**Kate:** Good morning, this is Kate Moore for the National Park Service and today is the 6th of December, 1993 and I'm in Lansing, Michigan at the house of Charles Adams who came from England in 1923 when he was 8 years old.

And why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth please?

**Charles:** Yes, my name is Charles Alfred Adams, born April 4th, 1915 in London England and I lived for short time before coming to this country at 33 Haig Road Plaistow London.

**Kate:** And where were you born? In London England? That’s where you were born.

**Charles:** I was born in London, England.

**Kate:** Describe the neighborhood or the area that you came from in London.

**Charles:** Oh, probably lower working class.

**Kate:** What section of London was it? Do you remember?

**Charles:** Plaistow.

**Kate:** Plaistow yeah.

**Charles:** I was born at home, I don't know at somebody's house in the District of Bow which is the Cockney country in London.

**Kate:** Could you spell Plaistow and Bow please?

**Charles:** P- L- A- I- S- T- O- W, it exists today. If you take the underground from London on the district line you have to grow through Plaistow.

**Kate:** What was your father's name?

**Charles:** Same, Charles Alfred.

**Kate:** And you’re junior then?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Kate:** What was his occupation?

**Charles:** Here or there?

**Kate:** There.

**Charles:** Well this was shortly after World War 1 and he worked in the ammunition plant Woolwich in the city or district of Woolwich. W- O-O -L- W-I-C-H, it’s on Thames Rivers.

**Kate:** And what did your father look like? Could you describe him?

**Charles:** Ordinary chap, I think this chap. I've got a picture of him.

**Kate:** How tall would you say he was?

**Charles:** Probably a little shorter, I'm 5"9 he was probably about 5", black hair.

**Kate:** Black hair and what about his personality and temperament? How would you characterize him?

**Charles:** Just a hardworking English bulk, he'd get mad once in a while when something didn't go right. No different than anybody else.

**Kate:** And is there a story about your father that you associate with your father from your childhood?

**Charles:** I don't understand that question.

**Kate:** Well, is there anything if you could tell story about your father that typified your father what would you tell someone? Any anecdotes about him?

**Charles:** I don’t' remember things special about him over there except coming home from work tired because to get to our home, I think he had to take a ferry and a couple of trains.

**Kate:** So he was hardworking right there?

**Charles:** Yeah, he was a manual worker and worked with machines as far as I know.

**Kate:** And your mother's name, what was your mother's name?

**Charles:** Charlotte Hannah.

**Kate:** Hannah H-A...

**Charles:**  H-A-N-N-A-H.

**Kate:** Right and what did she do?

**Charles:** Well, she was one of about 7 girls that was born to her mother and father and they operated a small store in the city of London.

**Kate:** What kind of store was that?

**Charles:** Grocery store.

**Kate:** Grocery store and what did she look like or how did she look?

**Charles:** She had real dark hair, she was short, I don't know.

**Kate:** Brown or blue eyes?

**Charles:** No, I think she had brown eyes.

**Kate:** And what about her personality and temperament? Do you remember anything about it?

**Charles:** Ooh, she get mad at my father once in a while, he get mad at her but then it blew over. I wouldn't say they're any different from any other English person. Nothing exceptional different.

**Kate:** What about her chores around the house? What her responsibilities at home?

**Charles:** A typical English housewife in London. Did the cooking, did the shopping and made the beds and swept the floor and stayed at home pretty much and raised her kids.

**Kate:** And what about any stories you have associated with your childhood with your mum?

**Charles:** I don't remember anything particularly special.

**Kate:** Any fan thing she ever did or?

**Charles:** When you're getting back beyond 8 years I just don't remember too well.

**Kate:** What about after 8 years, what would you say [crosstalk 00:05:08]?

**Charles:** Well, 8 years we come to this country.

**Kate:** And then what would you say?

**Charles:** Well you see we came to this country in 1924 and she only lived with us till about 1929 when she divorced my father.

**Kate:** And you have brothers and sisters that came?

**Charles:** One sister.

**Kate:** One sister, what’s her name?

**Charles:** Vera Florence.

**Kate:** How do you spell Vera?

**Charles:** V-E-R=A.

**Kate:** Alright and what house did you have in England? Can you describe it where you lived?

**Charles:** The house we lived on Plaistow was a duplex if you walked into the front entrance it was a kind of a brick shaped opening and like a little anti pouch and on one side was one door to one part of the apartment and the other was ours and you went in the door and you could walk through a small hallway all the way to through the kitchen and scalar into the backyard.

On one side of that hall there was a living room and a stairway, there was an upstairs, there was 2 bedrooms up there and a toilet. Very small rooms compared to the American standards.

**Kate:** How was it heated that house?

**Charles:** Frankly I don't remember.

**Kate:** How about was there a garden?

**Charles:** Well, you could have a garden. I think the backyard was about 15 by 10 or something like that. Very very small.

**Kate:** Then did you grow any plants?

**Charles:** I don't think we did there.

**Kate:** What kind of furniture was in the house? Do you remember anything special in the house in your childhood?

**Charles:** No, I guess ordinary furniture.

**Kate:** That was in the city of London, this house right in that neighborhood.

**Charles:** Well, in greater London.

**Kate:** In greater London yeah. Did you keep any animals at all?

**Charles:** I might had a dog at one time but he died, when the dog died there was this [unclear 00:07:35].

**Kate:** Who else lived in the building?

**Charles:** Well it just so happened on the other half, right now I can't remember her but she married my father's brother- Arthur Adams and he died quite a while ago and she's still living today. Auntie Gaudy that was her name [chuckle], aunt Gaudy.

**Kate:** And she's there in that house?

**Charles:** When I lived on the side, she was Aunt Mary living on the other side with her mother and another daughter I believe.

**Kate:** Now, who did the cooking in the family?

**Charles:** Who did it? My mother.

**Kate:** And what was your favorite food?

**Charles:** I don't really recall anything like that, to any favorite. Over there we ate what was put in front of us. We don't have any choices, no choices and my mother's favorite saying was before we sat down and eat, "I thank the lord for what we've had, a little or more we would be glad but thus times are so awfully bad, we've got to put up with what we've had [laughter]." That’s what I remember in my mother.

**Kate:** What was the kitchen like then?

**Charles:** Well, it’s rather small but I don't really really remember that.

**Kate:** What about the meal time, did you eat together everyone? What were meals like?

**Charles:** Well, English system of eating was eating all the time but when my father was working, I don't really recall a special food. I think we did have an evening meal and maybe a supper.

**Kate:** Where were your grandparents or any other relatives nearby living the area?

**Charles:** My grandparents died in England a long time ago.

**Kate:** Before you were a child?

**Charles:** Well, I did meet my grandfather and my grandmother on the maternal side when I was still in England. I'd had to be around 6 or 7 now and I met my grandfather probably once when I was over there but my grandmother I think committed suicide so I understand. She wasn't alive at the time that I saw my grandfather.

