

LS 0145

Lennart Setterdahl: Today it's the 1th of October 1985. I'm sitting together with Mrs Marion Erickson in Rock Island, Illinois. You are the first generation of American?

Marion Erickson: Yes.

Lennart Setterdahl: Both mother and father; - they were Swedish.

Marion Erickson: Born in Sweden.

L: How old were You when You understood that Your mother and father were Swedish?

Marion: Oh!

L: Did You go to the Swedish church service at that time? Do You remember?

Marion: Yes, I did.

L: (? Utelämnad fråga). Did they talk Swedish during the sermons?

Marion: No it all sounded the same and; and a lot of their friends joined the same Swedish Lutheran church.

L: Yes.

Marion: All their accent was all the same to me.

L: Yesb but I mean: the service; was it in English in the 1930s? Do You remember?

Marion: They did one service - (they had two services) - and they did one in Swedish in every Sunday,

L: Oh I see!

Marion: of two of certain point and I don't know what year they changed that, but; for a long time they offered that to the immigrants.

L: It was in the First Lutheran?

Marion: That was the Salem Lutheran, in Moline.

L: The Salem Lutheran.

Marion: mhm.

L: Did You attend the Swedish service with Your parents, or did they go to the English one at that time?

Marion: I think they alternated! - as I remember. They wanted the children to be American,

L: Yes.

Marion: so we attended the Sunday school and; I only remember attending julotta - we always went to that. But I don't recall that I attended the Swedish sermon every Sunday.

L: No.

Marion: I think I was just aware that it was available.

L: Did You understand the Swedish service at that time?

Marion: Oh I understood quite a few of the words.

L: You couldn't understand the mening of it though.

Marion: No, because I knew enough in between of what they were saying.

L: Did Your parents speak Swedish to eachother in Your home?

Marion: To eachother, yes.

L: They did?

Marion: Mhm.

L: Most of the time?

Marion: The most of the time, I think they did. Now I can't remember. They were not so that they wanted the children to retain Swedish. They wanted us to be American.

L: They didn't push it on You.

Marion: No no. They wanted us to be American and to speak good English.

L: Okey.

Marion: So - usually - just to themselves - when they were having a conversation- I could here them speaking in Swedish, but to us they always spoke in English.

L: Oh, they did.

Marion: mhm.

L: And You did never answer them back in Swedish at any time?

Marion: No, no but I picked up Swedish in a hurry, listening to them.

L: Really.

Marion: Yeah - because I was interested.

L: So You got a drift of what they were talking about.

Marion: Oh sure, especially if they were discussing us!

L: So - You were: how many brothers and sisters?

Marion: I had one brother and one sister.

L: They were older than You?

Marion: Yes.

L: Your sister and Your brother didn't use Swedish with Your parents then?

Marion: No, we all knew about the same words.

L: Okey. You were in the same age group then - more or less?

Marion: My sister is seven years older than me and my brother is five years older.

L: I see. Your sister, seven years older, she wasn't able to converse with them in Swedish then?

Marion: Yeah we all really used English, but all three of us children knew the same Swedish words.

L: The Sunday school, it was all in English?

Marion: Yes.

L: The confirmation was all in English?

marion: Yes.

L: And the same for Your older sister?

Marion: Yes.

L: So there was no Swedish influence from the church then?

Marion: No.

L: Did You use table praiers In Your home?

Marion: Oh yeah: - - I Jesu namn _ Till bords vi gå. _ Välsigna Gud till mat vi få. - -

L: Okey. Who read that one; Your mother or Your father, or anyone of You?

Marion: Well some times we said it together - and some times one of us would say it.

L: So anyone of You could say it without any problem.

Marion: Yeah.

L: When You got visitors in Your home, who said the table praier?

Marion: No. I think that might have been

L: It might not have been in Swedish- but

Marion: I thought that wasn't pretty unique that I knew it in Swedish. I was never shy to say it. I recalled saying it. With company too, You mean?

L: Yes.

Marion: mhm.

L: So You were brave enough.

Marion: mhm.

L: You were not afraid to pronounce the words.

Marion: No.

L: You've got the hang of it.

marion: Yeah!

L: You had relations here in the Moline/ Rock Island area.

Marion: Yes.

L: It was uncles and aunts - or?

Marion: Uncles; my mothers brothers were farming here in the area.

L: In (? överhoppat).

Marion: Cambridge; was the first farm. Well: Cambridge and Woodhall and Oledo, in that area.

L: So they came for visits then and You went down to their farms?

Marion: Oh, yes yes. We went out to the farm. That's one of my most vivid memories in the childhood, it's on the Sunday, going out to the farm and bringing home a chicken. A live chicken.

L: Oh, a live one!

Marion: Yes!

L: You came with it home then?

