**Paul:** Good morning, this is Paul Seacrest for the National Park Service. Today is Monday November 14th 1994. I’m in Poultney Vermont and that’s spelled P-O-U-L-T-N-E-Y with Margaret Disorda.

Mrs. Disorda came from North Wales in 1920. She was five years old at that time. Mrs. Disorda, can we begin by you giving me your birth date please?

**Margaret:** March 31st 1915.

**Paul:** March 31st 1915, and where in Wales were you born?

**Margaret:** Well, it’s near Canavan. It’s up in Llandwrog.

**Paul:** Can you spell that please?

**Margaret:** L-L-A-N-D-W-R-O-G.

**Paul:** Pronounce it one more time for me.

**Margaret:** Llandwrog.

**Paul:** You said that’s in North Wales?

**Margaret:** North Wales.

**Paul:** Do you have any recollections yourself of the town that you lived in?

**Margaret:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What do you remember about the town?

**Margaret:** Because I was over there with my mother and I’d been over there since then too.

**Paul:** What do you remember as a five-year old about the town?

**Margaret:** Going to school, walking over to my grandmother’s going to church.

**Paul:** Can you describe what the town looked like a little bit?

**Margaret:** Yes, it was ... it had like terraces up, so a narrow street, a terrace that went up, an incline. Of course, we were up high, it’s more up in the mountains and so it was high and you could look down. You could see the ocean and you could see Canavan, you could see a lot of different little towns all around everywhere from there. Of course, everybody walked, walked, walked over there.

**Paul:** Is there one building that was in town that sticks out in your mind as a little girl?

**Margaret:** Yes, the church and the school.

**Paul:** What did the church look like?

**Margaret:** Any ordinary church I would say. I do have pictures of it from when I was over there and the school was the same when I went back, not much change.

**Paul:** Do you remember the house that you lived in, in Wales?

**Margaret:** Yes, I took a walk up there. I wasn’t quite sure of it because it’s more like a duplex, here you would call a duplex.

**Paul:** You are talking about when you went back to visit?

**Margaret:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What do you remember as a child of the house?

**Margaret:** Well, I think it was like ... it had an open stairway and it seemed ... had a fireplace and a back room and not too much of anything.

**Paul:** Was it a freestanding house or was it attached?

**Margaret:** It was attached. It was more like duplexes around here.

**Paul:** Was it in town or out of town?

**Margaret:** It was in this little village, yes.

**Paul:** Do you know what the house was made out of?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t think so but I would assume probably stone.

**Paul:** Do you remember how many rooms it had?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t, no I don’t.

**Paul:** Who lived in the house?

**Margaret:** As far as I can remember, it was just my mother and I and my sister. I think my father was away at that time. See, he was in the service, First World War you see.

**Paul:** What was your father’s name?

**Margaret:** Evan, E-V-A-N.

**Paul:** What was your maiden name, his last name?

**Margaret:** Morris, M-O-R-R-I-S.

**Paul:** Tell me a little bit about your father’s background, his family history.

**Margaret:** He lived near what they call Criccieth and it was Llanystumdwy. There’s a castle there in Criccieth of course and he lived right near where Lord George lived because he was buried right there in a little cemetery, near a little bridge and now he has this one very big rock for a marker.

**Paul:** What do you know about your father’s family history?

**Margaret:** I think he was brought up more or less by his aunt. I think his mother had to go out to work and his aunt brought him up.

**Paul:** What was his personality like?

**Margaret:** He was easy going. He was more my coloring. My mother was dark, her hair was dark and my father’s was a reddish color.

**Paul:** What were some of the things that he liked to do in life? What things gave him pleasure in life to do?

**Margaret:** You mean when he got older or when he was over here?

**Paul:** Over here, just anywhere, whatever you remember- things that he enjoyed doing.

**Margaret:** Yeah, well, not too much of anything different. I guess he ... he liked his animals, liked to walk with the animals, dogs and stuff like that. Of course, he worked in the quarries and...

**Paul:** Did he work in the mines...?

**Margaret:** In the slate mines.

**Paul:** In the slate mines here in America?

**Margaret:** Yes.

**Paul:** Did he do that work also in Wales?

**Margaret:** No, because he was younger and I think they went off to service. I think at first, they probably in agriculture helping on farms and things like that over there. Then I think when the First World War came along, that’s where a lot of them went, into the War and after that, that’s when he came over here.

**Paul:** Do you know how old you father was when he went into World War I, when he went into the service?

**Margaret:** He must have been around 19 or 20, I think, somewhere like that.

**Paul:** Did he ever talk to you later on about his experiences during World War I?

**Margaret:** No, no. I know that he’d went. I can remember him say into Turkey and [inaudible 00:06:11] and all of those big ... he went all through it from beginning to end, yes.

**Paul:** But he wasn’t inclined to tell stories about it?

**Margaret:** No, they didn’t. No, they didn’t tell much stories. They didn’t any tell ... I wish now that my mother and father had told us a lot more about when they were over there and about different things. But you know what, those times, the little kids should just go aside, sit aside and be very quiet and not make any noise. The grownups would get by themselves and talk and poor kids didn’t know.

**Paul:** Kind of kept in the dark about everything?

**Margaret:** Yeah, yeah, it was true, yeah.

**Paul:** What was your mother’s name?

**Margaret:** Catherine Ellen.

**Paul:** What was her middle name?

**Margaret:** Evans.

**Paul:** E-V-A-N-S?

**Margaret:** Uh-huh.

**Paul:** Tell me what you know about your mother’s family background.

**Margaret:** Well, she had quite a few brothers and sisters. Two of them came over here and none of her brothers came over. One of her brothers was quite a good singer, a very good singer. He won a lot of trophies and things over in Wales.

