**Janet:** Today is November 12th, 1995. I’m here in the Lutheran home in Worcester, Massachusetts. I’m with Martha Gustafson who came from Sweden when she was 22 in 1927. You came to this country with your husband and your two first children.

**Martha:** First Children.

**Janet:** Today, Mrs. Gustafson is 91 years of age and looks absolutely wonderful.

**Martha:** Thank you.

**Janet:** I want to say that I’m looking forward to whatever you can remember. Let’s start at the beginning, if you would say where in Sweden you were born.

**Martha:** I was born [inaudible 00:00:42]. That’s in the Central Sweden. I lived there till I really went to the United States. I lived there in different places there.

**Janet:** But within that same-

**Martha:** Yeah, in that area all the time.

**Janet:** What’s your birth date?

**Martha:** My birth date? That’s in July 27th 1904.

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

**Martha:** Ausgasta

**Janet:** How do you spell that?

**Martha:** A-U-S-G-A-S-T-A, Ausgasta.

**Janet:** Do you by chance know her maiden name?

**Martha:** Her maiden name was Anderson.

**Janet:** Anderson and your father, his name.

**Martha:** His name was Oscar.

**Janet:** Oscar. Did you have sisters and brothers?

**Martha:** Oh yeah. We were nine sisters and brothers. I was next to the youngest one. I was four and half years old when my father died and my brother was only six months old. My mother took care of the family after that and she used to weave and she started to do that work to make a living. She did wonderful. We were nine children, we never starved, we never went without clothes. She was just a wonderful person.

She used to sit at night … I can remember waking up in the morning sometimes at four o’clock, five o’clock, probably I had to go to the toilet and she sat at a study. She made curtains, she made material for dresses, and she made rugs, and she made a lot of tables’ clothes, beautiful linen table clothes that she sold. I still have some of them at home, but I gave it away to my children. I divided it out to my children so they could have something to remember her by because she was really remarkable person. When she had been dead for 40 years, they wrote an article about her and her picture was in the paper in there.

**Janet:** In this country.

**Martha:** No, in Sweden after she was gone for 40 years, they wrote what she had done. That was my mother.

**Janet:** She supported all her children.

**Martha:** She supported. Of course, my elderly brothers they were working then because they were 21, and 18, and 17 and things. So they working and [inaudible 00:03:47], but she supported us.

**Janet:** We’re turning this off. We’re resuming now. You were telling about your mother and how she supported the entire family. Now what kind of a person was she?

**Martha:** She was a quiet person. She was very religious. Every Saturday she took us children to her husband’s grave, to my father’s grave every Saturday. Of course, in the winter time when it was cold she couldn’t go, but when she would go with us always every Saturday afternoon. We went with flower to the grave.

**Janet:** She was a Lutheran?

**Martha:** She was a Lutheran.

**Janet:** What about church? Did you go to church?

**Martha:** Yes, we had to go to church.

**Janet:** What about religious occasions? Do you remember religious holidays, and what you did-?

**Martha:** Yes. We had a lot of holidays there. There was all more religious in here. There were all from the bible. I can’t even describe them. We had one that Jesus got blessed when the … No, I can’t explain in the bible on the year. He got blessed from heaven. They were a certain day.

**Janet:** On Easter?

**Martha:** No, Easter was Easter. I can’t remember exactly what day it was, but I remember it was [inaudible 00:05:41]. What was the name of that day now?

**Janet:** What did you do on that day?

**Martha:** Nobody worked. It was a holiday. The first holiday we had after that was in February when there was [unclear 00:06:09], what we call [unclear 00:06:10]. It was when Maria got blessed. We call that [unclear 00:06:18]. That was in the last part of February or somewhere. It was a holiday. Nobody worked then.

**Janet:** What did you do? You went to church?

**Martha:** We went to church and we went to [inaudible 00:06:38] and had coffee, and homemade things, and coffee, bread and cake and cookies, and things like that. Went door to door and visit each other. We did a lot of that in Sweden. We went to visit. We were very caring about each other, what happened to them, very caring.

