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The Golts Interview

Vapaa: It is 2:15 P.M. on September 7th at Dover, Delaware at our home. And we have a rather unusual program I think for you today because we have 2 people who have come to us from Latvia. And I'm going to ask ah, the husband to introduce himself first and te--its--give us your name please and when and where you were born.

U. Golts: My name is Uldis Golts. My middle name is Raimonds. I was born in Rigo, Latvia--the capital of Latvia in 1937 to the 2nd of September.

Vapaa: All right. Uldis, you might as well spell your name too.

U. Golts: Ah, first name U-l-d-i-s.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Middle name?

U. Golts: Middle name R-a-i-m-o-n-d-s. And the last name G-o-I-t-s.

Vapaa: s. I see. And ah, I believe you told me ah, before that in Latvian all male names begin in s. Is that correct?

U. Golts: You mean they end on s.

Vapaa: End on s.

U. Golts: That is correct.

Vapaa: End on s.

U. Golts: Nominative masculine singular ending.

Vapaa: All right. I see. Now, you said you were born in Rigo, Latvia, and did you give me the date of birth?

U. Golts: Yes, I did. 22nd of September.

Vapaa: And what year?

U. Golts: 1937.

Vapaa: 1937. So you are how old now?

U. Golts: 36--very soon 37.
All right. Thirty-six years of age. All right. Now, let's get your wife. Your name please.

G. Golts: I'm Grieta Golts and I was born in Hamnich, Germany on November 27, 1944.

Vapaa: Do you have a middle name?

G. Golts: I don't have a middle name. My parents didn't have time to find one for me.

Vapaa: I see. Well, what was your maiden name?

G. Golts: Rosans.

Vapaa: And how do you spell that?

G. Golts: R-o-s-a-n-s. And in Latvian there would be a little hat over the first s. A little sh thing like this.

Vapaa: O.K.

G. Golts: Which makes it an s-h sound rather than an s sound.

Vapaa: I see. And that was your--your maiden name? Now how about your parents names?

G. Golts: Well, my mother's name is Erna--E-r-n-a, and my father's name is Janis--J-a-n-i-s. Which Americans always call Janis. (laugh) But that would be the Latvian form of John.

Vapaa: Yes. In other words it's J-a-n-i-s? un-hum.

G. Golts: And Rosan?

Vapaa: And Rosan?

G. Golts: Rosans.

Vapaa: Rosans. I'm sorry. That's what that little hat's for.

G. Golts: Uh-hum.

Vapaa: I'm glad you're here to help me--to help the typist because she's going to have to--when she types this thing it's going to have to
ah, type it ah--or put these marks in here with a marking pencil.

G. Golts: Right.

Vapaa: Because our American typewriters are not designed to ah, do this sort of extra marking ah, particularly on an initial letter.

Now ah, you said you were born in Germany. Why in Germany?

G. Golts: Because that's where my mother was at the time. (laughter)

Vapaa: I see. Was she born--

G. Golts: My mother was from Latvia, but they were fleeing the Communists. And they had left Latvia, I think it was in Ju--July or August, and they were fleeing into Germany to get to freedom. And I just happened to come along in November.

Vapaa: Um-hum. I see. And ah, where were they fr--where they both from the same place in Latvia?

G. Golts: Yes, of course.

Vapaa: And what was that? I mean where--were they both born in the same place--town?

G. Golts: Well, they were pretty close together. Ah--

Vapaa: I see. Do you remember the town?

G. Golts: Well, it was Rites Pheastes. It wasn't really--

U. Golts: The County of Rites.

G. Golts: Yeah. It wasn't really--they were born out in the country on the farm. Not in a.town.

Vapaa: I see. Can you spell Rites Pheastes for us?

G. Golts: R-i--

U. Golts: Pheastes--Pheastes simply means county or parish, so Rites is really just the--
G. Golts: Rites is R-i-t-e-s. It's not the same ah--

U. Golts: I see.

G. Golts: ...as my name.

Vapaa: All right. And spell Pheastes for us.

G. Golts: Pheastes as Uldis said means County. It's just P-h-e-a-s-t-e-s.

Vapaa: T-e what?

G. Golts: T-s.

Vapaa: T-s.

G. Golts: Yeah.

Vapaa: I see. You know, we're going to have a little bit of trouble I think as far as picking up the ah, word meanings. But this is all right. This is part of the object of this ah, oral history for the University of Delaware that ah, we're doing. We're trying to find some background on ah, where you were from, what it was like when you lived there and ah,--. Let's go back to your husband for a minute or two and let's find out where--about your early schooling and so forth ah, Uldis.

U. Golts: O.K. Well, I ah, me start in the very first year in elementary school because that was the time when I was ah, when my family was fleeing from Latvia. So, I started directly in the second grade. And that was in a Latvian refugee school in ah, southern Germany.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Do you remember the town in Germany?

U. Golts: Yes. The town is Robinsborg (sp). It's located ah, way down south in Germany about 30 miles from the Swiss border.

Vapaa: Would this be in what you call Bohemia?
U. Golts: That would be very far from there.
Vapaa: Oh.
U. Golts: Bohemia is part of Czecho--Czechoslovakia not part of Germany.
Vapaa: Oh.
U. Golts: This was--this would be in the part of Germany that is referred to as Schwaben.
Vapaa: Oh. Now you'll have to spell that too.
U. Golts: Schwabea in English.
Vapaa: S-c-h--
U. Golts: S-c-h-w-a-b-e-n, Schwaben.
Vapaa: Schwaben, Germany. Yes. Now what did your father do in the way of work?
U. Golts: Ah, well, in Latvia my father was in the restaruant business. Ah, for awhile he managed his uncle's restaurant in Rigo--was a very big restaurant. But later on he ah, purchased himself a combination of restaurant and country store--general store on the highway leading to Rigo.
Vapaa: Um-hum. I see. And ah, after ah, he ah, left Latvia, I guess, what did he do?
U. Golts: After he left Latvia he ah, well for one thing he got--he couldn't get out of ah, the--Danzig ah, which ah, was at one time part of Germany. At one time it had been a free state, but now it is part of Poland. And in any case he was there (cough) for a few years after the war ended. Yet while ah, my mother, my brother and myself ah, managed to get to southern Germany. And while he was there he was ah, ah, chauffeur for a Polish officer. But ah, later on when he escaped to Sweden he worked in a loom factory ah, making looms.
And ah, when we got to America he worked in the furniture factory--as a furniture polisher.

Vapaa: I see. Well, we're moving around pretty fast and I think we've skipped over some things that are of interest. I--I think you said you had some interesting experiences when you came out of ah, Latvia itself.

U. Golts: Ah, yes. They could be called interesting perhaps. A little bit scary afterwards but at that time (1st side of tape ended)

Vapaa: Well, we seem to have run out of tape for a minute or two there so ah, let's go back and find out how you got out of Latvia.

U. Golts: Well, people were trying to get out of Latvia in whatever way they managed. Ah, lots of people were simply--who were from the countryside ah, they simply put some horses in front of a carriage and tried to go all the way through Lithuania, Poland, etc. ah, to get out to Germany. But ah, we managed to get space on a ship. It was a munitions ship. And ah, ah, there--little adventure that we had on that ship was that we got mined. But fortunately the mine only scraped the side of the ship. And ah, of course the ship stopped eh, ah, so as not to reveal itself to the submarines that had shot the mine and--eh, the torpedo rather. And ah, when we finally got to our destination in northern Germany ah, and the ship was unloaded, then the scrape became visible--just a shiny, metallic furrow on the side of the ship. So we were lucky there.

Vapaa: Um-hum. That's quite interesting ah--. Ah Grieta, did your parents have experiences in getting out of ah, Latvia?

U. Golts: (unintelligible) ....were born.

G. Golts: I really don't remember because I wasn't around.

Vapaa: (laughter) Oh, that's right.
U. Golts: Grieta, what about the oven that exploded in ah, the where you were.

G. Golts: Of course, during the war there wasn't any nice hospitals so when I came along they shoved me in this dirty couple room shanty that apparently had no heat at all. And one of the midwives or ladies that was helping my mother try to get the stove going and that exploded. So my mother tells me how dirty and black I was. (laughter) I caught pneumonia from that experience. Ah, and I almost died I'm told. And all the German soldiers trooped in to watch me die. But I gather that I surprised them. (laughter) And my parents were one of those who put a horse in front of their carriage and came out of Latvia that way.