Two of her sisters as I said, came over here. The first one, and this is the one where when came here, I think when we went into Boston, that was he and her name was Mary. She married this man by the name ... his last name was Gasper. Well, she-

**Paul:** Gasper?

**Margaret:** Gasper.

**Paul:** G-A-S-P-E-R?

**Margaret:** Uh-huh. She died at childbirth. Then later on, my mother’s other sister, Elizabeth came over here and married the same man. They had a boy by the name of John. Well, they named him John but we always called him Jackie and both of those children are living now. Jackie is in Florida and Mary is in ... the first baby is in Massachusetts.

**Paul:** That’s an interesting story, isn’t it? This is all before you came to the United States that this all happened?

**Margaret:** No.

**Paul:** You were already here when this all happened?

**Margaret:** Yes, because the first one, Mary that came over, was in Boston. This was why I think we went into Boston because they picked us up there at the port. That’s what I think. We came then probably by train from Boston. That’s the train was running then, not many cars.

**Paul:** You went from Wales to New York City, to New York City to Boston by boat and then train from Boston to [inaudible 00:08:59] New York?

**Margaret:** That’s the only thing that I can think of. No, no.

**Paul:** Poultney, Vermont?

**Margaret:** Poultney, probably into Rutland and then the trains did come through from Rutland to Poultney and to Granville down that way.

**Paul:** Tell me what your mother’s personality was like.

**Margaret:** Well, she was sort of stubborn. She was the boss.

**Paul:** Can you give me a story that illustrates how stubborn she was?

**Margaret:** Yeah. Well, when got into New York in Ellis Island, of course, they were giving us shots for vaccination, shots, you know and how your arm would break out and be very sore? She would be so mad because they did that, she’d rub it off. Then of course, they put us in this big tub to bathe when we got there to Ellis Island and everybody and their brother were in that tub. She didn’t want us to go in where everybody else was bathing, so she gave them a hard time there. I thought sure they’d send us back.

She was the same with everything around through her life. What she made up her mind to do, that would be it.

**Paul:** Strong willed?

**Margaret:** Yes, yes and it had to be that way. She wouldn’t change. She would not change. There’s a lot of other stories I could tell you too but...

**Paul:** Is there one that comes to mind?

**Margaret:** Yes, my father got hurt in a quarry one time. A block came down because he was in a pit.

**Paul:** This was in Poultney?

**Margaret:** Yes, South Poultney. It came down, hit his shoulder, went down, hit his arm, hit thumb so his arm was just about hanging. Of course, in those days, they didn’t have no rescue squad or anything. They finally got him home and they wrapped big Turkish towels around him and took him to the hospital. Well, the doctors there, of course, they wanted to cut his arm off and my mother said no.

She said, “You’re not ...” She says, “If he’s going to die, he’ll die with his arm on.” Well, his arm got better.

**Paul:** A good example of your mother’s stubbornness working to your advantage.

**Margaret:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Paul:** In Wales, is there a story that you remember when you were in Wales of something that you did with your mother or something that your mother maybe taught you how to do? Some interaction between you and your mother in your early childhood.

**Margaret:** I don’t know. The only thing that I can remember is that she used to dress us up and we’d have to walk to my grandmothers. Of course, she’d always give us a warning not to do this and do that. We walked a lot, we walked a lot.

**Paul:** Who’s grandmother was that? Was that...?

**Margaret:** My mother’s mother.

**Paul:** What do you remember about your grandmother?

**Margaret:** Well, I remember she was kind of ... she’s the type that liked children so we really related to her very closely. I’d go into her place because they had these little stone houses. I remember lots of times we’d have to stay with her for some reason or another. I don’t know, maybe my mother was out working or housework or doing something. I don’t know but she’d take care of us once in a while.

Of course, it was one of these small places and a few of her sons were living there. I can remember when we had to go to bed. We had to crawl up this ladder into the loft like.

**Paul:** What did your grandmother look like?

**Margaret:** She was very short and she became blind later on. Later on, she was blind.

**Paul:** Before you left Wales was she blind?

**Margaret:** She might have been partially for all I know. It might have been coming on you see because then later she was.

**Paul:** Do you know what her name was?

**Margaret:** She’d remarried. You see, a lot of the women over there remarried because a lot of the men died from this slate dust. A lot of them remarried and she married this Jones.

**Paul:** What was her first name?

**Margaret:** I don’t remember what it was. I’ve probably got it some place on my mother’s...

**Paul:** But she was an Evans before she became a Jones?

**Margaret:** Yeah. I think it was Margaret.

**Paul:** Margaret?

**Margaret:** I think her name was Margaret. Probably that’s why my name is Margaret.

**Paul:** Is there something that you remember your grandmother teaching you as a small child?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t think so, no.

**Paul:** You mentioned men dying in the slate mines. Was your grandfather a miner?

**Margaret:** Yeah, he must have been. I don’t know anything about him.

**Paul:** He was gone before you...?

**Margaret:** I think he was, yeah, yeah, because she was remarried when we were small I believe.

**Paul:** What about your father’s parents? Did you have any...?

**Margaret:** I don’t know much about his parents and he never mentioned them. I guess being brought up by his aunt ... only his sisters- only his sisters.

**Paul:** Do you know if they were dead or were they just out of the picture?

**Margaret:** When you mean...

**Paul:** He was brought up by his aunt but were...?

**Margaret:** I think his mother took off and had to go work on a farm somewhere. I think that was it but I don’t remember anything about his father. I know there is a story about that but whether it’s true or not I don’t know. I looked on his certificate and it says, “Father unknown,” so I don’t know. There’s nobody’s around that I could ask now because they are all gone you know over there that I could ask.

