**Kate:** Good afternoon, this is Kate Moore for the National Park Service. Today is the 25th of June 1994. I’m in Aberdeen Washington at the home of Sylvia Katainen, who came from Finland in 1924 when she was six years old. Why don’t you begin by giving me your full name?

**Sylvia:** My full name is Sylvi Annikki born May the 7th 1918.

**Kate:** Could you spell your name please for us, for records later?

**Sylvia:** My first name?

**Kate:** All your names.

**Sylvia:** Sylvi, S-Y-L-V-I, Annikki, A-N-N-I-K-K-I.

**Kate:** Your maiden name?

**Sylvia:** Lagerbom, L-A-G-E-R-B-O-M.

**Kate:** Where were you born?

**Sylvia:** Pori, Finland.

**Kate:** Could you spell Pori please?

**Sylvia:** P-O-R-I.

**Kate:** What size of town was Pori at that time do you remember?

**Sylvia:** I think it was about a sixth in size of the larger cities there, so it had to have over 100,000 population.

**Kate:** What did the town look like? What type of town was it? What was the major industry?

**Sylvia:** The major industry was cotton mill, and pulp, and paper, and [soundy 00:01:39] work.

**Kate:** What type of town was it? Could you describe it at all?

**Sylvia:** Lively town, with two parks making a cross in the main city, dividing it in four quarters.

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

**Sylvia:** My father’s name was Kaarle Johannes Lagerbom.

**Kate:** Could you spell the first names please?

**Sylvia:** K-A-A-R-L-E, Johannes J-O-H-A-N-N-E-S.

**Kate:**  What was his occupation?

**Sylvia:** He was a laborer.

**Kate:** What type of labor work did he do?

**Sylvia:** Any kind, he was good in everything.

**Kate:** What did he look like?

**Sylvia:** Handsome young man, very handsome. Tall, approximately six feet, loved music, good dancer, good singer.

**Kate:** What about his personality and temperament?

**Sylvia:** Jealous.

**Kate:** Of whom or what?

**Sylvia:** Jealous of anyone who said a bad word about his family.

**Kate:** Is there a story about your father that you remember from your childhood that typifies him?

**Sylvia:** Yes, if he couldn’t get us up from the bed we were sleeping in, he would come and rattle there under the bed. He would put the phonograph playing and he would take his accordion and his harmonica. If there wasn’t noise then, we all got up.

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

**Sylvia:** Selma.

**Kate:** Spell that.

**Sylvia:** Selma S-E-L-M-A. Elizabeth E-L-I-Z-A-B-E-T-H and her maiden name Heinonen.

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

**Sylvia:** H-E-I-N-O-N-E-N.

**Kate:** What was her occupation?

**Sylvia:** Home wife.

**Kate:** What did she look like?

**Sylvia:** Petite, dark haired, very quiet, good voice in singing. Held more to herself.

**Kate:** What were her chores around the house?

**Sylvia:** She just kept taking care of us wild ones.

**Kate:** Is there a story about your mother that you think tells about her that you remember from your childhood?

**Sylvia:** Yes. It is that I had her too short of a time. She was only 37 when she had a nervous breakdown in America.

**Kate:** When she came here?

**Sylvia:** She lived here for about three, four years, and then she had it.

**Kate:** We’ll get to that in a moment all right. We’ll talk about that later. What about your brothers and your sisters, how many did you have?

**Sylvia:** I had a brother and a sister that followed us when we came to America.

**Kate:** What were their names?

**Sylvia:** Pentti Johannes.

**Kate:** Pentti you spell?

**Sylvia:** P-E-N-T-T-I.

**Kate:** Yeah and Johannes?

**Sylvia:** Johannes, J-O-H-A-N-N-E-S. He did have a third name too Armas, of course.

**Kate:** Pentti Armas, yeah. How old were they in relation to you?

**Sylvia:** Two years apart we were.

**Kate:** You were the eldest?

**Sylvia:** Yes. We were six, four, and two.

**Kate:** Pentti came after you?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Then your younger sister?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** What about your house in Finland, what did it look like?

**Sylvia:** I don’t know how you can describe it.

**Kate:** What was it made of?

**Sylvia:** Wood, my dad built it himself.

**Kate:** What color was it?

**Sylvia:** If I remember right, it was white with green trimming.

**Kate:** How many rooms were in that house?

**Sylvia:** Two and a half.

**Kate:** What were those two rooms?

**Sylvia:** Kitchen and a family room and then a little nook for a bedroom.

**Kate:** How was it heated?

**Sylvia:** Wood.

**Kate:** Wood stove?

**Sylvia:** Wood stove.

**Kate:** Was there a garden?

**Sylvia:** Yes, as you see the potatoes are.

**Kate:** What did you grow besides potatoes, anything else?

**Sylvia:** No, because my dad was from a farm, so we had a chance to get all the other vegetables and grain stuff and all of that from …

**Kate:** From your grandparent’s house?

**Sylvia:** Yes, his mother and dad.

**Kate:** Where did they live?

**Sylvia:** In Nakkila.

**Kate:** Where is that?

**Sylvia:** Nakkila near Jyvaskyla, Jyvaskyla, Nakkila.

**Kate:** Could you spell Nakkila and Jyvaskyla.

**Sylvia:** They are right near Pori. Jyvaskyla is only about, I think, 20 minutes by train from Pori.

**Kate:** How do you spell?

**Sylvia:** Nakkila is, we have a saying, “See how the Nakkila and [inaudible 0:06:44]”. It’s a nice small farming area. It’s spelled N-A-K-K-I-L-A, Nakkila.

