**Kate:** Well good morning. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service, and today is the 22nd of January 1994 and I’m in Las Vegas Nevada at the home of Mary Ryman with her sister Leona Hilla, who came from the Netherlands in 1914 actually when her mother was pregnant with her and why don’t you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth please.

**Leona:** I’m Leona Hilla, formally Houben H-O-U-B-E-N. I was born December 31st 1914 Lake, Montana.

**Kate:** Your family town, they came from, which side is that?

**Leona:** In Holland?

**Kate:** Yes.

**Leona:** They were all in quite small, Maastricht is the largest town close and they were really from Ulestraten which is.

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

**Leona:** U-L-L-E-S-T-R-A-T-E-N, it’s just a little bit from Maastricht and then some of them live in Gulpen. They are all are all very close because the country is so small.

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

**Leona:** G-U-L-P-E-N.

**Kate:** What made your industry in those small towns?

**Leona:** I don’t know they, I have a cousin that is a pharmacist. As an upper teeth they call it and they had little Orchids and things, it was quite fruitful there. My mother and father had a Mill, where they ground the grain to make the floor.

**Kate:** What did your grandparents do?

**Leona:** My grandfather was a Burgomaster.

**Kate:** Of?

**Leona:** [Inaudible 00:01:33] and grandmother just, was a housewife I guess, and they also had a small orchid, because my mother worked in, not the fields it would be the orchid.

**Kate:** At that time?

**Leona:** Aha.

**Kate:** The Burgomaster.

**Leona:** Is like a mayor?

**Kate:** Which grandparent was that, your father’s, your mother’s father?

**Leona:** My mother’s father.

**Kate:** Your mother’s father was. What was your father’s name?

**Leona:** Houben Joseph, Houben, H-O-U-B-E-N.

**Kate:** What was his occupation?

**Leona:** He was in the mill grinding with mother, when they actually got married, before that he lived at castle Vliek which is a castle called V-L-I-E-K, and I don’t remember, his parents died really waiting for, when he was a child over there and his uncle raised him at this castle.

**Kate:** Why was he at the castle do you know?

**Leona:** Because his uncle was there I guess?

**Kate:** Doing what, living there?

**Leona:** I really don’t know.

**Kate:** What did your father look like, how could you describe him?

**Leona:** I was just about 5, 10 or 11 good looking man, later on in life he was heavy but when he was younger he wasn’t, broad dark hair, blue eyes and was quite face a nice looking man.

**Kate:** What about his personality and compliment how would you describe that.

**Leona:** Not the rest, I don’t want to go to that.

**Kate:** Is there a story about your father that you associate with your childhood?

**Leona:** Not really no. Our childhood wasn’t very great.

**Kate:** What about your mother, what was her name?

**Leona:** Hurbertina was her, Hurbertina Mary, but she went by the name Mary into the state, in Europe they called her Tina, and she was about 3rd all the star I think.

**Kate:** What was your Maiden name?

**Leona:** Hurbertina H-U-R like Herbert but Tina on the end.

**Kate:** What was your occupation?

**Leona:** To work in the middle with the father.

**Kate:** New York you would say?

**Leona:** Yeah, before she was married.

**Kate:** What did she look like?

**Leona:** She looked like my younger sister which is hard to describe, she had a much fine features than I have she was a pretty woman.

**Kate:** How tall?

**Leona:** About five, she was the shortest one of the whole family. About five, four, five something like that.

**Kate:** Her hair and eyes?

**Leona:** Her eyes were brown, her hair was brown.

**Kate:** What about their personality and template?

**Leona:** She was a doll, and absolutely initial she really was.

**Kate:** She was kind, dull or angle like?

**Leona:** Well she was nice, pierce quite, easy going woman, but still firm with his children. But not me or anything you know her father was kind of mean.

**Kate:** What were choice around house bending, a housewife?

**Leona:** Raising children and Molly had chickens and pigs and cows.

**Kate:** It the States, in the States right.

**Leona:** Yeah, in the near she worked in the middle with father I guess.

**Kate:** Do, you have a story about your mother that you would associate with your childhood, what about her willing to drive I heard?

**Leona:** That was a catastrophe and lived to say and what impressed me and my mother in later life, was if you would call her and said you want to go somewhere her suitcase was packed immediately she was ready to take off in 30 minutes, I’m not exaggerating.

