**Paul:** This is Paul Seacrest, today is October 11th, 1994 and I’m at the Ellis Island recording studio with Kirsten Hansen. Mrs. Hansen came from Denmark. She was held at Ellis Island in December of 1951. She was 23 years old at that time. I am doing this introduction to introduce Seph: Rodney. I will spell Seph, S-E-P-H. Seph: is a student intern with Long Island University. He’s with us this fall at Ellis Island. This is Seph’s first interview.

**Seph:** Good afternoon. This is Seph Rodney for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday, the 11th of October and I’m at the Ellis Island recording studio interviewing Mrs. Kirsten Hansen of Denmark, who was born on December 1951 and came over to Ellis Island at age 23.

**Paul:** She came to Ellis Island in 1951.

**Seph:** Excuse me. She came to Ellis Island in 1951. We can begin by you giving me your full name and date of birth please.

**Kirsten:** My name is Kirsten Hansen. My birthday is 28th of September, 1928.

**Seph:** What was your maiden name?

**Kirsten:** Maiden name? That’s a bit more difficult, M-A-R-C-U-S-S-E-N.

**Seph:** How do you pronounce it?

**Kirsten:** Marcussen.

**Seph:** Where were you born?

**Kirsten:** In Denmark and …

**Seph:** That was the name of your town.

**Kirsten:** Yes.

**Seph:** Could you describe what the town looked like?

**Kirsten:** It’s a little sleepy, not king size city, a village. I didn’t live at the village because my father and mother run a boarding school. We had the school situated outside this little village.

**Seph:** What was your father’s name?

**Kirsten:** Poul, P-O-U-L Hansen.

**Seph:** What did he do?

**Kirsten:** He was a teacher.

**Seph:** Did he teach in the town that you were born in?

**Kirsten:** No, he taught at the boarding school.

**Seph:** Which was near the town?

**Kirsten:** It was about two kilometers which will make about a mile outside the little village. It was way out in the country side.

**Seph:** Could you describe your father for me? What was his personality like, his temperament?

**Kirsten:** This is a difficult question. He was trained an officer and then he skipped the military and went to the university to pull a little science. Then he met my mother and he took a job as a mathematics teacher, math and arithmetic, French language.

**Seph:** What were the ages of the children he taught at this boarding school?

**Kirsten:** In the first years, from 7 to 15 and later they skipped the first grades. They will be from 10, 11 and up to 15, 16 both boys and girls.

**Seph:** What was your mother’s name?

**Kirsten:** Elizabeth.

**Seph:** What was her maiden name if you know?

**Kirsten:** Jensen.

**Seph:** Could you spell that?

**Kirsten:** J-E-N-S-E-N.

**Seph:** What did she do?

**Kirsten:** What do you do when you’re married to the headmaster of a boarding school? Thousand little things, she was in charge of the cooking and holding hands when children got sick and unhappy.

**Seph:** Could describe what she looked like? What color her hair was? What was her personality?

**Kirsten:** She was blonde and she was tall and slim and very well-liked by the children. They always came to her, put their heads on her shoulder almost 24 hours a day.

**Seph:** Is there … I’m sorry.

**Kirsten:** I was saying that she was very sweet person.

**Seph:** Is there any story you remember that you associate with your mother, a special story from childhood?

**Kirsten:** There was a favorite story. There was a big household. During the war, we had a household of about 90 people with the staff included, so whenever they made anything, it was in large portions. She wanted to make pickles. She picked little … Do you know what that is?

**Seph:** No.

**Kirsten:** You take a lot of different vegetables in a jar and add spices to it. This is what not just for one little family but 90 people. They fixed all kinds of cucumber, and cauliflower, and roots in different kinds all on a big table in little boxes. Then you have to add salt and leave it overnight to preserve it. The next morning you just throw out the salty water and add the spice. She did. Instead of salty sent soda down so of course it was all to go down the drain. She called up the merchant and said, “You sent me the wrong … I didn’t get salt but soda.” He said, “Never mind, you don’t have to pay for it and I will send you some more salt,” which was not a big help. That’s one of her favorite stories.

