

**NPS-46**

**OTTO HEINEMANN**

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**GERMANY, 1930**

**AGE 22**

**SHIP:**

**PORT: HAMBURG**

**RESIDENCE:**

- **GERMANY:**
- **USA:**

NASH: Today is January 31, 1974 and I'm sitting in a restaurant in one of New York's top hotels speaking with a man, whose name is Otto, who is the maitre de at this restaurant. Otto was born in Bremerhaven, Germany and now we're going to hear how he came from Bremerhaven, Germany to this place that we're sitting in now.

HEINEMANN: (he coughs) Okay. (coughs again) Sorry. My first inkling to come to this country, I mean my first desire to come here was when I was a boy playing on the docks in Bremerhaven, where I was born. These ships came in after World War One and we were impressed by all those things those people had on these boats and especially where I remember when we were in school those days there was, after, in the first year, after the First World War there was Mr. Hoover, the President of the United States, he was in charge of a relief program for children in all these countries in Europe. They were giving them hot meal at lunch time in the schools in all the larger cities. And I was one of the undernourished ones in those days. They were in each class they picked, by doctors, two boys who went every lunch to a place where they getting a hot meal and a big roll with it, which we didn't see in five or six years in those days, and I was just one of relief mens from those two because I was not one of the worst cases.

NASH: What year was this and how old were you?

HEINEMANN: That was in 1919. Then I was eleven years old that time. And I was very happy to go whenever one of these two fellows was sick. And I went there and got a bowl of chocolate soup or a bowl of barley

soup and we got a big roll with it and we called it the Hoover *Brötchen*, means a Hoover roll. And I assure you I sent Mr. Hoover, when he went in the Waldorf-Astoria, when he living here. And I sent him a letter and told him my story and he sent me also a letter back.

NASH: Went to read the letter?

HEINEMANN: Well, it's just that he acknowledged that he appreciates the gracious letter of August the 30th and the long time friendship of which this evidenced, see. I explained to him why I wrote to him and I give him my life story that I jumped ship in order to come to this country and I was actually this was the first inspiration. His feeding the underprivileged children of conquered nations, mine too, because after all Germany lost the First World War and I was one of the children there and we never had anything. We didn't have any white bread, we had no rolls and I took this meal what we got in these schools and I took that roll home to my mother and we called the Hoover *Brötchen*, which means the Hoover's roll. And that was my first desire to come to this country. Do you get the point? So, well, then after that, when things get real bad over there I started to have apprenticeship in Germany in a bank. And after three years in the bank business, it was in 1925, they just told us to, no more jobs. They put on new apprentices. So my father worked one the, (tape volume lowers) he as a custom inspector in the German customs, he looked the baggages over from personals and so on, (tape volume raises) and that's how I got a job on the boat. See this is my old man here on the boat, this is the Bremen at that

time, I mean that's how I worked on ships then. I worked and I made eight trips to this country. On the first trip I had in mind to just walk away, here in New York, but I couldn't do it because first of all I had nobody here in this country, I didn't know anybody. Then my parents, they looked forward, every trip we picked up groceries in Hoboken here in the grocery store, these canned goods and every trip I came back they would look forward to receive these goods. So I really, I didn't have the heart to run away then so I made eight trips here as a clerk in the steward's office, in the head steward's office, and then they taught me how to wait on people, that was back in 1925 and '26. So my first experience in New York when we came ashore, I remember the first thing we went into these ice cream stores and had big ice cream sodas, two, three of them. It made us nearly sick but we didn't have any ice cream over there. (tape volume fluctuates) And then we went in the bake shop and had apple pie with all kinds whip cream on there. There was a second trip, I think, it was New Years Eve, and we went to Time Square, it was 1925 and they flashed the big numbers on there on the Times Building, and it was 1926. There were so many people there they had barricaded the windows, there were all kinds of precautions, the people, you know, there were too many, like maybe they still do it now, I haven't checked on it. But those days for the fellow never was here he wanted to be there where the action was. And we were standing there and looked when they put the number 26, that was my first impressions of this country.