**Kate:** And who were you closest too in the family? Is there anyone you've been close too?

**Charles:** Not particularly, no.

**Kate:** Was there any favorite uncle or cousin or something that on top of mind?

**Charles:** Well, yes. One of my mother's sisters was auntie Flo [chuckle] and she had a bike and she took me for a little ride on the bike one time. I had another uncle, I can't remember exactly his name- my father's side and he worked for book publishing company at the time and he gave me a complete set of 10 books of the children's encyclopedia which I read from cover to cover before I came to this country.

I tried to bring the books with me but they got thrown out because of the long journey because of the weight of them, so when I left England I left the books behind.

**Kate:** [inaudible 00:11:58]. What about religion? Do you remember anything? Did you go to church often or?

**Charles:** No, I can say something about that. The state religion has a church of England over there and I used to go on Sunday afternoons to the Band of Hope and which was [unclear 00:12:28] small children and they gave us a little songbook with the words in and no music and I happen to go there singing a few songs but that’s all. That’s about the only religion I remember, Band of Hope [laughter].

**Kate:** And was that nearby that church? Nearby your house?

**Charles:** No, I had to walk 2-3 blocks. I don't know now where it was located.

**Kate:** Did your parents practice religion at all?

**Charles:** No.

**Kate:** And you never heard any religious persecution or prejudice or anything [inaudible 00:13:06]?

**Charles:** No.

**Kate:** What about holiday’s celebrations, what were some of the favorites that you had?

**Charles:** Well, Christmas of course.

**Kate:** And what kind of food did you eat then?

**Charles:** Plumed pudding I think was kind of a delicacy back then. Steamed I think was kind of a delicacy back then, steamed plumed pudding for Christmas. It was a very heavy cake and once you ate it, it was very heavy on the stomach. I think it was full of fat but it was very rich, a typical English meal which meals over there are very heavy and satisfying.

**Kate:** What about Guy Fawkes Day? Do you remember that?

**Charles:** Oh yes, I was going to come to that- Guy Fawkes Day. The only chance we had to shoot our fire crackers.

**Kate:** And do you remember much of that day before you left?

**Charles:** Well, we didn't shoot any firecrackers, they cost too much but people that had money used to shoot them off.

**Kate:** What about the Effigy, did you do that effigy of the Guy Fawkes when you're a child?

**Charles:** I never put one together but that was done, made out straw, got some clothes and burned. Yes, I remember seeing them but we didn't do it like that in our house.

**Kate:** So Christmas was basically for you the happiest holiday?

**Charles:** Oh yes, we got Christmas presents. Mummy got an orange on her stocking and few things. The one thing I did get was a rocking horse but we had to leave that behind of course when I left and I got very intrigued with an erector set that I received for Christmas, wanting to build structures you know. I enjoyed building. I guess that’s where I got my mechanical aptitude from.

**Kate:** Did you keep that with you when you came here?

**Charles:** No, we didn't. No, you had to limit what you brought. Anything that wasn't absolutely necessary was discarded before we came.

**Kate:** And so almost most of your toys were discarded?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Kate:** How did you feel about that by the way?

**Charles:** I did give it a second thought really but then nothing I could do about it.

**Kate:** Do you remember school life there?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Kate:** In England, what was it like?

**Charles:** Well, we had strict, firm teachers but they kept discipline and they were people you looked up to. The discipline didn't hurt me a bit, if I stepped out of line and got my knuckles wrapped we accepted it in good faith and we didn't do it again and that’s something that we lack in this country, is discipline. We had discipline and we learned more.

**Kate:** Where was the school in London? Do you remember anything?

**Charles:** I would remember it, I know where the location was because we were living at 33 Haig Road at the foot of the road where it run into was a main road and then across the main road was a park and we went through the park and the school was outside the park.

**Kate:** What was the condition in school? Were many children in school? Was it crowded?

**Charles:**  No, every sit was filled but people were orderly and we learnt and it wouldn't make much difference if they think you don't need students per teacher if you can keep order.

**Kate:** How many were in class, do you remember?

**Charles:** [unclear 00:17:11] maybe 30, 30 I would guess.

**Kate:** Do you remember any playmates or teachers at that time?

**Charles:** A little girl who took her shines on me [laughter] and before I knew what was left sex was all about [laughter].

**Kate:** What was her name?

**Charles:** I can't remember now.

**Kate:** [inaudible 00:17:33].

**Charles:** Well you see I can add this, back in those days our desks were really kind of like benches. Desk and the seat was like a stretched out seat over here and the boys sat in one end of the bench and the girls sat on the other end of the bench and we have a common table in front of us you know one piece and I was alright.

I'll tell you this I stayed on my side but she kept coming over rubbing herself against me and the teacher would come over and separate us [laughter].

**Kate:** What was your favorite subject?

**Charles:** None in particular but I will say that in the afternoons we had sewing on Monday afternoon, we had knitting on Tuesday afternoon and we had [unclear 00:18:43] on Wednesday afternoon and they taught us to sew and they taught us to knit but in my particular case I never could knit right and I kept going over and over, trying to do it right and I had the dirtiest woolen thread in the whole class [laughter].

But the girls they were good at knitting and they could knit doll dresses and they looked like they would fit a doll but my square piece looked more like a trapezoid, they had more stitches at the top than they had at the bottom [laughter]. It’s supposed to be square or rectangular.

**Kate:** Was that your favorite subject?

**Charles:** There wasn't any favorite subject. We didn't decide what to take of course but...

**Kate:** You said your mechanism applied [inaudible 00:19:45].

**Charles:** Yeah, but we didn't have anything about that.

**Kate:** Alright, what did you do for entertainment? What did you do for fan when you that age back in England?

**Charles:** Well, of course I had a friend across the road. I can remember his name Jezy- Jacky Cozy and we used to go on long walks. One time we walked all the way down to the Thames River and went down the banks, put our feet in the water and then walked back home, up the steep banks of Thames Rivers and walked back home.

That was a long hike and we had another area where people used to grow their vegetables called the [unclear 00:20:33], we used pass to the train station of Plaistow and Jake and I we go there and play and see what people are growing and pick up discarded fruits and vegetables, discarded vegetables and play with them and one time I did eat some berries but it turned out to be nightshade and got sick.

You know these questions you're bringing a lot of memories out of me that I didn't think existed. That’s [unclear 00:21:12] getting sick eating nightshade.

**Kate:** What’s a nightshade there?

**Charles:** It’s a deadly poison. Its berries that grow on a vine and they look pretty because they're red and then turn black. They look good but I think they have a very severe poison and I’m not sure what it is.

**Kate:** What happens when you get sick? They take you to the hospital?

**Charles:** No, you don't do those things, you call a doctor. Going to hospitals involved travelling a long way on a bus. You only went to hospitals when you're really sick you know we were hardened up people and if I were to describe myself in modern day language what we have around today in this country.

I was underprivileged but the thing is I didn't know it and I enjoyed life. I could probably have used a few more of those buzz words to describe the condition but people here underprivileged or not have a lot better off than we were in England. We weren't allowed to expect too much.

**Kate:** When you came to America, who decided to come to America, do you remember?

**Charles:** Not too much, this was after World War 1, my dad had been at the British army for the beginning of it, he was there in France in 1914. He was wounded, has some [unclear 00:23:02], he was discharged and came back to England.