**Paul:** What was the story that you remembered about that?

**Margaret:** Well, this story that was told to me by cousin that I have over there now from one of his sisters. In, I think its Criccieth, the little town next to where he was born, they were building this big hotel, I think it was called St. George Hotel, I don’t know. They said that his father worked down there and fell off from that building and was killed.

Now, whether that’s a true story or whether it was a story in order to cover up father unknown business, I don’t know but these are things I’d love to find out. Of course, those days, they hid all this stuff. Today, they wouldn’t, they wouldn’t think anything of it today.

**Paul:** Tell me what you remember of food in Wales as a child. What do you remember eating?

**Margaret:** Well, it would be the same thing probably that we try to make here sometimes. It’s mostly beef and lamb that they would cook, big dinners like on Sunday. Of course, all through the day, if the men came home from the quarries earlier, they’d have like tea and probably fresh bread. They always made fresh bread over there and that’s one thing I could remember my grandmother doing too, it’s that fresh bread.

**Paul:** Can you describe how your grandmother made the bread?

**Margaret:** I suppose they didn’t have stoves like they have today. You see, there were ovens in the fireplaces like you see. The fireplace would have little ovens on.

**Paul:** The fireplace would be in the kitchen?

**Margaret:** Yeah, in the wall. They’d have their tea when they came home from work probably around 3:30 or 4:00 and probably the fresh bread or maybe some cakes that they had made, little breads that they’d make or like fruit cakes or whatever. Then later on, they’d have their dinner. The men coming home from the quarry would be cold and damp and they would have to have a little something to keep them going until suppertime I suppose.

**Paul:** What about for special occasions, was there a certain food that was prepared for a special holiday or a special event?

**Margaret:** Yeah, I would imagine it was the plum puddings and they’d make rice puddings, a lot of puddings and a lot of pies. They make a lot of pies, pastries, over there.

**Paul:** Did your mother work outside of the house to support the family?

**Margaret:** At that time, I don’t know unless she went once in a while to help somebody with housework. I don’t quite remember.

**Paul:** As a small child, was there a chore that you were expected to help out with in the house?

**Margaret:** No, not that I know of, no, because we were a lot younger then.

**Paul:** Yes, you were just a little child.

**Margaret:** Yeah, yeah.

**Paul:** What about ... you said you had brothers and sisters, yes?

**Margaret:** I had one sister but she just died a few years ago.

**Paul:** One sister, was she born at that time? Was she...?

**Margaret:** Yeah, she was, yeah.

**Paul:** What was her name?

**Margaret:** Winifred.

**Paul:** Is there story that you remember as children of something that you and your sister did together?

**Margaret:** Yeah, we always had to be together and walk over to my grandmother’s together. She used to be more of the pet of the family than I was and that didn’t sit very good with me. I don’t know why, probably because she was from that side of the family and I was more like the other side of the family, my father’s side of the family.

**Paul:** Was she older or younger?

**Margaret:** Younger, she was only three when she came over.

**Paul:** There were just the two kids, just you and your sister. Do you remember games that you played as a young child?

**Margaret:** Over there?

**Paul:** Yes, over there.

**Margaret:** No, not really, no. No, I don’t think so.

**Paul:** Is there a memory of celebrating perhaps Christmas in Wales prior to coming to America?

**Margaret:** I don’t think ... I can’t remember that. I know we used to have to go to church for little pieces that we’d say or sing. The kids have to always sing in church over there, those little things, that’s all.

**Paul:** What language did you speak?

**Margaret:** Oh, Welsh.

**Paul:** You spoke Welsh. What religion were you?

**Margaret:** Welsh Presbyterian.

**Paul:** Presbyterian. Was there some way that you practiced your religion at home?

**Margaret:** No, we went to Sunday school. Even when we came over here, they still had Welsh churches. It would be a lot of the older Welsh people that were on the board or the church members or deacons, whatever you want to call them. They used to make us learn Welsh and study in Welsh in the bible, the music, the hymns and whatever.

**Paul:** Do you remember perhaps a prayer in Welsh that you could say for us on tape?

**Margaret:** No, not that I can remember right off.

**Paul:** Tell me a little bit about school. How many years had you gone to school prior to coming here?

**Margaret:** I don’t know what they call it nursery school or what they called it over there. The kids ... even my sister went to school and she was only three or probably a little younger at that time.

**Paul:** Do you remember something specific about going to school?

**Margaret:** Yes, I can remember, we had to learn to sew and all that stuff, yeah, color. You had to do that.

**Paul:** Was the school somewhere near the house?

**Margaret:** Yeah, it wasn’t too far from our place. We’d walk down this little grade and pass the church and the school was around there.

**Paul:** Is there a dress or a piece of clothing that you remember from this period?

**Margaret:** No, but I can remember how we were dressed in little short dresses and the cushiony socks and the big bows in your hair.

**Paul:** Do you remember what kind of clothing your mother wore at that time?

**Margaret:** Well, I suppose these long dresses like some of those pictures there. The long dresses I guess and the white blouses.

**Paul:** Can you describe to me how people did laundry in Wales?

**Margaret:** Oh, they had to scrub the clothes naturally in tubs with a scrub board. They had big barrels outside where you have to catch water. We did that over here too when we first came because we were in the rural areas. They’d get the rainwater in the tubs and the big barrels and that’s what you washed your clothes in, you took water out of that.

**Paul:** It’s interesting.

**Margaret:** Of course, they always ... they’d scrub the outside of their sidewalk. If they ever saw my sidewalks, they’d have 15 kittens because they’d be on their hands and knees scrubbing those sidewalks. I’ve seen them do that too. Even the later years they were doing it.