NASH:

Did New York seem to be more fun to you in those days?

HEINEMANN: More fun? Well, for us as foreigners, it was real fun. We went to Coney Island, and the subway for the nickel, all the way on there and Luna Park, and we were impressed with all the things which we didn't have over there. I mean, working on boats in those days, we looked around to see something of this country. I was very much interested and I had a mind to stay right there but I just didn't have the nerve to do it. So when I came, after I make about eight trips here, then I switched to go to, I made a couple of trips to Norway, to Spitzbergen. And after that I went to South America and I got myself a visa because I couldn't get anything for this country. I tried to make connections with people here to be able to make affidavit out for me and so on but I didn't. So I got a visa for Buenos Aires that time. See this is actually my papers when I worked on the German ships here, which you can see when it was all the way back to 1925. I made eight trips here and then I got a visa to go to South America because that was the only country I could get a visa without anybody making affidavit out for me.

NASH: South America was the only place you could get a visa to the United States?

HEINEMANN: No, to go there. And then we were down in South America I left the boat with the understanding to work back for the lines, to learn Spanish there, that was in 1927, and I stayed there a year and a half. And even down there I could not control myself. I wanted to come here the worst way. So these two other fellows, we start, we took the railroad to the outskirts of Argentine and we start walking. We want to walk towards the United States and after about a week

we give up. We had rifles with us, we had equipment to stay overnight, sleeping bags, but it was too much for us. With all the insects and all this, you don't know what it is in these countries, and it gets warm. And we got scared stiff so we went back to Buenos Aires. So while back there after I was there another half a year I came back to Germany, and worked myself back on a boat. And in Germany, first thing, I wanted to get back a boat to go to the United States but there was none. You couldn't get here. So a friend of mine, I went to Czechoslovakia to work in Marienbad, in a resort place. And after I worked a season there, the first thing I did, I want to go back to Hamburg or Rotterdam or Bremerhaven to get a ship to the United States. So I get back, we would up in Rotterdam, we couldn't get a ship. I had another friend with me and then I went to Hamburg. And in Hamburg I got a boat because I spoke some Spanish and English, so I got a job, there were about a thousand people out of work, but I got a job on a ship going around the world. And so I was four and a half months on a trip around the world. And then we came to New York, we had so many souvenirs on the boat, from China, from all over, carpets, and lamps and all kinds of things what you buy in these countries and I want to bring them home to my parents. So I didn't stay here either, I took all that stuff home first. I want to see my parents and when we got home I right away got a job to Germany to somebody and I said, "Well, I might as well stay here and see what's going to happen." So after I worked there...

NASH:

What year was this?

HEINEMANN: It was 1930, 1930. And then 1930 I went back after I went down and worked a season in several places near the Czech border and so on. Then when I went back to Hamburg with the intention to find a ship, and I found a boat on the Hamburg-American Line I would bunk, I was engaged as a steward and a groom, and then when we got to New York I finally got up the courage and the gumption and the nerve to just walk away and don't come back anymore. I got myself in touch with a passenger in third class and he, I told him about, we got a little, I worked in the first class as a steward, and they had the baggage there for me, they took my suitcases ashore, I mean, that's how we, I managed to keep all my stuff ashore. And I just, I even worked to the last day I was on the boat, and my fellow workers they didn't know anything about it. I just didn't come back then. I had my stuff in, across the street and then I went to some friend I knew here and I slept over night there and that's how I just walked away finally. And that's the beginning of the problems to come here, really, because was the height of the Depression and my first job was in the Barbizon Plaza Hotel, which opened, I don't know if you know the Barbizon Plaza, see at that time the waiters they were different type of waiters like you have now. They were European trained and I, that's me here, by the way, that was 1930. That was here in the Barbizon Plaza. Now I got a job right away after awhile, I mean times were real bad, (to pet) go away. Times were real bad those days. I remember after I was in the Barbizon Plaza, you know, by the way, Ozzie Nelson, which is that program on Ozzie and Harriet, he was, that was his first job in New York, as a band leader, in the (?) Room in the Barbizon Plaza. And I met him and he lasted about five months, and that was such bad times

so I...