My aunts tells me that he was covered with mud from head to toe when living in the trenches and things were kind of rough in England and it seems to me that the British government was encouraging British people to immigrate to their processions because my folks were receiving brochures or something saying how good things were in south Africa and different countries you could go to and also from Australia.

**Kate:** Now who was sending those brochures, the government?

**Charles:** The British government was encouraging, I think the British people they wanted to immigrate to their processions but America came in on the situation because you have to have somebody in those foreign countries vouch for you.

So I understand we had nobody but my father did have an uncle that lived in Carson city Michigan, his name was William Hill that was able to vouch for us to come to America and that’s why we changed and come to America instead.

The reason for coming was just that I thought- well there's one other thing, some of these American cousins that came over in 1917, being Americans, they were bragging up about their country, how great it was and how terrible England was and America had this and had that and street paved with gold and so forth, that line of talk and I guess my dad took the bait and he decided to come here.

When once they found out they couldn't go any other place they figured out well we'll go to America that’s so great and leave England because like I said the British government was encouraging their citizens to immigrate whenever possible.

**Kate:** So you knew your uncle, was your father close to your uncle Carson City?

**Charles:** Not too much, see the Hills was my father's maternal side, grandmother. His mother was a Hill and it was his uncle on the mother's side that lived in Carson City.

He was a rail road engineer and he vouched for us and as a result when we came to this country, the first place we stopped that was at Carson City Michigan, we had to get our bearings.

**Kate:** And did any family ever send you money before going or how did you get over your own money?

**Charles:** I used our own money.

**Kate:** Did he go, getting proper papers. Do you remember you said you had to have a....?

**Charles:** Well we had our vaccinations yeah.

**Kate:** So did you have to go to the doctor for that?

**Charles:** I'm not sure if he came to the house or we went to his office but I do know this my dad- I’ve got to say he left in 1923, he was to come here first and he had no trouble getting in. He went through the port of Boston. 1924 when we finally found out we were going to go.

There was my mother, my sister and I we were all vaccinated the same time and we really caught a bad case of small pox and we were all in bed, nobody in the house and I was the first one that was able to pull myself together and I had to write- my mother dictated the letter that I wrote down, put it in the mail box to one of her sisters.

As soon as her sister got it, she came over and helped us to get well. It was quite a touchy situation, I had to walk down to the mail box, put that letter in and no telephones then.

**Kate:** So you remember the medical part of getting ready.

**Charles:** Yeah, it was very sore.

**Kate:** Did you want to come to America, do you remember?

**Charles:** I had no choice on it.

**Kate:** Do you remember how you felt about it?

**Charles:** No, just like going across the Thames River to see another town I guess.

**Kate:** What did you know about America at that point in your childhood?

**Charles:** Not a damn thing [chuckle].

**Kate:** How did your mother feel about leaving?

**Charles:** Well, I think she probably wanted to go but when she came to this country, I know she was very home sick for her sisters.

**Kate:** And how did your father feel?

**Charles:** Well, I think he accepted in good faith, I don't remember him saying he was home sick.

**Kate:** Did anyone give you a goodbye party when you left?

**Charles:** Oh no, that cost much [laughter].

**Kate:** How much luggage did you pack? How much did you take with you?

**Charles:** The main thing was we were able to get a wood packing box, probably about maybe 4 feet long and maybe 21/2 feet wide and maybe 21/2 deep. I remember that and we enforced with wood and metal straps and painted it black and we put everything, household goods in that one trunk and I don't remember any other little bags or anything, we must have had them but I don't remember carrying any bags but that box of household goods was restored in the ship hall you know and wasn’t' open until we got to this country.

**Kate:** Did you take any food with you?

**Charles:** No.

**Kate:** Did you take anything special? Were you able to take anything special with you?

**Charles:** No.

**Kate:** What about those books? You said...

**Charles:** I put them in this packing box like I said but when I got to this country they weren't there [laughter].

**Kate:** What happened to them?

**Charles:** Well I think my folks threw them out.

**Kate:** Before you even started?

**Charles:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Who came to America first? Your father?

**Charles:** My father came in 1923, in June of 1923. Like I said previously, he went through the immigration at the port of Boston and he got right in and he settled I think in Michigan at Lansing in this town here. He got his first job I guess work for REO motorcar company.

**Kate:** When you came twice you said, right.

**Charles:** Yes.

**Kate:** So the first time you came what port did you leave from?

**Charles:** Southampton.

**Kate:** Southampton, and how did you get from your home to the port?

**Charles:** By train.

**Kate:** And what do you remember of that journey through the port?

**Charles:** I just remembering boarding the train probably Victoria street station and a normal drive takes I think only 40 miles approximately to the port of Southampton. We stayed in a room overnight and we boarded the boat next day.

**Kate:** You boarded, you had to wait for the boat. You had to wait overnight.

**Charles:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Where did you say you stayed?

**Charles:** Well, we stayed in a room in Southampton.

**Kate:** Did you rent it or it was a friend’s house or?

**Charles:** Oh no, we had to pay for it, I think so. We didn't know anybody there.

**Kate:** Were there any family members come with you and see you off?

**Charles:** No.

**Kate:** What month and year then did that ship depart?

**Charles:** The Manifest- that’s the ship left 29th of September- wait a minute I'm getting mixed up. 1923 our first time over here.

**Kate:** What month was that?

**Charles:** That was September 29th when we left England and we arrived at New York somewhere around 11 of October. That’s all documented in here. I didn't know all those dates until I got the manifest.

**Kate:** From America. What were accommodations like in the ship, do you remember?

**Charles:** Very [unclear 00:33:15]. I remember the paints when permeated the whole lower decks, we were in the steerage area of the rear of the boat and I think all 3 of us, sister and I and my mother we had one cabin. We must have had a few beds to sleep in but a very small cramped as I remember.

**Kate:** [inaudible 00:33:40] what class was that?

**Charles:** 3rd.

**Kate:** And where were the dining rooms? Do you remember that?

**Charles:** On the boat? Nothing in particular, you just went along, sat down and they brought the food to you.

**Kate:** And what about the food? What was it like?

**Charles:** Nothing as special, I can't remember that.

**Kate:** [inaudible 00:34:09] because you went through something about that dining room, you remembered people were shoving in.

**Charles:** No, that’s Ellis Island.

**Kate:** Ellis Island okay but the boat trip itself do you remember the eating situation at all? Who else was [inaudible 00:34:23]?

**Charles:** Well, let’s just put it this way, the first 3 days the water got rough and we all got sea sick and we ate nothing.

**Kate:** The first voyage.

**Charles:** First voyage, well second too.

**Kate:** And were you allowed to go on deck?

**Charles:** Oh yeah.

**Kate:** And what did you see when you were there?

**Charles:** Well, the water was awful rough, it was grey and rough and the boat was pitching pretty heavy and the water will like splash over the rails and over [unclear 00:34:52] of course the boat had railings so you [unclear 00:34:55] but it was usually cold and damp.

When you're sick like that, later on I sort of enjoyed the voyage, its 11 days when the sea become smoother and the sun came out, so that was pretty nice. I spent most of my time on deck looking at all the machinery and watching all the engines working in the hall.