Vapaa: I see. Well ah, I don't know that I ever saw in my experience in World War II any ah, refugees moving from one place to another. I guess I just happened to be in places in Europe where they--there wasn't a whole lot of ah, movement into the areas where we happened to be.

U. Golts: Um, that's right. There were millions of refugees--literally millions ah, moving from the east to the west.

Vapaa: East to the west.

U. Golts: Never the other way around.

Vapaa: No. You're quite right, Uldis. Now, where do we go from here? We were talking about your father. He became a furniture polisher, did you say?

U. Golts: That's right.
Vapaa: Ah, where?

U. Golts: In ah, furniture capital of the world Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Vapaa: Grand Rapids, Michigan. And ah, how did he get to Grand Rapids, Michigan?

U. Golts: Well, there is a story behind it. Ah, actually when refugees were coming to American they couldn't get to America until they have 2 guarantees--guarantee of a place to stay and guarantee of a job. Ah, we had this guarantee for New Jersey. Ah, we would have worked there in ah, ah, well in a--a--in a--ah, hot houses or something of that nature producing--in other words they were producing vegetables whatever. But ah, ah, our relatives had meanwhile gotten to America. Ah, they had gotten there from Germany. We were--at that time we were in Sweden of course. And they had all gathered in Grand Rapids, Michigan. And ah, my uncle guaranteed us ah, actually ah, you could say he was lying. Ah, he claimed that he had a mansion af--co--. Of course, he only had a small apartment. And that we would have work ah, around the mansion and ah, that we would live there. And ah, that way we got to Grand Rapids. And of course, ah, there on our o--with our own efforts ah, we managed to find ah, work for my parents. And ah, I and my brother started junior college there.

Vapaa: I see. You were how old then when you got to Grand Rapids?

U. Golts: I was about 18.

Vapaa: Eighteen years old. And which was the junior college that you enrolled in?

U. Golts: It was the Grand Rapids Junior College.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Is it still operating as far as you know?
U. Golts: It's operating, blooming and expanding.

Vapaa: I see. Just like the University of Delaware— or Delaware State College.

U. Goldis: Ah, I don't know whether I would put it in the same category.

Vapaa: Oh. I see. Well ah, I'm trying to jump ahead a little bit, and I shouldn't really because I don't— haven't even gotten your parents to this country yet. How did they happen to get to the United States?

G. Golts: Well ah, again we left Germany very early in 1949. I was only 4 years old. And also there was this thing about guaranteed work. But my father had owned a farm and had been a farmer in Latvia. And that's what America need most of all— farmers. So we fairly soon got a guarantee of work on a farm at State College, Pennsylvania. And so we came over in a ship and ah, landed in New York and from there we were taken down to State College.

Vapaa: Was this at the University farm?

G. Golts: No. The University is— you mean Penn State?

Vapaa: Penn State. Yes.

G. Golts: Is very near there but it had nothing to do with— . The man just owned the farm outside of the town.

Vapaa: I see. And he was just looking for some help and—

G. Golts: Right.

Vapaa: ... and he guaranteed a job for your parents?

G. Golts: Right.

Vapaa: I see. Now ah, how old were you at the time?


Vapaa: I see. So you were still too young to go to school when you went there.
G. Golts: Right. I started I guess the next year there. And I don't even remember the name of that school because we moved very soon after that.

Vapaa: And where did you move to?

G. Golts: Oh, well we ran around for quite a bit. Ah, we moved to ah, a place near Danville, Ohio where my father worked on a turkey farm for awhile. And then we moved sort of to this area. We moved to Unionville, Pennsylvania and then Kennett Square (laugh) and then final we settled more or less permanently on a farm near Landenberg. And my father ah, found a job at Longwood Gardens.

Vapaa: I see. And what did he do at Longwood Gardens?

G. Golts: Oh, he was just on the maintenance staff ah, fixing things, fixing old statues, mending cracks in pavement--all kinds of ah--

Vapaa: So you're quite familiar with Longwood Gardens?


Vapaa: And you like it. Do you know Dr. Seibert (sp) there?

G. Golts: Ah, his son and I graduated from Kennett High School the same year.

Vapaa: I see. Dr. Russell Seibert.

G. Golts: Yeah.

Vapaa: Who is the Director of Longwood Gardens.

G. Golts: Right. Right. And he would give my father these Russian books to help him with.

Vapaa: I see. Now, do you speak any other languages beside English and Latvian?

G. Golts: No, I don't
Vapaa: No German?
G. Golts: No German.
Vapaa: Even though--. Now let's talk to you husband again a little bit because I want to know how he got to speak German.

U. Goldis: Well ah, eh, in the first place of course ah, we fled to Germany. (1st reel, side 2 ended)
Vapaa: Now this is reel 2, side 1 and we'll start again with Uldis. You were telling us ah, how you learned German.

U. Goldis: Yes ah, first ah, I came in contact with it in Germany where we had gotten after we had fled from Latvia. I learned the local dialect there and then in the Latvian school--in the Latvian refugee school we started learning the standard German also as a foreign language. And then when we eventually got to Sweden ah, and when I got to Swedish high school ah, I studied some more German. And ah, ah, eventually when I came to America I made Germanic languages my major field and ah, of course ah, studied ah, even more German and German literature, etc.

Vapaa: I see. Well, how did you learn English now?

U. Goldis: Well, I learned English in that same Latvian refugee school. We ah, ah, even though it was just an elementary school we learned ah, ah, 3 foreign languages--German, English and French. We lived in the French zone. And ah, the French occupation forces there made it a rule that ah, all schools had to teach French also for awhile. And ah, that's where I started learning English. And then again of course, in ah, Swedish high school I learned much more English.

Vapaa: Well, isn't it true that in most European schools you learn several languages anyway?

U. Golts: Absolutely.
Vapaa: And ah, is there any minimum number of languages that—er, is taught? That you know of?

U. Golts: Ah, yes. The minimum would be 2 foreign languages.

Vapaa: And what do you study in the school—in your Latvian school besides language?

U. Golts: (laughter) Ah, we indeed have time for other subjects too. It was a very basic type of a school. We had hardly any facilities. We didn't have such fancy subjects as music or ah, ah, or gymnastics or ah, whatever of that nature. We had si—simply strictly ah, subjects like bi—bi—sturdy subjects like biology and ah, geography, history, Latvian language—

Vapaa: Mathematics?

U. Golts: Mathematics of course. And ah, drawing. Of course ah, we were fortunate to have several ah, pretty well known Latvian artists residing in that city. And they were taking turns teaching ah, drawing and painting, etc.

Vapaa: Do you know what the requirements for a teacher were in Sweden I guess we'll—or in Latvia?

U. Goldis: Well, I have no idea. But ah, I know they prepared them thoroughly.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And the person made teaching their career?

U. Goldis: Of course. Yes.

Vapaa: I see. Do you know whether any of these teachers became refugees?

U. Goldis: I'd say that a very large part of them did.

Vapaa: Because they were foreigners themselves, is this why? When I say foreigners I mean ah, were not born in say Sweden or Latvia.

U. Goldis: Latvian teachers were always Latvians.
Vapaa: I see.

U. Goldis: Ah, I--I don't know ah, your questions seem a little bit strange to me. Ah, but ah, let me make clear that ah, Latvia was a highly cultured country. It had the largest percentage in the whole of Europe going to Universities. I think it also had an extremely high percentage, if not the highest in Europe, of books printed per each person.

Vapaa: Do you have any idea what that percentage might have been?

U. Goldis: I--I'm not very good at remembering numbers.

Vapaa: Ah, percentages. I mean, you couldn't even make a guess--would it be half of them?

U. Goldis: I have no idea. I have materials at home ah, statistical materials that I could make available to you later on. But ah, ah, I--I don't recall any numbers.

Vapaa: I see. Well, now let's get your wife educated a little bit. You started school at where?

G. Golts: I started school near State College where I was at--. Well, I was only there a half year or so. And then, as I moved from place to place I just continued. Ah, and I had a pretty normal American education. Ah, I didn't go to school in Germany because I was just too young yet.

Vapaa: And you were never in England I guess?

G. Golts: I was there 3 years ago. (laughter)

Vapaa: Three years ago.

G. Golts: I was a tourist.

Vapaa: Oh, I see. But I mean ah,--. Of course, you were born where?
G. Golts: In Germany--East Germany.

Vapaa: East Germany. And you came from--your parents came from East
Germany how? Or how did they get to the United States?

G. Golts: I told you that back on the other reel.

Vapaa: All right. Let's have it again. I've forgotten it frankly.