NASH: How did you get that job?

HEINEMANN: I went to the international organization which is the Geneva Association which is international speaking, I belong to them. And they try to find jobs when you look for something and I worked as a busboy for two days and the maitre de there he liked the way I operated and I said to him, "Well, I'm not going to stay here as a busboy. I want to be a waiter." So when he opened the Leschmetu Room he put me on as a waiter and I lasted there all this time. And when this was all over and I worked in a one ship for the while. We were discharging and there was no work and it was real bad. It was the height of the Depression in this country. Then I got to the Park Center Hotel and I worked on the roof there, and I waited on people from, that worked on Wall Street and (?). All these type of people. I was there for awhile but there comes one of these things, and what happened in those days, every so often the head waiter there, they discharged about six waiters, not any big reasons, just to pick out six waiters who had to buy jackets for eight dollars a piece to make (?), in this way he was getting a tuxedo for free from the company who was making these jackets. That's one of the things which I experienced. So when the same, I remember when I went to, on Sixth Avenue, we were looking for jobs, to find something after I got out of there. I wanted to have a haircut. I go in the store. It was twenty-five cents a haircut. This guy starts working on you and gives you everything, massage and all kinds of things and I didn't want all these things. And then he said "It's three dollars." I told

him, "You must be out of your mind." So, even I not legal in the country, I went out and got myself a cop and I went in and I explained the situation. And he says, "Listen, one more complaint and we're going to close your store. And you had a nice haircut, with everything with it for nothing." So the same, the employment agency on Sixth Avenue, we walked every day around there and looked for jobs and they offered me a job in New York, somewhere in a country club there, in the Elks Club, ten dollars for the job. And I had that saved up, it was real bad those days. And then out there was no job. I came back, said to them, "There was no job." "Well, maybe somebody took it before you." I said, "No, they never had a job." He says, "Well, you're going to be the first one to get the job." I said, "Look I want my money back." He says, "Nothing doing, you'll get the next job." So I went down and got a cop, so he went up and I got my ten dollars back. Then another thing, times are real bad, I was so short of money. Those days they had a restaurant on Sixth Avenue. It was McFadden's Physical Culture Magazine and he had a restaurant for people who didn't have much and didn't work. You could have breakfast there for five cents. So in order to save the five cents, (to pet) go away please. See, we was either having breakfast for five cents and I lived on 88th Street up town on the West Side and I went all the way down, forty blocks, to save the nickel to have breakfast there for five cents, one cent for orange juice, one cent for the bun, one cent for coffee, one cent for some oatmeal, that's it. That's how bad it was. And then you had to buy yourself jobs there. I remember I got a job for five dollars a weak wages, no fifty cents a day, for this you had to clean the vegetables first in the restaurant in the afternoon and then you got a couple of

parties and your whole week you got dimes and nickels and quarters and in order to pay my rent I changed it into dollar bills, not to be embarrassed with the landlady. In those days you pay five dollars or three dollars for the room. I mean I just want to emphasize under what conditions, and it didn't make any difference to me. I wanted to be here, and I just didn't care how hard it was but I survived somehow. And then things were getting a little better here I started here in Roosevelt here in, first time I worked here an extra in 1931 Guy Lombardo wasn't here yet, he played here for thirty years, Ben Burney played here and I worked as an extra there. That's how you lived on it, just a few extras. And in the Waldorf Astoria when they opened it, you standing outside with a hundred fifty people there on a Monday morning when they called out there was maybe thirty men needed there for an extra and he picked this man and this guy said, "This is my, I have three children, I have this and I need a job." And everybody had his own story and that's how you survived. Louis Sherry across the street worked once a week, (to other person) Joe, pick up the phone. And so how I survived in those days, get once and awhile an extra. I went to Wall Street, Wall Street Club, where Rockefeller was the, he was the, in charge, I mean he was a member there and Nelson Rockefeller, who is the governor, was the governor for many years here. I remember I used to wait on him there. And we had to come in the morning there and stand in line there and they needed maybe a couple of man there, some extra party, Mr. Rockefeller had some people there, the father from, Nelson, in the private room and they put you to work and we were getting two dollars for it, no tips. We were happy to have a meal and we went there maybe ten