**Kate:** Where would you ask her to go then?

**Leona:** She wanted to come to Vegas and fly down or like I have a brother and sister that live in Oregon and would say, let’s go up in the mountains today or let’s go somewhere really, she is ready to go right now, or go to Montana to visit, we still have a sister in Montana and she went back there many times.

**Kate:** Why do you think she was like that even though?

**Leona:** I don’t know, I like to travel myself, I travel all the time.

**Kate:** What about, could you name all your brothers and sisters in order that they were born?

**Leona:** Mary, what about the dates?

**Kate:** You have it would be good.

**Leona:** November 24th 1910, and May 16th 1912. Myself Leona December 31st 1914. Cecilia December 25, 1990. Martha July 29th 1921. Josephine, September 30th 1927. Roman Joseph our brother who we call Bud, July 3rd 1930.

**Kate:** You went back to see the house that you lived in, could you describe your house, how is the mill.

**Leona:** I didn’t live there, I was born there.

**Kate:** Good to see you again.

**Leona:** Yes, I’ve seen it 3 times.

**Kate:** How would you describe it?

**Leona:** It was big and beautiful I can’t imagine that we are living there to come over here to put, home set up in Montana I really can’t.

**Kate:** How did it look?

**Leona:** It looked beautiful.

**Kate:** Who owns it now?

**Leona:** I have no idea.

**Kate:** But you went back to see it.

**Leona:** Mmh.

**Kate:** How would you describe it, it’s a beautiful, what made it beautiful?

**Leona:** It was a big brick building and I mean big. So, I have no idea the footage, well kept, well maintained, true story.

**Kate:** Was the Mill still in operation?

**Leona:** Not to my knowledge, I don’t think so, we have a cousin that runs a mill that the government helped restore it, to keep it as a historic place.

**Kate:** In Holland?

**Leona:** In Gulpen.

**Kate:** In Gulpen and what was it, it was a stone building I guess.

**Leona:** Brick I think.

**Kate:** Did you, what did your family tell you about that house at all, anything?

**Leona:** They had a fire, that’s where they came to America, they had a fire at, well my father had come to America in 1913 with another group of men and he liked it, and he thought it would be a great opportunity and they were going to come to America and stay eight or nine years and make their fortune and go back on, that was their original intention.

Then they had a fire in the Mill, so I guess then they decided this was the time to go.

**Kate:** Who set the fire, how did the fire…

**Leona:** I don’t know how the fire started.

**Kate:** Was the Mill destroyed, how big?

**Leona:** I don’t know that either.

**Kate:** Did your parents ever talk about their decision to come to United States without leading on to you?

**Leona:** No, I just, what I just told you.

**Kate:** What about, did they ever talk about, the housing or any other terms precise that?

**Leona:** No.

**Kate:** Who did the cooking in the family?

**Leona:** Mother.

**Kate:** Right, what was your favorite food as a child?

**Leona:** Fried chicken and green grains, fresh peas just out of the garden and homemade ice cream, that we made with ice that we harvested in the winter time off the lake which is about eight and half from the house and they put it in ice houses and stored between, and it would stay all summer.

**Kate:** Did you help cook at all.

**Leona:** Some.

**Kate:** Okay, we will go back to, did you ever meet your grandparents at all?

**Leona:** No, they were deceased in the 20’s.

**Kate:** Both sides, except with the.

**Leona:** No, my grandmother died in about twenty, five or six and my grandfather died in the early 30’s. My mother didn’t even go back where they were living, but my sister and I took her back in 1967. No, she went back right after the war, in 1949 she went back by boat, there was no trans airlines at that time, and she flew back and that was her first airplane like rise up.

**Kate:** So she was ready to go wasn’t she?

**Leona:** She was ready to come home, she went by boat and came home by plane.

**Kate:** Did they tell you about anything about the trip over to United States did they tell you anything by getting prepared for or anything.

**Leona:** Not a thing, in fact my sister and I, my sister Josephine in Oregon and I have discussed many times we said we should, she just prepared a book for her children, of the history of the house and she is selling it, and her husband built from scratch and she said I wish our parents had given us some history like that. We have, we have very little history on our parents.

**Kate:** Why do you think that is?

**Leona:** I have no idea. Said we didn’t ask the questions, which I wish we have.

**Kate:** Did they talk about the boat drift to you?

**Leona:** My mother was sick I know that, and way over, and rather than that they were very crowded and they were a lot of children and a lot of people.

