

OH 278

## OSWEGO COUNTY ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 19, 1983

Interviewer: Lawrence Baron

Interviewees: Ralph Faust, Howard Clark, Virginia Dean

[Tape has long lead-in, long high-pitched tone. Telephone call.]

LAWRENCE BARON: All right. I was just wondering if you could talk a little bit about the experiences, how refugee students ended up going to the schools in Oswego and what were the general results ... the relationships between the students, and their performance in class.

RALPH FAUST: Well, you see they were brought here, in early August of '44. They had asked the local schools to let them enter and when that was done, I was just finishing my summer session here and was asked to go to the Fort and meet the students of high school age. I did that and found I had to spend the rest of the summer interviewing them to find out what their background was and where they could fit into our courses of study. Most of them had been out of school for three, four, five, six years and they were eager to get back, but I had to figure out what their background ... how much science and math and so on, they'd had and what their command of English was, and so on.

Then I scheduled them... I'd go over each day and interview them. I had two or three gals act as interpreters for me and set up programs for them, for the opening of school. And then the day before school opened I had them come to the school and gave them a tour of the building, so that they would be oriented to getting around the building.

I can distinctly remember as we got down on the lower floor, where the shops were ... among themselves they spoke German. They were mostly Yugoslavs but among themselves, they seemed to be speaking German, and as they looked into these shop doors, I can distinctly remember them saying – hearing the words over the babble of German – “magnifique!”

Well, now this is all in Ruth Gruber's book. This is the kind of thing that she picked up from me. And you can get this from the book. Although I realize that you want to get a different method here. But go ahead.

To answer your other questions, we got them into school; they came the first day. I had arranged with our school President ... I asked him if he would give them a word of welcome, welcome to the school; he wouldn't do it. He didn't feel that the school had a chance to say whether they would be allowed to come or whether the community

would be allowed to receive these people, and he wouldn't do it. So I welcomed them myself. Then I had one of the students primed to give a response.

They got into the school system and they had difficulty at first with the English; they had to use a dictionary a lot of the time. But they were eager to get back to school and I think that they did a lot to motivate our teachers to go out of their way for them. And I think many of them did. I think our teachers were very fine with them.

LB: What sort of ... I had read that you testified before the Congressional Sub-committee in June of 1945 about what these students had accomplished their first year. Can you talk a little bit about that?

RF: Well, I can't remember what I said. It must be in the Dickstein minutes. I can't remember what I said except I thought that they were as a collective group and they were equal to or more motivated than an equal number of students in our school. I can't remember exactly what I said, but I was trying to make the point that I thought that if they were allowed to come into our country that they would make a contribution to our culture and to our civilization. I thought all along that this was a unique thing in American history. 'Course, my own background has been in history and I felt that this whole project was a unique thing in American history. And for that reason, I was anxious to see them be allowed to stay.

LB: Were you part of ... I know there was a drive, a petition? A memorial, I think it was called...

RF: Yes, there was a memorial that a lot of us signed and sent to the President and Congress, petitioned to be allowed to stay in this country.

LB: And do you think that that had a lot of popular support in Oswego?

RF: Well, I can't tell that. I think that the majority of the people didn't even know about it or weren't concerned. But we who served on the Civic Committee – we had a Civic Committee organized to work with these people. I don't know if this was particularly known among the general population. This was something that we thought was desirable and put it together and forwarded it on to the president.

LB: Did American students get along well with the refugees?

RF: I think so ... I don't think that there was any trouble. There might have been some isolated incidents, but generally speaking I think ... I know that a lot of our kids invited them to their homes. You're trying to make a point that there was a lot of opposition in the community; there wasn't. There was some who were narrow-minded and who didn't think that this was the thing to do. But I think our community accepted them and the Teacher's

College faculty and our faculty were very sympathetic to what seemed to be the way of helping some of these folks. Yeah.

LB: Did you remain friends with some of these people? With some of the refugees?