**Seph:** I suppose your mother wasn’t too happy about this.

**Kirsten:** She was mad.

**Seph:** Do you have any brothers and sisters? Could you name them for me?

**Kirsten:** Yes, I have a sister, Pirgt.

**Seph:** Could you spell that?

**Kirsten:** P-I-R-G-T.

**Seph:** If you remember your house when you were growing up, could you describe it for me?

**Kirsten:** I have two brothers too anyway.

**Seph:** Could you tell me their names?

**Kirsten:** Yes. L-A-R-S, Lars and O-L-E, Ole.

**Seph:** Could you describe your house for me?

**Kirsten:** Just an ordinary villa, nothing much to it. Me, my parents, and the children stayed in one house besides the boarding school. We had our own house.

**Seph:** Was it big? Did it have many rooms?

**Kirsten:** No, the necessary, one for each child, and bedroom, living, and sitting room.

**Seph:** Did you have any pets or animals outside the house?

**Kirsten:** No. I used to have a dog long time ago.

**Seph:** What happened to him or her?

**Kirsten:** We had to kill it because it had eaten all the farmer’s chickens.

**Seph:** I didn’t know that dogs eat chickens.

**Kirsten:** They didn’t either, my parents but he did.

**Seph:** Who did the cooking in the family? I suppose your mother did. You mentioned that.

**Kirsten:** Yeah. We ate with the boarding school, the family.

**Seph:** Your mother cooked for the whole boarding school.

**Kirsten:** She was in charge and she did the shopping and decided.

**Seph:** Do you remember her favorite food that she really liked to eat?

**Kirsten:** No, I don’t. Mind you, this was during the war, partly during the war when I stayed home.

**Seph:** Did you ever help your mother to cook?

**Kirsten:** No, I didn’t.

**Seph:** Did your sister?

**Kirsten:** My sister was fond of cooking, but no, not me.

**Seph:** Could you describe the kitchen and tell me what meal time was like at your house?

**Kirsten:** Do you want the boarding school kitchen which was of course a large one or our private?

**Seph:** Your private.

**Kirsten:** It’s just like any other six family kitchen with a stove, and sink, and table, and what have we, nothing special.

**Seph:** Were there any other family members nearby where you lived like grandparents or cousins?

**Kirsten:** Yes. I had my mother’s parents. They lived in this little village.

**Seph:** Did they visit? Did you see them often?

**Kirsten:** Yes, a lot.

**Seph:** What did they do?

**Kirsten:** My grandfather was a shoemaker and she was a housewife with 11 children plus his helpers [inaudible 00:09:37].

**Seph:** That’s a big family.

**Kirsten:** They used to have that in Denmark you know.

**Seph:** Most of the families then had lots of children.

**Kirsten:** Yeah, in that period.

**Seph:** Could you tell me any interesting stories about other family members and your grandparents perhaps?

**Kirsten:** There are quite ordinary people really. My father’s parents, he sold wine and tobacco.

**Seph:** I suppose he had interesting stories to tell about places he’d go and people he’d met.

**Kirsten:** I don’t know. No, I think he was rather bored and just made it as a living.

**Seph:** What was your religious life like? Did the family often go to church?

**Kirsten:** No, ever. We were baptized and I’m not even married in a church.

**Seph:** Do you know what denomination?

**Kirsten:** It would Lutheran. That’s a state religion in Denmark or you pay your … Automatically you become member of the church because you go through the state.

**Seph:** So everyone was Lutheran.

**Kirsten:** Yes.

**Seph:** You didn’t experience any sort of religious prejudice or anything like that.

**Kirsten:** No.

**Seph:** What were the holidays like Denmark?

**Kirsten:** Do you mean time wise or what we’re doing?

**Seph:** What you did during-?

**Kirsten:** We had a very long holiday from the end of June till middle of August. In my family, my parents were busy maintaining the school buildings and washing all the curtains, and cleaning, and so on. The four children, we’re sent to an aunt who had a summer house. We would go there for a month and my parents usually took off only two weeks off one of the two weeks and took a holiday somewhere in Europe, Paris preferable. That’s our only chance for proper holiday.

**Seph:** Do you remember what it was called?

**Kirsten:** What?

**Seph:** The holiday?

**Kirsten:** No, it’s just called a summer vacation. You had that too.

**Seph:** Here in America we have it for three months. In Denmark it was only one month.

**Kirsten:** One and half, about six weeks.

**Seph:** How was school life for you? Did you go to school? Did you enjoy it?

**Kirsten:** I loved it. I really did. I was not scared to tell my pals that I liked to go to school. I told my own children when they came here. I liked it.