**Kate:** And did?

**Leona:** On this boat and I think they were like on steerage or something. It wasn’t first class it’s what I’m saying.

**Kate:** You know where they departed from the boat.

**Leona:** I wouldn’t image without her there.

**Kate:** Did your mother talk about selling anything in the house before she came?

**Leona:** No, because everything was destroyed by fire, they rescued very little. They rescued a clock that they received as a wedding present, which my brother still has, wall clock and very little else.

**Kate:** Were there, just to mention walk lines or something.

**Leona:** Yeah, [inaudible 00:10:45] but they didn’t bring much over and nicely they didn’t have room on this boat, they were 1914, this were not luxury liners by any means.

**Kate:** How did your family get here, financially how were they able to do it?

**Leona:** I don’t know, I presume they saw the mail.

**Kate:** That’s how your father, now do you remember and your father, they were talking about why he came to the United States, he said that he was.

**Leona:** He said that my father would have been a great adventurer if he had a lot of money. He never stayed in one place very long I don’t think, and the other side of things always looked better, really.

**Kate:** So, he had great expectations from here?

**Leona:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Do you think that it lived up to that?

**Leona:** No, no means no way.

**Kate:** How not so.

**Leona:** Well so cold up there in the winter and the homestead so you got 160 hectares free for homesteading. If they didn’t have grasshoppers or grass or rain too much rain it was always something, so we had very few good crops then he tried raising cattle.

So he raised hay, well that worked out fairly well. Then the cattle price went down. One year he raised coleus I wasn’t very successful there. Another great year he raised maybe beans or I don’t know, something happened. It didn’t have enough rain or something. Everything he tried poor fellow just did not work out too good.

**Kate:** How was life back on the homestead?

**Leona:** Very hard?

**Kate:** Did you speak, what language did you speak at home?

**Leona:** We spoke [inaudible 00:12:26] in school.

**Kate:** Do you remember learning English for the first time?

**Leona:** I learnt from Mary and Anne because they went to school before me, so Mary was two years older. Anne was two years older, Mary was four years older. So, I had the advantage of having some English at home, I don’t recall it, it was difficult for me at all I’m sure it was very difficult for Mary.

**Kate:** Do you remember what they do, they come home from school and tell you what went on in school, is that it or how did you start learning?

**Leona:** I don’t know, they probably spoke English as soon as they learnt it. Because for me all start to learn English, that her parents spoke English also. They didn’t continue speaking Dutch all the time.

**Kate:** Did you remember this is a conscious process at all, do you remember any incidences about English is the language?

**Leona:** No, not recalling any problems really with it.

**Kate:** Were you ever called any names from being from Holland at school?

**Leona:** Well, there were quite a few immigrants around there, so it wasn’t too bad really, they were. So, there were several other families besides that, they were, if they hadn’t come there their grandparents had.

**Kate:** Did they identify you as foreign?

**Leona:** Yes it wasn’t very nice to be an immigrant in those days you know.

**Kate:** Why not?

**Leona:** I don’t know, people just looked down on, now it’s fashionable an immigrant. That’s right. I remember them making fun of our pig tails, because we had long hair with pig tails. One day when dad would tell our mother to cut them off, cut our hair off and we were so elated and he was very shocked when he saw us with our hair cut Dutch bob you know down below your ears.

**Kate:** Why did she come off?

**Leona:** Because we get pressured to cut it off, we didn’t want pig tails nobody else had them.

**Kate:** Was there anything else that was different that you did, that other kids did?

**Leona:** I don’t think so, no we walked to school, a mile and a half everybody else walked also. We were typical kids.

**Kate:** Talk about your homestead that you had, and life there, your family came from Ellis Island and went to Montana and got this homestead, can you describe it?

**Leona:** its 160 hectares, my father build a home on it, house size.

**Kate:** How big was that house?

**Leona:** Very small it had, there was a kitchen and a bedroom for them, had a big, a little wood cellar, we called it. It’s just, it’s a cellar but it’s not lined with cement like they are now, it’s just with the sod which makes it nice because it did, sort of nice. Then he put, that was the main part of the house, then he put two more rooms on her best children.

Then later on about in, 1930 I think, he bought another big house and he lived all his years on this farm, and we could use both houses there. We did not have inside plumbing or electricity. We had a well that was very close to the house maybe 20 feet.