RF: Why, yes! Just yesterday we had one stay overnight with us, a chap who is the head of a research group in California that worked on the MX missile and the Polaris missile. He's now identified with about a hundred and fifty utility companies in the country, who're working on an alternate method of generating power than oil. He was here visiting our Niagara Mohawk utility and he stayed overnight as our guest.

LB: What was his name? Just out of curiosity.

RF: Well, his name was Rolf K. Manfred.

LB: If I tried to locate him, what city does he live in now? In California.

RF: Well, do you have a copy of Ruth Gruber's book?

LB: I just ordered my copy. So I'm waiting for it to arrive.

RF: Now I think it says in there, Belmont, California. Which is about thirty miles south of San Francisco.

LB: OK. There's someone else. There's another refugee whose address I've gotten, who lives in Belmont. So that's interesting.

RF: Well, now. Maybe that's the one. Now, he was known in school as Rolf Kuznitzki. But he's changed his name to Manfred. Ruth says in her book that his middle name was Manfred. But I don't know about that. That's my remembrance. Strangely enough I don't have his address. He's written to me before and I must have it in my files somewhere, but I think you can get it out of Ruth Gruber's book.

LB: OK. Well, I appreciate you taking this time ... I didn't want to bother you, like I said. I didn't want to take you away from...

RF: No, no, believe me. Good luck to you.

LB: Let me ask you one more thing. What's your address: I want to make sure it's current cause I can mail you a copy of my article. Which by the way, argues that Oswego did well. I note the few people who were problematic. But by and large, it's a pretty positive portrayal.

RF: I think so. I don't think there was any opposition. If it were, there were just a few families. And no. Now, you've heard of Sharon Lowenstein and what she's done?

LB: Right. And I've been working with her. She's a consultant on our project.

RF: Now, I haven't heard. I sent her all my files earlier, and I haven't heard whether she's finished her thesis or not. I did hear from Rolf Manfred that there's been some delay in it. I think her husband's been a little nettled by her traveling around the country and she's not home so much.

LB: No, What's happened with it, is that she got a job. She is teaching at the University of Kansas.

RF: She's been recognized by several Jewish organizations, where she's had to go and give speeches and so on.

LB: But her book is going to come out next year. I think it's called *A New Deal for the Refugees*.

RF: Oh, she did send me a brochure, a little book, giving the background in Congress.

LB: Right. Let me make sure your address is right. Because I'll send you out a copy of my article. Is it 78 West Fifth Street? Or do you have a different address now?

RF: Incidentally enough we've moved into the building where I was principal for twenty-five years.

LB: That's interesting.

RF: It's the old high school. The address is ... the apartment is 202. The address is 201 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Oswego, NY 13126.

LB: Apartment 202. West Second Street. OK.

RF: Now, you're writing another book, I guess. It's very interesting to me how all this has resurfaced. Of course, time has kind of brought it to the front, hasn't it?

LB: Well, actually, I'm not writing a book on this. My article ... this isn't even my field. I'm a German historian, but I did this because Canton isn't that far; it's part of the North Country and I thought it was an interesting local history project. I really wrote mostly about the reaction of the town of Oswego, not so much about the refugees. That's why I was interested in getting ...

RF: Well, I've been closest to Steffi Winters. Have you heard of her?

LB: No, but ...

RF: Well, she lives in Teaneck, and maybe a month ago she was here and stayed with us overnight. Our daughter brought her up ... the Syracuse Jewish women dedicated a monument two years ago in memory of these people. This year on October 2, they brought up 150 kids from the Shabbat schools in Syracuse, I can't tell you the name of the organization anymore, but they and their parents came up here and dedicated some shrubbery and trees around this monument and they had a tent set up and speakers. I didn't feel I could speak because I'm on a walker, but Ruth Gruber spoke and she did a swell job and she came over to the car and we talked for a while. But Steffi, who was our guest, our daughter drove her up, Steffi Steinberg Winters.

LB: The name Steinberg I remember that name from my ...

