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SUBJECT : Interview with Iver Emil Anderson, Duluth, Minnesota
INTERVIEWER : Dr. Joann Hanson-Stone
PROGRAM : Swedish Immigrant Oral History Project
City of Duluth Sister Cities Commission

This is Joann Hanson-Stone. It is Thursday, August 19, 1999. I am in Duluth Minnesota with Emil Iver Anderson, also known as Captain Iver Anderson. It is – we are going to do an interview as part of the Swedish Immigrant Life in Duluth Oral History project. I would like to ask a few questions about your family background. Your immigrant – your Swedish mom and dad who came from various places from Sweden to Minnesota and I'd like to for the record have your father's name and your mother's name.

My mother's name was Sveya Anatolia Anderson and my dad was John Rodemar? Anderson; they both lived, after they got married, in McKinley, Minnesota.

Now they were from separate places in Sweden, provinces?

No, dad came from Harverviik? and my mother came from Medelparden?– also known as Sunstahl ?, Sweden – middle part of Sweden.

Do you know how they met in Sweden?

No, I have no idea. Dad never talked much about his family because I guess he was adopted or something; I don't know. That is why his maiden name was John Berg and he changed it to his mother who was married before he came to this country and her name was Anderson so he changed his name to John Anderson. Otherwise he'd be known as John Berg.

What type of work did he do in Sweden?

He worked on boats. He was on a ship there that sailed on the Baltic Sea and he left Sweden because he didn't want to get to the draft. That is the reason he left.

What year did he emigrate to the US?

1913.

Your mother?

Afterwards in 1914. And they both had sister-in-laws and brother-in-laws in McKinley so that is why they settled in McKinley, Minnesota.

I just want to make sure that I understand that your mother and father had met each other in Sweden before your Dad emigrated?

Right.

When she came did he send for her?

That I don't know. I'm sure my sister would probably know because they talked about it. Of course I wasn't home – after I grew up I went away to the service and my younger sister- she was at home so I'm sure she knows a heck of a lot more about my family than I do.

But your mom -she was born- when we talked earlier – she was born in 1895?

Yes, 1895 and Dad was born in 1892, I think.

So they were young people?

They were young people; they were 18's and 19's.

Were there other family members?

After my father came here his mother and his brother – two brothers and two sisters came with him and they lived on a farm and he lived in the town of McKinley and he worked in the mines and then he went as a stationary engineer for the schools up there in McKinley. Then when he left McKinley in 1926 I was just 4 or 5 years old and they came down and moved to 39th Avenue West right down in that area and they lived there for a few- or maybe a year and then he moved to 11th Avenue West and 6th Street – 10 something West 6th Street and then after that he bought a home on 5th Avenue West and 6th Street but that house didn't have a foundation and didn't – it was just built on a hill and he was a good worker and a good provider.

Was it the West End?

No, it was called sort of between West Duluth and West End – then when they moved up to Central Hillside, then 11th Avenue –

What's your birthday?

1/13/22

Where were you born?

In McKinley, Minnesota.

Did they tell you the circumstances of your birth?

I was born in the house there -- where there was a midwife I guess that they have in them days. Whether they had a doctor I don't know.

How many children were in the family?

My older brother John, my older sister Irene and myself and then they had one child that died right after birth. He took me up there to show me that the child was buried in the back woods in some cemetery in McKinley.

When would that have happened?

Well it would be the year before I was born. That is when this boy was born.

So you are the middle child.

Would you give me your full name?

Iver Emil Anderson.

Emil was actually your first name?

That was my first name and I was named after my uncle. I guess they had a tradition that they always named it after somebody that looked like you or thought you were going to look like them. It was an honor given to the relatives.

So your first name was Emil after your Uncle Emil Berg.

Right.

And then your middle name is Iver.

Right

The tradition of having two names and going by the second name.

Right.

It looks like that happened with your sisters and your brother too.

Right.

Do you have an idea when your parents married?

Well I am sure my sister would know. She has a copy of the license. All the papers and stuff more or less went to her.

If your older brother was born in 1914 we could guess that they were probably married when your mom arrived. So we could say 1914.

They didn't believe in living together in those days you know so I am sure when she got here they got married.

They lived here and then went to McKinley?

