

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION: CASE STUDIES OF THE EXPERIENCES OF POST-
WAR G.I. BRIDES

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CULTURAL ASSIMILATION: CASE STUDIES OF THE EXPERIENCES OF POST-WAR G.I. BRIDES

An Abstract of a Dissertation by
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Problem: English women who met and married American servicemen during the post-war period of 1950s–1960s experienced understandable cultural and conceptual assimilation as G.I. brides. English immigration, however, provided its own set of arduous cultural challenges that have been generally disregarded due to cultural similarities and common language that would appear to promote a seamless absorption into U.S. culture. British post-war brides confronted unique immigrant experiences as “silent immigrants” (Strauss & Howe, 1991) arriving in America as impressionable young women. Transitions such as to cultural change, assimilation, emotional and psychological adjustment were issues faced by these women. There is a dearth of literature exploring how these women intellectually, culturally, and emotionally adapted to cultural change in America.

Procedures: The initial phase of this qualitative multicase feminist study focused on survey responses from 23 women from 10 states belonging to the Transatlantic Brides and Parents Association (TBPA), a national organization for English people living in America. From this population five women were selected to share their individual experiences through semistructured interviews. Emergent data from codification of interview verbatim transcriptions and field notes produced a holistic portrait of their unique experiences and common factors that enhanced or inhibited cultural and conceptual assimilation.

Findings: These women told unique stories of personal truths about early life in England, expectations of life in America, realization of those expectations, and the degree to which skills and educational experiences advanced the assimilation process. Friendship, TBPA membership, military life, church, and work were identified as factors contributing to successful assimilation. Although the five women presented different perspectives of the assimilation process, common themes of resilience and flexibility were central to their adjustment to a new way of life and acculturation.

Conclusions: The women showed remarkable openness to new experiences in the assimilation process. They embraced citizenship, pursued further education, and were generally absorbed into the mainstream American population, although some reported ethnic pluralism continues to exist.

Recommendations: Further research with existing 1,931 members of the TBPA organization should be conducted to corroborate findings of this study. A longitudinal study may show the extent to which cultural pluralism continues to exist in subsequent generations of British families.

Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	vi
Chapter	
1.INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Rational and Significance of the Study.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
Research Questions.....	9
2.LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Purpose of the Literature Review	11
Cultural Change	11
Assimilation	13
Transitions.....	17
3.METHODOLOGY	24
Qualitative Approach.....	24
Participants.....	26
Instrumentation	28
Design	36
Procedures.....	38

Data Analyses	40
4.FINDINGS	49
Survey Analyses.....	49
Analysis of Research Focus	67
5.CONCLUSIONS.....	82
Findings and Emergent Themes.....	82
Conclusions.....	83
Recommendations.....	87
References.....	89
Appendixes	
A. 11+ Questions and Answers	98
B. Survey Questions	105
C. Mail Message Sent to Survey Participants.....	108
D. Interview Questions	109
E. Survey Results	111
F. Survey Demographics	125
G. Informed Consent Form.....	126
H. First Iteration: Coding Surface Content.....	127
I. Second Iteration: Categories.....	149
J. Third Iteration: Emergent Themes.....	157
K. Interview Demographics.....	159
L. Mapping Themes to Research Questions.....	160
M. Five Phone Interviews.....	163

Tables

Table	Page
1. Definition of Terms.....	8
2. Total of 23 Survey Responses.....	33
3. Consolidation of Data From Five Semi-structured Interviews	43
4. Educational Experiences of 23 Respondents	50
5. Success Factors in the Assimilation Process of 23 Respondents.....	56
6. Main Reasons Indicated for Becoming a U.S. Citizen	58
7. Number of Children Born to Five Interview Participants.....	76
8. Education Experiences of Five Interview Participants	78

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I am an emigrant from England who came to America and married an American citizen in the early 1970s. I met my future husband on a blind date. While it was obvious that this was a serious romance I had not planned on staying in America. I still had a life in England where I wanted to return. Prior to our courtship my husband had served in the military. He had been stationed for a period of time in Europe, but I did not meet him until he had completed his military service years. I have often considered if I would have dared to embark on a future that involved marriage and move to America if I had fully understood the commitment I was making to American life and culture. Acculturation (Kassebaum, 1985) for me was like being born as an adult because there was so much I didn't know. I felt left out of many conversations, I didn't even understand the jokes, and I was not familiar with any of the television programs.

My story is slightly different than the women in my study, in that I was already living here when I decided to get married and become an American citizen. However, this transition forced me to confront my cultural heritage. I felt too foreign and did not fit in. Still, I loved my husband and I decided that I had married him, not the entire nation. My marriage was the focus of my future, rather than what country I was living in. My own reflections have been piqued by the stories and perspectives of experiences of the British women in this study.

America, a country of immigrants, is often referred to as a melting pot because of its ethnic diversity. Bourne (1916) described early 20th century America as trans-national meaning "a new type of nation in which the various national groups would preserve their

identity and their cultures uniting as a kind of world federation in miniature” (p. 185). More recently, Tishman, Jay, and Perkins (1992) describe how Americans use their own interpretive lens to view the world in relation to the culture that they were raised in and that provides a sense of security and self. This natural bias impacts willingness to change and may provide either inhibitors or an impetus for assimilation. Transition can be arduous and painful. It is part of adapting to a new culture. Transition is the period that occurs between the relinquishment of an old process and the assimilation of a new course of action or a physical move from one culture to another. Bridges (1991) explains “*Transition* is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. Change is external, transition is internal” (p. 3). Steffey (2002) refers to the influences that cultural identity has on the understanding of the world and how a person uses this understanding as a framework for interpreting and making sense of reality.

Although Britain and America share similarities in cultural background, language and standards of living, Virden (1996) explains that there is value in examining “the question of British assimilation into American society” (p. 5). Creswell (2007) reminds the researcher that it is important to be sensitive to the impact on the people and places that are part of the research. My own background and experiences assisted me in conducting this research on cultural assimilation in both a professional and empathetic manner.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose was to understand how young English brides, from the post-war era of 1950s and 1960s, were able to incorporate the rapid and extensive learning curve that influenced their enculturation and assimilation to the American way of life. This study explored the experiences and reflections of a representative group of approximately 23

British women, now living in 10 different midwestern, southern, and east coast states, who married G.I.s in England during the post-war period. Focusing on this group of women, and the impact of their transitions between British and American cultures, was able to bring new perspectives to understanding the dynamics of adaptation to change, the process of assimilation, and enculturation to new environments including their interests in formal education. Potential findings may help educators understand the dynamics of adaptation to change, assimilation, and enculturation as increasing numbers of diverse student populations arrive in America and seek to improve their educational status. It is also possible to examine diverse world views regarding the impact of immigration and how people in general adapt.

The purpose of this research is “to share in the meanings that the cultural participants take for granted and then to depict the new understanding for the reader and for outsiders” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 31). In this society of rapid change and even faster technological growth, understanding how people cope with transition and sustainability of change can provide an insight how employees and immigrants manage the process of assimilation because “each of us may have been shaped by entirely different legacies and layers” (Williams, 2001, p. 41). Even in business communities culture plays a significant role and present problems in diversified companies. “Cultural differences can easily lead to communication difficulties and to misinterpretation” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 118). Growing interest in cultural impacts has caused universities to offer courses in the study of specific cultures and communities. Studying different cultures and ethnicity provides insight into how other people act and think, reveals unconscious behavior within one’s own culture, and provides the

opportunity to “examine aspects of society in relation to nationality, race, ethnicity, gender or culture, including the interactive nature of relations among peoples who differ according to these categories” (Drake University, 2008).

Background for the Study

British emigration statistics suggest that, “over five million people from the United Kingdom immigrated to the United States throughout American history” (Viriden, 1996, p. 4). British immigrants were the third largest group of immigrants, following closely behind the German and Italian immigrants. During World War II (WWII), American servicemen were referred to as G.I.s, which originated from the term Government Issue or General Issue (Kennett, 1987; Martin, 1967) describing anything that became associated with enlisted American servicemen. During the course of WWII, there were 4.5 million American G.I.s stationed in Europe. Three million G.I.s spent time in Britain during the war years and just prior to the Normandy invasion a total of 1.6 million G.I.s served in Britain. Approximately 70,000–100,000 English women married G.I.s and returned with them to the United States, underestimating the long-term consequences of such a dramatic transition (Lee, 1985; Viriden, 1996). “Statistics on the total number of British war brides can only be estimates; however, 70,000 seems a reasonable conclusion given available sources” (Viriden, p. 3). The second surge of female immigration occurred in the 1950s when American G.I.s were stationed in Europe to support the restoration efforts after WWII. Young English women during 1950s and 1960s also married U.S. servicemen, but did not arrive in America as a publicly recognized group of immigrants like the war brides. Rather, they arrived individually, as their husbands returned to bases in America. British women, who met and married their husbands while these men were stationed overseas during this period, had little

preparation for their new lives in America. I choose to refer to this group of women as Silent Immigrants based on their generational demographics and their birth years (born 1925–1945) which classifies them as members of the “Silent Generation” (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Their immigration was barely recognized occurring with little publicity. This generation felt pressure to conform and who learned to silently adapt to the changing world.

Female immigration stories of the British G.I. brides are unique because their experiences do not follow the conventional pattern of immigration (Rodriguez, 1999) of people seeking opportunities for a new life. “Scholars may not have focused on British ethnicity or cultural identity, but this does not mean it was not there” (Viriden, 1996, p. 5). Immigration always provides its own set of cultural adaptation issues and assimilation may occur only at superficial levels (Bridges, 2001; Gordon, 1964; Viriden, 1996). Often it takes many years for immigrants to feel as if they belong in their adopted country.

There is a dearth of literature about immigrant experience and impact of the second largest group of females ever to immigrate to America. This research focused on the cultural characteristics of an identified group of women, who share common experiences. British immigrants have received little attention because the common language and heritage of the United States and Great Britain would appear to minimize any problems (Viriden, 1996). Immigration provides its own set of cultural adaptation issues that stretch far beyond this group of immigrant brides and extends to new experiences, encounters, and experiences with any new environment (Bridges, 2001).

A feminist approach provided the better method to create a holistic portrait of these women’s experiences of cultural adaptation and assimilation. My personal approach

to these case studies reflected my own role as a female researcher and the gender of British brides who shared a uniquely female experience. Luttrell (1997) suggests that women's perspectives are unique and also very different from the way men view the world. Therefore, my research took a female approach to study a situation from a feminist perspective (Luttrell, 1997) using narratives.

Descriptive narratives described by Creswell (2007) lend themselves to an empathetic approach to the individual stories of immigrant women. The value of recounting individual stories should not be underestimated (Creswell, 2007; Holman, Devane, & Cady, 2007) because stories can provide the human side to research. Stories draw the reader into the reality of the participants. The voice of both the storyteller and the narrator presents insights and revelations as the narration reveals thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The art of portraiture is closely tied to artistic processes because of the rich and detailed descriptions that are provided. Therefore my purpose was to interpret shared cultural meanings of the participants, and then depict new understandings as a portrait of these experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Rationale and Significance of the Study

There is very little research published on the cultural assimilation experience of British G.I. brides. Their stories have been virtually ignored. I conducted my research from a unique perspective. Although I am a member of the same culture and a participant in the immigration event that I evaluated, I am removed from the dynamics of these women. Nevertheless, I was able to begin my research with personal understanding of immigration and cultural adaptation experiences. Accordingly, Creswell (2007) recognizes the value of bringing the researcher's own experiences to the research process.

Therefore, this research was able to tell untold stories of British women who married American servicemen in England during the post-war era of the 1950s and 1960s and then immigrated to America.

In the 21st century, with improved travel and rapid communication systems, “immigrants are not permanently isolated from their cultures and ties to their homelands” (Williams, 2001, p. 39). Therefore it is incumbent that people learn to understand and adjust to other cultures and to find value in their interactions (Wenger et al., 2002). There is more to immigration than just the physical aspects of relocation; the human aspects and the emotional effects of relocating to another culture have significant impacts. In Lewin’s (2006) writing from the early and mid 1940s, he explores the topic of cultural anthropology and contemplates how cultural reconstruction can be accommodated. Having an understanding of the stages of assimilation and what causes people to change and adapt can assist in developing a proactive approach to assisting with making a conscious decision to accelerate the assimilation process (Covey, 1989) and value people for their contributions (Kanter, 1983).

Definition of Terms

In order to fully understand the purpose and the scope of these case studies, I have provided definitions of the terms used in order to bring simplicity, clarity, and understanding of the research process and of the participants. Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner (1995) make clear that, “effort should be made to explain the terminology in more widespread terms or to include a more accessible synonym upon first mention” (p. 170). Table 1 provides an alphabetical list of specific terms and definitions to assist in the interpretation and analysis of the data.

Table 1
Definition of Terms

Term	Definition	Source
Acculturation	Allows previously conditioned individuals to become part of the new culture.	Kassebaum 1985, p. 3
Assimilation (Conceptual)	Immigrants' view of their own ethnicity.	Viriden, 1996, p. 2
Assimilation (Cultural)	Outward signs of how the immigrant adapts to the dominant culture.	Viriden, 1996, p. 2
Culture	Social group's observable patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of life.	Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 513
Emigration	Process of uprooting oneself from one's country of origin to resettle in another country.	Rodriguez, 1999, p. 11
Enculturation	Process by which the goals of a culture are transferred to its individual members.	Kassebaum 1985, p. 5
Ethnic Group	Shared sense of "peoplehood," usually involving common elements of race, religion, and national origin.	Gordon, 1964
G.I.	Slang term for an enlisted American soldier introduced in 1930s meaning general issue.	Kennett, 1987; Martin, 1967
Immigration	The process for people from different ethnic backgrounds coming to America to make a new life for themselves and for their families.	Rodriguez, 1999, p. 10
Modeling	Observers acquire new patterns of behaviors by watching the performance of others.	Bandura, 2007, p. 6
TBPA	Transatlantic Brides and Parents Association – a British Heritage Society formed in 1946.	http://www.tbpa.info/
Transition	Letting go of the way things used to be and taking hold of the way they subsequently become	Bridges, 2001, p. 2

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to seek understanding of the experiences of British women who married American G.I.s during the 1950s, in order to explore their adaptation to cultural change, assimilation, and transitions within their American environment, including their educational experiences. Commonalities with transition experiences in general were also explored. These subquestions were able to elicit identifiable themes that guided this study.

1. What expectations did these women have as they anticipated life in America?
2. How did they intellectually, culturally, emotionally, or educationally adapt to new roles and environments in America?
3. In what ways have these women assimilated into the American culture and been changed as a result?
4. Has their enculturation and assimilation process been enhanced or inhibited by their formal education experiences?

A literature review provided background for this research by introducing terminology with which to reference their experiences and historical perspectives describing the cultural norms of that period of time.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a plethora of information, including novels, movies, and personal stories (Dickey & Ramirez, 2007; Lee, 1985; Virden, 1996) including actual documentation regarding the generation of women who married American servicemen in Europe during or shortly after the Second World War (WWII). However, there is very little documentation on the experiences of the British women who became G.I. brides during the 1950s and 1960s and who arrived in America as young wives and mothers.

The initial immigration experience of the post-war G.I. brides was very different from the well publicized attention and support that the earlier generation of war brides received. British war brides were notable because, “they comprised the largest single group of female immigrants to the United States in the 1940s. Seventy thousand women fit this category, outnumbering war brides from all other countries” (Virden, 1996, p. 1). This second group of female immigrants from the 1950s and 1960s entered America with little of the attention or publicity that surrounded the G.I. brides of the previous decade. Their immigration experiences were unrecognized and not well documented. These women were silently absorbed into the American society.

Like the previous group of war brides, “overseas marriage had little to do with military regulations or social issues: it was simply a case of meeting someone, falling in love, and getting married” (Virden, 1996, p. 47). The consequences of these marriages had tremendous impact on the acculturation process that these women experienced.

Purpose of the Literature Review

Although there is a dearth of literature regarding this particular population of female immigrants as G.I. brides, there exists substantive information regarding U.S. immigration populations in general. The U.S. immigration levels between 1951 and 1960 indicate that there were 2,515,479 immigrants absorbed during that 10 year period.

I structured the literature review to provide an overview of transition processes that influence immigration such as cultural change, assimilation, and transitions. This will be followed by a description the historical events and cultural differences that may have influenced the cultural assimilation of this population of British women.

Cultural Change

Kotter (1996) indicates that, “Culture can powerfully influence human behavior, because it can be difficult to change, and because its near invisibility makes it hard to address directly” (p. 148). Associating with other American families and experiencing life on a U.S. base, albeit in England, must have initially helped form an impression of what life would be like in America. Lee (1985) documents a few of the adjustments mentioned by the British brides, “the money exchange, sizes, weights, numbers to be unlearned and new ones learned, the language, the barriers the government and public regarded as insignificant” (p. 196). Culture exists on an unconscious level and change occurs slowly. Unexpected cultural differences can come as a shock. When change is unanticipated it is often resisted (Kanter, 1985; Kotter, 1996). Individuals resist change and cling to what is familiar because it provides comfort.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) define culture as “the sum of a social group’s observable patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of life” (p. 513). Adaptability of mankind has been responsible for creating unique cultural environments in which the

members of the group are taught what is considered the appropriate behaviors for acceptance within that group. Steffey (2002) explains it is natural for societies to enculturate their children and pass on ways of essential beliefs and values and thus perpetuate their biological heritage.

Enculturation

The process of cultural adaptation, or enculturation (Kassebaum, 1985), began before the G.I. brides of the 1950s arrived on U.S. soil. Enculturation of these women began with the association with the American servicemen and a way of life that exposed them to the “norms of conduct, beliefs, values, and skills along with the behavioral patterns” (Gordon, 1964, p. 32), and created impressions and expectation of life in America. Adapting to different standards of living, politics, fashion, and economics all contribute to understanding and surviving in a different culture. Lewin (2006) writes extensively about *culture*, which he describes as “equilibrium” and a “living process” (p. 42). Kassebaum (1985) describes culture as teaching group members what is required to be part of a group. Individuals accept as reality the norms and standards of the society in which they live. The process of enculturation can be a conscious or unconscious act. Tishman et al. (1992) provide three mutually reinforcing ways of defining the process of enculturation. These three ways are through cultural exemplars, interactions, and direct instruction. Part of the enculturation process is the assimilation that occurs when the immigrant population melds into the general population and shows little difference in the socio-economic behavior (Steffey, 2002). Enculturation can be informal and automatic or there can be a conscious decision to embrace a deliberate learning process.

Acculturation

White (1988) examines the relationship of assimilation and *ethnic pluralism* and explains that cultural assimilation is the process of merging with the identity and values of the host culture. This occurs when the commonalities are recognized and embraced rather than rejected. People are more likely to resist change if they have to admit that the way that things were done previously was wrong (Kanter, 1985; Kotter, 1996).

Adaptation to change requires an evaluation of what were previously accepted as cultural norms and behaviors in light of new experiences, and to display a willingness to be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things (Bridges, 2001; Kassebaum, 1985).

When the first influx of war brides arrived from Britain shortly after the end of WWII, the U.S. Office of War Information created orientation literature entitled *A Brides Guide to the U.S.A.* in an attempt to provide an overview of life in America. The newcomers were encouraged to subscribe to women's magazines and local newspapers as a venue for understanding current politics, topics of interest, fashions, and attitudes. The guide gave advice on behaviors to engage and avoid and "provided a glossary of terms so war brides would be able to understand American English" (Virden, 1996, p. 120). Therefore, these women, as silent immigrants, were subtly prepared for fresh experiences and challenges as they began their new lives in a new country, learning how to assimilate into a new culture and way of life, while at the same time maintaining an ethnic sense of their heritage.

Assimilation

The assimilation process is a matter of degree that occurs at a different pace for various individuals and may take several years before the process is complete (Gordon, 1964). "Assimilation into a new culture has never required the obliteration of ethnic

identity. Instead it involves newcomers of differing backgrounds adopting basic concepts of American life-equality under the law, due process, and economic opportunity” (Rodriguez, 1999, p. 1). The assimilation experience is a gradual process of integration. Some of the typical coping mechanisms used by immigrants include maintaining their religious identity by attending ethnic churches, reading native-language newspapers, celebrating cultural holidays, and joining ethnic clubs (Gordon, 1964; Rodriguez, 1999; Virden, 1996). Four indices of assimilation identified by Rodriguez are citizenship, homeownership, English language acquisition, and intermarriage. Only citizenship, the first indicator, applies to the G.I. brides, and then many of these women only became citizens to enhance their husbands’ military career. The lack of alignment with the traditional indicators of assimilation stress the uniqueness of these women’s immigrant experiences and sets this group apart from the traditional assimilation experience. The immigration experience of these women was influenced by their husbands’ return home with the U.S. military to their American culture. The men did not realize that there would be vast cultural differences that would affect their wives’ assimilation and perception of their new country.

Assimilation occurs at different depths and various researchers have used different terms to explain the levels of assimilation. The superficial or external appearances of assimilation are described as a situational shift (Bridges, 2001), cultural assimilation (Virden, 1996), and behavioral assimilation (Gordon, 1964). All of these terms refer to the obvious and the visible signs of behavior change. The internal or more personal transformational process of assimilation is described as internal transition

(Bridges, 2001), conceptual assimilation (Viriden, 1996), and identificational assimilation (Gordon, 1964).

Viriden (1996) explains her two concepts of assimilation as divided into *cultural assimilation*, which she describes as “outward signs of how the immigrant adapts to the dominant culture within America” (p. 2) and *conceptual assimilation* which she explains is “the immigrants views of their own ethnicity” (p. 2).

Cultural Assimilation

The cultural aspect of assimilation refers to the way immigrants appear to fit into the new culture. For example, preconceived notions of life in America were derived mainly from pictorial images of America, television, and Hollywood that idealized an image of life in America and influenced social behavior (Bandura, 2007; Lee, 1985). Social modeling (Bandura, 2007; Bandura & Huston, 1961) explains how people initially learn to fit into a culture by modeling and reproducing appearances and actions that are considered the norm. Bandura describes the process of *observational learning* where observers acquire new behavioral patterns by watching how other people interact and respond. The easiest way to fit into a culture is to watch what others are wearing, doing, and saying. Modeling theories (Bandura & Huston, 1961) are often used to explain the mechanics of observational behavior. Bandura’s modeling theory is more closely aligned with the superficial *cultural assimilation* (Viriden, 1996), rather than the transformational *conceptual assimilation* (Viriden, 1996). The observer is able to learn and create acceptable ways of responding to new situations, “by observing a model of the desired behavior, an individual forms an idea of how response components must be combined and temporally sequenced to produce new behavioral configurations” (Bandura, 2007, p. 39). Thus the process of cultural assimilation begins.

By recognizing and understanding what is culturally defined as acceptable behavior it would appear that learning how to fit in to a culture and adapt to a new environment would be best served by adopting the *observational learning* processes. Lewin (2006) explains that action is ruled by perception and that change in behavior is an indicator that new facts and values have been perceived and adopted. This confirms Bandura's (2007) theory of *observational learning*. Yet, embracing change must be an emergent decision on the part of the observer who recognizes the rewards of change and adaptation.

Forced change is resisted; it is not met with openness. People are more receptive to change when change in behavior is voluntary because unexpected change is intimidating and can be perceived as threatening (Bridges, 2001; Lewin, 2006). No change will occur if the individual is hostile to the new environment. Kanter (1985) supports this assumption and declares that, "The more choices we can give people the better they'll feel about the change. But, when they feel out of control and powerless, they are likely not only to feel stress, but also to behave in defensive, territorial ways" (p. 52). Modeling (Bandura & Huston, 1961; Kassebaum, 1985) enables observers to determine what behavior is acceptable and rewarded.

Conceptual Assimilation

In a survey conducted by Virden (1996), the war-brides were asked to comment on the perception of their ethnic identity 45 years after coming to America. It was interesting to note that the perception of the assimilation of these women differed between the wives and their husbands. Although most of the women considered themselves British-Americans, Virden's findings indicate that, "Conceptual assimilation, or the end of previous ethnic identity, has not occurred for the majority of British war

bride immigrants” (Viriden, p. 142). Psychological transition (Bridges, 1991) depends on relinquishing the old reality and includes a willingness and openness to change. A proactive approach and a positive attitude toward change is a significant factor in becoming assimilated, which Rodriguez (1999) describes as *rootedness* and “coming to believe that they are part of a larger family of Americans” (p. 11). Lewin (2006) refers to this process as acculturation, which is aligned with *conceptual assimilation* in changing the cognitive structure in the way our physical and social worlds are perceived.

“Most historians have ignored the story of British immigration, mistakenly believing that sharing a language and some parts of history and culture with the United States meant that British immigrants assimilated easily into American culture” (Viriden, 1996, p. 145). It is interesting to explore the long-term effects of the decisions made by these British women to marry Americans G.I.s. Transitions begin with relinquishing old beliefs and ways and *conceptual assimilation* is more than just adopting the style of clothing, manner, and customs (Bridges, 1991; Viriden, 1996). Rather, it is when the immigrant starts to identify more with the adopted country. The first step in assimilation is personal confrontation with expectations.

Transitions

Bridges (2001) insists that people do not actually resist change, but what they actually resist is transition. Transitions start with an ending, and losses cause emotional pain. He explains the transition period as “that uncomfortable in-between neutral zone” (p. 3). Bridges explains that transitions ensue automatically when change occurs and some part of our life ends or changes. The psychological transition referred to here most closely identifies with the process of Viriden’s (1996) *conceptual assimilation* and is

likened to the difference between when a person makes a decision or a choice (Bridges, 2001).

Lewin's (2006) change model of, "unfreezing, changing, and refreezing" is a process of reeducation, where the old way of doing and thinking are reevaluated and motivation to change occurs. This can be compared to Bridges (1991) belief that "unless transition occurs, change will not work" (p. 4). The reeducation that Lewin proposes in his *unfreezing* stage is consistent with Bridges' (1991, 2001) first stage of *ending* before there is openness to any change. The transition from one culture to another was an experience in the process of adaptation to change. Varying factors may have assisted or inhibited this process for these women.

The migration from the *neutral zone* occurs when a new behavior becomes a habit (Bridges, 1991). In his studies, Lewin (2006) indicated that he wanted to explore what actually caused change to occur and what prompted resistance to change. In Lewin's writing, from the early and mid 1940s, he explores how cultural reconstruction can be accommodated. This process can be described as being equivalent to enculturation (Kassebaum, 1985; Lewin, 2006). During Lewin's active field research he determined that there must be a motivation to change before the change can be implemented.

Historical Context of 1950s G.I. Brides as Children

During WWII everything was in transition. Many families became separated because fathers were deployed and mothers went to work to support the war effort. Everyday life was less stable, "the combination of evacuation, mobilization, and destruction of housing meant that more people were on the move with British society than ever before" (Viriden, p. 23). Children had fathers who went to war, and in some cases never returned, or were gone for up to six years or more. During the war, women

were also mobilized; their help was needed with the war effort on the home front. In 1941 the British government required, “all women between nineteen and forty years of age to register their jobs with the local Employment Exchange” (Enloe, 1983, p. 182). Although women who had young children were exempt from this requirement, some mothers had the burden of working both in and outside of the home. There was a food shortage the need for rationing. People were encouraged to grow their own produce and “farmers were given a subsidy to encourage them to plough up grassland and grown cereal on it . . . even the man with an ordinary small garden is urged to grow at least some food instead of only grass and flowers” (Maycock, 1940, p. 578). Gardens were dug and some were cultivated on top of the air-raid shelters that had been dug into the back gardens. Everyone had to learn how to cope with less food and clothing.

Subsidized child care did not exist. Working women had to rely on other family members to assist with the child care. Many children were evacuated and sent away from their homes because the areas where they were currently living were vulnerable to excessive bombing. This was disruptive emotionally and educationally for many children who were sent to live with strangers. “As the threat of war had increased during the late 1930s, the government had begun laying plans for evacuation” (Brown, 2000, p. 3) and a concerted effort was made to get the children to safe locations usually in the countryside. Brown describes the attempt made to remove the British children, the elderly and the disabled from London itself, and various industrial cities and coastal ports that were considered liable to be affected by the bombing.

Educational Limitations in Britain

Schools were evacuated and classes transported *en masse* to rural areas that were considered to be safe, where the children were integrated into the local school system.

Evacuation plans resulted in the following situation where “many evacuees were homesick; some had been hurriedly placed in the most unsuitable billets, dirty and unsanitary, or with people unwilling or unable to look after them properly” (Brown, p. 6). Urban children were integrated into local rural schools. Parents were expected to pay to board their children with selected families when they were evacuated. Separations were difficult for families and many parents made every attempt to visit their children when possible. When the expected attacks failed to occur, almost half of the people evacuated returned to their homes within four months.

School children practiced donning their gas masks in air raid drills at school in preparation of a real attack. When the raids occurred, during the war, “lessons would be disrupted as everyone filed down to the shelter” (Brown, 2000, p. 37). Educational systems were intermittent for some children, but the learning process still had to be maintained. When schools were bombed, children had to be absorbed into other local schools. Schools with underground facilities, such as cellars, made use of them for air-raid shelters. Children learned quickly to be flexible and families erected simple corrugated steel Anderson shelters, covered with earth in their gardens (Richard, 2001). As the war continued the facilities in the air-raid shelters became more sophisticated allowing lessons to be continued during an air-raid and air-raid practices became common (Brown). George VI, the King of England at the end of the war, acknowledged that the war years had impacted these children, interrupted their education, and affected them perhaps for the rest of their lives (Brown).

Educational Opportunities in Britain

From 1918 to 1944 the legal age to leave school was 14 years. Standardized school testing continued through the war years, even though some of the education

process was interrupted. The Education Act of 1944 extended compulsory education, established the grammar school system, and changed the legal age to leave school to 15 years. The 11+ exam (see Appendix A) determined the placement at age 11 years in either a grammar school environment or a secondary modern school and determined the child's future educational path. The two-tiered schooling system, considered the secondary modern school academically inferior to the grammar school. Placement in a grammar school positioned children to be able to take the necessary exams for university admittance. Children who had just survived the war years had not come from a positive learning environment and were at a disadvantage academically. Allen (1966) describes the educational testing system:

There was the “scholarship” later generally known as the 11+ exam for admission to grammar school A pass at eleven years admitted to the grammar school, and sufficiently high marks in G.C.E. would admit to the university (p. 3).

Unfortunately, there were not enough places to accommodate everyone who passed the 11+ exam (see Appendix A) because the grammar schools could not take more than 20% of the school population. It appears that many of the children who took the 11+ exam and who should have passed were deliberately failed (Allen, p. 3) and their future educational opportunities were defined by age 11.

Post War – 1950s

After the end of the war, returning British soldiers added additional strain to the already overstressed economy. Wrigley (2006) states, “Absorption of some 9 million people from the armed forces and war-production section was a major achievement.” “Fifty-two percent of British men between the ages of nineteen and forty has served in armed forces by 1944, with the majority posted overseas at some point” (Virden, 1996, p.

29). In Britain, 5 years after the war, there were still bomb sites and gaps between buildings caused by bomb damage. It took over a decade to recover from the ravages caused by the war. During this period Britain struggled to recover economically. However, in the 1950s life in the United States of America was very different economically and politically from the Britain. The American dollar became very strong against the British pound. Most American servicemen stationed in Britain during this period seemed affluent because they had access to products and goods that were still not readily available to the British public. The fifties in America was a period of economic growth, education, development and new technical advances. During this time the popular media, assisted by an abundance of advertising, exploited and reinforced the myth of the woman's place and created stereotypical images of how the traditional American woman should look and behave (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971; Culley & Bennett, 1976; Peterson & Kerin, 1977; Venkatesar & Losco, 1975; Wagner & Banos, 1973).

Summary of Literature Review

Female immigration tied to the marriage to U.S. servicemen tells its own story because these silent immigrants did not come into America as part of an immigration quota, but immigrated as an act of marriage (Viriden, 1996). The women, who left England as young brides and some as new mothers, encountered many new experiences and challenges. As these women matured and assimilated into the American culture they had their whole adult lives ahead of them to develop and grow intellectually, emotionally, and educationally while maintaining an ethnic sense of who they were and where they had come from. Assimilation can occur at both the cultural and conceptual level. As adults these women continued to learn formally, "nonformally", and informally (Coombs,

Prosser, & Ahmed, 1973) and some became life-long learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Interviews initially provided demographic information from 23 women from his era. These data combined with five semistructured interviews provided a better understanding of the transition process and effect of assimilation on this generation of women.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was designed “to explore the beliefs, language, behavior and issues” (Creswell, 2007, p. 70). Qualitative research is not linear and has greater flexibility in its process than quantitative research (Ambert et al., 1995). By reframing perspectives on cultural differences, it is possible to accept differences, background, attitudes, and value systems as realities (Holman et al., 2007).

The purpose of this research focused on a specific group of G.I. brides from 1950s and 1960s in order to explore adaptation to cultural change, assimilation, and transitions for female immigrants within their American environment, including their educational experiences. Exploring the immigrant experience from a female perspective provided insights into how people in general adapt to new environments and if they consciously or unconsciously retain remnants of their own culture. By reframing perspectives on cultural differences, “we begin to accept our differences - in background, viewpoints, and values – as realities to be lived with, not problems to be solved” (Holman et al., 2007, p. 318).

Qualitative Approach

Creswell (2007) explains that, “unquestionably, the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information” (p. 43). Using a qualitative approach provided an empathetic perspective to the transition process that occurs when women experience a cultural change. Although qualitative research methods and its evaluation are often open to debate, Ambert et al.(1995) indicate that “qualitative research should be evaluated on the same overall basis as other research, that is, according to whether it makes a substantive contribution to empirical knowledge and/or advances theory” (p. 166). This research followed the structure of portraiture and

allowed the voice of the portraitist's voice to be revealed through the "collection of the data and the analytic shape of the final portrait" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 106).

Portraiture

Portraiture is defined as a qualitative approach because the context of the research leads to the researchers' own interpretation of thoughts, feelings, and observations (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Because my purpose was "to better understand human behaviors and experiences" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 43), portraiture was useful in creating a holistic picture of the participants in order to understand their experiences (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis). I explored the experience of the G.I. brides from 1950s in order to understand the culture they came from, their transition to the culture that they entered into, and whether their adaptation and assimilation process may have been influenced by any formal education experiences. From the stories of these women, I attempted to interpret the transition process and the personal, cultural, and educational experiences that contributed to the assimilation process. Therefore, portraiture provided the opportunity to create a thick and rich composite of the experiences of female immigration from the personal perspective, while at the same time align the data within the historical context of their experiences.

Background of the Target Population

There is a common held belief, "that immigration and assimilation were relatively easy for people of British birth, who spoke English and came from an industrial environment" (Viriden, 1996, p. 4). However, the G.I. brides from the 1950s have their own unique experiences that define and separate them from any other immigrant group. Most of the information that has been recorded regarding the female immigration of G.I.

brides comes from personal stories that I have found on various websites and published books on the experiences of war brides. Seemingly, there has been little interest or documentation about the second surge of female immigrants from Britain, who followed their U.S. servicemen husbands back to America in the 1950s. These silent immigrants, defined by the demographics that classified them as members of the silent generation, arrived in America without the fanfare and attention of the war brides who immigrated to the United States as a result of choosing to marry an American G.I. Results from a pilot study with two G.I. brides during my doctoral studies, revealed that these particular women had little formal assistance, education, or support to help them adjust to the enculturation process and assimilate into their new lives.

In 1946 the Transatlantic Brides and Parents Association (TBPA) was formed specifically as an organization to unite British people with a common culture and interest. In the past, TBPA arranged charter flights across the Atlantic for families. Now it provides a permanent link for people with British heritage. National conventions are held every two years. Magazines and a website provides contact for members scattered across the United States and Canada with the purpose and aim to provide fellowship and support, and to foster Anglo-American relationships. TBPA became the substitute for an ethnic enclave that provides the intervening step for immigrants to assimilation (Rodriguez, 1999; White, 1988). The comfort and familiarity of TBPA memberships continue long after its usefulness in the transitional process. TBPA became my resource for connecting with English G.I. brides who were willing to participate in this research.

Participants

A total of 23 women from TBPA memberships in 10 different states completed the survey (see Appendix B). The five women who were selected for semistructured

interviews were the first of the 23 respondents who indicated that they were willing to tell their stories. Four of the women were from the Midwest region and one woman was from an East coast state.

I created descriptive narratives that explored the experiences and introspections of these women in a sensitive manner by “sympathizing and identifying with the people studied to the extent that the materials produced represent the participants’ life in ways that are not just true to life and authentic to outsiders, but that feel legitimate to the participants themselves” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 98).

Selection Method

Finding participants was a challenge. The original target group for my research was a convenience sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) from my own local branch of TBPA, located in a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. Fraenkel and Wallen refer to the ease and advantages of using convenience sampling, but indicate it may not be truly representational because individuals who agree to be interviewed may hold strong opinions about the subject matter. I was comfortable with Fraenkel and Wallen’s explanation of sampling where researchers use personal judgment to select a target group. “Researchers assume they can use their knowledge of the population to judge whether or not a particular sample will be representative” (p. 100).

Although I had not been a frequent attendee at the monthly TBPA meetings, I was always welcome when I chose to attend. Females in this target group ranged in age from 60 to 80 years old. Most of them are U.S. citizens, although a few of them have chosen to maintain their British citizenship. Realistically this was an accessible population, conveniently available for participation in my qualitative study. As a participant observer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006), I would make it clear that I was conducting research while

fully participating in the group. In order to improve my credibility with this group, I increased my attendance at the TBPA meetings. According to Shaffer and Stebbins (1999), “Friendships are established that influence the extent to which access is granted to one group and simultaneously closed off to others” (p.50). I believed that I was in a unique position to be both a member of the group that I wished to study, as well as a “gatekeeper” to the group that Creswell (2007) explains as “an individual who is a member or has insider status with a cultural group” (p. 125). Consequently, I assumed that this group of individuals, who were conveniently available for study, would be eager to cooperate with my research. However, I discovered that these women were reluctant to expose their stories to me.

Instrumentation

Data collection triangulated multiple sources through review of historical documentation, literature, administration of a total of 23 surveys, transcription and field notes from five personal interviews. Historical documentation supports the experiences mentioned by the women as they described their childhood recollections of England, their educational experiences, and their impressions of America in the 1950s. Literature provided supporting information regarding the issue of transition (Bandura, 1977; Bridges, 1991; Bridges, 2001), the effect of social modeling and observational learning (Bandura, 2007; Bandura & Huston, 1961; Kassebaum, 1985), and the process of assimilation (Bridges, 2001; Gordon, 1964; Rodriguez, 1999; Steffey, 2002; Virden, 1996; White, 1988). Surveys and interviews provided an excellent tool for gathering intimate data. Creswell (2007) indicates that, “unquestionably, the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information” (p. 43).

Distribution of First Survey to Target Population

After attending the local TBPA meeting for several months, I broached the topic of my research to the club secretary and asked for permission to distribute my survey (see Appendix B) to the attendees at the next monthly TBPA meeting. I was able to explain the purpose of my research and personally hand out surveys to seven women who were in attendance that evening. I verbally assured them that I would protect their confidentiality and make the results of my research available to them. Using the club directory as a resource, I then mailed an additional eight surveys to the regular attendees who had not attended that evening. The mailed surveys contained an introductory note (see Appendix C) with an explanation of the purpose of the survey and request for participation. This explanation accompanied both the surveys that were mailed directly to the women and the surveys that were sent electronically by email.

The response was less than I had anticipated. This may have occurred due to possible trust issues, based on the fact that I do not share a common immigration experience with them since I was not from their generation of women and I did not arrive in the United States as a G.I. bride. Perhaps it resulted from their reluctance to expose stories with personal details to someone with whom they were merely acquainted or that they would be easily identifiable by other members of the group. Only four women from the original convenience sample anonymously completed the written survey (see Appendix B). None of the respondents were willing to meet with me further to discuss their personal experiences.

Expansion of Target Population

Therefore, in order to increase low number of responses from British women from my own geographic area, I contacted a second group of women, who were also affiliated

with the local TBPA chapter in their area. An identified gatekeeper (Creswell, 2007) in that group approached the members of her chapter to determine if these women would be willing to complete a survey and share their life stories as part of my research. At their next monthly meeting this contact person presented the topic of my research that generated enthusiasm within the group regarding participation in the research. Ten women submitted their contact information so that they could receive the survey. When I was unable to promptly dispatch the survey I received several inquiries from the group who indicated that they were eager to participate.

Second Survey Distribution

Eventually, seven emails were sent with the survey as an attached word document. Three additional surveys were sent by U.S. mail to women who had not provided email addresses. These surveys contained the same introductory message (see Appendix C) that accompanied the first round of surveys. I explained the purpose of my research and provided assurances of confidentiality. Only one response was received from the emailed requests. No responses were received from the mailed surveys. I was disappointed in the lack of response, following their initial eagerness to participate. I considered that the lack of response might have been due to the lack of computer skills and the ability to open up an electronic survey attachment. The gatekeeper suggested that I provided her with paper copies of the survey along with self-addressed stamped envelopes so that the survey results could be manually distributed and returned anonymously. Five women took copies of the survey and completed them. Three of the responses indicated that they would be interested in meeting with me to discuss their experiences further. At that point in time, I had 10 completed surveys from women in

three Midwest states, with four of the responses indicating a willingness to share their stories further.

In summary, a brief survey (see Appendix B) had been manually distributed, with stamped self-addressed envelopes, to two TBPA groups in three Midwestern states. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) indicate that manual distribution of the survey instrument provides the highest rate of response and recommends that “this method is used whenever a researcher has access to all (or most) of the members of a particular group in one place” (p. 400). This survey tool gathered general demographics, and was used to identify any participants who agree to participate in “semi-structured interviews” (Kvale, 1996).

These survey questions (see Appendix B) were based on the format of similar surveys (Lee, 1985; Virden, 1996) that have been conducted with WWII G.I. brides. The initial survey questions were structured to obtain demographics that include education, age, years of marriage, and year of arrival in the United States, while the open-ended questions were designed to investigate emergent themes and concepts in order to reflect impressions (see Appendix D) of their migration to the United States of America during the 1950s. From the survey responses I was able to identify anyone who was interested in sharing their stories further and who would allow me to conduct additional in-depth interviews. Name and contact information was provided with the survey results if the respondent indicated that they were willing to be contacted further in order to participate in the personal interviews. It was not possible to identify who the respondents were unless they chose to provide their contact information. Their confidentiality was protected by pseudonyms. Surprisingly, a better response to the survey was received from the TBPA website from anyone who accessed the site.

Expansion of Target Population using Electronic Resources

In a continued attempt to access and expand an identified population, I contacted the web-administrator of the national TBPA website explaining the purpose of my research and requesting permission to place a link to my survey on the website. An electronic application tool called Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) enabled me to create my own survey quickly and easily and produced results with customized spreadsheet pages for each question (see Appendix E). Over half of the surveys results collected were obtained electronically through this web tool. The percentages were already calculated and displayed response frequency and response count, along with the number of participants who answered the question and the number who skipped the question. The results of the paper surveys were combined with the electronic responses. Simple statistics made the survey data easy to analyze. Although the category of questions was formulated ahead of time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006), the data were emergent (Creswell, 2003). Counting was an important part of looking for frequencies and creating percentages. Median and mode were also calculated to determine if the average alone was misleading. The responses to the freeform questions were also tallied, weighted, and compared for similarities. The opportunity for additional respondents, who access the national TBPA website, generated 13 responses from Midwest, Eastern, and Southern states. I now had a total of 23 survey responses (see Table 2) from ten states and 12 people who were willing to be interviewed.