**Janet:** Now the town that you were living in … Borgore.

**Martha:** Borgore, yes.

**Janet:** How big a place was that? Were there a lot of people there?

**Martha:** There was a small city or town outside Norrkopen, largest city.

**Janet:** What was the largest city?

**Martha:** Norrkopen.

**Janet:** How would you spell that?

**Martha:** N-O-R-R-K-O-P-E-N, Norrkopen

**Janet:** Would you go to Norrkopen for certain reasons? Would you go to the larger city?

**Martha:** Yes. We used to go to do some shopping and things like that in larger stores [inaudible 00:07:56] because it was a small city but we-

**Janet:** What was the kind of work that most people did in Borgore?

**Martha:** They made pitchfork. My father made … I can remember going and visit him in the shop though I only was four and half years old. I used to go 11 O’clock in the morning with coffee, and coffee bread, and things like that and four O’clock in the afternoon because they worked a long day. I used to go down with coffee. I had a little coffee pot and then [inaudible 00:08:35] in the little basket.

This was my job when I could, when and I was old. I was my father’s petsy. I used to go down with the coffee. He had … It was a big oven, like an oven where they heated all the material that they made those pitchforks from. Those boys were standing there taking care of it. Then my father took those hot … and put it in a big machine and then stepped on something and made it split in the material. After that he made the pitchfork out of it.

Some people made the screws and baths. They made an awful lot of everything in different parts of the factory. In one part of the factory they made the material, wood material, something out of wood like clothes pins. I never saw clothes pins. They made them here like they did. They had a spring in the middle. Some of the clothes we were having, they still clothes that I know because that’s what they made [inaudible 00:10:11].

They made tops to play with. They had a pretty string around them and played with those tops. They made them there too. They were quite busy working people there.

**Janet:** Do you have any particular toys that you remember?

**Martha:** Huh?

**Janet:** Do you remember any toys you had when you were a little girl?

**Martha:** Any toys? Oh yes. The most I had were the dolls that were made out of everything, all kinds of material, probably porcelain heads. The head was made of porcelain. The other things were made. My mother made the other things, the arms, and the body, and all those. She used to make that.

**Janet:** You played dolls. Did you play by yourself or did you have friends?

**Martha:** No. They were a lot of friends. We lived in an apartment building so there was quite a few people there. I had a lot of friends. I wouldn’t say a lot. We were at least eight or nine I guess. They used to go together and play.

**Janet:** What else did you play with your friends besides with the dolls?

**Martha:** What?

**Janet:** What other things did you play with your girlfriends?

**Martha:** We played games, all kind of games, and things like that. We used to run and hide. We had to find out what it is was hiding and [inaudible 00:11:55], things like that. We played game on it.

**Janet:** Can you describe the apartment where you lived? Could you describe the apartment of where you lived?

**Martha:** My brothers, they lived upstairs on the third floor in that apartment building because we lived on the first floor with my mother and the girls. They were three room and then there was a big hallway we walked into. In one of those three rooms, she had the loom where she was doing the weaving on.

**Janet:** How many girls were there? How many girls?

**Martha:** One girl was married so we were four girls.

**Janet:** Four girls. How many brothers?

**Martha:** We were nine. There were five brothers but we didn’t live in that … They were married. Three of them were married. Three of my brothers were married.

**Janet:** What did your brothers do for work as they got older?

**Martha:** They worked in the factories. They made screws and all that kind of material.

**Janet:** Did they have to do an apprenticeship or did they go after school? After they finished school, they went--

**Martha:** Yes, not at that time. They picked it up at father’s [inaudible 00:13:50] whatever they did see.

**Janet:** Did you have grandparents there in Sweden that you knew?

**Martha:** No. My grandmother’s husband, he’d been to the United States. He went to Maine and they never heard of him. They never know what happened to him. That was on my mother’s side, but on my father’s side, his parents went to the United States and they took all the children with them but my father and my aunt didn’t like it over here so they went back to Sweden.