**Kate:** Did you keep animals at all?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** Did any of your grandparents or other family members live in the house with you?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:**  Who did the cooking in the family?

**Sylvia:** Mother.

**Kate:** What was your favorite food?

**Sylvia:** Riisipuuro and [inaudible 0:07:17].

**Kate:** What are they in English?

**Sylvia:** Rice pudding and berry soup.

**Kate:** Did you help cook at all?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** Describe the kitchen, where the kitchen?

**Sylvia:** [Inaudible 00:07:31] furniture. My dad built all the furniture, every piece of furniture in the home. They were pretty steady all of them, and had to be with us wild ones running around all the time.

**Kate:** What wood did he make it out of, all the furniture?

**Sylvia:** I think. Could it have been birch I think? Then, well what was commonly used them days.

**Kate:** What about meal time, what was meal time like?

**Sylvia:** Be quiet and eat.

**Kate:** You all ate together?

**Sylvia:** Yes we did.

**Kate:** How many meals a day did you eat?

**Sylvia:** One heavier meal when dad came home from work. Then mom just fixed something for us children whenever she had a chance to get us together.

**Kate:** Did you eat breakfast?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** The family members nearby, your grandparents, they were, as you said, Nakkila?

**Sylvia:** Yes and mother’s mother lived not too far away either, in Pori.

**Kate:**  Was your house in town or out of town?

**Sylvia:** Just the outskirts of Pori, just the outskirts there.

**Kate:**  What section in the Pori was that?

**Sylvia:** It’s called Paviljonki.

**Kate:** Were you especially close to someone in the family?

**Sylvia:** My dad.

**Kate:** The place where your grandmother, your mother’s mother lived, where was that?

**Sylvia:** She lived about 50 minutes from us, so she was in the same area. It’s called [inaudible 0:09:21], sixth part of the town.

**Kate:** Do you have any anecdotes about any of your family members, funny things that happened that you remember?

**Sylvia:** Now to tell you the truth, it’s been more sad than funny. I just don’t, at the moment now, remember any.

**Kate:**  Anything sad too you can say if you feel like it okay?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that we drifted all apart.

**Kate:** Later in life?

**Sylvia:** Yes, early in life.

**Kate:** Do you want to talk about that now or wait until after we talk about some of the other facts?

**Sylvia:** It would go back to where my dad wanted to come to America. He just got the fever soon after the house was finished and we had moved in. He wanted to go, and he couldn’t get his relatives to sponsor him here in America.

My mother had a friend whom she had worked for as a young girl and they were in America. They were the ones that sponsored my dad.

**Kate:** Where were they living?

**Sylvia:** In Aberdeen.

**Kate:** All right.

**Sylvia:** This is the way my dad got here first.

**Kate:** We’ll get to that in a second when we talk about what happened to the family because of that move. Before you left, in Finland, what was religious life like then?

**Sylvia:** Very good. I went to Sunday school, and in no way did I want to miss any.

**Kate:** It was fun?

**Sylvia:** My dad didn’t care more so, but my mom was very much for it. She was happy that I wanted to go.

**Kate:** Did your parents go to church?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** What denomination were you? What religion?

**Sylvia:** Lutheran, Evangelical Lutheran.

**Kate:** Did you practice at home any prayers before bed or?

**Sylvia:** Before going to sleep we did as little children, we did yes.

**Kate:** Do you remember any of those?

**Sylvia:** [Finnish 0:11:39].

**Kate:** We’ll write that down.

**Sylvia:** Very common Finnish prayer.

**Kate:** What about before meals, did you pray before meals?

**Sylvia:** No we didn’t.

**Kate:** What about holiday celebrations, what were your favorite holiday celebrations in …?

**Sylvia:** Christmas of course.

**Kate:** Why?

**Sylvia:** Because Santa Claus would come, even if you didn’t have much, but it was just that suspension that you were in to have Santa come. You never saw him, because them days they threw the bag from the door and disappeared.