Table 2

Total of 23 Survey Responses

1 st survey paper version	2 nd survey 2 nd city via email	3 rd survey 2 nd city paper version	Web Survey Internet	Total
4	1	5	13	23

From this convenience sample of survey respondents I identified five participants from three states as a convenience sample, with whom I was able to conduct follow up phone interviews. Themes resulting from the open-ended questions were explored during the dialogue that occurred during the interview process. These interviews were designed to expand on their original survey responses (see Appendix E), which I had summarized for easy interpretation (see Appendix F), and to explore memories, feelings, impressions, transition, and assimilation experiences in America.

Interview Participation

Interview processes are a powerful tool for capturing personal experiences of individuals (Kvale, 1996). The five participants, who formed a convenience sample, were contacted for personal interviews based on the completion of the surveys that indicated their willingness to elaborate on their experiences. After receiving the survey responses I mailed a brief introductory note to each woman with the informed consent form (see Appendix G). The results of these interviews in did not attempt to categorize or define the entire experiences of all the women who came to America as young brides. I chose to concentrate on the particular stories of the selected group of G.I. brides from the 1950s.

My intent was to gather rich descriptions of the interviewee's life experiences and create a recognizable cultural portrait of this group that has both resonance and coherence.

My initial phone contact with the women who had agreed to be contacted involved a personal introduction by myself with a reminder of their response to the survey. I placed the phone calls in the early evening advising them that our conversation would probably take about an hour and that I would be recording and taking notes during the interview. In addition, I recorded field-notes about my perceptions of the conversations as the conversations were being recorded. Each interview was initially structured as a review of their earlier responses to the survey questions. Topics were expanded by using 10 open-ended questions (see Appendix D). These questions expanded on topics such as childhood memories, parents' attitudes, expectations of life in America, transitional and assimilation experiences, perspective and reflections. However in these interviews, each woman's experience was individual to her own perceptions. Conversations evolved as personal information emerged. Each unique story expanded on themes or restricted avenues of information based on the personality or the comfort level of the participant.

A one-hour phone interview took approximately 10 hours to transcribe. I believe that I was the best person to complete the transcriptions because I took field notes during the interview process to assist with the interpretation of the interviews and included references to laughter and encouraging sounds made by myself. "Verbatim descriptions are necessary for linguistic analyses: the inclusion of pauses, repetitions, and tone of voice are relevant for psychological interpretations of, for example, level of anxiety or the meaning of denials" (Kvale, 1996, p. 166). However, I discovered during the

transcription, because I was transcribing English voices, I found myself also using English spelling such as “neighbours” instead of “neighbors.” Data from semistructured interviews are emergent and the interview process became reactive to the different conversations as the dialogue ensued.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol

Kvale (1996) reminds us that, “ethical decisions do not belong to a separate stage of interview investigations, but arise throughout the entire research process” (p. 110).

Therefore, in accordance with IRB protocol, I provided the following documentation:

- Informed consent form (see Appendix G) to be signed by each interviewee that indicates a release of information, explains the purpose of my research, and assurances of confidentiality
- Declaration of consequences that there is no perceived harm to any participants.
- Contact information and an explanation that the participant can voluntarily withdraw from the study at any point.

This consent form (see Appendix G) addressed the protocol for the women who agreed to be interviewed indicating that participation was voluntary and those participants may withdraw from the study at any time. The one-hour audio taped phone interviews were conducted followed by verbatim transcriptions for data analysis. No payment was made for participation in this project.

Interviews, conducted by telephone, were audio taped on a digital recorder then transcribed personally to carefully “hear” the data. I personally transcribed the tapes because I also took field notes during the interview process to better interpret the interviews. I have maintained the tapes and transcripts in a secure location in my home

until such time that they are no longer needed to validate the research and at that time the tapes will be destroyed.

Design

Qualitative studies from a feminine perspective provides a ‘thick description’ (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to capture a holistic *cultural portrait* (Creswell, 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Morse, 1994). Ethnomethodology refers to the study of how people manage their every day life experiences (Bogdan & Biklen). By examining the experiences of a group of women who arrived in America in 1950s and by incorporating the historical perspective, I explored how the environment and the political influences affected the G.I. brides’ transition and assimilation process, and thus was able to “develop a traceable narrative that demonstrates that the line of argumentation is worthwhile and justified” (Galvan, 1999, p. 51).

Interpretive and Internal Validity

Therefore, because I was thorough with the analysis of my surveys, my interview procedures, field-notes, and observations based on the phone interviews, I was able to accurately capture the meaning implied by each respondent. The multiple truths and multiple perspectives of participants became evident through narratives as personal version of truth (Krefting, 1991). I attempted to prevent my own biases from impacting my understanding of their perspective as I conducted the analysis.

I used member verification or member checking (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) to reduce personal bias and as a way to verify the accuracy of the statements and impressions of the participants. As a follow up, each interview participant and group member gatekeeper were asked to review the transcripts of the interview for accuracy and completeness and the degree to which the researcher captured the participants’ viewpoint

(Johnson, 1997). The gatekeeper became a reliable source of data verification; however there was minimal feedback from the actual participants. The results of the analysis were sent back to the participants to provide an opportunity to review and validate my interpretation. When no responses were received to the email a second contact was made by phone. These personal contacts and responses were positive and actually generated additional conversation. No reason was given for the original lack of response except perhaps the perception that no response indicated a tacit agreement.

Interview Approach

During the phone conversations I maintained a casual conversational tone as I attempted to gather data and interact with the participants, “in a natural, unobtrusive, and non-threatening manner” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 39). I have a genuine curiosity about the experiences of the women who came to America without knowing what their future would hold, and how they coped with the changes that they experienced. I selected the design of a qualitative case study in order to provide the ‘thick description’ that is so often referred to in qualitative studies and to capture a holistic *cultural portrait* (Creswell, 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), but I was not fully prepared for the amount of personal data that emerged from the interviews. Qualitative research is broad enough to accommodate a variety of research techniques, but it is necessary to understand that qualitative research is emergent and cannot be closely controlled (Creswell, 2003). The emergent information often provoked questions that had not been anticipated. It was difficult to conduct this type of research without developing, an empathetic approach as I listened to their individual experiences. However, it was necessary for me not to become overly emotionally involved in these stories. As a female immigrant it was also important for me not to lose my perspective and to understand Creswell’s (2007) point of view on

research by accounting for any female bias that might interfere with misinterpretation of the data.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) indicate that the value of qualitative research “is on documenting or portraying the everyday experiences of individuals by . . . interviewing them and relevant others” (p. 511). Personal interviews allowed me to take a post-positive approach to the multiple realities of truth and to interpret what I heard from the perspective of the person who is sharing that truth based on their own experiences. The G.I. brides from the 1950s have their own unique experiences, shaped by a specific historical era that defines and separates them from any other immigrant group. As children they had firsthand experience of a world war, and their formal education was, to some degree, impacted by this experience. In addition, their arrival in America did not follow the normal immigrant pattern as they were silently absorbed into the general population, hence the nomenclature of the term “silent immigrants.” When I surveyed and interviewed the convenience sampling of G.I. brides from the 1950s I followed Luttrell’s (1997) recommendation “to write about what transpires in such a way that readers can decide for themselves the truthfulness, significance, or usefulness of the knowledge that is produced” (p. 14).

Procedures

I already anticipated having to be flexible with my perspectives. Although qualitative data has to have a design, the design itself must be able to be adjusted in order to incorporate emergent data. Therefore my approach for this qualitative study was to obtain an inductive inner perspective and achieve an in-depth understanding of the experiences of these women and their interpretation of their own experiences by researching the historical period of WW11 and the fifties era in America “Descriptive

data are what is important to collect, and that analysis is best done inductively” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 55).

Collection of Data

The initial foundation of the data collection was the demographic information from the surveys, supplemented by the copious notes, personal reflections, insights and transcriptions that I created as field-notes during the interview processes. Each hour long interview generated an average of twenty pages of transcribed dialogue. In addition, my own field-notes created a body of information that was composed of observations, personal reminders and questions to myself about what may not have been said but inferred during the interviews (Ambert et al., 1995; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007).

I gathered an initial layer of basic statistical information from the surveys to understand the demographics of the participants. Then, along with the unstructured responses gathered from the surveys, and combined with the transcriptions from personal interviews this provided sufficient information for analysis (Creswell, 2007). Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) recommend designing a logical approach to the methodology and to create relevant categories that emerged as the data is obtained from both the surveys and interviews. The survey and interview questions were structured to provide data that is aligned with my four subquestions that helped to create identifiable themes for the data collection. At the outset emergent themes were stored under these four sections. These categories centered on the purpose of the research that address the readiness of the G.I. brides of the 1950s to embrace change and the reality of their expectations upon arrival in America, their emotional and intellectual growth, transition process into assimilating into

life in America including their educational experiences, and their introspections of these experiences.

Triangulation

Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) indicate that triangulation is elemental in qualitative research. For the purpose of this dissertation I used Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) definition of the term *triangulation* to mean multiple data-collecting techniques.

Triangulation improves reliability and validity in qualitative studies. The processes of data collection, obtained from the various methods of survey responses, interviews, and interview-notes of personal observations made during the interviews, provided supporting and comparative sources to actual historical events. The validity of my observations and data collection analysis was verifiable by collecting information then comparing it with other sources of supporting data recorded from prior immigrant experiences and historical facts. Recurring patterns, observed from both the surveys and interviews, also provided a method to check for consistencies and reliability. The more sources that I was able to validate the more effective triangulation became as a tool to check validity because this allowed the data to be cross checked against supporting evidence. I compared the stories that I heard with historical data from that 1950s era. I looked for commonalities in the emergent themes that validated similar experiences. I reviewed documented experiences of the first generation of G.I. brides that came as a result of marriages during or shortly after WWII. I created field notes during the interviews to describe my own observations (Ambert et al., 1995).

Data Analyses

In order to produce a holistic cultural portrait of the participants I followed recommendations suggested by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) which were to immerse

myself into the cultural memories and produced “a detailed description of the culture sharing-group being studied, an analysis of this group in terms of, and then some interpretation of the group by the researcher” (Fraenkel & Wallen, p. 512).

Survey Analyses

The initial survey questions gathered basic information that helped to determine the demographics of the convenience sample. The survey also asked the women to indicate who was willing to be contacted for a personal in-depth interview. Responses to the survey questions were analyzed for statistical information, similarities and contrasting opinions relating to their experiences. The data that were collected from the paper version of the survey were combined into the electronic survey results spreadsheet. The electronic survey calculated percentages and it was simple to incorporate the results from the paper surveys into the data base.

Interview Analyses

My analysis of the interviews had begun almost as soon as the surveys were returned and demographics and patterns began to emerge. Twenty-three women had responded to the survey, 12 women indicated that they were willing to be interviewed. For convenience purposes I selected the first five respondents who indicated that they would be willing to discuss their assimilation process further. These five women, who will be referred to as Chris, Kelly, Lucy, Sue, and Tina, were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. I contacted each of the five women by phone and, the interview process was constructed around the survey questions (see Appendix B). Each story provided pieces of a living history tapestry that validated documented events with which I was already familiar. Listening to these stories and events first-hand was to understand, for the first time, the emotions involved in some of these experiences.

The interview data assisted in expanding the various themes identified from the surveys. The questions were not formally structured like the survey, but the descriptive information from the surveys provided the groundwork for the interviews to build upon. I used their responses to the survey to guide the semi-formal phone interviews and align and expand the emergent survey themes. By keeping each narrative separate, the transcriptions of the interviews created lengthy documents, of about 15-20 pages each that made analyzing data a challenge (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990). At this point it became apparent that I was dealing with five individual case studies. I followed Yin's (2003) recommendation to identify the issues and then record the common themes.

Coding

The coding of the interview data, which produced 77 pages of single spaced dialogue, was an enormous effort (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Patton, 1990). The document containing the actual transcripts (see Appendix M) has been added to the end of this document for convenience of navigation. Analyzing the interview data was more complex and convoluted than the analysis of descriptive survey data. Coding involved reading each interview separately, looking for key points which emerged as themes and keeping track of which woman had provided what information. The initial interviews were color coded on the actual paper transcripts as various categories, based on the interview questions (see Appendix D), were identified. This assisted in easily identifying the categories that emerged from the survey data. I followed Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) advice and developed a coding system based on the emergent themes to assist in identifying regularities and patterns and then selected words or phrases that easily identify defined topics (Creswell, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Coding recurrent themes helped me

to identify and count occurrences (Creswell, 2007). Key quotes were selected and, by clustering similarities, categories emerged and were identified to make the classification of emergent themes easier to recognize. Three iterations (see Table 3) occurred before the data was sufficiently reduced to a manageable format for analysis.

Table 3

Consolidation of Data from Five Semi-Structured Interviews

Documentation	See Appendix	# of Pages	# of Categories	# of Themes
First Iteration	H	21	19	
Second Iteration	I	8	23	7
Third Iteration	J	7	14	5

One master document was created from the five interviews which gathered all of the data and identified all of the themes. The first iteration (see Appendix H) reduced the interviews to key phrases and comments by coding the preliminary emergent content and identifying initial categories based on different area of the women's lives. The second iteration (see Appendix I) reduced and refined the data from more of a critical perspective from 21 pages to eight pages, but actually expanded the number of categories from 19 to 23. Finally in the third iteration (see Appendix J) interview data was reduced to 14 categories and realigned based on emergent themes and the relevance to the research sub-questions. These iterations contributed to the analyses of the data by reducing the relevant information to a manageable size. A clear trail of consolidation of the data, and the emergent themes, through three iterations is presented in a table format (see Table 3).

In addition, a quick summary of the pertinent interview data was arranged in a table to consolidate the interview demographics (see Appendix K). Finally, as the five themes (see Appendix J) were aligned to address the four research questions, it appeared that the fifth identified theme of insightfulness was applicable to both the third and fourth sub-question (see Appendix L).

All of the participants had agreed to have their phone conversations tape-recorded. During the interviews some of the participants were more willing than others to share detailed information. I recorded and reviewed each interview in my role as a researcher, with an open mind. During the interview process I discovered that the participants were “not equally articulate and perceptive” (Creswell, 2003, p. 187). My interview notes indicate interest, surprise, and validation of the information and the details that were recorded. Parallels with the historical events and the literature emerged from the narratives, as personal details were revealed (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). My goal was to create a blend of the historical culture as well as the contemporary reflections that were being revealed.

Topics and themes were expanded or contracted as the analysis progressed and minor categories emerged. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) suggest the importance of coding both manifest and latent content of the data. Manifest content refers to the tangible information that is blatantly obvious such as the initial demographic information from the surveys. Latent content is more subtle and intuitive by determining the underlying or implied meaning. This required sensitive discernment on my part as I attempted to interpret a person’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that emerged during the interview

process (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Latent content is less reliable because it is open to interpretation by the researcher.

Generalizability

Qualitative research puts a lot of credence in the positivistic perception of credibility (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Quantitative measures cannot be applied with the same standards to qualitative research (Ambert et al., 1995). From a post-positive perspective individual truths are not quantifiable. Qualitative research does not have to be validated by considering if the results are transferable to another study or situation because qualitative research can be unique to a specific group or research topic. Yet it is feasible that, although the research did not focus on a random sample, the methods and the results may very well be transferable and relevant to the broader membership of the TBPA, to immigrants in general and their educational experiences and to the workplace, where change management and transition processes are a growing concern. A global economy has increased the need to understand more diverse nationalities and to accommodate cultural differences rather than expect total assimilation (Williams, 2001). Therefore, because my research was conducted with the strategies of triangulation, member checking and any biases were considered and accounted for, then results should be credible even if they are not transferable. "Generalizability is not the major purpose in qualitative research" (Johnson, 1997, p. 164). However, by discovering how one group managed the assimilation process may provide insight into how transitions may affect other people and situations.

Experiences with cultural change, enculturation, and assimilation are relevant in a multicultural world (Williams, 2001) where everything is related to everything else (Covey, 1989). Yet, change and the need to constantly adapt to changing environment

must take into consideration divergent interests and perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Holistic research is richer than quantitative studies and allows for a post-positivist approach by providing a glimpse of individuals' personal everyday experiences and individual truths (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2003). It appears if there are similarities in culture and language, then assimilation should not be a significant issue. I sought to discover from the personal experiences of English G.I. brides if this was the truth from their perspective (Lee, 1985; Virden, 1996) and to capture "the participants' actual language, dialect, and personal meanings" (Johnson, 1997, p. 162). Results of this qualitative study may or may not be generalizable, but from a post-positive perspective the conclusions represent the truth as experienced by the participants. However, my intention for this research was to provide insight into a particular group of women who had been given an opportunity to explain how they addressed cultural change and managed the assimilation process during a particular historical era in the hope that it would shed some perspective on why assimilation is a universal issue that can be controversial from an individual perspective.

Assumptions and Limitations

I have a similar background and cultural experiences in common with most of the women that I interviewed. As a woman researching a particular female experience that occurred to a specific group of women during a precise historical time frame, I am cognizant that there is an ease in which a female researcher may more easily obtain intimate revelations from female participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Although it could have been easy for me to make assumptions that I understood their experiences without really listening to what they were telling me I conducted my interviews in a professional and ethical manner.

The post-positive perspective acknowledges the reality of personal truth, which is reality to the people who are being studied. The small homogenous group of women, selected as a convenience sample, may generate doubt in the transferability of the study results, but reliability can exist without the results having to be generalizable to other populations. Therefore individual research, even based on a small sample, can provide truth value by discovering how these participants perceive their own experiences (Krefting, 1991).

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) supports the assumption that research is an iterative process with emergent themes whereby data can take its own shape and form. Being flexible with the direction of the semi-structured interviews (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) I found that different personalities responded to me in their own way based on their ability to share intimate details. My own personality and interview style may have contributed to the level of comfort that some of the women felt during the interview process and the resulting level of intimacy and sharing that occurred. Nevertheless, I was able to obtain in-depth details about individual experiences of their home life and marital difficulties that reflected these women's personal truths.

Perspectives of the Process

I made an effort to conduct my research in a professional and ethical manner that permitted me to protect the vulnerability of the participant (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). I referred back to their survey questions in order to keep the conversations focused. Although some of the stories moved me deeply, I attempted to keep my perspective as a researcher. I accounted for any of my own biases or enthusiasms, by making sure that I stayed objective as I recorded the individual stories that I heard (Ambert et al., 1995; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

During the analysis process it was important to avoid any “elite biases” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) by not giving additional weight to the data from the participants who were more articulate. By adopting a story telling approach, I acknowledged that my personal perspective may have affected the approach I took; however, by focusing on the data analysis I was capable of providing “an insightful and sensitive cultural interpretation with a rigorous collection and analysis of what they have seen and heard” (Fraenkel & Wallen, p. 514). Sorting the data into tables and looking at trends addressed any personal bias and allowed the data to provide a “much more rendering of events” (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 38). Storytelling provides the opportunity to combine both the perspective of the storyteller and the person conducting the interviews into a ‘thick description’ of personal experiences of a culture-sharing group.

Using a convenience sampling for the surveys and selecting the first five survey respondents who indicated willingness to be part of the interview process made them automatically the accessible population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). I recognized and addressed these limitations during the analysis process. While the five survey respondents determined the size of the sample, their diversity and their geographic locations may provide a satisfactory cross section of the population of interest. I was cautious that the close emotional and cultural association that existed during the study may have lead to romanticizing their experiences or minimizing the data in order to avoid creating any embarrassment. Although it is necessary for the researcher to become submerged into the culture in order to be able to identify recurrent patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) I was consistently careful to avoid reframing the narratives based on my own perspectives and experiences, and presented the experiences from the perspective of a credible researcher.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to explore the process of assimilation by surveying and interviewing British GI brides who married and came to the United States and examining how they adapted to cultural change and to address assumptions and preconceived ideas about transition experiences. There is no longer a need for the individual “to submerge, deny, or devalue aspects of their identity and culture to a larger societal or organizational identity” (Williams, 2001, p. 46). Personal and organizational change can be difficult and instinctively people are going to resist certain changes (Kotter, 1996). “How people greet a change has to do with whether they feel in control of it or not. Change is exciting, when it is done *by us*, threatening when it is done *to us*” (Kanter, 1985, p. 52). Many of these women have now been living in the United States now for more than 50 years. I was able to contact them through the Transatlantic Brides and Parents Association (TBPA). I pursued four areas of interest, derived from the four subquestions that included memories, transition experiences, adaptation and assimilation, and reflections and perspectives. I was able to determine commonalities in these perspectives that led to patterns that generated preliminary themes. My goal was to use a survey to initially obtain demographic information from a larger group and then determine a convenience sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) to participate in the interview process.

Survey Analyses

Data analysis of the initial surveys was performed manually. The electronic survey was administered using an online application known as Survey Monkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>) that was able to create an electronic spreadsheet of the

data (see Appendix E). I added the interviews that were manually completed to the electronic spreadsheet and recalculated the statistics

Educational Background of all Respondents

The first section of the survey was based on the educational background and educational experiences of all twenty-three women (see Table 4). In England, the 11+ exam was used to determine a child's future educational path. The age of school leaving ranged from 14–18 years of age. The average age of these women for leaving school appeared to be 16.5 years of age. Median and mode was slightly lower at 16 years of age.

Table 4

Educational Experiences of 23 Survey Respondents

Survey Data	Yes	No
Passed 11+	71%	29%
Received superior education in England	80%	20%
Obtained H.S. diploma or university degree	26%	74%
Obtained GED in the United States	8%	92%
Pursued additional education in the United States	75%	25%
Obtained education to improve employability	66%	33%

Eighty percent of the women considered the education that they received in England to be equal to or above the standard of an equivalent U.S. education. Yet five years later, only 26% of the respondents indicated that they had obtained the General Certificates of Education (GCE) at the Ordinary (“O”) for high school graduation or had received a university degree. Eighty percent of the survey respondents added positive comments about their British school experiences. One respondent indicated that she felt that she

“had a good sound basic education. Much more memory work.” Another woman responded that she thought “the basic education was very solid in the U.K. compared to the United States.”

After arriving in America only 25% of the 23 women received a General Certificate of Education (GED). One respondent described that she recognized the reason for obtaining her GED was because it was “the quickest way to get into college.” Surprisingly, 76% of the women pursued some level of college education without taking the GED (see Table 4). This education experience was described as college real estate classes and many night school courses, or evening classes at the local community college, college courses to become a legal secretary, or obtaining a degree in accounting from California Polytechnic State University. It appeared that their previous education in England was deemed sufficient for them to enter college in the United States and to be successful in their chosen field. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) indicate that 83% of people pursue additional learning because of some past, present, or future change in their lives. Sixty-six percent of the women, who chose to pursue further education, did so because of the need to improve their employability. One woman explains that her English education was sufficient to enable her to take college classes and shares that the impetus to pursue higher education was the fact that “I was a widow at 40 with 2 children . . . and went to school at night, then later full-time to enhance my career skills and for self development and actualization.” Another woman who also attended college recognized that she wanted to “improve job performance.” One woman had the insight to acknowledge her motivating force as “maturity and the opportunity for education.” Merriam and Caffarella (1999) indicate that because America is a democratic society all individuals have the

opportunity to pursue and education and the ability to be self-directed in the learning process is critical.

Educational Opportunities

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) observe that, “adults often engage in learning as one way to cope with the life events they encounter” (p. 115). Obtaining U.S. citizenship became a self-directed process (Guglielmino, Long, & McCune, 1989; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Torrance & Mourad, 1978) that taught them about their new country. Two of the women interviewed obtained U.S. degrees. Another woman actively pursued her GED so that she would have her high school diploma before her children graduated from high school. Merriam and Caffarella believe in patterns and interrelatedness indicating that “learning is tied to a triggering event” (p. 107). However, the greatest impact of education is seen in the first generation of these women’s American born children, that occurred as a direct result of the encouragement and support that these women gave to their children and the informal and cultural opportunities that they exposed their children to. From their mothers’ descriptions most of the adult children appear to have benefited intellectually from the travel they were exposed to while their fathers were in the military, the cultural pluralism of their mothers, and the educational opportunities that were made available to them.

Demographics of all 23 Respondents

Survey data (see Appendix F) reveal that 65% of the women, who ranged in age from 16 years to 23 years old, were teenagers when they met their future husbands with the average, median, and mode age being 18 years of age. Initial meetings occurred as the result of a casual social event, or being introduced by friends. One respondent described a chance meeting with her future husband “at my girlfriend’s twenty-first birthday party.

She was engaged to an American and he invited some of his friends to her party.”

“Seventy percent of the G.I.s were career military. The average age of the women at marriage was just over 20 years of age and 66% of the couples returned to America within two years of the marriage. Arrival years in the United States spanned a sixteen year period from 1954 to 1970, with the median and mode being 1958. Sixty-seven percent of the women who responded to the survey arrived in America during a six year period between 1954 and 1960.

The English families were less accepting of the marriage than the American in-laws (see Appendix F). Most of the parents were devastated. Comments reported from the English parents ranged from remarks such as the parents “concern that they would never be able to see me again” or feeling “very disappointed. I could have married anyone as long as they were British,” to being apprehensive and thinking their daughter was crazy. One woman described her parents as being “very upset and sad and disappointed in me.” Other parents were “horrified and a little ashamed and embarrassed.” Other families showed reserved support and the respondent explained that although they were “very upset-however, they really liked my husband but hated the thought of my living so far away, as I did.” One woman indicated that although her mother had a lot of reservations about her marriage, her mother, who was a widow, had decided to immigrate to America with her daughter and the daughter’s American husband.

Most of these parental concerns were not shared by the women themselves, who did not seem to be unduly deterred by their families’ responses. The women appeared to anticipate their new life with enthusiasm. One woman indicated in her own words that, “I

was ready for an adventure.” Another response indicated that there was an expectation that life would be better in America. One woman’s impression of America was that there would be “big spaces, lots of room, and big cars!” Another woman eagerly anticipated a “change of climate, lovely colored cars, and lots of travel.” While one response indicated a longing for “homes with all the amenities,” yet another indicated that she was impressionable. She said, “I think I got my ideas from movies and magazines.” One introspective comment indicated that this respondent “never thought about what to expect, as long as I was with my husband. When you are young you are very carefree, and adventurous.” There was an eager anticipation and general excitement about their new country and life and the general consensus was that “life would be better.”

Upon arrival in America 76% of the women were well received and welcomed by their husbands’ families. The respondents shared their experiences and gave responses such as being greeted “with open arms and warm affection” and “royally treated.” One woman who arrived in the United States 3 years after her marriage described the reception that she received from her in-laws, “they were so very happy to see me and my children. His mother raced past my husband, whom she had not seen for over 4 years in order to hug me. All his brothers, sisters and family came that day to meet me.” Unfortunately twenty-eight percent of the women indicated that they had not been well received by their extended American families. When asked about their initial experience with their American in-laws they recorded comments such as, “unfavorably” or “my mother-in-law was very cold towards me - the rest of his family was much friendlier.” It must have been a difficult adjustment too for the American families to welcome their son’s spouse into their lives. One woman described in detail the problems that she

experienced in making herself understood. She shared that “they accepted me, but at times difficult over how they misunderstood different terms of speech.”

Experiences that Enhanced or Inhibited Transition

More than one source of support was mentioned as assisting the transition period (see Table 5). Church, family and friends were credited with assisting the women’s favorable adjustment to life in America. Several women indicated that connecting with other British women through TBPA personally helped them. For example one woman shared her relief when she “found TBPA and other women who had also married American servicemen.” Another woman who had not been well received by her mother-in-law indicated that, “I wanted to go home so badly and knew I had to find a job to occupy myself.”

Military life and living in a military community with other multinational families was mentioned as easing the transition. Military life seemed to provide a transition between life on a U.S. base in England to military life in the United States. One woman provided her perception of the benefits of military life when she indicated, “I did not have many problems because I lived in a military community with wives of all nationalities.” There was a feeling of camaraderie and of sharing common experiences as another woman describes her initial experiences in the United States. “We lived in military housing so all the young wives were far from home and family. We were all in the same situation.” Finding a job and working was cited several times and credited with helping with the adjustment for these women. For one woman there was a realization that there was no going back. She comments sadly when she realized that she “figured I’d made my bed, now I had to lie in it.” Another woman, who had a difficult time admitted to experiencing culture, shock indicated that “I felt like a fish out of water.”

Table 5

Success Factors in the Assimilation Process of 23 Respondents

Friends	TBPA	Military	Church	Employment
50%	28%	17%	11%	11%

The following comments presented the transition in a positive light. As one woman indicated that her transition was assisted by “a supportive husband, good friends, and beginning to work outside the home.” The support of the husband’s family was a tremendous asset, but even day to day activities a culture shock. One woman described her first grocery shopping experience when “they took me shopping to the supermarket. I was totally overwhelmed by the vast array of food and tremendous variety.” Another woman referenced a more spiritual aspect when she described how her family coped with transition by relying on “our Christian faith and a strong love for each other and our family.” Other responses indicated that the women felt less isolated by “keeping in touch with my own family and friends.”

Negative comments addressed adjustment to the climate and reaction to the women’s British accents. One woman explained that she “had a hard time adjusting to the heat and some of the food. I worked at a company where I had to use a two-way radio and they wanted me to speak American.” Yet another woman was soon left to cope with transitions and cultural assimilation on her own because “my husband left me with two small children to support so I went to work and learned to take of myself my children. I remarried when they were grown and on their own.” Time and reality assisted with the

transition process. As one woman explained “I adapted after about four years after my first trip home knowing I could get back home again to see all my family.”

Factors Easing the Assimilation Process

Military life became a surrogate family by easing the assimilation process and represented a transition period between life in England and arrival in America (Bandura, 1997; Bridges, 1991; Bridges, 2001). A rapid learning curve had to occur upon arrival in America in order to make assimilation possible (Kassebaum, 1985; Lewin, 2006). New experiences seemed to fascinate rather than repel these women. However, one area of concern that resonated for some of the women I interviewed was the lack of welcome from their American in-laws. There were still the daily experiences of adjustment mentioned by the women who I interviewed, such as “the money exchange, sizes, weights, numbers, to be unlearned and new ones learned” (Lee, 1985, p. 196). Assimilation is a gradual process. A visit back to England and the birth of children also seemed to be another step toward the enculturation process. For the women who found jobs and went to work the assimilation process was accelerated as they were forced into daily interaction with Americans.

Some of the typical ways that immigrants cope with assimilation includes, involvement with a local church and joining ethnic clubs, but the most significant sign of assimilation for these women, is citizenship (Rodriguez, 1999; Virden, 1996). This validated my research findings where 94% of the women who responded to the survey and 80% of the women who were interviewed had become American citizens (see Table 6). Forty-four percent of the women interviewed directly attributed their desire to become citizens to the needs of their husbands and children. Citizenship is an outward sign of the

internal process of conceptual assimilation, that is deeper and more transformational than the cultural assimilation and is “quintessentially proactive” (Rodriguez).

Table 6

Main Reasons Indicated for Becoming a U. S. Citizen

Allegiance to the United States	Children	Husband	Voting	Other
29%	25%	19%	13%	14%

Rodriguez (1999) informs that, “more than three-quarters (76.4%) of immigrants who had resided in the United States for 40 years or more were naturalized citizens” (p. 2). This has also proved true of my interview population, where 93% of the women who responded indicated that they obtained American citizenship. This validates Rodriguez’ findings that the longer a person resides in America the more likely it is that they will make the proactive decision to become part of the community and culture in which they live.

Almost half (44%) of the group of women who were interviewed (see Table 6) cited the husband’s career needs or the fact that they had children born in America. Response from one woman who felt that becoming a citizen “made for a more secure situation for me and the children.” Another reason for becoming a citizen was that her “husband encouraged it, thought it would help his job career.” A more pro-active approach was expressed by another respondent who expressed the desire to participate in the elections, and explained that she become a citizen “two years after living here, it was important to further my husband's career and to actively participate as a citizen in local and national elections etc.” One woman provided a perspective on the choices that she

had made that, “after going back to England, I realized I missed the USA and decided if my children were Americans, I would also become a citizen.”

Several responses focused on the practical aspects. For example one woman was concerned about her legal rights and explained that it was “very important to become a citizen to protect your legal rights--children, property and for obtaining work, especially if you are applying to companies who have any involvement with government contracts.” The simplest reason one woman gave was that “I wanted to be able to vote and become an American.” Two of the respondents indicated that they had not become citizens. One woman chose not to explain her response; the other woman indicated that “I did not become a citizen because I will not denounce [sic] British citizenship.”

Unable to physically see the women as the interviews were being conducted; nevertheless I was able to establish rapport with each woman as she shared her memories and personal reflections, some of which were very intimate. I was also able to create a bonding experience with common memories and to detect avoidance or reluctance to share some information, which I did not pursue. Each of the women was eager to tell their own story. My own childhood, the educational experiences, and assimilation into the American culture although different in many respects, still provided a frame of reference for me to be able to identify with their stories. Similar to Luttrell’s qualitative research on females (1997) my goal was to depict their personal life stories to show the ways in which these women were able to adapt to change, assimilate into the American culture, grow emotionally and educationally, and provide retrospective insights into these experiences. The interview questions (see Appendix D) were formulated around their

childhood memories and educational experiences, their transition, adaptation and assimilation experiences, and finally their insights, reflections and perspectives.

Interview Participants

The study focuses on the stories of five women, who will be referred to as Chris, Kelly, Lucy, Sue, and Tina, and who reside in three different states. All of the women are still associated with the Transatlantic Brides and Parents Association (TBPA) that provided me with the gateway to reach out to this group of women. The five women had all arrived within a ten-year span from 1957 to 1967. I encountered different personalities, and different perspectives that ultimately provided the ‘thick description’ referred to earlier by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). Demographic data were gathered, compared, and contrasted (see Appendix F).

Chris has been married and widowed twice. Her first husband was working for the prison service in the infirmary when he was attacked and killed by a prisoner the day before he was scheduled to retire. She was working on her degree at night and was “left with a child, my daughter who had just finished her freshman year in college and my son who was in high school.” She was able to finish her degree while living on the West coast with her second husband.

Chris was very open and forthcoming with her responses. She was only a teenager when she met her first husband who began attending her local church in England. They spent four years stationed in Europe before arriving in America in 1962. They were able to return from France to have both of their children christened in the church in which they had been married. She was well educated and had lived in France and Germany and spoke both languages fluently. The time she had spent in Europe with the military helped to mitigate her experience with the cultural changes that she experienced when she first

arrived in America. She describes her experiences with the military, “I did not have many problems because I lived in a military community with wives of all nationalities, plus I came from a home and church where I had hosted people from many areas.” Chris was outgoing and gregarious and was willing to share her misfortunes as well as her reflections and insights.

Chris and her first husband were stationed at a very isolated post in Utah when they finally arrived in the United States she jokingly shared that “I told my husband I thought it was a test to see if I had married him for a green card.” I felt an instant rapport with her. She had been evacuated with her mother during the war, but the mother returned home after a day and her mother told her that, “as she was walking down the street with us in the pram, my father was walking up the street to come and get us because he did not want to be apart from us.” Most of her memories of the war were happy because of all of the parties that were held to celebrate every time her uncle came home on leave. Her mother made several trips to the United States to visit Chris and her family. She remembers her mother’s amazement at all of the fast-food restaurants. Chris told me that, “it was kind of nice seeing it through her eyes.” She maintained very strong ties to England while her parents were alive, but her desire to make a trip back to England has diminished since her parents have passed away. Although she feels more American than most of her English friends she still cooks English food on occasion and has introduced her son-in-law to various traditional foods.

Kelly was three years old when the war broke out in Europe. Her mother would not let Kelly and her brother be evacuated, although for a while, the mother took them to a safer location in the north of England. Her family was bombed out of two homes. She

remembers spending the days at her grandmother's home, and then the family would sleep in underground chalk caverns at night, because there was no roof on the grandmother's house. Her childhood did not seem strange to her. She felt secure because her mother took the children with her everywhere she went. Kelly casually shared that "we went down to the harbor when they brought the men back from Dunkirk in the fishing boats." She told me that her mother, "was down there serving tea and sandwiches and stuff and we were right with her." The one vivid memory that still stays with her from the war years and still bothers her is when she thinks about when "they laid all the dead bodies out on the pavement in front of the house, you know, from the blast, from the bombs." Kelly was only six years old at that time.

Kelly left school and started work as an apprentice to a tailor on her fifteenth birthday. She was only a teenager when she met her first husband, who was several years her senior. Her family did not like her in a relationship with a U.S. serviceman. Even after he was posted to a different base in Europe she kept up a correspondence with him for more than two years. She married him finally after he returned for a second tour of duty to England. She didn't have the "vague idea" of what her new life would be like in America, but she describes herself as "a very outgoing person," who was ready to try something new. Her husband was reassigned back to the United States and she traveled to America alone and pregnant. She described her recollections of her initial journey, "I flew to New York by myself and then, I rode from New York down to Georgia. A greyhound . . . by myself, and I was pregnant by then."

There were difficulties in her marriage; she described with honesty the problems that she had with her first husband. "He developed a drinking problem. He couldn't keep

a job and then he started to get mean so I finally took my children and left.” She was not about to expose her children to an abusive situation. Money problems prohibited any trips back to England. She explained, “I was trying to raise my kids. So I didn’t get a chance to go anywhere. I didn’t have any money to go anywhere.” Kelly had no family in the United States, but she was courageous. She has worked hard all her life to support her family and she describes her best experience in the United States as, “meeting my second husband.” I was impressed with her courage and steadfastness. She dated her second husband for thirteen years and did not marry him until her children were grown. When she finally did make a trip back to England she thought that “everything seems more Americanized,” but she admits that she still likes the English food.

Lucy was 20 years old, when she met her first husband at a coffee shop in the local village. She had high expectations of life in America and admits that naively she “thought that it was going to be wonderful. I really thought that the streets were paved with gold because I had seen too many movies.” After arriving with her husband in the United States she discovered that her husband had a drinking problem that severely affected them financially. She met her husband’s family and found that her father-in-law was also an alcoholic and could not understand her mother-in-law’s tolerance of the situation because “the kids were sleeping on the floor, just on blankets. So it was a very different life what I was used to.” In retrospect she felt quite ashamed for the way she treated her mother-in-law. Her husband became very possessive and Lucy became a stay-at-home mom; she did not work during the years that she was married to him.

Lucy enjoyed the time they spent in the military and believed that the military contributed to her adjustment because, “the military does take care of people . . . So even

if you don't have any family, in-laws or what have you, you still have the military people and I was quite happy." Lucy had expected to be able to return to England if her husband got another posting to Europe, but he did not stay in the military. Her expectations were not realized although she thought that if he had stayed in the military it might have been a possibility. "I really thought I'd be back, you know, back and forth, back and forth. I'd go over; I'd be back next year . . . It just didn't work out that way for the money." Lucy was the most reticent about her childhood and memories of the war, but eager to talk about her present interests. She honestly admitted that she would have preferred to have stayed in England, but now, although she loves to go over there she always wants to come back to the United States. She is proud of her children and knows that "if you changed anything, that would change and you wouldn't want that," but she did say, "If I had to do it over again, I would have stayed in my small little town and married a local guy." She has, however, become a U.S. citizen and confided, "I thought, you know, get on with your life and get your citizenship."

Sue was 19 years old, when she met her husband at a college night event. He was wearing an English tweed coat. She did not believe he was an American when she met him because he didn't look like one. He got posted back to the United States after they were married and left the military. She probably had the most insight of all of the women that I interviewed. After getting married she remained in England with her family during her pregnancy because there were problems obtaining U.S. medical coverage. Sue explained, "My parents were concerned enough . . . They did not want me to come if we didn't have a place to live and we didn't have some support. It would have worried them

to death if I'd have come and we didn't have any support." She admitted that "coming to America everything seemed bigger and better."

Sue was generous about sharing her insights and understanding of the cultural issues that faced her generation of immigrant women. She did not really understand the commitment she had made to live her life in America and told me that "you don't realized how important that family community is, when you've grown up knowing everybody around you, and they know who your aunties, uncles and grandparents." She still suffers from claustrophobia that she attributes to going into the dark damp bomb shelters. She remembers "as a kindergartner going into the bomb shelters and the musty smell . . . and then the lights went out." She observed that "it takes quite a long time to sort of fit into that culture, I could communicate, heaven only knows what people do who can't; it must be so frustrating." Sue's husband was French-Canadian and upon arrival in America she discovered that French was spoken in the home and that was "difficult for me because I really didn't speak French."

Sue recognized that she had gaps in her education in England and pursued a college education in her later years. She admits that her husband had no idea how difficult the transition to life in America would be for her. She was able to make frequent trips back to England because her parents always paid for her daughter's fare, but her aging parents' illness made her feel guilty about not being there more often. She confided that "I don't think that the guilt will ever leave you because you kind of left their care giving to other people." She has worked with immigrant and abused women and she observed that "many of these women who come in, what they lack, especially if they are foreign born, they lack the social network. They are just looking for someone to

understand them, understand what the loneliness of being home with children . . . these women are almost shut-ins.” I wondered if she was referring to her own experiences.

Tina came to America at twenty years of age to work as a nanny for an American family who had employed her in Europe. She was very unhappy with her living situation once she arrived in the United States and she sought the help of the British Consulate in getting out of her difficult situation. The couple she worked for spent long hours away from the home, leaving little food in the house; there was no public transportation nearby. Tina was responsible for the cooking and cleaning, in addition to the childcare. She contacted the Consulate and explained her situation. She told them, “I had a green card which means I can stay here and the lady at the house has told me that if left before two years she would have my passport lifted and I would never be able to travel anywhere out of England again.” She had only been in the United States 14 months in 1959 when she left the family who employed her and moved in with some American friends she had made. Her initial immigrant experiences were different than that of the other women, but the cultural aspects had the same impact.

Tina was not sure that she fit the typical profile for my research, but she brought an interesting aspect to the project. She was single when she arrived and eventually met and married a former serviceman. She had been evacuated as a child during the war years with her mother. A brother was born during this period and later there was a sister who had not been fathered by Tina’s father. Tina was the eldest of five children. There were problems in her parents’ marriage when the power base shifted. She described the situation when her father came home, “he wanted to be the boss and she had been the boss for eight years.” Tina’s mother deserted the family shortly after the end of war, and

that meant Tina became responsible to help her father raise her younger brothers and sisters. She commented that “it was hard because I had to go to school.” When she went to work she took her paycheck home and handed it over to her father. She was well equipped for her role as a nanny to an American family in France and she needed to get away from home. Her father had her mother declared legally dead and married a woman that Tina described as “the mother of the snotty-nosed kids and brought the snotty-nosed kids into our house and . . . then they had a baby.” There were now ten children in the home and Tina was the eldest.