**Kate:** How was the house lit then?

**Leona:** Kerosene, lamps at first and then later on with the gasoline.

**Kate:** How, how big was your barn for example?

**Leona:** Pardon? A ban, oh yes we had a big ban.

**Kate:** How big was that, a big barn is big, but how big like.

**Leona:** Not like what they are today. Maybe it’s very smaller in there today, probably 60 by 30 or something like that.

**Kate:** What was in the barn?

**Leona:** Cattle and chickens and.

**Kate:** How much of this, I’m trying to get an idea of how big that farm was?

**Leona:** Well the farm I told you was 160 hectares. How many chickens we had, I had no idea. Everything when you are a child, seems like large and it really isn’t it, probably 50 or 75, we had bunny rabbits about 6 of those. We had, at least six cows I’m sure and horses because we didn’t have a car until 1925 or so. We were in horse drawn carriage in the winter time with the sledge pulled by horses.

**Kate:** What about the furniture of that house. You remember anything?

**Leona:** Well, at least each bedroom had a bed and a dresser. That was, no carpeting, wood floors. In the kitchen we had a cook stove and a heating stove. Little part really wasn’t so small but we have nice big- like an old fashion kitchen or like you see in the stores nowadays and a big table and chairs. That’s all about all room there was.

**Kate:** The house was heated by?

**Leona:** The cold stove or the cook stove.

**Kate:** The cook stove right. Describe meal time at home, what was it like, how do you eat your meals?

**Leona:** Well like anyone else does, we had plates and china so.

**Kate:** No, I mean how was it organized, you had breakfast together in the morning?

**Leona:** Oh! Yes.

**Kate:** What was breakfast?

**Leona:** Where we went to school, usually milk and my mother baked bread. So we called it, black berry with wheat bread. We liked that more than the white. Then in summer time we had a big meal at noon. Then just sandwiches or something else for supper.

**Kate:** In the winter time, it was the biggest meal.

**Leona:** We were in school, so our biggest meal is at night.

**Kate:** What was the big meal consisted at that time?

**Leona:** Making potatoes and Gravy vegetables fruit.

**Kate:** Did you eat any foods that were typically Dutch at all?

**Leona:** Well yes, my mother had a recipe I wish I could find the authentic one, it was called [inaudible 00:17:55] it was made out of rabbit and it was delicious, it was like pate, you know it was really good.

**Kate:** Haas pate.

**Leona:** Haas pate she called it, oh Haas is rabbit. I don’t know how you spell it, and Paste is like pate, P-A-T-E, and she made in a big crock, maybe 12 inches across and about 6 inches deep. It comes out like a liver pate or something to make today, and it was really good and I can’t, I’ve gotten recipes from my cousins over there, but it doesn’t taste like hers.

We always had coleslaw cabbage, oh we made our own salad crouton and they were big crouton like 3 feet deep and in fact we sold the batter at the cream and that’s about all we but with that money we would buy coffee and sugar and floor. The rest of the thing, we raise in the garden.

**Kate:** How do you view your childhood then you said it wasn’t great and for what reason?

**Leona:** It was good.

**Kate:** You didn’t go hungry then?

**Leona:** Oh heavens no, we never went hungry even during the worst of depression we never went hungry.

**Kate:** Did you want for anything then as a kid?

**Leona:** You know how kids are, we want for a lot of stuff but not the necessities, we all had necessities.

**Kate:** What did you do for games and entertainment as a child at home then?

**Leona:** We played the, when snow is on the ground we would make a big circle and we would play- what is this game they called, I can remember what it is. I can’t remember even, I get like a pie and then we would chase each other and somebody is hitting. We played head over the farm, which is a physical ball. Throw the ball over the bar on the other side tries to come around out and take somebody. We had all kinds of games that nobody ever head of today probably. Marbles, we played marbles.

**Kate:** Did you play anything like kick the can, those things?

**Leona:** No, we never did.

**Kate:** How about, did you play any ball games in the summer?

**Leona:** I played some soft ball, or baseball whatever you call it. I remember once I made a home run my dad was watching me and I was so proud. I was probably about 12.

**Kate:** What about religious life at home?

**Leona:** We were spiritualized Catholics. We went to church hail or shine or whatever we went.

**Kate:** How about daily did you have anything as a routine?

**Leona:** No, we wouldn’t. We would say prayers before meals.

**Kate:** Do, you remember any of those prayers?

**Leona:** Prayer about to receive through our Lord, these thy gifts which we are about to receive through our body, to Christ our Lord Amen.

