**Kate:**  Kate Moore. I'm in Denville, New Jersey with George Moore, June 2nd 1993. George Moore is from England. His year of immigration was 1947 at the age of 26. Where were you born?

**George:** In Barrow-in-Furness which is in the North-Western part of England.

**Kate:**  And what size town was Barrow-in-Furness?

**George:**  Probably at that time I would imagine about 40,000 people.

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

**George:**  John James Moore and he was an iron worker.

**Kate:**  What was your mother's name and occupation?

**George:**  Sarah Moore and she was a housewife.

**Kate:**  Could you name all your brothers and sisters?

**George:**  My eldest sister is Doreen, my next sister was Mary and the youngest is Brenda.

**Kate:**  What kind of dwelling did you live in?

**George:**  We had moved to Blackpool which is on the west coast of England, again in the northern side of England. When we lived in three or four and we lived in a suburb of Blackpool called Leyton, which was about a mile from the Irish Sea.

We lived in a row house which had the three small bedrooms and for the time, an innovation which was an inside bathroom, small front room and a kitchen and a little kitchen garden in the back of the house.

**Kate:** Was it heated?

**George:** Well, it wasn't heated centrally. We had fire places in each room and so we would have to build a fire in the main fireplace which was flanked by ovens where the baking was done and if we wanted to heat the bedrooms, then we carried some fire from the main fireplace up into the bedroom fireplace.

**Kate:**  Was this row house in or out of town?

**George:** It was in a small suburb of Blackpool and at that time I guess would be considered to be out of town.

**Kate:**  Did you keep animals at all?

**George:**  We had dogs at various times and during the war, during World War II, we kept chickens for eggs. I personally had ferrets which I used to hunt rabbits.

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

**George:**  My mother, father and my three sisters.

**Kate:**  So, you lived basically in the same row house alone?

**George:**  Yes.

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

**George:** My mother did the cooking.

**Kate:**  And what was your favorite food at that time?

**George:**  Well, we did a lot of fishing and so I guess my favorite food was fish and particularly shellfish of which there was plenty around us.

**Kate:**  Did you ever help cook at all?

**George:**  Yes, I did. When my sisters were born, my mother had a midwife come in. We didn't have a doctor and she didn't go to hospital at the time, so I would do the cooking during the time the children were born and until she got back up on her feet again.

**Kate:**  What was meal time like there?

**George:**  Well, we would start out in the morning with the usual fairly hearty English breakfast of the eggs and bacon or ham and sometime sausage and fried tomatoes and field mushrooms.

Lunch time was really a main meal at our house and then we would call it dinner, which would really often be a boiled dinner with boiled potatoes and some meat or fish and lots of garden vegetable then would have a teatime which would be at about 5 or 5:30 consisting of sandwiches and we have a present tea. That would be a lighter meal.

Then we would have the fourth meal of the day which we call supper, which was usually about 8 or 9 O'clock at night and would be fish and chips or steak and kidney puddings or something of that kind. They always believe you should go to bed with a full meal in your stomach at that time.

**Kate:**  When you lived in Blackpool, were there other family members who lived nearby?

**George:**  Yes, my stepfather's mother lived just a few doors away. During the bombing of Barrow-in-Furness, where I was born, I had gone to the town to bring my uncle and aunt and her four children to Blackpool to get them away from the heavy bombing that was taking place. They lived about two or three miles away from us.

**Kate:**  Did you see your family often who live nearby?

**George:**  Not too often. Obviously, the family of my stepfather's mother were there and her sons were my best friends. Her other sons’ were my best friends.

**Kate:**  Well this is related to, were you especially close to someone in your family?

**George:**  Well yes. I was close to my second sister Mary I think the most, and we had a very close relationship and friendship all of our lives.

**Kate:** Could you tell any anecdotes about family members that would characterize any one of them?

**George:**  Well, we lived a very relatively simple life and I used to do quite a bit of hunting and fishing and so we ate the wild rabbits and sometimes birds. We would go out and collect water hens eggs from the lakes and ponds and we had those for breakfast in the morning quite often.

We raised our own chickens as I mentioned and we really required very little from the stores. We would get roasted pork from what we called a swill man. He was a fellow that came around once a week to collect the food refuse that we put out for him and as a reward for that at Christmas we would get roasted pork.

I don't know of any particular anecdotes that would characterize our family. We were a very friendly family. Mary, my second sister and I, would go out often very early in the mornings to look for field mushrooms or sometimes we would go out shooting. She was ten years younger than I was but she followed me around wherever I went.

**Kate:**  What was religious life like there? What denomination were you?

**George:**  Well, I belonged to the Church of England for a long time when I was young. For a while my mother had sent us to a little mission. Eventually we [inaudible 00:08:10] but essentially we belonged to the Church of England.