**Kate:** Did they let you look at the engines?

**Charles:** Yeah, they seemed to [unclear 00:35:32] of the ship, that is that end you see you weren't allowed in the 2nd class area or the 1st class that was off limits.

**Kate:** So there actually people were pretty segregated.

**Charles:** Yes. Let’s use the word discrimination. There everybody else was discriminated against. We were discriminated against and we didn't know it [chuckle].

**Kate:** Were all three of you ill? Who was ill most of the time?

**Charles:** The three of us got sick about 2-3 days.

**Kate:** Were there any activities on that boat?

**Charles:** Nothing structured, you made your own fan and since you had to been out the rear you could see where had been and find fish jumping out of the water. I mean wake you know the propeller made but there was nothing structured.

Now this was not a cruise ship this was strictly business, treated like cattle you know. They're giving us a place to live and a place to eat and you took care of yourself the best way you could until you got to port.

**Kate:** And do you remember anything unusual about that voyage at all? Anything sticks to your mind?

**Charles:** Well I used to pick up pieces of rope I mean about a couple of feet long and found a piece of wood, I would make a rope by tying the strands together and it was long enough, so it would reach the water then I used to take this piece of wood and throw it overboard and drag it along the side of the ship [laughter].

You didn't see anything because of the way the boats, there's an overhang there. I didn't see it but I used to pull the boat along on the side of the ship. I did well. Funny but you do things when you don't have anybody telling you what to do or what to play with you made your own fan.

**Kate:** How long was that voyage?

**Charles:** 11 days, we stopped at Halifax. I think we lost a day there to discharge cargo.

**Kate:** You remember seeing land for the first time?

**Charles:** I suppose yes, now you bring it to my memory. I suppose I did. There was just kind of grey mass at a distance.

**Kate:** How about the statue of liberty? Do you remember seeing that?

**Charles:** Not so much coming in but I saw a lot of it when I was staying in Ellis Island.

**Kate:** And did you know what the statue of liberty was before you came here?

**Charles:** Not particularly no.

**Kate:** What about other people, what they thought? Did anybody react [inaudible 00:38:39]?

**Charles:**  Not especially you know, we weren't told about those things you know.

**Kate:** What about your impression of seeing New York City for the first time? Do you remember anything, your impression?

**Charles:** Well the tall buildings but I never really went into the town. The first time we were shuffled from the boat that we came on [unclear 00:39:07] and put on the ferry boat and shoved over to Ellis Island and the second time when we finally got through, seems what we did was just take a bus to the train station.

**Kate:** Now this is your first trip to Ellis Island and what happened at Ellis Island when you got there? What were your impressions when you got to Ellis Island for the first time?

**Charles:** Naturally we were very less concerned because we were put on this ferry boat and we started out and then I noticed the Statue of Liberty and I saw this kind of grey cold looking building and of course the ferry boat stopped and we got off and of course we were other people on the boat too.

We were all herded together and I don’t' remember too much how we ended up but first thing I know we were shaved into a big dormitory like thing to sleep and here they had the three tear banks which I saw. I saw those things when I went home, took my trip in 1990.

I saw the same banks and seemed to me they had no mattresses on and the first time we were given an army blanket and that’s all and thank goodness my mother had the English spirit and she give somebody hell next day about it. We were English and we're not used to this kind of stuff because Ellis Island itself looked more like a prison.

Well it was a detention camp but it certainly wasn't fancy I will tell you, it was just a detention place to square house people till officials knew what to do with them.

**Kate:** What did your mom tell the people? What did she say?

**Charles:** She must have gotten a hold of somebody, so the next night we were in a smaller room and it was double banks but we had clean sheets and pillow cases and that’s how we were able to exist.

**Kate:** And you think that was because your mother complained?

**Charles:** I think so yeah.

**Kate:** What was the inside of the building? What was your real world impression there as a child? Was it frightening?

**Charles:** Well I just accepted the situation but remember we were put there and nothing was said to me. I didn't know how long we were going to be there.

My first impression was it must be a damn prison where I am because all the windows had screens or heavy iron web screens so you couldn't go and escape through the windows and you couldn't go outdoors and it was just seemed like all confusion because I remember that balcony, it’s still there by the way where we stayed and it was people filling up all those seats from everywhere.

That’s when you begin to realize all the different nationalities and there are Russians, and Polish people and Italians, people from Italy especially because I wrote their letters from right to left and funny looking [unclear 00:43:11] and there was nothing for us to do, just to sit there and of course we were concerned, "What are we doing in a jail like what have we done and all," but then we weren't the only ones.

**Kate:** I'm getting a lot of mic noise here. What I'll ask you is what did your mother-- did you feel anything that your mother was having worries too?

**Charles:** I think she was but I don't remember her really complaining you know English aren't really complaining people, no tears.

**Kate:** What do you mean? You weren't very emotional about it?

**Charles:** No, you accepted the situation.

**Kate:** What were you wearing all of you?

**Charles:** I think it was clothes.

**Kate:** Your best clothes or?

**Charles:** No, I don't think so and we weren't dressed up. We didn't have enough really dress up clothes but the only thing I wore was English shorts. The kids my age who are in England wore shorts.

**Kate:** You said this place was crowded, was it clean?

**Charles:** Yes, I think it was. I don't think it was smelly and I think the place was well maintained as that’s concerned.

**Kate:** What about the staff, how did they treat you?

**Charles:** I don't remember how much on who your staff there [chuckle].

**Kate:** Did you have a medical examination?

**Charles:** I must have but I don't remember. I think that was required unless we were examined before we left England and maybe they accepted that but that’s something I don't really know.

**Kate:** Were there other children?

**Charles:** Oh yeah of course, other kids around but not too many. Most of the people looked poor, there was nobody in striped pants and top hats or dressed up there. People looked haggard and tired and were especially people from Eastern Europe you know and being English I felt somewhat superior to them.

**Kate:** When you knew you were going to be detained and you might have to go back, do you remember when they first said that you'll have to go back your reaction to that?

**Charles:** When we found out we were going to have to go back to England of course we were concerned. We didn't really want to go, to come all this way and then go back you know 11 days on a boat is not like it is 4 hours in the air today. It’s quite time consuming, rough journey back and sickness and little boats for it.

**Kate:** Did your mother explain?

**Charles:** She did what she was told. No, I don't remember any screaming or howling or crying. We accepted the situation in good faith. I've got to say about eating in the dining rooms there, I looked for those dining rooms when I went back in 1990 but they were blacked off but it seems to me we went down a hall and a door was open and we went inside and they had benches and tables and usually it had some food on. Maybe like a loaf of bread, Italian style cut in chunks about 2 inches.

What I remember when they opened that door, the rush to get in there most of those eastern Europeans who were just like a bunch of animals pushed through that door and either it gets crushed a little bit or shoved through and I thought they were the dirtiest people because I could see the men blowing their noses on their hands and then rubbing their hands on their pants and rushing in there, being ahead of the line, pushing away and then grabbing the bread like wild animals and tearing it with their hands and shoving it in their mouths.