times in a row to find one day he put you to work. That was the bad days. Then I started here in 1936 in the Roosevelt, when Guy Lombardo was here I was put to work here. I worked here for eight years. Then in summertime I worked in the rest, in the country club. But now was thing hanging over my head and I was not legal in the country I guess they could have picked my up any time. I mean, I go ahead on my story, actually in 1933 I worked in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, there's a Scot captain down on Eighth Street, and one of these, came two, fellows came on the door there, I was having my dinner in the back, and they said to me, "They want to see you." And I looked and I figured, one of them must be from, maybe somebody, one's from immigration, I figured that right, and they were. They were looking and they wanted to ask me questions. Somebody had given my name to them, you know, you must understand, times were real bad and there were other people in this country they know people were not legal here they wanted their jobs and they give your name and then the immigration had to go after you and pick you up. And I was one of those. But I spotted them so I went away from them. I walked out of the door and took a walk and I called up from outside and in the meantime, that's a very long story, after awhile I called the place back, and I came out of where I was there and it was very cold, it was on George Washington's birthday, and it was real bad, and they came out of the hotel and I figured they were some workers but they were, of them was immigration guard and they, right away stopped me, he said, "Why are you running away from us?" I said, "Well, I have an idea why you want me." So they took me back to the hotel and wanted to ask me questions and on the way back I turned around

and punched this guy in the belly and I run away again. So then they chased me with two taxis and after an hour they got me. Then they brought me to the Tombstone there and they brought me to Ellis Island, I mean that's where my real problems started, I wasn't, (to pet) go a little further, the dog, please put him on corner there, alright. They stopped you, what I wanted to say, they finally on the station house, you had to come clean, how I came here and everything, and they brought me to Ellis Island, they stick me in the worst prison in New York. They had no room anywhere.

NASH: This is in 1933.

HEINEMANN: It was in 1933 and so they brought me to the island and the next morning, we stayed overnight there, I never felt so bad in my life, they brought me to Ellis Island, they kept me there for about three weeks, after they found out where I came from, and then they deported me.

NASH: I'd like to know something about Ellis Island. What happened to you at Ellis Island?

HEINEMANN: In Ellis Island I was there three days, or four days, and I still didn't want to leave this country, even they picked me up. So we, somebody had some kind of a scissors and we were outside in the yard, they cut the wires, and we wanted to jump down and we wanted to swim over to Jersey. They caught us because they come around with a patrol boat and they caught us. I never got into the water, one guy was in the water already and as a result of this they

put us in double security in the third floor, it was very bad arm wrists. Like people from the prison, we were there for deportation, some they had killed somebody somewhere, robbing banks, Italians and some all kinds of people they wanted to get rid of, they put us there. (he laughs) So after three weeks...

NASH: What was it like there?

HEINEMANN: Well, they're all human beings, I know, they did something wrong, but you don't know when you talk to them, they were just like everybody else, they committed a crime and they want to get rid of them. They are not legal in the country or what. So finally after three weeks they had my papers in order and they said, "You go back to Germany."

NASH: I just want to get a little bit more about the conditions at Ellis Island.