Marion: A-Ha.

L: Or; they lived in Rock Island, Your parents?

Marion: They lived in Moline.

L: In Moline.

Marion: mhm. We'd bring home a rooster, a live rooster.

L: And You kept it for a few days?

Marion: Yes - down in the coal-bin.

L: Oh, I see!

Marion: Yeah and every morning he crowed.

L: So You had to feed him for a couple of weeks then?

Marion: No. It was probably the following weekend, that my father would probably

L: For the Sunday dinner?

Marion: Yes. We'd take it at home on the one Sunday and did have it the following Sunday. But I was always the one that was with him to the coal-bin, cause I had to clime up to show the rooster down to where he was.

L: Oh, I see.

Marion: Yeah!

L: You had cousins then down in Oledo and in Cambridge?

marion: Yes.

L: Did they speak any Swedish? Do You remember?

Marion: No.

L: No.

Marion: No. They did not seem to do that.

L: No. Did they talk about old Swedish stories and reminiscing back?

Marion: Well once in awhile the parents would speak in Swedish to one another. But usually the children were out in the barnyard - You know - and playing.

L: Playing.

Marion: Yeah. But if ever You were inside the house, there would be a little Swedish things said back and forth - You know - every once in awhile. And they probably discussed a lot of things that we didn't hear.

L: Because You were

Marion: I was buzy with the animals.

L: Did You play the same games in Cambridge and in Aledo as in Moline at that time?

Marion: No, because we had more things to do on the farm. We could ride the horse.

L: I see. You were a part of running the farm.

Marion: Oh yeah and gather the eggs, feed the chickens and - You know - the cows would get to come in. I did the milking.

L: I see!

Marion: I loved the farm.

L: Who encouraged You to do that?

Marion: Usually they couldn't get rid of me!

L: I see. So You were interested in the farm life?

Marion: Oh yes. I loved it. I went out one summer and helped without pay.

L: Oh I see. How about Your brother and Your other sister?

Marion: My brother would go out without pay, cause he could do more than me; manual work. Yeah. I went with him to stay on the top of the hey. I suppose I felt that I was doing a big job, but I was a kind of to little to be there, but I wanted to be with.

L: So that were more interesting than to play with the neighbour kids in Moline then?

Marion: Oh yes.

L: Because You've got Your free life - and the animals.

Marion: Oh yeah. And they had a pony to ride and - You know - no saddle, or anything. You just rode that bare back. And it was fun to go out and get the cows and there was always that big dog, that got with, to bring the cows home.

L: So that was the completely life. Did You talk to Your dad about getting a farm perhaps? They weren't interested?

Marion: No. No he wasn't, but I always asked them. I always wondered why they had never asked for a farm.

L: Because they came from farming in Sweden.

Marion: Yes!

L: Both Your father and Your mother?

Marion: Yes, they did - and it's strange, because I was very interested in it too. I often asked them why they never were gone to a farm.

L: But they had no longing for it, for the heavy work.

Marion: Not at all! I think they had enough of it. They wanted to be in the city. And, perhaps, they wanted their children to have the advantages of the city too.

L: How often did You go down there then, once a month or?

Marion: It seemed like we went that often. No, we didn't go in the winter at all.

L: No. You had a car?

Marion: Yes we went by car.

L: And they came here then for hollidays?

Marion: Yes. And then we could go in the summer and then we could stay for a couple of weeks. And then they'd come back and get one of us.

L: That was a brother or sister of Your father or Your mother; or?

Marion: It was a brother to my mother.

L: Oh - I see. Morbror?

Marion: mhm.

L: Did You call him **morbbror** then?

Marion: No.

L: No.

Marion: No.

L: Uncle?

Marion: Yes.

L: I see. Uncle Nelson.

Marion: No; uncle Axel, and uncle Gust.

L: I see. They were two brothers?

Marion: Yes. We visited both of their farms.

L: You were confirmed at the Salem Lutheran church.

Marion: Yes.

L: Did Your mother tell You what to do, or did You just look at Your sister?

Marion: We did the dishes, laied the table.

L: Washing and baking?

Marion: I used to help her with the washing, with the laundry, I remember that. You know; I had to get started in Unior High and in High school, that kind of all seasons, because there were so many activities in school and You're so buzy with that. And - that was fine with her.

L: She understood that.

Marion: Oh yeah - she'd rather I do that. Yeah. But when I was little, I helped her with a lot of chores.

L: So she didn't have to push You in to it?

Marion: No. I kind of enjoyed it, because I enjoyed the farm. I can remember me standing next to her every wash day, she had the ringer tub and I was fascinated with that (? överhoppat) and I always wanted to catch them on the other side, or I always wanted to feed them in . I caught my hand in the ringer.

L: Was it by hand?