To me as an English man that was uncouth, I couldn't imagine people acted like that and the other things I remember especially in the toilets, I think there were people that didn't know what a toilet was because I could see feces on the seat as if they stood on the seat and I also so feces in the corners of that toilet.

I'd never seen anything like that in my life why people were total so damn that they didn't understand how to use a toilet properly because I feel the Americans at least had sanitary facilities, they were well kept but there are Europeans that never saw a flush toilet before.

That shows you the kind of people we were associating with and there are those most ugly impressions I have of other people and because at least being in England we were a little more civilized than that.

**Kate:** Were you entertained at Ellis Island at all?

**Charles:** Of course not [laughter].

**Kate:** You know at one point evidently was some entertainment, that’s what I'm trying to figure what years. Now, you went back to England and how long did it take to come back?

**Charles:** It took about a year. We went back in 2nd class on the steam ship [unclear 00:50:02], much nicer boat. Now, I read somewhere that Ellis Island was a detaining area until they could locate transportation for you and send you back and I think now that’s why we were there about 2 weeks, they were waiting for a boat to go back to England.

**Kate:** You were in 2 weeks there in those accommodations.

**Charles:** Yes.

**Kate:** And so when you went back 2nd class who paid for it?

**Charles:** I don't know, I'm assuming that the steam ship company, white star that had [unclear 00:50:44] must have guaranteed us that we could make the quarter because I heard the word quarter used quite a bit and we didn't make the quarter and I think since they guaranteed it they had to ship us back. We didn't have that kind of money you know free trips across the ocean, so I think the steam ship company paid for our trip back and also for the return trip.

**Kate:** What was the combination difference in 2nd class and 3rd class? Was a big difference?

**Charles:** Oh yeah, the cabins were bigger and beds were nicer and the food was better.

**Kate:** What was the return voyage like? Was it very sad for you?

**Charles:** No, I didn't cry about it. It wasn't too bad after all [laughter].

**Kate:** But what was your mother going to do without your father in England for a year then?

**Charles:** We're English we can take that kind of stuff. We went back and my mother must have found one room ground, I think in Lenton near one of her sister and she had a sister leaving in Lenton and we stayed there for that one year and I went to school.

**Kate:** What about all your belongings?

**Charles:** I don't know what happened to them.

**Kate:** I mean you only had trunks.

**Charles:** One trunk, maybe it came back with us, I don't know.

**Kate:** So you didn't see your father for that year.

**Charles:** That’s right but my father was learning I think machine tools at a REO motorcar and company and he used to send me funnies, funnies out of a Sunday papers every 2-3 months you know as I really enjoyed seeing the funnies he used to send us then. He must have sent my mother money to get by money but I don't know he must have went off for struggle.

**Kate:** And so what happened? After a year you get news from somewhere? How did you try to get...?

**Charles:** Well, the same ship. They must have arranged to have us make the return trip and this time I went to the Southampton again, I think. How do I look that, seems maybe it wasn't Southampton anyway.

**Kate:** [unclear 00:53:20] Southampton.

**Charles:** It wasn't because that is the port that you leave there, it’s a big port.

**Kate:** What was different about the second time around, anything?

**Charles:** No, not particularly just two things that happened on ship board. One time we woke up and the ship was listing to one side, they said, "Cargo move [laughter]."

**Kate:** What happened? How did they people react to that?

**Charles:** Well, I don't know. I know I got up and the ship was enlisting like this and I thought its fun but it didn't last long they must have corrected it that morning.

**Kate:** So it was rough, was the rough seas?

**Charles:** Not so much as I got sea sick again though.

**Kate:** How about your sister and mother?

**Charles:** Yeah, they did too but we knew what to expect now. So we were seasoned travellers [laughter] so you take it in strides.

**Kate:** What class did you go back out?

**Charles:** Steerage, 3rd class.

**Kate:** So you came 2nd class back in steerage?

**Charles:** Yes, mainly because of accommodation on the [unclear 00:54:32] I guess was there and it might be. We could have got steerage I suppose maybe but they gave us 2nd class accommodation and we took what they gave us.

**Kate:** Then [crosstalk 00:54:43]?

**Charles:** Like I said before the name of the boat was Adriatic.

**Kate:** Alright so you went over the [unclear 00:54:52] and then you came back on the Adriatic.

**Charles:** Back to England on the Adriatic.

**Kate:** And then over?

**Charles:** Then the return trip back to this country was the Pittsburg, that’s 3 ships.

**Kate:** The Pittsburgh, and what’s was the difference between the Pittsburgh and the canopy you went [unclear 00:55:06].

**Charles:** Oh about the same. It wasn't as good a ship as Adriatic, that’s a classier ship.

**Kate:** Alright now when you got to Ellis Island this time what happened?

**Charles:** We didn't go to Ellis Island, we went right through. Got off the boat and through customs and loaded on a bus and taken over to the train station.

**Kate:** So you just bypassed this time Ellis Island.

**Charles:** Yeah, although we were holding our breaths [laughter].

**Kate:** Till you got there you didn't believe it?

**Charles:** Well we couldn't believe it. We went through so easy the second time.

**Kate:** You had the same trunk with you?

**Charles:** I don't know what happened to that trunk [laughter]. I think eventually we got it.

**Kate:** Where did you go? Where were you going when you left Ellis Island? What address were you're going to, what was your destination?

**Charles:** To Carson City I would say because that’s the destination we had to put down on our passport or what it was to where we were going. See things are different then before they enforced the immigration laws and you had to make sure that you wasn't going to be a burden on the country.

That you were going to America, you had to have some money and you had to have somebody to vouch for you and you had to have a place to go and [unclear 00:56:45] burns me up how hard it was for me to come to this country back then and how easy it is to skip in this country and nobody cares.

**Kate:** That’s kind of true but it’s not true a lot of people get to seat back and unclear [00:56:58].

**Charles:** But the hell of a lot of the sustain over here too.

**Kate:** Yeah, a lot of them are coming through the border but they still have very strict coming in here. They really give it to people and they can go back sometimes.

**Charles:** I don't know it’s what I read, there's a lot of people coming from Canada and there's a lot of them coming across Tijuana and then Nogales, [unclear 00:59:17].

**Kate:** But the way they always did [unclear 00:57:23] says his father came across the same point in [inaudible 00:57:26].

**Charles:** So it’s nothing new but well I see. Listen beside the point but California is having a hell of time taking care of wet bags that’s coming in. They got to furnish them, social services and they haven't got the money but anyway beside the point but I feel like what I read and people and immigration seems to be helpless about doing anything about it.

**Kate:** So you feel you had to fight to get in here?

**Charles:** Yeah, I think considering what we had and even my ancestors settled this country you know we certainly weren't treated very royally when we came over here [laughter].

**Kate:** You got there by train. Carson City is where by the way?

**Charles:** it’s about 40 miles from Lansing, it’s just north, It’s on the map. You can walk 27 and I think there's a main road north of Saint Johns and you turn left on that road. I can't remember the number. I would end you go about 10 miles west and you run into Carson City.

**Kate:** And who met you when you once you got there?

**Charles:** Uncle Bill's children turned out were all farmers and he also had a son William Hill and his wife that met us at the train station in Carson City.