They went to McKinley right away – first. They lived in McKinley and come to think of it Dad did mention that they lived in Biwabik for about a year too. And then back to McKinley I guess my uncle had given them some way to get this house and somebody lived in McKinley. I guess prior to that they lived in Biwabik.

Did your dad tell you much about what he did in the mines?

No. He didn't want to talk much about that. He didn't like working in the mines. He finally got out of it and went as a stationary engineer. Of course he was a smart man and I have often said and I'll always say I wish I had half his brains; he was very smart. He was a hard worker. He was a good provider. My mother never had to worry. That's the way it was. It was a Swedish tradition he had to be boss, superman. He didn't have nothing to say about it but – they always made sure the wife had necessary items. I guess of course he was a very progressive man; he believed in modernization and he always used to say to me, "don't stop progress." You know, and he was very much one of these guys who would get the latest model car out and Model T and then enclosed car; then he was just that way. He was hefty. When he was 75 years old he was climbing on top of roofs fixing chimneys and he wore short pants and he would never think of wearing that when he was a younger boy but heck he got so he could wear derby and you know – he said, "don't knock progress because if you kill progress you won't have anything," and he used to say, "just look at it; we have the trains out there," and you know that is true. Just like I have said iron ore is going to be depleted within so many years and something else will take its place. There always is. Maybe it will be grain or coal that is coming in from the western states and they haul it down now and pretty soon that will be what's keep these folks going. Iron ore is going out, let's face it. Aluminum cars and plastic cars and that's the way life is, "but you can't stop progress," he used to always say – you don't want to go to old Sears and Roebuck catalog for wipin' the butt and how true it is. You have to have modern convenience. Look at the plastic and now the computers come along. I used to spend a whole day drilling one cribbage board you know. Now I have a guy who drills it with his computer; he sets the computer and he drills all my cribbage boards for me and it takes him five minutes.

So you do use computers a little bit?

Oh, you bet all these dots are made by computers now. I used to paint them before. They charge me a lot like 3 cents a piece for these and for these and –

So they're applying letters as well?

Oh yeah.

These aren't holes?

No, you might say decal. I used to put all these letters on by hand. But now I buy them all stripped.

Your name is Captain Anderson.

That was given to me by kids in schools. I used to go out to talk to them about building boats and one time I was over in Nemadji, south of Superior, and they invited me to this school and big audience and I got talking about boats and this one fellow stepped up and says, "Well, captain, do you mind telling me about this or that?" Well, then it just mushroomed; everybody got to call me captain.

How long have you been building wooden replicas?

20 years. It's a nice hobby but it's getting to be a burden and – because I get calls every day – want this and want that – I have to look up the boat and try to build something similar to what they want and they have silly requests you know – here is a guy that wants a drum set put on a boat because he used to play the drums on his boat when he went from Duluth to Fond du Lac. So this was an operation of 1942. I rode this thing many times; you go from 5th Avenue West where they built an aquarium dock right there and they would run that boat up the river and this is the way the boat was built and he wants a drum set because he played the drums for an orchestra. Well, I finally found a drum set after researching and I sent one and I am waiting for it to come in so I can see how they are going to fit on the boat.

And these are – this is the Montauk was a paddle?

Paddle wheeler. This goes up and down and the engine keeps pumping these pedals and they just keep turning wheels.

Was that steam?

Yeah.

Did your dad or anyone else in your family like to work with wood?

Well, my dad loved working with wood. But he made furniture and for the church and he loved to make knick- knacks like that shelf up there; that was one of his. He made a lot of furniture, a lot of desks and stuff and he just loved working with wood. But he himself was a brilliant engineer you know and but he loved working with wood. I never liked it ; I wouldn't have wasted time you know but now it's mushroomed for me. I have built planters and tables and stuff started out and now it's all boats.

After you retired?

I retired, yeah – about a year before I retired and after I retired I devoted full time to it.

Maybe we should back up again. Your mom was a housewife.

A housewife and very very superstitious and very very religious but she was not a church going person but she knew the Bible and she would say, "be careful what thou?" Thou that child because if you name that child is what that child will be and how true that is I – my lifetime I more or less have taken after her and studied that and how true it is. All the children- every one of them -are so different – Joan - I have to say built identical then they have other qualities. They love cooking and they have are good business people. It's amazing you know how she was so right on so many of those things.