(laughter) (murmuring). The maching is picking it up. My wife
says there's no point in repeating it, but I--. Go ahead.

G. Golts: They were guaranteed a job near State College, Pennsylvania on a
farm. And they came across on I think it was the General Bayard
Taylor as I remember.

Vapaa: The name of the boat you mean?

G. Golts: Yes. And it was a 10 day trip. We landed in New York. And from
there we were taken to the farm where my father did general farm
work. And my mother did housekeeping work.

Vapaa: You didn't go through Ellis Island or anything like that? That's
where the refugees used to come in. I mean the immigrants used to
come in--that came to America prior to World War II ah--

G. Golts: No, this was after World War II--1949.

Vapaa: 1949.

G. Golts: I don't remember exactly where we landed.

Vapaa: Well, we know it's New York City.

G. Golts: Right.

Vapaa: So that's good enough I think. And this General Grant was it a
converted troop ship do you know--offhand?

G. Golts: I don't know.

Vapaa: It sounds like it because ah, a liberty ship--it would have been
too slow to pass for a liberty ship.

G. Golts: I don't know. It was slow and it was overcrowded. And everyone
eat--body got seasick.
Vapaa: (laughter)

G. Golts: The usual, I guess.

Vapaa: I see. Well, now, all right, we have you at high school. Now, where did you go from there?

G. Golts: Well, I commuted to West Chester State College for 3 years where I got my Bachelors. And then I got a job down in Lewes, Delaware for a year teaching English. And I returned and got my Masters at the University of Delaware.

Vapaa: And what year?

G. Golts: I guess that would have been 1967--summer of '67 when I finished there. And--

Vapaa: How long did it take you to get your Masters Degree?

G. Golts: Well, I had started in night school. I was teaching at Lewes. And then I went to summer school. And ah, I finished up the following summer. So I did a year of full time and a year of half--part time. And then I went to West Virginia and taught for 2 years. And then I went back to Temple University where I'm al--almost finished my Doctorate except I have to do my dissertation.

Vapaa: Now you say you went back to your--to Temple University. We didn't get you there yet. How did you get there?

G. Golts: Well, back from West Virginia--I taught in West Virginia College for 2 years because I couldn't find a job in this area. And then after I had enough money saved up I stayed still with my parents on the farm--that's why I say back--

Vapaa: Oh.

G. Golts: And ah, went to Temple.
Vapaa: Commuted?
G. Golts: Yeah, commuted. It was 3 days a week only.
Vapaa: I see. You drove back and forth you mean?
G. Golts: Um-hum.
Vapaa: Didn't use tru--public transportation at all?
G. Golts: No. No energy crisis then you know.
Vapaa: No. Well, are we up to the point where you got married yet?
G. Golts: Oh, no. (laughter)
Vapaa: We're not even close, are we?
G. Golts: We're getting there.
Vapaa: We are? All right. Let's ah--
G. Golts: Well, all right. After my year at Temple I found a job at Delaware State College in Dover. And I guess that same year Uldis and I met at a Latvian bazaar type of thing.
Vapaa: Where?
G. Goldis: In--ah, in--
Vapaa: Yes.
G. Goldis: Very near.
Vapaa: Just north of Wilmington.
G. Goldis: Just north of Wilmington.
Vapaa: And ah, Uldis, what were you doing at the time?
U. Goldis: I was teaching at the Moravian College which is in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.
Vapaa: And ah, what were you teaching?
U. Golts: I was teaching eh, German, German language and German literature.

Vapaa: And how did you get to Dover?

U. Golts: Well, ah, by marrying Grieta. Ah, we met in--in Wilmington ah, in Arden near Wilmington. And ah, then when ah, we got married ah, ah, I quit teaching Moravian College and decided also to study toward the doctorate and ah, ah, I was commuting to the University of Maryland from Dover.

Vapaa: So you're doing your Doctorate work at the University of Maryland?

U. Golts: That's right.

Vapaa: And both of you are working on your Doctorate Degree?

U. Golts: That's right.

Vapaa: And both of you are about the same stage, are you?

U. Golts: That's right.

G. Golts: Right. ABD.

Vapaa: What do you mean ABD?


Vapaa: Oh. (laughter) I see.

U. Golts: It's almost an official degree nowadays.

Vapaa: It is?

U. Golts: Yes.

Vapaa: Now, ah, you told me what you dissertation is on. Do you want to give us--

U. Golts: It's ah, on ah, an old Norse syntax--old Norse sentence structure.

Vapaa: Sentence structure. S-y-n-t-a-x, right?

U. Golts: Yes.
Vapaa: And ah, your dissertation?

G. Golts: Mine will be on women in Ellen Glasgow. And Ellen Glasgow is ah, ah, woman--woman Virginian novelist who died in 1946. Most of her novels are set in Virginia--a few in New York.

Vapaa: Well, I'd be interested to read your dissertations when you finish them. Do either of you have a deadline? When you have to have them done or should have them done?

U. Golts: Ah--

G. Golts: I should have mine done within the next 2 years. (laughter)

U. Golts: Well, I have a little bit more leeway since I didn't start it until quite recently. So, I have several years to do it.

Vapaa: I see. But in the meantime now ah, Grieta, what are you doing now?

G. Golts: I am still teaching at Delaware State College.

Vapaa: And what are you teaching?

G. Golts: I teach freshman composition and American literature.

Vapaa: And Uldis?

U. Golts: I have a part time job as a lifesaver at the YMCA.

Vapaa: Yes.

U. Golts: It is very hard for me to find a job ah, ah, right now because there is quite a crisis for language teachers. And even though I have applied to close to a hundred colleges ah, I have not been able to get a job.

Vapaa: So that ah--

G. Golts: Does anybody have a job out there? (laughter)

Vapaa: So ah, Rita, you said if anybody has a job out there--you're talking about in the tape here--why you'd like to know about it.
G. Golts: Yes. We'd like to know about it very much--translating (laughter)

Vapaa: I see. What can you translate now?

U. Golts: I can and have translated from ah, Latvian, German, Swedish and Norwegian.

Vapaa: I see. How much difference is there between Norwegian and Swedish, we'll say?

U. Golts: Ah, the difference isn't very great at all. And ah, I suppose it's a little bit greater than let's say ah, between British English and ah, American English. But ah, it's all Scandinavian languages are rather close together except for Icelandic. Ah, Icelandic is a little bit further apart. Eh, you might compare that with English vs. Dutch. Eh, that's how great the difference is between Icelandic and the other Scandinavian languages.

Vapaa: Do you understand Icelandic at all?

U. Golts: Oh, yes. I have studied Icelandic ah,--I've studied ah, old Icelandic for a couple of years. And ah, I have studied modern Icelandic for 1 year.

Vapaa: You--but you've never been to Iceland?

U. Golts: Yes, I have. But only in transit.

Vapaa: From where to where?

U. Golts: From Europe to America.

Vapaa: I see. Grieta, you speak just English and Latvian?

G. Golts: That's all. (laugh)

U. Golts: Actually, Grieta is a bit modist. Ah, she has passed the--

G. Golts: My Doctorate exams in German and French, but those things are just for form. I wouldn't say I speak--. Ah, when I was in Germany my parents were in the DP--displaced persons camp--and all the people around us were also Latvian. So I didn't really get a chance to
learn very much German because we were always at the camp.

Vapaa: Un. It's a little bit like my mother when I was growing up in the early days. Why she and my father wanted me to speak English, so they would only talk to me in English.

G. Golts: Yeah.

Vapaa: They would talk to themselves in Finnish. But ah, to them—to me and— or to my brother, John, in English only because they felt that it was important that we know English even though of course, as we all know, that it's very easy for a youngster to pick up English just associating with other youngsters as he plays.

G. Golts: Yeah.

U. Golts: Yes. There is no problem in learning the language of the country where one lives. So there—mothers really are doing a wrong thing in ah, trying to avoid teaching ah, the children their own native tongue. Ah, it's only a benefit if you know one extra language. Eh— it increases your thinking capability. You are able to look at the ah, ah, world of reality from various viewpoints.

Vapaa: Now ah, where do I want to go from here?