Marion: No. I can remember. Those things really stand out in Your memory. I can remember that my hand were sliding through there - You know. Yeah! And I remember mother hit in the brake, or the relief. It was on the top of the ringer.

L: Oh - I'm sure it's something to remember.

Marion: Yeah.

L: When You went to Unior High and to High school, You learned the American ideals. Did You bring home any ideals, to Your mother and father, that they should do in another way?

Marion: No.

L: Changing the ideas of washing?

Marion: No, I don't.

L: No table manner were changed?

Marion: No, because the Swedish ones were better.

L: In what way.

Marion: Well - there were more formal manners - in the dinner.

L: Because Your play mates in the neighbourhood of Moline. You went into their homes, I'm sure and there were non Swedish?

Marion: Oh a lot of them were Swedish.

L: A lot of them were Swedish?

Marion: Yeah.

L: But You were also in non Swedish homes? Can You remember any Belgian people, or immigrants with German background, or English?

Marion: I'm trying to think; because so many of my friends were Swedish.

L: Yes; but how about in High school?

Marion: There were Evander, Anderson, Broman .. Nilson! So I had many Swedish friends, just because there were so many Swedish people in Moline, that I had a lot to do with. And then the boy that I dated, the one I married, was Erickson.

(? Överhoppat).

Marion: Well: mabee both - it might have been a little bit of both, and You hear things said when they were talking about someone else - You know - mabee what they had done, or something and I think You picked that up along the way.

L: But isn't it in this way, that people hear a lot of things, but they usually think that: it can't happen to me?

Marion: Yeah my child would never do that.

L: That's right. But still that happen into marriages between Italians and Germans and Belgian people. That was hard for the parents though.

Marion: Yes. Yes I think so.

L: Especially about the religion.

Marion: Oh yeah.

L: I suppose it was the hardest.

Marion: And my parents didn't have a problem, because all three of their children married Swedish children.

L: Oh - I see. (? överhoppat).

Marion: There were plenty of Swedes to pick from!

L: There were different later on though, up in the 60s and 70s.

Marion: Oh, yes. I see now with my children and my sisters children and my brothers children. That wouldn't mean a thing to them.

L: And You will also understand it better?

Marion: Yes. Yeah.

L: Even if it's hard!

Marion: Yeah yeah. Because it's not the same with the first generation, I don't think.

L: No. Because now adays it is not unusual any more, so people don't talk about it.

Marion: Right.

L: But; years ago, they probably talked about it all over the neighbourhood, when somebody was lost for the church.

Marion: Oh yeah.

L: So - what did usually happen then when a Swedish girl married, let's say now, a Belgian?. And they were usually Catholics. What did happen then? Did the boy turn to the Lutherans or did she turn to the Catholics.

Marion: No. I remember some neighbours that their son married a Belgian Catholic girl, Yeah! He did, and that was (!)! that was! You know! I can remember, Some times they went in and talked about it. That was so terrible!

L: jaha.

Marion: Yeah. (? överhoppat). And, of course now, years later, it didn't matter.

L: And the marriage worked out all right?

Marion: Yes.

L: No problems?

Marion: They are still together.

L: So after a while I suppose their parents came together?

Marion: Mabee. I don't know. I don't think the Swedes ever expected that.

L: (? Överhoppat).

Marion: Yeah, I think so, and the ones who came over from Sweden either.

L: They were steeped in one mold then!

Marion: Yes. Yeah. I think it just (? överhoppat). I don't think it was **really expected**.

L: So this girl, she turned Catholic?

Marion: The one i'm thinking of?

L: Yes, the one You mentioned?

Marion: The girl was. It was the boy.

L: I see, it was the boy. (? Utelämnat).

Marion: Yes, then he turned Catholic.

L: Did he attend the church then? Do You remember if he did?

Marion: He did then. He didn't very much before.

L: Oh I see.

(? En dialog överhoppad).

Marion: Yeah. But he became a stronger Christian in any way. So there was some good.

L: Did the Swedish parents every Sunday take their children to the church, or could they stay home a couple of Sundays?

Marion: No. No. They went to church.

L: That was a weekly arrangement?

Marion: Yes.

L: So You went to the Sunday school before the service, or during the service? Do You remember that?

Marion: I can't remember that; if I went to the Sunday school when they went to church. And I was in confirmation and then I just went to church after that. I don't recall when I was little if I attended both, or one.

L: No. The confirmation classes, they were held once a week?

Marion: They were held on Saturday morning.

L: Oh, Saturday mornings. Did You start during the fall, do You remember that?

Marion: I don't remember. I was confirmed in May.

L: You probably started in the fall then?

Marion: I think so, or that summer. I mabee started that summer.

L: But You were confirmed in May?

Marion: I mabee started like the June before.