Do you have examples of her superstitions?

Well, she'd say, "be careful how thy honor thy father and mother," and I'd say, "well, why mom?" and she'd say, "if you honor your father and if you honor your mother you shall live three score plus ten." Which means at least 70 years. But she was very superstitious. A bird flew against the window she'd say that's a bad omen. If you step on a crack or all these little things were superstitious but she believed them. She really did and she was just a good person. I always say I had two saints in my life, my wife and my mother and my daughter is growing to be the same thing, a real nice person.

Did your mother do any work outside of the home?

No, she was always home but she did a lot of crocheting and that was her – she used to crochet beautiful dolls and beautiful bedspreads and she was very very – that was her life just building stuff out of crocheting.

Sounds like she was busy all the time?

Her kids were her whole life, you know. I can remember, silly as it may sound, - I can remember when we were kids we didn't have much heat in the house and she would get up early in the morning and build a coal fire in the fire wood stove that we had there and I remember all of us kids used to crawl under her skirt – she would lift up her skirt and put it over us and it was warm up against her legs and you know today you wouldn't do it but – they wore big skirts then and they never wore pants.

Was that in McKinley?

No, that was in Duluth, here.

I wanted to establish that you moved back to Duluth after you were born around 1926. What did your dad do as head of the household in Duluth?

He worked at Northern Brewery, Karlsbrew, Fitger's, People's brewery on 39th Avenue West. He was the stationary engineer. Well, a stationary engineer was the one that feeds the boiler with coal and he works some places where they make the steam that makes the generator that makes the power plants for that industry or plant or whatever and its – he went to the U of M and the same thing he was a stationary engineer up there and he would – that was their main job was to shovel coal and it was a hard job but then they walked around and oiled the machinery.

So it was not only the heat but it sounded like they kept things moving?

The machinery and the pumps and some of the industries that he worked for produced their own electricity.

Do you remember when he went to the University to work?

Oh, I don't know; all I can say is he joined the university when it was a college – teachers' college and a year after Duluth Teachers' College sold the building and became U of Minnesota that is when my dad went up there and worked –

The old or first campus?

That's right; then they moved up to- I call it – when he first started there he hired me to work planting all the trees so I planted all the trees that goes into that science building. Now they're about 30-40 feet high. I planted all those. That was the only building there then when he was up there. The Science building the first building. Then they started one or two more buildings before he died.

Did he work up until his death or did he retire?

He retired. But he wasn't retired very long.

We have him passing away in April of 1966.

Yeah I think he – he was born in 1891 in April. Then he worked until he was 65 so added to that would be what – 1956. That meant that he had about 10 years.

Your parents were living in Central Hillside. When you were growing up in the house that you lived in for the majority of your childhood -could you describe that house?

It was old –fashion, didn't have a basement in it, he built the basement and built the walls, dug all the dirt out himself and put a furnace in there and changed the walls so instead of having a hallway they had at the bottom of the stairs you opened it all up and he made a big living room and big dining room and big kitchen. Only three rooms – then he added on a porch and built a porch – the picture shows it open here but he built an enclosed porch. Then we had an old car; we had a Willis Overland and he decided that he was going to build a driveway in the back of the house so he came all across from 6th Street from it'd be 3rd

Avenue West all the way to Fifth Avenue West- he built the road himself and he built a garage and then he decided well that was too far to drive so he would go up a steep hill to get into his house in the back of his house through that field and we all got scared to death when we had to ride up that hill, but he was a worker and he had gardens and he just loved to work. His whole life was working.

And the bedrooms were upstairs?

The bedrooms were upstairs and we had 4 bedrooms and when the kids started moving out of course he took the walls out and made three bedrooms and two big bedrooms and that was – he was always busy with walls and plastering. He was not one to sit still. He worked the afternoon shift and he would work in the morning and work all day long and eat and go to work.

Did you have relatives that lived near you in Duluth?

No; in McKinley they lived about a half a block apart but in Duluth it was – the closest relative was at the West End.

Who was that?

Emil Berg; they moved down here too. I think he moved before my dad did. He followed him down here. Then my dad's mother came down. She was down here about 4 or 5 months and then she died. On 39th Avenue West there. They had a house there. Hotel... right across from Perkins.