U. Golts: Now maybe we—

Vapaa: Well, let's --. Oh all right. So ah, yes. Just let it run because ah, I'll think of some questions here as we go along. It seems to me that as I do these tapes I run out of gas so to speak. And ah, run out of ideas, questions that I should ask. Perhaps you could—

G. Golts: Why don't you have Uldis tell you about how his father got to Sweden. I think that's a very interesting story.

Vapaa: All right, Uldis.
U. Golts: Well ah, ah, as I mentioned someplace earlier on this tape, my
father did not manage to get out of ah, Polish controlled Danzig
ah, at the same time when ah, my mother and my brother and I did.
Ah, the Germans had issued a decree that all men between the ages
of 16 and 60 had to stay in the city and defend the city against
the Russians to the last man. Of course, that was a ridiculous
order especially since ah, none of these men had any weapons.
Ah, so when the Russians came in everybody just hid in the base-
ments and then came out in a couple of days and that was that.
And my father ended up being a chauffeur for a Polish officer.
And ah, he was doing pretty well. He was working for a good man.
And ah, ah, however, he--

Vapaa: How did he communicate with him?

U. Golts: I was/to that. He managed to find out where we were located
through the Red Cross. Because we already beforehand had agreed
that we would try to reach the city of Robinsborg (sp) ah, be-
cause it was so near to the Swiss border that we figured that ev--
even if the Russians would advance that far--which we didn't
think was likely--we would have a chance to escape further to
Switzerland. So ah, he told the Red Cross the fact that he thought
we would be in Robinsburg. And ah, they did manage to find us.
And ah, after that my father started thinking of ways of getting
together with us. And ah, he ah, hid on board a Swedish ship and
managed to get to Sweden. And ah, that escape ah, is a very in-
The Golts Interview

Vapaa:

U. Golts:

Interesting story. I'll just give a little--a few details about it. Ah, he ah, somehow got on board the Swedish ship. I think he said he pretended to be a drunken sailor returning back to his ship. And thus he got past the guards. Ah, but the guards got suspicious and ah, came on board the Swedish ship to search it. Ah, he jumped immediately overboard to the next ship which was ah, ah, yes, it was parked ah--I don't know whether you say parked about ships--it was parked right beside the Swedish ship. It was a Dutch ship. And he jumped right into the arms of the Dutch captain who immediately realized what the situation was and hid him on the Dutch ship. And ah, after a good while he told my father O.K., you can now return to your own ship. So my father jumped back to the Swedish ship and there the Swedish sailors hid him below deck in a--in the ballast room. In the room where they keep ah, water when they're not transporting anything else. And ah, there were some air pipes--some pipes that provide air passage from below deck to the top of the deck--and the Swedish crew kept rolling down boiled eggs to him to eat through those pipes. And he managed to get to Sweden all right on that ship. Ah--

Vapaa: Where did he land in Sweden?

U. Golts: It ah--landed in ah, ah, the Swedish border Teleborg (sp) which is in southern Sweden. But in order to confuse ah, ah, the tracks ah, the Swedish crew chipped in together, gave him some money and told him to take a train to Stockholm and ah, report himself to Swedish police there saying ah, that the ship had taken him to Stockholm. Ah, because ah, if the--if it ever were found out that the ship had been transporting refugees from Poland then the
Polish government would never permit it to land in Polish ports again. And so he gave himself up in Stockholm. And the police didn't quite know where to put him so they put him in the jail just in order for him to have a place to sleep. And he said that ah, that was probably one of—it was the—as good a place to stay as any good hotel. Ah, because the Swedish jails already at that time had a reputation for being quite luxurious.

Vapaa: I see. Well, how did he happen to get up with you then?

U. Golts: Well ah, of course, all the time he knew then where we were since ah, he had found us through the Red Cross. So he sent us a letter from Sweden. And ah, I remember when his first letter came from Sweden. I looked at the stamp and it said in Swedish, of course the name for Sweden Sverige. And I told my mother, "Say, here is a--another letter from Dad. And now he is in a town that is called Sverige." My mother started immediately jumping up and down and--and shouting and--and saying that means that he is in Sweden, because she happened to know that that was the name for Sweden—in Swedish.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

U. Golts: And ah, then it took a whole year before all the formalities were completed and we could join him in Sweden.

Vapaa: I see. And how did you get to Sweden?

U. Golts: Well ah, we went by train. And join up with my Dad who had decided to settle in ah, southern Sweden. They had interned him more or less on the same type of thing as the Ellis Island. They had ah, ah, a citadel in a city of ah, Landskrona. And ah, he had been
staying there for I think half a year while they were investigating him. And ah, then he liked the area so much that he stayed in the same town.

Vapaa: I see. And what did he do in Landskrona—in the way of work?

U. Golts: Ah, ah well, ah, he worked there in a loom factory.

Vapaa: Oh, you told me that in the beginning, but I didn't ah--. And Landskrona is spelled L-a-n-d-s-k-r-o-n-a?

U. Golts: K-r-o-n-a.

Vapaa: O-n-a. O.k. Incidentally, how do you manage to ah, go from one language to another with the alphabet—the way they—. I mean, for instance, when you spell something for me in English you can distinguish very easily between o and u and a and all of this. Now ah, how do you manage this?

U. Golts: Well ah, --

Golts: Just naturally.

U. Golts: It is ah,--. Yes, as my wife says it comes naturally. Ah, if you know several languages well, then of course you know how to spell in the—those languages also. And it doesn't really matter in which language you aw, call the letters. I mean the fact that in—the letter a is called letter a in English while in Sweden the same—exactly the same letter would be called ah doesn't make any difference.

Vapaa: Same way in Finnish.

U. Golts: Ah, yes. Except in Finnish ah, the—you would say 'ah instead of aw.
Vapaa: Yes, ah.
U. Golts: Little bit lighter sound to it.
Vapaa: Right.
U. Golts: But ah, if you knew 2 lang--lan--know 2 languages well ah, eh, of course you can spell in them and it doesn't matter in which language you do the spelling.
Vapaa: You know it's a odd thing ah, I haven't introduced myself yet and we're almost done with the first reel of the second tape. I better get this introduction in. George Vapaa and ah, as the narrator on this particular recording. Ah, I should have done--Dr. Monroe told me to do this right in the beginning and (laughter) and of course, I have ah, postponed it up to this point. But I guess it's all right. He won't mind. Ah, there must be an awful lot of interesting things that ah, we haven't touched on yet. Ah, you have been married how long?
When were you married?
E. Golts: Christmas 1971
Vapaa: 1971. So it's been just over--not quite 3 years.
E. Golts: Not quite 3 years.
Vapaa: And there are no children?
E. Golts: No children.
Vapaa: Yet.
E. Golts: Well, when he finds a job maybe (laughter). It's a little hard to teach adults (?) and have children at the same time.
Vapaa: Of course, this work you're doing at the YMCA is strictly temporary
and ah, hardly--

U. Golts: Ah, I don't plan to make a career out of it. (laughter)

Vapaa: No. Because you are paid by the hour, aren't you?

U. Golts: That's right.

Vapaa: And it--

U. Golts: $2 and hour.

Vapaa: Eh, which is minimum wage--

U. Golts: Which is minimum wage. It would have been less if the minimum wage hadn't been raised recently.

R. Golts: It's only for 2 weeks anyway. (laughter)

U. Golts: Yes. It's ah,--it's only a 2 weeks job until the regular season and the regular lifesavers start again.

Vapaa: Well, I think perhaps that if you're still around here that ah, we can make some arrangements with Dave Dougherty at the YMCA. He tells me he has a surplus of ah, life guards.

U. Golts: That's right.

Vapaa: We call 'em life guards. And ah, but ah, I think if he realizes just how critical your need is we--he may be able to work you in a little bit more than--

U. Golts: Yes, and of course ah, I'm trying very diligently to get some other type of job, because life guarding at YMCA is never a full time job. And ah, the earnings are, of course, quite meager.

Vapaa: Right. And ah, what are you doing right now ah, Uldis, to ah,
find some other kind of job?

U. Golts: Well!

Vapaa: I found out this morning.

U. Golts: Ah, I have done various things. I have ah, I have ah, of course registered with ah, couple of employment agencies, couple of professional agencies ah, for teachers, and one general employment agency. I intend to register with more of those regular employment agencies. I have ah, visited several big corporations ah, trying to find a job as a translator. Ah, I have taken evening courses in computer operation and data processing ah, perhaps trying to go into the field of ah, computers.

Vapaa: Now, you say you have taken them?

U. Golts: Yes.

Vapaa: Or are you taking more?

U. Golts: Yes. I have taken ah, computer operations course. And I'm--right now I am starting a course in data processing. And I have been reading books on computer operations ah, also.

Vapaa: Do you like this?