HEINEMANN: Well, I tell you, we were given three meals a day there. We were having a big room outside where there's was wiring around out here where you could exercise and walk around and so on. And you had a library where you could pull books out I mean, you were, I think treated better than any prisoner in any other country would be treated, I mean, that's for sure. And somehow I relaxed there, it was bad times (he laughs) in this country and at least they give you a meal there and you didn't have to struggle for it and you got it on the house. And that's was what, see I still didn't want to leave this country. So we attempted to swim over there but that was foiled so when they came to bring me to the ship there on 48th Street where

the Hamburg-American Line had their piers they brought me to the New York and they had three detectives coming for me because we made a attempt to escape so they want to make pretty sure I got on that ship and before I left Ellis Island they give me a big lecture that I never can come back to this country because the cost of it will be, well the government will take care of it and the shipping company will take half of it. So they left us locked up in the cabin under the ship and they put a guard in front, and then when the ship came out of the three-mile zone where the pilot got off, that's the time they came down and opened the cabin and then I could come off. I just want to show you, this was, where it shows deportation, marked on my passport, see, that I was. See it says here, "deported so and so," right? This was on the ship when I was deported, I was here and it was New York on the Hamburg-American Line. So now you come back on the boat, I have no money. I had about, a few dollars that these few people, we played Scot, played a little games on the boat and I made a few bucks to pay the steward a tip because they treated us like first class passengers. We came to Cuxhaven, then the German authorities took over, then the trouble starts. They were first...

NASH: This was in 1933?

HEINEMANN: 1933, just when Hitler took over Germany. Now they came over there, the real Hitler style everything. When I was in this country I had been all over the world. I lived in Buenos Aires, I was not in that frame of mind, I had a different attitude, I had a sense of humor, and so the guy greeted me with, "Heil Hitler." And I said

"Well, Heil Hitler, my brown shirt is in the suitcase." The guy really got angry, I thought he would bust, that I made fun of all these things, you know, how it is in this country, you make a joke of things and so on. "Oh," he said, "We're going to fix you, we're going to take care of you. You go to the, they give you a ticket to see your parents and then you go to the *Kommandatur* [commandant's headquarters] and then we will find a place where you will make a best use for the *Vaterland* [fatherland]." But I had no such ideas. I was there for a few days and I did not report, I was in my parents house, and they were surprised to see me because they thought I was in this country. And then after a week there came a policeman, look for me. I was standing behind the door, I told my mother, "If somebody comes you never heard of me, I'm in the United States." So when the guy says he looks for me, and she says, "No, he's not here" and so on. So then I knew I had to get out somehow. So now what the hell I gonna do, I want to come back here. I figured I maybe get a ship to Mexico, but I couldn't get no papers in Germany, nobody would give, let me on a boat. So there came the, I know my way around boats, now there comes the part of the story, see like this ship Bremen, it came in that day, and this my old man, he was a custom inspector, and this the Bremen, I just happened have pictures still around. And that ship came in in the morning. And I said to myself, "That's the quickest way to get back to United States." So I just walked the night before, I went on the pier, I knew they, you couldn't get on a boat so easily in those days either. But the officer on the gangplank there, I went to school with him. I said, "Look, I want to look around." "All right, go aboard." So I went around and in a pocket two sandwiches and a couple of

bottles Apolinaris. So, I found myself a hiding place, that was the night before the ship left the next morning, so I found myself a hiding place over the coffee kitchen and the sundeck restaurant there for the nightclub, very small compartment. I climbed up there, I figured I'd sit there for about six days. The boat takes about five or six days so hope for the best, there's no air, no nothing. The next morning, you know, the ship, they didn't get passengers before ten o'clock the next morning. Then they looked the whole ship over, the Gestapo, for people who might want to run away from the Third Reich. They didn't look for me, they didn't know, I mean. But they look for young persons, you know, there were all, a lot of people that wanted to run away, you know. They don't want get into the Army, they don't want get started. So finally the ship moved, I heard the moving. Then we came to Cherbourg in France. They have still Gestapo officers on the boat, they looked the whole ship over again, they didn't find me, nobody figured, you know, that was a place where they put boxes and old stuff over the coffee kitchen there. I knew all the time then that it was two o'clock in the morning I could hear the band on the nightclub there. And I knew it was two o'clock in the morning. When we came to New York...

END SIDE ONE

BEGINNING SIDE TWO

NASH: How did you eat and survive?

