our daughter lived, but not all the way to New York. And so we settled in Allentown where I am now in private practice, psychological practice. I also teach colle-- courses for the Allentown College. Now I'd like to tell you a little bit about the societies in Brooklyn. Would you like to hear some of that?

GREEN: I'm very curious. Did the fact that you came from Norway influence the course of your career in psychology and education in any way?

BREDLAND: I only followed what I had – I had always -- when I came to America, my idea was to learn the language. That's all I – I want – I came for. To learn the language and then I planned to go back and study in Norway. But when I came back in 1931, '32, '33, I learned that people looked upon me as being too old for continuing education. There was no possibility, there were no scholarships and I didn't have the funds and there was no possibility of – of borrowing money either. So I just simply gave it up and came back. But in 1938 someone said to me, "Why –

why don't you continue your education here? Why waste your time?" And I did. And I began -- that's how I began at City College. I had to make up for some courses, the fact that I had not gone to high school. I had to make up for courses.

GREEN: I see. I think that's very interesting, and now coming back to the point that I'm very anxious to hear about, the Norwegian community in Brooklyn. Are there many Norwegians there?

BREDLAND: When I came, we had about fifty thousand Norwegians.

GREEN: Fifty thousand. That was in 192--

BREDLAND: In 1924. Well, I came in 1926. However, today the number may have dwindled to twenty thousand. People have moved out, moved into the suburbs. So there are many, there are fewer and fewer of them.

GREEN: What sort of things does this Norwegian community in Brooklyn do to keep alive Norwegian customs and traditions?

BREDLAND: Well, when I first came, as I said, at an earlier – at an earlier point in our conversation, every – every locality in Norway had it's own local society. And consequently there must have been about thirty different Norwegian societies, aside from the churches, there were about ten different Norwegian churches in Brooklyn at that time.

GREEN: All Lutheran?

BREDLAND: All -- yes, all Lutheran. Well, there's some -- they were not all Lutheran, no. But most of them were. Well, one maybe, a deviation, a slight deviation from Lutheran, but in that category anyway. So you had all these different societies. You also had--

GREEN: Where did they meet?

BREDLAND: They met in South Brooklyn in different halls. They had – they had about ten different halls. One of the big halls was Prospect Hall. And I remember one of the big affairs they had in Prospect Hall. For example, there was a Danish society called Dania and they had a – a ball every New Years or sometime in January they had a masquerade ball. And they would have as many as three thousand people at those masquerade balls. It was a great, they had all these great groups meeting, Scandinavians. But they were mostly Norwegians. Very few of the Danes, very few of the Swedes, mostly Norwegians. And they had all these societies. I belonged to one called the Sunber [PH] Society, that is the group, that is the locality around Volda and Aalesund. There was also an Aalesund's kut [ph]. Never did belong to it, they didn't function too well. And there was also another society that I joined in '27, the Turn Society.

GREEN: How do you spell that?

BREDLAND: T-U-R-N. Turn, is a it's a German word really. T?rn. T?rn. And, gymnastics, they performed gymnastics, they had soccer and they had boxing and wrestling. I went in for boxing. I was very young--

GREEN: Were the Norwegian Americans fond of athletics too?

BREDLAND: Yes they were; very, very fond of athletics. And they had a good many outstanding athletes who w—who were sent to the Olympic Games. A friend of mine, Andressus [ph], came out number three in one of them – one of these contests, Olympic contests, in 1924. He was number three. He climbed – he was a rope climber, he climbed with a broken finger. He was still number three. Sons of Norway, of course, was one of the greatest societies we had and still have. Today there are a hundred thousand members.

GREEN: A hundred thousand! How old is the sons of Norway? By the very first people who came.

BREDLAND: It was founded back in 1895.

GREEN: By the very first people who came here.

BREDLAND: That was – no – yes. That was a group of people from a locality in Norway called Trondhein.

GREEN: How do you spell that?

BREDLAND: T-R-O-N-D-H-E-I-N, Trondhein. And there were twelve of them and they all came from the same locality back in 192-- 1895 -- they founded this Sons of Norway in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It – it was a sick benefit society. Today, of course, it does not have sick benefits. They have insurance. It's a big insurance society today. And we had a good many, we had four lodges in Brooklyn when I joined in 1927 but then came the hard times and we lost two of them. So there were only two lodges when I came back from Norway in 1933, but by now, but then after a while they had many, many more lodges. But now we are back to four again.

GREEN: There are four lodges?

BREDLAND: Yeah. In Brooklyn, that is. But the district here, the eastern seaboard all the way from Maine to Florida have over fifty lodges. And--

GREEN: There must be many in the Midwest.

BREDLAND: There are many of them all over the country and in Canada.

GREEN: Canada, too.