RF: She got in Ruth Gruber's book. My daughter brought her up and she stayed with us overnight. The local newspaper here, fellow picked up somehow, I guess Ruth Gruber must have mentioned Steffi as being one of the former refugees. He sought her out and got a nice article in the Syracuse papers on it. I don't know if you'd want to run that down.

LB: I might.

RF: I think the date was October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mike Grogan, who was the reporter, he could give you the exact date and send you the article. You could easily get that in the local library.

LB: OK. I thank you very much and I hope you're feeling better. Thank you again. Bye.

RF: Bye

[This interview ends about half-way through side one. The next interview is face-to-face.]

INTERVIEWER: LAWRENCE BARON

INTERVIEWEE: HAROLD CLARK

LAWRENCE BARON: We all right? I'm interviewing Harold Clark who was a Boy Scout leader of a troop of refugee boys, during 1944 and 1945, who lives in Minetto, New York. Mr. Clark when was the first time you saw the refugees and what gave you the idea of starting a Boy Scout troop for them?

HAROLD CLARK: Well, I knew that they didn't have very much, and I thought that here was an opportunity, although I had a troop of my own I thought that it'd be good for some of the boys of our troop would be leaders there and have the experience. So I asked how many would like to go down, and right away I had to do some picking and selecting, so I got three or four of them to come down with me and we'd go down on, I think it was Tuesday night, and on Thursday night we'd have our own meeting so back and forth we went in my four door, I think it was a '35 car. I know after we left they didn't want us to leave; they'd climb all over the car on the fender and everything.

Getting back to your question. They were eager to have organization, have somebody pay attention to them. So we started right in having games, and what impressed me more than anything at the beginning even though they couldn't speak, only through an interpreter, we'd play games where they had to get down on the floors on their hands and knees sometimes, and of course the floors hadn't been dusted in years, an old Army barracks, and before we'd do anything else outside of the games, they'd raise their hands, through the interpreter, for permission to wash their hands, more than our boys – they'd rub their hands on their pants. These boys had to go wash their hands. They were very clean.

They told of sleeping on the floor, on straw; I guess on sidewalks, in the streets where they came from. These boys were from Yugoslavia, from Jewish descent, partly Jewish, with Yugoslav, Jewish, French, half and half. They'd had these experiences. One boy said his father died from a heart attack when a bomb landed near them in Italy, it burst near him and it exploded so near him. Things like that happened and they couldn't get over when they did get to a place where there was a mattress and were relieved by the advancing Allies. To sleep on a mattress is something we take for granted. And they just couldn't get over that.

So scouting, although probably they'd heard of it, was a new experience for them. It took a little while but eventually they got, a neckerchief, maybe a shirt, and a cap. After a while they got a belt and a pair of pants. And as you see by the picture here – their full uniform. We had three patrols and they became very proficient, and within a year several of them became First Class, which was exceptional.

LB: do you think that they worked harder than other Scouts you'd had before?

HC: They were more eager and more aggressive. If we had a hike, they'd study for their tests. They were ... yes, I'd say so. Our boys take things as a "so-what" attitude, no different now than that ever was. These fellows were denied those things, they didn't have them, but now, coming over here, this was new and how they ate that scouting program up. They just went for it; gung-ho as they say.

LB: Did they ... you mentioned that you wanted to help them. How did you even get involved with them? I know you don't live in Oswego; I know you lived in Minetto.

HC: Five miles from there.

LB: But what brought you to even see the refugees?

HC: Well, I worked in Fitzgibbons Boiler Works, working on tanks; work all day welding tanks and aircraft carrier parts, defense work. At noon we'd see these kids over there, look at us wistfully through the fence. And some people regarded them as animals; and some didn't want Roosevelt to bring them here. I couldn't see that it did any harm; these people didn't come from the gutter. These men, the fathers, were violinists – musicians, I mean – doctors, lawyers, professional men. They were not hoboos, or anything like that; they were smart people, and clean, not the scum of the earth. They were selected ... I don't know how they were selected, how it happened. There was nine hundred and eighty or ninety, pretty close to a thousand, and some died and some were born here. Some died and are still out in a little cemetery.