Analysis of Research Focus

Although these five women had different life stories to relate, they all share a common thread of transition and adjustment. They had little preparation for their new life in America. Although the military life tempered the immediate exposure to the new culture, they were not absorbed into an enclave of existing immigrant population (Virden, 1996) like most new immigrants. The main research question led me to seek understanding of the experiences of British women, who had married American G.I.s in England during 1950s, in order to explore their adaptation to cultural change, assimilation, and transitions within the American environment, including their educational experiences. The five women who were interviewed provided the data for analysis to address the research questions. Commonalities with transition experiences in general were also explored in order to provide a broader perspective on assimilation in general. Four sub-questions were used to explore the individual experiences of a small group of women, with the intent of telling the untold stories of personal truths and, “to document and illuminate the complexity and detail of a unique experience or place, hoping that the audience will see themselves reflected in it” (Lawrence-Lightfoot &

Davis, 1997, p.14). The common thread that ran throughout these individual stories was the resilience (Rodriguez, 1999) of these women, their survival skills (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 2007), their reasons for learning (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980), and their ability to adapt to changes (Bridges, 1991) in their environment. These skills have emerged from their emotional intelligence that allowed them to recognize their own inner resources, abilities and in some cases their own weaknesses (Goleman, 1998).

Resilience is the ability to cope with stress and to recover from setbacks by reframing perspectives. This can be accomplished by people empowering themselves to discover a different way of approaching any challenging new situation (Bolman & Beal, 2003). This not only occurs on a personal level but can be transferable in other environments where new situations are difficult and uncomfortable. There are many commonalities between ethnic cultures and corporate culture: “the interwoven pattern of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that defines for members who they are and how they are doing things” (Bolman & Deal, p. 243). At an organizational level, the cultural environment within American corporations has to be recognized and acknowledged before the conscious process of assimilation can begin (Kanter, 1983).

An awareness of a gap in knowledge and a “need to know” is a strong motivator. Adults become ready to learn when they recognize that gap and take control obtaining the skills or knowledge that they need to achieve their goals (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). New environments often demand new coping skills. This is true both on a personal level and in the work environment. Observational Learning (Bandura & Huston, 1961), modeling (Bandura, 2007), and a deliberate decision to embrace adult learning (Covey,

1989; Knowles et al., 1998) all contribute to the ability to assimilate into the personal or professional environment and to effect cultural assimilation.

Any new environment requires a period of adjustment and transition (Bridges, 1991; Bridges 2001). Agility and a willingness to adapt to change are huge motivators. Maturity and insightfulness contribute to the impetus to change. Changing environment, whether it is cultural or organizational is often resisted because of fear of the unknown. According to Wenger et al. (2002) whether it is coping with personal change or organizational change, integration of change requires transformation.

Expectations

What expectations did these women have as they anticipated life in America? Most of the women did not know what to expect, but they were receptive to new experiences and open to change. They looked forward to new marriage and the adventure of travel and seeing new places and things. They were flexible enough to embrace change and grow from the experience (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). They were all open and eager for new experiences and felt energized rather than challenged by them. The theme that identified their adaptation and transition process is individual to the women who were interviewed.

Lucy, at the age of 23 thought that America was a country of opportunities where “everyone lived wonderfully.” She told me that her mother would have preferred that she had married an “English guy.” Lucy’s positive attitude was contagious in spite of the grueling investigation that was conducted by the military before she and her husband got married. She explained that “you had to apply, you know, to marry an American They check you out.” They even interviewed her boss about her. During WWII many of the English brides experienced the same intense inquiry. Virden (1996) explains that, “the

U.S. military saw these marriages as ‘a passing fad with post-war complications’ and tried to discourage them” (p. 42). Lucy described with enthusiasm her attitude to the new foods she experienced, “there’s nothing better than fried chicken and pizzas and all that stuff.” Lucy credits the military with assisting her adjustment to life in the United States, but ultimately her husband did not stay in the military.

Sue’s mother warned her against getting involved with an American service man and told her, “they’re here today, they’re gone tomorrow, those Yanks. You don’t want to get mixed up with those because they’re here today, gone tomorrow!” Sue did not want to listen, but in retrospect she shared that, “you had to be young. You really did and you had to know what life was going to bring you. So that was just part of it. Really you didn’t know. I think ignorance was bliss really.” Chris was also eager for a new life, and moved to France a week after she was married. She was glad that she had taken French in school and just submerged herself into a foreign culture. She was excited and she remembers thinking that “we are going to see the world. I rode in an airplane for the first time and all of this was so new and exciting.” She embraced the opportunity to meet new people and shared that she didn’t limit herself to only finding English friends because, “it is part of the helpfulness in the assimilation process is if you make friends among people from all different backgrounds and different parts of the United States.” She also believes that her children benefited from multicultural experiences during their childhood.

Kelly admits that she didn’t have the vaguest idea of what to expect, but she liked to travel and she was prepared for an adventure. She volunteered that she likes “to meet new people and try new foods and everything, yeah!” After her arrival in America it took

her a day and a half to ride the greyhound bus down to Georgia, where she stayed with friends of her husband, while he got settled in a base in the Midwest.

Tina came as a nanny for the family that she had been working for in France. She met and married her husband after living in the United States. Her cultural adaptation had been mitigated by a stay in France where she had to learn both French and Italian in order to communicate, but she also had high expectations of the family that she was coming to work for. She shared that “my thoughts were that the family was good and I was to come over and pickup where we left off and everything would be fine.” However, her experiences with the family that she worked for and lived with were very unpleasant, so she contacted the British consulate to discover what her legal rights were.

The military provided a bridge or a transition period for most of these women (Bridges, 1991; Lee, 1985; Virden, 1996). Life with the U.S. military, especially after being married but while still living in England, helped to acclimatize the women and prepare them for life in America and the American culture. Even after arriving in the United States the military continued to provide a substitute for a welcoming cultural enclave (Rodriguez, 1999). This experience provided a sense of familiarity and a sense of security that eased the feeling of separation caused by the initial immigration experience.

Adaptation to New Roles

How did they intellectually, culturally, emotionally, or educationally adapt to new roles and environments in America? Their flexibility and openness to change provided a resilience that sustained them through the initial period of adjustment (Maslow, 1954). For some, military life on a U.S. base had provided some insight to life in America. As previously mentioned the military provided a transition period of adjustment for these women and eased the transition experience. Seventeen percent of the women indicated

that military life was a contributing factor in easing their adjustment to life in America (See Table 5). The fact that, as children they had survived a World War, had been evacuated, slept in underground tunnels and air-raid shelters, seen their homes bombed, and carried gas masks to school and their only reaction was that it “seemed normal.” They had been part of history, yet Kelly laughed when she told me that she had gone with her mother to the beaches to serve cups of tea when the soldiers were evacuated from Dunkirk. She laughed when she shared her memories of watching “the Battle of Britain until the air-raid warden got mad and grabbed us and threw us down the shelter.” Then Kelly became serious when she described the home where they lived, “our house lost all its windows and the door flew up the stairs and we had to move out and go into another house.” Sue’s childhood memories of the war years and rationing were clear. Even as a child she had a clear understanding that candies and other treats were limited and she learned not to ask for more. Her mother told her “if you have a second cup of today that means that at the end of the month you will have none.” Chris summarized the war experience for all the children when she said, “If you had grown up in the war years you had never known anything else.”

From a cultural perspective, these women were ready for change. Most of the women came from small villages. Sue confided that, “coming to America, everything seemed bigger and better. They had everything here.” Chris and Sue had small children with them when they arrived. Kelly was already pregnant when she arrived alone and had to find her own way to where her husband had been posted. Tina felt isolated with no transportation, no ticket back to England and the sponsor family who threatened to have her passport suspended but she did not consider returning to England. She told me that “I

had found my way and I just had to take care of myself and I really was just taking it a day at a time.” Sue confided her shock and the realization of “suddenly you’re here and you know no one and they’re all foreigners to you.” She was pragmatic with her insights and shared that, “you hear Americans talking about it (WWII), to them gasoline rationing was so horrible. They have no idea of the visions, even as a child, you have visions of putting rationing books on the co-op counter and getting bananas.” The Americans who she met did not understand why food had been rationed for the British.

Emotionally, meeting and being welcomed by their husbands’ families had a significant impact on their first impressions. Chris’s mother-in-law rushed passed her own son to greet her new daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Chris’s first glimpse of her mother-in-law was when she “came flying out, she had an apron on because she had been cooking, and she came running down off the porch, down the steps, and down the pathway.” All of her husband’s siblings, wives and children had gathered to welcome them. Chris recognized the “little white picket fence around this nice little white house, with really pretty gardens” from the photos that her mother-in-law had sent. Lucy found America different from what she thought it would be like. She was shocked at her in-laws living conditions and she remembers that she had probably made it obvious. In retrospect, she admitted to me that she had felt and acted superior to the family and although her mother-in-law had “never said anything bad to me or anything,” she had probably said “unkind things to her.” Chris explained that, “it was a very different life what I was used to.” Later she confided that, the adjustment process would have been much easier if she had come to a loving family. When she recognized that her marriage was in trouble she did not have many choices. She was almost speaking to herself when she shared that, “I

was unhappy but did I ever think about running back? No, I just stayed in a bad situation.”

Intellectually these women understood that maintaining contact with the English families helped relieve the sense of isolation, especially if there was an extended or repeat tour of duty in Europe. Lucy was confident that had her husband stayed in the military this would have been a possibility for them. Her mother was a widow and she had a fear of flying and would never come to America for a visit. Lucy has regrets and admitted that “it was the money that kept us from going back; I wish now that she’s gone, you know, I wish we had gone back.”

Chris maintained close contact with her parents and she was able to make frequent trips to England. Upon arrival in America she struggled with the money and did not understand about tax on purchases. She admitted that, “I didn’t know that they added on taxes afterwards, because in the PXs (stores operated by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service) and overseas you don’t have that.” Although Chris made numerous trips back home she told me that since her parent have died and “since 9/11 I’ve not had much desire to go over.” She never considered returning to England after she was widowed and describes herself as feeling “more American than a lot of the British girls.” Sue also saw her parents every year. Either they made the visit to the United States or she traveled to England with her daughter. She is currently fighting breast cancer and is grateful for the current American health system, that she believes is far superior to the nationalized health system that is available to her family in England. Tina’s visits home have been limited. She was very close to her father and had supported him as the younger siblings were growing up. She did not get along with her step-mother and freely admits “I

always said if I had not come to America I would probably been in a mental institution . . . because of all the things that were going on within the family.”

Several of the women embraced the educational opportunities offered in America. Although some of the women found that their formal education had been interrupted by the war, the experiences of learning a second or third language and coping with the changing of another culture was an informal learning experience that prepared them seek and build on their formal education (Coombs et al., 1973; Mezirow, 1991).

Assimilation into American Culture

In what ways have these women assimilated into the American culture and been changed as a result? The assimilation process is gradual, and as Rodriguez (1999) explains, “to some extent, it is never ending, almost all Americans carry some of their ethnic past with them” (p. 1). The indices from the survey (see Table 5) indicate the major factors of assimilation as friendship, TBPA, military life, church affiliation, and employment for the group who was surveyed. This is mirrored by the women who were interviewed and who cited similar factors. Friendships were significant in contributing to the assimilation process. From the friends that Chris made in the military to the friends who provide a refuge for Tina when she left her sponsor family. Friends, family, church, the military, and TBPA all provided a sheltering support system that ameliorated cultural assimilation and lessened the impact of cultural shock (Gordon, 1964; Rodriguez, 1999; Virden, 1996).

All of the women whom I interviewed are still members of TBPA after living in the United States for approximately 50 years. Gordon (1964) refers to idea of cultural pluralism as the need and the right of ethnic groups to maintain their cultural differences and to create an ethnic community. Overwhelmingly, with the interview group, the needs

of their children (see Table 7) were a dominant factor in hastening the assimilation process.

Table 7

Number of Children Born to Five Interview Participants

Chris	Kelly	Lucy	Sue	Tina
2	2	3	1	4

Chris waited until her French born children were old enough to understand the process before having U.S. citizenship officially confirmed for them. She told me that she “wanted to do it when they were old enough to understand what they were doing.” As a single mother, Kelly went to work to support her children while Tina changed her speech patterns because her children had picked up her accent and were being made fun of by other children. After Chris was widowed she made a conscious decision to stay in the United States because she explained “my 2 children were American and they were here in school, and if I’d have gone back and taken them back it would have been a big uprooting for them right in the middle of their school careers.”

However, the main indicator of assimilation (Rodriguez, 1999) is becoming a citizen (see Table 6). Ninety-three percent the survey group became U.S. citizens, and 80% of the interview group became citizens. Lucy concisely summed up her reason, “I’m never going to go back and live in England and this is where I am, so I’m just going to be a citizen. So that was it.” Sue observed though that there were still some English women in her TBPA branch who had never become a citizen because they had not really made to transition, “A lot of girls still don’t have it . . . They’ve got one foot over there.”

Lucy and Sue both mentioned learning to drive giving them a sense of freedom. I could hear the excitement in Lucy's voice, when she explained that "when I learned to drive! It was! It was the happiest day of my life." Sue had the greatest insights regarding assimilation. She felt that fitting into a culture is a long process (Rodriguez, 1999). Sue observed that, "we spoke the language, but we really didn't, we weren't understood!" She recognized that for herself, in America, she had the opportunity to develop and become an individual and explained that for the women of her generation in England everything revolved around the family and children. Sue had attended technical college in England, but her American degree and education has given her an aura of self-confidence. As a college educated career woman she shared that, "in this country, if you can get out there you do have that chance, you really do assimilate and become a person, rather than an attachment to your husband or your family."

Formal Education Experiences

Has their enculturation and assimilation process enhanced or inhibited their formal education experiences? In spite of the deprivations of the war, the children continued to receive an education and as adults continued to pursue educational goals (see Table 8). Although only Chris and Sue obtained college degrees in the United States, all of the other women developed emotionally and displayed a level of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). Tina's story was the most moving as she recognized the value of education and was determined to get her own high school diploma before her children graduated. Their childhood educational experiences did not appear to either inhibit it or accelerate the assimilation process. Emotional intelligence, insightfulness, and the flexibility to manage personal life experiences appeared to be the greatest accelerator of the assimilation process.

Table 8

Education Experiences of Five Interview Participants

Educational Opportunities	Chris	Kelly	Lucy	Sue	Tina
Passed 11+	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Attended College in England	No	No	No	Yes	No
Obtained GED in America	No	No	No	No	Yes
Obtained College Degree in America	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

Both Chris and Lucy passed their 11+ exams. Chris had learned both French and German in school, and that stood her in good stead in later years, when she found herself with her husband stationed in Europe. Her mother and uncle were both teachers and she was provided with educational support during the school years. After her first husband was killed Chris was prompted to continue her education in America, first at night school, then full time. She worked for the military and eventually earned a degree in accounting. Lucy, who was not forthcoming with her childhood experiences passed the 11+, but never pursued any further education.

Kelly did not pass her 11+. She left school at 15 and went right to work. She has held a variety of jobs over the years. She did not mention any further education. Sue had not passed her 11+ but was given another opportunity at 13 years of age to sit and pass a similar qualifying exam (13+). She stayed in school till she was 17 years old and was able to start her college education in England. She was curious and eager to continue her formal education and, after a few years of living in America she realized that, “there were definitely gaps. It was totally different really in many respects to what we get. I think

ours is a bit more thorough in the grounding.” She did not understand the educational system in the United States and struggled to find the resources to assist her with her educational pursuit,” I tried to get more education, but I really didn’t understand the system and I had nobody here to advise me.” After working full time and going to school, she succeeded in obtaining her degree.

Tina’s childhood education was the most affected by the war years. She became responsible for her younger siblings after her mother left the family. Doctor’s appointments and laundry occupied her teen years. She explained how hard it was because “there weren’t any washing machines or conveniences like we have today!” She left school at 15, but, as a nanny she had lived in Europe and had already mastered both French and Italian. Tina accepted the need to learn these languages in her stride and laughingly shared that, “I learned as I went. I had to learn French and Italian. Thank goodness they are pretty much interchangeable.” After getting married in America and rearing four children, she became determined to obtain her General Certificate of Education (GED) before her children received their high school diplomas.

Chris was able to pursue her education and obtain a degree, by working during the day and going to school at night. Her job sustained her as she coped with the unexpected death of her first husband. She remarried, finished raising her two children and completed her degree. After a difficult first marriage, Kelly spent many years working to support herself and her children. She shared that, “I didn’t get a chance to go anywhere. I didn’t have the money.” Her children were her priority. Lucy was a stay-at-home mom with a possessive husband. She never went to work and considers that those years she devoted to her children was the reason that her children were successful. Sue had attended

technical college in England prior to her marriage. After her arrival in the United States, and working part-time for a few years, she struggled to understand the American education system and started to take college classes. She shared, “It was never planned. It wasn’t a sort of planned way back to school. I sort of drifted into it.” Tina was driven to achieve her high school diploma and approached the local high school and told them, “I have got to get this before my children.”

Children of Immigrants

Chris was intellectually stimulated during her childhood. She spoke both French and German. She worked in the United States and obtained a college degree. Her children had been exposed to other European cultures and languages. Her daughter is fluent in German, has a college education and has traveled to Europe and Russia. Kelly worked hard all her life to support her family. Her daughter attended school in England for a semester. Lucy was a stay at home mother and credits the fact that she never worked as the reason. She wanted me to know that, “they turned out so good.” She did not obtain any further education, but says her children were all smart and they went to the library a lot. Her son had the opportunity through his company to live and work in England for a year. She encouraged him to take advantage of the opportunity. She describes her children, “they all turned out wonderful, good jobs and did well . . . no thanks to me except I was a stay-at-home mom.” Sue pursued her own education, earning a degree and some graduate credits. Sue has the clearest insights to be benefits she received from the American education system. Tina is a classic example of the self-directed learner referred to by Guglielmino et al., (1989), Merriam and Caffarella (1999), and Torrance and Mourad (1978). She learned to speak both Italian and French out of necessity. Tina made

sure her children were well educated and she felt challenged to obtain her own high school diploma before her children received theirs.

Emerging Patterns

Throughout the interviews and creating the transcripts myself I was able to immerse myself in the individual stories (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The common thread that ran through these revelations spoke of the resilience that these women had in developing the skills to cope with whatever circumstances they encountered. From a childhood impacted by WWII to the disapproval or concern of their parents about a marriage to an American, that entailed a permanent move to another country, they embraced change and coped with any obstacles they encountered. The women differed in what obstacles they faced, but their openness and willingness to adapt to their environment was an indication of their positive approach to embrace change. Luttrell (1997) examines women's roles in education and child rearing and discusses a holistic approach to their world view that is "governed by interests to attend to others' needs" (p. 24).

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on the experiences of a small group of female immigrants who came to the United States as a result of marriage to an American. The purpose of the study was to explore how these women adjusted to the cultural differences, how they transitioned into a new life in the United States, and in the process managed the assimilation experience. I looked at their childhood experiences during World War II (WWII), the family life and their early education, and the proactive steps, including formal education that was taken to enhance their enculturation (Tishman et al., 1992). Their childhood experiences and recollections aligned with historical reports from that era.

Findings and Emergent Themes

The initial purpose of this study was to pursue qualitative research of the culture, historical era and assimilation processes of the post-war G. I. brides. The research evolved into a series of individual case studies, that explored the issue of cultural assimilation “through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Therefore this qualitative research became five individual case studies, that was expanded to show different perspectives and comparisons of similar experiences.

An emergent theme, common to all of the stories, was the openness and willingness of the women to embrace change and eagerly move toward an unknown future, in spite of the disapproval of their families. Some of the women indicated it was a lack of foresight and awareness that made them embrace a future that they were not really equipped for. These women, along with the war brides of the 1940s, formed one of the largest female immigration populations to ever arrive in America (Virden, 1996). These

women arrived in America ready to make the changes that were necessary to make their new life successful. Cultural assimilation focuses on the process of adopting new behaviors and the values of the new environment (Kassebaum, 1985; Virden, 1996; White, 1988).

The second emergent theme that dominated the stories was their resilience to deal with the adversities they encountered. Life was not always easy for the women who had left their support system behind in England. Friends became a very important substitute for an extended family. The Transatlantic Brides and Parents (TBPA) organization substituted for an actual cultural enclave (Rodriguez, 1999) and provided a permanent link to other women in who shared the same immigration experiences.

Conclusions

Cultural assimilation has produced an informal transformative learning experience (Mezirow, 1991). The women I interviewed were insightful and pragmatic about how their lives had been shaped by their experiences. They were able to critically examine the effects of their decision to marry and come to the United States. Although the women feel that they have a good life in the United States, and no longer feel that they belong in England, there are still emotional bonds that continue to bind them to the country of their birth. These bonds have slackened since the parents are no longer alive and the desire to travel back to England has abated. It was probably the emotional ties to the parents rather than the physical ties to England that caused the homesickness. Unlike homesickness, nostalgia is a pleasant journey back into the past (Rodriguez, 1999). Many of the women indicated that they did not like the observed changes that had occurred in England since they left. They have become Americanized and the women preferred their memories to the realities. However, these women still seek contact with other British women. This is

substantiated by their continual association with the TBPA and the attendance at the monthly meetings and biannual conventions that are held throughout the United States. Cultural pluralism (Gordon, 1964) has become a way of life as the women continue to enjoy favorite foods and traditions, but have assimilated to the extent of obtaining an American education, entering the workforce, becoming a U.S. citizen, and focusing on providing an American life-style for their children. Their early educational experiences in England did not inhibit the ability to obtain an American education, even college degrees. Every one of them speaks with pride of their children and their accomplishments, realizing that the advantages that their children were exposed to by being raised in the United States.

Perspectives on Educational Alignment

There is a growing need for teachers to understand and to be able to relate to children from other cultures who may be coping with diversity and assimilation issues in the U.S. schools. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2009) indicates that “some 20 percent of children age 5-17 spoke a language other than English in the home.” Public schools across America are increasingly multicultural, both in languages being spoken and racial diversity and it is important for children from minority backgrounds to be exposed to a diverse teaching force. Instructors who are sensitive to cultural issues along with an understanding of the assimilation process will enhance the learning experience of the students.

In addition, according to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), in 2003 14% of all adults living in the United States were foreign born. Sixty percent of these foreign born adults arrived in the United States at the age of 19 or older. English was a second language for many of them; 14% percent of them only spoke English. The number of

minority groups in the workforce is rapidly increasing and changing prior demographics. Workforce diversity is causing new issues in the workforce and forcing businesses to implement diversity and cultural sensitivity training (Smith & Hanebury, 1996).

Personal Perspectives on Corporate Alignment

As early as 1991, Autry saw the benefits of a diverse workforce when he indicated that the future of American companies depended on “honoring diversity.” He recognized that to succeed in a challenging and global marketplace the talents and diversity of every good worker would be necessary.

Working in the corporate world, I have observed and recognized that change is a constant part of staying competitive. In fact, Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) indicate that the ability to change is the key driver to superior performance. Companies are constantly looking at how to implement change; often they do not realize the ramifications and effects on the employees. As a performance improvement specialist, involved in change management projects, I have frequently been responsible for process reengineering. I have observed the different ways employees react to change, especially rapid and unexpected change. As a result, I have learned how to be a good communicator in order to show the value of changing current practices. As organizations are forced to adapt to current conditions it becomes necessary to have a team who knows how to manage change and make the transitions to new ways of doing business (Kanter, 1983). New processes and new technologies are a fact of life in an ever increasing electronic world and companies find it necessary to innovate ahead of the competition. Working as part of conversion implementation team, I have had the chance to mediate change and mitigate the effects of change by being aware of how adults learn (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999), how they embrace or reject change (Williams, 2001), and how they cope with the

transition process (Bridges, 1991). My greatest achievement was in creative cooperation (Covey, 1989) by becoming bilingual across various business divisions and establishing credibility based on my willingness to listen and respond to unspoken needs.

Corporate change is often mandated change and the people affected by mergers and acquisitions are powerless over the changes that are implemented. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) indicate that learning is often tied to a trigger event. They understood that adults cope with life events and transitions by engaging in learning activities. Adapting to a new environment and managing change is a trigger that causes a learning process of coping with a cultural change. In a broader sense, being able to dissect the cultural assimilation process of the post-war G. I. brides brings understanding to anyone who enters and has to survive in an unfamiliar culture (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Change management is a strategy that is used to lead and manage the transition process from the old to the new (Kanter, 1983).

Bridges (2001) refers to primary function of transition as *reorientation* and the second function as *personal growth*. American corporations are trying to manage change as they strive to compete on the edge (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1998) and keep a financial advantage, while at the same time addressing “the changes that have been forced on them by technology, international competition, and demographics” (Bridges, 1991, p. 123). Every business is unique but individualistic cultures can affect and inhibit successful mergers and “managing change is not easy” (Brown & Eisenhardt, p. 6). Brown and Eisenhardt refer to mandated change as *rearchitecture* or *recombination*, which parallels the transition process. From my research and through my career in implementing change

I have come to realize that adaptation to either ethnic culture or corporate culture is very similar and appears to progress through the same transition stages.

The business practice of change management, the transition period (Bridges, 1991), and the assimilation process (Covey, 1989) appear to be interchangeable with the stages of assimilation and personal growth experienced by the women in this study, thus increasing the possibility of these findings being transferable with any change, transition, and assimilation process. Understanding how change affects one group of people makes it possible to understand how others might react and respond in similar circumstances. A changing business world and increased technologies demand developing knowledge and a strategic flexibility to better approach change management and the impact of ethnic change, corporate change, or even personal change on people.

Recommendations

With more time, further research with a larger group of these women could be conducted to increase the dependability of the study and therefore might demonstrate transferability to a larger group of the population (Anfara et al., 2002). However, on a superficial level, it appears that there are enough similarities between assimilation into ethnic and corporate cultures to make this study relevant in understanding the transitional process that encompasses cultural assimilation experience. Additional studies using change management theories in corporate America could be conducted researching both the similarities and the contradictions between ethnic cultures and corporate cultures, which initially appear to follow a similar transition process (Bridges, 1991).

In order to expand this study of post-war G. I. brides, the TBPA website would be logical resource for determining a purposive sampling and for obtaining the data, which also could be collected by attending the biannual convention that is scheduled for August

2010 in Pittsburgh, PA. There are currently 1,931 members registered with the national organization of the TBPA. It would be interesting to explore if the observable themes that emerged in this study were consistent and were able to be reproduced in a larger, nationwide group.

In addition, because cultural pluralism appears to exist within the original English immigrant wives, an additional study might determine if their children have a cultural pluralistic perspective (Gordon, 1964). Many of these children traveled back to England during their childhood and visited grandparents and extended family. The women exposed their children to English traditions and food as they were growing up. An additional study might show to what extent cultural pluralism exists in that second generation because, cultural pluralism is “hardy” (Gordon).

I became fascinated with the different stories that I recorded. Although every story was unique the commonalities of their experiences create a unique bond that unifies these women and has continued through the decades. Under other circumstances these women may not have met nor even became friends, but their common memories of growing up during the WWII, their meeting and marrying their American husbands and subsequently arriving in America, the sometimes funny or difficult situations that they found themselves having to cope with and their nostalgic look at these experiences have caused them to maintain contact on a regular basis even after 50 years of living in the United States. I have the utmost admiration for everyone of them as I marvel at the honest introspection of their personal experiences. I thank each of them for their honest revelations that contributed to this research.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: 11+ Questions and Answers

Extracted by Marcus Dunk from *The Eleven-Plus Book: Genuine Exam Questions From Yesteryear*. (Michael O'Mara Books, Daily Mail Reporter, 2008).

GENERAL ENGLISH

1. Make adjectives from these nouns: beauty, slope, glass, friend, doubt, expense, delight, sleep, danger, sport.

2. Write these lines of poetry in the usual way, putting in capital letters and the correct punctuation: the evening is coming the sun sinks to rest the rooks are all flying straight home to the nest caw says the rook, as he flies overhead it's time little people were going to bed.

3. Choose the correct word from those in brackets:

- a) She gave the (fare, fair) to the conductor.
- b) I am (confidant, confident) of success.
- c) Why does she (die, dye) her hair?
- d) His sister has (wrote, written) him a letter.
- e) The screw fell off because it was (lose, loose).

4. Fill in the relative pronoun in the following sentences:

- a) That is the coat my brother took away.
- b) The man to I spoke was very disagreeable.
- c) The boy ball I kicked was offended.
- d) The man does his duty is always brave.
- e) He asked me I intended to do.

5. Each of the following sentences contains one error. Re-write the sentences correctly:

- a) This is not an Infant's School.
- b) I am told that Tom Jones's brother have won a scholarship.

- c) The bishop and another fellow then entered the hall.
- d) When the dog recognised me it wagged it's tail.
- e) The matter does not concern you or I.
- f) Talking to my friend, the bus passed me.

COMPREHENSION

Read the following:

'You are old, Father William,' the young man said, 'And your hair has become very white; And yet you incessantly stand on your head - Do you think, at your age, it is right?'

'In my youth,' Father William replied to his son, 'I feared it might injure the brain; 'But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none, 'Why, I do it again and again.'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'as I mentioned before, 'And have grown most uncommonly fat;

'Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door - 'Pray, what is the reason of that?' 'In my youth,' said the sage, as he shook his grey locks, 'I kept all my limbs very supple.

'By the use of this ointment - one shilling the box - 'Allow me to send you a couple?'

Now answer these questions:

- a) Father William was certainly a queer man. Mention two queer things that he did.
- b) When he was young, Father William thought that one of his pranks might do him harm. When he was old, he changed his mind. Why?
- c) What does 'incessantly' mean? What is a back-somersault?
- d) What does the word 'supple' mean? How did Father William keep supple? Do you keep supple in the same way?
- e) What signs of old age did Father William show?

ARITHMETIC

Read the following:

1. 3,755 is multiplied by 25 and the result is divided by 125. Write down the answer.
2. A motorist leaves home at 10.15am and drives at 32 miles per hour. He stops for lunch from noon to 1.45pm and then continues his journey at 30 miles per hour. How many miles has he travelled by 5pm?
3. An aeroplane uses 100 gallons of petrol for a flight of 150 miles. How far could it fly using 40 gallons?
4. Write in figures: twelve thousand and twelve.
5. A race started at 23 minutes past three and finished at 23 minutes to four. How long did it take?
6. Simplify:
 - a) $1,000 - 10$
 - b) 25×12
 - c) 615 divided by 3
 - d) $0.5 + 0.75$
 - e) The fractions $\frac{4}{5} - \frac{7}{10}$
7. Of 800 people living in a village, half are men and half women. A quarter of the men leave the village to join the army. How many more women than men now remain?
8. Multiply 7,296 by 479.
9. Which of these numbers is divisible by 4 without any remainder: 214, 230, 226, 224, 218?
10. Add all the odd numbers between 12 and 20.

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE/KNOWLEDGE

Read the following:

1. The letters ERBDA are just the letters of the word BREAD mixed up. Now, straighten up the following:

- a) AAANNB is a fruit which comes from abroad.
- b) ROHES is a large animal.
- c) GRATEAMR is a girl's name.
- d) DWEBORRA is an article of furniture.
- e) SAIRINS are used in Christmas puddings.

2. Select and write down one of the answers below which makes the best answer to the following:

A woman who had fallen into the water was dragged out in a drowning condition by a man, but she did not thank him because:

- a) She never felt thankful for small things.
- b) She did not know the man well enough.
- c) She was feeling better.
- d) She was still unconscious.

3. Complete the following by giving words expressing sound and ending in 'ing'.
e.g. the humming of telephone wires.

- a) the of leaves
- b) the of anvils.
- c) the of brakes.
- d) the of stairs.

4. In each of the sets of words given below there is one word meaning something rather different from the other three. Find the different word in each line and write it down:

- a) alike, same, similar, somewhat.
- b) pigeon, duck, goose, swan.
- c) bus, conductor, passenger, driver.
- d) this, that, the, those.
- e) firm, rough, solid, hard.
- f) desk, book, cupboard, drawer.
- g) spade, earth, sand, gravel.
- h) pretty, nice, charm, lovely.
- i) justice, merciful, pitying, forgiving.
- j) tumbler, cup, mug, jug.
- k) fishing, rowing, climbing, swimming.
- l) scarlet, blue, red, pink.
- m) sewing, cotton, needle, calico.

5. Each of the following sentences here can be made into better sense by interchanging two words.

Re-write the sentences correctly: E.g. Milk like cats - Cats like milk.

- a) Our black cat had a retriever with the fight next door.
- b) The sea went to the family for a swim.
- c) The shepherd whistled by the gate and stood to his dog.
- d) A was stung by Joan bee.
- e) Sailors have to climb able to be.

ANSWERS

In addition to the above, students were asked to write essays on subjects as varied as: 'The bravest deed that I know', Eggs, Everest, The Gothic, Queen Salote, The Maoris, and 'What life must be like as a cat'.

One group of students even had to give an account of an imaginary talk between an eagle and an owl.

GENERAL ENGLISH

1. beautiful, sloping, glassy, friendly, doubting, expensive, delightful, sleeping, dangerous, sporting/sporty
2. The evening is coming, The sun sinks to rest, The rooks are all flying Straight home to the nest. 'Caw', says the rook, As he flies overhead, 'It's time little people Were going to bed.'
3. a) fare; b) confident; c) dye; d) written; e) loose
4. a) which; b) whom; c) whose;
5. a) This is not an Infants' School.
b) I am told that Tom Jones's brother has won a scholarship.
c) The bishop and another gentleman then entered the hall.
d) When the dog recognised me it wagged its tail.
e) The matter does not concern you or me.
f) While talking to my friend, the bus passed me.

COMPREHENSION

- a) Two queer things that Father William did were to stand on his head and turn a back-somersault at the door.
- b) Father William changed his mind because he is sure he doesn't have a brain to injure.
- c) 'Incessantly' means repeatedly, without relief. A back-somersault is when someone jumps over backwards.
- d) The word 'supple' means flexible. Father William kept supple by using an ointment.

e) The signs of old age that Father William showed were white hair and growing fat.

ARITHMETIC

1. 751
2. 153.5 miles
3. 60 miles
4. 12,012
5. 14 minutes
6. a) 990 b) 300 c) 205 d) 1.25 e) 1/10
7. 100 more women
8. 3,494,784
9. 224
10. 64

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE/ KNOWLEDGE

1. a) banana; b) horse; c) Margaret d) wardrobe; e) raisins
2. The best answer would be d)
3. a) rustling; b) banging; c) screeching; d) creaking
4. a) somewhat; b) pigeon; c) bus; d) the; e) rough; f) book; g) spade; h) charm; i) justice; j) jug; k) climbing; l) blue; m) sewing
5. a) Our black cat had a fight with the retriever next door.
b) The family went to the sea for a swim.
c) The shepherd stood by the gate and whistled to his dog.
d) Joan was stung by a bee.
e) Sailors have to be able to climb.

Appendix B: Survey Questions

An Case Study of G.I. Brides and their Transition to Life in America

These are the survey questions were distributed manually, sent by mail, sent as an attachment in an email and made available through an Internet link.

Participation is voluntary. Completion of this survey by the respondent indicates a willingness to participate in this research. Survey results are anonymous, unless participant indicates a willingness to provide contacted information for the purpose of participating in further research.

The first set of questions on this page relates you your educational experiences growing up in England. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to skip that question and move on to the next question.

1. When you attended school in England, did you pass your 11+ exams?
2. How old were you when you left school in England?
3. What was the highest level of education that you achieved in England?
4. Do you consider that the level of education you achieved in England the equivalent of an American High School diploma?

Please explain.

5. Did you obtain a G.E.D. in America?
6. What formal education have you obtained since arriving in America?
7. If you obtained additional formal education in America, what prompted that decision?

Next

Thank you for continuing with this survey. These questions refer to our meeting and marrying an American, your decision to relocate to America, and the effects of that decision.

1. How old were you when you met your husband? (Listed ages 13 – 20)
Other (please specify)
2. How old were you when you got married?
3. How old were you when you came to America?
4. How long had you been married when you came to America?
5. What year did you come to America?
6. How did you meet your husband?
7. Did your husband stay in the military after you arrived in America?
Please explain.
8. How many years did he serve in the military
9. What branch of the military did he serve in? (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines)
10. What were your parents' feelings about you marrying an American, moving to America?

Next

Thank you for continuing with this survey. This set of questions relate to your initial experiences in America.

1. What did you expect to find when you arrived in America?
2. How were you received by your husband's family when you arrived?
3. How did you adapt to life in America? Who/What helped the process?
4. Did you become a US citizen? When /Why?
5. If you are willing to allow me to interview you about our experiences with assimilation into life in America please complete as much of the contact information that you are comfortable with.

- Name:
- Address:
- Email Address
- Phone

6. Would your husband be willing to complete a survey that provides his perspective to your immigrant and assimilation process?

7. If you answered to the above question, please provide email contact information.

Thank you for participating in this research. I am interested in your responses. This information will help me gather data and contribute to the body of knowledge in general about immigration and assimilation processes.

Done

Appendix C: eMail Message Sent to Survey Participants

Subject: Survey on Cultural Assimilation

I am currently in the process of conducting research on cultural assimilation for my doctoral dissertation. I am looking particularly at the experiences of post-war G.I. British brides and their experiences with adjusting to life in America.

I would appreciate your assistance with my research. If you would consider assisting me with my project I have attached a survey for you to complete. Please feel free to omit answering any of the questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Your survey responses will be kept confidential and I am willing to share the results of my research if you are interested.

In addition, if your spouse would also consider responding there is a second part of survey attached for him. I would also like to speak to some of you personally about your experiences if you are agreeable.

If you would prefer to mail a hard copy of the survey back to me, please print out the document and complete it manually. It can be sent to my attention at:

Vanessa Erwin

3912 N. 95th St.
Omaha, NE 68134

Once again thank you for considering supporting me with my research.

Appendix D: Interview Questions

A Case Study of G.I. Brides and their Transition to Life in America

Along with the survey responses, these interview categories and questions were used as the basis for a semi-structured interview conducted with a convenient sample of women identified from the survey responses (See B). The survey responses permitted a natural expansion of the topics below:

Memories:

1. What are your childhood memories of the war years in England?
2. What do you remember about growing up in England and your educational opportunities and experiences?

Transition Experiences:

3. Did you understand the outcomes of your choice to leave England? Explain
4. How were your expectations realized?

Adaptation and Assimilation:

5. What did you expect to find upon arrival in America?
6. What were your best/worst experiences or most difficult experience when you first arrived?
7. How did you adapt to life in America? Was your education a facet of your adaptation process? Who/What helped the process?
8. Did you become a US citizen, when, why?

Reflections and Perspectives

9. How would your life be different if you had not come to America? (Discuss Plus and Minus).
10. What changes have you seen in England since you left that surprised you?

Appendix E: Survey Results

Survey results gathered from data collection instrument Survey Monkey and combined with the paper survey results.

The first set of questions on this page relates to your educational experiences growing up in England. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to skip that question and move on to the next question.

Section 1

1.1 When you attended school in England, did you pass our 11+ Exam?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	71%	15
No	29%	6
<i>Answered question</i>		21
<i>Skipped question</i>		2

1.2 How old were you when you left school in England?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
13	0%	0
14	10%	2
15	33%	7
16	38%	9
17	14%	3
18	5%	1
<i>Answered question</i>		22
<i>Skipped question</i>		1

1.3 What was the highest level of education that you achieved in England?		
Answer Options	Response Count	
	23	
<i>Answered question</i>		19
<i>Skipped question</i>		4
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	Passed 4 O levels.
2	Web survey	Attended Machine & Harpers Secretarial College for one year before being hired in a Solicitors Office in Liverpool.
3	Web survey	6 'O' levels plus City and Guilds in Shorthand and Typing.
4	Web survey	GCE Grammar School
5	Web survey	Left school at 15 years. Went to a secondary modern school.

6	Web survey	GSE
7	Web survey	Fifth Form, Grammar School
8	Web survey	University degree Exeter
9	Web survey	Grammar school
10	Web survey	4th year of High School
11	Web survey	2 year secretarial school
12	Paper survey	Secondary Modern School
13	Paper survey	4yrs high school
14	Paper survey	15yrs and out. I cannot recall what level that was
15	Paper survey	Like a GED
16	Paper survey	5th form at Manchester Central High School for girls
17	Paper survey	Secondary Modern
17	Paper survey	H/S equivalent
19	Paper survey	2 years of technical college

1.4 Do you consider that the level of education you achieved in England the equivalent of an American High School diploma?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	80%	16
No	20%	4
Please explain		12
<i>Answered question</i>		20
<i>Skipped question</i>		3
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	Had no problem whatsoever finding employment with Attorneys. In fact I am still working part-time for a Law Firm in Hampton, Virginia.
2	Web survey	The basic education was very solid in the UK compared to the US.
3	Web survey	Had a good sound basic education. Much more memory work
4	Web survey	Yes and more....a couple of years of college too!
5	Web survey	No - higher. My credentials were evaluated as A-Level being the equivalent of the first year of college in the US
6	Web survey	actually I felt it equivalent to Junior College
7	Paper survey	Don't know
8	Paper survey	Yes
9	Paper survey	Maybe yes in '52, but not now
10	Paper survey	Yes
11	Paper survey	I consider it superior to High School in America - I took French, German, Higher Math, plus Physics & Chemistry, etc.
12	Paper survey	I believe math level was not as good

1.5 Did you obtain a G.E.D. in America?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		14
<i>Answered question</i>		14
<i>Skipped question</i>		9
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	No
2	Web survey	No
3	Web survey	No
4	Web survey	NO
5	Web survey	No
6	Web survey	I did, because it was the quickest way to get into college.
7	Paper survey	No
8	Paper survey	No
9	Paper survey	Yes
10	Paper survey	Not sure, never received diploma
11	Paper survey	No my certificate of GCE in 7 levels was accepted
12	Paper survey	No
13	Paper survey	Yes
14	Paper survey	No

1.6 What formal education have you obtained since arriving in America?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		17
<i>Answered question</i>		17
<i>kipped question</i>		6
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	Secretarial School. College real estate courses and many adult night school courses.
2	Web survey	Attended College courses to become a Legal Assistant
3	Web survey	B.Sc. In Business Admin. Credits toward Masters in Adult Ed.
4	Web survey	Took evening classes at the community college. Also learned a lot from children going through school here.
5	Web survey	Have taken various college classes for interest only.
6	Web survey	None
7	Web survey	I attended classes at the University of Maryland, Overseas Division (while my husband was stationed in Germany)
8	Web survey	College accounting classes
9	Paper survey	None
10	Paper survey	None
11	Paper survey	2yrs community college. Graduated 3.5 plus some classes at UNO
12	Paper survey	College Business degree

13	Paper survey	GED - Studied through KU for my citizenship
14	Paper survey	None
15	Paper survey	Graduation with Associate degree from Kansas city Community college BSC magna cum laude California Polytechnic University - Pomona (L.A) with accounting as my field
16	Paper survey	College - 1.5 years
17	Paper survey	12 credits basic ed

1.7 If you have obtained additional formal education in America, what prompted that decision?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		12
<i>Answered question</i>		12
<i>Skipped question</i>		11
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	Personal improvement.
2	Web survey	See #6
3	Web survey	Maturity and the opportunity for education. Better job prospects.
4	Web survey	Wanted to do something I enjoyed doing
5	Web survey	Just for my own interest
6	Web survey	Our boys were soon to become independent and I felt I should brush up some skills, perhaps go to work.
7	Web survey	jobs
8	Paper survey	to get a job
9	Paper survey	Become more educated
10	Paper survey	My husband was killed in the line of duty (law) and I was a widow at 40 with 2 children. I was employed by the US Army in Finance and Accounting and went to school at night and then later full time. Reasons: 1) To enhance career skills 2) For self development and actualization
11	Paper survey	Improve job performance
12	Paper survey	To obtain work

Section 2

Thank you for continuing with this survey. These questions refer to our meeting and marrying an American, your decision to relocate to America, and the effects of that decision.