**Paul:** Your father served during World War I. did he come back to the family when he was finished?

**Margaret:** Oh, yes, because I remember he brought me a teddy bear from some place. Went I went to school, there was a wall like. I put the teddy bear down and went somewhere and I came back and it was gone.

**Paul:** Was life different in the house after your father came back?

**Margaret:** I don’t quite remember what he ... what that was at that time or where he went or what he did. I don’t know. It don’t seem to me like he worked in the quarries over there but maybe he did. I think he did, yes, because I remember he had a cat and that cat would always go to meet him in the mornings when it was time for him to come from work so he must have been. He must have been working in the quarries.

**Paul:** Do you remember what the cat’s name was?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t. I don’t like cats.

**Paul:** Was that the only pet that you had or did you have any...?

**Margaret:** Over there, yes.

**Paul:** Did you have a garden or anything like that that you remember?

**Margaret:** I don’t know if they had a little garden out there or not. I don’t remember. There was not too much room there you know.

**Paul:** Was there a back yard to the house?

**Margaret:** Probably a little one, not even a quarter size of this maybe.

**Paul:** Was there a bathroom in the house?

**Margaret:** I don’t know if they had a bathroom or they used the pots or what they did. I think they did that at my grandmother’s so they must have done it at our house too because I don’t ... there was no ... I know there were no bathrooms, I don’t think but I don’t remember going. Only probably on the pots maybe, I don’t know. What they did with afterwards, I don’t know.

**Paul:** Tell me who wanted to come to America in the first place?

**Margaret:** I think my father or maybe my mother too because she had a sister here.

**Paul:** What did you know about America as a little girl in Wales?

**Margaret:** Nothing.

**Paul:** You had no conception of what this all meant?

**Margaret:** No, no.

**Paul:** Did your father come first?

**Margaret:** I think so because he wasn’t with us when we came. I’m sure he did but how far or how long before we did, I don’t know. These are things I’d like to find out but I can’t.

**Paul:** Did your father come here to Poultney when he came? Where did he go?

**Margaret:** I think he went somewhere else to begin with like Utica, Rome or some of those places for a short period of time. But I would definitely want to back here with people that ... relatives and things that my mother had around here. He didn’t have relatives here but my mother did.

**Paul:** Do you know what he did when he got here before you came?

**Margaret:** Well, yes, I suppose he had to find us a place to live and also, he was working in the quarries.

**Paul:** He got jobs in the quarries?

**Margaret:** Yes, yes.

**Paul:** How long had he been here before you came over?

**Margaret:** This is what I’d like to know. I really am not sure, no. They never talked about that, those things.

**Paul:** Tell me about what you remember if anything about getting ready to leave Wales.

**Margaret:** I can remember [inaudible 00:26:30] by the church and this woman lived by the church and she had knitted some mittens for us as a present, a going away present. I know that I lost one of mine of course. I didn’t know whatever happened to it. I felt bad that but that’s ... I don’t remember saying goodbye to anybody or anything like that.

**Paul:** Do you know anything about the process of getting papers and passports and that sort of thing?

**Margaret:** No.

**Paul:** Do you remember being photographed for a passport?

**Margaret:** No.

**Paul:** No, do you remember what you took with you? What did your mother pack?

**Margaret:** Trunks probably, trunks but what she had in there, I don’t know.

**Paul:** Do you know what month it was that you left? What time of the year was it?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t.

**Paul:** You’re just not sure?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t know, no. The only thing I can pick up or think of is that we must have landed here somewhere March, April, somewhere around March and April in the 1920s I think. I’m not sure.

**Paul:** You think that you went to Liverpool to get the ship?

**Margaret:** Yes, I do because that’s the closest. We weren’t too far from Liverpool.

**Paul:** Do you have any memory of the trip to Liverpool?

**Margaret:** No, I can just remember something about walking and there seems like there were no [inaudible 00:28:17] or something and we tried walk through [inaudible 00:28:24]. I can remember smelling that and seeing it but where it was, I don’t know.

**Paul:** Much to your mother’s horror?

**Margaret:** Yes.

**Paul:** Well, let me see, do you remember the name of the ship?

**Margaret:** No, these are one of the things I’d like to find out.

**Paul:** What do you remember about being on the ship?

**Margaret:** I can remember us playing and swinging like on swings and there was [inaudible 00:28:54] work underneath us, you could see down. I think there was some boys down there with long sticks or something that would stick them up and pinch us when we sitting on the seat there. I can remember that and my mother, I told my mother and of course, she’d get mad and she’d go down after whoever was doing that.

**Paul:** Do you know where you stayed on the ship?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t remember too much about that.

**Paul:** What about eating on the ship?

**Margaret:** I don’t remember that either.

**Paul:** Do you remember how long this ship voyage was?

**Margaret:** I think we were getting kind of tired but sorry, about that, no, I don’t know.

**Paul:** Did anyone get sick in your family?

**Margaret:** Yeah, I can remember this woman that was with us coming over. My mother said to her ... they were ... how I know this is because when they got together over here, they’d say something once in a while, fool around.

She got sick and my mother says, “Oh, never mind,” she says, “I’ll take care of you,” she says. The first thing, you know, my mother was sick. It was just vice versa then so they got a big kick out of that I guess.

**Paul:** Do you remember there being a storm on the boat while it was coming over?

**Margaret:** No, no, no, I don’t.

**Paul:** Do you have any other recollections about perhaps being on deck or something that might have happened while you were on this ship?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t.

**Paul:** Do you know if you had a toy or something with you? You’d lost your teddy bear and well...

**Margaret:** Yes, I lost my teddy bear. We didn’t have much of anything I guess in those days. No, I was lucky to get that I guess.