**Kate:** What did you eat during Christmas? Was there any special foods or?

**Sylvia:** Yes, we had that rice pudding and that berry soup. We had potato casserole, rutabaga casserole, beet salad.

**Kate:** What about meat did you eat a meat dish?

**Sylvia:** Ham.

**Kate:** Christmas ham?

**Sylvia:** Christmas ham.

**Kate:** Did you go to church on Christmas?

**Sylvia:** Yes we did.

**Kate:** As a family?

**Sylvia:** I can’t remember if we all went, but I know mom went with us.

**Kate:** Did you go to school in Finland?

**Sylvia:** Yes I did.

**Kate:** What was school life like there?

**Sylvia:** Returning from America I went into the fifth grade.

**Kate:** First you came...

**Sylvia:** I mean the sixth grade in the public school, in Helsinki.

**Kate:** We’ll go back to that then afterwards what school was like. What did you do for entertainment as a child? What type of games did you play? Do you remember any?

**Sylvia:** Singing and dancing, [inaudible 0:13:37] yeah. That’s what we loved to do.

**Kate:** In childhood, what would you say were your best moments?

**Sylvia:** I guess they were those early years that I remember when, grandma came over and we would dress the Christmas tree, Christmas Eve. She would watch me because I was the one that wanted to do it.

I was a short, stubby, little girl so she was scared that I’m going to turn the tree upside down the way I was going. I did burn my good nice Christmas dress, because I lit a candle down below where I should have lit the upper ones first. I was the one that they had to watch all the time. I got into mischief.

**Kate:** You liked when grandmother was there with the tree?

**Sylvia:** Grandma was good. She always said to my mother, “You don’t know how to bring up children.” Mother was so good, tender hearted, she couldn’t scold us. We had a chance to do whatever we wanted.

**Kate:** Which grandmother was this now?

**Sylvia:** This was my mother’s mother. Dad’s mother was a stun one. You wouldn’t do that with her. Thank heavens she lived further, because kids had a freaking...

**Kate:** You said your father decided to come, and you said that your mother had a friend?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Do you remember him getting ready to leave?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** What happened?

**Sylvia:** My little sister held me, the sister that was with us when we came, her. She was my father’s favorite child and she was only so little as one year old. Dad took her in his lap and we had a picture taken of all of us.

It was hard for him to depart because the children were so young. He just had that what we call sisu, and he carried it with him and left. We were put on the kitchen table, sitting on the kitchen table because our window looked out towards the road that he walked. He had to walk to get the bus or whatever he took, I can’t remember.

We watched him until he disappeared. My little sister held me said, “Papa [inaudible 0:16:26], papa [inaudible 00:16:28].” “Daddy is not coming, daddy is not coming.” “Papa [inaudible 0:16:35], papa [inaudible 00:16:37]” That’s how much she could speak already. She was a little above a year old. It was sad.

**Kate:** Did your mother react? Was your mother...?

**Sylvia:** She more or less left us sitting on the table and disappeared. I think she hurt so bad that she just went and [inaudible 00:16:56] somewhere else. She wouldn’t show it to the children.

**Kate:** When you say sisu, how would you translate sisu in English?

**Sylvia:** Guts, determination.

**Kate:** That’s the typical Finnish thing?

**Sylvia:** Yes. We are known here, all over America for that.

**Kate:** What happened? How long was your father in the States? How did you join him?

**Sylvia:** Father was a year and then he sent us, his family, a ticket. Mother sold the house and off we went.

**Kate:** What did he do in Aberdeen when he came here?

**Sylvia:** He came straight to Aberdeen because of the family that sponsored him lived here. He came here. He didn’t stop at Butte, Montana where so many did. He was not a man to go underground anyway, farmer’s son; he wouldn’t have liked that job anyway.

**Kate:** You mean the mines?

**Sylvia:** Yes. Many stopped first in East America and went into the mining and then they came to Butte, Montana and stayed there. Then later on they got to know that this is the country to come to if you like to be outdoors. They transferred there, Brooklyn, this area. My dad went right away to a saw mill.

**Kate:** To a saw mill to work?

**Sylvia:** That’s what he did.

**Kate:** Do you remember selling the house and your mother’s attitude toward it? Did she want to come?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** Did she say so as much?

**Sylvia:** She feared the trip. Her mother was saying that she’s crazy with three children, to start to even think about traveling to an unknown world part. Dad sent the tickets, so we came.

**Kate:** You heard your grandmother say that to her?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Did she ever say anything to the children about it?

**Sylvia:** No. I had my ears always open. I was what they call [Finnish 0:19:03].

**Kate:** How would you translate that in English?

**Sylvia:** Old in young age.

**Kate:** Precautious?

**Sylvia:** Yes, and curious.

**Kate:** You heard all?

**Sylvia:** I did. I heard a little too much sometimes, which wasn’t very good for me.

**Kate:** To whom did she sell it?

**Sylvia:** I don’t remember. If I remember that name it was something like Jacobson or something like that. I didn’t pay too much attention to it because all I was thinking about, we’re going to go to America.

**Kate:** What did your mother tell you about America before you left?

**Sylvia:** Nothing.

**Kate:** Did you know any English at all before you left.

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** Did she know any?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** Now the night before you left, do you remember packing?