**Kate:** Did you say any other thing before you went to bed?

**Leona:** We would, we would say protect us for so. You know something like that.

**Kate:** Did you, who was more religious your mother or father?

**Leona:** I would say my mother but they were both religious.

**Kate:** Did you…

**Leona:** I would say the Rosary a lot of it. Are you familiar with Rosary?

**Kate:** Yes, do you say it in English or Dutch?

**Leona:** English.

**Kate:** So, your prayers. Do you remember any Dutch prayers at all?

**Leona:** No.

**Kate:** Do you have any stories about family members that you could relate to us that typify that time, it could be dumb things they did or whatever your brothers and sisters?

**Leona:** I can’t really recall anything like that. I’m usually did a lot of dumb things that I can’t recall.

**Kate:** What about your parents, did they ever, how did they adjust to life in this country?

**Leona:** I think they adjusted very well, I really do.

**Kate:** Was either of them happier than the other. Were they both, how did they feel about being here in this country?

**Leona:** I think they just decided they were here, and that was it, they didn’t. I never heard my mother say, “I wish I’d never left Holland,” well my dad either no.

**Kate:** Do you think they were content with coming?

**Leona:** Yes I do.

**Kate:** I don’t think it turned out the way they had planned but I think they were, I think all in all they were glad they did, even in later life, because when my mother went back. Like I said she went back about five times I guess, four- five times. When she come home, she would say, “Well I’m glad we live over here,” and I don’t know why, I loved Holland, I thought it was just great.

I really did, and all my cousins are very successful, have beautiful homes and everything nice and like I said we should have asked her more questions which we didn’t. I think I guess you think she is going to live forever or whatever or we weren’t interested until we got older and she died in 71. That’s 23 years ago but she always was happy that they had moved to states.

**Kate:** Did she ever mention anything, about the significance of the Statue of Liberty when they came in the harbor is that ever mentioned, she ever mentioned that.

**Leona:** I can’t remember but I’m sure she is very glad to see the sea sick if she was. I know they got on the train after they left Ellis Island and came across to Montana which must not have been much a delightful trip at that time either, 1914 and a whole bunch of people on the train.

**Kate:** What happened in your life and years after that, what happened? What happened to the farm, what happened to your parents?

**Leona:** My father decided Oregon would be nicer than Montana. The winters were so harsh, so he moved to Oregon.

**Kate:** Did the family?

**Leona:** Yes. Well what was left there were three youngest went. The rest of them stayed in Montana.

**Kate:** What happened to the farm, the homestead?

**Leona:** Well, he had a loan against it and he could have stayed there if he'd wanted to, but he didn't want to so I guess he just had an auction sale and sold it all and left.

**Kate:** You say that your father was an adventurer, and your mother was glad she was here. It's always difficult to look back and now you've seen your other family there. Do you think that keeping their mill there, this is all hypothetical, they would have a better life there than here?

**Leona:** Financially I think so. I really do.

**Kate:** The quality of life, you think?

**Leona:** I think it would have been an easier life, but they both seem very glad they came to America even my mother, like I said, going back, she's still in her later life was glad they came to America.

**Kate:** How do you view it, the immigration?

**Leona:** Well, that was theirs. Whatever they decided to do, I had nothing to do with that.

**Kate:** You'd never think yourself of going to Holland to live?

**Leona:** Oh, no. Well not my age. Even when I was younger I wouldn't, no. I love to visit it and I love to visit all my cousins over there.

**Kate:** When you visit your cousins in Holland, do you remember any Dutch at all?

**Leona:** No, but I can understand and if they don't speak too fast. There are so many dialects in Holland that even Ryan's Dutch cousins don't understand some of the area's dialects. They said, "You go over the next hill, there's another dialect," and my parents did not speak high Dutch which is more universal than dialect.

Some of my aunts spoke high Dutch and some of my cousins. We've had several cousins come over here to visit. Oh, and I'd say four or five different ones, and they all speak English. They take six languages in grade school those children.

**Kate:** Well, what happened in your life then? Name some of the major things that happened in your life, in terms of your … When you went to school, what happened and who you met and how you lived your life.

**Leona:** Well I walked to grade school. I loved school. I really did love school and then I rode horse back to high school. Three miles. Winter and spring and fall. It was tough because it was cold on the winter time.