**Paul:** Do you remember when the boat came into New York Harbor?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t think so. All I can remember is being around there with a lot of people around. We had to get undressed and put this blanket around us and kids being kids go and keep the blanket on, this is to get in that stupid tub.

**Paul:** This at Ellis Island?

**Margaret:** Yes.

**Paul:** Do you know how long you were at Ellis Island?

**Margaret:** It must have been quite a while because I know we had to answer a lot of questions or my mother did. Then, they had to ask the kids questions. There was one officer, I can remember this. He wanted to know what my name was. My mother always called me Maggie and I hated that name. I wasn’t going to tell him what my name was. We almost got sent back for that. I wouldn’t tell him what my name was.

I would not tell him that it was Maggie. My mother called me Maggie, of course, my name is Margaret. That’s what he was trying to make me say and I wouldn’t say it. Isn’t that awful?

**Paul:** What about ... you have a younger sister with you, what recollections do you have either on this ship or at Ellis Island of having this younger child with you if any?

**Margaret:** No, we always had to more or less stay together, stick together.

**Paul:** Because your mother’s got two young kids to...

**Margaret:** To watch. Well, we had to sit there and do nothing. We didn’t move, that’s how she took care of us.

**Paul:** You mentioned that another woman came with you.

**Margaret:** Yes.

**Paul:** Was this woman from the same town in Wales?

**Margaret:** Yes.

**Paul:** Do you remember what her name was?

**Margaret:** I don’t know what her name was. I know for her first name was Elizabeth and then of course, I don’t know ... I know her married was Jones. I thought she got married before she came over but she didn’t. She got married when she got over here because that’s what her daughter told me.

**Paul:** I see and so when she married, she became Elizabeth Jones?

**Margaret:** Jones.

**Paul:** Do you have any other recollections of Ellis Island and being on the island?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t.

**Paul:** Were you ever fed on the island?

**Margaret:** I don’t remember that either.

**Paul:** Do you remember what happened with your luggage? Did you have it with you or …?

**Margaret:** I don’t know, I don’t know.

**Paul:** Now, from Ellis Island, where did you go?

**Margaret:** Well, I thought we got back on the ship and went to Boston. That’s all I can remember.

**Paul:** Why does that stick out in your mind?

**Margaret:** Because I can remember saying to my mother, “I don’t want to get back on that ship again,” and somebody said, “Well, it is going to be very long this time.” Then, I spun onto something that said Port of Entry of at Boston but I still know I was in Ellis Island so what the connection was, I don’t know.

But as I say, we had a ... I can remember there is a picture. I don’t have it right now. This is amongst some of my sister’s things. Having my sister and I’s picture taken with my mother’s sister and she was pregnant at that time. She was in the middle and we were one on each side of her.

It had to be that we went into Boston and they picked us up there because it wasn’t long afterwards or it couldn’t have been because she pregnant then. She died of course at childbirth.

**Paul:** That’s right, that’s a way of timing the time you [inaudible 00:34:12]

**Margaret:** Yes, that’s the only thing I can put together. If her husband was still living, I could find out but he’s dead too, everybody is dead.

**Paul:** Well, of course, there could be a death certificate for the woman and if you had the death date of the woman, you knew that you would have been there just prior to that.

**Margaret:** Yes, well, I was, sure.

**Paul:** Do you think that you stayed in Boston for an amount of time?

**Margaret:** I don’t know, I don’t know. They must have packed us on the train and sent us on, I don’t know.

**Paul:** But your father didn’t ... he wasn’t in Boston or in New York?

**Margaret:** He wasn’t with us, no, no.

**Paul:** Was anyone in New York that you knew that met you?

**Margaret:** No.

**Paul:** No, okay. Where did you go from Boston? You went on a train and where did you...?

**Margaret:** Evidently came to Rutland.

**Paul:** Do you remember that train ride at all?

**Margaret:** No, no.

**Paul:** Did your mother ever relate to you later how she felt about this whole process of coming to America? Did she want to come?

**Margaret:** She probably did, I don’t know. Of course, everybody thought it was going to be great over here but it was pretty rough not, like it is today.

**Paul:** Do you remember as a child how you felt about leaving your home and coming to America?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t think I minded it. Kids, experiencing something exciting probably.

**Paul:** Something new to do.

**Margaret:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Tell, what happened when you got to Rutland. Where did you hook up with your father again?

**Margaret:** I don’t know. I really don’t know.

**Paul:** Where are you when you do remember?

**Margaret:** On South Poultney. The first place we lived in was ... we’re in Poultney now, it was South Poultney. I don’t know if you came through South Poultney today or not. Did you come down [inaudible 00:36:01]?

**Paul:** [inaudible 00:36:02] Wells on Route 30.

**Margaret:** Around the lake you came from?

**Paul:** We came around the lake.

**Margaret:** Oh, yes. Well, if you didn’t come around the lake, kept straight through, you’d have come through South Poultney. Well, anyways, it’s up on 31, 31. You came in Poultney through [inaudible 00:36:22] Street that way. At the corner there, is ... 31 goes that way and you came this way off in 30.

**Paul:** But you remember being in an apartment?

**Margaret:** No, it was a house. It was a double house and the house is still up and I don’t think it’s ever been painted. If you went by there, you could notice that. It was two parts, like a duplex I would say, yes.

**Paul:** What was the inside? Can you just walk me through the house on the inside?

**Margaret:** Yeah, well, there was a little brook next to it, was mostly nearing the road. As you went through ... we’ll, it was upstairs and downstairs. It wasn’t side by side, it was upstairs and downstairs. The room was a big room and I think the kitchen and everything was there and maybe there was a living room for this. Then of course, you’d go out back and you always had a shed out there and you wash clothes and things there. Then of course, there was bedrooms upstairs.