The Church attendance by the parents was very sporadic if non-existent for long periods of time. I sang in the in the church choir of a large Church of England. Later I joined the Unitarian Church mainly because they taught ballroom dancing and I was one of the teachers so I became very interested in that religion for a while.

**Kate:**  Could you describe holiday celebrations, food or music, special activities, gift you gave etcetera?

**George:**  Well, the holiday at Christmas of course was the biggest holiday, and we had all kinds of customs as I remember of welcoming a dark-haired man into the house on Christmas Eve and he bringing coals to the house for good luck. We would go caroling around the neighborhood and we were always welcomed at the various houses.

We would have the cups of mead or wassail. Christmas was generally a very fine time. We had Christmas crackers which are the things a bon-bons that you sit at the table pull and outcome the paper hats or little toys. We always at Christmas would have the goose which we had kept and fed very religiously, if you like, all year long so that is very, very fat goose. That would be our Christmas treat.

The goose was very useful to us because it not only gave us the meat for our Christmas dinner, but also the goose grease was used for all kinds of things like waterproofing boots or as a salve on people's chests when they had a cold. Just a very, very useful ointment if you like.

And mother would make an English Christmas cake, which she'd prepare two or three months in advance [inaudible 00:10:38] on it that, a very hard icing on it and marzipan underneath. It would be decorated with a little Father Christmas and little houses and trees and whatever and that was something that we looked forward to.

Also there’d be plum pudding, and in it mother would have put the little silver gifts, little tiny silver gifts so that each one of those would get a gift when we ate the plum pudding. So that was a time of great merriment.

As far as gifts are concerned the gifts that we exchanged were quite simple because we didn't have a lot of money. We didn't have a Christmas tree in the sense that we know it in America. We went out into the woods and would cut a branch that looked like it would look nice if it was decorated then that we would all sit around and wind each of the twigs on the branch with green crepe and cut the edge of the crepes, so they were fringed and that would eventually be our Christmas tree with the with live candles on it in little candle holders.

The rooms would be decorated with a with paper decorations, with paper bells and streamers and so on. Christmas, it was a very, very merry time. The day after Christmas, Boxing Day which went back in history as a day of giving to charity was a day of rest for us and recapping all of the joys of the Christmas time.

**Kate:** What about Guy Fawkes Day?

**George:** Well, Guy Fawkes Day when we were children was a very, very exciting event. Guy Fawkes Day occurred on the 5th of November and months beforehand we would go around chanting. Usually a crowd of boys at the time with a few girls like my sister Mary, who was a tomboy, with us and we would go around to the various houses singing, “Remember, remember 5th of November,” and collecting for fireworks and at the same time wood for a bonfire.

The bonfires were neighborhood bonfires, great piles of wood and branches and whatever we could collect would go into the bonfire and somebody would have to guard it all the time because of the neighborhoods who had bonfires would raid our bonfire for our wood and we would do the same thing to them.

We would have a wheelbarrow, we called it a cart, it had two wheels on. We always made them ourselves from boxes and we would have an effigy of Guy Fawkes which we would wheel around again asking for contributions for fireworks and any firewood that people might want to give us to make our pile a lot bigger.

And then on the night of the 5th of November, the Guy Fawkes was put on top of the fire heap and the fire was lighted, and all the fireworks were set off and we had a great time. Then when the fire died down and the embers were glowing, we would all sit around and roast potatoes in the embers, so we would finish up with a roast potatoes supper at the end of the evening.

**Kate:** What about your school life? Could you describe your school life to us?

**George:** Well, school life at that time was very strict in England. I started school when I was five and did quite well. At the age of 11, they had the exam which was called the Elevenses which was used to, I guess segregate children into any of three categories.

The top category I guess of the brightest, so called brightest children would go to grammar school, and the middle group in the exam would go to a commercial school where they would be trained for business and secretarial work or commerce. The third group would go to trade schools where they would learn carpentry and plumbing and a lot of shop work and so on and so forth.

In my case, I went to a very fine grammar school, which was a fee paying grammar school and I was given a scholarship there and attended that school from the age of 11 to 16 and a half. That was quite a hard time for me because we really didn't have the money to outfit me properly in a proper school blazer and hat and the usual uniforms.

The cricket clothes were very expensive, and we could never afford those. Everything I got was sort of secondhand. We played a lot of rugby. I was captain of the Bantamweight rugby team for the school for about 3 years. I can't say that I really enjoyed that school. I should have probably put out more effort but it wasn't the happiest time of my life.