L: I see. Did most of the young kids attend the confirmation classes?

Marion: Yes. Oh yeah. Everyone was there.

L: You only had the communion once a month then? Not as often as they have it now?

Marion: It was not as often, but I think it was that often then. I think it was less then that and then they changed it to once a month. I think it was less.

L: Yes. Oh I see.

Marion: It was three four times a year. Monday Thursday was always communion.

L: So three four times a year was probably the most likely custom at that time.

Marion: Yeah.

L: Did they baptize the children in the church, or at the pastors home?

Marion: In the church.

L: In the church.

Marion: mhm.

L: They always tried to have it in the church at some Sunday service?

Marion: mhm.

L: Before, or after the service?

marion: That was during, during the service.

L: I see. Did they have church weddings, or was it mostly private?

Marion: No, it wasn't private.

L: They had them also in the church?

marion: Sure.

L: Yes - but not everybody though?

Marion: They didn't!

L: They didn't have it after the service? That's what I ment, in other words. You never remember that?

Marion: Oh on Sunday, after the service?

L: Yes.

Marion: Oh I never remember that. No.

L: That was always on the Saturday?

Marion: No, it was on Sunday, but like in the afternoon. I seem like Sunday was the day.

L: But after the regular service? It was not in combine with the service?

Marion: No. I was married on a Sunday.

L: A Sunday afternoon.

Marion: Yes.

L: In Salem.

L: mhm.

L: So You married a High school sweathart then. He was also from Moline?

Marion: mhm.

L: Of Swedish background.

Marion: Yes.

L: Erickson; - and hes first name is?

Marion: Paul.

L: Paul Erickson. And hes parents, they came from Sweden, or were they born here?

Marion: Hes great grand parents were born in Sweden - so

L: So hes both parents were born here! In Moline?

Marion: Yes. Well hes grand father would be the first generation Swedish here and then hes grand mother was already in America.

L: So he is the second generation of American then?

Marion: Yes. Third. He would be the third.

L: the third.

Marion: Hes father would be the second.

L: The second. That's right. Does he know less Swedish than You do?

Marion: Oh my Yes - yeah. That was never presented to him at all.

L: So he couldn't talk any Swedish to You?

Marion: No. He wasn't aware of the traditions or anything. They were never offered it at home. It was to far removed. He was the third generation, so.

L: I see.

Marion: And hes mother was not Swedish and that has a lot to do with it. If the mother is Swedish, then the children usually taught those traditions.

L: Hes mother then is of - what descend?

Marion: Well - I don't know for sure!

L: An American, in any way.

Marion: Yeah! I think there is English/ Pennsylvanian Dutch.

L: So there's nothing specific in their culture, in other words.

Marion: No.

L: I see. So the fathers influence was not that great then?

Marion: No.

L: He couldn't do the cooking!

Marion: No and I don't think, even the father wasn't aware of that, because his mother was not Swedish.

L: That probably makes another difference. So he became a Swede then again when he married You?

Marion: Yes!

L: Do You believe that the cooking will have a tremendous influence on a family, in what way they would think and talk about the culture?

Marion: The cooking?

L: Yes. It makes a lot of difference, because You remember that.

Marion: Yes, I think it was.

L: What do You remember from Your home. (? Överhoppat).

Marion: Oh! the Swedish bread.

L: The bread?

Marion: Yes.

L: So there was a special twist to it, that nobody else could do.

Marion: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

L: Did You learn how to do it?

Marion: Yes, I do make it.

L: (? Överhoppat).

Marion: No, but I. That's right. That was how they cooked, they mixed and how they baked with its flour until the dough was right. And - I was not a judge of dough.

L: How did You learn that then?

Marion: I was beside her a lot in the kitchen - and - now, lately, I had her to make the bread with me, a couple of years ago. And - each thing she was going to put in to the ball, I measured first and then she would dump it in and then if she was going to put more in, then I measured that to, so that I got the exact measurements and I wrote those all down.

L: So You had observed it all.

Marion: Yeah, so now I make the bread.

L: She didn't have to push You to do this?

Marion: Yeah. No! I was after her, to get the recipes to do it.

L: I see. Do You believe that if You (?) not that observant and interested, the tradition could be lost then? The parents won't push it on You?

Marion: That's right. I believe that.

L: The kids are more or less free (? överhoppat). If they are not asking anything, they won't tell them.

Marion: Right. Right.

L: The children have to be the factor.

Marion: I think so.

L: Your parents were busy with their own.

Marion: Sure. I seemed to be the one of the three children that was interested in what they were doing.

L: I see.

Marion: I don't know if I was just under foot! all the time!

L: (? Överhoppat). Like Your older sister?

Marion: I don't know if she

L: Did she help Your mother more than You did, do You think?