**Seph:** Was it a big school? Was it crowded? Where there lots of other children?

**Kirsten:** We were approximately between 80 and 200. We had quite hard school day because it was an old fashioned system. I was the last student with that program. Then it was altered because I had to get up before breakfast. [Inaudible 00:13:14] and Swedish language, and Latin because that was not included. We had four years to keep hold on till we should pass our examination. Nowadays they only have the last year but we have four years of studies to keep track of.

**Seph:** When did that start? What age did you start?

**Kirsten:** That was in the 6th grade, 6, 7, 8, 9.

**Seph:** You were about how old?

**Kirsten:** I started young. I was 14 when I finished, when I passed the examination.

**Seph:** You must have started at about six or seven.

**Kirsten:** Seven years.

**Seph:** Do you remember any specific teachers that you really liked or what [crosstalk 00:14:15]. Could you tell us about that?

**Kirsten:** Just how children are maybe because they didn’t like the subject and maybe liked the subject. Maybe I liked the other one because I liked the subject.

**Seph:** What were the subjects?

**Kirsten:** I always liked the mathematics which I was taught by my father. I generally liked school. I liked school work.

**Seph:** When you got home and maybe took time to play with your friends, do you remember what games you played or what you did when you weren’t in school?

**Kirsten:** I think we did the same thing as children all over the world take a ball, kick it and people would go skiing in the winter and go swimming in the summer, take your boyfriend in hand and take a walk in the wood. What do we do?

**Seph:** It was very warm in the summer in Denmark and very cold in the winter.

**Kirsten:** That depends a lot. We had very many cold winters in the beginning and pretty nice … But you know how times goes by. You think that you had cold winters and warm summers. You know how it is. You forget.

**Seph:** This is true. When you decided to come to America, who decided to take the trip? Did you know someone who was in America already? You had relatives here.

**Kirsten:** I had two very good friends who came over as exchange students I think. They wanted me to come too. They had it arranged, so some of their friends would like to see me too. I was in England at the time when I got my permission to go to America.

**Seph:** Why were you in England?

**Kirsten:** I was sort of Au pair girl on a big sports school.

**Seph:** Au pairs’ sort of like a nanny.

**Kirsten:** No, it was a school for grownups so I was merely in the kitchen area and some cleaning halftime and then I took part in education in the other time. I got my Visa to America through the Danish Embassy in London.

**Seph:** What did you think of America before you came here?

**Kirsten:** I didn’t think. It was just completely open.

**Seph:** You had no idea what it would be like?

**Kirsten:** No, you have some ideas but I couldn’t really say what it would be like. I didn’t know what to expect. My friends were very happy to come, to stay here so I thought it couldn’t be too bad.

**Seph:** How did you parents feel about your decision to leave?

**Kirsten:** I think they thought it was okay, I mean try everything once.

**Seph:** They weren’t at all afraid for you that you were going to this huge, far away country and …

**Kirsten:** They had seen so many tough things and dealing with so many different people. Of course, if they could have decided, they might have decided for me to stay home. I don’t know. I don’t think so. I think they wanted me to have another experience in life.

**Seph:** They did give you a goodbye party.

**Kirsten:** No, I was England. I went directly from England to the States.

**Seph:** Did your parents know that you were going to the States [crosstalk 00:18:06] England.

**Kirsten:** Yes. They called me on the last day. Some friends gave a party in London and then my parents called.

**Seph:** What was the party like? Do you having specific memories of it?

**Kirsten:** No. it’s just a friends, and his mother, and his brother, and … I don’t know, just a little goodbye, “Hello.”

**Seph:** Did you pack up a lot of luggage with you when you went?

**Kirsten:** No, couldn’t bother.

**Seph:** Basically you just took one bag.

**Kirsten:** Yeah.

**Seph:** Did you have any mementos or special keep sakes with you when you went?

**Kirsten:** Keep what?

**Seph:** Keep sakes, well mementos, small things, a picture, a photograph.

**Kirsten:** No. I had my diary.

**Seph:** Which you’d always written in.

**Kirsten:** Yes.

**Seph:** Since you were-

**Kirsten:** I always carry it with me when I’m abroad. No, I find it difficult enough to have to travel on my own and then carry too much baggage. It would be just too much. I thought maybe they have probably running water there so I could always do some washing.