**Paul:** Did the house have electricity?

**Margaret:** Oh, no.

**Paul:** How did you light the house?

**Margaret:** Lamps, I still got some of the lamps. Then we lived there and there was the school not too far from there, across the road probably. I was late every day.

**Paul:** How long did you live in that house?

**Margaret:** [inaudible 00:37:55] we had to learn English too in that school.

**Paul:** Do you remember any of that experience of learning?

**Margaret:** It didn’t seem like it was that bad really. We had a nice teacher.

**Paul:** You say it was a nice teacher, why does that teacher stick out in your mind?

**Margaret:** Because she was more like a motherly teacher. She was very good to you, very patient and helping and that she wouldn’t get mad at them. If you didn’t know something, she’d just be nice about it.

**Paul:** Do you remember her name?

**Margaret:** Yes, she just died recently too. My son even had her when he went to school.

**Paul:** What was her name?

**Margaret:** She lived right across from my sister too. She was Ida, Ida Hughes.

**Paul:** Ida Hughes?

**Margaret:** Ida Hughes. Her husband I think was a First World War from here probably, not from across. He was in the First World War too.

**Paul:** Can you describe the school building for me?

**Margaret:** Yes, this was way up in South Poultney now, the first school we ever went to over here. It was a big ... a two-roomed school. It was a few grades in one room and then the other higher grades in the other room. Of course, the teachers had to come up by horse and buggy up there so the winter too was hard. Some of the boys in that area would come and start the stoves and things for them.

**Paul:** Is that how the school was heated?

**Margaret:** Yeah, the stoves, yeah.

**Paul:** Do you remember any interesting stories about being in school, maybe something that happened one day when you were in school during this early period up here?

**Margaret:** There, well, no. I can ... no, well, a lot of things would happen, different little things would happen. We’d put our boots out in the hall out in a row. I had a brand new pair of boots and I thought some of the other kids switched the boots, while we weren’t around and we used to get more trouble over that. I suppose my boots were supposed to look new all the time.

**Paul:** Were there other immigrant children at this school?

**Margaret:** I think most of them were born here but they did originate from Wales.

**Paul:** Was this mostly a Welsh community that you were living in?

**Margaret:** Yeah, definitely, this whole area was. This whole area here was all Welsh people at one time.

**Paul:** Was it a combination of Welsh from Wales and Welsh descent who had been born here or was it mostly people who had come from Wales?

**Margaret:** Well, a lot of them ... I don’t think too many of those children came from Wales. Their parents did but not the children until later then there was one other family that I remember that did come over after we did. But then of course, there were Polish people around here too because the Polish people, you know ... but they had their own little section.

**Paul:** Did the Welsh people associate with the Poles?

**Margaret:** They didn’t want you to, really didn’t want you to but of course my mother’s relatives that were here ran a store up there. Of course, the Polish people would come down and trade there and that’s about it. Of course, they worked in the quarries just the same as the Welsh I think.

**Paul:** That was going to be my next question. Did the Poles also work in the quarries?

**Margaret:** Yeah and some of them had farms to.

**Paul:** Can you talk to me a little bit about the slate quarries and what the men were actually doing? How was the slate mined?

**Margaret:** Well, it all depends. There were different sections of it. Now, like some men would be working in the pit, digging the slate ... not the slate but the blocks I think you’d call them, blocks out. Then they’d hitch them onto this chain and this carriage up above, like in the engine house, when it would roll them up and then they put them up on the yard.

Then it would be split. Then you’d get them split a certain way and then they’d cut them in shapes for slate in different sizes. Then they had a machine that would punch holes in them like you put nails in. They’d be different sizes, whatever sizes somebody would want.

Then there were different colored slates around here too. Now, the Granville area has the red slate and we had the green slate. The black slate is Pennsylvania and the green and the gray...

**Paul:** A number of large Welsh populations is here?

**Margaret:** Yes, right.

**Paul:** Well, now were the slate quarries here used exclusively for slate shingles or was it mined for different purposes?

**Margaret:** Well, at first I think it was more or less for the roofs, for roofs. Then of course, they do have them for blocks and probably some floors.

**Paul:** They would be cut differently for those?

**Margaret:** Different, yes.

**Paul:** Now, your father was working in the mines.

**Margaret:** He was in a pit, quarry pit, yes.

**Paul:** You told me the story about the piece of rock hitting his arm.

**Margaret:** Yeah, right.

**Paul:** Are there any other stories that you remember about your father working in the quarry, stories that he might have told?

**Margaret:** A lot of the men got hurt at that time.

**Paul:** This is a dangerous job?

**Margaret:** Yeah, it is.

**Paul:** What kinds of things could happen?

**Margaret:** Well, as I say, things could fall onto you if you are down in the pit. That was the most probably important thing. Or if you were probably halfway up, you might slide down or something and things like that.

**Paul:** Do you remember an occasion where something did happen in the mines?

**Margaret:** Oh, yeah, a lot of times men would get hurt. Someone got killed. I remember when my friend’s father got hit in the head and he wasn’t too good after that I guess but ... and then I think another man got hurt the same time as my father did that one time. But he wasn’t ... I think he lost a leg that was it. I know one of them did anyway. Probably some of the big blocks slid down on his leg or something.

**Paul:** Did the slate quarry owners offer any kind of insurance or compensation to their workers?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t think so. I think you had to have your own insurance if you were lucky. Their insurances were sold terribly ... everything was expensive because you didn’t make much money, let’s put it that way.