2.1 How old were you when you met your husband?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
13	0%	0
14	0%	0
15	0%	0
16	9%	2
17	21%	5
18	21%	5
19	13%	3
20	13%	3
Other (please specify)		
21	17%	4
23	4%	1
<i>Answered question</i>		23
<i>Skipped question</i>		0

2.2 How old were you when you got married?		
Answer Options	Response Count	
	21	
<i>Answered question</i>		21
<i>Skipped question</i>		2
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	19
2	Web survey	22
3	Web survey	21
4	Web survey	19
5	Web survey	19
6	Web survey	21
7	Web survey	24
8	Web survey	18
9	Web survey	19 and 10 months
10	Web survey	22
11	Web survey	21
12	Paper survey	23
13	Paper survey	17

14	Paper survey	20
15	Paper survey	21
16	Paper survey	22
17	Paper survey	21
18	Paper survey	20
19	Paper survey	18
20	Paper survey	18
21	Paper survey	22

2.3 How old were you when you came to America?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		21
<i>Answered question</i>		21
<i>Skipped question</i>		2
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	21
2	Web survey	24
3	Web survey	21
4	Web survey	20
5	Web survey	23
6	Web survey	21
7	Web survey	24
8	Web survey	20
9	Web survey	22
10	Web survey	22
11	Web survey	22
12	Paper survey	24
13	Paper survey	20
14	Paper survey	20
15	Paper survey	21
16	Paper survey	20
17	Paper survey	23
18	Paper survey	24
19	Paper survey	19
20	Paper survey	20
21	Paper survey	24

2.4 How long had you been married when you came to America?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		18
<i>Answered question</i>		18
<i>Skipped question</i>		4

Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	17 months
2	Web survey	Two years
3	Web survey	1 year
4	Web survey	one year
5	Web survey	4years
6	Web survey	Less than a week
7	Web survey	5 months
8	Web survey	almost 2 years
9	Web survey	2 years and 2 months
10	Web survey	6 months
11	Web survey	13 months
12	Paper survey	12 months
13	Paper survey	3 years
14	Paper survey	1 year
15	Paper survey	0
16	Paper survey	6 months
17	Paper survey	2 years
18	Paper survey	3 and a half years

2.5 What year did you come to America?		
Answer Options	Response Count	
	21	
<i>Answered question</i>		21
<i>Skipped question</i>		2
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	1957
2	Web survey	1960
3	Web survey	1967
4	Web survey	1958
5	Web survey	1957
6	Web survey	1960
7	Web survey	1969
8	Web survey	1962
9	Web survey	1958
10	Web survey	1969
11	Web survey	1958
12	Paper survey	1959
13	Paper survey	1958
14	Paper survey	1955
15	Paper survey	1958
16	Paper survey	1957
17	Paper survey	1962
18	Paper survey	1970

2.6 How did you meet your husband?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		19
<i>Answered question</i>		19
<i>Skipped question</i>		4
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	At my girlfriend's Twenty-first birthday party. She was engaged to an American and he invited some of his friends to her party.
2	Web survey	College night.
3	Web survey	He was dating my friend - we are still friends!!!!
4	Web survey	On a blind date
5	Web survey	At the end of Hastings Pier at a dance.
6	Web survey	He lived off base in the village where my parents lived
7	Web survey	At a dance
8	Web survey	I worked for the British Air Ministry at RAF Station, Kirknewton. My husband was to go to England, but en route he was assigned to RAF Kirknewton, Scotland and we worked in the same office!
9	Web survey	Airman's club
10	Web survey	USO Club at Manston Air Base
11	Paper survey	Community dancing classes
12	Paper survey	Blind date
13	Paper survey	At a dance
14	Paper survey	Blind date
15	Paper survey	Coffee shop
16	Paper survey	He was stationed in England in England in the Us Army. He attended the church I also attended in Manchester and I got to know him through our Youth group.
17	Paper survey	English pub
18	Paper survey	At a Xmas Party
19	Paper survey	Introduced at a weekly dance ion AFB and in town Northampton, England

2.7 Did your husband stay in the military after you arrived in America?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	55%	11
No	45%	9
Please explain		10
<i>Answered question</i>		20
<i>Skipped question</i>		3
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	He stayed in the Air Force for another two years.
2	Web survey	Left after 4 year duty
3	Web survey	He did not want to stay in military

4	Web survey	Air Force Career
5	Web survey	He preferred to make his own way
6	Web survey	There was a recession in October 1958 & we had a child to feed
7	Web survey	stayed for 3 more years
8	Paper survey	He served in Korea – de-mobbed in 1954
9	Paper survey	Yes, he was a career soldier and retired w/22 years service
10	Paper survey	Retired after 20 years

2.8 How many years did he serve in the military?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		20
<i>Answered question</i>		20
<i>Skipped question</i>		3
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	20
2	Web survey	7
3	Web survey	4
4	Web survey	5
5	Web survey	5years in the military. 1 year in the dept of the air force as a civilian
6	Web survey	20
7	Web survey	4
8	Web survey	5
9	Web survey	20
10	Web survey	4
11	Web survey	14
12	Paper survey	29
13	Paper survey	4
14	Paper survey	2
15	Paper survey	2
16	Paper survey	10
17	Paper survey	22
18	Paper survey	20
19	Paper survey	23
20	Paper survey	29

2.9 What branch of the military did he serve in?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Army	17%	3
Navy	0%	0
Air Force	83%	15

Marines	0%	0
<i>Answered question</i>		18
<i>Skipped question</i>		5
2.10 What were your parents' feelings about you marrying an America, and moving to America?		
Answer Options	Response Count	
	20	
<i>Answered question</i>		20
<i>Skipped question</i>		3
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	Concerned that they would never be able to see me again.
2	Web survey	Very upset - however, they really liked my husband but hated the thought of my living so far away, as I did.
3	Web survey	Very disappointed. I could have married anyone as long as they were British.
4	Web survey	They were sad to see me live so far away.
5	Web survey	Didn't express how they felt. Let me make the decision.
6	Web survey	They were very upset and sad and disappointed in me.
7	Web survey	They were disappointed I did not marry an Englishman
8	Web survey	sad
9	Web survey	It was difficult for them. I was the oldest girl to leave home and I was taking away their grandson.
10	Web survey	Horrified and a little ashamed and embarrassed
11	Web survey	They were not happy
12	Paper survey	Reserved support/sad approval
13	Paper survey	Not happy, I was an only child
14	Paper survey	They thought I was crazy (did not like)
15	Paper survey	I moved to America with the intention of only staying 2 yrs. So they were a little upset, but expected me home again. It was 17 years before I returned to England
16	Paper survey	Ok with it
17	Paper survey	My father was not too keen on the idea. However, my mother loved my husband as her son and was very happy about it.
18	Paper survey	worried but trusted my husband
19	Paper survey	Apprehensive
20	Paper survey	Many - but my mother came to American with us. My father has passed when I was 15 years old

Section 3

Thank you for continuing with this survey. This set of questions relate to your initial experiences in America.

3.1 What did you expect to find when you arrived in America?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		18
<i>Answered question</i>		18
<i>Skipped question</i>		5
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	Homes with all the amenities.
2	Web survey	I expected to find friendly people and modern offices - which certain was not the case.
3	Web survey	Life would be similar to the UK.
4	Web survey	Never thought what to expect, as long as I was with my husband. When you are young you are very carefree. And adventurous.
5	Web survey	I really did not know, I was very sheltered and naive. But I was ready for an adventure!
6	Web survey	I was anxious about the whole process
7	Web survey	didn't really think about it
8	Web survey	I had no great expectations. I knew it was a BIG country and I had no idea where we would live.
9	Web survey	Lots of everything
10	Paper survey	Another place to continue making a home for our family
11	Paper survey	Can't remember I think I got my ideas from movies and magazines
12	Paper survey	My future husband
13	Paper survey	Big spaces. Lots of room - big cars
14	Paper survey	Life would be better
15	Paper survey	His family had written to me and sent photos for several years so I expected to like them and I did.
16	Paper survey	No expectations
17	Paper survey	I didn't think about it
18	Paper survey	Change of climate. Lovely colored cars and lots of travel

3.2 How were you received by your husband's family when you arrived?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		18
<i>Answered question</i>		18
<i>Skipped question</i>		5
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	Unfavorably

2	Web survey	My Mother-in-Law was very cold towards me - the rest of his family was much friendlier.
3	Web survey	Luke warm. Cultural differences.
4	Web survey	They accepted me, but at times difficult over how they misunderstood different terms of speech.
5	Web survey	Very well....they loved me.
6	Web survey	Very well
7	Web survey	very well
8	Web survey	I was received with open arms and made to feel like a member of the family almost immediately. They took me shopping to the super-market and I was totally overwhelmed by the vast array of food and tremendous variety.
9	Web survey	I never met them
10	Paper survey	with open arms and warm affection
11	Paper survey	Very well
12	Paper survey	Very well, I was treated royally
13	Paper survey	They were very accepting of me. I had been here 15 months when we married
14	Paper survey	Good
15	Paper survey	They were so very happy to see me and my children. His mother raced past my husband whom she had not seen for over 4 years in order to hug me. All his brothers, sisters and family came that day to meet me.
16	Paper survey	Received well, not really by family location
17	Paper survey	They were wonderful
18	Paper survey	They were New Yorkers. They instantly loved us and welcomed us with a big family party - They were thrilled. Their older brother had found the love of his life and had a son and a lovely mother-in-law.

3.3 How did you adapt to life in America? Who/What helped the process?		
Answer Options	Response Count	
	18	
	<i>Answered question</i>	18
	<i>Skipped question</i>	5
Number	Response Type	Response Text
1	Web survey	A supportive husband, good friends, and beginning to work outside the home.
2	Web survey	I wanted to go home so badly and knew I had to find a job to occupy myself. I answered an ad in the newspaper for an Attorney's Office and when I called, to my amazement, I heard an English accent at the other end of the line. It turned out that the receptionist was English and after interviewing for the job and being accepted, she became my best friend and introduced me to the TBPA!!!
3	Web survey	Found T.B.P.A. and other women who had also married American servicemen.

4	Web survey	I adapted after about 4years after my first trip home .Knowing I could get back home again to see all my family.
5	Web survey	We lived in Military housing so all the young wives were far from home and family. We were all in the same situation.
6	Web survey	My husband's family and friends from high school helped but I never really settled until I had children 4 years later
7	Web survey	Figured I'd made my bed now I had to lie in it
8	Web survey	We moved from Ohio (family) to California and I felt like a fish out of water! (I lived in a small village in Scotland) I was fortunate to find an English girl two streets over, so we let the children play together in the afternoons while we talked and talked. For 2 years I was so homesick. Another English woman introduced me to TBPA in 1960, she had started the club and it was a godsend! Our own support group led us to foster relationships with American neighbors.
9	Paper survey	My husband left me with 2 small children to support so I went to work & learned to take care of myself & my children I remarried when they were grown & on their own.
10	Paper survey	Our Christian faith and a strong love for each other and our family
11	Paper survey	Hard time adjusting to the heat, some of the food. I worked at a company where I had to use a two-way radio; they wanted me to speak American.
12	Paper survey	My husband's family, friends I made, keeping in touch with my own family and friends. Having a good husband.
13	Paper survey	I only had every other Sunday afternoon off a week, and Thursday every week. So I learned form the family I worked for. Television was a tool too. I did not meet another Brit for 15 years.
14	Paper survey	Military life was good.
15	Paper survey	I did not have many problems because I lived in a military community with wives of all nationalities. Plus I came from a home and church where I had hosted people from many areas.
16	Paper survey	Joining British TBPA, also good neighbors!
17	Paper survey	I met a wonderful friend older and she was like a sister
18	Paper survey	TBPA via our telephone installer who connected me to a girl that spoke like I did. She took us - Mom and I to an area meeting that night - Offutt A.F.B. Nebraska

3.4 Did you become a U.S. citizen? When/Why?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	94%	15
No	6%	1
Please clarify your response		16
<i>Answered question</i>		16
<i>Skipped question</i>		7
Number	Response Type	Response Text

1	Web survey	Felt it made for a more secure situation for me and my children.
2	Web survey	Not until ten years later on the advice of an Attorney I was working for.
3	Web survey	Very important to become a citizen to protect your legal rights-- children, property and for obtaining work, especially if you are applying to companies who have any involvement with government contracts.
4	Web survey	1965 After going back to England I realized I missed the USA and decided if my children were Americans I would also become a citizen.
5	Web survey	Because my husband was applying for special assignment
6	Web survey	To prevent having to pay estate taxes as a resident alien instead of a citizen
7	Web survey	1974
8	Web survey	Requirements: Live in a place 3 consecutive years, witness must know you for X number of years...It was a long time before we lived in one place for 3 years!
9	Paper survey	I did not become a citizen because I will not denounce British citizenship if they change the wording to give up I will but I will not denounce
10	Paper survey	Yes, two years after living here, It was important to further my husband's career and to actively participate as a citizen in local and national elections etc.
11	Paper survey	1962 - I figured I was going to stay here, might as well join them
12	Paper survey	Yes, 6years after arrived. I wanted to be able to vote and become an American
13	Paper survey	Yes - changed my speech pattern (Dance) (grass) etc. because my children were being made fun of at school
14	Paper survey	11/64 - because I had 3 children by then
15	Paper survey	1980s just wanted to
16	Paper survey	1959 - Husband was going to be stationed back in England after two years

The responses to survey questions 5, 6, and 7 have been omitted based on confidential contact information that was provided.

Appendix F: Survey Demographics

Survey Responses – 23 respondents (not every person answered every question)

Demographic Patterns	Yes	No
Passed 11+	71%	29%
Aged 16 years or younger when left school	81%	19%
Received “O” levels or university degree	26%	74%
Considered English education equivalent to U.S. high school diploma	80%	20%
Obtained GED in the United States	25%	75%
Obtained further education (college) since arriving in the United States	76%	24%
Additional education desired to improve employability	75%	25%
Arrival between 1954 – 1960	67%	32%
Husbands stayed in the military	55%	45%
Husbands served 5 years or more in the military	70%	30%
English parents felt positive about marriage	10%	90%
Positive reaction of U.S. in-laws	76%	24%
Became U.S. citizen	93%	7%

Appendix G: Informed Consent Form

Qualitative Study of the Perceptions of Life in America by GI Brides

Project: The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore, from a historical perspective, the experiences of a group of English women who chose to marry U.S. servicemen during the 1950s and relocate to America

I am inviting you to participate in a research study on how GI brides adapted to their life in America. You will be provided with a prior copy of the questions that will be used during the interview process.

Your interview will be conducted privately and any notes taken or audio recordings made of you during the interview will be kept in a secure location under the personal supervision of the researcher and will be destroyed once the formal documentation has been submitted for review. You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may choose whether or not to participate.

If you find that the questions make you uncomfortable and you feel discomfort at recalling past events you can refrain from answering any or all questions without penalty or explanation. You may freely choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Please note that your personal story will contribute to the body of knowledge about how women adjusted to life in America.

As the principal researcher I can be contacted at any time at verwin@cox.net or by phone at (402) 571-1314. If you have any concerns with your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact Drake University at IRB@drake.edu or 515-274-DIRB.

By signing this form you agree that the information shared during the interviews will be used as part of the primary research materials for this study. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

I agree to be audio taped as part of the interview process.

I have read and understand the purpose of this interview and my role in the project and I consent to voluntarily participate in this research study, knowing that I can freely withdraw from the study at any time

I am aware that the final document of the research project will be submitted for review and a grade as part of the doctoral program at Drake University.

I have read and understand all of the above information on this the date of _____, 20__

Signature of participant _____

Printed name of participant _____

Signature of researcher _____

Appendix H: First Iteration: Coding Surface Content

Childhood

Chris:

- I lived in a part of England that was a bombing target because they had a lot of firms that were on war production and we were not too far from the docks. You know, there were docks in that part of the country.

Kelly:

- So we lived in the south of England through the war, right on the coast. We lived in what they call “Hell Fire Alley.”
- We were bombed out of two homes and spent most of the time in an underground shelter.
- Our town had tunnels built all under the town and they put bunk beds in there, you know like they use for the army and everything.
- We would stay at my grandmother’s during the day, but she didn’t have a roof on her house.
- It (the roof) had been blown off in a blast. So, we would spend the daytime, you know daylight hours, above when there wasn’t an air-raid, and then we would go down there at night and sleep.

Tina:

- She just left us . . . My dad and I were together. Doctor’s appointments and laundry! . . . It was hard because I had to go to school Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- The council had found a house for us. Returning soldiers’ kind of deal!
- I didn’t ever have a diary in England. I didn’t have any pencils or paper in England. You know we had nothing. We really did not have anything.

Evacuation

Chris:

- I was evacuated as a small child and my brother was just a baby.
- My mother was not very happy with the situation because she said there were a lot of rough scruffy little kids there.
- She (my mother) said that she was going to sit out the war at home
- My father was walking up the street to come and get us because he did not want to be apart from us.

Kelly:

- No, my mother wouldn’t let us . . . I had a brother who was 15 months younger than myself and she wouldn’t let us be evacuated. She took off with us and went up north to my aunt’s.
- After a month or two or three months, or I don’t know how long because I was small, she brought us back home. So we lived in the south of England through the war, right on the coast. We lived in what they call “Hell Fire Alley.”
- Just about all the kids from around there had been evacuated . . . There were only about six of us went to this little school

Lucy:

- It was only families from London that were evacuated. We stayed put.

- I never knew anybody. I never knew anybody who had come from London or whatever.

Tina:

- We were evacuated, but we were evacuated with my mother, because we lived in the southern part of England . . . They took us out and took us to Wales.

War

Chris:

- I remember things like, you know, the heavy noise of the bombers going over.
- I remember the sirens and also the air-raid warden lived next door to us.
- I remember the black-out curtains and him (air-raid warden) coming, you know, to tell us that they needed to be closed because there was a chink of light showing.
- We had a basement, a cellar . . . a coal cellar and so on and we had bunks built under the steps where we could go at night.
- There was also an air-raid shelter behind our house, a large one, a community type one. I remember being in that with a group of people.
- I have memories of my uncle, who was in the navy on Russian convoy duty and he would come home sometimes like on a small leave.
- My memories of this are really happy because, the funny thing is, if you had grown up in the war years you had never known anything else.
- I thought everybody took a gas mask to school with them. I always had a little, what they called, a little Mickey-Mouse gas mask.
- It was always exciting when he came home, 'cause he was just a young man and all the young women in the neighborhood would come flocking over to the house to see him, and it would turn into kind of like a big party.
- He (the uncle) had been to Africa, and he brought us a couple of bananas and we had never seen bananas!
- She was telling us children how wonderful these were, and they were called bananas and she peeled them which fascinated us and she then broke them into halves and she gave one to me and one to my brother.

Kelly:

- My mother took us everywhere we went. We went down to the harbor when they brought the men back from Dunkirk in the fishing boats.
- She was down there serving tea and sandwiches and stuff and we were right with her. We watched the Battle of Britain until the air-raid warden got mad and grabbed us and threw us down the shelter (Laughter). We were standing there watching.
- A flying bomb, we lived in like a duplex, well you know how they were built, knocked the corner off the house joined to us, bounced in the street and knocked six houses completely down. You know, they were all brick houses
- The only thing that bothered me, and it still bothers me sometimes when I think about it, they laid all the dead bodies out on the pavement in front of the houses, you know, from the blast, from the bombs. . . . I would have been six.
- Our house lost all its windows and the door flew up the stairs and we had to move out and go into another house. We had to go into a council house, is what we had to do.

Sue:

- I think after the war, we didn't know any different, but when you look back at it and you hear Americans talk about it, to them gasoline rationing was so horrible. They have no idea of the visions, even as a child, you have visions of putting rationing books on the co-op counter and getting a bunch of bananas. You know, they are absolutely flabbergasted, that "you mean you couldn't get bananas, you couldn't get oranges." I said "No."
- My father and others who went through horrible things never had any sort of counseling. You know they were probably in post traumatic stress syndrome for some time.
- A lot of that recent history, again was just never covered until we finally got to this country and you started to study American history and you got up to more recent times, did you sort of get the sense of what really took place.
- You had your local ones (war stories) from your aunts and uncles and your family but it was always the good things and they never ever touched on anything very negative . . . It was always the good times like well when we got married, when we got together, we got a ham, somebody bought a keg of beer, somebody else gave their rations for this. You know it was not . . . never the horrible things that took place.
- It's only talking to people, even at work, about their childhood and mine, are quite different, very very different. We might be about the same age, but it's totally different because of those war years. Those years when you do have those images, you do remember the black outs when the lights would go out, when there was rationing with the cocoa and the oranges.
- It was a rolling blackout. It would be like a Monday Wednesday or er! Tuesday, Thursday. I think it was about bedtime, seven o'clock; it would go off till about five or six in the morning. You literally would huddle around one room, around one fireplace really, or a nice oil lamp or anything that you could get that would give you a bit of light.
- "That's not the best. It's war issue." Whenever you bought anything during the Second World War, whether it was a wedding ring, or furniture or anything, or even after the war, even toys, it was war issue and that meant it was second class. The wood everything was not the best.
- I mean, growing up in the fifties, they would take your school uniform and the white shirts and turn over the cuffs because if they got frayed, then you would just turn them over and you would use them again. Children here just have no concept whatsoever.

Tina:

- There were no men. There were old men, boys, the minister, vicar, and I think the doctor and that was about it. Everything else was women.
- Suddenly, everywhere there were these good looking men, that the women had not seen any men, you know, in going on four . . . and then I had a sister who was born. She was born in '44. My dad did not come home to very late in '45.
- We were still on food stamps . . . no, rationing till '52. It was a different life.

- See the thing that I don't understand about this country is that we are in two wars right now. We are fighting two wars. Do your grandchildren know anything about going without because we're at war?
- We had this little hanky and tied it around our neck with a piece of string, 'cause that's all we had was a piece of string or a shoelace and that camphor would come up through your nose and that would help your cold. Either you wouldn't get one or the one you got would get better!

Parents

Chris:

- My father was an engineer and my mother for a while taught in a kindergarten type situation.
- Yes, my mother has been over here. My father wouldn't leave England. Now, I think his deal was that he was frightened if he ever got out of England he might never be able to get back. He was a dyed in the wool Englishman.
- When she (mother) was alive she came over here several times. She came over for my daughter's high school graduation.
- She was just amazed, the first time she came over; she was absolutely amazed at the amount of food that was here.
- They said that's a meal for one person, you know, and she couldn't believe that. She said, "The amounts of food that they give you on a plate!"

Lucy:

- Of course I would've gone back home sooner. Yes, but I then wouldn't want . . . My mother just had a fear of flying, you know, so never would come . . . No, she'd say, "I'm scared to fly, I can't fly."
- In the beginning when my mother was upset and everything about me, going on about we're not going to see you again and that sort of thing. I really knew in my own mind, that I'd back next year and the year after, you know.

Sue:

- Our parents sheltered us, all the children of the war. They did. They didn't want any thing to happen to them like they'd experienced. It wasn't really doing us a favor; on the other hand I think were adult enough to that we would have been able to cope.
- My mother came the next year. She came to visit us next year for a month. It broke her heart!
- What my parents did, they would always pay for my daughter's fare. So generally it was about every other year, because if they came to see me then I would go the following year. So till my daughter was about eight, then what I did was, she spent the summer then when she was eight and nine.

Tina:

- He wanted to be this boss and she had been the boss for eight years.
- In those days there was no help so my mum just left us. My sisters were 2, 4, my brother was 7 and I was 11.
- My mother . . . yes, she came back after five years. After five years you can have them declared dead when they leave. That's how it was in England then, so after she had been gone five years then, she was declared dead and my dad could file

for divorce from a dead person, but anyway that's the way it was! Missing or dead, so he got divorced from her.

- My dad married a lady. It's not funny . . . but you know how you have kids that live on the block and they lived on the opposite corner from us around the block and she had five children . . . Well, he married the mother of the snotty-nosed kids and brought the snotty-nosed kids into our house. And . . . then they had a baby!
- So then there were ten of us then and I was still the eldest.
- I could not get on with my step-mother. I had been the boss of the house from the age of 11 to 17, and suddenly she took away all of my authority.

Education in England

Chris:

- I was at an all-girls school
- I got a decent one in England and then continued with it later.
- I had taken French in school.
- The second year in high school I took German because we had to take a second foreign language
- I had an uncle on my father's side. He lived with my grandmother and I went there for tea every Sunday and he used to drill me in the roots of words. He spoke fluent French.
- I don't think that there was any impact at all on my education.

Kelly:

- Our church a teacher a lady lived not too far from us. She took about five or six of us and we had a little room in the church and we went . . . she taught us. So I was way ahead of all of the other kids, when, you know, everything went back to normal.
- Kids started coming back, I guess, right after the war. I guess, you would say that when that September term came up, we went to regular school.
- I was done when I was fifteen

Sue:

- In the British school system they did not teach you about the Second World War, even though it was immediate, recent history. I found out why. Many of the teachers we had, particularly the men, because most of them were men, were pretty much . . . these were the veterans of the second war, these were the young flyers; these were the young engineers. For many of them, I even had a German teacher who was actually a German and she lived in Germany during the Second World War, for them they were still healing and to have to retell about the Second World War, we never covered it. We only got up to the Depression. We never covered World War Two in the fifties
- It was a secondary modern school. I didn't go to a Grammar school. You were very much segregated, where boys and girls went on their own playground and didn't really mix. You didn't really mix until you were outside of school. You had a headmaster headmistress. It was very disciplined. Everybody came out cloned. You know were all cloned the same, pretty much! So I think generally, they tried to give you a good all round education.

- I didn't pass 11+ to go to the Grammar school, but at thirteen they gave you another test. But apparently they learned that children do catch up.
- At thirteen they had a huge number of children who could have gone to grammar school. So that's why in our school, I think we were about the second class that took GCEs.
- Shorthand was something . . . everyone was losing those skills. They didn't need them; they were doing dictation. So I did practice transcribing, but even that got into a dinosaur!

Tina:

- I went to school in Wales and then my brother went to school, my brother was born in Wales actually.
- I learned as I went. I had to learn French and Italian. Thank goodness they are pretty much interchangeable Ha! Ha! Ha! Because of the Italian maid, but I only learned, you know, to go and get bread and please and thank-you and all that kind of stuff.

Worked in England

Kelly:

- I went to work on my fifteen birthday. My birthday is in September and they wouldn't let me go before then.
- I was apprenticed to a tailor.

Sue:

- I didn't work for ten years but many of them I think you had to qualify by contributing for ten years. But a lot of people left school at fifteen and they contributed for some ten years.
- They do, yes, they're quite a few (who draw their pension). There must be people, some of them who went to work at fifteen, so they got ten years or almost ten years into the system. You had to have worked ten years I think.
- There are quite a few who do, who get their pension. Yes, about every three months, I think, they get a check, arrives from the U.K. They said you had to apply when you turned sixty, because in Britain at sixty, you got a pension, a woman did. So they had to apply at sixty. If you apply after that you don't get any back pension, but I wouldn't have had enough quarters, or what ever.

Tina:

- I finished at 15 and graduated at Christmas because my birthday was in September. I graduated on Friday and went to work on Monday.
- I got my money in a little manila envelope, a little tiny thing, took it home and gave it to my dad and then he would give me five shillings out of it and that was for the week.

Met and Married

Chris:

- We married in England and moved to France a week later.
- We were married at the church where we first met
- When our daughter was born, we took her back there and had her christened there and the same when our son was born.

Kelly:

- Oh, they didn't really like it.
- Well he came back to the States; then he went to Turkey for a couple of years. Then he came to England and was stationed at a different base.
- We wrote and everything else.
- He was older than myself, seven or eight years older ,and when he got out of the service, he had 14 years when he decided to get out, and he developed a drinking problem
- He couldn't keep a job and then he started to get mean, and so I finally took my children and left.

Lucy:

- I just remember her saying, "Well, I don't want you to be doing that, but if you're happy that's all that matters to me." You know she thought, you know, that we were happy, and you know, and that I wish you'd got an English guy.
- What I remember, you know, is when I, when you had to apply, you know, to marry an American. You know how you had to go through all that. They check you out. Did you do this? Did you do that? And everything! Remember, they asked my boss about me too. I remember him saying, "well, you know, you're asking all about her, what do we know where she's going?" And, you know, that made sense.
- He was from a not very good family. He had an alcoholic father.
- My husband . . . he was a bit possessive.

Sue:

- I met him when I was at college. He showed up at the college.
- I didn't believe him when he said that he was an American because he didn't look like one. He didn't look like one; he had an English tweed coat on. He wanted to blend in. He really didn't, really didn't.
- We never got married, because he finished up going to Turkey for three months. I never would have been married if they hadn't taken him away for three months.
- My parents said, "Oh! They're here today, they're gone tomorrow, those Yanks. You don't want to get mixed up with those because they're here today, gone tomorrow!" And sure enough it was about right, you know, because one day he was in Turkey.
- That was the agreement that I would not come. My parents were concerned enough that I would not come. They did not want me to come if we didn't have a place to live and we didn't have some support.
- It would have worried them to death if I'd have come and we didn't have any support. In those days you couldn't get welfare, even though he was an American citizen.

Arrival in the United States

Chris:

- We were in France for quite some time, and then I came to the United States.
- I thought in terms of we are going to have excitement. I was going to be traveling; we are going to see the world.
- I rode in an airplane for the first time and all of this was so new and exciting.

- My husband thought it would be nice for me to see the country, so we traveled by train, by dome-liner. We got on the train in Newark, NJ, went down to Chicago, got on a dome-liner there that took us out to San Francisco. Then we traveled down to Southern California by bus.
- I have always had such positive reactions to me as an English person.
- Now when I first married, I had to admit, I was living in France and the American money at first confused me.
- Every time I went to buy something, “How much is that in real money?” which I meant in English money and I kept . . . Then she said, “You’ve got to stop thinking like that and you’ve got to start thinking in dollars.” And she was right.
- And that’s when you know something has clicked and that is the money you deal with and now if I go to England I am looking at something and thinking, “How much is that in dollars?” and figuring it that way. Little things like that.
- I put these several items down and they rang them up and they told me would be so much and I said, “No, that’s not right, it is only this” and she said, “No.” and I said “I think you’ve made a mistake.” And I went on and said, “That, that, and that is so much” and she said, “And tax.” I looked blankly at her and said, “Tax?” She said “Purchase tax.” I didn’t know that they added on taxes afterward.

Kelly:

- I didn’t have the vaguest idea.
- I like to travel even now and you know I like to meet new people and try new foods and everything, yeah!
- Everything was so big!
- I came by myself because he was already had to come back to the States So I flew to New York by myself and then, I rode (Ha! Ha!) I rode a bus from New York down to Georgia. A greyhound . . . by myself . . . I was pregnant by then.
- A little black man came up and said, “Can I help you?” I said, “Well, I’ve got to get myself and those suitcases across there to that bus station.” And he said, “Come along” and he took them and took me in there and showed me where to go and everything. And I was surprised because, you know; I didn’t know any black people. I was in the little resort town, you know, and the only ones we did see some at the base, and we didn’t know any.
- You know, how much bigger everything was than it was at home. Cause, you know, I was from a small seaside town.

Lucy:

- It would have been no different for me, even if I had come in the fifties, sixties or even the seventies.
- I thought that it was going to be wonderful. I really thought that the streets were paved with gold because I had seen too many movies and I really, you know, just thought that everyone lived wonderfully.
- It was the first time that in my whole life that I had gone through a winter and didn’t have bronchitis, because I am prone to bronchitis.
- This is my second marriage. My first one was not really good
- Coming over I think that everything was going to be like the streets were paved with gold and everything.

- Well, it was different, but not crazily different, you, know. So we had different things and you do miss your English food, and still miss your English food, but you know we had fried chicken and pizza and stuff and things we didn't have in England, you know. So there's nothing better than fried chicken and pizzas and all that sort of stuff.

Sue:

- We just didn't grow up with the comforts that they had here. And that was the big difference. Coming from America to . . . coming to America everything seemed bigger and better.
- They had everything here. The grocery stores, I had never seen such stuff in grocery stores. It was mind-boggling on a Saturday morning to walk around a grocery store. I honestly didn't know half the things in the store. I didn't know what they were, and I certainly didn't know how to cook them.
- I had some really disasters with watermelon. I gave my husband the rind. I didn't know how to prepare a watermelon.
- Even in America I found people didn't really talk much about the Second World War.
- I hadn't really known people from other cultures even.
- (Daughter born in England) we stayed there because we wouldn't have had any medical insurance back then. You had to be insured for nine months. Plus, my husband had to come out of the military to find work and it took a couple of months before he . . . I stayed over there.
- So I came over when he had the job, when he said he was starting work and had the job. She (the baby) was only a few months old.

Tina:

- We came to the Midwest of America, course there is no transportation.
- They picked me up at the airport in a pink Thunderbird (V chuckles) that had no roof and then we drove . . . through down town and there I was looking at all of these buildings and to me they were skyscrapers.
- I had worked for this couple in Paris, and so my thoughts were that the family were good. I was to come over and pick up where we left of and everything would be fine.
- Got to this exclusive part of town and there was nothing. Like on Mondays all the buses would come and the black ladies would get off, and they would be the washing ladies, and on Tuesdays the black ladies would come and they would be the ironers, and on Wednesday the kitchen cleaners would come through up the back, and at my house there was nobody at this house . . . Just me!
- She would just leave the little boy and I at the house and we would walk to the nearest shopping area . . . She left food, but we had to get milk and bread and stuff like that.
- I came because I was coming to them and I didn't know any different. I thought it's okay. Then after a year I went to the consulate
- "I do not have a ticket to go home" . . . "I had a green card which means I can stay here and the lady at the house has told me that if left before two years she would have my passport lifted and I would never be able to travel anywhere out of England again."

- I came over single, I met him on a blind date, and you know!

American In-laws

Chris:

- I will never forget how wonderful my mother-in-law was to me. She was such a nice lady!
- All the family had gathered to be there for when we arrived. And he had a large family of brothers and sisters, and they all had children.
- She ran right past him and ran to me and hugged me.

Lucy:

- The mother, who was my mother-in-law, was quite nice and I, in fact, probably wasn't very nice because I didn't understand why she stayed with this guy because he was a drunk and why . . . and she never really. . . I know deep down she didn't like that I thought I was better than them.
- They were very poor because he was an alcoholic. And I remember, you know, the kids were sleeping on the floor, just on blankets. So, it was a very different life what I was used to.

Sue:

- My mother-in-law was French/Canadian, that's why she stayed near a French community because she could go, and shop and talk to people in her own language. To go out and understand other people it must have been very difficult.
- They are all bi-lingual. It was French in the home and that was difficult for me because I really didn't speak French. They tried to sort of talk English around you but it wasn't easy.

Military

Chris:

- We had two small children and I was stationed in the middle of the desert and I told my husband I thought it was a test to see if I had married him for a green card.
- The military is a pretty good life for kids because they have a lot of classes and things available to them, probably better that you would have in a small community.
- We moved backwards and forwards with the army.
- I worked for the U.S. government and I had a top secret clearance . . . because of the work that I did for the government. I'd already gone through a thorough background investigation. My husband had top secret clearance and so did I.
- I think part of mine that helped is, as a military wife, you are asked to do certain things where you volunteer for this and you volunteer for that. I was a room mother for both of my children; I was a girl-scout leader for my daughter's girls scout troop. I was on the boy-scout council that got the badges and things like that. So I have always been one to volunteer and join in.

Kelly:

- When he chose a base to come to, he didn't know what he was doing. He thought he was getting one down south, but he picked an air force base which was in the

Midwest. I mean that was one of his choices, but I think that it was his third choice, and that was where they sent him.

Lucy:

- Like so we got out and I was only over her in the military for probably about two years. I do think the military life is a good life for people.
- Because we were in the military, the military does take care of people. There is always somebody across the street, that knows you've got nobody, or what ever, you know.
- So even if you don't have any family, in laws or what have you, you still have the military people and I was quite happy.
- I didn't not like the military life! It was okay, yes!

Sue:

- We stayed there (England) because we wouldn't have had any medical insurance back then. You had to be insured for nine months. Plus, my husband had to come out of the military to find work

Worked in the United States

Chris:

- I worked for the military. I went and took my civil service test to see if I could I could pass and found how easy it was and at that point realized that I had got a much better education in England that I would have got in a high school here. And I probably knew a lot more.
- I was glad I worked because when my first husband was killed, if I hadn't been working, I don't know what I would have done, because he was only in his early forties when he was killed. I was left a forty year old widow.

Kelly:

- I'd worked in the clothing factories until they started closing them down. And I worked . . . I'd done everything. I'd tended bar. I tended bar for a friend of mine.
- Then I got a job, a part time job working in a restaurant and a bar. Then I worked in a plastics factory for a while, catching bottles coming off the line. I worked at an overall manufacturing place. I did their payroll. I've done everything.
- My last twenty years, twenty-two years all together, I worked for the same company. I worked nights most of the time and that's where I retired from. I never really retired because I work as a volunteer now.

Lucy:

- I was a stay at home mom. I never did work. So that's the only reason that they (her children) probably turned out so good.

Sue:

- But I did go back into the work force, kind of part-time.
- I got into part-time training of adults and then I did, I taught the Wang, and then I got into PCs in '86. So really I had almost twenty five years of computers.
- My mother became ill so I really had to go. At that point then I was going every year for quite a few years. I went every year. In fact I changed my job so that I could. I worked in the school system ten months a year, so that I had the summer months to be able to go and I was lucky to do that.

Tina:

- The family I came to lived in a very exclusive part a large metropolitan city.
- I didn't have a work visa. They gave me a green card in London; they said if I even stayed for two years I would never go back. He said I am not giving you a two-year work permit . . . he said we would cover all the bases and then I got the green card immediately.
- By then I had found my way and I just had to take care of myself and I really was just taking it a day at a time. I went downtown; I got a job on my first interview. I lived with this couple and I babysat for them. I didn't have to pay them pay money. I just had to baby-sit for them when they needed a sitter at night or something like that.

Education in the United States

Chris:

- I was going to school of an evening and after some time I had gone for so long, I really had to make a decision to go full time to finish it up.
- I couldn't continue because I still had to maintain a home and help my children with their schooling. So it was very piecemeal for a while, until I got it finished.
- I was going to finish at Kansas University, but I transferred instead to Cal-Poly, which is California Polytechnic University.

Lucy:

- No I never went to school

Sue"

- I found with education a lot of things didn't get kind taught to us. We got it from a different angle You never got the American point of view. So I was very pleased when I did go to college here, they gave me American history. We had it completely from a very different angle.
- There were definitely gaps. It was totally different really in many respects to what we get. I think ours is a bit more thorough in the grounding.
- Especially sort of in the . . . what they called it geography not social studies. Things that were . . . you know, we did get a good Phys Ed education too, which I think here it was very selective. People who got on to teams and so forth. In Britain they had more of an intramural spirit, where you competed amongst your school mates.
- I would say it must have been in my thirties really. I tried to get more education, but I really didn't understand the system and I had nobody here to advise me. I really needed some advice and in those days I didn't have the sort of guts to go to a college and get the advice.
- For me to go fill in the gaps and see what they would give me for what I had. So that's what I did. I went and I took some tests as well. They did place you. So I kind of got into it that way really. In a way I almost drifted into what I was doing it was never planned. It wasn't a sort of planned way back to school. I sort of drifted into it.

- I went down the general path. What did I get? A Bachelors of Science I think it was in General Admin in the end, but then I went into more training and development, into that field. I sort of got that by chance.

Tina:

- I got my G.E. D. because I wanted it before my children got their high school diploma.
- I went to the High School and said I have got to get this before my children.

Friends

Chris:

- There was an English girl that lived about three streets up, who was a British girl, you know.
- I didn't limit myself to try and find English friends.
- I had a German girl-friend who was two houses away from me to the left, who was a very good friend of mine, and years later we bumped into each other again in Germany of all places.

Kelly:

- I couldn't afford to get back there and my parents couldn't help me. My father was a coal miner and he had black lung. He died shortly. He died in '77. He was already, you know, on disability and they couldn't help me.
- Nobody. Well, just friends that I met and all. I never took any welfare. I did take . . . at the time they didn't have any food stamps, they had commodities. I did do that, but I worked and I had friends who would help me with babysitting and things. A girlfriend of mine's mother babysat for me. People that I met! I am a very outgoing person.

Tina:

- I had been going to a Dentist, and I had gotten friendly with this dental technician and . . . she told me one time, you know if it really gets too much I have a box room and if you want to come stay there we can move the stuff out. You can have that.

Assimilation

Chris:

- I think that is part of the helpfulness in the assimilation process is if you make friends among people from all different backgrounds and different parts of the United States.
- Ask questions of them and learn from them and tell them things about yourself, because I've had friends from all over the world.
- I think that my children did very well. I think one of the reasons that they did is that they are very close in age. There is only fourteen months difference.
- I have always tried to get out, especially on the weekends with them (children), when we were overseas and take them to see places and do things. You know take them to see castles in Germany.
- You get exposed from children from all different parts of the world and different nationalities, different races and the parents would be from various parts in the United States.

- I think we assimilated well.
- (The children) when they were eleven or twelve we got the citizenship verified. I wanted to do it when they were old enough to understand what they were doing.
- First of all, I think that I do very well. Most of the Brits do because, to start with, we have a common language.
- It is different in some ways, but not that big a deal, and also we have a common heritage.
- She said to me, “where are you from?” and I said, “England.” She said, “Oh! How wonderful, I just love they way you talk.”
- I had one English girl-friend out there; the rest were American. So I did very well as I was, you know I was fine. I think I was integrated quite well. I had a good time out there.
- Now I will say something that I have noticed. I feel more American than a lot of the British girls.
- (When widowed) “No. I’m not going to come back” And the reason that I wasn’t going to come back was that my two children were American and they were here in school, and if I’d have gone back and taken them back it would have been a big uprooting for them right in the middle of their school careers.
- So, I didn’t want to uproot my children and take them away from the life they knew and take them to totally different surroundings. So I stayed here. I had a job here. I told my mother, I said “I’ve got really good friends here. I’ve got a home here and I’ve got a job here. I would be uprooting myself, but more than that, my children.” So, this is where we stayed.