U. Golts: Yes ah, I was a little bit surprised at that. But I always liked mathematics when ah, ah, I studied that. I 've studied calculus for example and so on. Ah, I find the--the field of mathematics quite close to those of languages in a way. There is ah, a logical process involved. And a ah, when I first took my evening course in computer operations I thought that that might be a useful tool for my language research. But I found that I--I liked ah,
ah, the computer ah, dealing with computers ah, also for its own value.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

U. Golts: And ah, let's see what else have I done to get--

B. Golts: Written a hundred letters.

U. Golts: Oh yes, I--I have written as I said close to hundred letters to various colleges. I--

B. Golts: And they wrote back, we have a thousand applicants for 4 places.

U. Golts: This is exactly true. And lot's of those replies were dittoed simply because they had so many candidates they simply couldn't afford to write individually to each person.

B. Golts: Oh, we wrote President Ford.

U. Golts: That's right. (laughter) Since ah, since ah, Jerry Ford has written to me ah, before when I won my Woodrow Wilson fellowship he congratulated me on that. And since we are both from Grand Rapids ah, ah, well that--I thought was sufficient reason to now write to him when he had become a president. Ah, and ask him to help ah, not just me but the teachers in general. I s--I proposed to him that he should set up a special government translating program. Something that could be compared to the ah, to the ah, work projects that were done in ah, during the depression for people who were out of work. And that such translation projects would--would help all the thousands of language teachers that ah, are out of work now.
Vapaa: I presume you did this just recently?

U. Golts: Yes.

Vapaa: Have you had time to get an answer yet?

U. Golts: I don't think so. I wrote to him about a week ago.

R. Golts: Yeah.

U. Golts: And he's been rather busy lately. (laughter)

Vapaa: Did you hear him last night on television?

U. Golts: Ah, I did not, but I--I've heard summaries of what he said. So I take it he has been rather busy. He has been thinking about these economical matters.

Vapaa: Yes. In fact, right now he's more concerned, I think, about ah, inflation. And ah, he talked about inflation last night on the television--

U. Golts: That's right.

Vapaa: ...for the 1974 celebration being held in Philadelphia--


Vapaa: ...right at the present time.

U. Golts: Yes.

Vapaa: And in preparation for the arrangements to be made in 1976 also in Philadelphia. And ah, of course, it will be a national celebration. And ah, we don't know ah, how it's going to work out. But listening to the TV ah, broadcasters last night I had the impression that they're very much encouraged by the participation that's going to take place by people in the ah, ah, bicentenniel
celebration. The 200th anniversary of the forming of this ah, nation.

Now, we're just about out of tape with--but we got enough time here, I think, to get your reaction to how you like America and ah, this sort of thing.

U. Golts: Well ah, American is perhaps what you make out of it. Ah, it's a vast country. And ah, you can find just about anything in America. You just have to look for it. Ah, it's a country with vast opportunities ah. Ah, it's of course, quite far behind Europe as far as ah, social welfare of the people is concerned. Ah,--

Vapaa: Do you consider this good or bad?

U. Golts: I consider that ah, bad. Ah, I think that ah, when a person has worked all his lifelong and has ah, become a retired person--he is a pensioner, he is receiving his pension--then he should have earned ah, enough during the lifetime to--to not to have substantial worries at his old age. I don't think also that people should ah, ah, should lose everything they possess if they have a major illness. If they have to spend all their earnings they have ah, for some tragic event that maims them, causes an illness, whatever. I think that these should be things that the government should take care of. Ah, ah, a productive member of the society has earned certain rights in that society.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Well, this is ah, very interesting, Uldis. I'm going
to let this tape run out and then we'll pick up again on
the other side of the reel in just a minute here. Ah, but
ah, this reel is just about to run out and we haven't found
that blank reel yet so we'll use the broken one. But I think
it'll work all right. Let's see, how are we doing?

U. Golts: I think we have more or less run out of the essential things--
Vapaa: Oh, yeah--
U. Golts: ....that you are interested in. (reel 2, side 1 finished)
Vapaa: I don't know what's happening on this reel, but it seems to be
turning so we'll go from here.
Ah, this is ah, side 3 of reel 2, Ah, with Uldis and Grieta
Golts. And ah, we were talking earlier about politics, I think.
And ah, I think it left off with the point where you had indicated
that you have no particular political preference. Is that right,
Uldis?

U. Golts: Well ah, I have ah, certain ideas. But ah, I hesitate to align
myself ah, totally with ah, one group or the other. I ah, prefer
to think for myself.
Vapaa: I see. So you would call yourself an Independant.
U. Golts: That's right.
Vapaa: But you have very definite ideas about social ah--
U. Golts: No. I don't have very definite ideas. Ah, I--I'm not ah, an in-
ventor of political programs. I just ah--I have certain preferences.
And ah, I have certain ideas. But I don't have a system of ideas.
Vapaa: All right. Now, you have indicated to me that you are a friend of ah, Jerry Ford, our new President. (laughter) Now--

U. Golts: That's in quotation marks.

Vapaa: How about explaining that a little bit.

U. Golts: Well ah, Jerry Ford has done lots of favors for lots of people. He has been in contact with lots of people. He probably has con--
contacted or been in contact with or helped everybody--just about everybody in or around Grand Rapids which is his original district. And ah, that's how I meant it. Ah, my uncle who is ah, well, quite a bit active in the Republican Party has met him personally several times and has talked to him and so on. And of course, he--there are several Latvians who are very close friends of Jerry Ford.

Vapaa: I see. Now you are talking about your uncle on your wife's side?

U. Golts: On--on my side.

Vapaa: On your side of the family?

U. Golts: Yes.

Vapaa: Is he in this country then?

U. Golts: Oh yes, in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Vapaa: How did he get here?

U. Golts: Oh, the same way everybody--all the other ah, displaced persons got here. He--

Vapaa: By boat.

U. Golts: He ah,--well, yeah, by boat and of course, somebody who wanted cheap labor ah, guaranteed hi--job for him. And ah, mostly these first
jobs, as Grieta explained, were agricultural jobs. You had to work on a farm. Ah, with other words sort of replacing migrant labor. And ah, the Latvians mostly got out of that after their first year. They had to guarantee that they would be there one year. And ah, then most of them got out and either tried to get into their own specialties or if the--the language was a barrier, then--then they would at least try to get a better paid job than ah, than just their being an agricultural worker.

Vapaa: Have you ever done any agriculture work yourself?

U. Golts: Never. Ah yes, but I--I don't like that. (laughter)

Vapaa: You don't like it. What kind of work did you do?

U. Golts: Well, I have ah, ah--well, I have worked in Sweden. During my summer vacations I worked in a hothouse. Oh, taking care of tomatoes and cucumbers and things of that nature. And I've cut hedges a lot. And ah, general gardening.

Vapaa: Did you ever milk any cows or handle any livestock?


Vapaa: So you don't know how to harness up a horse?

U. Golts: No, I--I don't know any of that.

Vapaa: Did you ever drive a tractor?

U. Golts: Ah, seems to me that maybe in Latvia I used to sit in my father's lap. Yes, I did. Once in awhile when he would ah, ah, drive the tractor and do whatever people do on tractors in the fields.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And ah--
R. Golts: Uldis doesn't know anything about farming.
U. Golts: I am a city boy.
Vapaa: You're a city boy. Well, how do you feel about it, Grieta? I mean--
R. Golts: About--?
Vapaa: ..about farm life.
R. Golts: Oh. Well, my parents' place near Landenburg was 20 acres. So even though my father worked at Longwood, he still sort of par--part time farmed. So I would sit on his lap on the tractor. And mother would raise a lot of vegetables and auction them off. Stuff like this.
Vapaa: I see. Where did they auction them off?
R. Golts: Oh, there was ah, there's a little auction outside of Kennett Square. And ah, she'd just take her things out there and they'd auction them off--keep 10%.
Vapaa: Did your father ever raise any mushrooms?
R. Golts: No. But we've got a lot of mushroom houses around the farm. (laughter)
Vapaa: Oh, yes.
R. Golts: Be about 4 bunches from there.
Vapaa: Um-hum.
R. Golts: And the smell is terrific if the wind blows right.
Vapaa: Well of course, I happen to like mushrooms.
R. Golts: Oh, yeah.
U. Golts: Well, the mushrooms don't smell bad. It's the fertilizer.(laughter)
Vapaa: Yes. Well, you know that's changing now--that's one of the changes that's occurring in agriculture in the United States. Ah, in mushroom growing we're using artificial compost now.
U. Golts: Yeah. But they haven't started doing it yet. There's talk that in maybe 10 years they'll all be using that. But ah, they're still using the natural stuff around ah, ah, Grieta's old farm.