**Kate:** Where was that school exactly?

**George:** That was right in Blackpool and it's not there anymore. They now turned it into a Salvation Army headquarters I believe.

**Kate:** Was it crowded, the school?

**George:** No, it was not crowded. The classes were, as I remember, relatively small, about 20 or so with a very rigid disciplinary system. Where we went in the morning we would have to... of course we all wore uniforms, school Blazers and caps, and when we arrived in the morning, the first thing we would do is probably stop at the tuck shop to get some sweets, candies that is.

Then when we went into the school, we would have to take off our shoes and the caps of course, and when we took our shoes off and we would have slippers there waiting, galoshes we called them or something to put on while we're in the school. If you arrived late, you automatically lined up outside the headmaster's study. He would come out, and you would stick out your right hand and he would cane it.

**Kate:** Do you remember specific teachers or playmates in that school?

**George:** Well, I remember some specific teachers. There was young Drip Murdock for instance who was a Trotskyite and a very unusual and gentle fellow who wore odd socks to class and his suits never quite matched and all kinds of things. He was an anachronism in that kind of school.

There was Bill Breeze, who was the bluff geography teacher, [? Haythongsweight 00:28:47], who taught history and mathematics I believe. Drip Murdoch, did I mention Drip?  I probably mentioned Drip Murdoch, right? So there were quite a few of them.

The headmaster, the original headmaster, I'm trying to think of his name and it doesn't come to my tongue right now but in the event he was a Greek scholar, and if you didn't take Greek, I don't think he had very much use for you in the school. So everybody tried a little Greek, and we took 4 years or so of Latin and the same period of time for French, and generally try to get an education befitting a future gentleman, I suppose.

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

**George:** My favorite subject was rugby to tell you the truth.

**Kate:** You went on after that. Did you have any other schooling after that?

**George:** Yeah, I went to Blackpool technical college for a while and took some commercial courses because I felt that that was what was promising in the area. That of course was then. We were then at a period when... Let's see, that would be 1937, 38 when things were turning very nasty in the continent of Europe and everybody in England at least we realized that it looked like we were going to be in trouble.

As a matter fact, the Spanish Civil War occurred about that time, I can't remember the dates, but I remember trying to get into the volunteers to go and fight against Franco. But at that time, I was only 16 so they wouldn't let me go which it as it turned out quite fortunate or else I wouldn't be here giving this very poor interview right now. Where was I now? What were we talking about? Oh, what?

**Kate:** What other schooling you had after where you said technical schooling.

**George:** So that happened and then of course I went to work at a company called Robert Fielding [inaudible 00:31:29] road in Blackpool. This was a company that build houses, and it was rather good education for me because they did everything for themselves.

They had their own clay pits and they made their own brick and they had a brick works and they had a great sawmills and mill shops where they did finish the carpentry and millwork.

My mother sold me into slavery as an article clerk to that firm, which meant that she was supposed to pay but I think she got me in free and signed articles where I was bound to the chief of the firm as an article clerk which was a something like a Dickensian atmosphere.

We worked standing up at stand up desks and used India ink and pens with long, steel nibs. Everything was done in India ink, so you weren't allowed to make any mistakes. They had female employee who was a cashier, Mrs. Scofield was assigned the duty of making sure that I was properly dressed when I came to work and that I washed behind my ears and that I attended church every Sunday. It was a very, very strict thing. We had lots of tea in the office and a fireplace that was going merrily all the time. It was a hard but well taken education for me.

Then came 1939 and the writing was on the wall. Mr. Chamberlain was already making his trips to Berchtesgaden, and I think most people knew what was going to happen. We didn't feel that we were quite ready for it and I think Mr. Chamberlain may have gained us a little time, a little breathing room, while let people prepared for what was inevitable.

One of the effects was that the companies, like the small company, relatively small company I was working for, started to retool or reassess the future. They knew there was not going to be a great deal of home building for instance if war broke out and so they started to cut back and regroup and a lot of people were casualties in that in that they were put out of work.

I was put out of work there at that company, and then I went to work as an assistant to a surveyor on some plants that were being built for the government. One of them who was to make war gases and I work there. Then of course in September, Hitler invaded Poland and at that time war broke out, England declared war and everything changed at that particular time in our lives.

I joined the home guard, which was a regiment, an army of territorial soldiers. Some of them were 70, 75 years of age, just like I am now. They'd fought in the Boer War and in the first Great War. Some of us were very young. We had wooden rifles to start with and shotgun and pikes whatever we could lay our hands on.

We went to drill every day, and then we would start to at night and guard the hospitals and the airfields and patrol the roads and look for parachutists which we were convinced would arrive. I remember one time we stopped an old lady on Who Hill late at night and we became convinced that she was a German parachutist in disguise. We had a hard time with her until she started to lay about with her umbrella and we just retreated.