**Paul:** Do you know how much your father made working in the mines?

**Margaret:** No, I don’t. It wasn’t very much. Of course, if it was raining, you lost a day and you didn’t get paid for it like they do today. Of course, a lot of the days in the winter, you couldn’t work either, snow and ice and whatever. You didn’t get much money in those days.

**Paul:** Did your mother work outside of the house?

**Margaret:** She worked but I can’t remember when she started whether we were at the first house that we lived in way up when we first came here how long she’d been ... It was quite a while before she went to work. But down here, Downtown here they had this big Manhattan shirt factory and that’s where a lot of the women worked, in the shirt factory at that time.

Way up in South Poultney, they used to send a truck after the women. It was more like a platform truck but they had benches on each side of it for them to sit. It was of course wide open but at least it was a ride, you weren’t walking.

**Paul:** Did the Polish women as well as the Welsh woman work in the factories like the Polish men and the Welsh men working together in the mines?

**Margaret:** All I can remember is mostly all the welsh women. I don’t know what the Polish women were doing, probably working on the farms. Yeah, most of them I think worked on the farms. Yes, yes, until later years. Because they really couldn’t speak English as well as we did, the Polish people of course. English in Welsh, you learn that anyways. You see, they teach English in the Welsh schools.

**Paul:** Oh, so you were...?

**Margaret:** We knew something, yes. My mother or father, they had any trouble speaking English.

**Paul:** Do you remember them trying to improve their English skills at all when they were here?

**Margaret:** No, they just [inaudible 00:47:14] but amongst themselves, they always spoke Welsh. Of course, they’d speak Welsh to us, but of course, we’d be going to schools. We’d answer them after back in English. Then after a while, you forget your Welsh and you try to talk Welsh and you weren’t saying it right, they laugh at you so then we forgot about [inaudible 00:47:31]. Yes, my father did anyway.

**Paul:** Did your parents ever want to go back to Wales to live?

**Margaret:** My mother always got ... once in a while, she’d get discouraged or disgusted with somebody and she’d like to go back to live. But this is ... my father never said that. He probably lost all connections anyways or he was more isolated I guess than she was with her family. He was more isolated from his family. He didn’t know too much about them I guess. I don’t know why.

**Paul:** Did your father develop any kind of health problems from his job?

**Margaret:** Well, yes, later years, he ... of course, being in the service too I think didn’t help. In the First World War, a lot of them were gassed and all of that stuff. Well, yes, I think his lungs were getting bad, yeah. He finally developed, I think, a carcinoma, that he had a tumor of the intestines. He suffered a long time with that.

He had pain in his side and he went to doctor after doctor. “Well, there’s nothing wrong with him. There’s nothing wrong with him. There’s nothing there.” The poor man was suffering out and there’s nothing wrong with him till after he died, then they knew what was wrong with him. Disgusting.

**Paul:** You said your mother did work in the Manhattan shirt factory?

**Margaret:** Yeah, for years.

**Paul:** Can you describe for me what he job was at the Manhattan shirt factory?

**Margaret:** She was what called examiners. They stood up all day and it was threads, you know or if there was something wrong with it, they’d have to send it back to have it corrected or if there were threads, they’d have to snip those off. If there was something wrong like maybe sewed wrong or something. Everything had to perfect on those shirts.

**Paul:** How did your mother feel about having to work in the factory?

**Margaret:** I don’t think she minded too much. The only trouble is she ... I don’t know what later on in years it was that they didn’t have that truck running or what but she had to walk to work a lot of times. We moved from way up South Poultney, halfway down.

**Paul:** How long did you live in the first house?

**Margaret:** Oh, gee, I don’t know. Let’s see, five, six, seven, probably maybe five years, I don’t know.

**Paul:** That’s quite a long time actually.

**Margaret:** Then we moved to the second place and we went to Little Red Schoolhouse that was halfway down. From there, she had to walk all the way to Poultney. Even in the wintertime, I can remember she used to have to wear creepers a lot of times because it would be icy on that hill and cold. The poor thing walked all the way to work and back. I don’t know how she ever did it but she did.

**Paul:** What did your parents do for entertainment?

**Margaret:** They didn’t do much in those days. You couldn’t go very far. No, they didn’t. We used to go to church a lot of course. We had little plays and things for church. We used to have some of the men teach us these plays and things. They were pretty good plays too lots of time.

**Paul:** Were they performed in English or in Welsh?

**Margaret:** English I think.

**Paul:** Were there active Welsh organizations up here? Like, was the St. David Society...?

**Margaret:** Well, we didn’t have ... I think they used to years ago have one and I think it fizzed out. Yeah, so the ladies … I think the ladies had some kind of a society.

**Paul:** I’m just wondering...

**Margaret:** I don’t know if they called them Rebekah’s because I don’t know what they called them.

**Paul:** Maybe the church did this. Was there some institution that offered social events to the Welsh people up here? Either a Welsh Society or a church might have sponsored a dance or something.

**Margaret:** No, they didn’t. Oh, no, they didn’t dance much, no. All I can remember church suppers or something like that. That’s about it that they’d have. Of course, you couldn’t get around. We didn’t have no cars or anything. Of course, we didn’t have horses. Once in a while, some of them would have a horse and a buggy and we’d get a ride on that to come to Poultney. My mother did her shopping and then they’d come back home and we’d stay with somebody while she was gone.

**Paul:** Did your parents have any more children once you settled here?

**Margaret:** No, no.

**Paul:** Just the two girls?

**Margaret:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Just the two girls. Did you go through high school in Poultney?

**Margaret:** Yes, I went to TCA over here, it’s a college now. Troy Conference Academy it was.

**Paul:** Troy Conference Academy. Did your parents ever attend any kind of school or night classes or anything here in this country?