**Kate:** Was your dad there?

**Charles:** Yeah, I think he was, anyway it was my first time that I rode in a passenger car owned by a person. They had a model T, a touring and it was the first time I got off the train and got into a private car. Now this is living [laughter] to me, I was 9 and you see I put on a year while I was living in England and between the boats.

**Kate:** So what you rode in that car before to your new home?

**Charles:** No, we went to the farm house and his wife's name was Arty. Arty put us up for a few weeks I guess until my dad could locate something here and he hadn’t able to locate a thing in Lansing I guess.

I don't understand if they had any money or not, I mean why he didn't do beforehand but he had to find us something to move into and then I think we probably were around 3 or 4 weeks living in Carson City area on this farm and then we came to Lansing.

**Kate:** Did you see anything else beside the car that you'd never seen before?

**Charles:** I saw [unclear 01:00:46] houses. We didn't have those in England [laughter]. Well farming back and well you're talking about the 20s they didn't have electricity yet and they didn't have telephones yet either.

**Kate:** In the farm house.

**Charles:** And they used oil lamps you know to light at night getting around with and they use a pot berry coal stoves and wood burning cook stoves. You pumped your water out in the yard you know ordinary pumps. So this was primitive living compared to where we are.

**Kate:** That farm house you talked about that had different heating and electricity that you're used to.

**Charles:** They burned wood in the stoves and also and the heating stove was kept in the living room and Arty, she had a some place, a cooler or some place on the ground on the basement or something, no refrigeration of course and no electric light.

The washing machine I think was run by a little gas powered motor and most everybody went to bed early because you didn't want to seat in the dark or lamps and all. The lamps used coal oil and kerosene.

Now uncle Bill, I call him that, he ran this farm and he had some milk cows and he used horses and I used to go out with him you know and he also had a tractor. An old ford tractor, I forget the name Fordson maybe or so. It had steel wheels, no rubber tires with clitchs and that’s what he used in his farming operations so I used to ride with him there.

**Kate:** [inaudible 01:03:15].

**Charles:** Oh yes, I most certain do. I can't do this and I have lawyers. I had my English accent.

**Kate:** Did they make fan of you?

**Charles:** No but I found out they spoke terrible. I say, I can't do this and why do you all say I won't do this or [laughter], peculiarities of the American language.

**Kate:** And what were the differences when you went to school finally?

**Charles:** Well, you know the English diction you should know that. The English diction is very clear over there, they sound their consonants and over here I see they talk kind of lazy, by the way I learnt the American language pretty fast when I got to living in Lansing and had to go all these 9-10 year old kids have laughed at me and I'm feeling also talking so damn.

**Kate:** Did they say that to you.

**Charles:** Yeah, they didn't like that but I picked up the American language very fast. I lost my beautiful English diction and all the nice words I used because they taught us [01:04:35] vocabulary there. The schools were much better there I'll say and here when I started here I went to the 4B grade I was doing 7B work compared to the kids around me. I could do things in mathematics and in English and in spelling much better than the kids around me but that will come later.

**Kate:** Did your parents every lose their accents?

**Charles:** Oh yeah, my dad did. I started using can't. I remember that word particularly, can't do this because I said." Can I have this?" "No, you can't have it." So if you can't have it so I learned that word very fast.

**Kate:** What about your sister, did she adjust well?

**Charles:** Yeah, she did.

**Kate:** She was younger than you?

**Charles:** Yeah, when I was 9 she'd be 7 and I think my mother retained a little bit of English inflexions you know because if you're over there and turning and get around 25 before you leave and go anywhere you're never gone lose your English accents.

[Unclear 01:05:45] even though you used the right word like can't here, there's an inflexion that you notice right away. I notice English people when they come over. There are some people, some women that I know that married American soldiers in World War 2 and they still have the English accent but I lost mine completely.

**Kate:** You were still young but were there other immigrant children in your neighborhood?

**Charles:** This is getting ahead of the story but my wife lived in this area here and she went to school with all kinds of Polaks and Czechs, Russians and polish [laughter].

**Kate:** Was she English your wife?

**Charles:** No, she's American.

**Kate:** But in your neighborhood did you go through?

**Charles:** In my neighborhood there were mostly American kids. I lived over in Baker's street and Millers court which is now today is underprivileged area and those houses were working men type houses and the reason we moved there is because it was right across the road from REO, my dad could walk to work you see and I remember that part when I was in the 4B grade.

**Kate:** And how were you treated as an immigrant in school? Was there any prejudice or any discrimination at all?

**Charles:** No, I don't see any difference.

**Kate:** What about your spelling and things that they...?

**Charles:** Well I was just ahead of everybody else. They didn't speed the class up to suit me. I slowed down [laughter] to meet their requirements but you know there were a lot of second generation kids up and down Bakers streets.

We had plenty of Waps and Syrians [laughter] living up down that street, a lot of polish people. Us kids in my class were all mixed up nationality because they were the second generation you see. I was the first generation to come here.

**Kate:** What about when you left that farm after some weeks, where did you go then?

**Charles:** To Lansing.

**Kate:** And your father found a place?

**Charles:** He found us a place.

**Kate:** What kind of place was it, do you remember?

**Charles:** Yes, I do. The first place we stayed there was in some small bungalows on South Washington Avenue that’s south of Mount Hope, also the bungalows are gone. There again they built those bungalows ahead of the sewers and water supply so we only stayed there 4 weeks maybe 6 weeks and we had to get our water from a pump, a common hand pump in the area. We had chemical toilets up in the attic.

**Kate:** What about lighting?

**Charles:** They had electric lights, we had that.

**Kate:** And who lived there? Was it single family dwelling or what was it?

**Charles:** Yeah, there was single family dwellings. There were just 4 room bungalows.

**Kate:** So this cousin in Carson City or the uncle in Carson City was that the closest relative you had?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Kate:** And the only relative?

**Charles:** Yes, just the Carson City relatives and they were distant relatives.

**Kate:** So basically you grew up after 9 years old with no grandparents or cousins around?

**Charles:** That’s right.

**Kate:** Did you get along well with your neighbors?

**Charles:** I thought so [chuckle], I got a bloody nose on them kids but [laughter] that’s growing up you know.

**Kate:** So your father at that time was working where, at the REO...?

**Charles:** REO Motorcar Company.

**Kate:** Did your mother go to work?

**Charles:** Not at first but to show you how the conditions were, we moved from this place on South Washington to Mellis court and that’s where we had a lot of kids to play with trains tracks right there and the trains going down. It was a glorious place for kids to play around and then my mother- somebody decided that we could afford a house and they went and bought a house, I don't know what terms on South Washington’s avenue and this was right close to Rockford road.

The corner Rockford road and Washington, it was the second house. It was a 3 bedroom more modern house and we moved there I think on 1927 and we stayed there a year. My dad got laid off apparently my folks lost that house, they had to get out of it and we moved.

**Kate:** Lost the house you're saying.

**Charles:** Well foreclosed, we couldn't meet the payments.

**Kate:** Is that the depression time, yet? What year was that around?

**Charles:** I think in 1927 was the time I think my dad got laid off and we must have moved to another small place on River Street that’s near the grand trunk tracks.