**Seph:** What Port did you leave from?

**Kirsten:** Southampton in England.

**Seph:** Can you describe the journey to Southampton? What exactly happened when you left?

**Kirsten:** Nothing much happened because I took the boat train from London, goodbye friends and then get on board in Southampton. Very unformatic, sailed over, just pleasant and some fun. I met some nice people.

**Seph:** Could you tell me the name of the ship?

**Kirsten:** My husband and I was just talking about it. I think it was called Atlantic. It was a French boat.

**Seph:** It was a French boat.

**Kirsten:** French line.

**Seph:** Did you have anyone waiting for you once you got to Port, your friends?

**Kirsten:** Not in New York.

**Seph:** Where did you stay when you got here?

**Kirsten:** Ellis Island.

**Seph:** You mentioned before that you had some problems with being detained here. Could you tell me more about that?

**Kirsten:** It’s quite obvious. Its must be a problem to get a surprise on the boat and the officer sort of picked me out of the line. I didn’t know what was going on and he took me down in the boat. Some of the friends I met on the boat tried to interfere and said, “We will guarantee he won’t take her out of the State of New York.” He had made his decision. He picked me and my luggage up and put me on a boat and over to Ellis Island. That was quite shocking.

**Seph:** What happened once you got to Ellis Island?

**Kirsten:** You get into an interview and that was the absolutely worst thing in my whole stay in America because he took away my passport. Anything else I could have lived with, I couldn’t … I didn’t know what to do without my passport.

**Seph:** Did he tell you why he took it from you?

**Kirsten:** No, he said he had to. I said, “I’m not going to give you my passport. I want some support of some kind.” He didn’t have too much time.

**Seph:** So he took it from you.

**Kirsten:** He took my passport.

**Seph:** You weren’t planning on going into Ellis Island.

**Kirsten:** No, definitely not.

**Seph:** Where was the boat from Southampton headed?

**Kirsten:** To New York, to one of the piers. We had planned- some friends had their home in Los Angeles in Hollywood and that we should get a hotel and spend one day in New York and then take away over to California.

**Seph:** Could you tell me when exactly the ship departed, the month, and day.

**Kirsten:** I can’t remember the date but it departed from Southampton in the end of November. It took about six days I think to come over to New York.

**Seph:** November 1951.

**Kirsten:** It’s been around 6th, 7th December.

**Seph:** Do you remember what the actual trip was like on the ship with the accommodations? Was it first class or second class or comfortable?

**Kirsten:** I went cabin class, so that was very okay, a bit rough. I seemed to be getting seasick. It was an enjoyable trip, comfortable.

**Seph:** You got over the seasickness.

**Kirsten:** Yes, because I had some drama mind pills.

**Seph:** Did you bring them with you or did the-

**Kirsten:** Yes.

**Seph:** You knew that you-

**Kirsten:** I knew that.

**Seph:** You were prepared. You didn’t have any travelling companions.

**Kirsten:** No, I was by myself.

**Seph:** Can you tell me any interesting stories or anecdotes about the voyage over?

**Kirsten:** No, have you been on a cruise?

**Seph:** Never.

**Kirsten:** They make some kind of entertainment with little plays, and games, and carts, and good dinners.

**Seph:** But you were looking forward to coming here?

**Kirsten:** Yes, I took that as sort of have to in order to get to the States.

**Seph:** How long did the voyage last?

**Kirsten:** I think about a week, a little week. I don’t know, can’t remember.

**Seph:** It’s a long time.

**Kirsten:** Yeah. This was in 1951.

**Seph:** Could you describe the first time you actually saw land here in America? What it was like here?

**Kirsten:** Yes, I can because we got up in the morning we came I think sevenish and seeing the skyline of Manhattan. I was very excited. I loved it.

**Seph:** Did you see the Statue of Liberty when you came in?

**Kirsten:** Yes.

**Seph:** Could you describe that for me?

**Kirsten:** Statue of Liberty on here? What do you mean can I describe it?

**Seph:** Describe seeing-

**Kirsten:** It was a [crosstalk 00:25:13] with this lady standing.

**Seph:** Were you impressed by it when you came in?

**Kirsten:** Not really. That’s one thing I have learned about, Statue of Liberty. I suppose I was kind of impressed, but it didn’t … The skyline of Manhattan I will never forget, but I have to recall the Statue of Liberty.