Marion: No, I don't think that. I thought You ment as far as learning different things.

L: In other words: she had to go out and get a job, or how did she get away from home? Did she marry?

Marion: No she went to school and then she married.

L: And then she moved away.

Marion: After a couple of years.

L: Yes. And You were still at home though?

Marion: Yeah.

L: So You were longer with Your mother after her. You took over what she left.

Marion: Yeah - but I was a kind of there in any way, even when I was little and everyone was home.

L: So You were observing.

Marion: Oh I was there with the meat glinder when they made the potato balony. I put the potatoes into the meat.

L: I see. (? Överhoppat).

Marion: Sure! I wanted to make it all. I wanted to see it all. They had to watch me, because I was so enthusiastic over what they were doing. I wanted to be right with them!

L: So You picked up a lot of customs.

Marion: mhm.

L: Did Your mother make the loaf breads or the round cakes?

Marion: She made the loaf.

L: The loaf.

Marion: mhm.

L: Yes, and there were of rye?

Marion: She didn't do of rye so much, but I remember that coffee bread.

L: Oh coffee bread.

marion: The braided coffee bread - yeah.

L: Oh I see. And it was cardemum in it - and?

Marion: Oh yeah. She may have made of rye. I made Swedish of rye. She may have made it and I don't remember that part. I remember the braided egg bread. The cardemum bread.

L: Were You eating a lot of white bread at the dinner table?

Marion: Yes.

L: Rather than bread of rye?

Marion: Yes.

L: So rye was not as much a custom at that time?

Marion: No - well - rye was always there, because my parents liked rye.

L: But how about You kids?

Marion: No. We chosed the white bread.

L: Because it was a time, in the 40s - and in the 50s, when the white bread were supposed to be a little bit nicer to eat.

Marion: Was it? I think we children always had the white bread.

L: How about the school lunches. Do You remember what the children carried in their lunch bags? Because You didn't have any school lunches at that time?

Marion: In the Grade school, I came home.

L: You were close to home.

Marion: Yeah, I came home for lunch then. They didn't serve a hot lunch while I went to the High school.

L: So You carried lunch with You to the High school?

Marion: No I ate in the cafeteria in High school.

L: Oh I see, they had a cafeteria!

Marion: mhm. And I think I carried lunch in the Unior high! I don't think I came home, but it was close for Unior high too. I don't recall my lunch in Unior high. I remember the Grade school and the High school. I have to think about Unior high.

L: Did You go to the Moline High school on the 23rd Ave? No, that was to far away.

Marion: No. No I went to the one on 16th St, the old High school.

L: Oh - down there. It's a new one up there instead.

Marion: Oh yes, yeah.

L: Did Your parents help You with Your home work?

Marion: No.

L: Your brother and sister probably did? They helped You?

Marion: Yes.

L: With Your home work?

Marion: Yeah.

L: Could You do the most of it in school or did You have home work?

Marion: Yeah we had, we had some. I don't remember in any tremendous amount. My sister was the most studious.

L: I see.

Marion: I was to buzy, doing other things.

L: On the farm?

Marion: Yeah! I was more interested in the other things, rather than in the studies.

L: Of the rooster in the coal-bin.

Marion: Yeah I liked that! And my sister would never have gone down to get the rooster.

L: She was not interested!

Marion: Oh, no. No. She did not. She didn't want that.

L: She didn't enjoy the trips down to the farm then?

Marion: Well she did, course the cousins. They had seven children, somebody in our age. So there was always funny; - of the children for us to play with. No, she enjoyed that, that part. But she didn't think mother should make bread, she thought we should buy it. So; I don't know. She was seven years ahead of me. If that was her feeling about it, or not. I didn't have that feeling, i thought home made bread was wonderful. But mabee her group of friends thought: You just shouldn't do that - You know: You should buy white bread.

L: That's right. Did people buy a lot of bakery at that time? Because there were several Swedish bakeries then?

Marion: Yes there were.

L: Did people buy much bread from them, or was it only for certain occasions?

Marion: No they always made bread there.

L: They did?

marion: Oh yeah.

L: They didn't buy it in a bakery?

Marion: I don't think so. That was the treat, the home made. I think they all wanted to show up their home made bread.

L: Was it coffee and coffee bread, kaffe med dopp - as we call it - every Sunday, after the service?

Marion: No - I don't remember that.

L: But You used to have a cup of coffee though?

Marion: at church?

L: Yes. You don't remember that?

Marion: No.

L: So it's a later (?) then.

Marion: Yeah. I go to it now - and have for a number of years, but I don't remember that.

L: Yes. Not at that time?

Marion: No.

L: But they had their meetings though. Then they had the Ladies ade and the Lutheran league.

Marion: Oh yes. Oh yes.