**Kate:** That’s 3 moves in how many years?

**Charles:** Oh God, must have moved every year I think.

**Kate:** So you moved a lot between 9 and what year?

**Charles:** Yes, we did.

**Kate:** That’s a big adjustment [unclear 01:12:03]. So you moved to this country then you moved first in the farm for a couple of weeks then you moved after one year?

**Charles:** We moved from the farm to this place on South Washington Avenue, then we moved to Mellis court then my folks bought this house also on South Washington but it was closer to Rio. From there we went to a place on River Street.

This was around the first part of 1928- River Street then we moved to a place on REO Avenue and then my mother divorced my dad and my dad took us and we lived in 1929 particularly on Harding Avenue, he was running that house Harding.

**Kate:** Go back to this.

**Charles:** Are we getting too far ahead.

**Kate:** Yeah, your father lost a job. Do you know why he was laid off?

**Charles:** Yeah, laid off. See we didn't have unemployment compensation then. When the automobile companies were going full blast they'd really were going full blast maybe in spring and then people bought the cars in the spring and then they didn't sell anymore so they laid them off in the summer time, they might hire them back in the fall. You could not expect or get 12 months’ work a year working for an automobile company that time.

**Kate:** And there was no guarantee [crosstalk 01:13:42]?

**Charles:** No guarantees.

**Kate:** You said your dad got custody, that’s pretty unusual for that time, wasn't it? For the man to take custody of the kids?

**Charles:** It wasn't quite that way, my mother got custody but my dad took care of us [laughter]. So that was kind of a mix up, to complete that part. My mother contracted rheumatoid arthritis somewhere about 1932-33 and they put here in an institution, she was now a single woman and she never did recover from rheumatoid arthritis.

**Kate:** Were you able to see here ever?

**Charles:**  Yes, I could go out to the old folk’s home or whatever they called that institution name county hospital.

**Kate:** But she did break up before she had arthritis?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Kate:** You didn't know she had arthritis, could handle that.

**Charles:** No, idea.

**Kate:** You still had access to see her?

**Charles:** Yes, I kept in touch.

**Kate:** And your sister did, did she?

**Charles:** Well, what happened in 1929 is that my dad was trying to better himself, he got a better job in Columbus, so he quit his job here and went to Columbus with the idea of living a room and making more money and he left us with Vera with her family and left me with a family. We were separated while he went down there. He worked 3-4 months [unclear 01:15:31] and he got laid off then the depression hit.

**Kate:** Yeah, those were hard times.

**Charles:** Yeah, that was really hard times and my sister, she being a girl she could do things around the house and he was paying - my dad was paying for her but I think she helped supply services and it wasn't quite so much but with me I wasn't worth a damn, he had to pay the family I stay with and he didn't really get paid off and paid up until maybe sometime in 1930. So those are quite interesting years as I say.

**Kate:** For a little kid you went through a lot then. How did you feel about that time and you did adjust well. It’s quite an adjustment kids are pretty [crosstalk 01:16:18].

**Charles:** I think I was flexible, I don't understand the way I just accepted everything in a stride, this is life, I wasn't used to good living. I wasn't used to wealth or cars. Everybody where they went to school was better than I was. You just accepted that you were just a poverty stricken individual and did the best you could you know.

**Kate:** Then what happened in the 30s then, once depression hit, what happened in your family? How did your father manage with kids? How long did you stay with these families?

**Charles:** Are we through talking about the Ellis Island thing and all that because I just don’t' talk like this but I don't feel it has to do with Ellis Island.

**Kate:** They want to see what happened to the immigrants once they came here, about your life.

**Charles:** Alright, I guess we could go on with the story then my father got a small inheritance from England or somewhere around 1930 and we rented a house on south seda street near baker. South [unclear 01:17:32] near baker, rented that house and took Vera and me in with him and there was 3 of us lived.

He was able to find a job in the depression, he was an automotive machinist. He used to work for a place that they used to work on automotive engines. He could reborrow this cylinders and fit pistons and rings and sort of thing. It’s quite a skilled job. People are always repairing their engines you know they couldn’t build this as good as they are today.

So he was able to make about $25 a week, something like that and we paid $25 a month for this house we were staying in and that time I was now going to eastern high school and that was a long walk and the depression hit by the time I get out of graduation high school, that was January, 1933.

Things were really tough, people laid off everywhere, factory said signs up, "No help wanted, gates closed" but my dad was still working, we're still making a go and that time my mother was in that institution out here at [unclear 01:19:11]. I guess what I did, I graduated.

We had what we called post graduate education in high school. We had more rooms than we had kids so if you wanted to stay and learn something more, you could stay another couple of semesters if you wanted to. So since I graduated in January, I think I might as well stay in school another 3 months which I come out in the summer time which I did. I took some extra courses and then had a little job that paid me $4 a week for working 6 days and driving a truck delivering parts you know I could drive by then and then I got laid off.

**Kate:** Do you think your father was happy he came here?

**Charles:** Yeah, I think so.

**Kate:** How about your mum?

**Charles:** I think my mother missed her sisters, being a woman you know she's here in this country all alone. When you don't have relatives to go see. The only people that she would have anything in common would be other English people and it doesn't take long to find out you know. My mother was quite thick with the English family.

**Kate:** And why didn't she go back [inaudible 01:20:47]?

**Charles:** Didn't have any money, what for?

**Kate:** You mean she couldn't go back, okay.

**Charles:** Up to the time that she was taken ill with rheumatoid arthritis we didn't have the money for that.

**Kate:** So you think that would she have had the money would she have ever gone back?

**Charles:** I’m not sure.

**Kate:** The reason we ask is this because once you leave your country can you ever go back because my father was the same way, he was very very home sick, every day was like. The question is once you leave all that can you really ever go back and if you want to it’s more complicated than that.

**Charles:** Well the dollar bill I think answers the question, without money you could go back under any circumstances and then when she took sick she was physically impossible for her to go and she stayed there maybe the institution maybe 8-10 years then Vera on her side, she had gotten married and then she lost her husband and so my mother went down there to Miami where Vera was living and she got her own little place and Vera and they sort of kept company and Vera kind of watched her afterwards you see while I was up here because I got married and I couldn't take care of my family too.

**Kate:** When did you get married? Wait wait so you went to school.

**Charles:** Okay, I'll get back to that. I'm getting into the 1950s now. Let’s say its 1934, I was able to get a job for $14 a week working in a machine shop here in Lansing, Hue Lance company and I wanted to get into- so training as an engineer and I either I filled out all the papers but I was rejected for some reason or other so I decided that I go to Michigan state at that time.

I made the decision to go to college so by hook or crook. I either saved a $100 from my job because I had that ambition that I want to go to college by the dollar bills and I wasn't entitled to it. I applied, I didn't take engineering that time because engineers were [unclear 01:23:34], they were pumping gas and this was the time of soil conversation and farming and killing little pigs and so forth and all these terrible times for farmers and agriculture were a lot of openings coming up for educated people.