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

**Leona:** I think history and geography.

**Kate:** Do you think the fact that your families were immigrants, somehow influenced that?

**Leona:**  I couldn't say. It might be.

**Kate:** You went by horse back to high school and then what did you do later?

**Leona:** I graduated from high school and then … Well it was a depression when I graduated from high school in '33. I was a … Really the deep depression and I went to Great Falls where Mary was a nurse, my sister, Mary.

I lived with her and I got work. I worked for a family that owned the Great Fall ferry for a year and a half, for $15 a month. They had three little boys, eight, 10, and 12 and they wore white shirts to school, and their father wore white shirt to work and the nephew lived with them and he had a white shirt and I had to wash and iron all those shirts $15 a month and after a year and a half, I asked for a raise, $5 raise and they said, "No," so I quit.

**Kate:** Then what did you do?

**Leona:** Then I went to Havre because my sister Ann lived there.

**Kate:** Which is where?

**Leona:**  It's about a hundred miles north of the Great Falls, Montana. I went to work as a waitress in a coffee shop.

**Kate:** Did you have a… who did you live with, your sister?

**Leona:** Yes.

**Kate:** I see. Were there any family tragedies that occurred after your family came here to the country?

**Leona:** To our family here?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Leona:** No, we've been a very fortunate family. Our sister, Ann, passed away in 1976. She was 63, and our father died in 1942 or 3. He was 60-something, passed during the war.

**Kate:** What did your mother do and then on for a living?

**Leona:** She did housework for a family in Eugene, Oregon. She worked for them for years and years and years.

**Kate:** You've basically lived with your sister most of your life, your other sister?

**Leona:** My sister, Ann, yeah. Then till I got married.

**Kate:** When did you get married?

**Leona:** In '42. In Great Falls, Montana.

**Kate:** Did you marry another person from Holland?

**Leona:** No, he was from Butte, Montana. Part French and part English.

**Kate:** Are you still married to the same person?

**Leona:** No, he died. I remarried, a childhood sweetheart that I hadn't seen for 50 years. In '84, and he died in '88.

**Kate:** A childhood sweetheart. How did you find him after all those years?

**Leona:** Well, I just happened to be in the library one day and I saw a telephone book in Montana and I thought, “I wonder if Corry is still alive.” I looked in the phone book and there was his name and address, so I wrote him a letter. His wife had died previously, and so we got together and we got married.

**Kate:** Wow, what a story.

**Leona:** His wife had died several years before. I would have made big page of the paper here. We had a real nice four years together.

**Kate:** Now you're here in Las Vegas, and you're close to your…

**Leona:** I've lived here since 1944.

**Kate:** That's because your sister Mary came out here?

**Leona:** Yes, my husband went overseas and there was nothing in Montana of course to make a livelihood with, so I came down here and went to work. I worked Flamingo for 20 years, cocktail waitress.

**Kate:** In the hotel?

**Leona:** Flamingo hotel.

**Kate:** Hilton?

**Leona:** Flamingo. Yeah, you know.

**Kate:** The Hilton?

**Leona:** It was Flamingo when I first went there. It's nothing like it was then. I retired in '67, I retired.

**Kate:** How is it different now? How is Las Vegas different than it used to be?

**Leona:** Oh, it used to be so much fun. There was 10,000 population when I came here. Now it's a million. You knew everybody in town and now I know more people in the cemetery than I do on the streets.

**Kate:** Oh.

**Leona:** It's the truth. Everybody is dying and all the hotels have changed. So big now. It's not fun like it used to be.

**Kate:** Is it more commercial than it used to be or?

**Leona:** Oh yeah. Everybody was… It was small and everybody knew everyone. It was friendly and very nice.

**Kate:** You liked it better then than now?

**Leona:** Oh yes. Although I'm not going to… I still like it. I wouldn't live any place else. I really like it. I like… The winters are so pretty. Summers compliments are miserable, they're miserable everywhere if it’s hot. Back East, I have step-daughter who lives back in Minneapolis, and she [inaudible 00:23:06] in Washington D.C area. When it's hot back there, it's miserable.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Leona:** I like it I guess and I've all my friends here and I play a lot of bridge and I wouldn't move any place else. I usually get out of the heat in the summer time.

**Kate:** Are you happy that your parents came to the states?

**Leona:** Yes, yes I am.

**Kate:** You said you went to Ellis Island.

**Leona:** My younger sister, Josephine, in Oregon and I took a trip in '92. We left the first of September, we returned the end of November. We drove by car, she met me here and we went to Montana to visit our sister, Cecil, and we went to Mount Rushmore, visited a friend in Minnesota [unclear 00:30:52] Niagara Falls.