**Janet:** Do you know when your father was here in the United States?

**Martha:** I couldn’t say. I know my grandmother and grandfather died in Holden.

**Janet:** Holden, Massachusetts.

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Did your father stay here very long before he returned?

**Martha:** No, that I don’t know either. I don’t think he stayed a year.

**Janet:** This was before he was married.

**Martha:** Before he was married so then he went home. He met my mother and married her.

**Janet:** Did they ever tell you about how they met?

**Martha:** No. I can’t say that they did.

**Janet:** Were they both from the same town?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Can you think of any other holidays or festivals?

**Martha:** Yes, of course, there was New Year but there was nothing too special about New Year. Nobody worked and then we had a holiday where we took out the Christmas tree. That was in January. What did we call that? Tusonde Knut. That’s what we called that holiday.

**Janet:** Could you spell it?

**Martha:** 20 … I just spelled it, 20 [inaudible 00:16:17], T-U-S-O-N-D-E K-N-U-T.

**Janet:** its two words?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Janet:** What does it mean?

**Martha:** We threw out the Christmas tree. There was 20 days of the Christmas.

**Janet:** I see. What would happen on that day?

**Martha:** We danced around the Christmas tree. We all danced around our Christmas tree. We had candy that was wrapped into paper, beautiful paper and those inside they were candy.

**Janet:** What kind of candy?

**Martha:** There was regular candy, there were hard candy. In all the houses, the mother or father stood and gave out this candy. We all were supposed to have exactly used as many candy from the Christmas tree.

**Janet:** Before that the candies were hanging on the--

**Martha:** Before that, they were hanging on the tree. We danced around the tree and then after we danced around the tree, we took those candy off in a pile and then my mother in my house took one candy here and one there till we all got used as many.

**Janet:** What else was on the tree besides the candy?

**Martha:** We had light, and we had all kind of decorations, and bells … Oh yeah. Christmas is a big holiday in Sweden. It’s the biggest holiday.

**Janet:** What did you do on Christmas day or Christmas Eve?

**Martha:** We started Christmas in Sweden in the 13th of December. That’s when we celebrated the nun that came over from Russia years and years, hundreds of years ago. She wasn’t a Lutheran, Russia was Roman Catholic. They were strict against the Lutheran people. She escaped over that Baltic Sea and came over to Sweden, but she was a nun really.

She was so nice. She went from house, took all clothes and washed them, and took them apart and made clothes for younger kid’s side of it. This all she did, went from house to house to do that. She was very nice person. From there and on, we celebrate that at 13th of January and we call it Lucia day...

**Janet:** L-U-C-

**Martha:** Lucia. How do you spell Lucia?

**Janet:** C-I-A.

**Martha:** Lucia Day.

**Janet:** That was the 13th of December.

**Martha:** That was the 13th of December. That was the first holiday in December. It was a holiday too. Nobody worked to celebrate the way she did it. Then we …

**Janet:** When you celebrated that day, what did you do?

**Martha:** We just celebrate. We didn’t work. We went to visit each other.

**Janet:** What was the next holiday in-?

**Martha:** Then come Christmas.

**Janet:** What did you do on Christmas Eve? Did you anything--

**Martha:** Christmas Eve, first we went and got the Christmas tree, but we did that before Christmas Eve, probably a couple of days. That was all decorated Christmas Eve already. There was a lot of food. We started to cook before Christmas all kinds of foods. The herring was done and what we call [inaudible 00:20:58], all kinds of meat put together in one that you cut up. What do you call that? You call the [inaudible 00:21:09]. All kind of food was cooked before Christmas because Christmas you were not supposed to work [inaudible 00:21:17].

Everybody went from house to house. If you came into one house, you couldn’t get out of there. You had to have cookies or something because otherwise you walked out with a Christmas.

You had to treated on something, doesn’t matter who you were, we never saw you before in all our life. If you happened to come into our house, they had to be treated on coffee or coffee bread, and cookies, and homemade stuff.

That was Christmas Eve. On Christmas day we went to church. It was very quiet Christmas day. It was a quiet day, but then we had a second Christmas, second day of Christmas. Then they started to go out and dance and have fun people…