**Margaret:** No, no.

**Paul:** Nothing like that. What was the first paying job that you got?

**Margaret:** Me? Well, as kids, we used to probably take care of somebody’s kid or something or go out and clean somebody’s house probably for ... if you got paid, you were lucky. Yeah, they expect you to do things for nothing. We used to go and help an old woman get her ... she lived in the house that we lived in the second time before we got it, help her get wood and things and she’d make this candy, fudge candy of some kind. Brown sugar candy, I guess that was it. Poor old lady, we’d find a piece of string or something and then that’s how we got paid, a piece of candy.

**Paul:** Was she Welsh?

**Margaret:** I think she was, I’m not sure.

**Paul:** I should have asked you this when we talking about your mother in the factory. Was the factory unionized? Was your mother a member of the union when she worked there?

**Margaret:** No, they didn’t have unions in them. Well, they probably did have unions but that shop wasn’t.

**Paul:** What about the slate quarry?

**Margaret:** I think the slate quarries did. I’m not sure because I remember some of them going to work and I can remember being with a bunch of ... well, on the corner, on my uncle’s store up there in South Poultney because the quarries were up above his store there. Had us all on a corner where [inaudible 00:54:03], they would go to work. It reminds me, at Telescope down here. They’re on strike right now too you know.

**Paul:** Is that a factory?

**Margaret:** Well, they made the Telescope ... the furniture, it’s a furniture place. Not house furniture. It was the furniture for outside. That’s what they are making down there.

**Paul:** When was the first time you went back to Wales?

**Margaret:** I went back ... my mother went by herself. She scrimped and saved and went over because she wanted to see her mother.

**Paul:** How long was that before she went? From 1920, when you were arrived, what year did she go?

**Margaret:** Gee, I don’t remember. I went with her ... what was it, it 1940... Well, it was after War, about ’47, ’48, somewhere there, I went back with her. Why she’d want to go was because she wanted to see her mother because I guess her mother was getting bad and she wanted to see her before she died.

We got everything all ready to go and she got worried her mother died but we went just the same. That was quite an ordeal to go through.

**Paul:** How did you feel when you went back to the town that you been a child at? How did you feel emotionally?

**Margaret:** Well, I liked to look around and I can visualize. A lot of the places came back to me and things like that but I didn’t ... in fact, I really didn’t want to go. That was the whole thing. I really didn’t want to go but I just went because she wanted me to go. I wasn’t too interested but we stayed over there for what two, three months. That was quite a while.

**Paul:** How did she react to being there?

**Margaret:** Well, she felt terrible of course when we got there. Well we did see ... we went into London, which we shouldn’t and took the train from London. Boy that was something because we didn’t get the express train. It was a local and we stopped at every station and we had these darn stinking trunks. This is how stubborn she was. She wouldn’t change and get something easier. She had to do things the hard way.

Like me, I’d fly or I’d get a bigger ship or something but no, not her. She had to do things the old-fashioned way and make it so hard. Of course, at that time, those poor people didn’t have much to eat over there because it was right after the War. They didn’t have nothing, absolutely nothing so she tried to bring sugar over to them in a tin and she had it sealed with tape or something of course naturally so the covers wouldn’t come out.

Well, it took us so long to go through customs there because of the way she did things. She made it look terribly hard and these people didn’t believe her but she was just that stubborn. She was going to stick with it. Oh, God, if we sat there three years she would have stayed there. They kept shaking those stupid cans and I said, “Oh, mother, let them have the damn thing and let’s get out of here,” “Oh, no, no way.”

**Paul:** When you look back on your life now, what do you think is inherently Welsh about you?

**Margaret:** Well, you always try to forget these things. In fact, people who came over didn’t really want anybody they were immigrants so they try to hide a lot of things. They didn’t want anybody to know. You didn’t broadcast it. But when I went to church, we had a ... it all depends on who you had there for a Sunday school teacher. You had to do the Welsh.

**Paul:** But now, is there’s some aspect of your personality you think of as being very Welsh or is there something that you enjoy doing that you feel is part of your Welsh heritage?

**Margaret:** Well, yes, I’m getting back into it now. For a while, I’ve been paying attention, you know how it is. Now we’re getting back into it, so the St. David Society. Being that I went back over there and met some of my relatives, on my father’s side, especially, they are the ones I wanted to meet you see because I didn’t know anything about them just on my mother’s side really.

**Paul:** It’s a dark corner in your history.

**Margaret:** Yes, so this is what I wanted to find out. A few years ago, Janice and I went over. We wanted to go over …

**Paul:** For the sake of the tape, I want to say that Janice is a member of the St. David Society. Jan Edwards is her name.

**Margaret:** Yes, she was the Jones. Well, anyhow, we got the bright idea to go over there. Well, okay, so we got going and I said, “I don’t know how I’m going to get a hold of these people because there’s nobody left over there to ask on my father’s side.” What do you suppose happened?

I get this letter. When I went over with my mother, I had met two of my father’s sisters but then after that, I lost track of them. I get this letter when we were wondering where to go on, who to contact from this cousin of mine and he says, “My mother just died. When I was going through her things and I found this letter where you had written and a picture of your son.” After I came back, I had a son.

He says, “I took a chance to write to see if you were still around and still in the same place and something,” and so right there we got our in, right there. He took us everywhere, he introduced me to all my relatives over there on that side and this was just great how that turned out. Wasn’t that funny?

**Paul:** Great, we need to end right now. We are just about out of time. This is Paul Seacrest signing off with Margaret Disorda on Monday November 14th 1994 in Poultney Vermont. Thank you very much.

**Margaret:** You are welcome.