L: Then You had coffee.

Marion: Yeah, the Lutheran league I went to.

L: So Your brother also went to the different stations there?

Marion: Yes.

L: The Sunday school, the Lutheran league and the Young people?

marion: Oh yeah. We were all, we were required.

L: How about the Ladies ade, did You join them later on too?

Marion: No. No, my mother was with that.

L: She was with them.

Marion: Yeah.

L: Was it a trend, do You think, that it went away with the oldtimers? Did You think that You were too young to join that group?

Marion: Oh definitely! I would never join that! No.

L: But: there was a period between The Young people and the Ladies ade. What did people do then? Weren't the pastor afraid to lose their participation?

Marion: He must have had other things for them to belong to! They must have been The Young people and The Young marrieds, or something! group, but the biggest thing at church was the Ladies ade.

L: The Ladies ade.

Marion: Yeah. They all worked in the group then and they made a lot of money for the church.

L: They were the treasurer of the church, so to speak.

Marion: Yes.

L: They certainly had a job.

Marion: Yeah they did.

L: And they didn't ask for any recognition either?

Marion: No, they enjoyed working.

L: To do something very good.

Marion: Yes.

L: You mention that You had seven cousins down at the farm? What happened to those people?

Marion: They all went to California.

L: California! The hole family!

Marion: They sold the farm and went to California.

L: What year? In the late 30s?

Marion: It must have been in the 40s.

L: The 40s.

Marion: Yeah.

L: What was the reason?

Marion: Well - I don't know why they did that! I don't think my uncle; he was the last one that really wanted to leave and one of his sons didn't want to leave either - and he and that boy kept farming for awhile and the rest of the family went to California, so pretty soon they left and went there too. But that one boy, who didn't want them to leave, is still living here.

L: He is. Is he farming?

Marion: No. No. He couldn't have managed that by himself.

L: I see.

Marion: So they sold the farm and then the father - my uncle - went to California too, but that particular son stayed here.

L: Their girlfriends, were they interested to be farm wives?

Marion: They must not have. None of them ever returned - and none of them did any farming.

L: They married out in California?

Marion: Yeah, they became cityfied!

L: So You have never been down there any more then after that?

Marion: I went out there one time in the middle of the 70s, to find the farm again, when another cousin of mine from Sweden came over. Course that would have been his uncle's farm too.

L: Yes.

Marion: And - together with mother we found the farm in Cambridge and; I haven't seen that since the 40s - and - I haven't been back since, but we did find it.

L: So it was down in Cambridge.

Marion: mhm.

L: So they left.

Marion: Yeah. The other uncle stayed and kept farming in Oledo, so; we did have that farm for awhile, to still go to, but.

L: Were Your parents interested into follow up the elections?

Marion: They always voted.

L: They were not involved.

Marion: They were not involved, no.

L: In the (?) and stuff like that.

Marion: No. My mother worked, in the later years, for the Republican party. She drew people to the polls.

L: I see.

Marion: That was - that was some involvement! But they always discussed the politics; the national politics - they did. And they always voted.

L: Republican?

Marion: I think they were always Republican.

L: How about PTA? Were they interested in the school questions?

Marion: No.

L: The parents' didn't get involved then, like they did in the 60s and the 70s?

Marion: No. Mine didn't, in any way. They always came for a program, if we were in that. They were always very faithful.

L: And for Your exams?

Marion: Oh, sure. What ever we were involved in - You know - they always came to that.

L: Have You been interested in the local politics?

Marion: To run for an office, or anything?

L: No, I mean: to be involved and change things, in the school - for instance?

Marion: Yeah - I think I was more interested in that.

L: Did You belong to PTA then?

Marion: No, I did not go to PTA either. That type of meetings I didn't care to attend. It was always dragged out and those ladies just did not do the business and get on with it. They were arguing about the prize of milk, if it is from 12 cents to 13 cents and I just don't like meetings like that. I like a little more substance than that, so I never went to it.

L: You don't think the PTA would have any real impact!

Marion: No. I think You need a stronger organization than that to get things accomplished.

L: So it doesn't have the weight?

Marion: No. I think You have to do some other things, mabee even on Your own, were You can push things in the right direction, if You feel it's not right at the school. I've done that.

L: In Moline You had a Swedish mayor.

Marion: Oh yeah. Most of those offices were filled by Swedes!

L: How were they handling the political situation, in Your opinion?

Marion: Well I think they were all right! Mabee I was brain washed, I figured if a Swede was in there, they would do it right!

L: But Now they need more than Swedish votes to get in though. They need a lot of outsiders also to get elected?

Marion: Oh yeah it has changed.

L: The old Swedes are dying out.

Marion: Yeah.

L: How about Your contacts with Sweden. You have cousins in Sweden, You said.