HEINEMANN: I had two sandwiches and I had two bottles of Apolinaris, that's some kind of Schatzwater, that's all I had. So you, you survive.

NASH: In six days you had two sandwiches?

HEINEMANN: Yes, six, seven days it was. Before I got off the boat it was nearly eight days because we came to New York. Now I didn't realize what a problem it was to get off the boat because remember we still had prohibition days. And now you can, in New York City, the agents come ashore. They know where everything is. They know where to look for booze. So they, we were there and I wanted to wait that night out to go ashore the next day when they get the new passengers on it to go back. They were only staying one day in port, they went back and forth, they want to make money, the line. So I had to wait until the passengers came aboard so I thought I'd play it smart, I stay in that place overnight. Then they looked the ship over and all of a sudden somebody climbs up, and opens the door. I had hid myself in the corner, I had put old boxes in front of me and the guy flashed the light and he said, "Okay" and slammed the door. My heart nearly, I'm telling you, I really stopped breathing because if they would have caught me there they would have sent me back again and first of all he would have put me in jail for two months because that was a second offense, illegal entry. But what could I lose? There was nothing over there, so I, luckily they didn't see me. The next morning I jumped down from there and I had to wait first, no in the afternoon was it, when everybody was gone. See then nobody should see me and I came down, I fell down like a sack of potatoes, I couldn't, you know, I was in a cramped position,

was that high, for eight days...

NASH: Had you never stood up once in all that time?

HEINEMANN: No, I can't, there was only that high and you could only, I was there for eight and I was cold, and I had overcoat on and I had pajamas underneath and then I had to get off the ship so I knew my way around boats, I worked on boats, like I told you many trips to South America and here, so I went down with the freight elevator to get off the boat and the gangplank you have to have a pass. In those days they only give passes to people who had families in Germany where they know they would be back, fellows who had no family ties, they didn't give them a pass, I mean they figured they weren't gonna come back. So I figure my way around, I start to, took a book out and start to make notations on all kinds of goods what arrived there, they were on the ship. I said to the officer on the gangplank, I said, "Is that all came?" He said, "No, there's some more on the pier." So I just walked on the gangplank. He figured I had something to do with the office in New York and I made my notations and I walked out of the pier that way. And that was in Brooklyn, in Prospect Park and 59th Street. So when I get to the entrance of the pier somebody put their hand on my back. He said, "Listen buddy, if you want..." and he said it in German to me and he was those watchman on the pier. And he said, "Buddy, if you want to run away from this ship you better stick your pajamas in there and take that overcoat off." It was in May, May the first, it was hot like the devil, and I had a winter overcoat on and pajamas sticking out. And he says, "Come on, I know what you're up to. Just forget

it." So he was a nice man so I walked off the pier. And I went to Prospect Park in Brooklyn, I had fifty cents in the pocket. I went into, the after I get my little (?) and I went into some of the coffee pots there and had some scrambled eggs there, I couldn't eat anything too much, and some coffee. And then I had a nickel car fare left, I went to New York, to the friend of mine and knocked on his door. There was nobody home and the landlady said, "Well, he is out working." He says, "I'm so and so." Why don't you go in and sit down. I went in the back there and I fell asleep and this guy comes home in the middle of the night and he thought he saw a ghost. That was, I mean that's how I came back here and that's how I got started again, coming here. Then I was in the worse soup, so the first thing I looked for something to do. I worked in the Lexington Hotel, I mean that goes much too elaborate the story, I think, maybe you cut that out what you don't want to know. So I want to get out of town because I figured they'd recognize me, they are going to, when I walked on Sixth Avenue. I put dark glasses on and everything. And then somebody said to me, "Otto, what's the matter? Is something the matter, something wrong with your eyes?" So they recognized me anyway. So I got a job through the Hotel Gazette and they opened the Hershey Hotel in Pennsylvania, that was in 1933. There was open on the taxes what the Hershey factory saved, for this they put the hotel up to relieve the unemployment situation, and I was hired there as one of the waiters there. And then I worked at Hershey for the whole year, then I came back. I couldn't stay away from New York. I'm a hearty New Yorker, I traveled the subway in (background noise) New York for forty three years and I love New York. So I came back here and I

worked in the Biltmore and I worked in the Roosevelt since 1936 and then I got acquainted on my wife and married her and then she found out I wasn't legal in the country.

