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Oral History Clip Title: Welcome to Canada

Theme: Canadian Identity

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(Ismé)

I came here really in the beginning of 1970 actually, and I think I really liked living in Canada as I got used to it, I liked the Canada way, I like the fact that we were much more live-and-let-live kind of society, I liked the multiculturalism, all of these things, you know, I really felt very much part of it, that I was enjoying it, and that I wanted to be a Canadian, I didn't want to be an American, though I'd had a green card. I was no longer wanting to be a South African because the passport wasn't getting me anywhere – I'm joking, no I wasn't a South African anymore, it was home but it wasn't me, so yeah, I just, I don't know that there was any point to it, I thought: yeah wow I'm Canadian! but I had to make a decision about becoming a Canadian citizen and in those days I think you had to wait five years so kind of on the fifth anniversary of whatever I showed up at the citizenship building on St. Clair and said I want to apply for Canadian citizenship and they...I still had a South African passport and they looked at my passport and they were very "Oh, what do we do" because South Africa was no longer in the commonwealth, and they didn't quite know what to do with us, so they treated us as British in those days. So he said - and I had this vision of myself, you know I was gonna go to the citizenship court and I was gonna have gloves and I was going to have a hat and I was gonna study, I was gonna learn who the prime ministers and premiers were, which I still don't know, some I know, but not many, and I was going, you know, all this stuff, and it was gonna be a whole big deal and I was gonna raise my hand, and they said to me, "Well come this way" and I was taken into an office, and the gentleman said, he saw my passport, he saw my paperwork, that I'd been here five years, and he said, "OK. Welcome to Canada!" and I said, "That's it?" and he said "Yeah, that's it." He said, "But we only, we have to ask you to do only one thing, you have to take an oath of allegiance or whatever -" he said, "But if you an objection to doing it on a bible, you can do it on a cookbook" I said "Fine" and I was Canadian.

(Interviewer)

And that was it?

(Ismé)

[Smiling] That was it.