**Seph:** Did other people seem to react well to the Statue of Liberty?

**Kirsten:** I don’t know. I was all by myself so I wouldn’t know that.

**Seph:** When you were detained by this officer, what happened after he took your passport?

**Kirsten:** I was sitting down this big hall that I remember so clearly. When I was settled in one of the dormitories up here, I had my luggage placed next to my bed. I went down to the big hall and then I saw a boy sitting. I’ll never forget that. He sat with a lot of newspapers and he sat just staring out of the windows. I said, “Well, that’s what becomes of you in a few days.”

**Seph:** He was just ripping the newspapers in half.

**Kirsten:** In little bit pieces.

**Seph:** And throwing them out of the window.

**Kirsten:** I said to myself, “That’s what happens when you stay here for a long time.”

**Seph:** Could you describe what the building was like? Was it dark? Was it crowded? Were there a lot of people?

**Kirsten:** It was pretty crowded. I think if I’m not very wrong, I think we were about 1000 people here at the time I was … People come and go. One thing that really bothered me was that I couldn’t use the telephone and inform my parents or my friends I was going to see and my relatives in Iowa.

I wanted someone to know where I was, but I couldn’t use the telephone. I was not to contact people outside Ellis Island. That was very embarrassing. I felt very insecure. I did something I shouldn’t have done I suppose namely I found the routine in the house.

I said, “There must be some kind of daily routine.” Somebody must be going out somewhere.” I found out assistant where they had a bench sort of underneath the balcony. I found out there is where people are sitting here will probably be released. I made a note to Danish Consulate and sneaked over and said, “Could you please post it for me?” because then I know somebody will know, I just had to rely on the person, but I did remember I did that.

**Seph:** We’re going to have to pause in the interview now while we turn over the tape, continuing the interview with Mrs. Kirsten Hansen from Denmark who was detained at Ellis Island for 16 days. My name is Seph Rodney and we are at the Ellis Island recording studio. You were telling me about being detained.

**Kirsten:** I was telling you about how I sneaked out a letter just to make sure … We were about as far as I recall it somewhere between a thousand and 1400 people. I think a lot of the people were sitting here because of x-ray failures. Maybe their picture didn’t come out correctly because I talked to several Scandinavians and I said, “Why are you here?” they said that it seems because of their x-ray.

I had my x-ray proof which was okay. The reason I was sitting was of course because of the Cathy period, communist fear. You want me to tell you … I came to an interview by sort of … And I was here. The daily routine was just a daily routine with meals. I met some Scandinavians and we sat playing canasta. We had various games and we changed books and so on and so forth.

**Seph:** Before we talk about the interview that you had, I wanted to find out who you mailed the letter to, the one sneaked to the-

**Kirsten:** I didn’t put an address on it because I didn’t have any address. I was quite sure whether it should go to the Danish Consulate or to the Danish Embassy. I told this lady, “Would you do you me a favor?” of course, we were in the same boat. Of course, she would do that. Actually I don’t know where she sent it, but the consequence of the letter was that the people receiving my letter contacted the Danish priest of the Danish church in New York.

He came over to see me and that was a relief because we had a private room where we could talk. Of course, I gave him some telephone numbers. Please call my cousin in Iowa. I felt a little better after someone knowing where I was.

**Seph:** Could you describe what it was like where you slept and what you ate when you were detained at Ellis Island?

**Kirsten:** To me as far as I remember I had absolutely nothing but noodles. It seems like they didn’t know how to cook anything but noodles. I never had it since, noodle and tomato sauce.

**Seph:** Where did you sleep?

**Kirsten:** I slept in one of the dormitories. We’re on the second floor.

**Seph:** The third floor.

**Kirsten:** Yeah, just above the big hall. I slept up here in the dormitory.

**Seph:** What were the beds like? Were they-?

**Kirsten:** I can’t remember. I think we had … What do you call it when you have beds over each other?

**Seph:** Bunk beds.

**Kirsten:** Bunk beds, yes. I think we were about eight or ten in the room.

**Seph:** You said that you were entertained by playing canasta with some Scandinavians that you met.

**Kirsten:** Yes.

**Seph:** That tended to help you pass the time?

**Kirsten:** Yes. There seems to be a lot of people from Hawaii and Haiti. Somehow I had the feeling that they had something to fear which I didn’t feel I had because I could always be sent home. I could always go back to Denmark anyway. These people were more sort of immigrant than I was. I was just unfortunate.