NASH: Was she an American?

HEINEMANN: No, she was German born but she was American citizen. And naturally as soon as she found out, I mean it's such a long story I only want to give you a quick going over, so she came in contact with a lawyer and I went down and he advised me. He made applications to Washington that I would be eligible for the preference quarter by having a wife here, who needed me for her support. And even with my being deported once. So they had to get first get permission from me to apply for the visa again, which they granted. And then I had made application in Havana to come here, in Cuba, because that was in 1940, when the German's were already invading Norway and I couldn't go to Montreal. When most people were illegal they went to Canada, it was quicker, but I couldn't go there, they would have returned me because I was a German, I would be an enemy. Because Germany, we were not at war, but Germany, with Great Britain was at war. So I had to go only go to Cuba. So I told legal things, you know how that worked, they were great enough, they give me the assure. Then they sent me a letter, I went to Ellis Island then and I said this is and this me. They can't arrest you then because when you come out yourself. But they give you notice you have to leave the country within six weeks. Otherwise they will pick you up, deport you. But in the meantime I already had assurance that I might get a visa in Cuba.

So I went then on a Cuba airline as a passenger to Havana. In Havana there was at that time, they had about a hundred thousand refugees there, mostly Jewish, from Germany, Czechoslovakia, and they were all waiting to come to United States. But I had the preference what quota granted, so to speak. So I had to see a vice consul there. So, I came into his office then after two days waiting, I finally go into his office. He looked my papers over and everything what he had on me and he says, "Gee," he said, "you tried awful hard to come to this country." He says, "Gee," he said to me, "If we don't grant you a visa now, you most likely will find ways to come back." I said, "You bet your sweet life I will I come back maybe Mexico." He says, "Look, we have enough trouble as it is," he says. I think we make it easy all around. I give you the visa and we have no more problems." I said, "That's wonderful thing. You give me the visa." And it's right here in my passport here. You don't have to, if you want to check me out. It's right here. (he shows papers) I think it's right here, it's the, I went to Havana, it was in 1940, here's my tax, eight dollars, what I paid, alien head tax, 1940, see it's all there. So I finally came here, I mean, that's a hard way to come to this country. (Ms. Nash laughs) I mean, maybe you didn't have a story like this. Because most people who come here to this country, they have an uncle over there, they make affidavit out, they have a job for them waiting, they come here, it's everything on a silver platter. You see, I came here, I had no other way, I had nobody here. And I wanted to come here in the worst way and like I said before, my first idea was when, on account of this Hoover great work they did for relieving all the departments they had in Europe and give at least the ones who deserve most some food, and so on, even if

they were enemies before. And that impressed me so much, I am one of them now. I'm very happy that I came here this way and, see in that time the Roosevelt Hotel in order to facilitate my things here when I had to go to Havana, see they wrote me a letter which said that they were happy to grant me a leave of absence and that my job here is assured. See that's all they could do for me, you see, so the Roosevelt somehow is in my mind, I'm really connected with this, I'm, belong to the fixtures. Everybody know me in the hotel, you call here and you call Otto and that's it and they connect me to this room. See now what I try to bring out, I mean I got a nice family here, I got two boys, so I don't think the country lost anything by my coming here. My oldest boy, by the way, he is a clinical psychologist, he had a Ph. D., he is in Muncie, Indiana, he is in charge of a clinic for children. He helps a lot of young ones with dark problems and family relations what you have now a days. We have such a problem with so many families broken up and the childrens are the ones who suffer and he is there to help them and he always says, he can help a young person. He says like with a young tree, you can bend them, but an old one you can't bend anymore. I have another boy now. He is in Brooklyn Law School now. He wants to be a lawyer. He sent out of here, he didn't know he wanted to be a newspaper man and finally he found out there was no jobs, he did all kinds of jobs when he was out of college, they both went to Fordham University, by the way. And my other boy, he went to Rochester University and he was on a fellowship there for clinical psychology. So this fellow here now he found out the hard way that he had to get an education to get someplace. So he set out of here and he worked here one year in the summer, he