BREDLAND: Every – every two years there is an international conference, an international meeting with delegates sent from the different districts. There are – there are about nine districts altogether and this district here on the eastern seaboard is called the Third District

and now on – in – in August around the 22nd of August, the international society of the Sons of Norway will have its semi-annual, biennial I should say, biennial meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I happen to be a delegate. This is my eighth time. I have been meeting with this group from Vancouver and Washington, the state of Washington, Seattle, Washington, Vancouver and Chicago, Minneapolis . Here in New York, met with these groups on eight different occasions.

GREEN: What types of projects does the Sons of Norway sponsor?

BREDLAND: Their projects are fraternal. They stress the fraternal membership. But it has gone into, they come in probably more and more of a fraternal insurance society, a fraternity with insurance.

GREEN: A fraternity with insurance, that makes sense. Now in speaking about the Norwegian community, what can you tell me about the Norwegian community newspapers and their impact on the immigrant experience? I understand you've had something to do with the Norwegian newspapers.

BREDLAND: Yes, well, the Norwegian press has been a – a center, a focal point, for all the societies. It has been the society, the instrument that has been – that has made it possible for communication among the various groups in the community.

GREEN: What is the name of your newspaper?

BREDLAND: The newspaper is the -- that is the largest Norwegian newspaper in America and it's called Nordisk Titanben [ph], Norwegian News. It has, as I said, been a central point for communication with all these various groups. Without it, it would not have been possible for the different groups, for the colony to exist as such. So it needed that central focus for the communication internal.

GREEN: It must be a great help to the immigrant trying to make his way in America to learn about how to get jobs --.

BREDLAND: That is where he can find people whom he can connect, get in touch with. And get to know what is going on not only here but also in Norway.

GREEN: [not understood]

BREDLAND: Right. Now, the -- paper as we call it, has been influential in organizing many functions within the society. It's been sort of a leader in many ways and giving support to whatever institution needed aid and sustenance. Back in the – the hard days when, well, in the Depression, it did a good many things for the needy. Again, we then had another group meeting, a it was radical, but it was a great group, it's called Ny Dag.

GREEN : How do spell that, please?

BREDLAND: They had their own newspaper called Ny Dag, New Day, NY, D-A-G.

GREEN: And what --

BREDLAND: Yes, it was an organization founded upon the belief that they could help those who needed help. For example, someone came along and they didn't have house rent. These people would go to bat for them and help them, see what they can do to get made..

GREEN: They served as an advocate?

BREDLAND: Right. They served as an advocate for the needy.

GREEN: (Unintelligible)

BREDLAND; Yes. So in the war years, no before, that is now Depression Years, they did a great job. Of course, when the Depression was over and we got into the war years there was no longer a need for that and that group, of course, was disbanded, dissolved. All through the years the Norwegian group has celebrated different occasions. One of these has been the Leif Erikson movement and there has from time to time been groups call themselves the Leif Erikson Society. But every year one group or another has organized a Leif Erikson festival. My first association with the group was back in 1930 when I gave my first Leif Erikson speech. And since then I've talked for the – for the recognition of Leif Erikson as the discoverer of America over the years. I've talked at many functions and I've talked over the radio and consequently when this society of the Leif Erikson movement was started in Hartford, Connecticut about fifteen years ago, someone felt that I would probably be a logical candidate for receiving their annual award.

GREEN: I heard about that. Please tell me about how you received the Leif Erikson award in 1973.

BREDLAND: Well, it came as a surprise to me. We had just moved from New Wilmington to Allentown, when one day we received a telephone call from a lady who said that I had been chosen to be the rec—recep—to receive -- I'd been chosen to receive. I would be honored with the Leif Erikson award, with the national award. And she would be pleased to tell me about this and said I could expect to hear more from them and that they would like me to come to Hartford, Connecticut at a certain date in the fall to receive the award. So we didn't know what to think about this, I hadn't heard of the society until this lady called. And sure enough, we heard more from them and we were asked to come up to Connecticut then -- in the fall, the 9th of October, and receive this award. The Leif Erikson Day in the fall is on the 9th of October. It is said that's when Leif Erikson came to this country.

GREEN: (Unintelligible)

BREDLAND: Yes. They discovered grapes and they said that was about the 9th of October (the grapes were ripe) so they said it must have been about that time that he came down this far on the coast that he could

find grapes. That is how I was honored with that award. Many – many others have been awarded. Senator Humphrey was given the award one year. And I was very honored, I thought very pleased to be given this honor.

GREEN: You certainly deserved it. I wonder, can you tell me about contributions that you feel that Norwegians other than yourself, of course, have made to American life.