So you did have an uncle nearby?

Yeah, I had a lot of uncles. We spent the majority of our time – if we weren't home we were visiting them. We played cards and their whole life was playing cards. 500 or –whist.

Did you walk over there yourself?

Oh, yeah, we walked as young kids. That was a big deal to walk over –

They come and visit you too?

Oh yes – then I got a little older too and my uncle would let me drive his car when he wanted to go somewhere, and put it in the garage. You know, it made me feel important.

What language did you speak in the household?

My mother spoke mostly Swedish and broken English.

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What did they do to make you say or feel that?

Well, there would be some neighbors that moved in and they were different nationalities and they would say, "oh, I wish the heck they were a Swede," and, "nothing like a Swede," and they would be -of course my dad had a tremendous dislike for Italians and the reason he had this dislike is when they worked up in the mines - most of them were Italians up there and you know how they gang up on the certain individual and they used to pick on my dad something horrible and then finally my dad had enough so he met all the guys up there and I don't know if it is today but up 'til ten years ago they had a picture of my dad flooring these five guys - oh, he was a brutal guy, my dad, he just -take it so long, and then -bang.

Now where is this picture?

I don't know if it is still there - I don't know if the tavern is still up there. It used to be in the tavern, there was this big Swede that knocked out these five Italians.

Is this in Biwabik or Mckinley?

Mckinley.

Do you remember the name of it? So there is a tavern?

Well, there was five, six taverns there, see - I think that tavern -the building is tore down. I am sure it is. My dad's name used to be on the big rock as you come between Gilbert and McKinley - there used to be a big boulder there and my dad's name was painted on the rock and my dad was known for beating up these guys. Silly stuff. I remember one year dad then was telling me you, he says, "I remember when the war first came on in 1914," and he says we used to have to finagle ways to get things so I guess they finagled a way to get a whole car load of flour and you know that was against the law to do that so I guess they all got together up there and they all decided to pitch in and buy this carload of flour so my dad at that time was working on the railroad as a section hand and my uncle was a foreman in the railroad so they all got together and the bought this car load of flour - can you imagine a car load of flour in a railroad car - well anyhow then one night they were sitting around chatting and they were told the sheriff was going to raid them the next night so my dad and my uncle they had a lake in back of the town of McKinley and my dad says they took the flour and they dumped it in this lake and he says that lake turned pure white; you wouldn't believe it -they were so scared they were going to be apprehended, and I guess the church come up to ask to see this railroad car and my dad says they dumped it all in this lake and we were all so worried- that lake was pure white. The lake itself was a block square - just a small pond but he used to tell the stories of some of the things he used to do.

Did your mother associate with other Swedish women?

No; my mother was a very private person- she only went with relatives or – of course she knew English and but then she had a couple Swedish friends -they were good friends and she would – she met some women up on the boulevard by the Cooks Home- that stone house and they became very good friends, they could communicate; I don't know how they did it but my mother had one of the biggest funerals this town has ever known. I told you that. Well you know she had – we were wondering why all these people came to her funeral because we didn't know any of these people and this guy says – I asked him, "how did you know my mother-?"- he said, "don't you know what your mother was doing?" I says, "what?" – "Well, you know your mother would look in the paper and she would see it's somebody's birthday or wedding announcement and she would send a hankie and a card and that's what she did." We didn't know that. She made a lot of friends that way.

New babies too?

Babies, birth announcements; she got it in her head to send and she would send it. Handkerchiefs – she would buy handkerchiefs – well those hankies were –my wife couldn't figure out what she was doing with all those hankies, isn't that right, Ma?

So she was quietly spreading good cheer?

She would never never would – I have never known my mother to use profanity, I have never seen her angry; so she was just a good person. I think back you know, I think boy, I hope that she's moved ahead you know because she was such a good – and when I think back I don't know if I did or not -I'm sorry now that I wasn't a better child to her you know what I mean by that – the reason I say that: I was very very poor about answering letters. I hated writing letters and yet I had won certificates for beautiful hand- writing and penmanship but I just did not like writing letters. I would write my mother once every year a letter telling her I was ok. I am sorry about that.

Did you – what languages did you speak?