They had a lot of children with them. I used to be a teacher. I tried to make some games with this group of children to relieve their parents because they were so worried and so upset. That’s how children also get upset when their parents are not feeling well. I tried to make little sort of games.

**Seph:** After you met the priest from Denmark, how long was it until you were finally released?

**Kirsten:** I can’t remember. I think maybe halfway through my stay.

**Seph:** About eight days later.

**Kirsten:** Yes, something like that.

**Seph:** How did you leave? Did you take a boat or the train?

**Kirsten:** I was followed. I think it must have been some kind of a police boat or some military boat or something. It was not a ferry boat, not ordinary ferry boat. A same type of boat took me back to New York where I was met by friends I made on the ship coming over. They stayed here to make sure that I came out in good shape.

**Seph:** Which reminds me, I forgot to talk about the interview, the actual interview. What was that like?

**Kirsten:** That was interesting because what he didn’t know was it was a very nice kind of a fellow. He had his formula, so he had to ask certain questions and he said, “What did you vote the last election?” I said, “I never had a chance to vote?” he said, “Why not?” I said, “Because I’m not 25,” and that was the age. He was very embarrassed. He said, “I should have known that.”

Somehow I said, “Yes, you should, shouldn’t you have tried to just look into small details?” he said, “Where did you leave all your- Where do you have all your things?” My kind of clothes, chairs, and spoons … I said, “Some in England and some in Denmark,” because I intended to go back to England.

I left some of my luggage there. I think it’s kind of funny. He said, “What did your parents vote? Which party were your parents?” I said, “I don’t know because we are more interested in” … What do we call it? Pedagogic than in politics, that’s the whole setup in my surroundings.

**Seph:** You mean it’s more important for your parents to be teachers than politicians.

**Kirsten:** Yes, definitely.

**Seph:** You left Ellis Island and you met friends. Where did you go from there with them?

**Kirsten:** I had to leave the State of New York within 24 hours for some funny reasons. These friends, they took me out to dinner at a Greece restaurant.

**Seph:** Greek?

**Kirsten:** Greek restaurant. One of their friends, he was a journalist and he wanted to type my story. I figured out that I would much rather save that for when I’m safely out of again of America. I had trouble enough. I didn’t want to get myself into more mess and then I left on the Greyhound bus.

**Seph:** Where did you go?

**Kirsten:** I went to Iowa where I stayed over Christmas with a cousin and his friends had a wonderful time.

**Seph:** How long did you stay with your cousin?

**Kirsten:** I stayed two weeks I think and then off to California.

**Seph:** How did you get to California?

**Kirsten:** On Greyhound.

**Seph:** Could you describe the trip for me? Did you see anything on the bus that you’d never seen before?

**Kirsten:** I never seen desert. When we passed Wyoming, is that a desert district area?

**Seph:** I’m not sure.

**Kirsten:** Nevada.

**Seph:** Yes, Nevada is a desert.

**Kirsten:** I never seen a desert before. I got stuck in snow up in the mountains between Nevada and California. What’s the stripe of rocks?

**Seph:** The Rockies … No, I’m not sure.

**Kirsten:** I got stuck. I had to stay over there for a day, two. They were also closed because of snow.

**Seph:** What did you do for the day that you were stuck there? They played games or what did people do.

**Kirsten:** I went for a long walk. I like snow.

**Seph:** I suppose there was a lot of snow when-

**Kirsten:** They had sort of cleared around the … I lived in a hostel or a motel like cheap.

**Seph:** When you got to your destination in California, who were you staying with then?

**Kirsten:** I was staying with the two boyfriends I had, my friends, two boys. They lived down in San Joaquin Valley.

**Seph:** San Joaquin.

**Kirsten:** Valley. That valley goes between San Francisco Los Angeles near a town called Fresno. I stayed there for two weeks. I went up to nanny three kids in Central Phil, North of San Francisco. I stayed with the family to get my food and I helped her with the children.

**Seph:** What is it an apartment or a house?

**Kirsten:** No, it’s a big house.

**Seph:** How many rooms were there? Did a lot of people live there? How large was the family?

**Kirsten:** its father and mother, three children, and myself.

**Seph:** Could you describe the neighborhood?

**Kirsten:** It was typical north of San Francisco area with great lawns and big houses, wealthy people.

**Seph:** Did you like living there?

**Kirsten:** No, I didn’t.

**Seph:** Why?

**Kirsten:** Because I didn’t agree with the mother of the children. We had different ideas of how to work with the kids, so I didn’t like it.