But working there next door ... I guess I had compassion for them. And my wife said, "Well, if you want to do it, all right." I was spending enough time away from home as it was, but I gave no thought to that. If I could get some boys of my own to help me it won't be any big chore. I managed to run two troops the same week, week after week, until ... well, what a thrill it was to have these boys come up in our woods. They got on the Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western Railroad at what is now the Big M Market, at the station there. The train had a baggage car and maybe one passenger car, because the automobile and the bus was gradually taking the trade away from the train.

But these kids got on the train and had a train ride, for the six or seven miles, whatever. Got off at Minetto, hiked up in the woods up the track and cooked with us. When they got out their camping gear they had old-fashioned heavy iron frying pans. Where they got some of that stuff ... it was donated, or else the Salvation Army ... I don't know. All kinds of ... mixture of cooking equipment that you ever saw. But they enjoyed it.

I have to laugh. Course there's two kinds of Jewish people, Reformed and Orthodox, which I know, and I had to laugh at one of these fellows. I stood over him, he had this big frying pan with slab bacon. I cleared my throat and I called him by name, Eric or who it was, and I says, "What's ...?" He says, "I know what you're gonna say." "Yeah, how come the bacon?" He says, "We like it." And that seemed to be all that mattered.

Well, bacon and eggs ... they soon found out that bacon and eggs was a traditional American breakfast, or a meal, whether it was breakfast or noon, or what. They built their fire out there, they cooked, they camped, they hiked, they earned their badges. Granted they didn't become Star, Life, or Eagle because they weren't here that long and that's one trouble. They did get to be First Class; not some of the badges beyond that but they did get some of the ranks, they got some merit badges.

LB: do you remember stories they told you, once they learned English, their hopes for staying here, some of the other things that might have happened to them before they came? And what did they feel about their being brought here? About being kept in the camp?

HC: They didn't seem to tell much about ... only like I told you about sleeping on straw, on the floor. I guess they didn't want to talk about it; it's too tragic a thing. If there was any of them, if their parents or friends went through the gas chambers, like we'd heard of before, they seemed to not to want to talk about it. They didn't talk about the trip over. I supposed I could have pumped them and got something out of them. Their main happiness was with what they had. "What are we going to do next Tuesday?" Looking forward to next Saturday, going out on a hike. The Court of Honor that's coming up. And then their parents coming.

Then there was another thing that you know about, the Congressional Committee came and Mrs. Gruber came in ... what was it?

LB: I think it's June, 1945.

HC: '45. I have a picture before me of the investigation of House Immigration Sub-Committee and here these boys standing stiff, like soldiers. And here the Committee was, looking them over and checking them. And each Scout was asked how he liked the United States. So they've told there, because the Committee questioned them.

LB: Did you speak on their behalf to the Committee?

HC: I don't think so. This was their night and ... it was something special for them, like an inspection. They were spic and span, their hats were on just right and they stood at attention as you can see in the picture. But they did ... I'm not just throwing this off ... they did collect waste paper at the shelter where they gathered – imagine – six or seven tons of paper. At that time, if I recall, it was 80 or 90 cents a hundred, which brought in a considerable amount of money. And money of course, and the proceeds, it says there, we bought badges, handbooks, and other equipment and other things.

So you see, they worked, besides that. Oh, they also cleaned up the dirty floor. I think there must have been an inch of dust on that floor where the soldiers had left and it was just neglect because nobody used it and it



accumulated dust. It was filthy in there. They wanted to use that recreation room and they did. We had games there every Tuesday night. I couldn't hardly drive the car out of their; they didn't want me to go, and they didn't want the other boys with me. Those boys with me got as much out of it, maybe more than I did.

LB: Did your troop inspire a Girl Scout troop?

HC: I don't know, it might have been seeds planted; I think later a Girl Scout troop did start there, it seems to me it did.

LB: Were there ever sort of joint maneuvers where they ever got to meet with other American Boy Scouts? Jamborees, or some such?