drove a taxi in New York to make himself money and then that year he went to Europe with few guys for nine weeks and saw all about Europe. He wanted to go into the newspaper field in the worst way. Then he couldn't find a job then, then he got a job at Lord and Taylors selling shirts on the counter there until he got admission to the law school, and it's very hard to get into a law school. Maybe you know, only one of fifteen got only in. And so right now he's in his first year in law school. You see, it shows you how families integrate here, I just want to give you an idea how this fellow here feels about the political situation here. The other day here, (he laughs) I had to laugh, here, see, this is my boy, maybe you can read it by yourself later on here or the story because I always somehow I make excuses for the President situation he got himself in. And I know what people get it into in life and he says this is my answer to what, you can take it with you if you want. I mean that show you how sons of immigrants here, (background noise) how they, somehow they integrate here and the whole thing and become Americans. And I think after all the experience I had and I come in contact with hundreds of people in the hotels where I work and I, in order to make possible a good living for my family, I always I never work less than sixty-five hours a week. When we started with the labor unions in 1955 we went on a five day week, I had the opportunity then to have, to work, this lunch job is my moonlight job, I call it. You know, here as a maitre de and I worked at night time as a waiter in Staladore, uptown, in the restaurant which you heard already the cookie factory. I worked it up to last September and then they wanted me to for lunch here so know I work at night time banquets at the Waldorf or in the Hilton Hotel and last Monday

I worked in the Madison Square Garden on the fight, this way I could see the fight. I worked in the Hall of Fame there and (he laughs) I didn't get there while I worked there and this way I could see the fight. I still have to make ends meet between this here and there. In the meantime I raised a family and I think the country didn't lose anything by it and for my coming here. Some people considered it a crime to jump ship and walk away but people who say that they don't realize what, how tough it is sometimes to make a living and if you are desperate you have to get away from some part, some other world, some other country and you have your hope here to come here and I say the way I establish a beachhead here and my family, I think they all very happy to be here. I know my oldest boy he bought himself nineteen acres of land, he takes a chance too, he built himself a forty-five thousand dollar mortgage he took on himself, but he has a lake and a forest with a house that's fifty years old and he starts to create something also and I think that's what this country is all about. To create something out of nothing, so to speak. Well, I don't know, maybe I went too far and I could elaborate much more on my years in South America and the problems you have. I mean, so I really, I don't know how much what exactly you'll get out of this interviews and what you want, the message you want to give people I mean to come the way I came, I wouldn't advise anybody. But I tell you, if I had to do it all over again I would do it because the results of it were good. And I think the country didn't lose anything. And I know a lot of good people. I waited on the Rockerfellers, I waited on the Kennedys. I remember (?) John Kennedy and his brother and his family. I used to wait on them many times, Governor Al Smith, I used to take care of him

and his wife in the restaurant I'm here. Governor Rockefeller, John Lindsay, sitting right there in the seat in the corner there, that's the prominent seat here and when, and the Dean brothers, the one pitching here for the, the very well known on the baseball field. We had, in this hotel we served a lot of very prominent people. When the Chinese came to New York two years ago I was on the door there when they came here and the press when interviewed me on the television and we talked about, what, and I said, "Well," I said, "That might be the era, the beginning of a new era in world affairs." And we at the Roosevelt, we do our best to accommodate these people. And the way it turned out it seems to be the ping pong business, diplomacy, it seems to be a good thing. so I think I have a lot of interesting things in my life happened to me. I hope you don't want to deport me though after all this (Ms. Nash laughs) because...

NASH: I'm not in a position to! (she laughs)

HEINEMANN: I'm more, I think I'm more American...

END OF THE INTERVIEW