On patrol, we'd stop at my mum's house, and we'd have a pot pie and some cocoa. There were five of us that were good buddies and always on patrol with each other, and one or two of them survived the war as I did luckily.

So that went on and we expected to be invaded and as a matter of fact, I remember thinking that it would be a good thing if Hitler invaded us because we were convinced that we would beat them quite easily because we knew all edge rows and the fences and the little places that we knew we could trap Germans in and we knew we had it all planned out what we're going to do with them. Then in 1940, I joined the Royal Air Force. I don't know whether you want me to go on with this. Where are we now?

**Kate:** In terms of the education, what education you received from the Royal Air Force.

**George:** Well, I went down in College Cambridge for a while, I think probably six months or so. I had originally joined as a wireless operator air gunner. As fate would have it by, I was posted, that was billeted if you like, in my hometown, where the big Royal Air Force radio school was located.

I did that for a while, but then I got the impression along with one or 2 of my friends that there wasn't much future in being an air gunner and bomber command because the turnover was so great. Lots and lots of casualties, and I really wanted to be a pilot so I re- mastered to pilot I was sent into pilot training to Cambridge initially

We passed through Cambridge and I went to... Where did I go from there? I went to an advanced flying training base and it so happened that one of my best friends, Eric Hawksford, who died in a raid during the war, and I were sitting in [unknown 00:29:07], which is the British equivalent I guess of the US open.

It was inside the base so it would be something like a commissary or something like that. When some officer came in and said, "Would any of you fellows like to volunteer to go to the United States?" Now this was now and one when America came into the war.

**Kate:** You were at 1941.

**George:** Yeah, somehow we'd gotten to 1941. I guess it was quite a bit of time in between but in any event, we were walking us through the airfield and my friend Eric said, "How about stopping for a cup of char and a crumpet or a muffin or something?”

So we went into this [unknown 00:30:08] room and the officer came in and said, "Is there anybody here would like to volunteer to go the United States?" because America just gotten into the war at that time.

I'd always had a desire to see the United States. In our living room in Blackpool from the time I was a little infant, I used to look at a painting on the wall which was called *The Boyhood of Raleigh*. I think the original is in the Tate Museum in London and it was a picture of Sir Walter Raleigh talking, telling stories to two boys.

They were dressed of course in the clothes of that time and pointing across the Atlantic towards America. He was obviously telling stories about his expeditions to the Americas and that always got me interested.

So I and Eric volunteered along with a few others. Then we came to the United States and first through Moncton, New Brunswick and then on to a US naval air station at Grosse Ile, Michigan. I think that’s someone that George Bush went to initially to. So I took a training with the US navy there, naval air force there, I think for about four or five months or six months maybe.

At that base they had a USO on an island called Elbert Island which was the home that it belonged to the Old’s Family of the automobile fame and that's where I met the woman who would become my wife of Juanita Clerk and I'll say she was a USO hostess with the moistest at that time. I guess we met while we were dancing to black magic or something like that. Then of course we established a very strong relationship and became sort of engaged.

Then I was sent to Pensacola where I finished up the training with the US Naval Air Force. I got US Navy pilot wings and I also had my Royal Air Force pilot wings, so I really felt that I was well equipped. Then we went from there back again to Moncton, New Brunswick as usual which was a big holding camp for air crews in Canada or for the United States and Canada and then onto Charlotte Town, Prince Edward Island for some training in long range navigation and then from there back to England.

**Kate:** When you finally decided to come to America to emigrate, was it because you knew someone who was in America already?

**George:** Well, I had met the woman who was to be my wife, Juanita. I guess it was in 1942 at that time, I think it was 42 at Grosse Ile in Michigan. We got sort of engaged and had talked about getting married but I decided at the time that I might not make it through the war. That was a good decision to make because my friends were already getting killed by the dozens, and British fleet air pilots that she knew and had trained there were dead before any of us got back to England.

So there didn't seem to be any point in getting married and tying her up to an Englishman somewhere. We were engaged then for five years and never saw each other. I will say that I was true blue and I hope she was. I'm sure she was true blue too.

**Kate:** Then you did want to come to America?

**George:** Well yes. I had already made that commitment and I didn't think she was going to be happy in England, so I decided that I was going to have to come to America and that was on my agenda the whole time.

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

**George:** Oh, we were talking about how my mother felt about it. Well I had already been away from home during the war for close to four years or so and part of that time in Africa. As I was saying the people in that area were not overly emotional so she never objected to me leaving. I'm sure the family as a whole thought I was really deserting Great Britain and to become an American. I don't think that they really liked that, but they didn't object vociferously to me about it.