HC: No, not that I know. I don't think so, I can't recall that.

LB: What sort of support did you get from the National, or the regional, in terms of what you were doing?

HC: Not knowing or thinking of myself about anything at all, only the desire to give them a good time and teach them Americanism, Scouting, crafts, and so forth ... I later received the Silver Beaver, which is the highest a person can get on the layman's level. I was the youngest that ever received it, and the only one in Minetto at that time that ever had received it. In 1946, I was 38 years old, so I am still probably the youngest that ever received it. And the reason I received it was on account of those boys, probably I wouldn't have got it if I hadn't conducted two troops, especially theirs. Maybe I'd have gotten it in later years for some length of service or something, but it certainly was that, I know.

LB: You kept in touch with them, I notice these letters. Are there any that express some sentiment that you'd like remembered, maybe if we have time can put on.

HC: Well these are 1945. Here was our 14-mile hike, where they had to write an account of their First Class hike. However here's a family program at Oswego Center, we went over there, we had 75 people there. Let's see ... then we had a family night.

[End of Side One]

HC: ... different places [sound of papers rattling], just a second here. We must have had another camping trip, here's where a father, a doctor, Ernest Flatau, in August 1945 gave permission for his sons Fred and Rolf to take part in a camping excursion. Here he's got a letterhead with an American flag. So you see they were getting Americanized. I do have a list here of ten ... seventeen names where they signed their personal autograph, that was pretty nice. I have a picture too, somebody's taken a picture of the boys, very nice, with full uniforms. When they came they had nothing, absolutely nothing. Our own Troop 19 in Minetto sponsored a variety show on October 4, 1945, and the color guard consisted of this Eric Levy bringing in the Yugoslav flag, he was the color bearer for that, and one of our boys bringing in the American flag. Then we had all the flags, through the Scout Council, of the United Nations. It was a very, very impressive opening ceremony; I never saw one since to compare with it.

So we did have campfires, we had shows, we had cookouts and hikes. I don't think they went out on a big scare with the district. I don't know why. Here's some letters I got from different ones after they had left. Some from New York, Philadelphia, different places.

LB: What became of them?

HC: They scattered, well, all over, so I don't know where they are now. I don't hear from them anymore. That's the best I can do. However in 1945, one of them made out of plywood, and he varnished it, a First Class Emblem, January 18, 1945, by Mile Silvain, to our Scoutmaster. And it's made with an eagle and it's green, brown with an orange color. I hang it up in my upstairs room. And then I have a shovel about three foot long, and I use that in my outdoor fireplace and that was made about 1944, '45, and it's still in use. Imagine, all these years. Thirty years old.

LB: Just wondering if you recall at all what their reaction was – I guess there were several sets of Congressional hearings – what their reaction was when they found out they were going to be allowed to stay in the United States?

HC: Well, it was one of happiness and I don't think they were too surprised because they had a friend in Franklin Roosevelt and they knew it. After all, he had invited them. They soon became citizens and became part of the mainstream, same as anybody else that came to these shores. I know that they've become good citizens, wherever they are, and I'm only happy that I had a share in their formation of their citizenship. And the three young men that helped me, they often think of it. Well, one of them got killed in an automobile accident on his bicycle. A car hit him. He used to help me. I told his parents about this interview and I hope they can hear it sometime; they live near me. When I called and talked to his mother, she says those are good days and Ray, their son, got a lot out of going down there and helping those boys.

LB: And he was their age, or a little bit older?

HC: He was 15.

LB: And there were two other boys that were from Oswego who helped?

HC: They were 15, give or take a year or two. There wasn't any particular reason I had them; I couldn't bring everybody, my car wouldn't hold only a few. There was one fellow here that I said went to Antarctica, his parents live in Fulton ... they're very much alive yet ...

LB: These are local boys or refugees that you're pointing to?

HC: These fellows live near me. But how clean these fellows are. To look at them you wouldn't know but what they are some that were born and raised here. In fact I have a tape that I made of the refugee citizens. I'm very proud of them, and proud of the small part I had in shaping their lives. And I do appreciate your asking me to come down.