**Seph:** How long did you stay with that family?

**Kirsten:** Six months. I promised to do that, so I did.

**Seph:** What did you do when you left?

**Kirsten:** I went to see my friends down in Fresno and then I went for two weeks to Hollywood to see the friends that stayed in New York to see me well off of Ellis Island. I kept contact with them and they wanted me to stay there for a period in peace.

**Seph:** Your friends came from New York to California.

**Kirsten:** They lived … They had their home in California. She was a teacher at LA.

**Seph:** You stayed with them.

**Kirsten:** I stayed with them in their house.

**Seph:** Did you like living there?

**Kirsten:** Yes, I loved it.

**Seph:** Why is that?

**Kirsten:** Because there was so nice people and they seemed to know everybody. We went to so many interesting places. She taught art so she had a lot of contacts. We had beautiful time.

**Seph:** She taught art at the university.

**Kirsten:** At the University of LA, yes. He was in film business, [crosstalk 00:41:15].

**Seph:** I’m sorry.

**Kirsten:** Fretz and Ula.

**Seph:** Do you remember their last names?

**Kirsten:** Yeah, Long L-O-N-G.

**Seph:** Did you get a chance to meet a lot of your neighbors in the neighborhood?

**Kirsten:** Not neighbors exactly but friends of theirs. What I cared much for was that she took me out to see so many interesting museums and art collections, very interesting. We did that almost every day.

**Seph:** Were you working at the time?

**Kirsten:** No. I had a year’s leave from my teaching job to go to England and to the States. I had little extra in both ends.

**Seph:** Did you go to school to learn English? How did you learn-?

**Kirsten:** It’s compulsory in Danish schools. I had it for five years.

**Seph:** By the time you got to America, you already spoke English very well.

**Kirsten:** Yes, because I had been in England for half a year before I came over.

**Seph:** What did you do after that year was up? Did you continue with the Longs or did you move-?

**Kirsten:** No, I had to get back to Europe. I took the Greyhound again back to Detroit and a boat train over to Canada because I sailed back from Quebec to Southampton.

**Seph:** What did you do then?

**Kirsten:** In England?

**Seph:** Yes.

**Kirsten:** I’ve stayed there on vacation for about two weeks and then back to Denmark and back to teaching and that was it.

**Seph:** That was the only time that you were in America.

**Kirsten:** Yes until now.

**Seph:** When did you come back?

**Kirsten:** Come back what?

**Seph:** Come back to America? I’m sorry.

**Kirsten:** This time? A week ago, we’re just here in our holiday.

**Seph:** You didn’t experience any bigotry or prosecution when you were here. Did anyone look at you funny or think your accent was odd or strange?

**Kirsten:** You mean now or when I was detained?

**Seph:** When you were here. At any point when you were here before.

**Kirsten:** No. There are so many different people in America so I think you should be really be something very special to be noticed language wise or appearance wise. Don’t you think so?

**Seph:** I suppose so.

**Kirsten:** It’s a melting pot.

**Seph:** Are they any special stories you remember of your trip here that you would like to share? Anything that really sticks out in your mind that happened-

**Kirsten:** You mean when I was detained?

**Seph:** After you were detained.

**Kirsten:** No. I lived just a very ordinary life, got married and got children, lived happily.

**Seph:** You got married when you went back to Denmark.

**Kirsten:** Yes, married at Den.

**Seph:** Your husband’s name is-

**Kirsten:** M-O-G-E-N-S.

**Seph:** His last name I assume is Hansen.

**Kirsten:** Right.

**Seph:** Do you have any children?

**Kirsten:** We had two, a girl and a boy.

**Seph:** Their names were?

**Kirsten:** L-E-N-A and L-A-R-S.

**Seph:** Lena and Lars. Do they have children?

**Kirsten:** Yeah. My daughter has a daughter.

**Seph:** Her name is?

**Kirsten:** Stena, S-T-E-N-A. Good Danish name.

**Seph:** That’s about the end of the interview. I want to thank you very much for the time to do this interview with us and speak about your immigrant experience. Again, this Seph Rodney signing off for the National Park Service at the Ellis Island Studio on October the 11th,1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.