**Kate:** How did your father feel?

**George:** Well, the same way.

**Kate:** When you left, did anyone give you a goodbye party before you left?

**George:** No I went over to... I remember the night before I left, I went over to my friend Bill Broadley's house and he was one of the fellows that had gotten through the war. He and I were in the home guard together and his father as a matter of fact, was a sergeant in charge of the platoon that we belonged to. So we sat there and just talked a while. We sat around and talked about our boyhood and what a good life it had been.

Nobody said, "I'll miss you," or anything like that. They just accepted the fact that I was leaving. The next morning I got up and mom made me a good breakfast and came to the door as I took my suitcase out and we said goodbye. I'm sure she knew that I was going to be gone for forever, but she never shed tears or anything like that. That wasn't the thing to do for those people in that part of the world.

**Kate:** Well, when you left, what did you take with you? How much luggage did you pack?

**George:** I just had one rather battered old suitcase that I had. I don't really know what was in it. I guess I probably had a change of underwear or something and some few shirts, whatever. I'd gotten rid of most of my stuff before I left, so I was traveling relatively light. I didn't have a lot of stuff at all. I just had a suitcase with the bare necessities in it.

**Kate:** Did you take anything special along with you that was a memory of your family?

**George:** I don't think so. I don't think I did. Come to think of it. No, no. Well yes, I did. I had an axe head that had been forged probably a couple of hundred years ago that at that time that had been given to me by my grandfather. For some reason or another, I developed an affection for this axe which had been pounded on an anvil by an ancient blacksmith somewhere and I'd used it as a boy to chop wood for the fireplace and so on. So I cut the handle off of the- hacked off the axe and that was the heaviest part of my luggage was the axe head that now I have sitting in my workshop.

**Kate:** When you took only that suitcase, what did you leave behind in terms of belongings?

**George:** Well, as you know I had just relatively come out of the military so I didn't have many belongings of any kind. In the Royal Air Force or any other branch of the British Military, there was no fuss about... when you got out, you were demobilized. I was never discharged so I guess the Queen could still call on me if she was in real trouble, which I think she is, but in any event I'm still a demobilized pilot in the [inaudible 00:39:36].

When we got out, we went in a great big [unknown 00:39:42] and when it walked in one door and put our uniforms and socks and shoes and whatever on a big pile and walked through the [unknown 00:39:53] picking out the suit that might approximate the right size and the shirt and the pair of shoes, and at the end, you picked up a raincoat that might fit you and walked out the other door and you were a civilian. That was all the stuff I really had.

Now at home, I had some shotguns and some very good split bamboo fishing rods, both for trout and salmon and bottom fishing. I sold all of those to pay for my passes to the United States, so I didn't have any of that personal stuff. Some stuff I left behind which were things that I'd received as a boy as presents and I didn't see any point in bringing those along.

**Kate:** So when you traveled to America, you went by yourself basically.

**George:** Yes, I did. I did go by myself. I met people on the ship on the way over of course but I didn't know any of them before then.

**Kate:** In what port did you leave from?

**George:** I left from Southampton.

**Kate:** And how did you get from Southampton from Blackpool?

**George:** I went by train. It was the only way to get there at the time. I couldn't walk that far. It was a long way to walk.

**Kate:** What was the journey like on the train?

**George:** On the train? Well, it was a journey like any other journey on a train. I don't know why you asked that question, it was just sitting in a railroad carriage and watching the countryside going by and listening to the rails going clickety clickety clickety clickety click.

**Kate:** What was the name of the ship you sailed on?

**George:** It was the US Marine Falcon. It belonged to the US lines. It was an ex-liberty ship, a cargo ship really.

**Kate:** Once you got to the port from the train, did you have to wait for the ship? Did you stay overnight?

**George:** I stayed overnight in Southampton with a brother of my stepfather who had become an official in Southampton. I stayed the night there and then went down to the dock and the ship was waiting for me.

**Kate:** What was it like waiting, knowing that you were going to go away and possibly never coming back?

**George:** Well, I remember standing on the dock looking up at the ship and saying, "Hey, what in the hell are you doing this for [inaudible 00:42:34]. Why don't you just go back home? Where it's comfortable." And if someone had then been there and sort of talked to me a little bit, I might just have turned around, but I didn't.

**Kate:** Did your family members that you stayed with that night, did they see you off?

**George:** No, no. These weren't really family members. It was just a place I was going to stay for the night.

**Kate:** Well when the ship left, do you remember the month and the year that was?

**George:** This is March of 1947.

**Kate:** What was it like on the ship? What was the accommodations that you had?

**George:** Well I don't think you could call them accommodations. That would be giving them too much more than they do in the way of description. The ship was a living hell. What had happened was that at that time, after the war, everyone practically it seemed in the world was either going back to where they came from or trying to escape from where they came from and go somewhere else. It was very, very difficult to get passage anywhere.