Kelly:

- I was right her in the middle of the country and I was trying to raise my kids. So I didn’t get a chance to go anywhere. I didn’t have any money to go anywhere.
- Best Experience: Oh! Meeting my second husband!

Lucy:

- My life actually has been very good. I mean I had a rough spell in a marriage there, you know, but it all worked out, you know, very good. Do I wish I had divorced my husband earlier? If I could have been with the present one, yes, but, you know, it . . . it. It just . . .
- When I learned to drive! It was! It was the happiest day of my life.
- I didn’t have to rely in anyone else, you know. I remember pushing a baby, two babies in a pram with the washing load, and taking everybody to the Laundromat, you know, to do the laundry and washing. Two babies and everything!
- You know, anybody coming over who didn’t drive, my!

Sue:

- They had no idea! They have no idea what it was like when we had to go into bomb shelters. I remember as a kindergartener going into bomb shelters and the musty smell because papers were stored there and then the light went out. We screamed the person next to me screamed so loud. I think a lot of my claustrophobia that I’ve had goes back to those days when we were in those dark and dingy places and so frightened. They don’t have a clue here.
- But I think coming here you had to assimilate.

- I didn't get the "Wants." I think, I feel very sorry for some people who come who want this and want that, they've got to have everything! It didn't bother me if I didn't have what everybody else had.
- I felt uncomfortable with people because I think Americans back there in the sixties and seventies were saying, "Oh you don't have this, you don't have that." It was a very much catch-up thing that people did.
- So that's when I went into the computers because it was like my shorthand I became a dinosaur with that, my transcription you became a dinosaur with that. You really had to evolve and change as you went through and that's how I got into computers. I was fortunately my husband was into them. So I did understand what computers were, but if I didn't change you became redundant.
- No, No, not for a year. I had my British license. We didn't have a car for about . . . how much, ooh! About nine months, we didn't have a car. We saved our money. My husband walked from our apartment to work and back and when we wanted to shop and so forth, my father-in-law would pick us up.
- So when I saw the highway that was like four lanes, I was absolutely petrified to get on and off these on and off ramps! So I'd go the back road. My husband, he would be next to me, but I'd go to the next town and I would take the back road. I didn't want to take the highway. I felt much more comfortable.
- We had one car for about three to four years like that. My husband would come home and I would take the car, but very rarely did I go anywhere without him.

Tina:

- My daughter saying graas and dance and all that . . . and they were making fun of her. It was easier to change because she did not go to any pre-school she just went to kindergarten and she was nearly six.
- I was in there one day with four children then and this lady came around the corner and I could see her shopping and she had four children. She was from the north, northern part and we got to talking and we got to talking and that was the first person in fifteen years and I didn't go home for seventeen years.

Segregation

Lucy:

- I remember, you know, sitting on the front of the bus and everyone going back down. There was segregation!
- I remember going once in like, in some kind of, I don't know what kind of deal it was. Anyway, some kind of office and, you know, a colored person came and they said, you know, and you can't come in, you'll have to wait outside or go somewhere else or anything. I thought, you know, that was a bit unreasonable, anyway.

Tina:

- We had a friend who worked down at the Federal building at that time. The riots had surrounded the federal building and the police had to . . . and the people inside the federal building we not allowed to leave until the next day. And oh! Within the month he and his family had moved away. He said "there is no person on earth who is going to get me treed inside a building in this day and age."

Citizenship

Chris:

- The local superintendent of the schools lived two houses up from us and he and his wife became very good friend to my husband and me and they . . . he was actually one of my sponsors for citizenship.

Kelly:

- No I haven't, and you know why? Because it says you have to denounce (comment: it is really renounce) your citizenship and I'm not going to do that. If they say give up, I would, but I am not going to denounce anything. It's a matter of principle.

Lucy:

- I thought, you know, I'm never going to go back and live in England and this is where I am, so I'm just going to be a citizen. So that was it.
- So I thought, you know, get on with you life and get citizenship.
- You know it was just answering questions and, you know, learning up who was president and this and that and everything. Taking a test, and getting sworn in and that was it. Yes!
- You just go to a class, and the class that I went to they just give you books to read up, and all this, and you read up. I went to a class, yeah!

Sue:

- I did. Ten years it took me. After ten years I did. A lot of girls still don't have it . . . They've got one foot over there

Tina:

- When I first applied for They told me I had to take the university . . . night studies, what ever that is. Well you do it at your house. I can't think what that's called.
- They would send me tests and I would have to read up on it and find all of the answers and everything and then send it back and then they would send me the next test.
- I had like 23 tests that I had to do before I got the papers from the university saying I passed.
- I had to have this certificate that said I had taken classes and passed and that I knew enough to go before a judge and take the oath and everything like that.

Transatlantic Brides & Parents Association (TBPA)

Chris:

- I am new to that group. Many years ago, back in the seventies I lived here and I belonged to a TBPA locally. It was one of those things, where it was not a very large group and it gradually fell apart.
- I've gone back to TBPA through people I've met and I've rejoined it as a matter of fact.

Kelly:

- I didn't start meeting English people until after I . . . well, on and off and here and there and everything. I didn't join any English clubs or anything until after I was retired.

Sue:

- Within eight months.
- Word of mouth! Somebody who knew I was English knew somebody else who belonged to this English group and gave my phone number to that person who then called me, and that's how I joined the group. Word of mouth! Just somebody mentioning that other English people!

Changes in England

Chris:

- Not good ones!
- We drove this American car down through my town and I am totally lost. Absolutely totally lost!
- A lot of the familiar landmarks aren't there anymore and there are new ones that I don't recognize.
- There was a lot of redoing, after the recovery from World War Two, you know. A lot of places were pulled down and then new buildings went up. And then the roads were improved and you have this big new super highway that went swooping over bridges.
- I had absolutely no idea where I was and I was desperately looking for some kind of a sign or something I recognized.
- It had been a bomb site and had been developed into beautiful, beautiful gardens. . . Well, now it's a glorified bus station and it looks horrible!
- Big shopping centers that weren't there when I was there.
- You see all these fast food places, you know, like McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken, and that was before they were so apparent in England. Now they're all over the place in England too.

Kelly:

- Everything seems more Americanized that it was, you know.
- We had a lot of bomb damage too, and it wasn't build up so much when I left as it is now. They've taken all that and made the big supermarkets. They didn't have all those when I left.

Lucy:

- England is not England anymore you know.
- When I grew up in my town, you know, you never saw Pakistanis, whatever now it's all Pakistanis. They have their own little markets and everything. You just . . . Now when I think of England and my little market town I don't think of Pakistanis everywhere and that is what it is.
- You know, you go back thinking things are going to be the same and it's all been changed, you know. Big fields where I used to play, you know! Buildings!

Sue:

- Oh lots of changes. I think we have become very much more Americanized! You know protocol has kind of changed quite a bit, the stuffiness has gone.

- Much less, much more relaxed. The Hollywood movies certainly did. They tried to emulate that as well. I think that was the big change.
- The biggest change that I have noticed I think in the last ten or twelve years, how cosmopolitan Britain has become, especially London.
- It's unbelievable how it has changed with the immigration policy. You never saw anyone from, very rarely would you ever encounter anyone living in Britain, who was from any other country. There was only one black person who lived in the village. In school, not even a handful of people from other countries.
- It is much more multicultural, it's more diverse.
- You could never have gotten on the BBC unless you spoke with a plum in your mother and had perfect, perfect diction. Now they will take Irish, they will take. .
- It was never acceptable for years and years. And you were literally looked down upon if you had an accent.
- I find that there is one thing that is much more acceptable, there are a lot more interracial marriages you never had before.
- You also have, I think, through the socialism you see the bad things too, where half of Britain is not working. Half these people are on social, what they call social I guess it's welfare.
- It's a problem, they do, they have to because if you wait for their medical system you are pretty much dead. Whereas I think in this country things would have moved much quicker.

Reflections & Observations

Chris:

- Since 9/11 I've not had much desire to go over.
- I don't know how it would have been different. I probably would have . . . there is one fellow I probably might have married

Kelly:

- I don't know if I would have stayed there or not (speaking about her home town).
- Everybody tells me I'm American. But I don't know!
- I like to the English food, you know, get the English food and everything, but they kind of think that I am more American. I don't know. Maybe I am! You know, fifty years.

Lucy:

- So it was the money that kept us from going back. I wish, now that she's gone, you know, I wish we had go back.
- I was unhappy but did I ever think about running back, "No." I just stayed in a bad situation; with somebody who . . . you know, my husband he was a drinker too . . . It was like it was in the family, sort of thing, you know. He's since died because of that. No, I never did think of going back.
- I really thought I'd be back, you know, back and forth, back and forth. I'd go over; I'd be back next year. I'd be back, you know I'd be back and forth, you know. It just didn't work out that way for the money.

- I mean I am happy and my kids, you know, have turned out absolutely super kids. So if you changed anything, you know, that would change and you wouldn't want.
- I would have preferred to have stayed in England. Not that I have . . . Now, you know, I would never want to live in England, never, never, never! I love to go over there, but I always want to come back. I lived in a small town.
- If I could do it over again I would have stayed in my small little town and married a local guy.
- If I had to do it over again, I would stay in England. Right where I was! You know when you say that it sounds as like you are not happy. I am, I am happy, perfectly happy! If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't do it, no, no.
- Just because I miss England, I miss the family and I miss the little town and everything and, you know, all the way of life.
- This is a much better life. I have a lot more than I would ever have over there, but, I just think I would have just had a simple life.
- The most important thing is if they were coming to a loving family, you know, which I didn't have over here. If they were coming to that I think, you know, it would be alright, everything would be alright!
- If you went back to England today, I could, you know, get by without a car because of the transportation. As long as you make sure you live near an underground station or something like that, you know. You don't really need a car.
- My mother's gone. So, you know, now I can go back now for a time, I wish, you know, I could have done that in the beginning.
- English people, you know, that I have met over all the years, to me it seemed like most of them in England didn't have much. I, you know, wasn't that way. A lot of them, that didn't really have much, "We were poor." I'm not talking about me. They were poor and didn't have much and everything.
- Most of them that I met; it seemed like . . . like they didn't have much. Whatever was better, or, you know, it wasn't really worse.

Sue:

- A lot of people . . . I find a lot of English girls it's the same thing, you know. The pretty much came to nothing. They really left everything behind. When you think about it you know, I don't think that I would do it again.
- You had to be young, you really did and you know what life was going to bring you. So that was just part of it. Really you didn't know. I think ignorance was bliss really.
- I think that you would have been even more homesick if you realized that, you know, you were only going to see your parents once a year. I can't say that I felt that way. You know, I thought that my parents would always be there, but they really weren't.
- Not really, no! I can't say that. No, I never really gave it that much thought. I really didn't. I think when you're young you think you're going to leave anyway. You've had a life anyway, but you don't realize how important that family community is.

- When you've grown up knowing everybody around you, and they've known who your aunts, uncles and grandparents and suddenly you're here and you know no one and they're all foreigners to you.
- I think, being British and have the upbringing we did I think it made us much much better when it came to managing our money, managing our life really. We didn't fall into that kind of trap.
- Yes, we spoke the language, but we really didn't, we weren't understood! And that was again, a thing that takes quite a long time to sort of fit into that culture. I could communicate, heaven only knows what people do who can't; it must be so frustrating.
- Really, he really didn't (prepare her for life in America). He didn't tell me. To him, you know, it wasn't any different. In Britain he wasn't really with Americans. So he . . . he had time to live the way the British did. He didn't live on base.
- So he got more of the picture of how the British lived, but I don't think he realized how different it would be for me. I really don't think he did.
- He really didn't prepare me for that. At all! In a way I am glad he didn't because, I think, you know, you'd think twice about it. If you really knew how it was going to be. I think you might have been . . . it would have been worse. This way you kind of made the best of what you had. They way you were and what you had.
- You knew you couldn't just go back to Britain just like that.
- It is a worry and you still feel guilty. I don't think the guilt will ever leave you because you kind of left their care giving to other people. You couldn't be there. Even the time you spent there you really weren't contributing very much. You know, it was just reassuring for that month that you were there it really did change their life very much because you couldn't, because you weren't the solution. They really could have done with an extra pair of hands to be there all the time. It was good. I don't regret it.
- I could have probably bought another house with the money I've spent crossing the Atlantic, but I really don't regret that. I think then, once again, when you leave you really don't realize the implications.
- I think it probably would have been a lot more routine the way my mother's life would have been.
- I think I would have been much more of a homemaker.
- When I did take a job and got out in the workforce, my friends in Britain were somewhat envious . . . if you had children you were pretty much at home.
- In Britain they didn't go on to get education any more than high school. The ones with education were the ones who went to college in Britain. They got their degrees in Britain, but the traditional role for women was pretty much, if you had children you stayed home, or if you did anything you were like the dinner lady.
- The only ones who did seem to work full time were those who were divorced and had children to support. So I think it would have been very different. It would have been much more family oriented than I think it is in America
- I would have probably been curious about other places.

- The British developed that travel thing in the late sixties and seventies and seem to pop up everywhere.
- I think we work much harder in this country, it's funny and we don't put that importance to that annual vacation that they do. It's always been very important to them that they take that annual vacation regardless of the economy.
- "You're very Americanized!" Even before my father died, "Oh you're real American now!"
- You're more a little more outspoken, a little more worldly on things. Where they're . . . they've sort of . . . I think that tends to be because you do get out in the work force more.
- They're not sort of into a career of any kind.
- You know they would stay home, stay-at-home mum, pick the children up, have a little part-time job.
- Socially they just didn't kind of participate much like you would if you were working here, and you were working, working full time. So you tend to socialize with people from work and different groups and I think you do become more . . . you've got . . . you're individual
- Whereas over there everything revolves around their family and the children.
- (Observations from working with immigrant women) I have found that many of these women who come in, what they lack, especially if they are foreign born, they lack the social network. They are very much alone! They are just looking for someone to understand them. Understand what the loneliness of being home with children, but their husbands are getting their English skills because they are out in the job market, whereas these women are almost shut-ins, and yet they are very bright.
- In this country, if you can get out there you do have that chance, you really do assimilate and become a person, rather than an attachment to your husband or your family and I think that what coming here does for a lot of women. If they can do it, if they can get out there, you become your own person. I don't know if it is good for the husbands, or if they really liked it, I know my husband probably didn't.
- You become much more worldly! You are not dependent. I think that's a lot to say about this country! On the more positive side of this country really, the good thing is what it has done for a lot of women.
- Probably something they would never have been in Britain. The expectations in Britain, my expectations were so low because I didn't expect that I could be anything different or do anything different. I was quite accepting to do what everyone else was going to do and be a housewife.
- The women's movement really did sort of help women, especially British women coming here, because I think they too got the opportunity that they probably would not have had in Britain. It was probably slower for tradition to change.
- You work twice as hard as woman if you've got a job here because you are expected to be the homemaker too and that what you struggle to do.
- The good thing about America if you have medical coverage is the fact that you do get good medical attention and much more on the preventive side. I know that in Britain . . . don't do a lot of preventive treatment. It does make sense.

- We are lucky to be here. You know, I think that's one good thing about it and sadly this is one of the worst countries if you don't have medical coverage.
- If you have regular routine in Britain you've got good access to medical and you can see a doctor because you go on a doctor's registrar. So I don't know, we could have a hybrid system here that could probably work. Well. I think we probably could. We're smart enough to work something out.

Tina:

- Over here probably with the kids, you know . . . Now I've been married 49 years. We have four children.
- I wouldn't mind going back there for a month and having a place to stay for a month and knowing how to get around and things like that.
- When I go over there now it like you going over there. The money is different than when we were there.
- *Response to the question: Do they think that you are Americanized?* Oh yes!
- Oh! I always said if I had not come to America I would probably been in a mental institution . . . because of all the things that were going on within the family.
- So I think all those things . . . I would have been in a mental institution if I had stayed, unless I had kind of married really well and found someone who was going to take care of me.
- *Children:* I only had one that cared. The youngest one, and she became a citizen before she was eighteen. A citizen of England!
- My daughter keeps saying "Mum, we should record all of this because you could write a book." Because I have a lot of other things that are . . . Funny uncle, all that kind of stuff! And I said I can't do any of that until your dad has passed away.

Appendix I: Second Iteration: Categories

Growing Up – War Years

Bombing Raids

Chris	Slept in bunk beds in the cellar, Communal air-raid shelter behind house
Kelly	Lived in “Hell Fire Alley.” Bombed out of two houses. Grandma lost roof. Spent nights sleeping on bunks in chalk tunnels
Lucy	Not impacted, lived up north. Not children evacuated to this area
Sue	Musty smell of bomb shelters, frightened, caused lifelong claustrophobia
Tina	Family evacuated, - No bombing

Evacuation

Chris	Evacuated with mother and brother
Kelly	Temporarily evacuated with mother and brother
Lucy	Did not know anyone who was evacuated
Sue	Not evacuated
Tina	Evacuated with mother and brother

Memories of the War

Chris	Bombers, sirens, blackout curtains, air-raid shelters, gas masks
Kelly	Dunkirk, Battle of Britain, flying bombs, dead bodies
Lucy	Seemed reluctant to discuss early family life
Sue	Seemed normal at the time, ration books, war stories, returning soldiers, blackouts, war issue clothing
Tina	No men around in the village, only old men, sister born during the war, before father returned, parents marriage had problems, rationing

Parents and Family Life

Birth Order and Siblings

Chris	Oldest child, educated parents – engineer and kindergarten
Kelly	Oldest child, one brother, two sisters
Lucy	One older sister
Sue	One brother, sheltered childhood
Tina	Oldest child in family of four children, mother left the family, father married woman with five children, had another child, ten children total in the new family

 Parents' visits to the United States.

Chris	Mother made frequent visits to postings in Europe and the United States, got home every year. Came for daughter's high school graduation, mother amazed at all the fast food restaurants
Kelly	Father - coal miner on disability, died of black lung, parents never visited, sisters have visited
Lucy	Father - coal miner on disability, died of black lung, parents never visited, sisters have visited
Sue	Stayed with parents till baby was born in England, mother visited next year for a month, went home every year, parents paid for daughter's fare, went home every year when mother was sick
Tina	Mother left family after the war, father declared mother dead and remarried, new wife had five children, they had a baby, didn't get along with step-mother

 English Education

Chris	Attended little village school, then went to all-girls school, took French & German, tutored in French by uncle, no impact on English education, mother taught kindergarten, good education in England
Kelly	Only six students in classroom during the war, taught by church lady, finished school at 15
Lucy	Left school at 16
Sue	Attended secondary modern school, passed 13+, took GCEs, education more grounded in basics, good all round education, attended technical college
Tina	Started school in Wales, after the war went to school, but had to help dad raise siblings after mother left family, picked up French & Italian as an adult living in Europe

 Worked in England

Chris	N/A
Kelly	Went to work at 15, apprenticed to a tailor
Lucy	Went to live with sister in London
Sue	Attended college
Tina	Left school at 15, turned wages over to dad, worked as a nanny in France

Meeting, Marrying, and Coming to America

Met and Married Spouse

Chris	Met at church, engaged for a couple of years before marrying, went to live in France, returned home to have children christened, first husband killed, widow at 40, remarried retired military man who died seven years after marriage
Kelly	Met husband at the base, parents did not approve, 7-8 years older, stationed in Turkey, corresponded with him and got married after two years when he returned to England, he developed a drinking problem, she left him, best experience meeting second husband
Lucy	Thoroughly vetted by the military prior to marriage, mother wished she had married an English guy, first husband possessive, remarried
Sue	Husband showed up at a college event, did not believe he was American, parents concerned, pregnant and could not return to the United States with husband, no insurance coverage
Tina	Single when came to the United States as a nanny, met husband after she left family who sponsored her

Military Experiences

Chris	Stationed in France, First U.S. base in the desert, good life for kids, moved a lot to different bases, back and forth to Europe, she worked for the military, both had top secret clearance, 2 nd husband also military
Kelly	Arrived when six months pregnant, got pre-natal care at the base hospital, stayed with friends in a different state, husband didn't get preferred choice of bases, got out of military couldn't keep a job
Lucy	Husband got out of the military after two years in the United States, military takes care of people, they become your family, thought military would allow return to England, money issues
Sue	Husband got out of the military upon return to the United States, no job, no insurance, wife stayed in England to have the baby
Tina	Served in Korea de-mobbed in 1954

Arrival in the United States

Chris	Husband stationed in France for 2 years before coming to the United States, rode airplane for first time, arrived with two small children and traveled across country to CA
Kelly	Didn't have vaguest idea what to expect upon arrival, husband shipped back first, pregnant when she arrived in the United States, took the bus from N.Y. to Georgia to stay with husband's friends, while he settled at base in Midwest, thought everything was much bigger in U.S

Lucy	Thought life was going to be wonderful, streets would be paved with gold, seen too many movies, not crazily different, but nothing better than fried chicken and pizza
Sue	Brought baby who was a few months old, everything seemed bigger, they had everything here, people didn't talk about the war, lots of food in grocery stores
Tina	Came as a nanny to a U.S. family that took advantage of her, left her responsible for 4 year old and no transportation, lonely, sought help from British Consulate

Segregation & Discrimination Experiences

Chris	N/A
Kelly	I didn't know any black people, saw some on base
Lucy	Remembers sitting on the front of the bus, colored people made to wait outside of office, seemed unreasonable
Sue	Had only seen one black person who lived in the village
Tina	Remembers the race riots in 1968

Problem Areas

Chris	Had to think in U.S. dollars when shopping, did not know about U.S. tax
Kelly	Traffic coming from opposite direction, husband couldn't keep a job, divorced when children were 8 & 5.
Lucy	First marriage not good, husband possessive, couldn't settle with the military, divorced when children 12,14,& 16
Sue	Stayed in England till daughter was born, husband returned to the United States, no insurance as a civilian, waited to join husband till he had a job and a place to live, hadn't known people from other cultures, disaster with watermelon
Tina	Isolated, no transportation, no ticket back to England, sponsor family threatened to have passport suspended

American Families

American In-Laws

Chris	Wonderful mother-in-law, came to large family, mother –in-law chose to pass son and hugged wife when they first arrived
Kelly	Never met them
Lucy	Came to poor family, alcoholic father, nice mother, wondered why she stayed with him, kids slept on floor on blankets
Sue	Came to French speaking family, hard to communicate with, family helped with housing and driving to the store before they had a car

Tina Married after being here 15 months, American family very accepting

Marriage and Children

Chris Married twice – widowed both times, 2 children born in France, moved with military, children well rounded, learned German, children got U.S. citizenship confirmed when they were old enough to understand the process

Kelly Divorced first husband, single mother raising 2 children, worked various jobs, best experience meeting second husband, remarried when children had grown, daughter went to school in England for a semester

Lucy Divorced first husband, possessive, stay at home mom, had 3 wonderful kids, good second husband, encouraged adult son to take temporary job position in London, visited him there

Sue One daughter born in England before coming to the United States, visited every year, parents paid child's fare

Tina Married for 49 year, had 4 kids, American children made fun of way her children spoke, 7 grandchildren

Assimilation Process

Worked in the United States

Chris Worked for the military, had top security clearance, doing audits, went to school at night

Kelly Worked in clothing factory, ended bar, part-time in a restaurant, plastics factory, overall manufacturing place, worked all her life, volunteers now

Lucy Didn't work, Stay-at-home mom, possessive first husband

Sue Worked part time at first, got more education, works with computers and training and development

Tina Worked as a nanny for a wealthy U.S. family when she first arrived

Formal Education in the United States

Chris Went to night classes while working, maintaining home and raising children, education piecemeal for a while, obtained university degree

Kelly N/A

Lucy Never went to school

Sue Recognized gaps in her education, pursued education, earned BS and some graduate credits, women in Britain didn't pursue education like I was able to

Tina Got GED before children graduated from high school

 Friends

Chris	Didn't limit herself to just English girls, met nice friends in the military, helpful with assimilation if you make friends from different backgrounds
Kelly	Describes herself as very outgoing person, helped by friends she met, never took any welfare, friend's mother babysat for her
Lucy	Most important thing is to come to a loving family, which she didn't have, makes a difference in the adjustment
Sue	Joined English club within 8 months of arrival, co-worker gave her information about enrolling in school, working women tend to socialize more in the United States.
Tina	Friends helped her escape from family she was babysitting for

 Transatlantic Brides and Parents Association (TBPA)

Chris	Belonged to club back in seventies, recently rejoined organization
Kelly	Didn't have English friends, didn't have time to join any English club until retirement
Lucy	Observations - Most English people didn't have much, it wasn't really worse over here
Sue	Someone knew I was English knew someone who belonged to group. Met English women within 8 months, word of mouth
Tina	Met first English person after 15 years in the grocery store

Adaptation and Citizenship

 Cultural Adaptation

Chris	Important to make friends from different parts, friends from all over the world, exposed children to culture of other countries, assimilated well, waited to have children sworn in until they were old enough to remember, share common heritage with the United States, common language, feels more American than other women, did not want to return to England and uproot children, when she was widowed, integrated well
Kelly	Main focus was her children, busy raising her kids, didn't have any money for a trip home, best experience meeting second husband, only remarried when children were grown. Worked hard all her life.
Lucy	Learning to drive was the best day of her life, no longer dependent on others for getting around. Much better life over here, but still has mixed feelings.
Sue	Nobody talked about war, you had to assimilate, didn't worry about "Wants," learned to drive, scared of the highway. Pursued a career, obtained a college education.

Tina Changed the way she spoke because children's accents were being made fun of. Said she would have been in a mental institution if she stayed in England because of a difficult family situation.

Citizenship

Chris YES – good friend from military became a sponsor
 Kelly NO - would not denounce (meant renounce) British citizenship, matter of principle
 Lucy YES – after 15 years realized never going back to England, just got on with it, learning who president was, etc. Get on with your life get citizenship
 Sue YES - after ten years, a lot of girls still don't fit in, they still have one foot over there
 Tina YES - to take classes at the local university, night studies, had to pass 23 tests, had a certificate and had to go before a judge

Observations and Insights

Changes in England

Chris Not good, familiar landmarks gone, got lost, lost of rebuilding post-war, big shopping centers, fast food places
 Kelly More Americanized, lot of bomb damage now converted to large supermarkets
 Lucy Not England anymore, Life was simple then, Now lot of immigrants, changed her little town with foreign markets, lots of buildings
 Sue Lot of changes, more Americanized, stuffiness gone, become cosmopolitan, multicultural, diverse, BBC uses people with different dialects
 Tina Based on family situation: "I would have been in a mental institution if I had stayed", not many trips home, last time ten years ago

Personal Reflections

Chris Keeps some English traditions, but not much desire to go over since 9/11, there was one English fellow she might have married, still writes to him, didn't consider separation from home would be a problem
 Kelly Everyone tells me I'm Americanized, maybe I am, but like the English food, likes to meet new people, travel and try new foods
 Lucy Doesn't maintain any English traditions, children didn't like the food. Money stopped her from going back, wish she had gone back, mother is gone now. She was unhappy, but never considered it; it didn't work out that way. Super kids, wouldn't change anything, but if she had to do it over again prefer to have stayed in England, married a local guy. Love going over there, but she wants to come back to the United States, much better life here, misses

	England, miss the family, miss the little town, don't need a car to get around in England
Sue	Thought parents would be there forever, never gave it much thought, didn't realize how important community is, feel guilty for leaving care of elderly parents to others, life would have been more traditional in England – homemakers, only worked part-time, really curious, became Americanized, expectations in England would have been low - acceptance of traditional role
Tina	Belongs more here, married for 49 years with four children, don't mind going for a month, but it is like being a visitor, money is different. If hadn't come would have been in a mental institution

General Observations

Chris	If she had stayed in England would have married childhood sweetheart, Brits generally well received in the United States, common language, common heritage, people say, "I love the way you talk"
Kelly	Parts of England are depressed now because people do not go to seaside anymore
Lucy	If you came to a loving family it would be okay, most people from England didn't come from much, wasn't that way for her, it was better for them over here
Sue	We spoke the language, but we really didn't, husband didn't realize how different it would be for spouse, It takes a long time to fit into the culture, a lot came to nothing, left everything behind, ignorance was bliss, I don't think you would do it again, if you had children, you stayed at home, English women not into a career, don't have the social circle that American women do, assimilation provides an opportunity to become their own person and become more worldly, women's movement helped American women more, women in America work harder, good medical care here if you have insurance
Tina	I wouldn't mind going back for a month, having a place to stay, getting around, but it is just like you going over there. Involved in two wars, kids today still want this and that

Appendix J: Third Iteration: Emergent Themes

After reducing the interviews to manageable data in a word document, the data was realigned based on emergent themes.

1. Resilience and Flexibility

- Growing up: War Years
 - Bombing
 - Evacuation
 - Memories of the war

2. Adaptation - Receptivity to Change

- Parents and family life
 - Changing family dynamics
 - Fathers gone to war
 - Divorce, death, remarriage, siblings
 - Went to work – helped with the family
- Met Spouse
 - Receptive to moving to America
 - Parents' disapproval did not hinder decision to marry
- Military life
 - Lived in Europe and different states within the United States
 - Open to expectations
 - First airplane ride
 - Adapted expectations upon arrival
 - Segregation
 - Assisted assimilation process

3. Assimilation – Citizenship

- Marriage
 - Arrival in the United States - pregnant or with small children
 - Segregation
 - Divorces and death of spouse
- Problems
 - Shopping and cooking
 - Managing U.S. dollars, thinking in dollars
- American In-laws
 - Reception by new family - welcoming and not welcoming
- Cultural adaptation
 - Children - Importance of children in the assimilation process
 - Friends - American and British friends help with assimilation process
 - TBPA organization
 - Learning to drive
 - Worked in America
 - Citizenship – becoming part of mainstream America
 - Tied to obtaining American education

- Became Americanized
 - Doesn't maintain English traditions
 - Feels more at home in the United States – much better life in the United States
4. Education and Intellectual Growth - Desire to improve
- English education
 - Early schooling
 - Parents' impact
 - Learned foreign languages
 - U.S. Education
 - English education not significant
 - GED not necessary
 - Education driven by desire to improve employability
5. Insightfulness – Reflections
- Memories of the war
 - Dead bodies
 - Way of life seemed normal
 - Changes in England
 - Familiar landmarks gone
 - More multi-cultural
 - England more Americanized –fast food places
 - Nostalgia
 - Lack of money prevented trips home
 - Regrets about elderly parents – miss family, feel guilty
 - Insights - Life would have been different, more traditional
 - Feels like a visitor in England
 - Life in the United States
 - More opportunities for education and self development in the United States
 - Career opportunities
 - Good medical care
 - Women's movement had greater impact in the United States - not so traditional for women

Appendix K: Interview Demographics

Interview Responses from Five Participants

Demographic Patterns	Participants				
	Chris	Kelly	Lucy	Sue	Tina
Evacuated	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Passed 11+	Y	N	Y	N	N
Age when left school	17	15	16	17	15
Aged when married	20	21	21	21	22
Military affiliation	Army	Air Force	Air Force	Air Force	Army
Age upon arrival in America	24	22	23	21	20*
Arrival in America.	1962	1958	1957	1967	1958
Married before coming to America	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Positive reception upon arrival	Y	N/A	Y	N	Y
Obtained G.E.D. in America	N	N	N	N	Y
Obtained education in America	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Became U. S. citizen	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Years before a trip back to England	2	20	12	2	17

*Came prior to marriage. Met and married spouse in the United States.

Appendix L: Mapping Themes to Research Questions

The research question and the four sub-questions were able to address emergent themes that were able to be categorized through the coding of the data.

Research question: to seek understanding of the experiences of British women, who married American G.I.s during the 1950s, in order to explore their adaptation to cultural change, assimilation, and transitions within their American environment, including their educational experiences.

Research Question #1: What expectations did these women have as they anticipated life in America?

Adaptation - Receptivity to Change

- Parents and family life
 - Changing family dynamics
 - Fathers gone to war
 - Divorce, death, remarriage, siblings
 - Went to work – helped with the family
 - Parents' response to marriage
- Met Spouse
 - Receptive to moving to America
 - Parents' disapproval did not hinder decision to marry
- Military life
 - Lived in Europe and different states within the United States
 - Open to expectations
 - First airplane ride
 - Adapted expectations upon arrival
 - Segregation
 - Assisted assimilation process
- Marriage
 - Arrived pregnant or with small children
 - Divorces and death of spouse

Research Question #2: How did they intellectually, culturally, emotionally, or educationally adapt to new roles and environments in America?

Resilience and Flexibility

- Growing up: War Years
 - Bombing
 - Evacuation
 - Memories of the war

Insightfulness – Reflections

- Memories of the war
 - Dead bodies
 - Way of life seemed normal
- Changes in England
 - Familiar landmarks gone
 - More multi-cultural
 - England more Americanized –fast food places
- Nostalgia
 - Lack of money prevented trips home
 - Regrets about elderly parents – miss family, feel guilty
 - Insights - Life would have been different, more traditional
 - Feels like a visitor in England

Research Question #3: In what ways have these women assimilated into the American culture and been changed as a result?

Assimilation – Citizenship

- Problems
 - Shopping and cooking
 - Managing U.S. dollars, thinking in dollars
- American In-laws
 - Reception by new family - welcoming and not welcoming
- Cultural adaptation
 - Children - Importance of children in the assimilation process
 - Friends - American and British friends help with assimilation process
 - TBPA organization
 - Learning to drive
 - Citizenship – becoming part of mainstream America
 - Tied to obtaining American education
 - Became Americanized
 - Doesn't maintain English traditions
 - Feels more at home in the United States – much better life in America

Insightfulness and Reflections

- Life in the United States
 - More opportunities for education and self development in the United States
 - Career opportunities
 - Good medical care
 - Women's movement had greater -impact in the United States - not so traditional for women

Research Question #4: Has their enculturation and assimilation process been enhanced or inhibited by their formal education experiences?

Education and Intellectual Growth - Desire to improve

- English education
 - Early schooling
 - Parents' impact
 - Learned foreign languages
- U.S. Education
 - English education not significant
 - GED not necessary
 - Education driven by desire to improve employability

Appendix M: Five Phone Interviews

Phone Interviews with Five Women on their Experiences with Cultural Assimilation

The interview participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities

Transcription of phone interview with Chris

Transcription of phone interview with Kelly

Transcription of phone interview with Lucy

Transcription of phone interview with Sue

Transcription of phone interview with Tina

Transcription of phone interview with Chris

V: This is Vanessa, thank you for taking the time to complete my survey.

C: Oh yes I got the little message that you sent me. I am glad that you were happy with what you got.

V: I was, is this a good time to talk?

C: Yes that's fine.

V: The club member has explained to you what I am doing and why I am doing it? I am in school working on my doctorate and I am looking cultural assimilation. Particularly how did we assimilate and make a life for ourselves over here.

C: Oh! Yes!

V: So . . . maybe looking . . .

C: Congratulations on having the ability first of all, and also the guts to continue to pursue a doctorate.

V: Well, you know I got sort of hooked on education and found it hard to give it up after I got my Master's. I got bored and started looking around to continue my education.

C: I understand that feeling.

V: I see that from the information that you filled out, you got a good education in England, it looks like.

C: I got a decent one in England and then continued with it later, a lot later after having children and raising them. Then, when my first husband died I was left with a child, my

daughter who had just finished her freshman year in college and my son was in high school.

V: Was your husband still in the military?

C: My husband was retired from the military, but he was working for the prison service then, in the infirmary and he was attacked by a prisoner and he died after a week in intensive care!

V: Where was that?

C: We were in a small Midwestern city close to the Kansas State Penitentiary.

V: Oh, how awful for you, after getting him through everything in the military and the law enforcement.

C: He survived Vietnam and all of that. It was ironic! And what was the irony also was that it was his last day on the job. He had another job to start the next day.

V: Oh no!

C: He was in charge of the locks and so on at the military prison. So he was looking for the same type of a job after retirement and . . . The thing was that you had to work there for a year in order to graduate before you would be considered for that. He was finishing up his first year there. It was his last day on the job and the next day he was starting a new job.

V: How dreadful!

C: Horrible irony!

V: Yes, It doesn't seem fair.

C: No, it didn't at the time. We went though quite a bit at that time and I was working . . . I was working for the military, doing audits, military pay records and making sure that people had been paid correctly. And if they had been overpaid get the money back, and if they'd been underpaid paying them. So I continued with that but I was going to school at night.

V: Was this your first degree?

C: Yes, that was my first one, yes. I was going to school of an evening and after some time I had gone for so long, I really had to make a decision to go full time to finish it up, which I did, and then finished up at Cal-Poly in California.

V: Your children had to be very proud of you.

C: I hope so. My daughter was very funny she had gone to Emporia State University and she gone there with pretty good scholarships based on her scholastic level. She graduated from high school, she had earned some other scholarships and she was working very hard to get through school herself and doing very well. And she came home for the summer to spend it . . . the summer here, and she had a part-time job, well not part-time. She had a full time job during the summer and she was working at a VA center and she decided to take some classes at the college that I was attending at the time which was a junior college. And she thought "I'll pick up a few extra credits here during the summer to help me on my way. This will be a cinch because it is just a junior college!"

V: and Mum can do it!

C: Yes, she basically said that this will be a pod course and I said "okay." So she took her course and she thought it was going to be so easy. She had kind of a little attitude because she though her school was so much better than the one I was attending. I came out at the end of the year with an A, and she had a B. So she wasn't quite as uppity with me then!

V: How come you finished up your education in California?

C: By then I had remarried. I had married my second husband and he also was retired from the military and he had been sent to a new job on the West coast. So I moved with him, of course and I was going to finish at Kansas University, but I transferred instead to Cal-Poly, which is California Polytechnic University.

V: Well, you were going to school for a lot of years then!

C: Yeah, bits and pieces, here and there, yeah! It wasn't like I couldn't continue because I still had to maintain a home and help my children with their schooling. So it was very piecemeal for a while, until I got it finished.

V: Goodness. And you had married your husband, your first husband and moved to France, is that right?

C: Yes, we married in England and moved to France a week later, I moved to France a week later. He was already living in France, but we had met when he was stationed in England and came to the church that I attended and we'd been engaged for a couple of years before we were married.

V: My goodness! I would think that your adjustment from England to France would be greater than your adjustment from England to America because of the language.

C: Well, fortunately I had taken French in school.

V: Oh Yes, didn't we all!

C: Yes, that was my first foreign language to take. And then the second year in high school I took German because we had to take a second foreign language, and continue with the French. Any way, my choices were Latin, German, Spanish or what we called commercial subjects, which would have been we called shorthand and typing and I didn't want to be a short-hand typist. So I took German and, as it happens, the only two foreign countries that I lived in for any length of time were France and Germany. Isn't that amazing?

V: My goodness. That was fortunate! I took Latin. I took French, then Latin, because I was at an all-girls Catholic school and . . .

C: I was at an all-girls school, but it wasn't Catholic.

V: No, well, Latin was so we could understand the mass, I think. (Ha! Ha! Ha!) Because it was in Latin. I don't think German was an option.

C: Well a lot of people with whom I went to school took Latin, especially if they intended to be going to university to study things like science or medicine or something like that, because Latin was such a basis for it. Fortunately, I had an uncle on my father's side. He lived with my grandmother and I went there for tea every Sunday and he used to drill me in the roots of words.

V: Oh! That was fun!

C: Yes, well, he spoke fluent French and so it almost like going to another day of school when I went there.

V: I am sure! I'm sure it was.

C: So I learned to . . . He used to give me a long word and I would have to make a stab at the meaning of it, by basically dissecting it. And that that stood me in good stead for a long time.

V: So you were intellectually stimulated throughout your childhood.

C: Well, Ha! Ha! My father was an engineer and my mother for a while taught in a kindergarten type situation. And my, let's see, my uncle, he taught school and then he became a head-master, and so that there were . . . my brother he is an engineer, he is civil engineer.

V: He's still in England?

C: Yes, yes! In fact I was talking to him yesterday. So . . . but it is amazing, I had all of these people around me that had all of these math skills. Engineering, you know, my father was brilliant at math and my brothers, both of them went into fields connected with math. One of them managed an insurance company and the other one is a civil engineer

and then my daughter became a math teacher and taught math in high school. Now she works for a medical company down south somewhere. There has always been a lot of math around us. My nephew at the moment is teaching in the United States. He is on an exchange from England.

V: How wonderful!

C: Yes, he and his wife are teaching on the East coast. She's teaches science; he's teaches math.

V: Are you going to be able to see them over the Christmas holidays.

C: No, no. They are going on a trip this year. They only have a short time off of school. So they are going on a cruise. They did come out the one Christmas and spent it here. I think it was a shock to them how cold it is here. And we had one of the most perishing Christmas on record. It was icy and it was miserable, but we actually had a good time with them.

V: But it helps to have family over here, doesn't it?

C: Well, they come and go. They've been . . . they were in the South for a couple of years and then they taught for two years in the UAR. They've just left that assignment and they are back in the United States. She is happier here because of course, she did not like the attitude to women in the Arab countries.

V: Of course not. Do they have children that they bring . . .?

C: No, they have not been married very long. They came over here as single the first time and then they got married when they went back to England and they were married when they were in the UAR. So they have been married about three years now.

V: Being married to military personnel yourself, you must have traveled and had postings throughout the United States. Were you overseas again after you were married?

C: Yes, we were in France at a base for quite some time, and then I came to the United States and we were stationed of all places in Utah, which is a very isolated post because it is a testing ground for nuclear, biological, and radiological warfare.

V: and you had two small children with you at that point?

C: I had two small children and I was stationed in the middle of the desert and I told my husband I thought it was a test to see if I had married him for a green card. Ha! Ha! Ha! I had some very nice friends there. I had a navy couple who lived next door to us. He was navy, and she was from Mississippi, very southern and her little children all called me "Mz." There was an older couple that lived across the street from us who were very very nice and friendly to me. And then, the local superintendent of the schools lived two

houses up from us and he and his wife became very good friend to my husband and me and they . . . he was actually one of my sponsors for citizenship.

V: Did you meet any other military couples where the wife was English or foreign?

C: Yes, while I was stationed at another base, someone told me that there was an English girl that lived about three streets up, who was a British girl, you know. I went over one day and met her and we got to be friendly and visited back and forth but I didn't limit myself to try and find English friends. I think that is part of the helpfulness in the assimilation process is if you make friends among people from all different backgrounds and different parts of the United States.

V: Oh, okay!

C: And ask questions of them and learn from them and tell them things about yourself, because I've had friends from all over the world.

V: Yes. Well, if you have been in France and Germany before you ended up in America at least you didn't have the language barrier to . . .

C: Well, I was actually in France, came to America then went back to Germany. I did have a stay in the United States. Then I had a German girl-friend who was two houses away from me to the left, who was a very good friend of mine, and years later we bumped into each other again in Germany of all places. Ha! Ha! Ha!

V: So how did your children adapt to these moves between countries and cultures and military bases?

C: I think that my children did very well. I think one of the reasons that they did is that they are very close in age. There is only fourteen months difference, and so every time we moved from one place to another they already had a built in friend. So that helped and we always made it a point that the first thing that we got organized when we moved to a new house or a new location was we got their rooms set up first. So they had a familiar territory and my daughter especially was very good at making friends. My son was a bit quieter, but he was the kind of child that was quite happy playing by himself.