Marion: Oh! I have 47 first cousins.

L: 40!

Marion: That's just on my mothers side.

L: And You have correspondence with some of them?

Marion: Oh yeah.

L: You know exactly which they are?

Marion: Oh yes.

L: And they have been here, visiting you?

Marion: Oh yes!

L: Have You been in Sweden?

Marion: I haven't - no.

L: Your mother did go back once, didn't she?

Marion: She has been back three times.

L: Three times.

Marion: Yeah.

L: So it's Your time now.

Marion: Yeah I really have to get over there, because I am really the one who is so interested in their traditions and in the Swedish culture. My sister has been there three times!

L: Oh I see!

Marion: But I haven't.

L: You married a Swede. How about Your sister? Did she marry a Swede?

Marion: Yes.

L: Is she living in Moline?

Marion: In Champaign.

L: I see. How about Your children? You have; how many?

Marion: I gave birth to one daughter.

L: Is she interested in her Swedish background?

Marion: No. She liked the braided bread, the Swedish braided bread! When she was little, I made her a Swedish costume and she attended Swedish functions with me then.

L: Yes.

Marion: And I had my costume, and I brought her with, when she was little and she wore hers then. Cause they go with You then, when they are little. I don't think that will continue (? överhoppat).

L: She have got an introduction to it. It's the most important thing. I suppose it's different times and different ideas, - You know: - different friends. It's so many things to do now adays, - in the school.

Marion: Yeah, there is - and You know; my child would be mixed with a lot of other cultures.

L: Yes.

Marion: I think; if she were to meet only Swedish friends, like I did, that it would be different for her to, but all the cultures are open to them.

L: (? Överhoppat).

Marion: No, they must talk about the Swedish things at home, she made that.

L: When You were growing up, did Your parents talk about: they are not Swedish and she is not Swedish - and so on? Did they talk about: being a Belgian, or an Italian, or?

Marion: Oh yes. I can remember my girlfriend said that her parents said to her: Can't You find a nice Swedish boy! And she did!

L: She did?

Marion: Yes!

L: You had the regular classes at the High school in Moline. You had a Swedish course at the High school?

Marion: Not a course. It was offered.

L: It was offered.

Marion: Yeah. I didn't take the Swedish.

L: You didn't take it.

Marion: No.

L: You didn't have to?

Marion: I didn't have to. I really don't know why I didn't take that! I should have.

L: (? Överhoppad fråga).

Marion: I'm not sure how many they were in there. I know they were students. I don't know how many.

L: But You had something else though: The Scandinavian ...

Marion: The Scandinavian singers.

L: Singers. And it consisted of; how many?

Marion: I suppose we were 15 or 16 girls.

L: All girls?

Marion: mhm.

L: Who was the teacher?

Marion: The teacher, her name was Margareth Becker. She was a music teacher at Moline High for years and years. And she organized this: the Scandinavian singers. I don't know if it was at the request of the students, or our parents, or herself. But she organized this group and they were all of Swedish background, all the girls. And we shared the Swedish customs and we were presented some songs in English, that we took home to our parents, who filled in the Swedish words and pronunciation for us and then we got it back to her - and then - it was decided on how we were going to pronounce the words and sing them. And a lot of Swedish songs to. And then we were taught the schottis and we sang in Swedish, and danced and we went to the Swedish (?) hall and around to the Wasa lodge and down by the Rock river, I believe there was the (?) camp, that was there. We sang and danced there. And at the end of the program we would each go out and get a Swedish gentleman to a schottis with us. It was a very fun group.

L: So You were full fledged Swedish dancers then.

Marion: Yes.

L: They came from Sweden and You had to do the schottis and hambo in the right way.

Marion: Yes. We didn't do the hambo, we did the schottis.

L: I see. Later on You did the hambo though?

Marion: Later on I did the hambo with another fellow, for a midsummer fest at Augustana.

L: I see. So how long program was this, about half an hour, or 45 minutes?

Marion: Oh yeah, at least it would be that. We sang quite a few songs and did some dancing as partners around the hall, on the dance floor. And then we stayed, because we did the dancing with the other Swedes who were there. And there were usually some refreshments served afterwards. It was a full evening for us!

L: You were allowed to stay out then?

Marion: Usually it was a Friday or a Saturday night when we went.

L: Were You paid anything for this?

Marion: Oh - no.

L: No?

Marion: No. It was all voluntar. All just for the love of it.

L: But You got some refreshments then.

Marion: Yeah - they'd have - I suppose some pup or cookies, or some things like that.

L: And a lot of people came out then?

Marion: Oh! - it was just full, just full! They had the chairs all around the dance floor and they were even standing behind that. And the Swedes were just smile. When they listened to a sing Swedish. I know they just really enjoyed it.