After I had visited the American embassy in London and obtained a visa, I tried to get a passage and couldn't for many months until I met someone who knew a fellow who could get me on the ship. It turned out to be the Marine Falcon and the fare was as I remember very reasonable and rightly so for what was going to happen to me. That was the ship that I came on.

There were very few people got on in England. There was Carl Downs and his wife who had a boiler manufacturing business in Detroit. There was an Irish girl who was going to Brooklyn to become a maid, a young Frenchman who was going to be a translator at the new United Nations Organization. When I got on the ship, I thought, "My God, it can't be going with these few people," and sure enough it sailed, I think for Le Havre.

When we got to Le Havre, I remember it got there at night and suddenly the ship started to fill up with hundreds of Jewish people who were I think Eastern Jews. They all were relatively short in stature I remember and wore long coats with Astrakhan colors and wore black their hats all the time. The women were dressed in babushkas and had their legs wrapped with leggings and they trooped on and on and on into the bowels of the ship.

There were no real cabins [inaudible 00:45:57]. There were mess decks. So the ship filled up with these people and I heard later that they were going to New York for transshipment to Israel, because, and again this is just what I heard, that the British had blockaded the Mediterranean to direct immigration from Europe to Israel for some reason or other. That was the compliment that was on board the ship at that time. It was full of people.

**Kate:** What class did you travel? Was there a class at all?

**George:** No, no. Just steerage.

**Kate:** What was the food like on board?

**George:** Well, it wasn't spectacular by any means. They had mess decks and you carried tin trays of food from the galley down to the mess deck and all ate together. I guess on the way over, we probably ate a lot of SOS and hot tea and whatever, chip beef, a lot of scrambled eggs. I really don't know. I can't remember.

**Kate:** You hadn't taken any food with you?

**George:** No, no. I wish that I had.

**Kate:** Where did you sleep? Were you allowed on deck too?

**George:** Yeah, you could go on deck if you wanted to, and as a matter of fact, we spend most of our time on deck at one time because of the problems the ship ran into. You could go anywhere on the ship you liked, but there was nothing to see on the ship. It was a cargo vessel.

**Kate:** And where did you sleep?

**George:** I slept in the bunk in the mess deck with a lot of other people.

**Kate:** When you said it was hell, how was it hell?

**George:** Well because in March 47, there was a terrible storm in the Atlantic, and we were in an unballasted ship, if you like. As I said, this was an ex-liberty ship, so they got into this terrible, terrible storm in which I understand several ships sank. Is it sank or sunk?

**Kate:** Sank.

**George:** Sank, thank you. I don't know. We were in real trouble and the ship every time it raised up, it would raise the bow out 30 or 40 feet out of the water. It would come down and clang and spread out on the sea. All the toilets would spout water and people were running around and screaming and praying and gathering in groups.

Carl Down and I and his wife and the other two or three people I mentioned, we decided we'd be better off on the deck. We went up on the deck and found an open cabin on the deck and we sat there for two or three days. The ship hooved to in the middle of the Atlantic in the storm for several days, I think the trip, if I remember rightly, took 17 days.

It was very strange for the Downs because on the way over to England, he had flown with his wife, managed to get an airfare from the United States to England and they'd flown over. His wife got sick from the plane and she said, "I don't want to fly back." So he arranged to get on this ship which was, for her, jumping out of the frying pan into a very hot fire. She was worse off on the ship than she would have been being sick on the plane going back.

**Kate:** Did you get sick at all?

**George:** No, not particularly. I don't remember getting sick.

**Kate:** And your companions?

**George:** No, no we weren't very sick. A lot of people were. I think the people from Europe, from the continent of Europe that I'd mentioned had never been near the sea before. I was raised on the sea and spent a lot of time on the sea. But I don't think they'd ever been on an ocean before and they were in a big mess on that boat. The whole boat was in a big mess, come to think of it. It was a very harrowing experience that I wouldn't want to go through again.

**Kate:** Were there activities on the boat for people?

**George:** Just throwing up and things like that.

**Kate:** Do you have any anecdotes or stories about the boat trip?

**George:** No. It was one of the most miserable periods of my life. There were five of us sat down and played poker day and night for three or four days and that's an anecdote. But it was a very miserable experience.

**Kate:** Well, do you remember seeing land for the first time after this trip?

**George:** Yes, we did. We saw land, thank God. If we hadn't we would have been in real trouble and yes we saw land after the trip.