**Sylvia:** Yes, I do remember. Because we had so many children’s clothes and the little one was in diapers yet. It was difficult, my brother and I had to lag a sack of clothes. Mom took the suitcase and the little one on her arm. We stopped many times when we went to the bus.

**Kate:** How did you get to the bus?

**Sylvia:** We walked.

**Kate:** Did you take anything special? Did your mother take anything special from the family with her when she packed?

**Sylvia:** No, only the clothing.

**Kate:** No toys?

**Sylvia:** Pictures.

**Kate:** Of home?

**Sylvia:** Of the family, which I still have some saved from that period. I tried to save them even during the war, from the bombing and all. Those were the first ones I always saved, those few pictures I had.

**Kate:** Now you had to walk. Before you left did they have a going away party for you or anything?

**Sylvia:** Nothing doing, we just got together, my grandma, my aunt and my cousins, and we took another picture of us all. My brother was so mad because they had to pick him up from sleeping. He was always mad if he was picked up in the middle of his sleep. He was so mad you couldn’t get him to smile, no way.

Mother had a chore keeping him in her lap that I remember, with his long hair. I know we were fancy in our new clothing. I think I even had my first pair of button shoes, those like slipper type, can’t remember where I put that picture.

**Kate:** You walked all the way to the bus the next day?

**Sylvia:** Yeah because there was a highway that went not too far from Paviljonki, that highway that runs there.

**Kate:** How far was that?

**Sylvia:** its nice walk, it’s about, would be about a mile and a half, approximately a mile and a half. Mother rested always and put the child down on the ground.

Then we got to where the bus took us to, let’s see, did we take a bus or did we go to the rail route station and went with a train to Hanko? That I can’t remember.

**Kate:** What about your grandmother, do you remember what she said before you left?

**Sylvia:** She was mad, her head shook and her little witty that she had on her head it was going back and forth. She was so mad, “Crazy people.”

**Kate:** That’s what she said? The last thing she said before you left?

**Sylvia:** Yes. “[Finnish 0:23:13]” “You will be sorry.” As it turned out, that’s the way it did happen then, grandma knew.

**Kate:** You left her standing in the doorway or?

**Sylvia:** No, she walked with us until she got to [inaudible 00:23:36] and then she went home and we went our way.

**Kate:** The last time you saw her there she was angry?

**Sylvia:** She was mad. That’s the last time I saw grandma.

**Kate:** Then you got on the train or the bus?

**Sylvia:** I’m sure we went with a train to Hanko, I’m pretty sure we went through train.

**Kate:** When you got to Hanko what’d you do then?

**Sylvia:** We went to that station there where they look you over, medical examination, before you leave on this beautiful ship that we have pictured here.

**Kate:** What do they do as a medical examination?

**Sylvia:** They listen your lungs and they ask you if you’ve had TB and all that. They look at your eyes, nose, ears, mouth, everything. If you have had any contagious illness, we had our regular children’s illnesses. Chicken pox, and measles, and whooping cough, them days you got them all. We had had them, but nothing else.

**Kate:** Did they check anything else?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** You got on the SS Austria?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:**  Austria wherever it is, in Hanko, Finland?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Where were you bound for at that point?

**Sylvia:** To England.

**Kate:** Where in England?

**Sylvia:** Hull.

**Kate:** You went to Hull and how long did that take?

**Sylvia:** I’m not sure how long that took that ship. It could have been a couple of days, two, three days, because that distance isn’t so -Where the North Sea is.

**Kate:** What kind of accommodations that you had on that boat?

**Sylvia:** Poor.

**Kate:** What did poor mean? What does that mean?

**Sylvia:** When the waves hit the deck they came down the storm vent, water all over the floor and everything. The bunk beds, pretty primitive. If you wanted to vomit as we all did, you had to try and turn on your stomach so you’d hit the pot. Mom, poor mom, I feel so sorry for her even thinking of her, three of them.

**Kate:** You were all sick?

**Sylvia:** All sick.

**Kate:** Was she sick too?

**Sylvia:** Yes, we were all sick.

**Kate:** Why were you sick?

**Sylvia:** It was so stormy.

**Kate:** On the North Sea?

**Sylvia:** Yes, very stormy.

**Kate:** Were other people sick too?

**Sylvia:** This boat is so narrow that it rocks so easy.

**Kate:** Were other people sick besides you?

**Sylvia:** Nearly everyone was sick.

**Kate:** Did they have food on that boat?

**Sylvia:** Yes, when we at last could get up that we could eat, we went into a dining area where all the passengers and all the -It was a great big room and even the passengers and the...

**Kate:** Crew.

**Sylvia:** Crew, we all sat down in the same place or in the same room. The crew they were real lively, of course they weren’t sick like we were, they were already used to that. They said, “[Finnish 0:27:02]” “Cockroach soup is served.”

You know what that did to my poor mom. When she heard that, she couldn’t eat anything. Those guys never figured out that that was the wrong word to say. We couldn’t go on the deck, no. We could have been swept overboard.