I can say I didn't speak Swedish. I used to say things back in American language; my mother would know what I meant but it was mostly Swedish in our home until we got older; then my dad- he spoke English because he was out mixing with people and mother wasn't but –

Did your parents encourage you to speak Swedish?

No. I tell you the reason they didn't is because we had sort of rebellious attitude you know; we would say, "you're in this country, Mom and Dad; why don't you learn how to speak English?" and that's wrong on our part but that was what we thought because it would be kind of embarrassing you know; you would bring people home and they – you'd have to tell them, well, what your mother said or something you know, and it wasn't that they weren't good parents because they were damn good parents,- the best -but we were ignorant and I have to honestly say I believed strongly and I still do to this day that I'm about 20 years behind; now that may sound silly to you but what I mean by that is I didn't do things like the kids are doing today at 16 and 17. I didn't do them until I was 30 and 31 –

You're not alone, Iver.

I had – you know I see things today and I think, boy, I must have been awful stupid.

Tell me about the grade school you attended?

I attended Jackson school and that particular school was right now where the parking lot for the core officers and when I was a young boy she was a very very strict principal; you had to come with a tie on and your hair had to be combed and she picked on my brother something horrible because he had the curliest hair you could see on a man and he just could not get a hair comb through it and I think her dislike for him made it tough on me because she would grab my ear, pull me this way and that, holler at me for this and that and very very strict.

Did you speak language when you started school?

I spoke English; like it was broken English – it was hard for me to understand different things because I didn't know the difference -s an example: I was 15 or 13 years old before I even knew what an accordion was, see, and mother would call it dranspiel? and I didn't know what it meant and then when the teacher wanted to ask me what I played and I told her dranspiel? and she looked at me and she says, "don't get smart with me," and I went home that night and I said, "Mother, the teacher got angry at me." I said, "I told her I played the dranspiel? and she says, "oh, that means accordion in English." – see, that was a difficulty and I wasn't a very bright student. I spent too much time working or playing.

At home and no homework was done?

My dad being such a brilliant man, I would ask him, "how do you do this algebra problem?" and he would tell me but only in Swedish and I couldn't switch it – he would give me the right answers and I would have the answer but then when the teacher would say, "well, get up on the board and show me how you got them,"; well, I couldn't do it – I would tell her my dad got that answer for you – he was a brilliant man.

Could you have told her in Swedish?

No. no.

So dad and mom were interested in your life at school. Do you remember anything in the school, grade, middle – how far did you get in school?

I graduated from Central.

What year?

1940.

Do you remember early on was there a real conscious effort on the teacher's part for you not to speak any other language than English?

No. Never heard anybody say anything like that.

Who made up your student body?

Well you know that's what I say; I must have been dumb -stupid and dumb- because I don't remember nothing of - I think probably I would have to say this: my school years weren't happy. They were not happy. I worked the last four years I was in high school. I worked in a dental laboratory and so it was my dad would holler that I was not doing enough and he was probably right but I didn't care to get A's and I didn't want to excel in school. I just thought - I thought school was a waste of time; that is what I thought.

Well, you had other things to do?

Yeah. But you know when I stop and see the kids that I went to school with or graduated with and that they would say things I don't even remember you know; and I think, gee, I don't remember that and they went to different functions and different parties: well, I don't remember that and the only school friends that I ever had was my next door neighbor's girl - I had a crush on her when I was a young kid and of course I never did anything about it, you know.

What was her name?

Julia McGregor.

Your best friend in the neighborhood?

No, I had one or two boy friends but life was kind of tough there. I used to get beat up all the time and the kids -

Did you hang out with Swedish kids?

No, most of them were Italians and in fact the majority of them were Italians because we lived in the Italian neighborhood and very very few Scandinavian, mostly Polish and Italians and French so very very few Swedish people. I got picked on a lot when I was a kid. I don't know why. I just did.

Did you belong to any organizations?

Well, yeah, Dad was very very active in Swedish- American -I don't know what you call it- the Woodman Hall and they had Swedish American fraternal organization. This was a lodge. This is a Swedish lodge but it was Swithid? Lodge and we were active in that and we go to dances all the time out there and that was on 21st Avenue and western Third Street.

It was your mom and dad?

Mom and dad.

This was when you were growing up?