V: Yes, I had one like that!

C: Yes, so it was probably as well that he was the one that was like that because he wasn't quite as outgoing as his sister. She was the kind of child that went over and said, "Hi, my name is Anna". I remember, when we lived in Germany there was a little girl that lived next door, a German child and her family and her name was Helga. These two little girls would play together all day and Helga didn't speak English and my daughter did not speak German at the time and they would walk around the back yard and Helga would say (what her name was in German) and my daughter would respond in English and say her name in English and that was good. They got the bit about "What's your

name?" and then they would walk around and Helga would point to a flower and say the name in German, as she would say pretty and flower. Gradually they got to know words of each other's language.

V: Incredible. Does she still remember German? Does she speak German to this day?

C: She took German later in school and actually she has a minor in German and can speak German quite fluently.

V: It sounds like you have given them a wonderful broad education with all of the traveling that you have done. So . . .

C: I have always tried to get out, especially on the weekends with them, when we were overseas and take them to see places and do things. You know, take them to see castles in Germany.

V: Right, right!

C: We did all that kind of thing. The military is a pretty good life for kids because they have a lot of classes and things available to them, probably better that you would have in a small community.

V: Yes, that is probably true.

C: And, you get exposed from children from all different parts of the world and different nationalities, different races and the parents would be from various parts in the United States. And we also managed to have children who they were happy with who they could play with. I think we assimilated well.

V: It sounds as if you did. Going back to your childhood originally . . . were you born during the war or before the war?

C: Before, just before the Second World War . . . born in 1938.

V: Were you impacted by the war?

C: Oh yes, yes!

V: What part of England were you living in?

C: I lived in a part of England that was a bombing target because they had a lot of firms that were on war production and we were not too far from the docks. You know, there were docks in that part of the country.

V: Were you evacuated?

C: I was evacuated as a small child and my brother was just a baby. And we were sent away from the dockyards with my mother to be in some kind of boarding house, I am sure it was, from the sound of it, and when we got there my mother was not very happy with the situation because she said there were a lot of rough scruffy little kids there. The first day that we were there one of them snatched my teddy-bear and scratched my face, and my mother said “that’s it!” and she bundled us up, both up, and she got us in the pram, my brother’s pram and me sitting on the side. She took us to the train station, and she took the train back home and she said that she was going to sit out the war there. And as she was walking down the street with us in the pram, my father was walking up the street to come and get us because he did not want to be apart from us.

V: Goodness! So do you remember any of the bombing?

C: Yes, vaguely! I remember things like, you know, the heavy noise of the bombers going over. I remember the sirens and also the air-raid warden lived next door to us and I remember the black-out curtains and him coming, you know, to tell us that they needed to be closed because there was a chink of light showing. Things like that. And we had a basement, a cellar . . . a coal cellar and so on and we had bunks built under the steps where we could go (V makes encouraging sounds to continue) at night, and there was also an air-raid shelter behind our house, a large one, a community type one. I remember being in that with a group of people. I also remember being in the house itself, and I have memories of my uncle, who was in the navy on Russian convoy duty and he would come home sometimes like on a small leave. And my memories of this are really happy, because the funny thing is, if you had grown up in the war years, you had never known anything else.

V: That’s true.

C: So this was totally normal for me. I thought everybody took a gas mask to school with them. I always had a little, what they called, a little Mickey-Mouse gas mask.

V: Yes, I had read about those!

C: Yes, We had them in a little box on a kind of string that you put around your shoulder and carried it with you all the time when you went to school and I remember, my uncle though, my uncle coming home in his navy uniform. And it was always exciting when he came home, cause he was just a young man and all the young women in the neighborhood would come flocking over to the house to see him. And it would turn into kind of like a big party. He would like to play the piano and so would my mother. They would have the piano playing and he would be thumping out, “In the Mood” and things like that, and everybody would happy because he home and he was safe. Then he would leave again, and then he would show up again just out of the blue. And one time he had been to Africa, and he brought us a couple of bananas and we had never seen bananas!

V: Oh my goodness!

C: We didn't know what they were. And my mother was so excited because he had brought these bananas for us and by then, I had little baby brothers too, and she was telling us children how wonderful these were, and they were called bananas and she peeled them which fascinated us and she then broke them into halves and she gave one to me and one to my brother. Then she took the other one and gave it to the little boys. And my one brother, he took a bite of it and spat it out and said "No likely."

V & C: Both laugh.

C: He didn't care for it, and that was our first taste of a banana.

V: and how old were you then?

C: I'd had been . . . Probably when the boys were born, I'd've been about seven. Any maybe not, maybe even younger, maybe about six.

V: So, you don't really feel as if the war impacted your formal education because the war was about over when you were ready for school, or not?

C: I don't think that there was any impact at all on my education. I went to the same school where my mother had gone and where she taught for a while and also where my uncle, when he got back from the navy after the war, he taught there after the war, and then went on to other schools and then became a principal of a boys' school. But it was very much a little village school and it was attached to the local church. So it was a very nice school and we knew the families and we knew the kids and right across the street from it was the CSW Biscuit Works and you could smell all these wonderful smells everyday.

V: Was that C. of E., Church of England?

C: Yes, yes and that was a nice, you know, a very much of a family type of school, and especially as my mother had attended there.

V: When you met your husband and you considered marrying him, did you realize that the rest of your life was going to be spent away from England or was that not even a consideration at the age you were at?

C: It was not really a consideration! This was funny! It seems funny that you don't think like that. I thought in terms of we are going to have excitement, I was going to be traveling, we are going to see the world. I rode in an airplane for the first time and all of this was so new and exciting. We went out to California to meet his parents and wrote to my mother, my mother and I were writing every week.

V: And you said in your survey that you were very well received, and that they were delighted and thrilled with you and the children.

C: I will never forget how wonderful my mother-in-law was to me. She was such a nice lady! Now, by the time we got to the United States for the first time I already had the 2 children. My son was about eighteen months old and my daughter was two and a half, going on for three, when we first landed in the United States. I had been writing to them and we'd been sending photographs backwards and forwards and they had been sending packages for the children, but I never actually met them face to face. We arrived in California after a long journey from France.

V: You flew from France to California? How long did that take?

C: Well, we were very young and stupid! We flew . . . we were flown from Paris to the air force base in New Jersey and we decided it would be interesting . . . and my husband though it would be nice for me to see the country, so we traveled by train, by dome-liner. We got on the train in Newark, NJ, went down to Chicago, got on a dome-liner there that took us to out to San Francisco. Then we traveled down the coast by bus.

V: With two small children?

C: My children were wonderful on the trip. Everybody kept saying what great little children they were. Then his sister picked up and took us by car to his mother's house which was in a small town. She had been on the phone calling all the family and all the family had gathered to be there for when we arrived. And he had a large family of brothers and sisters, and they all had children. They were all older than our children. Our children were about the youngest ones, grandchildren.

Anyway, we got to the house and it was still daylight when we got there. I remember we stopped in the driveway and there was this little white picket fence around this nice little white house, with really pretty gardens. And there a porch on the front and I could recognized it from the photos that they had sent. I remember seeing this lady, older lady, and I recognized her as his mother. And she came flying out, she had an apron on because she had been cooking, and she came running down off the porch, down the steps, and down the pathway. And I thought . . . and she had her arms outspread, and my husband was slightly ahead of me, and she ran right past him and ran to me and hugged me.

V: How wonderful!

C: And that was wonderful! It was so nice of her to do that! She hadn't seen her own son in years, and she just went right past him, hugged me, hugged the children and then hugged him. And it was so exciting and we got inside and everyone was asking questions. It was a bit confusing because I was trying to put the names with the pictures.

V: Of course!

C: . . . in my mind. And everybody was asking questions. They were so excited to meet me and meet the children, and they were all being so nice, but we were a bit overwhelmed with it. I've got to be honest.

V: You were probably exhausted from that trip.

C: Yeah! We were kind of dazed by it all, and so then after a while they left, and said they would come back the next day because most of them lived in the surrounding area or within a short drive anyway. And then we finally went to bed and we were just beat! But I actually stayed with them my mother-in-law and her husband. There were just the two of them; they were retired at that point. I stayed in their house for quite a few weeks while my husband went up to get assigned, you know to get to next base. He called me and said that he'd got the house for us, you know, on post and made arrangements for me to go up to join him there, which I did as soon as possible.

V: Were you able to see your family over the years, your English family?

C: Yes, I actually was. I was quite lucky because of the fact was we moved backwards and forwards with the army. Then I was in Europe! My mother came to Germany and France to visit me and I would go over at least once a year, over to England, and go on a shopping spree. Ha! Ha! Ha!

V: So how long has it been since you've been to England?

C: Now it's been more time because my mother and father are both deceased.

V: That makes a difference.

C: Yes, that does make a difference. The last time I went I took my grandson with me and it was for my mother's funeral and actually, since 9/11 I've not had much desire to go over. And so I do keep in touch with a lot of friends from my teenage years. I email, and in fact I was just opening some cards, while ago, that came from England from my girlfriend who was a bridesmaid at my wedding.

V: She went over to France for your wedding?

C: No . . .

V: Oh. No . . . you were married in England.

C: We were married in my home town. We were married at the church where we first met and when our daughter was born we took her back there and had her christened there and the same when our son was born. So, you know, all of our friends kept touch with us and sent us beautiful baby gifts when we had the children. We kept in touch over the years with all the different members of them.

V: What changes have you seen in England since you left?

C: Not good ones!

V: Not good ones?

C: No, I go back, but the funny thing was we went back one year, when we were stationed in Germany and we drove over, and we hadn't been in a few years. And we took the car and the kids and we drove over from Germany, took the ferry over and we drove this American car down through my home town and I am totally lost. Absolutely totally lost! I thought that I knew my way all around. We are in the heart of town, and I am looking around for a familiar landmark and a lot of the familiar landmarks aren't there anymore and there are new ones that I don't recognize.

V: They were demolished or bombed?

C: Well, there was a lot of redoing, after the recovery from World War Two, you know. A lot of places were pulled down and then new buildings went up. And then the roads were improved and you have this big new super highway that went swooping over bridges and it hadn't been there before and we had got ourselves somehow onto the highway. My husband said, "Which way do I go now?" and I was saying "I don't know." And he said, "You're going to have to tell me" He's going down the road and I am supposed to be navigating for him. And I had absolutely no idea where I was and I was desperately looking for some kind of a sign or something I recognized, and low and behold there's my high school. I saw my high school! As soon as I saw that I knew where I was. Then I could place myself, but it had changed, change a lot in the intervening years. Streets that you could go through were now one-way streets, that type of thing you know, and ornamental gardens had changed vastly. It used to be . . . It had been a bomb site and had been developed into beautiful, beautiful gardens and all the offices . . . the office workers used to go there at lunch time and sit eat their lunch and feed the ducks in the pond, that kind of thing. Well, now it's a glorified bus station and it looks horrible! And I thought, "Why did you do this to these gardens it was so nice," And the big shopping centers that weren't there when I was there.

V: And how would your life have been different, do you think, had you had not come to America and married your American husband?

C: I don't know how it would have been different. I probably would have . . . there is one fellow I probably might have married. Ha! Ha! Ha! Somebody I was . . .

V: We all have one of those!

C: Yes, somebody I had known since I was four years old. We went to school . . . we had gone to school together, and then we both passed our 11+ and went on. He went on to a boys' grammar school and I went to a girls', but he always used to meet me at the bus every night and carried my school bag home for me. That type of thing, and we went to the same church, you know. Our families knew each other and I think had I stayed in England I probably would have married him. As it happens, he married another one of my girlfriends after I left there. He married this other girl-friend and he turned into a wanderer. He is a civil engineer like my brother and he ended up working in Saudi

Arabia and he's lived all over the world. His wife wouldn't travel with him. She wanted to stay in England. So they always maintained a home in England and she stayed there with the children while he went and worked overseas and then came back from time to time, and I think . . . we still write to each other by the way, this fellow and I. We still have this kind of correspondence going on.

V: Good heavens, after all these years.

C: Yes, and I think somehow he would have liked it if . . . I think he is happy with whom he married, but I think he would have liked it if she would have been willing to pull up roots and moved with him, and she wasn't. She wasn't the type that would. She just wanted to stay there, and she had three sisters there. She just wanted to remain right there.

V: Have your family been over here to see you?

C: Yes, my mother has been over here. My father wouldn't leave England. Now, I think his deal was that he was frightened if he ever got out of England he might never be able to get back. He was a dyed in the wool Englishman. But I would go over and visit and rent a car, you know, and travel around with them and take them places. We did get to visit with them, but he wouldn't come over and visit, but my mother has been over to the United States several times.

V: Is your mother still alive?

C: No, no she died. She was 92 when she died.

V: That's right! You said you had gone home for her funeral.

C: But when she was alive she came over here several times. She came over for my daughter's high school graduation.

V: That was nice.

C: Yeah! And things like that and she'd come over and spent some time and we'd take her and show her all the sights. She was just amazed, the first time she came over; she was absolutely amazed at the amount of food that was here.

V: The amount of food, what in the grocery stores?

C: The amount of food in the grocery stores and in the restaurants. We took her out to eat at a restaurant and she ordered pork chops on the menu and they came and they brought her a plate that has at least three pork chops on it. And she said "No," she just wanted it for her, not for a family. They said that's a meal for one person, you know, and she couldn't believe that. She said, "The amounts of food that they give you on a plate!"

V: Yes, because she still remembered the rationing and everything.

C: Yes, somewhat and she was used to if you said you wanted a pork chop, you got a pork chop. She would go up and down the main street here with me and you see all these fast food places, you know, like McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken, and that was before they were so apparent in England. Now they're all over the place in England too. But she was amazed by it and she said, "You never have to cook if you lived over here!" Ha! Ha! Ha! She said, "You could go to a different one of these every night" and I said yeah, there are people that do that.

V: (Both laughed) That's funny!

C: Things like that! It was kind of nice seeing it through her eyes.

V: Yes. We had a French foreign exchange student come one year to stay with us one summer and it was interesting to see it through her eyes.

C: My mother bought cans of corn.

V: Cans of corn?

C: Because they didn't have it in England at that time. You know, golden corn, she loved corn on the cob. And I found it, where they had it in cans so she could take it back with her. She stowed it away in her suitcase to take back to England.

V: They must have been heavy.

C: Yes. Yes. I mean she'd take a couple of cans of this, a couple of cans of that. It was funny the things she thought was so wonderful. She loved the chocolate chip cookies over here. She got addicted to those. She always called them Maryland cookies for some reason, I don't know why. But then they started getting them in the shops more in England, you know, and then it wasn't quite so novel to her.

V: Well, how about your children? Has it had any impact on them your being born in England or introducing tastes of a different culture?

C: They both have French birth certificates, my children. It had some impact on my daughter when she was a senior in college. She was offered an opportunity to go on a trip to Russia, with a group of students from her school. It was kind of like one of these 'exchange of ideas' and she went over to Russia. My father, my father was so adamant about it, "Don't let her go to Russia, you know." He was so anti-communist. He said "How can you let her go there. She won't be safe?" I was saying that the state department wouldn't let her go if it wasn't safe for her to go. They had this whole group of kids that were going over from the university and one of their professors, or somebody else was going to, and it was all very well organized. It was a wonderful opportunity, we thought, for her to see this.

So she went and she actually landed in Russia, she was probably in mid-air, but by the time she landed that was when Russian invaded Afghanistan. And you know what that was like, immediately it was like the cold war was really frigid. So we were on the

phone trying to find out if she was okay and then she arrived. Well she did arrive and when they arrived in Moscow, as they were landing, there were Russian soldiers all around the airport with weapons, you know, like guns, all ringing round. She said she didn't know what she'd had landed into to. She said she was escorted into customs and everything. Everyone was going through and there was no problem until they got to my daughter and she was traveling on an American passport. They looked at it, you know, and then they said, "You were born in France, why are you traveling on an American passport?" and she said "because I am an American." How can you be an American if you were born in France? So they pulled her out from the rest of them and really gave her an interrogation and went through everything in her suitcase. The rest of the class had got through and were waiting for her and they still wanted to know how she came to be born in France. She said, "My father was stationed in France. He's an American. We were living in France at the time and I was born there, but I am an American citizen." Well, how can your father be living in France, well then she said that her father was in the American army. So then they went through her with a fine tooth comb and it took another half an hour or more for them to process her, while everyone else was waiting. But she finally got through, and they said okay, and they let her through, but they called for supervisors to come and go over her stuff, because they wanted to make sure she wasn't some kind of spy.

V: I know that my son and son-in-law are both in the military, and have both been in Iraq, and the impact of a foreign born mother, regardless of the fact that I was born in England, had an impact on their security clearance. It took longer for their security clearance to go through and to get vetted and they needed my citizenship papers and some things to give them clearance. I don't think it matters that you are born in England. It just matters that you had a mother that wasn't born in the United States and the red flag goes up, in that situation.

C: Actually my children have never had a problem with that part because the fact that I worked for the U.S. government and I had a top secret clearance . . . because of the work that I did for the government. I'd already gone through a thorough background investigation. My husband had top secret clearance and so did I. So right away it's already Okayed my kids they would never have a problem with that.

V: Your second husband, was he already in the military when you married him?

C: He was in the military when I met him, but he retired shortly before we married. He was a lieutenant colonel stationed in the Midwest. To further complicate matters he went to West Point so that would have really raised some red flags. However my children never did really had any problems other than they had French birth certificates. They do have, in English, a certificate that says that they are American citizens born abroad. When we came to Fort Leavenworth when they were eleven or twelve we got the citizenship verified. I wanted to do it when they were old enough to understand what they were doing. They set up a court date. They have a little district court on base that would be open about once a month. They had a judge come and swear them in as American citizens and they got their certificate saying that they are American citizens.

V: And they remember that?

C: Yes, that is what I wanted them to remember, doing it. Not do it when they were little babies and they wouldn't know, but they've had American passports since they were three months old.

V: What do you think in general about immigrants assimilating? How do you rate your self in that aspect?

C: First of all, I think that I do very well. Most of the Brits do because, to start with, we have a common language. It is different in some ways, but not that big a deal, and also we have a common heritage. And if I am out, and I was out yesterday with a friend, and we went in a store and we were dealing with somebody and she said to me, "where are you from?" and I said, "England." She said, "Oh! How wonderful, I just love they way you talk." You see, I have always had such positive reactions to me as an English person. Whereas, I think some of the immigrants don't get that kind of response depending on where they are from. (V Agrees) I feel particularly sorry for people who are from Arab countries, but who are not nasty people. Who are good people because they just get lumped in with all the rest. I have a friend who's last name is foreign (She spells it out), now she is a British girl. She was born in Scotland and lived there all her life and her husband also was born in Scotland, but he was of Afghanistan background. That's where his parents came were from, Afghanistan. She is kind of an interesting person because her family was Jewish and his family, of course, is Muslim.

V: In Scotland? They must have been a minority!

C: You've got quite a mix up with her. They married and their children were raised as Muslims. She's got a son who is a doctor and daughter who is very successful. You know, they have done a good job of raising them and, it's funny, her family and his family were chip-shop owners. For a while they had one when they came to the United States, they were in California. They opened a chip-shop out in California because there are a lot of Brits in California. They ran some other kind of business, but she has worked very hard. She is dark, she is dark looking; she looks almost Arab, even though she is not. She has a swarthy look to her skin and she's got dark hair. She's a very nice intelligent lady, but there are people that kind of, when I say this is my friend and mention her name, they immediately, you can see the stiffening, but she is just a sweet lady. The funny thing is she is one of the most peaceful people, I know. Very much pacifist, but she gets lumped in with those people and I think that's sad. So people like her probably had a harder time just being part of the . . .

V: People who stood out because they looked different.

C: I think part of mine that helped is, as a military wife, you are asked to do certain things where you volunteer for this and you volunteer for that. I was a room mother for both of my children; I was a girl-scout leader for my daughter's girls scout troop. I was on the

boy-scout council that got the badges and things like that. So I have always been one to volunteer and join in.

V: I have been looking at, as part of my reading that I have done in my research has been to look how assimilation works. Such as appearing like you fit in, wearing the clothes just so you no longer stand out. You wear the jeans, the tennis shoes what ever the population are dressing like, so you immediately look like you fit in. Your clothes no longer make you stand out. Then there is the slower process where you begin to feel like you are more at home here than in your country of birth. That can be a long process.

C: That can be a process. Now when I first married, I had to admit, I was living in France and the American money at first confused me.

V: It was all the same color.

C: Well I couldn't figure out what was nickels and what was dimes. I always got them confused and then somebody said "two-bits" to me one day and I had no idea what they were talking about. And I met an English girl who was married to an American and she was very helpful because I was saying every time I went to buy something, "How much is that in real money?" which I meant in English money and I kept . . . Then she said, "You've got to stop thinking like that and you've got to start thinking in dollars." And she was right. She said "you'll come to a point where you won't look at something and say how much that is in pounds. You'll just say okay it's that's how much in dollars." And that's when you know something has clicked and that is the money you deal with and now if I go to England I am looking at something and thinking, "How much is that in dollars?" and figuring it that way. Little things like that.

V: Well, the thing that confused me the most was that the money was the same color, and I never knew how much money I had. It was all the same color and size. Whereas in England it was different colors and sizes and you could immediately tell, looking in your billfold, how much money you had, but it was all green and that just frustrated me no end.

C: I had one instance when I first came to the States. We went down to the stores in the little town where my husband had lived and we went into a little dime store, you know, to buy one or two items and we went to pay for them. Because I like math, I have a habit of just adding things up in my head as I go. So I put these several items down and they rang them up and they told me would be so much and I said, "No, that's not right, it is only this" and she said, "No." and I said "I think you've made a mistake." And I went on and said, "That, that, and that is so much" and she said, "And tax." I looked blankly at her and said, "Tax?" She said "Purchase tax." I didn't know that they added on taxes afterward. Because in the PXs and overseas you don't have that. It's only when you go into a store in America that you get that added on. So that was my first brush with "you've got to pay a tax added on top." I found that was absolutely fascinating.

V: I'm sure. Do you still cook the English food and keep some of the English traditions?

C: Some of them, yes. And then I learned a lot of American ones. For instance, it's Christmas and we are going to have Christmas crackers at the table and I introduced my daughter's in-laws to them the first time they came over for Christmas dinner after they were married. I always set the table with a cracker at every place and they wanted to know what these were and I said, "Christmas Crackers." She is thinking crackers, like you eat and I said, "No, we pull them and they snap" My daughter said, "They're fun." My kids have always had them. So we proceeded to show them how to pull them and you got something out of it and you got a funny hat and you have to put the funny hat on. Well, they thought it was hilarious and they just entered into it and they expect them.

V: When my son was in Iraq for Christmas. I sent him a very small Christmas tree and a box of crackers and then he had to explain to them what they were.

C: And what they were supposed to do with them! It's things like that. For instance, my son-in-law loves sausage rolls. So he is coming in next week so I've got to make sausage rolls before hand. And they like Cornish pasties. And my daughter has . . . I got to make mince pies and she likes raisin cookies that I make, but those are actually an American dish that I've kind of altered a bit. We've always had with our Christmas dinner parsnips, which a lot of Americans don't really know too much about.

V: My sister does nice roasted parsnips.

C: This is something actually I learned from my last husband's family. We went out to his sister's house one time for Christmas. She had taken parsnips and she had julienned them like you would for French fries and then she'd simmered them very slowly in butter and made them nice and crispy and wonderful and it was their family tradition to serve this with the turkey dinner and I immediately fell in with that tradition and thought this sounds pretty good to me. So now it has become our tradition that we always have them.

V: My cousin in Ireland does mashed parsnips with mashed carrots in them.

C: I've done that before, but I had never seen them done before. I had never seen them done this way and I thought I like this kind! They are really nice and crispy and we just love them so I fix them and my daughter's father-in-law, he has got to be approaching ninety now, he is in his late eighties. He said, "You know, the last time I ate eaten parsnips was when I was a teenager. I'd forgotten how good they tasted." He just loved them.

V: Yes, yes, we always had them at home. You are newly come to TBPA Is that correct?

C: I am new to that group. Many years ago, back in the seventies I lived here and I belonged to a TBPA locally. It was one of those things, where it was not a very large group and it gradually fell apart. Then there was an incident happened that blew the whole things off the map.

V: Yes, well, those things can happen.

C: One of those unfortunate things, you know. Nothing to do with me, but the group ceased to exist. So when I was in California I didn't belong to any of the British clubs at all. In fact, the only thing I kept up with any kind of a club like thing was the West Point Association, through my husband. I did have a lot of friends out there. I had one English girl-friend out there; the rest were American. So I did very well as I was, you know I was fine. I think I was integrated quite well. I had a good time out there. Then when I moved back here after my husband died, I was in a store one day and they were asking if anybody wanted to join Daughters of the British Empire (DBE). There was a little notice about it and I thought, "Maybe, I'll try that" and I did and I formed a new chapter here in locally. That was several years ago, but then I've gone back to TBPA through people I've met and I've rejoined it as a matter of fact.

V: Are you still active with DBE?

C: To a degree. I'm not an active member now because the chapter locally is getting fairly aged and they don't like to travel . . . you have to drive quite a distance to the meetings and a lot of them don't drive at night and don't like to drive that far and I became like the bus-chauffeur for everybody. So at one point I just said, "No, this is not working."

V: I wonder if that would be a group that would consider filling out any of my surveys.

C: Well, if you like . . .

V: It's now posted on the TBPA national website.

C: Well, I tell you what, I can give them out to people if you want to send them to me, because Tuesday night I am going to a British girl I know, well she is a second generation actually. Her mother is British and lives in Kansas City. So this is second and third generation that I am going to visit on Tuesday night. They are friends of mine. The woman is American born; her sister was born in Britain. So there are a lot of British girls that I know through this organization and I would be happy to pass you survey along to them.

V: The surveys are available through a link on the TBPA website. Are they at that skill level that they could access a link and fill out a survey electronically?

C: Oh, sure!

V: Okay. Well, it's in the Chat Room section. You go to National TBPA website. Do you know where that is or can you find it.

C: No, this is all new to me. So is this TBPA.com or .org?

V: I am trying to think, let me see. I've got your Email address let me send you the link to the TBPA website.

C: I have two email addresses; let me give you the second one.

V: Let me write that down

C: All lower case.

V: I will send you the link. It's on the TBPA website. I'll send you that link and it gives a little profile with my picture. I wanted to make sure nobody thought I was a crackpot.

C: No, no. You know, the first meeting that I went to for TBPA it was another member that brought up this and apparently and she had given some people this thing and they hadn't filled it out.

V: That's right.

C: And she was addressing them and asked why . . . and some of them said it's private. Well, I said "I'll take one, let me look at it." I have no objection to filling it out. There is nothing in here I find offensive or obtrusive. I think some of them . . . some people get scared about because they've been told not to give out information to people they don't know.

V: Well, I wasn't asking for social security numbers.

C: That's what I said, there's nothing in here that can hurt me.

V: But I think that there are personal stories that maybe people don't want to share.

C: I think that's absolutely incredible!

V: I do too. I think that there is a story there for the people that are not responding to me, but I don't know how you would get that story.

C: Well, I sat in that group and listened to the reasons they were telling about why they had not responded. One of them said "well, I found it very personal," and I said, "I don't find this personal, it wasn't like it said 'how many times do you have sex with your husband?'" (Both laughed). What is so intrusive and personal about this, I said there is nothing I would say that I would be ashamed to say to anybody else.

V: What I was basically trying to do was to gather some demographics to see what the group of people looked like, and then just use that as a demographic background, not really to get personal information.

C: And see if it was different from generation to generation! Now I will say something that I have noticed. I feel more American than a lot of the British girls.

V: Did you work over the years?

B; I did, yes.

V: I think that might have made a difference. I have noticed that with some of the group that if they were with the military, because they moved a lot, they never really settle in any careers.

C: I worked for the military. I went and took my civil service test to see if I could I could pass and found how easy it was and at that point realized that I had got a much better education in England that I would have got in a high school here. And I probably knew at lot more.

V: You did your “O” levels, but not your “A”s, is that right?

C: Yes, I did my “O” levels. Yes! I was glad I worked because when my first husband was killed, if I hadn’t been working, I don’t know what I would have done, because he was only in his early forties when he was killed. I was left a forty year old widow.

V: You must have been devastated!

C: Yeah, and two children who were teenagers!

V: Did you consider going back to England at that point?

C: No I didn’t and I’ll tell you why I didn’t. My mother wrote to me and actually, she called me and she said that, you know, there is always a welcome in the hillside. If you want to come back you can come back and stay with us and we’ll help you get on your feet and all this kind of thing, and I said, “No. I’m not going to come back” And the reason that I wasn’t going to come back was that my two children were American and they were here in school, and if I’d have gone back and taken them back it would have been a big uprooting for them right in the middle of their school careers. I had a friend, she might be willing to do too this by the way; she lives in Maryland. I met her in France when we were stationed there. She and her two little girls had gone and lived in England, for a very brief period, while her husband was in Vietnam serving a tour of duty and she had enrolled them in British schools and they made fun of her children. The teachers, mind you, made fun of those little girls because they ate American style with a fork. They were chastised for not using a knife and fork properly in the dinner room.

V: They are always particular in England about how you use the knife and fork, though.

C: They were criticized for their manners and they made those two little girls’ lives absolutely miserable.

V: That’s terrible!

C: And then, they missed a lot of the things about their home and their friends. They were totally out of sync with the children in the school. They were like little fish out of water. So when her husband got a second tour of duty to do in Vietnam she said, “I’m not going

back this time, and I'm staying in the United States." So, I didn't want to uproot my children and take them away from the life they knew and take them to totally different surroundings. So I stayed here. I had a job here. I told my mother, I said "I've got really good friends here. I've got a home here and I've got a job here. I would be uprooting myself, but more than that, my children." So, this is where we stayed.

V: I've got all of your information here and I have kept you so long.

C: Okay, well, Listen I'll let you go.

V: I'm going right down to my computer and I'll send you an email.

C: I'll respond and I'll try and get some others to respond to you.

V: Super. I really appreciate it. Thank you, thank you so much. Bye-Bye.

Transcription of phone interview with Kelly

V: Hello Kelly, this is Vanessa, please tell me if this is a good time or not.

K: Yes, it's okay. I've been busy.

V: This is Christmas time. So I need to make sure that you don't have to rush out and finish up your shopping or anything.

K: No, no, no.

V: Okay and you understand that I'm looking at cultural assimilation, particularly at English women.

K: Uh hm!

V: I'm going to take some notes, and record some of this so I don't forget what you are telling me. Let me see, I've got . . . you came to the United States in the 1950s and you were in your early twenties when you did that. So you grew up in England, in post war England, and you have some memories of the war, do you?

K: Yes I do. Yes. I was three, three days after the war started, and then I was seven or eight when it ended.

V: Were you evacuated during that period?

K: No, my mother wouldn't let us. She took off. I had a brother who was 15 months younger than myself and she wouldn't let us be evacuated. She took off with us and went up north to my aunt's. And then after a month or two or three months, or I don't know how long because I was small, she brought us back home. So we lived in the south of England through the war, right on the coast. We lived in what they call "Hell Fire Alley."

V: On the south east coast?

K: Yes, and we were twenty miles across the channel from France.

V: That must have been a dangerous place to have been.

K: We were, we were bombed out of two homes and spent most of the time in an underground shelter. We had, luckily you know, it's a resort town you know and they are built on chalk around there.

V: Okay!

K: And we . . . they had built after the First World War; they had built tunnels under there, all under the town.

V: Didn't Churchill have some underground caverns, or something, that he used as a war office on the coast?

K: Yes, round Dover. All around there they did that, but our town had tunnels built all under the town and they put bunk beds in there, you know like they use for the army and everything. (V. makes encouraging sounds). We would stay at my grandmother's during the day, but she didn't have a roof on her house.

V: She didn't have a roof on her house?

K: Well, it had been blown off in a blast. So, we would spend the daytime, you know daylight hours, above when there wasn't an air-raid, and then we would go down there at night and sleep.

V: Did you know that this was an unusual way for children to live?

K: I'm sure I did, but I don't know we . . .

V: Was it something that everybody did, so it didn't seem strange?

K: No! Right and well, my mother took us everywhere we went. We went down to the harbor when they brought the men back from Dunkirk in the fishing boats.

V: Do you remember that?

K: Uh huh! She was down there serving tea and sandwiches and stuff and we were right with her. We watched the Battle of Britain until the air-raid warden got mad and grabbed us and threw us down the shelter (Laughter). We were standing there watching.

V: You are part of history!

K: Uh huh! And I have a sister that is six years younger than me and I have one that is ten years younger than me, but the sister who is six years younger than me my mother had her on the last day of December, on my mother's birthday. And then ten days later, a flying bomb, we lived in like a duplex, well you know how they were built, (V agrees) knocked the corner off the house joined to us, bounced in the street and knocked six houses completely down. You know, they were all brick houses

V: Your sister was born at home presumably?

K: Yes, and the only thing that bothered me, and it still bothers me sometimes when I think about it, they laid all the dead bodies out on the pavement in front of the houses, you know, from the blast, from the bombs.

V: How old were you then?

K: I would have been six.

V: Six! And you remember that?

K: A little past that, going on for my seventh birthday because my sister is six years younger than me and she was just ten days old. And our house lost all its windows and the door flew up the stairs and we had to move out and go into another house. We had to go into a council house, is what we had to do.

V: Yes, I am sure you probably did. Did you go to school during the war?

K: What we did was . . . our church a teacher a lady lived not too far from us. She took about five or six of us and we had a little room in the church and we went . . . she taught us. So I was way ahead of all of the other kids, when, you know, everything went back to normal.

V: How soon after the war were you able to go to the regular schools then?

K: Oh gosh, probably. Kids started coming back, I guess, right after the war. I guess, you would say that when that September term came up, we went to regular school.

V: So a lot of your friends had been evacuated, and there were children missing from the town?

K: Oh yes, just about all the kids from around there had been evacuated, yeah! There were only about six of us went to this little school

V: So what did peace time seem like to you? It was a change from living in your grandmother's house with no roof and being in caves under the ground.

K: She had already moved from there to a council house that got damaged, So in the meantime over the years, we had moved from my grandmother's when we had to go down to the shelter, the city had given us a council house, and that's what got damaged and we had to move out of that into another one.

V: Goodness!

K: So that was kind of different.

V: Yes! So did you take your 11+? What did you do about your high school education?

K: I didn't do . . . I was done when I was fifteen.

V: You were done when you were fifteen, and you went right to work?

K: Uh huh! I went to work on my fifteen birthday. My birthday is in September and they wouldn't let me go before then.

V: So you couldn't start school that September.

K: No, so what I did was, I went to school until July, you know, until they got out for the summer. So that September when I was fifteen then I started work.

V: Where did you work?

K: I worked for a . . . I was apprenticed to a tailor.

V: That would have been a good thing to have been. And did you have several jobs before you got married?

K: I only had one other job.

V: So you stayed with the apprentice to the tailor.

K: I stayed with the sewing, yeah!

V: Do you still sew?

K: Yeah, some. Not a lot, but I do some.

V: So, was there a military base near you where you met your husband?

K: Yes.

V: So what was your family's impression of you dating an American, and marrying and coming so far from home?

K: Oh, they didn't really like it.

V: You were the oldest child, no you had a brother.

K: No, I was the oldest. In the meantime, well I'll see, I guess I was nine, well it was right after the year after the war ended, and my brother was run over and killed by a bus.

V: The one that was just younger than you? (J. agrees).How tragic for the family! That was very difficult.

K: Then my sister was born shortly after that. So my mother must have been pregnant with her when . . . 'cause she was born in January, yeah, and she is ten years younger than me. So she was born in January, 1947.

V: So there were like two families, really. There was you and your brother and then there were two born after the war.

K: Well, No my sister was born in 1942 during the war. My younger sister was born after the war.

V: So you have two younger sisters, still, is that right?

K: I have one that is six years younger than me and one that is ten years younger than me.

V: Okay, Right, that's a little bit like my sister and myself, then. So you met this American. Did you know him very long before you married him.

K: Well he came back to the States; then he went to Turkey for a couple of years. Then he came to England and was stationed at a different base.

V: Did you know him during all this time?

K: Uh huh! We wrote and everything else.

V: So it wasn't a whirlwind romance. You know him quite a long time! (J says yes) So were you tempted to come over to America and visit him before you married him?

K: No, no.

V: You just waited for him. Did you date anybody else during that time period?

K: No, no. I didn't. I probably should have, yes! You know, he was older than myself, seven or eight years older, and when he got out of the service, he had 14 years when he decided to get out, and he developed a drinking problem (V: Oh dear). He couldn't keep a job and then he started to get mean, and so I finally took my children and left.

V: How many children did you have at that point?

K: Two, a boy and a girl.

V: Were any of them born in England?

K: No, no.

V: So what did you think that life in America was going to be like? What did you think that America was going to be like before you got here?

K: I didn't have the vaguest idea.

V: Are you an adventuress then, you were willing to take a blind leap?

K: Oh yes, I like to travel even now and you know, I like to meet new people and try new foods and everything, yeah!

V: So, off you went knowing what you were getting in to. Did you realize this was almost like a one-way ticket for you?

K: Yes, because I did not go back home. I came over here in '57. I did not go back home until 1975.

V: (pause) That's almost 20 years

K: Mmhm!

V: Can you remember what your first impressions were of America when you got here?

K: Oh gosh. Everything was so big!

V: What state did you come to?

K: Well, I tell you what. I came by myself because he was already had to come back to the States So I flew to New York by myself and then, I rode (Ha! Ha!) I rode a bus from New York down to Georgia. A greyhound . . . by myself.

V: You were married then, you'd had married him in England?

K: Yes, and I was pregnant by then.

V: You were pregnant. You . . .

K: The thing when I got off the plane . . . I was on the plane with, there were a bunch of American students coming home from somewhere and they told me the bus terminal was close to the air terminal in New York city. So I got a cab, when I got through all the things there. I got a cab and I said, "I want to go to the greyhound bus station," and he said, "Which greyhound bus station, there's more than one?" I said, "Take me to the closest one." So he did, and he dropped me off across the street with two big suitcases, and it was like a six lane road highway.

V: That was mean!

K: And I was standing there trying to figure out what I was going to do to get across that street. A little black man came up and said, "Can I help you?" I said, "Well, I've got to get myself and those suitcases across there to that bus station." And he said, "Come along" and he took them and took me in there and showed me where to go and everything. And I was surprised because, you know; I didn't know any black people. I was in the little resort town, you know, and the only ones we did see some at the base, and we didn't know any.

V: And segregations was still an issue in America, at that time is that true?

K: Yes, that he was very nice and got me across the street and took me to where I needed to check my luggage and everything and got me straightened out.

V: And all the traffic coming from the opposite direction.

K: Anyway, he really did help me and I got the bus and it took me a day and a half, I think, to go down to Georgia.

V: What time of year was this?

K: In October. I stayed with some friends of my husband's down there and then, when he found us a place to live, when he chose a base to come to, he didn't know what he was doing. He thought he was getting one down south, but he picked an air force base which was in the Midwest. I mean that was one of his choices, but I think that it was his third choice, and that was where they sent him. So, he . . .

V: So you were down in Georgia and he went to the Midwest?

K: Yes, uh huh! And he found us a place to live with a sergeant of his who had a house in town and they rented a couple of apartments in it. And they were fully furnished apartments. I rode a bus from Georgia up here.

V: And when was your baby born?

K: Oh! And she was born, that was in October, and she was born in January.

V: So you were quite far along with your pregnancy (J. Agrees). Were you getting any pre-natal care at this point traveling all around America?

K: The base.

V: Well you were very brave. What surprised you the most about America? What did you find that surprised you the most?

K: I don't know. Let me see. I will have to really think! You know, it's been so long. It's been fifty years. Ah! . . . You know, how much bigger everything was than it was at home. Cause you know I was from a small seaside town.

V: How long was it before you saw the ocean again?

K: Well, it wasn't until 1975 when I went back to England again because I was right her in the middle of the country and I was trying to raise my kids. So I didn't get a chance to go anywhere. I didn't have any money to go anywhere.

V: No. If you could say best experience, worst experience in America . . . or was the most different for you?

K: Oh! I don't know, best experience (pause) . . . Oh! Meeting my second husband!

V: Meeting your second husband!

K: I went with him for thirteen years. I didn't marry him until my kids were grown.

V: That was a long time. (K: Uh huh!). How old were your children when you were divorced, can I ask you that?

K: Let me see! I've got to think. My daughter was eight and my son was five.

V: And you went to work at that point.

K: I had already started working before. Yeah! I went to work in one of the clothing factories. You know, there used to be a bunch of them here.

V: And you had been trained as a tailor's apprentice in England. (K: Uh hah!). So you had some background.

K: Uh huh! And I'd worked in the clothing factories until they started closing them down. And I worked . . . I'd done everything. I'd tended bar. I tended bar for a friend of mine.

V: Did you!

K: Then I got a job, a part time job working in a restaurant and a bar. Then I worked in a plastics factory for a while, catching bottles coming off the line. I worked at an overall manufacturing place. I did their payroll. I've done everything.

V: Did you consider going back to England when you were divorced and you had the two small children?

K: No. I know I couldn't afford to get back there and my parents couldn't help me. My father was a coal miner and he had black lung. He died shortly. He died in '77. He was already, you know, on disability and they couldn't help me.

V: So who helped you with your adjustment? It sounds like assimilation was secondary to your other problems that you had; your everyday life. Who helped you?

K: Nobody. Well, just friends that I met and all. I never took any welfare. I did take . . . at the time they didn't have any food stamps, they had commodities. I did do that, but I worked and I had friends who would help me with babysitting and things. A girlfriend of mine's mother babysat for me. People that I met! I am a very outgoing person.

V: Did you have other English friends? Did you meet other English women?

K: No. I really didn't. I didn't start meeting English people until after I . . . well, on and off and here and there and everything. I didn't join any English clubs or anything until after I was retired.

V: Really!

K: Because I didn't have the time. My last twenty years, twenty-two years all together, I worked for the same company. I worked nights most of the time and that's where I retired from. I never really retired because I work as a volunteer now.

V: Oh do you! So you like to stay active and you like to travel? You never became an American citizen?

K: No I haven't, and you know why?

V: Why? Tell me.

K: Because it says you have to denounce (comment: it is really renounce) your citizenship and I'm not going to do that. If they say give up, I would, but I am not going to denounce anything.

V: Okay, alright. So it's the verbiage that you didn't like?

K: It's a matter of principle. Yeah! (Laughing)

V: Your children are they different for having an English mother, do you think? Have you exposed them to English culture?

K: No, no. My son, he kind of took after his father. He's in to the drinking. He's been in trouble. I don't know where he is. He is all over the country and I haven't heard from him for a while, but . . . My daughter is just fine. She has two children. I have a granddaughter from my son, and she has three children. So I have three great grandchildren.

V: Oh my goodness!

K: But my daughter, anything that I need. If I need any help she is always willing to help. To do anything, you know.

V: Have the children been over to England to meet their grandparents or were your parents ever over here?

K: Yes, They both went when we went in '75 and my daughter stayed over there from August until January and went to school over there.

V: That was an experience for her.