**Kate:** What did the wild ones do?

**Sylvia:** The wild ones stayed put because they were so sick. Yes, of course that little one she just hang on to my mom as fast as she could, just tagged on her the whole time.

It isn’t easy for a mom not knowing the language at all and not knowing anything, what to expect. To have three little ones, a year going on two and the next one two years going on three, and the next one between five and six. I was six already, yeah I was six. I wouldn’t do it.

**Kate:** You got to Hull, what happened?

**Sylvia:** We were in a hotel there waiting for the ship to leave then. That was a nice ship then, it was much larger.

**Kate:** Do you remember seeing England for the first time?

**Sylvia:** Yes. England that channel part there was beautiful. It was so beautiful, see it was, was it August? I think it was August. It was very pretty. What hit our eyes, there were so many lambs and what’s the next? Goats.

**Kate:** Goats?

**Sylvia:** Yeah lambs and goats. They were feeding out there on the banks.

**Kate:** Do you remember the name of the next boat that you sailed to the United States on?

**Sylvia:** What was it? I should know. No, I don’t.

**Kate:** That’s all right; maybe it will come to you in a bit.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, because I remember distinctly this other one that I travelled on.

**Kate:** That boat left Hull when? Do you remember what day or what month?

**Sylvia:** It was in September.

**Kate:** Of?

**Sylvia:** 24.

**Kate:** September 1924. You stayed in a hotel in Hull?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Kate:** What do you remember about that?

**Sylvia:** The good food, because we were all hungry. Our stomachs were settled so much already that we could feel that we were hungry. Anything tasted good to us. My little brother, when he saw the white bread, sliced white bread. He couldn’t fill his stomach so he put a slice of bread under his little jacket. That he wouldn’t run out of food. The desserts were good. It was a neat ship, very clean.

**Kate:** Than the one you went to the States on?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** What kind of accommodations did you have there?

**Sylvia:** They were pretty nice. I think it was below third class even it was like a fourth grade, it was in the cheaper part of the ship. That we were at least in a decent area for ourselves to enjoy.

**Kate:** Could you have bedding and?

**Sylvia:** Yes there were.

**Kate:** Was there bedding.

**Sylvia:** Yes, decent bedding, just like in any other ship.

**Kate:** Did you...

**Sylvia:** Big ones, it was a large one.

**Kate:** What was the dining room like at that boat?

**Sylvia:** It was beautiful to our eyes. Of course there was the table cloths. It was just gorgeous for the children’s eyes to see that when you had never even pictured anything like that.

**Kate:** What was the food like?

**Sylvia:** Good food.

**Kate:** Were you sick on this voyage?

**Sylvia:** I was the only one that was sick and I had to be in the bunk. When they had their practice for SOS and they put those life vests on, they had everybody go on the deck to practice. My mother was up there with the two children, because she couldn’t take me.

She couldn’t tell anyone because she didn’t know the language, so she couldn’t say that one of her children is down in the bunk. Because mom thought that we were in danger, she didn’t understand that that was a practice. She tried to get them to understand that she had one in the bunk.

I guess then later on, somebody had told her, no, that this is practice, we take this off no danger.” She was so quiet, she wasn’t a blabber like I am and have been all my life.

She didn’t dare go ask anybody anything. After they saw that she was horrified they tried to tell her that, “This is only a practice that we all have to go through.” Oh it was fun. That was fun on that ship. We were taken so good care of so many other people helped my mom and really offered all they could.

**Kate:** How did they help her?

**Sylvia:** They’d hold my sister and she would get used to somebody like a woman, not a man, but a woman. She would allow them to hold her, because she was petrified that they’re going to take her somewhere.

My mom had an awful hard time and her arms were getting just tired of carrying her all the time. The worst was, of course, when she dirtied her diapers and you’d have to try and wash them out because you would run short. Then try and dry them too. It was a chore and a half.

**Kate:** Do you remember how long that trip was?

**Sylvia:** I bet that was close to three weeks, coming over from England to New York.

**Kate:** Were you allowed to...

**Sylvia:** Two weeks at least.

**Kate:** Were you allowed to play on deck?

**Sylvia:** Yes. Mom just told us to stay away from the railing. Always there was a watchful eye, when they got to know that mom had three children. There was always somebody who helped watch. Yes, they took us to a barber shop and everything.

**Kate:** What did you do at the barber shop?

**Sylvia:** We had our hair cut because we all had long hair. Them days even boys had long hair like now.

**Kate:** Was that fun for you that trip?

**Sylvia:** Yes it was. It was exciting. I didn’t seem to miss anyone from Finland then.

**Kate:** During the trip?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Do you remember seeing land for the first time?

**Sylvia:** Yes, when we got near New York, wow. We thought those buildings were like ghosts, they were so huge compared to Finland which is so low. That’s when the trouble started because then mom knew that she’d have to try and hold us together and carry that suitcase.

When we left Helsinki, my aunt lived there; she gave us a blanket that reminds me of an Indian blanket. Because she had a store, a clothing store. All these excess baggage that we had, we put into that blanket and knotted it. My brother and I were supposed to carry it together.