Yeah, and we would go there; of course I never wanted to dance and I always saw them dancing and we were kids and we would sit around and watch and that was our whole activity.

Do you remember other things that the lodge did?

They had Swedish -American picnics and they had insurance and I know that Dad talked me to go into together to buy a couple slot machines so at that time he went and bought them and then after we bought them they were confiscated by the law.

When was this?

That was about in 1936 or 1937.

What was your dad going to do with the slot machines?

We were going to make some money on these things. We were going to put them in the lodge and that is what we did; we put them in the Swithid?Lodge and they were confiscated.

He used to take me fishing a lot but he never would take my brother – he resented my brother to this day and I think it's because my brother was very religious and he was extreme religious and his life was Jesus, let me tell you, and he was studying to be a missionary and he got killed walking home one night from Grandma's.

He was the oldest?

Yeah.

And he was also named John.

Yes. They were opposite believe me but I always thought my dad treated me better than my brother; I always thought that.

What was it like growing up with sisters?

I had to honestly say my dad showed favoritism to the girls and my mother showed favoritism to me and my brother and –

Example?

Well ,at Christmas time my one sister she would say, "I want a typewriter, Dad," and he would get her a typewriter and I would say I want this and I wouldn't get it; I would get whatever they want to give me. He did buy me an accordion; I wanted an accordion one year and he did buy me that, but it wasn't real accordion-it was a squeeze box and it wasn't a very easy thing for me to do and –

So you did play?

Very little.

How did your mom and day bring your heritage or traditions from Sweden and how you experienced them?

He believed in good morals. He was very strict on morals and that was the Swedish tradition and we all had to go to church and we all – you bet he made us go to church and

And your mom?

She made me go to church.

But did she go to church?

No.

Did you dad go to church?

No, just the kids.

What church?

Methodist. First Methodist Church on 3rd Avenue West and 3rd Street; it is now the "copper top".

Were there very many other Swedish kids at that church?

I don't think so. I don't have too much recollection. I remember going to Bible School and completing all those studies and so forth. Being confirmed. Well –

There was not a Swedish church?

No, there was Swedish food -at home.

What do you remember?

Well, Mom always had oatmeal and always had a lot of garden vegetables and they had a cow in McKinley and they believed in homelife, and I remember Dad would bring herring

home and lutefisk and of course I didn't like it but then he had to take it and that is what they fixed and you had to eat it. A lot of Swedish dishes – mother made Swedish syltita and Swedish syltsala?- herring mixed in with vegetables. I don't like herring.

Even to this day?

No – not pickled herring, pickled beets – no.

What holidays did you celebrate?

Well, Christmas was the biggest holiday and everybody was invited to the house for that. They would color eggs for Easter and take part in the Easter and there wasn't a holiday that wasn't celebrated. On Thanksgiving they got a big turkey and had a Pilgrim's dinner but they called it a Swedish dinner but it was turkey, bread pudding and whatever else-

Any traditions?

No, my mother's birthday was around Christmas time. But no – we used to go out and cut our tree it was a big tree and Dad put up a big tree and we would decorate the tree –

Who would do that?

All of us kids – we all -

Do you remember the decorations?

A lot of Swedish balls and it was nothing like most other people who had popcorn and stuff – ours was all ornaments and Swedish ornaments.

What is a Swedish ball?

Well, nowadays you've got – it's like a baseball; they are made out of glass and they are blue and yellow and then the Swedish would have those and they would have lots of those. The Swedish ornaments.

What were they made out of?

Made out of wood and they were painted yellow flags and Swedish flags on them.

Are there any of those left?

I don't know my sisters got all that Swedish stuff –

Did you have candles?

No, we had lights but then we had a lot of that little it looks like rope to me and it would be red, green -

Garland?

Yes and lots of tinsel; the more tinsel you got on the tree the better they liked it.

Did you go to church?

We go to church on all the holidays.

Did mom and dad go?

No I don't - the only time I ever saw my mother in church was for a funeral or something like that.

Did you celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning?

Christmas Eve always. That was a big time of the year for all of us. All Christmas Eve - Christmas Day would be something at the lodge but they always had Christmas Eve too - day time celebrations, but they always had a Swedish dinner too - always the biggest meal was on the 24th and then they would clear out all the dishes and plates and we would hear a knock on the door and then somebody would come carrying a basket or there would be a big bag laying out there on the porch and they would run out there and get it and then they would divvy out the presents and they had coffee and pie afterwards -

Do you remember any singing or music?