We went to New York City. We left our car, however, in White Plains. We took to train. Then we went up to Maine, Pearl Harbor then we went back down, we skipped the New York. We went south and we went to Annapolis where my step daughter, no … Washington D.C where my step daughter lives, but I'd been there several times before so.

Then we went to small piece, Blue Ridge and through Tennessee and then we went to Maine then to Florida, and we got to Fort Lauderdale, we had a cruise all booked but something happened while we were travelling and it was cancelled and we got our money back.

Then we went Disney land and what else? Cyprus gardens and then we went to New Orleans for four days. Then we went into Houston, Texas and we visited friends there.

**Kate:** Did you ever go to Ellis Island in this whole trip?

**Leona:** Oh, yeah. We went on tour.

**Kate:** To Ellis island?

**Leona:** Yeah, we took a bus to New York City.

**Kate:** Why were you interested in seeing Ellis Island?

**Leona:** Because our parents landed there. I was there before. My sister, Cecil and Joe, her husband in Montana and I took a trip to their motor home two different times, '77 and '78. The first time we went to- we stayed with friends in New Jersey right across the river from New York, and we went and they took the surround and we went to Ellis Island but it was closed at that time.

We went to Statue of Liberty but Ellis Island was not open. This time, Joey and I took this regular rest to New York City. You couldn't possibly see New York City on your own. Although with, when we were there before, they had a bus tour that you could take for a dollar and a half for all day, and you could get off and on the same bus. I don’t know if they still have it. We didn't pursue it. This time, Ellis Island was open. Joey and I went.

**Kate:** What was your impression?

**Leona:** Well, it was vivid terror to me. That was no impression.

**Kate:** Did your parents ever talk about the Ellis Island before?

**Leona:** Not really.

**Kate:** They talk about the quarantine being quarantined?

**Leona:** Oh yeah. They talked about being quarantined.

**Kate:** What did they say about it? Just…

**Leona:** They just took it as a matter of course I guess if they had, it was one of the things they had to do.

**Kate:** Did they say why they were quarantined?

**Leona:** Probably for disease.

**Kate:**  You don't know what disease?

**Leona:** No.

**Kate:** Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for helping us out.

**Leona:** Well, I hope to make something. Here's something to make it a little more interesting. We wish the best if we'd had more time, you know. This tour that we were on, we just had extra amount of time to spend Statue of Liberty. We had kissed the ferry back to the battery and then the bus that we were on was gone but we got another bus with the same company, which was really great because they took us places the other bus hadn't taken us.

**Kate:** Yeah, there's lots to see in here.

**Leona:** Oh, one day is not nearly enough but I'd seen so much before and my sister wasn't too impressed. She was impressed but she did not like that many people and the rush, she said, “Nobody walks around here, they just run,” and she was like goes up by slow by quiet although it wasn’t quite as hectic as Vegas but although she comes to Vegas all the time, right now she's in Mexico on a trip.

**Kate:** One last question that I fancy is that do you somehow still feel Dutch in anyway?

**Leona:** No, I'm proud of my Dutch heritage. I really am.

**Kate:** How do you feel Dutch in any way?

**Leona:** Because I'm born Dutch, I've got Dutch blood. I'm proud of Holland, it's a beautiful country.

**Kate:** Are you interested in it historically and … I mean do you read about Holland and …?

**Leona:** Well I’ve travelled back top to the bottom, it's such a small country. When my sister, Anne and I went after our stay, we left our mother in Holland with her sisters which put her nose really out of joint.

She wanted to go with us and she was … Well it was in '69, she was born in '73, I don’t know how old that makes her. '79, and she was in her 80s, her early 80s. Yeah, because she died four years later and she must have been 84 because she died when she was 83.

She didn’t like it because we took this trip without her but we took regular tours of Holland, you know, Vienna, Rome, Paris, the whole nine yards, and then when we returned, we rented a car, and she and I took the two aunts and my mother on a tour of Holland. Now we've got build-in tour guides.

They've lived there all their lives. We just zigzagged all through and we spent eight days on that little tiny country. We saw really all of Holland. That was a highlight also.

**Kate:** I’d like to say I’d like to thank you for helping us. I’ll sign off. This is Kate Moore in Las Vegas, Nevada, on January 22nd, 1994, with Leona Hilla, for the Ellis Island oral history project.