My angry brother wouldn’t do his share. I’d have to drag that thing after me and mom had to be scolding him the whole time. Also when we came to New York, mother said to him, “You have to help if you’re going to come with us.” He was a grouchy little boy when he was helping.

We stayed. Now this I don’t remember what happened, but I don’t think at that time we stopped at Ellis Island at all. Because we were supposed to have the money in the ship office and that ship office was in New York, shipping office. When we got there my mother asked for the money that you have to have when you enter in. It was not there.

**Kate:** Let’s go back a little bit, hold on. You came in through the harbor; do you remember the Statue of Liberty?

**Sylvia:** Not then.

**Kate:** The first time you came across, you don’t remember going through the Statue of Liberty, you don’t remember Ellis Island?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Kate:** The time that you remember Ellis Island is when you came back through again?

**Sylvia:** When I went from here in 29.

**Kate:** I’m sorry when you were deported.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** We’ll get to that later. This time you remember going to an office?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Where they had money?

**Sylvia:** Shipping yeah well we were supposed to have a letter that contained the money when we enter into the harbor in American currency.

**Kate:** Now that office was not Ellis Island, you don’t think so?

**Sylvia:** No, I don’t think so. No, I think we came to the harbor. Because I don’t remember landing in Ellis Island then, only once, and that was when we went back.

**Kate:** We’ll get to that in a moment, some of these memories of course go together because you were so young, you don’t know which direction you’re going. Maybe but you remember being on Ellis Island, we talked about that before. We’ll get that on tape. What happened when there was no money?

**Sylvia:** We got room there at the hotel. We had money enough, or did they give us? We went to Canada. We had to come from Canada to Victoria all across the continent.

**Kate:** How did you get across the continent?

**Sylvia:** Train.

**Kate:** On train?

**Sylvia:** They gave us a box of food. That I remember because it was a delicious fruit and all kinds of food there in that box for us to eat. That took three, four, days.

**Kate:** The train trip?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** How was that?

**Sylvia:** We fought a lot us kids, because you’re confined in such a tight squeeze there. Mom had a hard getting us to simmer down. Then the train stopped, I remember that. When the train stopped at a nice place there when we were coming, it was just red with little wild strawberries.

Of course I had to get out of the train like so many other grownups to pick a few strawberries because we were standing still there. I got to not following I should have jumped on; they just had to grab a hold of me and put me and the train was already going. I wanted to eat some more strawberries.

**Kate:** What was your mother doing at that moment?

**Sylvia:** Tending to that little brother of mine and sister.

**Kate:** Did she have any...

**Sylvia:** She knew that I was quick enough to take care of myself. I wasn’t because those strawberries tasted so good, those wild strawberries. Then I remember distinctive that one guy he took a hold of me from the back here and he lifted me like a potato sack. Poor mom she could have lost [inaudible 00:40:19].

**Kate:** Do you remember getting into the station in Vancouver?

**Sylvia:** No, we came to Victoria.

**Kate:** In Victoria, sorry.

**Sylvia:** That’s where we were stuck then. My dad had to get a sponsor to get us over on this side then.

**Kate:** How long were you there?

**Sylvia:** I think we were there about a week or two. We lived there; there was a nice family where we lived. They were very good people, very kind and accommodating.

I remember going to a circus, seeing an elephant. I had a beautiful white dress on with a white collar and oh was I smart. I enjoyed it enormously. I didn’t think that it was such a hardship for us, but it was a terrible hardship to get the money to sponsor us to come on this side because dad was on this side.

The distance from Victoria here is not too big, too large or long whatever. The law had changed, just then was it 22 or 23 that a wife does not become an American citizen if her husband is. It had just changed right there and then when we were entering in. We got sponsors for five years and came straight to Aberdeen.

**Kate:** Did you remember your mother or your brother and sisters and you having problems with language then?

**Sylvia:** No, because we were so eager to get out and mix amongst the children. We learned it very quickly.

**Kate:** How about your mom?

**Sylvia:** No, mother never learned it. Mother never learned it and she didn’t care, she was a home body and she didn’t care to mix. That’s one backfiring thing on her learning the language. No, we, my brother and I, we learned the language and went grade after grade after grade in school. We did pretty good.

**Kate:** Did anybody ever make fun of you for being a Fin?

**Sylvia:** They wouldn’t dare. We lived right in that other section where you’re going to go to [inaudible 00:42:51]. We lived in that area, them days, and that was full of Finish people. The Croatians were on this side and we mixed just well together.

There were Italians, and there were Croatians, and there were Greeks, and Fins, and some Swedes. They call themselves Swedes. Many were Finnish Swedish speaking people. Later on in life we got to know, they are really Finnish speaking Swedish I used to guess, because Swede is the second language in Finland.

**Kate:** You lived in a Finnish neighborhood?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Did you speak Finnish at home?

**Sylvia:** Yes our home language was Finn.

**Kate:** Was your neighbor language Fin?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Did you speak Finnish with other people?