No.

Did you have stockings?

No.

So Santa clause was not part of it?

No.

Did you celebrate St. Lucia?

No.

Mid -summer?

Oh yes, we always made sure we went to Lincoln Park on mid -summer day for the mid-summer festival. It would be the Swedish celebration then -

What do you remember about it?

Oh there were so many tents and a carnival atmosphere and people and tables and picnics and games and just a big affair. Mid -summer day you could walk up and down that Lincoln Park and go to all these different tents and tables for what have you.

And you brought a picnic lunch?

You always brought a picnic lunch but then they were serving things that the clubs donate and it would be ice cream or pop or whatever or we would bring some pop and that was – you met other Swedish people – everybody gathered there and there would be thousands of people there – just unbelievable.

Do you remember 4th of July?

Oh yeah, that was a big celebration – we went out and went to – at that time we went out to Lester River and they had the fireworks out there and we would sit there on the grounds with family and watched the fireworks. Huge, big display – what do they have down here on 4th - ... I laughed when I seen that –

Out on the harbor?

That's nothing compared to – we used to sit there for two hours and watched the fireworks and they would have all these different clubs open up on the Lester River – that would be Lester Park and you have – Carnival atmosphere was going on and hundreds of people walking and sitting on the grass watching the fireworks; that was a big deal.

So your family did participate in that?

Oh you bet.

How did you family look at their heritage – talk about their feelings and attitudes?

No, they never never discussed that. The only time I ever heard them mention that was in 1936 my mother said, "I'm going home to Sweden to see my sisters" –

BEGIN TAPE 2

She went back to see her fathers, mothers and kids and probably a good thing that she went because that year in 1936 was the hottest summer Duluth has ever had. We had a 104 and it lasted for a week. We slept outside on the porch and laid the mattresses out there and she just couldn't take it.

How long was she gone?

Over a month I would say.

Did your dad ever go back?

My dad went back in 1956 or '57.

About the time he retired?

Yeah, he went back because my dad's dad was named Berg -a very wealthy man- and he owned dime stores in Sweden so he went to see if he could collect some of the money that was left but as I understand what my dad told me that he would be entitled to a couple million if he gave up his citizenship and moved back to Sweden; that was the only way to get this money so my dad says no way would I give up my American citizenship so that's that.

So he had it in his will that you had to be a Swedish citizen?

Yeah, you had to come back and live in Sweden x number of years and you had to give up your citizenship of America or whatever and my dad says no way.

Did they write letters back and forth?

My mother wrote occasionally but she was just as bad as I was; she didn't care to write but she used to get letters once and a while. And I remember she used to tell us about it once and a while.

Did you have any Swedish relatives come to visit you here?

Yeah, my aunt, my mother's sister Grita. She came over here and spent maybe two months over here. Because she had two sisters here, my mother and my aunt.

Do you remember when?

Oh, this was just before my mother died. About in 1959 or 1960's. I think I showed you a picture of her. 1957 - there we go. There is everybody together. My mother, my dad, her sister from Sweden and her aunt from Duluth here.

It sounds like your family wasn't into the music part?

No.

We talked about food, any Swedish drinks?

Dad drank beer and a little bit of wine but there was no traditional Christmas drinks. Mother didn't think you should participate in alcohol. She was against it.

What did you enjoy eating that mother made for you?

I think back as a kid I think she at Christmas time made what they call a pyltsa? I used to love that and now my boy loves that but nobody makes it. Liver ground up – cooked liver ground up mixed with barley and onion– like a hash.

You don't have it today?

Nobody makes it.

Any family heirlooms that were special?

My mother had a Swedish watch. I gave that to one of the girls. My daughter has it. My dad has Swedish rings and I gave that to my boy. John Waldemar Anderson..

Your children- do you feel they identify with their Swedish background?