BREDLAND: I wonder if you would hold that for just a minute. I'd like to mention probably the greatest movement we have in Brooklyn today in New York is the Norwegian-American 17th of May Committee of Greater New York Incorporated. There were four of us back -- now today 17th of May was always celebrated by the Norwegians who came here, all through the years. In the – in the 20's and in the 30's we used to meet in Elmer Park in Brooklyn, it was called Elmer Park. But Elmer Park was no longer the place to meet because it became built up and I don't thi-- I think Elmer Park ultimately disappeared. So there was no longer a meeting place for us [not understood] as Elmer Park.

And for seven years there were no big events for the 17th of May. It was true that every society had a 17th of May festival but there were no parades such as they were having at Elmer Park. So four of us, I was not the originator, but they came to me, the three of them, two me-- two or three of them and they came to me,. They felt that I -- probably I had some influence somewhere along the line. They came to me, so the four of us went to work in 1952 and we got this parade started in Brooklyn. And it has grown and grown and grown, so that today there are more than one hundred different societies that each year takes part in the parade. That is -- It is not on the 17th of May itself, but on the Sunday that's closest to the 17th of May as a rule.

This year, however, it happens to be on the 23rd of May. The reason is that (unintelligible) the chances for better weather. So today they have a huge parade and we have been able, over the years, I was chairman, general chairman of it, for five years after I left New York in 1960. But I would still be with them. And they are still going very, very strong. It's fascinating to see how all these various groups, they're not all Norwegian, but groups of many kinds come and join, many kinds and many colors, they call, come and join the 17th of May parade in Brooklyn. Now you ask how these, what influence the Norwegians have had upon American life in general. American culture. I suppose you would have to say that the greatest influence the Norwegians have had on America has been in the Midwest, where they settled the land.

They moved out to Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Iowa and settled the land in many parts that if it was -- they were not states then, they were territories. And the Norwegians moved out there and settled the land, were the first ones to come there and settle the land. Consequently their influence was very, very great and you find that in – in the politics and in the education and in many, many fields in the Midwest; you find their influence. Their influence on the East Coast has not been as great as it was on -- in the Midwest. This is understandable of course. It so happens that this year is the two hundredth anniversary

of the birthday of the man who was called the father of – of Norwegian immigration to America.

GREEN: Who was he?

BREDLAND: He was called Cleng Peerson.

GREEN: How do you spell that?

BREDLAND: C-L-E-N-G. C-L-E-N-G. Peerson P-E-E-R-S-O-N Peerson. He organized the first organized immigra—immigration -- emigration from Norway to America in 1825. He took his people up to upstate New York where they found the land to be not suitable for them. Then he moved them out west to Wisconsin. Then he went further – further west into Minnesota and then he went down to Iowa. He traveled all over to find land for these people and he final-- finally ended up in Texas where he died and was buried. And today they're going to celebrate his birthday in Texas where he's buried. I don't recall the name of the place but that is where he ended his days. And today, then -- this year, then they're celebrating his birthday in Norway and probably in some places here, particularly then in the place where he died in Texas.

GREEN: So this was a very skilled contribution of time and brawn and energy.

BREDLAND: It was, it was. On the East Coast here I would say that their contribution has been marked in manning the ships and sailing the American ships all over the world. And also in manning the ships that left for the Great Lakes, so the Norwegian as a seafaring nation has manned -- helped to man, the American ships. As I myself was a part of it when I first came and met these people who were manning the ships here on the coast as well as some of the people who manned the ships on the Lakes. So their influence here has been on the ships and as – as America also had quite a large fleet of commercial ships. I think too they have also gone into the building trades. And many of the skyscrapers here in New York were built by Norwegian ironworkers and Norwegian carpenters.

GREEN: These were guys like yourself.

BREDLAND: So to speak. Yes. So to speak. They were great builders for doing that type of work. It is said that the Indians were such great ironworkers which is true, I'm sure it is true, but I'll say that the Norwegians were too because they worked along with them on these big buildings.

GREEN: A valuable contribution. Now what about the younger generation coming over now?

BREDLAND: They -- I also mention that the Holland Tunnel, for example, the second man in charge for building the Holland Tunnel -- the first tunnel under the Hudson River, was – his name was Holland, so they named the tunnel for him. The reason they named the tunnel for him, he died long before the tunnel was finished and they felt kind of sorry about that, so they named the tunnel for him. But the man who finished the

tunnel was a Norwegian engineer called Singstad, S-I-N-G-S-T-A-D, Singstad. He finished the tunnel. He was second in charge so when Holland died--

GREEN: That should be in our history books.

BREDLAND: It should be and probably is.

GREEN: I never saw it.

BREDLAND: But anyway they have been great engineers. We have --

GREEN: This is the end of the interview with Dr. Einar Bredland.

NPS-131/BREDLAND