**Kate:** Do you remember the feeling of first seeing land?

**George:** Well I thought I was very pleased that we'd arrived. I was very thankful we'd arrived. I then I guess found out the true value of prayer.

**Kate:** Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time?

**George:** Yeah, we did. We saw the Statue of Liberty coming in. It was very thrilling experience to see it through the mist that you came into the harbor under the bridge. It was a very moving experience.

**Kate:** What were your first impressions of New York City as you came in?

**George:** Well, I'm going to New York City when we came in. We could see it on the skyline. It was a huge panorama of buildings on the skylines that I'd never seen before. London wasn't like that. London didn't have in those days anything above about four or five stories. It was an experience to look at the New York skyline.

**Kate:** How did you get from the ship to Ellis Island?

**George:** Well, after this trying time I had, I don't remember much of anything except that I to off the ship which was the thing that was foremost in my mind. I really don't know how we got to the island, whether we were transshipped when the ship docked right at the island or something. For some reason, that part blanked right out. All I know is that we got off and I was with Carl Down and his wife and these other two or three people, the young Irish girl and the Frenchman and two or three other young people. We'd all got off together.

**Kate:** Do you remember anything from Ellis Island, the inside of the building where you were put through for processing?

**George:** I remember us being in a big hall. The thing that I don't remember is the other people that I said came on at Le Havre getting off the ship. I don't remember them getting off at all. I know we walked into this big hall and I had the papers and so on and so forth and so did everybody else and we didn't have any problem. Everybody seemed pleasant in an official sort of way. They weren't giving us laids or anything like that. They just let us go through.

**Kate:** Do you remember? Were you frightened or excited at that time?

**George:** No, no I'd been through World War II. I wasn't frightened or excited by that kind of thing anymore. I was. How could I say it? I was very, very pleased to be there and looking forward to where I was going.

**Kate:** What were you wearing? What were the people you were with wearing as you went through? Do you remember?

**George:** We were wearing suits. In those days, people didn't wear casual clothes like they do now. We were wearing suit jackets and so on and we looked like ordinary people.

**Kate:** Was Ellis Island crowded and was it clean? Do you remember any of that?

**George:** I thought it was very clean. And it wasn't crowded as I mentioned. I don't remember these folks who constitute most of the compliment on the ship getting off at that time, so I don't know what happened to them. But they certainly wasn't crowded when we went through.

**Kate:** Do you remember the medical examination?

**George:** We didn't get a medical examination. They just looked at our papers and we were on our way.

**Kate:** Did you stay overnight there?

**George:** No, no we went from there I think right to Grand Central Station.

**Kate:** You didn't eat there or have any other...?

**George:** No, we didn't do anything there.

**Kate:** So, how long was this process of you going through Ellis Island?

**George:** Oh, I think about an hour or two. Not more than that.

**Kate:** Was there any entertainment provided or anything while you were waiting?

**George:** At Ellis Island? You're kidding. Why don't you go on to the next question?

**Kate:** Alright, what were your expectations about America before you came?

**George:** I really looked forward to come into the country and it wasn't because I was coming from a life of persecution or privation because I really enjoyed my life up to then. I had a nice home in England and I loved what I was doing, loved the hunting and fishing and the fresh air and the sea and so on.

I didn't have any of that driven type of feeling that I was going to land where the streets were paved with gold or anything like that, and I had been in the United States before. I'd flown with the US Naval Air Force and also for other United States Air Force, the 5th and the 8th Air Force for some time, so I was familiar with Americans. My wife to be was waiting in Detroit, and to tell you the truth that's exactly what I was thinking about.

**Kate:** Where did you go after you left Ellis Island and tell us the trip that you took?

**George:** I took a train trip to Detroit. When I got to Detroit, my wife to be was waiting there for me.

**Kate:** What address in Detroit?

**George:** That was at 82 Batavia Street in River Rouge, Michigan.

**Kate:** When she came to get you in Detroit, how did you get home?

**George:** I think her brother was with her and they drove me in his car back to 82 Batavia Street.

**Kate:** Describe 82 Batavia. What was the house like?

**George:** It was a frame house with a long porch in front. I guess nowadays it would be considered to be an old fashioned house. It was a large house, white frame house.

**Kate:** How many rooms approximately?

**George:** Let's see. There'd be four or five bedrooms and the dining room and the kitchen and the front room and a big basement and a couple of bathrooms. Something like that.

**Kate:** How many people lived in that house at the time?

**George:** When we went there, just Juanita and her mother and her father.

**Kate:** What job in America did you get when you first came here?

**George:** I didn't have any prospects for a job and I didn't really know how to look for a job. But I saw a little advertisement in the local paper that said that in this furniture factory, so called furniture factory, they were offering a dollar an hour.