No, I don't think it's been carried on; it's just – I just think the morals parts of it. My son is stubborn like my dad and whatever but he's very sentimental like my dad. When my dad died I said a prayer to the Lord asking, "please give me some sign," and it bothered me and so what do you suppose happened, my dad died on Good Friday and that was a sign right there. Now I know my beliefs. But he was a man who showed no fear and but still when he was told that he only had two weeks to live he went into the hospital and he said – he came to me and he said, "Iver, I want a promise from you; I want you to promise you will not leave me alone." That was the first time he had ever shown fear so all of us kids got together and the grandkids and we all took a turn staying with him in the hospital and we never left him alone; we kept our word.

How many children you had?

I had 6. John Arthur – born 1945, Marilyn Lee and Marlene Lou – twins 1946, Karl Roland 1953, Vivian "S." – the reason we did that was my mother's name was Sveya,, and her mother's name was S?, 1958, Iver Raymond – 1949; he is after the twins.

What did you do in your work starting your family?

The first job I had I worked in a dental lab for four years, lab technician and then I went to the service and in the service I was an advance scout and a few other things for the army, in charge of troop ships and what have you and I was in the Aleutian Islands. I was up there for five years and then I came back and went shipped to Kansas and that is where I met my wife.

What is your wife's name?

Vivian Rae. I met her standing at a carnival; she was standing with her sister and her brother and brother-in-law and he came over to me and he kicked me in the shins and he says , "would you mind taking that broad off my hands? I want to be with her sister." And I says, "well, yeah, " so all of a sudden it started to rain like heck, so she said, "Well, I want to go

home," and I said, "where do you live?" and she told me and I said, "call a cab driver," so we called a cab and her and I got in the cab and were talking and she gave – I said, "what is your name?" and she said "Vivian Rae." And, "oh," I said, "ok," so I dropped her off and went back in the cab and took the cab out to the air base and I got to thinking, gee I don't even know her last name so – but I heard her mention that she worked at the telephone company so I called the telephone company and I says, "this is an emergency; I am trying to locate a Vivian Rae," and she says, "you're talking to me." –Well, that's strange, and her name was – she thought I meant her last name too, so it was Vivian Rae Rae .

So when did you get married?

Two days later we got married. I just knew. I don't know why. She says, "don't bother coming out; I have a date ." I said, "Well, I'm coming anyhow." Two days later we were married. 1944 May 10th. The funny part of it is when I brought her home my dad didn't like her. He said she is not Swedish. Talk about Swedish tradition. She is Indian, see. That made my dad worse yet. American Indian. She is Cherokee and Chickashaw, and so anyway when he died, before he died he said, "honey, I want you to know that I love you more than my own daughters."

Did he also not care for American Indian people either?

Oh ,yeah. He didn't like anybody that wasn't Swedish. Ok ;there you go. He just thought that there wasn't anything better than a Swede.

What do you think of your parent's immigration from Sweden?

Well, I didn't think anything of it. The only thing I resented was the fact that they did not speak and write English. I thought that as long as I'm born here I should speak – I resented when I was in the service I resented Japanese. To this day I don't like it because I fought them and I suppose it's the Swedish tradition but it took me the longest time before I would buy anything that wasn't made in this country because I–

How do you feel about your Swedish heritage?

I am proud of it ; I am not one bit ashamed of it and as far as I'm concerned I was given by God the best father and mother a person could have. I didn't know it at the time.

Do you belong to any Swedish groups now?

No.

Anything that makes you meet other Swedish people?

No. I suppose its ingrained in me that I was bitter and my folks were not speaking English or American and I think it run over into a lot of things. I don't like to buy anything foreign and it is wrong in my part but I would not buy a foreign car; I wouldn't buy this and that, not even

underwear unless it was made in this country but I was proud of the fact that I was American and I felt that they should be because they are in America and they are proud to be Americans -they got their citizenship- at the time I was stupid as a kid; that was so dumb. I think of how bad I was. I don'

What did you do after the service?

I was an insurance salesman for a few years for Prudential. I sold pots and pans for Watkins. Door to door and then I was a meter reader and then I started going up the ladder and to this and to this and a safety training officer.

So you retired in Duluth what year?

1982.

And you have been making boats ever since?

Yeah. There are things like now that I had an opportunity to go to school. I do wish that. Kind of look up my dad and mother's heritage and understand that. I am American and I felt that everybody should be that's here but that's wrong too. Now I realize it.

END OF INTERVIEW