Vapaa: If they can get it. Now they do have trouble getting manure. And ah, I can tell you an interesting story, I think, about this. I happen to be a director of the Delaware State Fair down at Harrington. And we winter 500 horses on the fair grounds. And during the winter months is when the mushroom growers want horse manure--

R. Golts: Um-hum.

Vapaa: ...to ah, put in the mushroom houses particularly. And that's when we have it available. And we used to earn at the fair grounds something like $8,000 to $10,000 a year from the sale of horse manure to mushroom growers up in the West Chester area. And ah, we still have this contract I'm sure down at ah, Harrington. But the mushroom growers themselves prefer horse manure and straw to ah, grow mushrooms in these enclosed houses of course. You know--you know whether--you've been in a mushroom house of course.

R. Golts: Oh, yeah.

U. Golts: I have too.

Vapaa: You have too.
U. Golts: Um-hum.

Vapaa: And ah, they're not—they don't smell bad inside do--

U. Golts: No, they don't.

B. Golts: It's just when they ah, change or turn it over. It--it's not always, but every year there are a few days when it gets very powerful.

Vapaa: Yes.

U. Golts: Yeah. When they transport the fresh manure in, I think, or throw out the old or whatever they do.

Vapaa: Yes. Have either of you ever had anything to do with raising chickens?

U. Golts: No.

R. Golts: Well, we've had chickens on the farm. But ah--

Vapaa: You're talking about Landenburg again?

R. Golts: Yeah, right. Just--just--

Vapaa: How many did you have?

B. Golts: Oh, we had about 20 at one time. Just for our own use, and friends--nothing.

Vapaa: But you soon found out that it was cheaper to buy the eggs than it was to buy the feed to produce the--

B. Golts: No, it wasn't ah--. Well, we had so much room there. We really didn't have to feed them that much. Just let them out in the summer and they fend for themselves. But I guess they were more of a nuisance. You can't really go away and leave them for a week of so.

Vapaa: No, you can't.
E. Golts: --if you want to visit. Things like that. I think that's when my parents stopped that.

Vapaa: So you didn't have any livestock at all on the farm other than a few chickens?

E. Golts: Ah, few cats! (laughter) And some bee hives. It was really just a part time thing.

Vapaa: Have you ever worked with bees, Grieta?

R. Golts: My father was a real expert at that. And I have a Godfather who took over his bee hives after he died. But I haven't ah--. Uldi claims that he wants to, but he hasn't ah--

U. Golts: I like bees.

R. Golts: My father loved bees too. He said they never hurt you and he'd take them in his hands and they never bit him.

Vapaa: Oh, I wouldn't say that they've never bit me. (laughter) I'm very much interested in bees, too. In fact, I started a beekeepers' association here in Delaware with ah, a few bee keepers ah, down in the lower part of this county. And we started a project for 4-H boys and girls in Delaware ah, to ah, raise bees. Now--

E. Golts: Well, they only hurt you if you hurt them first.

Vapaa: That's right.

U. Golts: If you step on them with bare feet--happen to hit against them. I don't think a single bee has ever stung me ah, without me having done it--something bad to it by accident.

Vapaa: Ah, it's just like any wild animal, I think. That ah, they'll stay out of your way if you--if you'll stay away from them.

U. Golts: That's right.
Vapaa: They not--they're not particularly anxious to socialize with others than themselves. And ah, ah, my father ah, had a book on the ABC of Bee Culture. I believe I have it back there on the shelf someplace. And ah, if I haven't given it to Wesley College. Cause I've been disposing of my various books that I've had over--collected over the years. Mostly technical journals in agriculture. That ah, Wesley College for some reason or another, as a junior college it doesn't have an agricultural program, is still interested in having books on almost any topic. And I have found Wesley College to be an extremely interesting place to go and I use their library facilities an awful lot. Have you ever been in there?

R. Golts: Oh, sure.

U. Golts: Yes. We've also been using their facilities.

R. Golts: But ah, Del State is getting--

Vapaa: And you've met--

R. Golts: ...a new library now. I'm on the library committee and we've finally got--. Have you seen it going up?

Vapaa: No, I haven't.

R. Golts: Oh, it's going to be the tallest building I think south of Wilmington. And it's going to be 6 stories. And we've got lots of money for new books. So, it should be very good. And the Director over there is very helpful and--

Vapaa: Who is the Director?
R. Golts: Dr. Daniel Coons.

Vapaa: How do you--

R. Golts: C-o-o-n-s.

Vapaa: Oh. C-o-o-n-s?

R. Golts: C-o-o-n-s.

Vapaa: Oh, yeah. Incidentally, is he black or white?

R. Golts: He's white.

Vapaa: I see. Because some of the blacks are very sensitive about the fact, you know, when a name like that--I mean ah--.

U. Golts: Oh.

Vapaa: It used to be--

R. Golts: Oh. (laughter)

Vapaa: ...a nickname you know. They used to call blacks coons.

U. Golts: Yeah. (laughter) That's right.

Vapaa: And ah, and they don't even like to be called negroes anymore. But ah, I have found out at Delaware State College they have the best sociology reference file that I've seen down state. Have you looked at that particularly?

R. Golts: No. I--I don't know about sociology (laughter)

Vapaa: Well, it's a very good reference file. And when I was taking an extension course in urban affairs with the University of Delaware, I went to Delaware State College because their reference library in that part was the best I could find in the Dover area. And Wesley College ah, library is as good as any that you can find at the present time for current material on ah, a wide variety of
fields. And if—particularly if you're looking for ah, people like—people whose names appear in *Who's Who In America* and so forth like this. Why, that's where you can really find that kind of information. And then you go to the State Archives down in the—next to the State House in Dover for ah, old history of Delaware. And this is where Dr. Monroe gets an awful lot of his research material when he writes books about the history of—of Delaware. I really can't say too much about Dr. Monroe's habits these days because while we were students together in high school and college, he was a couple of years ahead of me and is a couple of years older than I am. And ah, our interests have varied over the years but he's trying to make, I think, an embryonic historian out of me through this process of doing an oral history with people like yourselves and whoever else I can find who was not born in Delaware, but who came to Delaware. And he would like to know why.

U. Golts: Well, maybe you want to find out what we like about Delaware, what we don't.

Vapaa: All right. Tell me.

U. Golts: (laugh) Well, we both ah, like the beaches very much. Eh, we like to go swimming ah--

R. Golts: And we don't like the fact that Cape Henlopen has a $2 fee now. (laugh)


R. Golts: For out-of-staters and ah,--

U. Golts: I think it could attrack more tourists if it—if the fee had been lower.
R. Golts: Yeah.

U. Golts: Because ah, otherwise they might prefer to go to some free beaches a little bit further away like ah, was it Dewey Beach?

R. Golts: Yeah. Right down to Dewey.

U. Golts: Yeah, Dewey Beach is free.

Vapaa: Which is right next to Cape Henlopen.


Vapaa: Now, do you go to Rehoboth at all?

R. Golts: No. I--

U. Golts: Well-

R. Golts: ...used to go there in my younger days, but it's just too crowded.

U. Golts: We go n--sometimes just for a fun we walk out on the boardwalk a little bit.

R. Golts: Yeah.

Vapaa: I see. Now ah, do--how do you like the fact that the land is so flat in Delaware?

U. Golts: Boring. (laughter)

R. Golts: We just got back from a trip to Oregon where Uldi's brother lives and that was quite an experience. But ah, well, we have trees here. And I was rather surprised that half the country was almost bare. Ah, but the mountains are pretty. So I guess trees are better than mountains in a way. I--I don't like the flat land.

Vapaa: Well, that reminds me. I haven't found out how many brothers and sisters each of you have.

U. Golts: We--we both have 1 brother.

Vapaa: I see. And yours lives in Oregon?
U. Golts: Yes.

Vapaa: And where does yours live, Grieta?

R. Golts: Mine lives on that farm in Landenburg still. He and his wife
and he has a little daughter.

Vapaa: I see. And does he work there?

R. Golts: He teaches mathematics at Kennett High School where he graduated
from.

Vapaa: And his name again.

R. Golts: His name is also Janis. Ah, but he--


R. Golts: He--he's John for practical purposes.

Vapaa: Right. And ah, that's what he uses? Does he spell it John?