LB: It's a nice story to tell; I'm glad you came. I've got some addresses of some people and maybe I can get you in back in contact with some of these people.

HC: I did meet one there a year ago at the Fort. He was 40-some years old.

LB: Freddy Baum, maybe?

HC: I wouldn't have known him, Wilma went and got him. When she found I was Scoutmaster she said, "You wait right here, I want to get somebody." She went through the crowd. It's when they dedicated that first monument, first time they put that little monument in there.

LB: Thank you

[Another telephone interview.]

INTERVIEWER: Lawrence Baron

INTERVIEWEE: Virginia Dean

LAWRENCE BARON: This .... Virginia Dean?

VIRGINIA DEAN: Yes.

LB: My name is Lawrence Baron.

VD: I beg your pardon.

LB: My name is Lawrence Baron. I teach at St. Lawrence University.

VD: Yes.

LB: I've been doing a project on the Fort Ontario refugees. We're going to do a radio documentary about it, and in the process of doing it I ran into Mr. David Simmons, who's now a chaplain in Canton, New York. And he mentioned that you were the principal of his high school, not of his high school, but Fitzhugh Park?

VD: That's right, it was a junior high and elementary school combined...

LB: And he mentioned that you were there when the refugees from Fort Ontario attended classes there. And I thought I might call you up and talk to you a little bit about it, if that would be OK with you.

VD: Yes.

LB: What do you remember about the students and how they got along with other students and in their class work as well, the refugees from Fort Ontario?

VD: Well, my memory is the first of August of that year when they came, and I was given cards for about ... I think it was for about 60 pupils. They didn't ... most of them didn't speak English but I saw that nearly all of them spoke either German or Italian. Now I could take care of the German if the need came for the Principal to enter into the picture and I had an art teacher who could take care of the Italian. And one of the things I remember so well is how

I had formerly been a teacher of Latin in the high school and was interested in foreign languages. How quickly those young people, who were certainly far above average in intelligence – that was one of the things that I noticed – could pick up the English so very quickly.

We had to put them in grades according to their ages because they had no school records which showed where they should go, so I simply took the ages from the cards which were given to me and during the month of August planned for them to enter the regular classes according to age. They adjusted very quickly and we had no difficult problems at all in having them there. In fact, I felt that it was a great advantage to the school to have them because they were such a good example of behavior and ... what shall I say ... interest in work and being willing to work hard, which several of our pupils needed. I thought they were an excellent example. They were not a problem; I thought it was a delight to have them there, and I never heard any teacher object, but maybe some did but kept that to themselves, but they accepted them.

One of the most delightful examples of adaptation, when necessary, on the part of the youngsters, coming into a strange school and also on the part of the school to accept 60 people. I probably have a record somewhere, but there were about 60.

Then another thing I have as a recollection was that the parents of those children, that I met, were very fine people. Of course, many of them were professional people in Europe, before their problems, and they gave I don't know how many parties ... but I do know I was invited to maybe one or two parties at the Fort. They were delightful, European parties. Fortunately I've been able to travel a great deal and had been in many of the countries which these young were brought up. I forgotten how many different countries they represented but they represented a large number of European countries, but had come through Italy, for the most part, no matter what their original country was, and from there came to the United States. As I remember it -- it was a long time ago.

But I did remember how much I enjoyed the parties they gave, and particularly enjoyed the European flavor because I had seen some of these things in Europe. And they were distinctive parties.

Then another remembrance which I had, which is a very interesting to me. When they were to leave Oswego, presumably ... I think they were going to Buffalo and then into Canada. At any rate, they were leaving Oswego, there was a group of newspaper leaders who came to Oswego. Some very prominent papers were represented; I remember the *New York Times* was one, and I think one of the leading Washington papers, whether it was the *Washington Post*, I don't remember ... came to Oswego and we had a large ... they asked those of us both in the school system and in the city in general, that is the civic leaders, they asked us to come to this meeting and we were asked to answer questions and also to express our views, much as I'm expressing them to you now, and this was all for the *Congressional Record* in Washington. I don't know whether you ever knew that, but there is an account of this given by leaders in education and civic affairs and so forth ...