K: Yes, it was a good experience for her.

V: What changes have you seen in England since you left that surprised you?

K: (Laughter). Everything seems more Americanized that it was, you know. And it was just a little . . . and of course we had a lot of bomb damage too, and it wasn't build up so much when I left as it is now. They've taken all that and made the big supermarkets. They didn't have all those when I left and . . .

V: Right! Do you have any friends back there that you keep in touch with?

V: I have one. She doesn't write. Her daughter has to do the writing because she has really really bad arthritis. She's crippled really badly. Her husband was a coal minder and was killed in the coal mine. I get a card from her and I always go to see her when we go over there.

V: When was the last time you were in England?

K: It's been three years last September. We went on a Baltic cruise and we went to England for a week first, then we went on the cruise and then we went back to England and spent another week before we came home.

V: That was a lovely trip.

K: The last three or four times we've gone, the last three times I guess, we've gone, on a cruise and gone to England first then gone on a cruise, then gone back to England you know. I figure if you're over that way. We did a Mediterranean Cruise and did that too.

V: That was lovely! Have you ever thought about how different your life might have been if you had not come to America?

K: Yes, I have, every once in a while. But I don't know, my youngest sister still lives there and it's a kind of depressed area because people don't go to the seaside anymore. They go to Europe!

V: Yes, they do.

K: She has trouble keeping a job and he does too, you know. It's . . . So I don't know if I would have stayed there or not. My other sister married somebody from up near London and he worked for the telephone company. So he had a good job and had a good pension. So she never really worked much and now they run a yacht club.

V: Have your sisters ever been over to see you?

K: My one next to me, the one that is six years younger than me, the one that lives near London has been twice.

V: Was your mother ever over to visit you?

K: No, no. My parents died. Well, my mother was still alive in '75 and so was my dad. My dad died shortly after that and my mother died after that.

V: What else was I going to ask you? Do you feel more American than English? When you go back to England do you feel more English or American?

K: Everybody tells me I'm American. But I don't know! (Laughter) I like to the English food, you know get the English food and everything, but they kind of think that I am more American. I don't know. Maybe I am! You know, fifty years.

V: Fifty years is a long time.

Transcription of phone interview with Lucy

V: Hello, thank you for completing the survey and agreeing to talk to me. I am particularly looking at the group of women who came over in the fifties and how they managed and what their perspective is looking back and how you coped in general with the whole process. Because I think as they years went, particularly for myself, it was a lot easier coming in the sixties and seventies, than it was coming in the fifties.

L: Er! I wouldn't . . . what . . . how do you think it was different?

V: I think that the world got smaller. I think it wasn't so much a one-way ticket any more. When I came I think that England was a little more affluent. I think it was easier to take a trip back home. I think from my sister's experience it was harder to get back for a visit and the parents were so eager or able to make the trip over to see the families. So in that respect I think it was a little bit harder.

L: Hmm! Well, no, it wasn't for me.

V: It wasn't for you. Okay, that's good.

L: Right, right. There was no different between . . .

V: Now I am going to be taking some notes and recording this because I am never going to be able to remember all of this. So tell me you married an American?

L: It would have been no different for me, even if I had come in the fifties, sixties or even the seventies.

V: You met and married your husband in England?

L: Right '57. That's when I came over.

V: Okay! And let me see, I've got some notes here. You were 23 when you came to America. Did you have any children before you came?

L: No.

V: No, so they were all born over here?

L: They were all born over here. Probably, I think probably about three years, you know, before I had any children.

V: So what were you expecting to find? I mean what were your impressions of America? How had you formed your impressions of what life was going to be like in America?

L: I thought that it was going to be wonderful. I really thought that the streets were paved with gold because I had seen too many movies and I really, you know, just thought that everyone lived wonderfully.

V: So you got your impressions of America from the movies. What state did you come to when you came over here?

L: When we came over my husband was in the military and we went to an air force base, in San Antonio.

V: San Antonio. That is supposed to be a very nice climate there.

L: Right, it was and it was the first time that in my whole life that I had gone through a winter and didn't have bronchitis, because I am prone to bronchitis.

V: Are you still prone to bronchitis?

L: Yes, still prone to bronchitis, right. It was the only time that I . . . in my whole life that I . . . had pneumonia like when I was two and when I was three. You know, I had all that stuff going on when I was a baby.

V: (makes sympathetic sounds). Oh dear. So you came to this mild climate you came to . . .

L: We were only there six months. He was on a training program and then we went to Georgia.

V: Okay, that must have been very hot down there for you?

L: That was . . . No, no that was fine! Yeah!

V: Were your expectations fulfilled then when you came then. I mean was it what you thought it was going to be?

L: No not really, you see this is my second marriage. My first one was not really good. What I remember, you know, is when I, when you had to apply, you know, to marry an American. You know how you had to go through all that. They check you out. Did you do this? Did you do that? And everything! Remember, they asked my boss about me too. I remember him saying, "well, you know, you're asking all about her, what do we know where she's going?" And, you know, that made sense. He was from a not very good family. He had an alcoholic father and mother that would get . . . So we would . . . anyway then my husband didn't want in the program that he was in the military, so we said we were going to get out. So why we picked the area, was that it was where his mother and father were, and all the brothers and sisters and stuff. They were very poor because he was an alcoholic. And I remember, you know, the kids were sleeping on the floor, just on blankets. So, it was a very different life what I was used to.

V: Did you speak to the family or did you have any contact with them before you came to America?

L: Probably talking on the phone. You know, "This is . . . Do you want to say hi to my mother?" and I was excited and talked to her and everything. Of course my husband never . . . He did say that he was an alcoholic father. He hated him, you know, he did this and did that and ran away from home because of him. So, I knew that I didn't think that they were . . .

V: So that was a bit of a shock?

L: It was a shock, right!

V: And impacted your relationship or the interaction with the family when you came to America, then, did it?

L: No, not really. In fact . . . the mother, who was my mother-in-law, was quite nice and I, in fact, probably wasn't very nice because I didn't understand why she stayed with this guy because he was a drunk and why . . . and she never really. . . I know deep down she didn't like that I thought I was better than them. That sort of thing, but that's how it was. She never ever said anything bad to me, or anything and like I said, you, now, I said unkind things to her. Looking back . . . you know.

V: Looking back would you have done some things differently?

L: Er! . . . I don't think so. No, no, I really don't think so. Well, yes, because we had three children. So it probably was about twelve years before I got back home. Of course I would've gone back home sooner. Yes, but I then wouldn't want . . . My mother just had a fear of flying, you know, so never would come. So it was the money that kept us from going back. I wish, now that she's gone, you know, I wish we had gone back.

V: Did you consider going back when your marriage broke up?

L: No, because my marriage didn't break up until probably, well, I'd been happily married, wonderful, for 28 years. Somebody else was involved so . . . no. I never . . . I was unhappy but did I ever think about running back, "No." I just stayed in a bad situation; with somebody who . . . you know, my husband he was a drinker too . . . It was like it was in the family, sort of thing, you know. He's since died because of that. No, I never did think of going back.

V: No, not after that length of time and your children were about grown by then, I suppose.

L: Let me see, when I got divorced they were 12, 14 and 16.

V: How was the education they received over here different from you education in England, do you think?

L: I really didn't get involved that much in what they were doing. If I look back would I have done something different, yes! It's only, did I really get involved in school when I had grandchildren. I really, you know, didn't apply myself very well, get involved, you know. They just went off to school and that was it. So I didn't . . . but they all turned out wonderful, good jobs and did well. So it was really no thanks to me except I was a stay at home mom. I never did work. So that's the only reason that they probably turned out so good.

V: Did you travel with the military? Were you at very many bases?

L: No, like I said, my husband . . . he was a bit possessive. He went to pilot training school and, like I said, you could be gone forever. You know, a long time away from your family and he really didn't want that and he said, "I don't want to do it." And I don't think, because that was what he always wanted to do and suddenly he didn't really want to do it. And also he found out he was color blind too, which he had never known, see, and that was really going to go against him. Like so we got out and I was only over her in the military for probably about two years. I do think the military life is a good life for people.

V: Your own education in England, was that impacted by the war at all? You weren't evacuated at all.

L: No, no. We were up north and it was only family from London that were evacuated. We stayed put.

V: Did you have any children that were evacuated to you area?

L: No, no.

V: Okay, well that's interesting.

L: If there was I never knew anybody. I never knew anybody who had come from London or whatever.

V: Marrying an American soldier and moving so far away from home, how did your family feel about that?

L: Well, my father he died, so it was just my mother. I just remember her saying, "Well, I don't want you to be doing that, but if you're happy that's all that matters to me." You know, she thought, you know, that we were happy, and you know, and that I wish you'd got an English guy, but you know, it didn't . . . and I really thought I'd be back, you know, back and forth, back and forth. I'd go over; I'd be back next year. I'd be back, you know I'd be back and forth, you know. It just didn't work out that way for the money.

V: No. No. Of course, if he'd stayed in the military that might have been a possibility.

L: That's right, yeah!

V: Well, goodness. Looking back would you have done anything differently?

L: Er! . . . No, I don't know, I don't think . . . no, yes! I mean I am happy and my kids, you know, have turned out absolutely super kids. So if you changed anything, you know, that would change and you wouldn't want. The fact is again I would have preferred to have stayed in England. Not that I have . . . Now, you know, I would never want to live in England, never, never, never! I love to go over there, but I always want to come back. I lived in a small town and I would have . . . and then my sister lived in London see, and so me and a girlfriend went to London and, you know, it's not a small market town where everything closes and everything in London is . . . and this is where I want to be. So, you know, we went and lived with my sister. If I could do it over again I would have stayed in my small little town and married a local guy.

V: Was there a local guy?

L: Well er! . . . Actually there could have been. Yeah! There could have been!

V: There could have been? Okay.

L: There could have been.

V: You say that you wouldn't go back there to live. What changes have you seen then that you don't like, that make you say you wouldn't go back there to live?

L: Just . . . England is not England anymore you know. It's so . . . when I grew up in my town, you know, you never saw Pakistanis, whatever now it's all Pakistanis. They have their own little markets and everything. You just . . . Now when I think of England and my little market town I don't think of Pakistanis everywhere and that is what it is. So, you know, I would like that. Life was very simple then. It's not simple anymore, you know. I'd get off the bus at 10 o'clock at night, after going to the pictures, you know, and walk in the dark and everything and nothing every happened to me. Now who knows what goes on! So it's the same over here, and in your car and you're not doing that stuff anymore.

V: Did you become an American citizen?

L: Yes.

V: You did. What year did you become an American Citizen?

L: Er! . . . Probably, I would think, not for about fifteen years.

V: Fifteen years, and what made you decide to become an American citizen?

L: Something quite stupid really. My sister and her husband were visiting and we, you know, we went down to Texas and we were right there on the border. We said, "Oh God, do you want to go to Mexico?" Of course, I said to the guy, now my sister, they have passports but, I don't because I hadn't planned on doing it and he said, you know 'cause it was on this side, "If you just stick within Juarez, just stay around Juarez, you'll be alright when you come back." Now, of course, trying to get back in. No passport, you know or anything and I didn't drive so no driver's license or anything. So, out the car . . . out the car you go and then, you know, they were calling the British Embassy and all this business and I thought, you know, I'm never going to go back and live in England and this is where I am, so I'm just going to be a citizen. So that was it. You know, I was scared, I thought about . . . you hear about these people in Mexico, you know. You know, I was there by myself, you know, my husband, his mother, we didn't have any kids at the time, it was just my sister, who knows where they were, and I was in this building and I just . . . It all got resolved and I was allowed to go, but it was a weekend and the British Embassy or consul whatever you call them and it was a mess. So I thought, you know, get on with you life and get citizenship.

V: Yes, so that was scary then really!

L: Right, right!

V: Was it a big procedure for you at that time to become an American citizen? Was it more difficult than it is now, or was it easier, do you think?

L: I don't know what it is now.

V: No, I don't either.

L: I have no idea how they do it. You know it was just answering questions and, you know, learning up who was president and this and that and everything. Taking a test, and getting sworn in and that was it. Yes!

V: You vote and you participate as a citizen and everything, do you?

L: Right.

V: That's good, that's great. Oh goodness. Is there anything else that you think I might like to know or that you would feel comfortable sharing with me about what your expectations were, or if they were fulfilled? What disappointed you the most when you came here? What didn't you like? You came during the late '50s and went down to Georgia and that was during segregation, do you have any memories or any . . .?

L: I do remember, I do remember about that. I remember, you know, sitting on the front of the bus and everyone going back down. There was segregation!

V: What did you think about that?

L: Well, I am prejudiced, I am still am super prejudiced! I was eighteen before I saw my first colored person when I went down to London. In my town, you see there wasn't So I was prejudiced then and I don't think that ever changed.

V: And what about . . . ?

L: That's just the way I feel. There was a lot of it, you know. It was like, you know . . . and I remember going once in like, in some kind of, I don't know what kind of deal it was. Anyway, some kind of office and, you know, a colored person came and they said, you know, and you can't come in, you'll have to wait outside or go somewhere else or anything. I thought, you know, that was a bit unreasonable, anyway.

V: And also the fifties was a time of the nuclear war, and the communists scare and all of that. Do you have any memories or any impressions about that?

L: No.

V: No. Okay.

L: No, no. My life actually has been very good. I mean I had a rough spell in a marriage there, you know, but it all worked out, you know, very good. Do I wish I had divorced my husband earlier? If I could have been with the present one, yes, but, you know, itit. It just . . .

V: Is there any advice that you would give to someone embarking on a journey like you did, right now? Someone coming to America for the first time, with a husband, coming from England and having to fit into a new culture what advice would you give them?

L: Well, like I said if I had to do it over again, I would stay in England. Right where I was! You know when you say that it sounds as like you are not happy. I am, I am happy, perfectly happy! If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't do it, no, no. Just because I miss England, I miss the family and I miss the little town and everything and, you know, all the way of life. This is a much better life. I have a lot more than I would ever have over there, but, I just think I would have just had a simple life.

V: But if you met a person who had just come over here and they were telling you, "It all seems too much and there is so much going on, and I don't know if I made the right decision, how am I going to fit in, how is it going to work out, or if I made the right decision." What would you tell them? What you tell them how to begin the assimilation or adjustment process?

L: I wouldn't even know how to say anything. I don't think. The most important thing is if they were coming to a loving family, you know, which I didn't have over here. If they were coming to that I think, you know, it would be alright, everything would be alright!

V: So you think the way the American family receives the immigrant wife makes a lot of difference?

L: Right, right.

V: That makes a difference in the adjustment! Did your children get to know their grandparents?

L: No, let me see, yes, they did probably up to about six or seven. I didn't know the grandfather because he was a mess, but the grandmother did the best that she could in the circumstances, yeah!

V: Did you find any difficulty adjusting to the food or anything else over here?

L: No, no.

V: And the cooking, were you alright with cooking the American food and the measurements? Did you learn to drive when you first came over here?

L: No, no. I waited a long long time before I drove. Probably, I bet, fifteen years! And when I did that was the happiest day of my life!

V: What when you learned to drive?

L: When I learned to drive! It was! It was the happiest day of my life.

V: Because?

L: Just because I didn't have to rely in anyone else, you know. I remember pushing a baby, two babies in a pram with the washing load, and taking everybody to the Laundromat, you know, to do the laundry and washing. Two babies and everything! You know, anybody coming over who didn't drive, my!

V: Well, okay. That's interesting, that you would say that. The transportation in England would let people who didn't drive get around a lot easier. It was easier to get around.

L: Right, if you went back to England today, I could, you know, get by without a car because of the transportation. As long as you make sure you live near an underground station or something like that, you know. You don't really need a car.

V: Let me see. What else could I ask you? I am not sure that I have any other questions for you. Certainly if I think of anything I'd like to give you a call.

L: Right, coming over I think that everything was going to be like the streets were paved with gold and everything. And because we were in the military, the military does take care of people. There is always somebody across the street, that knows you've got nobody, or what ever, you know. So even if you don't have any family, in laws or what

have you, you still have the military people and I was quite happy. I didn't not like the military life! It was okay, yes!

V: The military was good to you then. Well, I think that this is about all that I have to ask you. Like I said if I think of anything else. Did you go to school while you were over here?

L: No I never went to school.

V: Did you have to go to school to get your citizenship?

L: No, you just go to a class, and the class that I went to they just give you books to read up and all this, and you read up. I went to a class, yeah!

V: How did you manage when your children were doing homework and doing American history, I was not a resource for them; I could not help them with that part of their homework or anything. How did you manage with some of that when your children were they were in school?

L: I don't know. I knew some of it. I don't know how they managed. They weren't asking me and everything. They just, you know, I think they were smart kids who went to the library a lot. I remember when I, we lived quite near to the library and so, I think they knew, they were able to walk up and stuff. I didn't help them, heaven knows, you know, they did quite good. So they had to be getting answers from somewhere, it weren't from me.

V: Is your sister still alive? Do you still have your sister in England?

L: Yes, yes.

V: When was the last time you went back for a visit?

L: We go back for a month every April.

V: Do you really, that's wonderful!

L: Right, 'cept the only thing is, my mother's gone. So, you know, now I can go back now for a time, I wish, you know, I could have done that in the beginning. In the beginning when my mother was upset and everything about me, going on about we're not going to see you again and that sort of thing. I really knew in my own mind, that I'd back next year and the year after, you know.

V: How long were you over here before you went back?

L: It was about fourteen years.

V: You must have seen a change in that fourteen years when you went back.

L: I did, I did, yes! You know, you go back thinking things are going to be the same and it's all been changed, you know. Big fields where I used to play, you know! Buildings!

V: There was a lot of rebuilding going on then in the sixties.

L: Rebuilding, right! Yes!

V: Do you read any of the English newspapers? Do you follow any of the English news?

L: Not really. Of course, if I could get my hands on them everyday, I would, yes.

V: Yes. You don't go online and look at them on the computer?

L: I don't have a computer. I don't want a computer!

V: Oh! Okay, because I look at the Daily Mail online and read the . . .

L: Oh! I didn't know that you could do that.

V: Yes, you can.

L: That's wonderful!

V: That was something, you know, that I didn't realize you could do that. I have a son that is with a big computer company. The only job he ever had. That's what he does, you know. He said they're always getting rid of computers. He said, "I can get you one set up and show you how to do it." And I said, "No, I just don't want to do that." You know, I go chasing for antiques, quite so. I have always been a compulsive person, and just give everything. I know that I would never leave the computer. I would just sit there, buy and sell, wheel and deal on the computer. So I just said, "I don't want anything to do with it." I just want to get out and roam around.

V: So you deal with antiques then?

L: Yes, I always had like booths in antiques malls. My house is wall to wall antiques.

V: I bet you see some things . . . well, I know for example some things my dad threw away that are considered antiques over here. Some of the stuff that we got rid of that nobody wanted that old junk anymore, really has some value over here. You just sort of bite your tongue when you think what was gotten rid of. I remember my father taking an axe to an oak dresser because it was old and he didn't want to carry it down the stairs. He just wanted it to be gotten rid of.

L: Right. English people did that!

V: I know, and then we burned it.

L: We had a big grandfather clock. My sister and I could open it up where the pendulums were and hide. That's how big it was, and my mother had to pay. She didn't want it any more and she had to pay somebody to come and get it and it was working and everything. She had to pay somebody. I would have paid to have it shipped over here, in a heart beat, but she paid somebody because she didn't want it.

V: Yes, and it had probably been in the family for generations, hadn't it?

L: No, I don't think it was that old but it was like a wedding present, I mean.

V: Do you buy English antiques?

L: I buy everything.

V: I'm being nose-y now, but what is the best piece that you've got? What do you consider your greatest find?

L: Er! I don't know whether the . . . the oldest piece I have is late eighteen hundreds which was a birthing chair, where you sit down, pushing chair and what ever. Then I have a cabinet, late eighteen hundreds too. I have a couple of pieces, you know, eighteen hundreds.

V: Wonderful! Do you buy to sell or do you just buy for yourself?

L: Buy and sell, I always bought and sold.

V: Do you find that you get attached to pieces that you don't want to sell?

L: Er! No because anything that I get attached to I just keep. I don't ever think well I like that, I'll just sell it.

V: Well, that's a wonderful hobby and a money-maker for you too. Have you gone home to England and brought stuff back with you to sell too?

L: Oh yes! Yes, tons of stuff, tons, tons, tons!

V: What is that the Americans are looking for in the English antiques?

L: I really don't know really what, you know, what sells. I'd be worth a fortune if I did. I mean, I can sell anytime I get it. I mean just work at it, sometimes for weeks. Floe-blue is good. That's a good one to go to England and get. So I can do well with that. The same way, you know, anything I get I can sell, all of it does good. Yes!

V: And you don't sell on the internet at all?

L: No, I don't have a computer. Then as I said I would sit there. I had friends who used to go to auctions and they would sit there buy something and before it had even been sold, they'd put it back on wait to get it. Then when they wait to get it, you know, they would package it back up and ship it out. I'd rather be racing and roaming around and all that, than just buying and selling on the internet.

V: What do your children think about you being English? Have they been over there for a visit? Do they feel like they have ties to England?

L: There was one time, yes, they went one time, and yes liked it, liked it yes! And then I have a son that lived over there for a year with his job. He loved it over there.

V: Did he get to meet any extended family when he was living there?

L: Yes he did. I think, probably I encouraged him to go. I said, "You should go." He said there was a possibility that he could go, if he wanted to. It was up to him. I said I would go in a minute. So they had two children. So they went and they lived in London and love it and my husband and I went and stayed with them and everything. Then it was time to come on back and you know, because there was an office there in London and then they came back. They loved it over there, they loved it.

V: That was a wonderful experience for them and the children then.

L: It was because they went to Egypt and went all over Europe, you know, because it is easy from over there. Their kids saw all the places they never would have seen.

V: Did your mother every make a visit over here to you?

L: No, she'd say, "I'm scared to fly, I can't fly."

V: Oh dear! You probably would have liked her to see where you lived.

L: I would. You know, that didn't happen.

V: Okay, well I appreciate you talking to me and visiting with me about this. Thank you, you've been a help. Like I said my experiences were different. I came in the late sixties to visit my sister and met and married my husband on a blind date in the early seventies. So I don't have this experience of not knowing what I was getting into. You know, what they did and how they managed with the whole process and some of them managed better than others.

L: English people, you know, that I have met over all the years, to me it seemed like most of them in England didn't have much. I, you know, wasn't that way. A lot of them, that didn't really have much, "We were poor." I'm not talking about me. They were poor and didn't have much and everything.

V: Are you talking about the ones that came over here, you mean?

L: Right! Most of them that I met; it seemed like . . . like they didn't have much. Whatever was better, or, you know, it wasn't really worse.

V: So that has been your experience with the English wives that you have met over here?

L: Right, right.

V: Well, England was poor at that time. They were coming out of a depression and the recession because of the war and America was a much more affluent country at that time and things switched in the sixties when, you know, the pop craze, the Beatles, Carnaby Street, that whole thing started sweeping all over to America. It sort of switched roles for a time, which is why I am so interested in the perspective of how people managed back then. The clothing was different, the styles were different, the climate was different and the food was different. Although of course, if you had been married and living on a base, you had, of course, got used to a mini exposure to American life anyhow.

L: Well, it was different, but not crazily different, you, know. So we had different things and you do miss your English food, and still miss your English food, but you know we had fried chicken and pizza and stuff and things we didn't have in England, you know. So there's nothing better than fried chicken and pizzas and all that sort of stuff.

V: Are there any English traditions that you maintain in your home or with your family?

L: Er! I don't know. I don't think so. My children, you know, never liked the things I did. If somebody would send me a plum pudding, you know, they would turn their noses up at it. Well I would save it all for me, you know, because I love it. If you don't like plum pudding that's more for me, so you know.

V: Anything like the Christmas crackers, or anything like that. Do you do that at Christmas time?

L: No, I, you know, maybe later on, you know, I got a box, went home to Harrods, it didn't seem like it excited them, you know. They didn't . . . the little present that was inside was something or nothing. So it is all tradition that you grew up since you were a baby, that you kind of like! Living there, as far as keeping it going over here, no, no.

V: That's interesting. I've got my Christmas crackers ready to go.

L: (Laughter). Well, I said I did it the one time, you know, they really didn't think it was that wonderful whatever.

V: You have very American children then.

L: I do, I do.

V: Thank you very much for sharing this. I really appreciate it.

L: You can always call me.

V: I appreciate it, goodbye, goodbye.

Transcription of Phone Conversation with Sue

V: Hello, this is Vanessa again and I very embarrassed to admit it but I erased my tape of our previous conversation. At least I think I did. I went to the tape and it was the wrong tape, I either lost it or erased it, but I can't find it.

S: Can't find it. It probably gone, you probably overrode it.

V: I probably did. Would you be good enough to repeat our conversation? I would be so grateful.

S: Alright. Let me turn off what I have got on here, so I can hear better.

V: I almost didn't call you. I thought, well I could eliminate that one from my research, but yours was so interesting.

S: Okay

V: Particularly what you shared about coming over alone with your baby and you having to stay in England and things like that.

S: A lot of people . . . I find a lot of English girls it's the same thing, you know. The pretty much came to nothing. They really left everything behind. When you think about it you know, I don't think that I would do it again.

V: I know, I know.

S: You had to be young, you really did and you know what life was going to bring you. So you just that was part of it. Really you didn't know. I think ignorance was bliss really. I think that you would have been even more homesick if you realized that, you know, you were only going to see your parents once a year. I can't say that I felt that way. You know, I though that my parents would always be there, but they really weren't. So . . .

V: Yes, you learn those things as you get older, I think.

S: You do, as you get older.

V: Let me go back over some of my notes. You stayed in school and got your "O" levels?

S: I did, and then I went to the technical college (V makes encouraging sounds).

V: When did you come over here? 1967? And you were born just at the end of the war, but you have some memories of, I believe that you shared with me, of the rationing and everything?

S: Oh yes, I think after the war, we didn't know any different, but when you look back at it and you hear Americans talk about it, to them gasoline rationing was so horrible. They have no idea of the visions, even as a child, you have visions of putting rationing books on the co-op counter and getting a bunch of bananas. You know, they are absolutely flabbergasted, that "you mean you couldn't get bananas, you couldn't get oranges." I said "No." And I didn't understand why. It's only when you go back and get an education that really, I sure other people will tell you, that in the British school system they did not teach you about the Second World War, even though it was immediate, recent history. I found out why. Many of the teachers we had, particularly the men, because most of them were men, were pretty much . . . these were the veterans of the second war, these were the young flyers; these were the young engineers. For many of them, I even had a German teacher who was actually a German and she lived in Germany during the Second World War, for them they were still healing and to have to retell about the Second World War, we never covered it. We only got up to the Depression. We never covered World War Two in the fifties.

V: That's true. I remember, I thought because we started at 1066 and it took us so long to get up to the next nine hundred years.

S: Only when I got to college and I actually met one of the history professors who was teaching at the college at that time did he sort of kind of make comments about, he was the navigator, you know. He was the one, the finder, who found where the bombs would go. You know for them, for many of them, they were still recovering. They never had counseling. My father and others who went through horrible things never had any sort of counseling. You know they were probably in post traumatic stress syndrome for some time. And I think a lot of that recent history, again was just never covered until we finally got to this country and you started to study American history and you got up to more recent times, did you sort of get the sense of what really took place. The 'News of the World' I started as a teenager maybe, getting some ideas in the sixties, because by then people were getting ready to talk, and started to tell the stories in their newspapers. And you had your local ones from your aunts and uncles and your family but it was always the good things and they never ever touched on anything very negative. They never did! It was always the good times like well when we got married, when we got together, we got a ham; somebody bought a keg of beer, somebody else gave their rations for this. You know it was not . . . never the horrible things that took place.

I found with education a lot of things didn't get kind taught to us. We got it from a different angle. I remember taking GCEs and they would always ask the "name the five things the British that, why the British lost the colonies." You know, could almost spout them off, you know they were it was the guerilla war, they were far away from home, they had Hessian soldiers, mercenaries. You never got the American point of view. So I was very pleased when I did go to college here, they gave me American history. We had it completely from a very different angle.

V: Interesting, how very interesting! You never shared that before.

S: No probably not.

V: I had never heard that or thought that before. That is a very interesting perspective.

S: It is and you didn't realize it till even afterwards. You know, when you're going through that process here. It's only talking to people, even at work, about their childhood and mine, are quite different, very very different. We might be about the same age, but it's totally different because of those war years. Those years when you do have those images, you do remember the black outs when the lights would go out, when there was rationing with the cocoa and the oranges. The Christmas gifts were Cadbury's chocolate was just to die for.

V: You talked about rolling blackouts before.

S: It was a rolling blackout. It would be like a Monday Wednesday or er! Tuesday, Thursday. I think it was about bedtime, seven o'clock; it would go off till about five or six in the morning. You literally would huddle around one room, around one fireplace really, or a nice oil lamp or anything that you could get that would give you a bit of light. You literally, in order to get us to go to bed, my parents would give me a cocoa, an Ovaltine or a Cadbury's chocolate drink. That's what they would give us and again, my brother and I would have our own little mug. I remember the Cadbury's mugs and the Ovaltine mug. We had one of those. If we asked for extra, because that's just kids, I remember the answer because she always gave us a choice, "If you have a second cup today that means that at the end of the month you will have none." So we had to decide and I am sure that at times I must have had a second cup. Now my brother no, he probably didn't! Me, I would have wanted that second cup! But that was the choice, you didn't have any choice. My mother would always say to us, the bedroom set, they had all their life, in fact my brother finally got rid of just after my father died," That's not the best. It's war issue." Whenever you bought anything during the Second World War, whether it was a wedding ring, or furniture or anything, or even after the war, even toys, it was war issue and that meant it was second class. The wood everything was not the best.

V: That makes sense!

S: It did, it did! They didn't have anything, they really didn't. I mean, growing up in the fifties, they would take your school uniform and the white shirts and turn over the cuffs because if they got frayed, then you would just turn them over and you would use them again. Children here just have no concept whatsoever. They really should have . . . I think we're getting back to it, I think we will be getting back to it. Not on the scale that we had it during the fifties and I mean, we just didn't grow up with the comforts that they had here. And that was the big difference. Coming from America to . . . coming to America everything seemed bigger and better. They had everything here. The grocery stores, I had never seen such stuff in grocery stores. It was mind-boggling on a Saturday morning to walk around a grocery store. I honestly didn't know half the things in the store. I didn't know what they were, and I certainly didn't know how to cook them.

V: No, I had the same problem! I didn't know how to make chili or potato salad or any of those things that my husband thought he wanted to eat.

S: I had some really disasters with watermelon. I gave my husband the rind. I didn't know how to prepare a watermelon.

V: You gave him the rind?

S: Well, the only melon that I had seen was a cantaloupe or honeydew, and you scoop out the seeds. So when I saw the watermelon I cut out all where all the seeds were. He had said how wonderful it was, you know watermelon. It was about seventy degrees, we lived on a third-floor apartment, hot sticky day, He had walked home in a three-piece suit, and I thought, I'll give him that watermelon. Got it all ready and put the watermelon on a plate and then of course, I had eaten it and I thought how horrible it was. Then he asked me, in those days he called me "Hun," he said, "Hun, what did you do with the red stuff?" I said, "Ooh, I threw it away with the seeds." He said "Uh-huh!" After that I knew what a watermelon was. I had no one to ask. No cookbook, I had a cookbook for two, a Betty Crocker, but I didn't have anything that was sort of . . . anything that was going to tell me how to prepare a watermelon. I did the best I could.

V: How did you meet your husband?

S: I met him when I was at college. He showed up at the college. Well, the only thing in town on a Monday night was a folk group that met at the back-room of the Black Dog Tavern. So when he came in to town, because he didn't know anybody, he had been in England not too long. He was not on an American airbase. He was out a microwave site; there were only six or seven Americans. So he went into town and asked what is there on a Monday night, 'cause it was his day off and they said the only thing going on in town is at the Black Dog Tavern. They've got a group of students and sometimes they have an entertainment. We would . . . sometimes people would just get up on a soapbox and sing folk songs in the early sixties and when we did have someone who was known we'd have a little collection, you know, and charge a shilling or two shillings to get in at the door to pay that person to sing. So he turned up and I think I sat in front of him. When he went to that student thing we were there to celebrate someone who was graduating, who was leaving. They had a wonderful job with a shoe designer. They just got this wonderful job so we were all there. It was packed, absolutely packed. That was the only thing going on.

It was the only time . . . and I didn't believe him when he said that he was an American because he didn't look like one. He didn't look like one; he had an English tweed coat on. He wanted to blend in. He really didn't, really didn't. And then of course, we never got married, because he finished up going to Turkey for three months. I never would have been married if they hadn't taken him away for three months. It would have been like my parents said, "Oh! They're here today, they're gone tomorrow, those Yanks. You don't want to get mixed up with those because they're here today, gone tomorrow!" And sure enough it was about right, you know, because one day he was in Turkey. He got a twenty-four hour notice to go to Turkey, to an air-force base. Then he got back again.

So he came back again like a bad penny, you know, after that when you miss somebody. Originally, no, we would never been married if it hadn't been for that.

V: And you didn't understand what the commitment was to come to America and spend the rest of your life here?

S: Not really, no! I can't say that. No, I never really gave it that much thought. I really didn't. I think when you're young you think you're going to leave anyway. You've had a life anyway, but you don't realize how important that family community is. When you've grown up knowing everybody around you, and they've known who your aunties, uncles and grandparents and suddenly you're here and you know no one and they're all foreigners to you. You know, you've never met . . . we had one black person who lived in the village. We had one or two people who were Polish, who had kind of fought during the Second World War; Austrian woman who had married a British man. I hadn't really known people from other cultures even. It was very strange, you know. You didn't even . . . you knew few Catholics. I mean, I married a Catholic which was pretty much hardly ever done. People were protestant. I had to have one witness only who was catholic. The other had to be a Baptist and I had to ask the priest for permission to have the Baptist as a witness because I didn't know two Catholics and I would have had to pull them in off the street.

V: My mother was an Irish Catholic and met my father while she was living in England but we went home to Ireland every summer. Home, we called it home, my mother always called it home. She's say, "We got the tickets, we're going home; we're going home." She'd be so excited.

S: Yes, it's always home!

V: Yes, there was a small minority of English Catholics. I really wonder how the Catholic schools survived when I think back because my father's family was very pro Church of England.

S: Yes, I know. Yet they were so close when you think about it and how stupid it was, really. It really was very very different and you were very sheltered, I think and our parents sheltered us, all the children of the war. They did. They didn't want any thing to happen to them like they'd experienced. It wasn't really doing us a favor; on the other hand I think were adult enough to that we would have been able to cope. I think everything they did was to make life better, and even in America I found people didn't really talk much about the Second World War.

V: I'm not sure it affected them too much over here.

S: Not the civilians. They had no idea! They have no idea what it was like when we had to go into bomb shelters. I remember as a kindergartener going into bomb shelters and the musty smell because papers were stored there and then the light went out. We screamed the person next to me screamed so loud. I think a lot of my claustrophobia that I've had

goes back to those days when we were in those dark and dingy places and so frightened. They don't have a clue here. Thank goodness they don't. You wouldn't want a whole generation of people to have that, but I think coming here you had to assimilate. The good thing is I didn't get the "Wants." I think, I feel very sorry so some people who come who want this and want that, they've got to have everything! It didn't bother me if I didn't have what everybody else had. I felt uncomfortable with people because I think Americans back there in the sixties and seventies were saying, "Oh you don't have this, you don't have that" It was a very much catch-up thing that people did. But, I think, being British and have the upbringing we did I think it made us much much better when it came to managing our money, managing our life really. We didn't fall into that kind of trap. Yes!

V: I know you told me, you had mentioned and I made notes on going out to buy cotton (which was American thread).

S: Oh that's it. Yes, we spoke the language, but we really didn't, we weren't understood! And that was again, a thing that takes quite a long time to sort of fit into that culture. I could communicate, heaven only knows what people do who can't; it must be so frustrating. I think that's why they stay . . . My mother-in-law was French/Canadian, that's why she stayed near a French community because she could go and shop and talk to people in her own language. To go out and understand other people it must have been very difficult.

V: What brought them to America?

S: Jobs, just jobs. I think my father-in-law was the youngest of a young family and a lot of the other half brothers and sisters and his brothers had come down and had down well. In fact they are all doing well, in fact the whole family had down extremely well. Even my husband's brothers and sisters, they have all made out very well. They are all bi-lingual. It was French in the home and that was difficult for me because I really didn't speak French. They tried to sort of talk English around you but it wasn't easy. It wasn't easy for my daughter because when her grandparents tried to help her with spelling and other things it was horrific. You know.

V: Your daughter was born in England?

S: Yes, we stayed there because we wouldn't have had any medical insurance back then. You had to be insured for nine months. Plus, my husband had to come out of the military to find work and it took a couple of months before he . . . I stayed over there because we didn't have anywhere . . . well we would have had a place to live, his father had owned quite a few apartments. Eventfully my husband being too proud wouldn't rent from his father, but his uncle also had apartments and that's who we rented from.

V: So he came over here and found a job, but you stayed in England to have your baby?

S: That was the agreement that I would not come. My parents were concerned enough that I would not come. They did not want me to come if we didn't have a place to live and we didn't have some support. It would have worried them to death if I'd have come and we didn't have any support. In those days you couldn't get welfare, even though he was an American citizen. You really couldn't. He didn't get unemployment because he had some military pay that because of Vietnam, they were so short of people he could never take his military time off. So he could collect his military pay. So he came back, he was lucky he came back and found a job with a computer company. That was the only job he had, so he found that job, but again he didn't get paid for a month. So I came over when he had the job, when he said he was starting work and had the job.

V: So how old was your baby?

S: Oh! She was only a few months old.

V: That was hard for your parents to see you leave with the baby too then?

S: Very hard and my mother came the next year. She came to visit us next year for a month. It broke her heart!

V: I'm sure it would have. It doesn't bear thinking about.

S: We did okay, we did well. It wasn't easy. Someone is trying to get you I think.

V: No that's okay, No I think it's your end. Is someone trying to reach you? Would it be easier if I tried to call you back?

S: No maybe it is mine. I am expected to go out. I have someone who is coming we are supposed to be going out for lunch today.

V: Then let me let you go. Would this evening be a good time?

S: I think we're going out this evening too, but later this afternoon would be good after 3pm.

V: Okay, I will try you then goodbye.

LATER

V: This is Vanessa getting back to you from yesterday. I would like to talk about the formal education that you got when you came to America and why you felt like you needed some further education.

S: Oh I think so, there were definitely gaps. It was totally different really in many respects to what we get. I think ours is a bit more thorough in the grounding.

V: Do you think it is a bit more classical?

S: Oh yes, I think so! Definitely, especially sort of in the . . . what they called it geography not social studies. Things that were . . . you know, we did get a good Phys Ed education too, which I think here it was very selective. People who got on to teams and so forth. In Britain they had more of an intramural spirit, where you competed amongst your school mates.

V: Did you go to a co-ed school?

S: Yes, it was a secondary modern school. I didn't go to a Grammar school. You were very much segregated, where boys and girls went on their own playground and didn't really mix. You didn't really mix until you were outside of school. So it was very much segregated. You had a headmaster headmistress. It was very disciplined. Everybody came out cloned. You know were all cloned the same, pretty much! So I think generally, they tried to give you a good all round education, but I think here you tended to, from what I've seen from the children in high school, you did go the same or similar path. Because I know to get my GCE I had to take a test. Though as teen, because I didn't pass 11+ to go to the Grammar school, but at thirteen they gave you another test. But apparently they learned that children do catch up. At thirteen they had a huge number of children who could have gone to grammar school. So that's why in our school, I think we were about the second class that took GCEs. Now it's a different track all together. You see, years ago in the fifties you would never have the possibility of taking GCEs if you hadn't have gone to a grammar school. I think that's why they have such good mechanics and such good sort of trade people in Britain, because these were the people who never did go on to college, but they did have a skill. So I was lucky to be in one of those groups really. I supposed they did it right after the Second World War.

V: No the 11+ was given during the war, I think so.

S: I think they did bring in the 13+ whatever and that's when we had our . . . because they always put you into different groups, you know, As or Bs. That's when they kind of put us into that group that would continue with school. Everybody left at fifteen, except a couple of classes. So we were in that group that went on until you were seventeen.

V: And you were already going to college in England when you met your husband?

S: Oh yeah! I was already there. Yes, I was.

V: And you decided to pursue it further when you came to the United States?

S: When I came, yes. Not for a few years because I was home. But I did go back into the work force, kind of part-time. I would say it must have been in my thirties really. I tried to get more education, but I really didn't understand the system and I had nobody here to advise me. I really needed some advice and in those days I didn't have the sort of guts to go to a college and get the advice. In those days I'd talk to people on the telephone and

tried to get more education and I really didn't make myself understood and finally it wasn't until, I did . . . I was working . . . yes, I was working, and somebody else it was an older person I met, who was going . . . she was going to get a Bachelors degree and it was taking her ten years. She only took one class at a time and she was the one who really gave me the information because she said that it would be . . . for me to go fill in the gaps and see what they would give me for what I had. So that's what I did. I went and I took some tests as well. They did place you. So I kind of got into it that way really. In a way I almost drifted into what I was doing it was never planned. It wasn't a sort of planned way back to school. I sort of drifted into it.

V: And you got into training and development.

S: Yes, that's right eventually. I went down the general path. What did I get? A Bachelors of Science I think it was in General Admin in the end, but then I went into more training and development, into that field. I sort of got that by chance. I bumped into people who . . . I had an old Wang machine, not Wang, Xerox and a salesman said to me, "if I don't send somebody to show people at one of the banks here how to use the equipment, they pretty much told me I could take it all back." So that's how I got into part-time training of adults and then I did, I taught the Wang, and then I got into PCs in '86. So really I had almost twenty five years of computers.

V: And your short-hand typing? The certification you got in England, did it do you any good over here?

S: It did, but it's like a dinosaur. Shorthand was something . . . everyone was losing those skills. They didn't need them; they were doing dictation. So I did practice transcribing, but even that got into a dinosaur! So that's when I went into the computers because it was like my shorthand I became a dinosaur with that, my transcription you became a dinosaur with that. You really had to evolve and change as your went through and that's how I got into computers. I was fortunately my husband was into them. So I did understand what computers were, but if I didn't change you became redundant.

V: That's right. And along the way you took out your American citizenship too?

S: I did. Ten years it took me. After ten years I did. A lot of girls still don't have it.

V: I know that. I think that there is some perception maybe that . . .

S: They've got one foot over there.

V: Yes, that they are sill more English, or something. And some of them draw English pensions too!

S: We have several girls that do. If you had . . . I didn't work for ten years but many of them I think you had to qualify by contributing for ten years. But a lot of people left school at fifteen and they contributed for some ten years.

V: And some of them paid their stamp while they were over here in order to be entitled to that.

S: I'm just going to change to another phone . . .

V: So there are some girls in your club that draw their British pensions now?

S: They do, yes, they're quite a few. There must be people, some of them who went to work at fifteen, so they got ten years or almost ten years into the system. You had to have worked ten years I think.

V: Ten years, that's a long time.