R. Golts: Right.

Vapaa: All right.

U. Golts: Because ah, Latvian Janis with its spelling J-a-n-i-s very often
is used as a--a girls' name.

R. Golts: Yeah. Miss Janis. (laughter) Get more letters like that.

Vapaa: Incidentally, in ah, ah, Latvian do you have any names that start
with s?

U. Golts: Oh, yes. Lot's of them.

Vapaa: Can you give me some examples--man or women?

U. Golts: O.K. (laugh)

R. Golts: Well, Guson (sp?) Se--

U. Golts: Well, you mean ah, the--the

Vapaa: Spell them together.
U. Golts: Let's--let's la--Spidola, there's one.
R. Golts: Spriditis.
Vapaa: You'll have to spell them as you go. (laughter)
Vapaa: That's a girl's name?
U. Golts: Yes.
Vapaa: Do you know what it means in English?
U. Golts: Ah, it means something that's ah, shiny. The shiny one maybe.
Vapaa: Oh. Um-hum.
U. Golts: And Spodra.
Vapaa: Ah, Spell it... 
U. Golts: Ah, S-p-o-d-r-a.
Vapaa: And it would mean in English?
U. Golts: It means something like ah, ah, the shining, clean one. (laughter) It--it sounds weird in translation.
Vapaa: Well, most of them do I think. Ah, now how about a man's name in s?
Starting in s.
U. Golts: O.K.
B. Golts: Spriditis?
U. Golts: No, that's--that's--that's just--
B. Golts: That's just a character.
U. Golts: That's in literature--a character in literature. Ah, but nobody is ever called that. Ah, it's not really a name. It means ah, ah, something like ah, ah, what--what--thumb eh--
R. Golts: Little--little--
U. Golts: Well, ah, in English--
R. Golts: Tom Thumb!
U. Golts: Tom Thumb. Something like that.

Vapaa: All right. Now, spell Spriditis for me.

U. Golts: Ah, ah, Spriditis, S-p-r-i-d-i-t-i-s.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

R. Golts: And I mean we have things like Samuels, the Biblical name--

U. Golts: Well, yeah. There are all different international names.

R. Golts: Yeah. Just stick an s on it.

U. Golts: Ah, but there--you wouldn't--you shouldn't really count them as a Latvian name. They're just international names.

R. Golts: Yeah.

U. Golts: Ah, Sam--Samuels, things of that nature. Ah, ah, let's see is there really some Latvian male name starting in s.

Vapaa: What's your brother's name?

U. Golts: Imants.

Vapaa: Spell it.

U. Golts: I-m-a-n-t-s.

Vapaa: I see. And what would it mean in English?

U. Golts: It doesn't have a meaning.

Vapaa: Does yours have a meaning?

U. Golts: No.

Vapaa: I see. All right so much for names. (laughter) Now, I'd like to know ah, how you feel a little bit about ah,--. You say you're not aligned politically. How do you feel about Jerry Ford as President?

U. Golts: Ah, I am rather pleased that it was him. Ah, was--just because of
ah, what kind of man he is. He has a reputation of being an honest person. And a person that tries to find practical solutions.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

U. Golts: And ah, with those 2 characteristics he can do quite a bit.

Vapaa: How did you feel about President Nixon when he was President?

U. Golts: Ah, I didn't trust the man from the very start.

Vapaa: I see. And ah, did you ever have any occasion to see him at all? Mr. Nixon?

U. Golts: Ah, no. No. No, I didn't see him. He always was out of town when I came.

Vapaa: Now, are you talking about Washington or wherever--


Vapaa: Have you--how often have you been to Washington?

U. Golts: Ah, I have been there a couple of times.

R. Golts: If you count the University of Maryland as being in Washington--

U. Golts: Um, well, I don't--I don't count the University of Maryland as being in Washington even though it's close there. But I have been in the City of Washington a couple of times.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Is there any thing you particularly like in Washington or dislike in Washington?

U. Golts: Well, ah, I--I like some of the parks, some of the buildings. I like the zoo very much.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Have you been in the park--I mean the ah, what do they call that park?

U. Golts: Well, what's in that park?
Vapaa: The one that you drive through.

U. Golts: Ah, yeah. Yeah, I have been driving through there. And I walked around there too.

Vapaa: It runs north and south through the city.

U. Golts: Yes, it's a--

Vapaa: It follows a stream.

U. Golts: Yeah. The one that has the Lincoln Memorial in it--right? And ah, the Washington Memorial--

Vapaa: Now--

U. Golts: ...is that the one you mean or--


U. Golts: I see. You can drive through there too, you know.

Vapaa: Rock Creek Park. Yes, I know. But I think it's Rock Creek Park, if I'm not mistaken.

U. Golts: Yes. Yes. I've ah--I was trying to find somebody's address there and I've been driving through that area a little bit.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

U. Golts: (voices overlapped - unintelligible)

Vapaa: Have you ever been to the Latvian Embassy?

U. Golts: Ah, no. No.

Vapaa: Do you know where it is?

U. Golts: Ah, no. (laughter)

Vapaa: Well, what about the ah, Latvians in America? Do you have any so-called Latvian colonies as such?

U. Golts: Ah, yes. Just about every larger town has one. And they all have
their Latvian Associations—usually with their own buildings by now. And they usually are at least 1, very often 2, Latvian parishes in every larger city.

Vapaa: Is there one in Wilmington that you know of?
U. Golts: There is one in Wilmington, yes.
Vapaa: How about Philadelphia?
U. Golts: There are a couple there.
R. Golts: Very definitely, yes.
U. Golts: Two, I think.
Vapaa: Now, do you—can you—
U. Golts: Latvian churches.
Vapaa: ...tell me where they are—off hand?
U. Golts: In Philadelphia—
R. Golts: The church in Philadelphia is on 47th Street.
U. Golts: One of them. Yeah.
R. Golts: Yeah. That's where we were married, as a matter of fact. And our minister who married us made the news a couple of years ago. He was the one that was shot by the policeman in Philadelphia. Maybe you remember that? He was standing there with his roses and ah—
U. Golts: Tending his rose garden.
R. Golts: ...there was somebody fleeing and ah, police shot him and he died a few weeks later. Ah, now they have gotten finally a new minister. There is a church ah, in Wilmington too, it's not completely ours. We just rent the Concordian Lutheran Church once a month for services.
And ah, that's the one we belong to. Ah, and our minister comes
down from Bethlehem where he teaches at the Muhlenburg is it?

U. Golts: Muhlenburg College.

R. Golts: Yeah. He just comes down once a month.

U. Golts: That's in Allentown actually.

R. Golts: Ah--

U. Golts: Ah, see all Latvians ah, well I would say no--hardly any Latvian
belongs to any non-Latvian parish. They all belong to Latvian
parish. Ah, and ah, even if in their town they don't have one
and they belong to the nearest one--like we live in Dover and
we belong to the Wilmington one.

Vapaa: Have you met any Latvians in the Dover area?

R. Golts: Yes. There are several ah,--in fact, I have a very good friend ah,
who her maiden name was Grieta Akmentins. But she--

Vapaa: Can you spell it?

R. Golts: A-k-m-e-n-t-i-n-s.

U. Golts: A-k-m-a--

R. Golts: m-e

U. Golts: m-e

Vapaa: t-i-s

R. Golts: e-n

U. Golts: i-n-s. t-i-n-s.

Vapaa: t-i-n-s, all right.

U. Golts: and--

Vapaa: Her first name?
U. Golts: A goes off, yeah. A-k-m-e -- cross out the second a.

Vapaa: Oh.

U. Golts: There we go. A-k-m-e-n-t-i-n-s.

Vapaa: t-i-n-s. All right. And ah, now, is that her first name or--

U & R Golts: It's her last name.

Vapaa: Last name.

R. Golts: Her first name is-- (voices overlap, unintelligible)

U. Golts: Means Little Rock.

Vapaa: Is what?

R. Golts: Grieta. G-r-i-e-t-a. And that's the American equivalent of

Greta, I guess.

Vapaa: I would think so. Yes.

R. Golts: (laughter) Yeah. And then there is a family called Krasts who live

not too far from ah--

U. Golts: Which means shore--

R. Golts: Yes. K-r--

U. Golts: Shoreline -- shore.

R. Golts: ...a-s-t-s. And he works at Playtex and she works at the air base.

And then there's Zemitis and he's an engineer.

Vapaa: Spell it for me?