**Sylvia:** We spoke with both then eventually, English and Finnish.

**Kate:** You came down to Aberdeen, and what was your dad doing then?

**Sylvia:** Saw mill.

**Kate:** Where did you live? What address did you go to?

**Sylvia:** First we lived down town in a little house. We only lived there about two months and then we moved to south side. Because dad could commute to his work, it was just so close by. We lived on South West Front Street at Mrs. Hamburg’s house. Then we moved to Cushing Street.

**Kate:** Who was Mrs. Hamburg?

**Sylvia:** A very good friend became a very good friend. I knew her when I was a child, so I knew her the whole time then.

**Kate:** She rented rooms?

**Sylvia:** She rented cottages.

**Kate:** You lived in a cottage?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** How big was it?

**Sylvia:** In a little house that had one, two, three rooms.

**Kate:** How long did you live with Mrs. Hamburg?

**Sylvia:** About two years. When my little brother was born in there, we lived until about three years. Because I think he was close to three years old when we moved away from there and moved to Cushing Street.

**Kate:** Which little brother?

**Sylvia:** The one that was born in America.

**Kate:** Who’s he? What’s his name?

**Sylvia:** He’s name was then Toivo. I can’t remember if he had a second name, Toivo Johannes I think he was also.

**Kate:** T-O-I-V-O?

**Sylvia:** Yes Toivo. He is now George Lockhoven. He was adopted when we were deported. My dad could not take care of the little one.

**Kate:** A little boy was born here.

**Sylvia:** 27.

**Kate:** In 1927 right?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Kate:** Then you moved from Mrs. Hamburg’s to where?

**Sylvia:** To Mr. and Mrs. Smith’s house on Cushing Street.

**Kate:** What was that accommodations, what was that like?

**Sylvia:** That was also one, two, three, four rooms all together. That’s four rooms all together. Then we moved to the next house next door, and that was the first that we had a bathtub.

**Kate:** How were these heated all these places, these cottages?

**Sylvia:** Wood.

**Kate:** What about indoor facilities, any?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Were there toilets?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** In all of them?

**Sylvia:** All of them.

**Kate:** Flush toilets?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Running water?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** How were they lit?

**Sylvia:** Electricity.

**Kate:** Now you mentioned that your little brother was born and then something happened you were deported, what happened?

**Sylvia:** My mother had a nervous breakdown.

**Kate:** Why was that?

**Sylvia:** We were sponsored five years. If you can’t renew your sponsorship or if you are unable to seek your citizenship, you are deported.

**Kate:** What led to her having a nervous breakdown? What do you think happened?

**Sylvia:** My sister got sick, my dad got hurt. She was always pondering on the idea that we have to leave when five years is up.

**Kate:** Your sister got sick with what?

**Sylvia:** What they call it? Bone …

**Kate:** Leukemia?

**Sylvia:** No, it’s bone, when the bone deteriorates. What do they call that now? They had to operate even and scrap the bone.

**Kate:** Ostreo -No.

**Sylvia:** I can’t remember what that was. She was in an orthopedic hospital for quite a while.

**Kate:** Your dad got hurt how?

**Sylvia:** At the mill.

**Kate:** What happened?

**Sylvia:** Lumber fell on his back.

**Kate:** What happened then?

**Sylvia:** He recovered from that. Then also another scare came that depression was setting in. See 1929 was coming and the world was turning topsy-turvy a little. My mom and dad were worried about the situation. Of course my sister being she was in orthopedic hospital, we didn’t have to pay anything for her.

Then if my mom and us children would have been a ward of the county, them days no. My dad said then in 29 summer, “I’m going to take out citizenship papers, maybe that will help”. I said, “Dad I’ll help you with your English.”

We read together and he got his citizenship papers, but it didn’t help. Dad was still working, he wasn’t out of work, but my mother’s condition was against.

**Kate:** What happened when she had a nervous breakdown? What happened with the kids and everything? How did it manifest …?

**Sylvia:** My dad had a baby sitter for my brother who was three, about three years old. The next door neighbor lady took care of him, and us three we took care of ourselves. Dad, of course, was a very good cook, when he came home he made the meals and gathered the room together.

**Kate:** Where was your mother?

**Sylvia:** Downtown was a private like a home that took care of mainly unbalanced that weren’t bad, that they didn’t destroy anything. My mom didn’t like it because she was behind closed doors and it aggravated her mind more.

My dad told the doctor that I cannot keep her there, that, “What should I do?” Then we had some people in Winlock that owned a farm there. They agreed, “Let’s have her come here.” My dad said, “You don’t have to worry she won’t do anything to anybody else but herself. She’ll try and destroy herself.”

They did have to watch her a little, but she got good food, she had freedom. She could go where she wanted to around the farm and they would keep an eye on her. She began feeling much better.

The only thing was that first time my dad went to see her there she says, “I thought you were dead, I didn’t remember you. I thought you were dead.” That made my dad really upset. Mom came home and we had a nice Christmas after that when she came home. Little by little she went back, it just came back again.