S: Yes it is. Some of them do. They do. Actually there are quite a few who do, who get their pension. Yes, about every three months, I think, they get a check, arrives from the U.K. They said, you had to apply when you turned sixty, because in Britain at sixty, you got a pension, a woman did. So they had to apply at sixty. If you apply after that you don't get any back pension, but I wouldn't have had enough quarters, or what ever.

V: Yes, that's right. You've got to have so many quarters. I don't know how many that is. So talking about your arrival in America, what were your expectations? How did your husband prepare you for life over here?

S: He didn't! I can't say that he did. No! Really, he really didn't. He didn't tell me. To him, you know, it wasn't any different. In Britain he wasn't really with Americans. So he . . . he had time to live the way the British did. He didn't live on base. So he got more of the picture of how the British lived, but I don't think he realized how different it would be for me. I really don't think he did. He really didn't prepare me for that. At all! In a way I am glad he didn't because, I think, you know, you'd think twice about it. If you really knew how it was going to be. I think you might have been . . . it would have been worse. This way you kind of made the best of what you had. They way you were and what you had. You knew you couldn't just go back to Britain just like that. No!

V: No, you couldn't! Did you drive when you first got over here?

S: No, No, not for a year. I had my British license. We didn't have a car for about . . . how much, ooh! About nine months, we didn't have a car. We saved our money. My husband walked from our apartment to work and back and when we wanted to shop and so forth, my father-in-law would pick us up. So we didn't have a car, but when we did get a car we moved about three months after we got a car we got out to the suburbs. That's when we got our house. Even there, I bet I took almost another, that was in winter time, it was probably by . . . I know about summer time I went down . . . It was probably another six months before I got my license. I was petrified of the highways. I had only seen the MI in Britain, all 65 miles of highway. The rest of it was on like the A45, you know a two lane road. So when I saw the highway that was like four lanes, I was absolutely petrified to get on and off these on and off ramps! So I'd go the back road. My husband,

he would be next to me, but I'd go to the next town and I would take the back road. I didn't want to take the highway. I felt much more comfortable. So finally when I did get my drivers license they never even took me on the road. I passed the written test and I'll never forget it, the gentleman said to me, he said "Do you have a British license?" I said yes, and showed it to him and he said, "Well, go upstairs and get your driver's license." I was absolutely dreading going on the road and they never took me! They gave me a license based on my British license and passing the written test.

V: My goodness! You were living in the suburbs without any transportation. And a child.

S: Yes, with a child. Well usually, but we only had one car, so really I couldn't go anywhere. We had one car for about three to four years like that. My husband would come home and I would take the car, but very rarely did I go anywhere without him. I probably joined the English club, and that was probably the place that I went without my husband when I was driving.

V: And did you find a group pretty soon after you got her?

S: Very quickly! I would say within eight months.

V: How did you find the TBPA?

S: Word of mouth! Somebody who knew I was English knew somebody else who belonged to this English group and gave my phone number to that person who then called me, and that's how I joined the group. Word of mouth! Just somebody mentioning that other English people! I didn't really know about . . . I knew about the organization because my mother belonged to one in England. That was the only way for them to get to America less expensively because they had to belong to these travel groups. Charter groups they were, and that's how she came too, through . . . there was another organization different to TBPA. I can't remember what it was. It was for parents of girls who had gone . . .

V: I think that's how TBPA started though originally. The parents got cheap flights to come to America.

S: And I flew on those for a while, until the charter business pretty much dropped off. The laws changed. That was a wonderful way to travel. It really was.

V: That must have been quite easy from the east coast to get to England.

S: It was, very easy. We were very lucky to be able to travel like that. I think . . . I don't what other people did, but it must have been horrible to have to . . . The journey must have been horrible too because I found it was bad enough just going from New York, you know. It was less from Boston, I go from Boston it's been five and a half hours sometimes. It's thirty minutes less from Boston than it is New York. Unbelievable, but it is. So that's why I love to go to Boston.

V: Did you go home much with your daughter? Did you take her home?

S: Pretty much. What my parents did, they would always pay for my daughter's fare. So generally it was about every other year, because if they came to see me then I would go the following year. So till my daughter was about eight, then what I did was, she spent the summer then when she was eight and nine.

V: How lovely. Did she have cousins there?

S: No, no, but there were lots of children around. So it was good, but I was very nervous about it, but I was glad I did it. She was a little bit afraid, but it was good. I wish I could have done it more often, but my mother became ill so I really had to go. At that point then I was going every year for quite a few years. I went every year. In fact I changed my job so that I could. I worked in the school system ten months a year, so that I had the summer months to be able to go and I was lucky to do that.

V: You were, you were very lucky, because I think that's one of the worries all of us had was aging parents and being so far away.

S: It is a worry and you still feel guilty. I don't think the guilt will ever leave you because you kind of left their care giving to other people. You couldn't be there. Even the time you spent there you really weren't contributing very much. You know, it was just reassuring for that month that you were there it really did change their life very much because you couldn't, because you weren't the solution. They really could have done with an extra pair of hands to be there all the time. It was good. I don't regret it. I could have probably bought another house with the money I've spent crossing the Atlantic, but I really don't regret that. I think then, once again, when you leave you really don't realize the implications.

V: Then once again, when you think back, how would your life have been different had you not met and married an American and came to America?

S: Well, I think it probably would have been a lot more routine, the way my mother's life would have been. It would have been much more . . . I think I would have been much more of a homemaker. I'll never forget it, when I did take a job and got out in the workforce, my friends in Britain were somewhat envious because they sort of envied me for that. Women didn't go to work in Britain back in the seventies. They really didn't. If you had children you were pretty much at home. If you did work, all of my friends who I have my friends with children who were married with children, none of them worked full time. None of them! They pretty much stayed as homemakers. They didn't, in Britain they didn't go on to get education any more than high school. The ones with education were the ones who went to college in Britain. They got their degrees in Britain, but the traditional role for women was pretty much, if you had children you stayed home, or if you did anything you were like the dinner lady. You worked part-time. The only ones who did seem to work full time were those who were divorced and had children to

support. So I think it would have been very different. It would have been much more family-oriented than I think it is in America.

V: Yes, the families are so scattered over here. Everyone is so very far apart.

S: Very, and you are not connected. Even if they live close by everyone else is so busy, you know. Even in this country I find, that there is one person with a large family like my husband comes from who does everything and everyone else is willing to let them do it.

V: Yes

S: Yes, very willing. Sort of . . . so it is different. I think it would have been quite different. I think I would have probably been curious about other places. I think the British developed that travel thing in the late sixties and seventies and seem to pop up everywhere.

V: I think that the country got a little bit more affluent and the weather was never conducive to take holidays in England. Even if you went down to Devon or Cornwall you couldn't count on a nice weekend. My aunties had cottages in Great Yarmouth area

S: Oh yes, it's cold on the east coas. It's cold!

V: Yes, and even then you couldn't count on it being nice.

S: No. no, no. Oh I know we had a caravan and it was like, Oh God you never went anywhere without your sweater.

V: Oh no, no! Absolutely not! So I think the affluence and the climate have driven people to Spain and places like that where it was cheap and the weather was nice and they could be guaranteed of a week of sunshine.

S: and that's all they asked and that's all they ask now. We are going to the Caribbean in March. It's a British ship and my brother is meeting us in Miami and it's the same thing when you meet people from the U.K., who are on the cruises, that's what they say. They know they are going to get good weather and that's what they are there for. It's their holiday. It's very important to them. I think we work much harder in this country. It's funny and we don't put that importance to that annual vacation that they do. It's always been very important to them that they take that annual vacation regardless of the economy. My father was always, "Well, we always get at least one week's vacation. The second week, well if it's been a good year we'll get two, but at least we'll get one week somewhere." And maybe the second week we might visit a relative. It was still important to have your vacation. Here people work; I mean they grab a long weekend, that's it.

V: We do, we do.

S: It's a cultural difference.

V: Do your friends and family in England consider you more Americanized?

S: Very much! Yes, yes! Very much so! “You’re very Americanized!” Even before my father died, “Oh you’re real American now!” You know, they do.

V: What are the characteristics that they define as being real American? What is it?

S: Well, I think you are more . . . um! Well, you’re more, a little more outspoken, a little more worldly on things. Where they’re . . . they’ve sort of . . . I think that tends to be because you do get out in the work force more.

V: Good point!

S: Whereas they do not. They’re not sort of into a career of any kind. They have jobs where they might . . . one of them in particular who was very very bright when we were in school, but she works for one of the gyms for years and years and years. Good Physical Ed, but you know, that was part-time job where she would go and she’d work in the gym. And I think they don’t sort of . . . its very parochial. You know they would stay home, stay-at-home mum, pick the children up, have a little part-time job. Socially they just didn’t kind of participate much like you would if you were working here, and you were working, working full time. So you tend to socialize with people from work and different groups and I think you do become more . . . you’ve got . . . you’re individual, whereas over there everything revolves around their family and the children. You might have your children, but you belong to other things too. You might go to the gym but you’d also go out with different groups as well. People from work, we would get together as groups. I don’t think they have that social interaction.

V: That is a very interesting perspective. You really have good insight to some of these things. I know some of these things people know and accept it, but are not able to verbalize it.

S: No, no, but I’ve notice that! And I have also noticed . . . I work with immigrant women and that’s where . . . I am probably going to retire at the end March and they are going to give us the golden handshake. I think I would work with . . . I have worked with immigrant women in a woman’s college, where they wanted to give them some career training but it was a federal program too. It came from the feds as well. When I worked with them they were from places like Somalia or Vietnamese. I worked with Vietnamese as well. I’ve worked with abused women here.

I have found that many of these women who come in, what they lack, especially if they are foreign born, they lack the social network. They are very much alone! They are just looking for someone to understand them. Understand what the loneliness of being home with children, but their husbands are getting their English skills because they are out in the job market, whereas these women are almost shut-ins, and yet they are very bright. I had one journalist from Somalia who was extremely bright, but her verbal skills, her written skills held her back. So I think, here in this country, if you can get out there

you do have that chance, you really do assimilate and become a person, rather than an attachment to your husband or your family and I think that what coming here does for a lot of women. If they can do it, if they can get out there, you become your own person. I don't know if it is good for the husbands, or if they really liked it, I know my husband probably didn't. (Laughter) I'm sure he didn't because you become much more worldly! You are not dependent.

V: That's very insightful!

S: Yes, I think that's a lot to say about this country! On the more positive side of this country really, the good thing is what it has done for a lot of women.

V: Really?

S: Probably something they would never have been in Britain. The expectations in Britain, my expectations were so low because I didn't expect that I could be anything different or do anything different. I was quite accepting to do what everyone else was going to do and be a housewife.

V: You had no other role model!

S: You didn't! No, one of two people! I had an aunt who had her own business. You really didn't! But you couldn't expect to be. Now in Britain, I think there are more women who are getting to that point where they got a career of their own.

V: I think that the divorce rate has increased too and there are more women in that position where they have to support their families.

S: That's true. They got pushed into it really. But back in the sixties your expectations, even coming here, was to support your husband, you know. I mean it was something that you did together. But I think here, the women's movement really did sort of help women, especially British women coming here, because I think they too got the opportunity that they probably would not have had in Britain. It was probably slower for tradition to change. The one good thing about the British is that they figured nine to three were mum's hours, and I think life was easier for a woman if she did want to work in Britain, than it ever was here or is here. I think you work twice as hard as woman if you've got a job here because you are expected to be the homemaker too and that what you struggle to do.

V: And you make the same commitment as a man does to his job and his hours and you . . .

S: Yes, and you get paid less, much less. Just take social security, how much women get . . . so much less than men. And you have to wait until your husband dies to get his, it's horrible, horrible!

V: What changes have you seen in England since you left?

S: Oh lots of changes. I think we have become very much more Americanized! You've never gone to London . . . In fact I told my husband when we went back to a theater he had to get changed and dressed, to my surprise we showed up and he looked very nice and neat with his jacket on and the people in front of us had blue jeans and a leather jacket. That would never have happened. There were people there with bow-ties and everything. Well, it ran the gamut. You know protocol has kind of changed quite a bit, the stuffiness has gone.

V: Yes, the formal!

S: Much less, much more relaxed. The Hollywood movies certainly did. They tried to emulate that as well. I think that was the big change. The biggest change that I have noticed I think in the last ten or twelve years, how cosmopolitan Britain has become, especially London. It's unbelievable how it has changed with the immigration policy. You never saw anyone from, very rarely would you ever encounter anyone living in Britain, who was from any other country. There was only one black person who lived in the village. In school, not even a handful of people from other countries, and now I think you go in it is much more multicultural, it's more diverse. Even the BBC, you could never had gotten on the BBC unless you spoke with a plum in your mother and had perfect, perfect diction. Now they will take Irish, they will take . . .

V: I think that they thrive on the accents, don't they?

S: They do, they do!

V: The North Country accent, or the Irish accent or something like that.

S: It was never acceptable for years and years. And you were literally looked down upon if you had an accent and now I find that there is one thing that is much more acceptable, there are a lot more interracial marriages, you never had before. But you also have, I think, through the socialism you see the bad things too, where half of Britain is not working. Half these people are on social, what they call social I guess it's welfare.

V: Yes, yes.

S: I don't know the system seems to have been high-jacked. I don't know where they are headed! They are not headed in a good direction.

V: And socialized medicine is a concern! I know that a lot of my friends and family carry private insurance too.

S: It's a problem, they do, they have to because if you wait for their medical system you are pretty much dead. Because I know my cousin had colon cancer and he was sick and he wasn't working and it took for ever before they gave him a colonoscopy and, pretty

much they delayed it and delayed it. He finished up losing his colon. He went to treatment and they gave him this experimental drug and the only reason they caught it, from what my brother was telling me, was because they messed up and waited too long, when they should have moved a lot quicker. Sadly he didn't survive, whereas I think in this country things would have moved much quicker.

V: Absolutely! I do know my cousin was told during the war he needed a tonsillectomy and of course, it was never done during the war. They contacted him twelve years later. He was a grown man and married at that point, to see about his tonsillectomy which was considered non-essential surgery.

S: He was on the waiting list.

V: Yes, on the waiting list for twelve years.

S: Good grief. The good thing about America if you have medical coverage is the fact that you do get good medical attention and much more on the preventive side. I know that in Britain, my brother said, they don't do a lot of preventive treatment. It does make sense

V: As a paying customer you have the right to ask questions and the right to make certain demands and I told them today, "If you are moving my husband I want a tour of the facility that you're planning on moving him to."

S: Of course you do. Because eventually, I mean, you are the one who is paying for it even if the insurance might be, you are the one originally who is paying for it. I know I am going through breast cancer right now. I had good results on my surgery they found nothing in the lymph system. They removed the tumors, but there was nothing in the surrounding tissues.

V: Congratulations.

S: Now, that was good. I bet by the time I finish radiation by the end of May, I bet this will be \$100,000.00.

V: Oh! Yes, yes I am sure it will, easily!

S: I tell you something, I've had so many doctors, MRIs, I've had and you've never have got all this attention in Britain. All because the mammogram, which was scheduled for every year, for twenty-three years I had one, and the one this past November showed suspect, it was abnormal and that's how they found it. And I mean the doctors I've been through, and will still going to be going through; I don't think I would ever have got to that level in Britain at all. No!

V: No! I don't think so.

S: No. So we are lucky to be here. You know, I think that's one good thing about it and sadly this is one of the worst countries if you don't have medical coverage.

V: Yes, that's true too.

S: Yes, it is sad because I couldn't go through this not knowing that I didn't have choice, I would be berserk! I can't imagine that you're signing away, you have to sign everything. Well you probably know, every piece of paper they have if its not 'who's responsible for this bill,' You'd be signing your life away. But that is the big difference, if you have regular routine in Britain you've got good access to medical and you can see a doctor because you go on a doctor's registrar. So I don't know, we could have a hybrid system here that could probably work. Well. I think we probably could. We're smart enough to work something out.

V: Yes, Oh I think so too. Well, I do appreciate you taking the time to talk to me again. I do wish you all the best with the follow up of your . . .

S: You too. I hope that your husband is good when gets back home.

V: There was an article that I read in the paper today about why they don't keep sick people in the hospital. It's because they can get sicker in the hospital.

S: Much sicker, that's why I have an English lady who's had that happen to her. She dreads going into the hospital. Each time, it's not the operation it's what happens. That's why even when I went in for surgery, it was day surgery. They were going to keep me the last time because my pulse was so low. Finally, at that point, I didn't care if they did or they didn't, I wanted to feel better. My friend said you really want to get out of there as quickly as you can. You don't know what you're going to bring home with you and you are going to heal better if you can get home. So they did let me go home, but it's a nightmare!

V: Thank you for sharing so much with me, you have been so helpful.

Transcription of phone conversation with Tina

V: Tina, this is Vanessa. Hi! I appreciate your filling out my survey. When I picked this topic that I thought people would embrace and share their stories and I just found that a lot of people are very resistant to responding to me and going very deep with their own stories. I started with some basic demographics and I am really looking for . . . what I am trying to do is look at cultural assimilation and how people assimilated into the American culture. Do you understand what I am looking at? So I thought that I would start with a local group of English girls. I would like to meet with you, but if that is not possible I would just like to talk to you on the phone. Now let me see. You're the one who came over as a nanny, right?

T: Right!

V: So you did pretty much what I did, because I came to visit my sister and met my husband on a blind date and stayed and married him. You came in '58?

T: Yes!

V: So, one of the things that I think affected the children and I know that it affected my cousins was the war interrupted your education. In a lot of cases, children were evacuated or incorporated other kids into their school, or were interrupted with air raid sirens. Did you have any of those experiences?

S. We were evacuated, but we were evacuated with my mother, because we lived in the southern part of England.

V: Oh my goodness, right on the coast.

T: Yes, so that is where the Germans, if they came from France, would come, all along the coast. They took us out and took us to Wales.

V: Wow, My grand-dad had a cottage and my mother went up there for a while with the children. You were evacuated to Wales, was that a culture shock?

T: Well, I don't know. I was so young. You know, I know that we lived in the country before.

V: You don't remember any Welsh speaking people? (Makes encouraging sounds)

T: No, not in our area. There were no men. There were old men, boys, the minister, vicar, and I think the doctor and that was about it. Everything else was women.

V: And did you go to school in Wales?

T: Yes. I went to school in Wales and then my brother went to school, my brother was born in Wales actually. Ah and then oh I don't know what year, about '43 they brought in Italians prisoners of war.

V: Oh my goodness!

T: Suddenly, everywhere there were these good looking men, that the women had not seen any men, you know, in going on four years (V makes encouraging sounds to continue) and then I had a sister who was born. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! She was born in '44. My dad did not come home to very late in '45.

V: Oh! Okay!

T: As far as we know it was an Italian, we don't know for sure, but it had to be because otherwise they were too old or too young. And you don't know when you were like my age then. I was two when the war started and then when the war was over I was five, six, seven, eight.

V: Did you ever discuss this with your mother? That must have been . . .

T: No not really. She was my sister, my sister. That was it. Never did ask my mother anything about it. (V makes encouraging sounds). I know that my father adopted her as soon as he could. But then when my dad . . . we moved back to our town and moved in with my grandma. There were no homes; then the council found us a place.

V: Was your dad injured at all?

T: No. He was in Africa, Burma and Ceylon, Bombay and all those places (V makes encouraging sounds). He was in Africa. When we moved into our own place I had another sister that was born from my dad in '46. April '46, and after that my mum and dad's marriage just went down the tube.

V: I think it was hard for men coming back!

T: Well Yes, because he wanted to be this boss and she had been the boss for eight years.

V: There is a power struggle when the men came back. I don't think it was uncommon for divorces to happen when the men came back.

T: In those days there was no help so my mum just left us.

V: Your mum left you?

T: She just left us!

V: Oh! My goodness!

T: My sisters were 2, 4, my brother was 7 and I was 11.

V: Goodness, you were the oldest one? Did you feel responsible for the children?

T: Well yes, I was, my dad and I were together. Doctor's appointments and laundry!

V: Oh my goodness!

T: It was hard because I had to go to school Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

V: And there weren't any washing machines or conveniences like we have today!

T: Scrub boards. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

V: You were living with . . .? No, you had moved into your own home by then?

T: It was our own home, but it was a council house, the council had found a house for us. Returning soldiers' kind of deal! (V makes encouraging sounds again) and then . . .

V: How old were you when you came to America then?

T: 20

V: And you were ready for an adventure or to get away from the responsibility of raising a family?

T: Yes, just to try something new.

V: You didn't intend to stay?

T: No I really didn't

V: I didn't intend to stay either.

T: I didn't have a work visa (V makes encouraging sounds). They gave me a green card in London; they said if I even stayed for two years I would never go back. He said I am not giving you a two-year work permit. He said I am going to give you the two year . . .

V: When he said never go back, he meant never go back to England?

T: Yes, like never return to live. He said that it would be silly to give you something that then you would have to start applying again and he said we would cover all the bases and then I got the green card immediately.

V: Wow!

T: I did not get the work visa. Now I've been married 49 years. We have four children.

V: I still have a teenager at home. My goal is to graduate before he graduates.

T: That's why I got my G.E. D. because I wanted it before my children got their high school diploma.

V: Yes. Yes!

T: I went to the High School and said I have got to get this before my children.

V: Good for you! Good for you! So where did you come to when you first came over here?

T: Midwest.

V: You came right to the Midwest?

T: The family I came to lived in a very exclusive part a large metropolitan city.

V: That must have been a culture shock.

T: Well, they picked me up at the airport in a pink Thunderbird (V chuckles) that had no roof and then we drove . . . you know, the old airport was downtown? Then you know we drove through down town and there I was looking at all of these buildings and to me they were skyscrapers. I never saw . . . I did work in the city of London, but to me they were skyscrapers when we came through downtown. You know 7, 8, 9 stories high.

V: So what were you expecting it to be like? Did you know what to expect?

T: I just . . . you see I had worked for this couple in Paris. (V makes encouraging sounds) And so my thoughts were that the family was good. I was to come over and pick up where we left off and everything would be fine.

V: and was it?

T: Not really 'cause when I was in France we had an Italian maid and I just had to look after the little boy and that's all I had to do. And then we come to the Midwest of America, course there is no transportation.

V: Oh yeah! No, and how did you manage? If you had been in London or any place the public transportation was a godsend to any young woman.

T: Right, and then I lived in Paris with the little boy.

V: and you had the Metro.

T: The Metro and all that stuff. Got to this exclusive part of town and there was nothing. Like on Mondays all the buses would come and the black ladies would get off, and they would be the washing ladies, and on Tuesdays the black ladies would come and they would be the ironers, and on Wednesday the kitchen cleaners would come through up the back, and at my house there was nobody at this house. Ha! Ha! Ha! Just me!

V: Oh you mean in Paris, you're saying?

T: No this was here.

V: Oh, this was here!

T: When I came over. The people that I worked for were in their forties when they got this little boy. He was adopted and they already had a life style (V makes encouraging sounds). When we came back here he was in charge of the jet program. It was just coming in and he worked for a major airline and was in charge of all of the jets that were just being produced. For him it was unbelievable; it was a new era coming in and he was in charge of it. So he had a life and she had a life.

V: Did she work?

T: No, hoity-toity like you know, shopping, lunches and cards . . . she would go back to Paris for a week or two.

V: Was she American?

T: Yes. They were both out of California. She would just leave the little boy and I at the house and we would walk to the nearest shopping area.

V: It must have been . . .

T: She left food, but we had to get milk and bread and stuff like that.

V: It must have been lonely for you.

T: It was . . . I didn't know any . . . I came because I was coming to them and I didn't know any different. I thought it's okay. Then after a year I went to the consulate. There used to be a consulate here in town. (V makes encouraging sounds). British. I only got off every Thursday afternoon and every other Sunday afternoon.

V: Oh my goodness!

T: So I went to the consulate on the Thursday and I asked for a private (V makes encouraging sounds) meeting room and requested that what ever goes on there would be private and "yes, of course, yes, yes, yes." So I said "well, I have a verbal contract to stay two years, there is nothing in writing on either side" "I do not have a ticket to go

home” (V makes encouraging sounds). “I had a green card which means I can stay here and the lady at the house has told me that if left before two years she would have my passport lifted and I would never be able to travel anywhere out of England again.” (V makes encouraging sounds).

I told this to the people or the person and I thought I can find . . . I have somebody who will take me in if it comes to that if it is going to become necessary. I did not say I was leaving or anything. I’ve been trained, so I can get a job and I just wondered what the penalties would be. (V makes encouraging sounds).

They said “Number One, she has no control over your passport. That belongs to you. If you get into any kind of trouble then it can be taken away from you and you can be deported.” So long as you take care of yourself and never ask the government for any help, which is different from what it is from today. My God, they come over and they give them the world, but anyway as long as I didn’t get into any trouble and didn’t ask for any aid they thought that it would be alright for me to leave. I had been there for fourteen months then. (V makes encouraging sounds). I said “I think that I have done a good two years work!”

V: How did you feel about leaving the little boy?

T: Well, that was the thing that kept me there, and I . . . he had not got into school yet it was August. He was getting into school in September. Anyway I called the bus back and when I got off the bus she was waiting on the driveway. She knew everything that had gone on.

V: How?

T: The consulate had called her (V gasps). And they were in bridge, you know, my wife knows your wife deal. That was the final thing of course, and “by Friday I want you out of here.”

V: And did you have someone to take you in or were you just bluffing?

T: I had been going to a Dentist, and I had gotten friendly with this dental technician and . . . she told me one time, you know if it really gets too much I have a box room and if you want to come stay there we can move the stuff out. You can have that. We at least have a single bed in there and she said that the buses come from down town and you can move down to the corner if you get a job down town. So that’s what I did!

She came and picked me up on the Saturday and they took the little boy away for the day. So he never knew that I was leaving or anything. That’s what hurt the most. (V makes encouraging sounds).

V: Did you consider . . . What were your plans to go back to England then?

T: No, by then I had found my way and I just had to take care of myself and I really was just taking it a day at a time. I went downtown; I got a job on my first interview. I lived

with this couple and I babysat for them. I didn't have to pay them pay money. I just had to baby-sit for them when they needed a sitter at night or something like that.

V: Your original job, did they pay you good money? Did you . . .

T: Here? The . . . the family? \$90.00 a month. (V makes encouraging sounds) for well, like it was. One Thursday a week and every other Sunday off. Lot of hours, lot of time. Of course, it was 24 hours around the clock. If you . . . he was 2 when I started, so he was going to be five then when I left. That's the way it was and like I said I did it a day at a time. You know you go with the flow.

V: The fifties over here were a lot more affluent than it was in England. England was still coming out of a depression. So it was much more . . . we certainly didn't have pink Cadillac's driving around England. Even I would have noticed one of those.

T: We were still on food stamps . . . no, rationing till '52. It was a different life.

V: So when you went to work how were your received, perceived by the people. I mean you were probably still very English in your mannerisms and your ways?

T: Oh very English. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! And I got both phone jobs. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Then and one time I had a gentleman call me, not me, called the company and I am answering the phone and he said, "I don't wish to speak to you, give me somebody else. So I got somebody else to take the call and it was a Jewish man and he though that I was German and he said I won't talk to that ***** German and then called me all these nasty names. Then they explained that I wasn't German I was English. Then he talked to me and he was thankful that we had come into the war. (V makes encouraging sounds) So, those are the little things that you forget about.

V: I hope that I haven't made you rake all this up and give you bad dreams tonight.

T: No, no I don't think so.

V: Some of the reading that I have done is about assimilation, when you visibly look like you fit it. You know they could not pick you out in the street because you looked or acted differently and that seems to be very easy to assume. But at what point do you begin to feel like your American? Are you more at home here or in England? Have you taken many trips back to England?

T: No, not very many. Maybe five or six, the last time was '99.

V: What did you think when you got there? Where are you fitting in now? What side of the pond are you fitting in?

T: Over here probably with the kids, you know.

V: Do you have grandchildren.

T: Seven. I have seven, kind of nice (V agrees). Then you meet people and they say “have you ever wanted to go live . . . Would you ever go back there now that you are retired and everything?” I wouldn’t mind going back there for a month and having a place to stay for a month and knowing how to get around and things like that, but I said when I go over there now it like you going over there. The money is different than when we were there.

V: and you became an American citizen?

T: In ’64. We were living in the Midwest and my husband went to work in an adjacent state in ’64.

V: When were the riots, and when did they have Marshall Law?

T: You mean because of the riots, that was later, that was probably about ’68.

V: Were you there then?

T: Yes, yes! I wouldn’t move until I got my papers, my citizen papers. So my husband commuted to his job everyday. And when I got my papers then we moved in January of ’65.

V: What was your reaction to Marshall Law and the race riots? We did not have anything in England like that then.

T: Well, you we live out here in the suburbs, so I don’t think we worried about it. It was something downtown. We had a friend who worked down at the Federal building at that time. The riots had surrounded the federal building and the police had to . . . and the people inside the federal building we not allowed to leave until the next day. And oh! Within the month he and his family had moved away. He said “there is no person on earth who is going to get me treed inside a building in this day and age.”

V: One of the things that you said, when you completed the survey was that you did not meet any one else from England for about 15 years.

T: Well, I didn’t and my children were . . . well, my daughter, not my son . . . my daughter was saying graas and daance and all that.

V: Yes, mine said baath.

T: And they were making fun of her. It was easier to change because she did not go to any pre-school she just went to kindergarten and she was nearly six, when she went because we moved to a new state. See, dates were different here and her birthday was in September. We thought that she was going to go to school when we moved here and we found out that things were different here, because of the laws in the state.

V: Where did you meet your first English person?

T: In the grocery store. It used to be an A&P Store. I was in there one day with four children then and this lady came around the corner and I could see her shopping and she had four children. She was from the north, northern part and we got to talking and we got to talking and that was the first person in fifteen years and I didn't go home for seventeen years.

V: Do you keep in touch with your sisters and brothers? Have they been over here to visit you?

T: My sister came . . . gosh! I can't remember if she has ever been to this house. She came to Florida and we went down to Florida, I think that we did that for three years running. She had lived with her boyfriend for about 22 years and then when they came over that one time he said "how about we get married over there and your sister can come to the wedding?" And she talked to my brother and said "why don't you go to Florida, you know. We are going for six weeks but you can go for one or what ever and you can give me away." Six of us were down in Florida and for the three of us, the two sisters and one brother. It was the first time that we had lived in the same house since 1958. My sister, she had rented a house down there and then we were all in the house. She got married down there.

V: Do they think that you are Americanized?

T: Oh yes!

V: So I don't know what else I want to ask you! How would your life be different if you had not come to America?

T: Oh! I always said if I had not come to America I would probably been in a mental institution . . . because of all the things that were going on within the family. My dad married a lady. It's not funny . . . but you know how you have kids that live on the block and they lived on the opposite corner from us around the block (V makes encouraging sounds) and she had five children. My dad always said "I never want to see you playing with the snotty-nosed kids. Remember that, the snotty nosed kids! Right! "I don't want you playing with those snotty-nosed kids. If I see you with the snotty-nosed kids you'll be in the house." Well, he married the mother of the snotty-nosed kids and brought the snotty-nosed kids into our house. And . . . then they had a baby! So then there were ten of us then and I was still the eldest.

V: And the houses in England were not very big!

T: No no, but we did have four bedrooms. It was like a three story house.

V: So how did you manage in France? Did you speak French?

T: No, I learned as I went. I had to learn French and Italian. Thank goodness they are pretty much interchangeable Ha! Ha! Ha! Because of the Italian maid, but I only learned, you know, to go and get bread and please and thank-you and all that kind of stuff.

V: You're a bit of a pioneer really, a bit of an adventurer at heart, aren't you?

T: Well, I wouldn't have been if I had stayed at home. I could not get on with my step-mother. I had been the boss of the house from the age of 11 to 17, and suddenly she took away all of my authority.

V: and you had finished school and were working then at 17?

T: I finished at 15 and graduated at Christmas because my birthday was in September. I graduated on Friday and went to work on Monday. I got my money in a little manila envelope, a little tiny thing, took it home and gave it to my dad and then he would give me five shillings out of it and that was for the week. Ha! Ha! Ha! (V makes encouraging sounds). I just think of my God if the kids today if they had to take their paycheck or even pay room and board when they first start out. But it was necessary! Because anybody in the family that did it, you all did it, you all had to help dad. It soon turned kids into adults. I know that he had a hard time and she was not quite the nicest lady but . . . yeah! He finished up with diabetes. When we were over there one time, probably in the eighties and I said "when get so bad that he can't do his own shots and things, will you do them for him and pull it out and measure it and everything?" . . . "I wouldn't touch him with a ten-foot pole." And that was the end of it for me. So had I stayed and been involved in any of those kinds of things and then my mother . . .

V: Did you see her over the years?

T: Yes, she came back after five years. After five years you can have them declared dead when they leave. That's how it was in England then, so after she had been gone five years then, she was declared dead and my dad could file for divorce from a dead person, but anyway that's the way it was! Missing or dead, so he got divorced from her. And then, this my dad never believed till his dying day. It was Easter, a girlfriend and I, have you ever been to the south coast of England?

V: No I haven't.

T: We lived up on the hill and we were all dressed up, dolled up with new shoes and everything. We'd go down and walk along the promenade. Both of us then have blisters on the heels, but we looked good Ha! Ha! Ha! And smoking, the whole thing. So we are closer to the next town then, and I said, if we took off our shoes and walked to my grandma's then that's easier than trying to walk back home, and all the way up the hill and my aunt or my grandma will give us enough money to ride the bus home. (V makes encouraging sounds). They'll give us sixpence or whatever.

So we approached my grandma's home and there are people outside smoking and stuff, gathering around. They would not let me into the house to see grandma, but they

brought her outside. And then I said that I got to have a band-aid, so she brought me out the band-aid and they're bringing out the tea and then I thought that this is really really strange because all of them were down there and my mom was one of eleven, and they were all there and that was strange! And then suddenly out of the door comes my mother, who I haven't seen since I was eleven and here I am.

V: and you knew her?

T: Yes, yes! And so I was trying . . . well, I don't know how you can be put off, but happy at the same, but I still a little upset at her to say the least. And she tried to make it okay and she said "this is God's wish that you got the blisters on your legs, so you could come in here." She had not been to town and nobody knew a thing about her till she arranged this meeting after dad had divorced her at the other end of town with her mom. And . . . I went home (V makes encouraging sounds) and I was frightened to tell my dad. Eventually I did tell him, but he never did believe that it was an accident. He always thought that one of the aunts or uncles had got in touch with me and said that my mother was going to be there and you should come down and visit. So I think all those things . . . I would have been in a mental institution if I had stayed, unless I had kind of married really well and found someone who was going to take care of me.

V: What do your kids think about you being English, or about England and all of that?

T: I only had one that cared. The youngest one, and she became a citizen before she was eighteen. A citizen of England!

V: Did she?

T: Yes, yes, because I am English she could. Did you know that?

V: No!

T: Oh! Well I didn't learn it till . . .

V: I thought that you could only have one nationality.

T: Well, you can, but aren't you still British anyway?

V: Yes, they still think I am. I could go over there and get a British passport and go to France on a British passport.

T: You've got your birth certificate, that's all you need. You're British, but you've got an American passport, I mean American citizenship too. But, I read in the "Together Again" from TBPA this lady write in and said . . . and by then I only had the one who was eligible and she was 16 then. So I asked her if she would like to have . . . "Absolutely." So we started it and got all the paperwork done and everything, you know, and then it got to the point where to take the oath, so I am talking to the consulate and you have got to

come to Chicago. Well, you've got to come to the consulate. I said which is the closest one to us? Chicago, Chicago, and I said it isn't like I can just jump on a plane or train or something and come. I have four children. I don't think my husband would let me come to Chicago. (V makes encouraging sounds). Could we make some other arrangements, so they said that they would get back to me.

So they called a couple of weeks and they said "here's what we've arranged." So the gentleman, what ever he is, I can't think of . . . consulate general whatever he is, anyway he is going out to Liberal, Kansas to the pancake race, which they do every year where they toss pancakes (V agrees) and they are in competition with a town in England and he was going to go there and on his way back to Chicago he was going to stay in Kansas City to go to the Truman Library. A place he had always wanted to visit and if I would arrange to meet him, and they told me the hotel, motel, motel. They told me to bring a bible, a family bible they would let me in and take the oath of office. I would have to bring somebody with us who was not a citizen. So I called up another English friend, who has passed away now, and I said "This is what is going on." So she drove and we went over to Independence and went into the hotel they could not find the guy! He was out getting lunch. Ha! Ha! Ha! He finally came and we went into his room and he privately gave her the oath and everything and made her a citizen of Great Britain . . . and so you have to do it before they are eighteen and I don't know if it is still good for grandkids or not, but it used to be.

V: That's interesting.

T: But they have to be direct descendants and so the idea was that after she got out of college she could go to England and work and live with my brother or sister. And she had a degree in journalism, so would not have any problems getting into P.R. or journalism, whatever or any written word or anything like that.

V: So did she do that?

V: No, she met somebody in journalism school. Ha! Ha! Ha! And then she went to Florida and he went to school locally and that didn't work. They were both working, so then she came back here and then she went to . . . let's see . . . she worked for a while and then they got married, and they both worked locally. She worked at . . . What's the school down there? . . . She worked in PR and he worked for the newspaper down there. And then they moved again, and the both worked at the local newspaper. Then they got a house, he wanted to finish up his master's. So she went to work at the local university, and then she had her first son and she stayed home. She stayed home they had a little business.

V: Well, you have had a very interesting life. You have had such a . . . It was not what I was expecting. I was looking for, you know . . . You have really shared so many personal stories and you don't know me from Adam!

T: Well, my daughter keeps saying “Mum, we should record all of this because you could write a book.” Because I have a lot of other things that are . . . Funny uncle, all that kind of stuff! And I said I can’t do any of that until your dad has passed away.

V: Well, I’ve made some notes and I would like to meet with you if the opportunity . . . to plump this out a little bit more. Especially what you were expecting to find here, what did you find? How did that align with what you found? You have shared so many personal details and have given me insight to a personal story. I will incorporate what you have told me into a story form as I prepare these interviews for my dissertation.

T: That’s a very good idea! You have a lot of guts actually going to school. The fact is that if you are really comfortable about doing it, then it is perfect.

V: I appreciate your support. I appreciate your talking to me.

T: I have a question for you now . . . When you got your citizenship did you study at home?

V: I did, I had a book. My father had passed away, and there was only my sister and myself and my mother is Irish and she had a sister in Ireland who wanted her to come home there. In England there had been my dad’s family; he had a large close family, but she said they weren’t her family. So she was going to come over here, and the easiest quickest way to get her over here was if she was next of kin of an American citizen. So I got my citizenship and I sponsored her and it seemed to go very quickly. I didn’t have any problem. I am a quick learner and I . . . let me see. I am not her next . . . She’s was not my next of kin, but I was her next of kin because a parent of an American citizen didn’t have to meet any quotas and she was able to come in right away. So that’s why I did it.

T: When I first applied for . . . They told me I had to take the university . . . night studies, what ever that is. Well you do it at your house. I can’t think what that’s called.

V: and you became a citizen when?

T: ‘64

V: I probably became a citizen in ’77 after dad died, yeah!

T: So I would . . . they would send me tests and I would have to read up on it and find all of the answers and everything and then send it back and then they would send me the next test. So what’s that called? Now it’s all done on computers.

V: Independent study?

T: I guess, maybe. So that’s what I had to do. I had like 23 tests that I had to do before I got the papers from the university saying I passed.

V: Were you married at that time?

T: Yes, I had three children then.

V: I think that I just studied from a book and went and took the test some place.

T: When I took the oath and everything, then I had to come to the State building there.

V: Different states must have different rules!

T: Must be! You wouldn't think so, would you? Being federal!

V: Well, isn't that interesting!

T: I had to have this certificate that said I had taken classes and passed and that I knew enough to go before a judge and take the oath and everything like that. The one question that my husband and I still talk about sometimes "If you've been in jail are you still allow to vote?" and we called the police in Lawrence and they did not know the answer. Ha! Ha! Ha! Like are your voting rights taken away from you if you've been in prison! Now I can't remember what the answer is.

V: I don't know either.

T: You can't vote if you are in prison, I think if you are out, maybe you've done your time and you are back to being a citizen again.

V: and you've paid your debt to society.

T: Right, and that was the funny thing, we called the police and they said we'll have to talk about this and call you back. They called back and said we don't know. Ha! Ha! Ha!

V: Apparently they weren't the right people to call!

T: Anyway, I'll let you go.

V: This has been lovely talking to you. Thank you so much for sharing personal details and as I write this up I don't put anyone's name. I'll change names when I write it up, confidentiality is a big thing. Well, okay lovely talking to you, Tina.

T: Nice talking to you. Have a nice Christmas! I hope that you get some more responses. I don't know why . . .

V: I have put the link out there on the national TBPA website and I've not got any responses on the national website either.

T: I don't understand why people who actually have what you are looking for, the people that knew their husbands in England, the people who got married there and came over to the husbands and family or came over and were met by the family and husband. I don't know why they are not replying. Mine is not what you are really looking for because I came over single, I met him on a blind date, and you know!

V: But you still had to adapt to living here. I mean, you still had to assimilate into the country. And the only thing is maybe they're are too personal or you can become who ever you want in another country.

T: I don't know. I never thought of that. We do have one lady who you can ask her something and she will go to her book and check the information.

V: She did not respond to me, or if she did she did not put her name on anything.

T: She was at the meeting and she said that she would respond, but I do know that she is on holiday right now.

V: Maybe she'll catch up with me.

T: But she does keep journals. They're really diaries, but she calls them journals. She writes every day.

V: I would love to talk to her.

T: I didn't ever have a diary in England. I didn't have any pencils or paper in England. You know we had nothing. We really did not have anything. Ha! Ha! Ha! (V makes encouraging sounds). Absolutely!

V: Everyone was poor during the war, because nobody had . . .!"

T: Every body was poor! The insurance man was sitting here the other day and he asked my husband and he says . . . well, he is going to be eighty in March . . . how did you do in the depression. How did you all survive? My husband said we had a cow, we lived in the country. We had a cow, we had chickens, we had pigs and you milked the cow and you let the pig have pigs, babies. So you propagated and you had more for later on and then you sold these pigs to somebody else. He said it wasn't a case of having to go to town for something if you could take care of your own family. People helped each other (V makes encouraging sounds).

See the thing that I don't understand about this country is that we are in two wars right now. We are fighting two wars. Do your grandchildren know anything about going without because we're at war?

V: No!

T: Even your children don't know. Unfortunately, it is not . . . War is hell, but it's only for the families that are at war . . . in the war. It doesn't seem to affect the fact that my kids want, my grandkids, they want CDs and they want this and they want that and everything else. They'll probably get them!

We had to go to school no matter what. We had those little camphor things tied around our necks in the cold. Ha! Ha! Ha! Maybe you didn't do that (V says No). Oh! We had this little hanky and tied it around our neck with a piece of string, 'cause that's all we had was a piece of string or a shoelace and that camphor would come up through your nose and that would help your cold. Either you wouldn't get one or the one you got would get better! On that, I will let you go. Good night!

V: Good night!