So, I converted that right away to British currency and realized I was going to be wealthy in about a couple of weeks. I went to work for a dollar an hour to this sort of a sweatshop making dinette furniture and found out that a dollar in America wasn't the same at that time as a dollar converted to British currency.

**Kate:** Were other family members in that household working?

**George:** Yeah, her father was working. I think he worked in the local shipyards at that time. There was a shipyard in River Rouge. I believe that was where it was.

**Kate:** Who else was working beside the father?

**George:** My Juanita, my wife to be, was the office manager at Sharpless Chemicals Corporation, which was located on the Detroit River south of River Rouge.

**George:** Did you experience any bigotry or persecution in America?

**Kate:** Not a bit of it. No, none at all. As a matter of fact quite the reverse. Remember now that I had been in that area in the air force so I knew already from my stay on the Grosse Ile Air Base and particularly at the USO a number of people, so I wasn't really coming into totally strange territory.

**Kate:** Were there other immigrants in your area?

**George:** I was not in contact with other immigrants. Yes, there was. There was another pilot from Britain. He married Trudy McGonagall. He was called Doug Fields. Doug Fields was another pilot who came in at the same time. He survived the war. As a matter of fact, everybody knew he was going to survive the war because he was a real artful dodger all throughout the war. He never got out of training all the time the war was on.

**Kate:** Did you get along with other people in your neighborhood and in River Rouge?

**George:** Yes, very well. They were all nice people. I never had any problems at all with any of the people.

**Kate:** And did other family members live nearby?

**George:** Yeah. Her two sisters lived nearby, Juanita's two sisters and her brother lived nearby and we got along just fine.

**Kate:** What was religious life in America like at that time?

**George:** Well, religious life is taken a lot more serious in the United States than it is certainly in England where in England it's a sort of unnecessary pastime most of the time. But they were really serious about it, particularly in Juanita's family because they were all what they called old fashioned Methodists. I suppose you'd call them that. They really believed in attending church and doing good things in church and so on and so forth. Then I became a Methodist.

**Kate:** Did you live near a house of worship when you were in River Rouge?

**George:** Just around the corner.

**Kate:** And what was that church?

**George:** That was the First Methodist Church.

**Kate:** When did you move from River Rouge and where to did you move?

**George:** Well we got married on June the 6th 1948 and lived with Juanita's mother for about two years until we found a house in Lincoln Park, Michigan which is about five or six miles from River Rouge if that.

**Kate:** Were you satisfied with life in America?

**George:** Yeah, I was very happy. I eventually got a very good job and worked my way up through a corporation. I was very, very happy. I wouldn't want it any other way.

**Kate:** Did any family tragedy occur during the years following your coming to America and if they did, what?

**George:** Well, not in the United States but my sister Mary, the one I was very close to all my life, died at relatively early age and that to me was a great tragedy.

**Kate:** Briefly describe the course of your life, like your marriage, children, your occupation or anecdotes about meeting your spouse, etcetera.

**George:** Well as I mentioned previously, I met my wife at a USO near the US Naval base in Grosse Ile and if there's such a thing as love at first sight, I guess it was that. And we've been that way ever since for the last… As a matter of fact, it's... How long has been since I first met her? 51 years since I first met her. It's been a very happy time. What else did you want to know?

**Kate:** Your children?

**George:** Oh, yeah. We have children. We have three children, two daughters and a son. The eldest daughter was born in 1948, and my next daughter was born in 1953 and son in 55 and they've all done very well academically.

The eldest girl teaches school at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina in the marine base. She teaches high school. My son is a PhD teaching at a University in New York and my daughter is at a University of Helsinki in Finland completing her PhD in linguistics and doing very well at it.

**Kate:** Are you happy that you came to America when you look back over the years and you make an evaluation about what your life could have been or was?

**George:** Well, no one knows what their life could have been but I'm very happy that I came to America and as I said I did very well. I finished up as a director of insurance and real estate at BSF Corporation and it was a good job and something that I was very interested in I was very, very happy.

**Kate:** And what about your family? Were they happy that you chose to come to America?

**George:** I don't think they were particularly happy any more than they weren't particularly sad. It was just a total unemotional experience for me.

**Kate:** Are there any other comments you'd like to make about looking back over your life and coming and immigrating to the states?

**George:** Well not particularly. I think as it turned out, the thing worked out extraordinarily well all around. In later years, I was able to go back to Europe, traveled a lot on business in Europe, went back visited my hometown and my family once or twice a year for many years. So everything worked out very well.

**Kate:** Thank you very much for the interview.

**George:** You're very welcome.