L: So a lot of oldtimers were still around at that time?

Marion: Oh sure.

L: And You did that also down south of Moline, in Oledo, You said?

Marion: Yes. I do remember going to Oledo. It was the group to. I don't recall what the occasion was. I know there was the centennial for Moline when it was a hundred years old and they had big parades and they went to Oledo for some thing and around the area we went to different things - and _ the Scandinavian singers were a part of that centennial parade. _

L: For how long did this continue?

Marion: I did it for three years.

L: Three years. Did they continue after?

Marion: It did for a few years and then it died out. I think they weren't as interested in that as our particular group was - and probably they didn't have as much call afterwards., because the lodges died out too.

L: You didn't join any Swedish lodges: like Wasa Wikings or Svitjood, or?

Marion: No.

L: No. They didn't have any recruners out talking to the parents that the children should join?

Marion: They may have. They may have.

L: How about Your brother and sister, did they join?

Marion: No, they didn't either.

L: So there was a drop off then. Did You go to any Wasa meeting at any time, do You remember?

Marion: No. No.

L: No. There was nothing for the Young people.

Marion: No the only thing I remember going to was the Svitjood camp at the Rock river.

L: It was in the summer time they had that, like a picknick then?

Marion: Yes, they always had that. I remember bringing a pole one summer when we were in High school.

L: To take a look at the crazy Swedes.

Marion: Yeah!!

L: You mentioned about Augustana later on. That's not so long time ago though. You went on there for midsummer.

Marion: Well that's probably 10 15 years ago mabee, when we danced at the midsummer fest. Yeah - I imagine that would be -69 - somewhere in there.

L: And then You carried this Swedish flag.

Marion: I had to carry the American flag. The boy I danced with carried the Swedish flag. We were the flag bearers. There was a men's chorus from the University of Lund who came over to entertain for the midsummer fest.

L: You said there was a special turn in Your life that You could do this.

Marion: Oh yes! I was very thrilled to be a flag bearer and to lead the chorus down to the midsummer fest and to; just to dance the hambo around the May pole.

L: Do You remember that went on for many years at Augustana, way way back?

Marion: Yes, Oh yes.

L: The midsummer fest?

Marion: Yes, they have always had it, they still do.

L: Do You think that the communities: like Moline, and Rock Island, participate in Augustanas Swedish (?) as much as they should?

Marion: Quite a few Swedes still attend the midsummer fest. It isn't done up as big as it used to be.

L: It was bigger years ago?

Marion: Yeah. Yeah there was a little more to do over it, as I remember - and there was usually some; - like this big chorus from Sweden was here. Some times we did have dancers from Sweden. Usually someone from Sweden was her for the midsummer fest. And the Swedes all turned out for it.

L: (? Överhoppat).

Marion: Yeah - course that's a big celebration in Sweden.

L: How about Lucia? Do You remember Your mother making luciakatter?

Marion: No. I don't remember her doing that.

L: It wasn't a custom years ago then - in other words? That's a later idea then? You have called out for Lucia.

Marion: Yes, I started the Lucia day tradition.

L: So what do You do? Tell me!

Marion: My husband makes glögg and I make the Lucia buns and I get bondeost - and

L: Ost also!

Marion: Oh yeah. You can't have buns without ost!

L: I know! How do You make that?

Marion: I don't make the ost.

L: You buy the ost?

Marion: No I buy the ost.

L: I see.

Marion: And I get all my Swedish things. We have a large sign that Paul made. It says: God jul. We hang that on the front of the house and I have that Swedish costume that I wore when I was in the Scandinavian singers! I wear that and I send invitations to my friends, telling them that it is the beginning of the Swedish christmas; December 13th, on the Lucia day and I want to share this tradition with them and for them to stop then in any time between 9 and 12 with coffee and Lucia buns. So; they are about 30 who stop.

L: For how many years have You continued with that?

Marion: I think I have done that mabee only four years, because I didn't get the recipes until then!

L: You were handicapped!

Marion: Yes, I really was! But before that we had a big smörgåsbord at christmas time, when we served glögg, and bruna bönor, and potato balony and always a ham. Lingonberrys and rise pudding. Sylta. Harring. The regular Swedish smörgåsbord. We did that before the Lucia, before the other traditions started.

L: Is anybody else doing the same things?

Marion: Not, what I know. I don't think so.

L: So You are the Swedish Lucia in Rock Island.

Marion: Yeah! I invite people who do belong to the Swedish/American group at Augustana. One lady was here the last year and she said. "Why I never thought of doing this"? So - mabee noone else does have that. That's good!

L: You carry on the traditions, from the old country.

Marion: Yes.

Lennart Setterdahl: Slut på intervjun med Marion Erickson, Rock Island, Illinois.

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