So I decided to take up forestry, a friend of mine was taking it up for the same reason that there might be some work forestry, when we graduated 4 years later on but we didn't want to be unemployed engineer. So I would like to take on engineering but since I had to work my way through college I really didn't have the time to take all those engineering labs anyway.

Since I was rejected from [unclear 01:24:22] I started in Michigan state in 1935, I got work around the college there, working heavy lay work, moving furniture and bleachers and cleaning girls bathrooms [laughter], swabbing out swimming pools, enough of that work.

So I didn't have to dip into my savings very much and I graduated in 1939 and believe or not I took a united states civil service exam for forestry – a soil conservationist and I was accepted and got my first job. First job I had money left over within the week, in 1940. By the time I was married and I had a daughter at that time coming along you know in the oven [laughter] and that’s just about how it got started.

**Kate:** How did you meet your wife in that time? Where did you meet your wife?

**Charles:** Eva goes back to about 1930, when I was going to high school there was a church group called the [unclear 01:25:43] in Mount Hope Methodist that used to have meetings on Sunday afternoons and my boyfriend and I we went there you know like something to do. We there, women there and there were boys there and I met her there see.

**Kate:** Was your family religious when they came to United States?

**Charles:** No.

**Kate:** Did you go to church?

**Charles:** Only for something to do yeah.

**Kate:** You mean like this social activity?

**Charles:** No, I was not hurl hardly religious.

**Kate:** And your wife what nationality background was she?

**Charles:** Her folks, grandparents [unclear 01:26:23] were in Switzerland and maybe Germany.

**Kate:** And so you had how many children all together?

**Charles:** 3.

**Kate:** 3 kids.

**Charles:** 3 daughters.

**Kate:** 3 daughters and did you go to war? You didn't have to because you had kids then.

**Charles:** Well, at first when I registered for the draft I was put in 3A which was deferred because of family reasons you know that time I had two youngsters see and also I was getting around 29-30 and then I eventually got started in engineering at this REO motor company over here and we organized and they started getting some war work in there and I was lucky enough to get a job there as a specification clerk in the engineering department.

And I had to drafting and things like that in college and physics and chemistry and all those goodies and I really had an engineering head on me you see and I did that for clerk work for about a year and then one of the supervisor in the drafting room knew that I was taking drafting at night and he encouraged me. He tried to get me in his department and it was a vast one and I finally was able to do that but first I had to get somebody to replace me first.

They were able to get somebody, to replace me and then I broke them in and then I went in the drafting room on January 1st, 1945. Now, we're still at war and we were building heavy duty trucks, special trucks for the navy in particular but we hadn't won the war yet so we moved into town here.

We had a small place that I built my own hands out in the country and I figured that this war was going to keeping on lasting and I thought I'd better get my family back in the town near where her parents lived. It’s not close by over here onto South Logan, it’s now paved over by the way [laughter] wherever the house used to be but we were living close to it and I bought a place and we moved in then my draft status while I was working was 2B and then work you see and then we were running scrape and a barrel and I got put in 1A which was eligible for immediate service somewhere around march 1945 and then April I went to Detroit.

I got my physical examination and I was waiting for my greetings that you know in the army and then I still had the two kids. We got Cathy in December 1945 that was it.

Well, I was all set to pack up and go to war and then Germany surrendered and it was just so happen that we know we're on the same class with kids and everything, there was a couple of them that got in the draft ahead of me and right there was the cutoff point. I was the next [unclear 01:30:49] to go and they cut off the recruitment of people just about that time. So I come closer.

**Kate:** [unclear 01:31:00].

**Charles:** Talk about luck yeah.

**Kate:** After that you began working for- after the war then, who did you work for? What job did you get?

**Charles:** Well, I was doing good at REO [inaudible 01:31:20] [laughter] by that time I was doing some chassis layout work and designing auto truck part bus badge but I wanted to get to body engineering which was at that time higher paid. They were doing some body work upstairs but when I took it up with my boss, he wouldn't hear of it.

Naturally at that stage you are interested to make as much money as you could. All I know is that I worked till 5 O'clock and came home but when I drove down to [unclear 01:32:02] where the engineering department was those lights on the second floor were on all the time.

Those guys were working overtime and that’s what I wanted to do is work over time and get more money you know and you won't hear it so I'm leaving it out. You've heard of Tucker automobile?

**Kate:** Yes.

**Charles:** You have heard about it. Well I went to work for them in August, 1947.

**Kate:** The Tucker?

**Charles:** Well, I worked there 6 months but I got in the body engineering and they said they were short of men they accepted the fact that I didn't have too much experience but I did have drafting experience. So I learned quite a bit about body engineering until 1948 when the things weren't going so good for the company.

As it turned out it was wrong but they were going to indict the Preston Tucker you know for defrauding investors and they closed up the place and then I came out of work and I couldn't come back to Lansing because I'd cut myself from them- the REO at the time so I packed up and went to Detroit and started out. A guy that I was working with you know at Tucker he told me a couple of places to apply you know and I got a job in out Detroit engineering company in 1948.

**Kate:** Which one?

**Charles:** Well it was [unclear 01:33:39] at the time, [unclear 01:33:40] engineering. So I guess that’s just about as far as I need to go.

**Kate:** Well, when you look back in your life though, are you happy you came to the states? I mean how do you feel about coming to the states?

**Charles:** Oh I think the best thing ever happened to me.

**Kate:** Do you think your father would have said the same thing?

**Charles:** I think he would too.

**Kate:** Then you say you're not sure if your mother would say the same?

**Charles:** Well but unfortunately being sick like that I think she lived a miserable life but during that time I could not take care of her. I could hardly take care of myself you know.

**Kate:** Your sister, how do you think she would answer that question, [unclear 01:34:22] coming to the United States?

**Charles:** Well, I really really don't know of her stand point and I can't ask her today because she's down in [unclear 01:34:34] and she got a mental condition. I don't know if it’s Alzheimer or not but she can't remember very much. Memory is very short.

**Kate:** [inaudible 01:34:56], are you in contact with any relatives in England still?

**Charles:** My wife writes to Aunt Gaudy after all these years.

**Kate:** And how was their life then back there in comparison, those who stayed?

**Charles:** She's pretty much on the welfare system now. Her eyes are bad and she's got arthritis. Her husband died that was Uncle Arthur and she’s taken care of but she's getting up in here so over me.

**Kate:** So do you think you would have been better off in England would you have stayed?

**Charles:** Me, if I stayed in England I think I'd be one of the first casualties of the Nazi bombing of London because I would have been the right age because remember when I was I born? 1915, 1940 I was 25is that right? And in 1939 they started bombing London so 20-24, I'd have been ripe to be the first one in the army.

**Kate:** You said you [unclear 01:36:20] application that when you first came to Ellis Island you didn't have a flattering opinion of this country because of the conditions there.

**Charles:** Well, Ellis Island is not a good example of America. I'll say that [laughter].

**Kate:** So that experience was pretty miserable at Ellis Island?

**Charles:** Oh, yes, it would be yeah.

**Kate:** Well I want to thank you on behalf of National Park service for giving the opportunity to talk with you and listening to your experience and well this is Kate Moore signing of on the 6th December, 1993 for the Ellis island oral history project.