LB: The Dickstein Committee?

VD: In the *Congressional Record*.

LB: That was the Dickstein Committee?

VD: I'm a little bit deaf ...

LB: I should tell you. We are recording you if that's all right because we're at the studios of WRVO and we're tape-recording this telephone call, if that's OK with you, we're at the radio station in Oswego right now ...

VD: You are at the radio station?

LB: Right, at WRVO.

VD: I didn't know you were recording it, and I would have liked it better if you'd told me you were, but I've said everything is the truth as I believed it.

LB: I'm sorry, I should have let you know at the beginning.

VD: That's right.

LB: You said you appeared at the Congressional Committee?

VD: For the newspapers that were reporting it and what they were reporting was for the *Congressional Record*.

LB: What I was wondering is how the students, the pupils from town get along with the pupils who were refugees?

VD: So far as I remember, of course, this was a long time ago, so far as I remember they got along very well. Now the classroom teachers would probably be able to answer that question better than I can because as a principal I was not doing classroom teaching.

LB: Do you remember any comments that parents made about their children going to school with refugee children? Were they happy about the program?

VD: I can't answer that because I remember having no favorable or unfavorable reaction from parents.

LB: One final question. Do you remember any of the stories that either you learned from the adult refugees or from the children about their experiences before they came here?

VD: I don't think, I don't remember any, but I don't think they talked about that at all. I know that I didn't initiate such conversations and as far as I remember there was nothing said.

LB: Any other memories that you might want to add? We're going to be making a three-part radio documentary for National Public Radio, we hope, and one of the segments will just be on the people of Oswego, students from the Fort going to classes and all the other programs for them. Anything else you can remember from that time that would involve important things the town of Oswego did for the refugees?

VD: Well, I don't remember those things because I was so busy with my own work and the schools. But I know that there were things done in Oswego to help them, in the city. I do remember one reaction that I had. I was sorry that we had not done more to teach – perhaps teach is the wrong word – to inform them as to some customs and habits of our country which are different from the countries of Europe. And also, those of us who had traveled in Europe, why we did ... I regret that we did not do more to inform the Oswego people of the habits and customs of people in foreign countries. A broader viewpoint.

LB: Do you think that was a problem, a cultural misunderstanding?

VD: No, not a great problem. No, not at all. But I do think that more can always be done when you have such different customs and habits in some countries. All over the world, I think we would have a happier world today if there was greater understanding of how people feel and think and do in their own countries.

LB: I agree with you. I think the story of Fort Ontario is an important one precisely because of how well it did work out.

VD: I would say it was a great success, I really would say so. Have you talked to Mr. Ralph Faust?

LB: I did, earlier this afternoon.

VD: Well he, of course, was principal of the high school, and he dealt with the children when they were older. My dealing with them ... the school that I was principal of was kindergarten through the ninth grade. You do have more conversational contact with pupils at the senior high school level where Mr. Faust was than you do with the little folks.

LB: I agree. From what Mr. Faust has told me it was fairly successful there, and actually I was remembering the other person who told me to call you. One was Mr. Faust and the other was Muriel Perry. I think she mentioned that I should call you. So I appreciate you talking to me.

VD: Now what is your name again?

LB: I'm Lawrence Baron and I teach ...

VD: Are you employed in connection with the station at the college?

LB: No, I teach at St. Lawrence University, and because I did some research on this I was able to get some money to produce a radio show in connection with our radio station at St. Lawrence. So we're going to be, in the next year I hope, put together all these tapes and do one show on the federal policy, one show on the refugees themselves, and one show on the people of Oswego and what they did. So you'll be included in that last show. And I appreciate your helping us.

[Ends around half-way through Side Two.]

*Transcribed by jCook/January, 2006*