R. Golts: Z-e-m-i-t-i-s. You want to get in touch with all--

U. Golts: Ah, Z-e-m-i-t--is ah, i-s, yes.

Vapaa: i-t-i-s.
U. Golts: You always tend to put in an extra-- (laughter)

Vapaa: No, I don't particularly have to get in touch with them, but--. Well--

R. Golts: Sure. They're stories will be a lot more interesting than ours. (laughter)

Vapaa: Oh, no. I wouldn't say that.

U. Golts: Zemitis ah, that ah, that means something like ah, --

R. Golts: Little--little land.

U. Golts: Yah. Little land. It could also have to do with Zems---the one who lives in a valley. You know.

R. Golts: Yeah.

U. Golts: (unintelligible) Zems means low. Zemit means earth. So, this could either mean little--little earth, little soil, or-- or it could mean one in the low land.

Vapaa: Now, when you say zems, you mean z-e-m-s.


Vapaa: Right. Incidentally let's talk a little bit about the Latvian language. How many letters are in the Latvian alphabet?

U. Golts: I never counted them. But there are a couple of ah--ah extra letters. There--well, let's do it this way. There are a couple of letters that ah, we don't have that the Americans have. We don't have the letter y. We don't have--

R. Golts: x.

U. Golts: ...the letter x. We don't have the letter q. Ah, we have the letter h and f only in--in our own words. F and h are not native Latvian
sounds. And even now older Latvian people simply don't pronounce the h. Ah, there is a Latvian name Helena, but the older people always keep saying Elena. Ah, and the f sound is still changed by some older people into a p sound. The word for factory is fabrica. But the really old people still tend to say pabrica.

Vapaa: Um-hum. But it would be spelled f?


Vapaa: F-a-b-r?

U. Golts: Yes. But f and h are not native Latvian sounds. And--

Vapaa: I see. How about your vowels?

U. Golts: Well, the vowels ah--we have a capital--eh--eh, couple of ah, dip-thong type of vowels. We have a letter ah--the letter o, but it's always pronounced as a dipthong. It's pronounced like ua--like the Finnish uo combination--ua. And ah, the o sound as such only occurs in borrowed words like Octoberists (sp) and eh--the month of October.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

U. Golts: But ah, native Latvian ah, words don't have the o sound. They pro--have only the ua sound. And then there is the dipthong ie. It's spelled i-e.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

U. Golts: But otherwise we use--but the letters of course as far as just look-ing at the letters they are all the same as we have in English for the vowels.

Vapaa: Yes.
U. Golts: They just pronounce—ah, pronounce them different.
R. Golts: Some of them are actually marked long.
U. Golts: Ah, yes. Ah, ah, we—we mark long letters—
R. Golts: It's like in my maiden name Rosans, actually there is a long a here.
U. Golts: Yes. Every long vowel is marked. Like was Zemitis would have a long e, Zemitis. Otherwise we would pronounce it Zemitis.
Vapaa: Um-hum.
R. Golts: And then we have the—
U. Golts: And the Spidola, the girl's name, has a long e—the Spīdola.
R. Golts: And then we have the—
Vapaa: You pronounce it e? Instead of i.
U. Golts: Yes. Just like the Finns do.
R. Golts: We have these funny little marks—I don't know what you call these, honey, for—
U. Golts: Softening marks.
R. Golts: Yeah.
U. Golts: Ah, if you put a comma below a k it m—it is pronounced like a ke.
R. Golts: So this is ǧakis.
R & U Golts: Which means cat.
R. Golts: Ǧakis is a funny k.
Vapaa: Um-hūm.
U. Golts: It always is ah, ah, the linguists would call it a palletization. Ah, if you put a little roof on top of a c that is palletizing into a ch. If we didn't have that, you would pronounce it st.
R. Golts: And the same thing with my s back here.
U. Golts: And, yeah. The eh--the s become sh when you put the little roof on top of it.

Vapaa: Yes.

U. Golts: And ah, the letter g if you put a little roof on it ah, becomes ge.

Vapaa: Ge.

U. Golts: Ge. Ah,

R. Golts: Like gimene


Vapaa: Gimene. Let's spell it then.

U. Golts: G-

Vapaa: G-i-m-s?

U. Golts: G-i-m-e-n-e. G-i-m-e-n-e.

Vapaa: e-n-e

U. Golts: And you have a little roof over the first g.

Vapaa: Over the g. All right.

U. Golts: Ah, roof like that. Except it--it's--you know, this upside down roof.

Vapaa: All right.

U. Golts: That's what we call--ah, we call it the roof in Latvian.

Vapaa: Upside down roof.

U. Golts: Yeah. (laughter)

Vapaa: That's a good description.

U. Golts: And ah, it ah, designates palletization.

Vapaa: Um-hum.
And then we have such sound combination as that we spell dzzzz--d-z. Let's see. It's ah, hard writing upside down.

That's all right. You don't have to.

Ah, that's pronounced zit. And if you put a little roof on the--or on the z here it becomes ju. And if you put a little roof on the z standing alone it's zzz.

Um-hum.

Ah, the basic principal ah, in Latvian alphabet is that every sound has only one sound value. And every sound value is designated by one letter. So ah, ah, it's quite phonemic.

Do you pronounce every sound?

Yes, we pronounce every sound.

Yes.

And ah, if you just--if you have learned the principals of Latvian spelling, you can hear a totally strange Latvian word that you never have heard ever in your life before and you will know how to spell it.

And a can't have like 5 different sounds like it does in--

Now, you being of Finnish extraction ah, ah, ah, if you were familiar spelling you wouldn't have any problems because ah--

No, I wouldn't.

...they also follow that principal that ah, you never can get confused.

No. Well, this is one thing that I've noticed ah, Uldis and Rita as ah, over the years is that I've been mispronouncing my name all my life. It makes my mother mad when she hears Vapaa. (laughter)
And ah, Dr. Monroe even calls me that. And ah, I've been called all through my life. In fact, people have wondered because of my slanted eyes, you know, whether I was ah, occidental.

U. Golts: Ah, you oriental you mean.
Vapaa: (voices overlap - unintelligible) ...you see. Oriental.
Excuse me. Oriental.
U. Golts: Yeah.
Vapaa: And ah,--
U. Golts: Ah, and ah, do you--do you know that actually you are?
Vapaa: A little bit.
U. Golts: Yes. Because ah, the Finns originally migrated from the East--
Vapaa: Yes.
U. Golts: ...and--and this is quite ah, ah, characteristic of the Finns--high cheek bones and little bit slanted eyes. Lots of Latvians have that because they have gotten mixed up with the Estonians which also are a Finn-Ugaric (?) people. And ah, I think that ah, my wife has little bit of that. And especially my wife's mother. Ah, she ah, looks quite Finnish.
Vapaa: Yes. She's a blond somewhat, isn't she? Just like you are.
U. Golts: And she has high cheek bones.
Vapaa: Yes.
R. Golts: That's because we've been out in the sun. (laughter)
Vapaa: That has nothing to do with it, Rita.
R. Golts: It does too, though. He's—he's a lot blonder now than he usually is.

U. Golts: Yes.

Vapaa: Well look, I think we really will wind this up now—

R. Golts: Whoopee. (laughter)

Vapaa: ...and I want to thank you for ah, participating on this ah, recording and I'm sure that the people at the University will appreciate what you've had to say and what you've ah, told us. I hope that our typist can get it down the way—pretty much—. Maybe I'll let you edit it for me before I have it ah—

U. Golts: It will probably be all right. (laughter) I trust you.

Vapaa: No. No.

R. Golts: There's a lot of extra junk in there, but it'll be taken out.

U. Golts: And if any of you have any translating jobs or teaching jobs, just contact George Vapaa. (laughter)

Vapaa: Well ah, actually I think perhaps I can be of some help. Ah, ah, in this. I know a lot of people. And ah, certainly we'd like to see you fully occupied. And I think you'd like to be fully occupied.

U. Golts: I would definitely want to be that. Yes. I don't feel right when I'm not working.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And ah, a person that's used to being a teacher is used to being busy.

U. Golts: That's right.

Vapaa: And ah, making a contribution to society. And I think this is ah, a fine attitude. And really the only attitude that most of us should
have as we ah, go through life. So, again I want to thank you for--both ah, helping with this tape. And ah, we'll close it off at this point because we're just about out of tape anyway, if I haven't run out by the time I finish this sentence.

U. Golts: It has been very enjoyable.

Vapaa: Thank you.

THE END