**Kate:** How did it?

**Sylvia:** She was schizophrenic.

**Kate:** Schizophrenic?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Kate:** When you were deported, did she go with you?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** How did you get back? Who sent you back? What happened?

**Sylvia:** Back to Finland?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** My dad saw us off to the train and the luggage was sent ahead of time. I was the one that had the money in my clothing. Dad said, “Don’t take it out of there until you reach Helsinki, when you see Aunt Emilia and give it to her. Watch mom and your sister and brother.”

**Kate:** What happened with the little one then?

**Sylvia:** The neighbor lady took the little one. Then he always came home when dad came home from work, stayed overnight with dad. Then dad thought, this isn’t going to work.

My mother couldn’t write anything from Finland so I kept the correspondence going. My dad would always ask how mom was. Is she getting along? Is she getting to be any better? Do I think mother will come out of it?

We asked the doctor and the doctor said no. We have now tried everything that is available at this time and age, that she will not. I relayed the message to my dad in letters. Then my dad lost hope and then he contacted his cousin in Portland. They wrote to each other, and he said the sad story, that she was not going to be any better.

My aunt, my dad’s cousin, there said there’s a family there that would love to adopt a little Fin boy. We had applications sent to Helsinki. We were living at the time in Helsinki, for my mom to sign over if she capable of doing it.

Or then power of eternity for the aunt to sign it, her sister, my mom’s sister. Then my dad explained that this is a good family and they would love to adopt him, so he was adopted.

**Kate:** Did you keep in contact with him?

**Sylvia:** Listen, we did keep in contact, I have always been one who wants to write and keep in contact. Then during the war time, of course, the correspondence was cut off. Then right after the war, again, after Pearl Harbor, we got a message, my mother was even living yet, that my brother had died in the Pacific.

This is the news that we, it didn’t come through the official office, military office, it did not come but the relatives here in Aberdeen wrote. Then I lost hope that I’d ever see him anymore, but I always was hoping that I would see my dad yet because my dad was still living then. We started procedures then. I started three different times, procedures to come back. Always something came.

**Kate:** Let’s talk about what happened now. You talk about you were deported. You went on a train from Aberdeen, you went across country. Now what happened when you got to New York?

**Sylvia:** We went from the train here; we were on this side we didn’t have to go to Canada then, we went through here. Then we had to wait for the ship, so all of us that went on that train. There was a lot of deported people on that train.

Mainly unbalanced people, some that illegally had entered in, and some that were maybe in the same position our family was. There’s was all kinds of us. We had to wait for the main ship, Estonia, that would take us over Atlantic to Helsinki.

We were quarantined in Ellis Island. I remember as plain as day when we left the harbor in New York on that, it was like a tug boat type of a small boat, ship. There was all kinds of us, and I was just looking around and thinking, oh my heavens, oh my God.

Even if I was only a girl of 11 years old, I thought this is something awful. We were led. What was missing from my family were the chains on our hands, we didn’t have those, there were some that had.

**Kate:** Some people had chains?

**Sylvia:** Yes because you couldn’t rely on them, they went berserk.

**Kate:** On this tug boat that you went on, some of the people who were going to be deported were in chains?

**Sylvia:** Yes, because they couldn’t rely on them staying put, so they had them handcuffed. There was one fellow in front of us, he had a habit of spiting, every time he turned his head he’d spit. I took my little sister and I said, “Stay away don’t go so close.”

Of course, wouldn’t you know it, he spit anyway on my sister’s coat. I start crying. I took a hold of that guy’s jacket and I went and rubbed that stuff off my sister’s coat with his jacket. I was crying myself because I felt that that was just horrible. The people that were close by, they were watching and shaking their heads.

**Kate:** What do you remember about getting on to the Island? What was your first impression of Ellis Island as you got there?

**Sylvia:** That huge room, it was so big. It had walkway like on the second floor of that window, round like that. Some of the passengers were up there. Some were in isolated cells without any clothing on even.

Us kids we went all around there and we’d go and peak. We weren’t supposed to be but nobody can watch kids, that they aren’t doing all kinds of things. They had a school there which we liked, we sat at the school.

**Kate:** They sent you to school then? Where did you live? What accommodations …?

**Sylvia:** In that Ellis Island.

**Kate:** What kinds of accommodation?

**Sylvia:** It was a room that we lived in.

**Kate:** With other people?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** What type of beds did they have?

**Sylvia:** Bunk beds.

**Kate:** Was it clean?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Was it crowded?

**Sylvia:** Quite a bit. We were told, “Hold on to what you have, don’t leave anything valuable out of your sight, keep it on you personally.”

**Kate:** What did you have with you?

**Sylvia:** We had our suitcase for change of clothes. Our trunk had gone ahead of time, so we didn’t have to worry about the trunk. We had just that suitcase. Then we had that bundle of clothing in that blanket, we had that.

We got lots of nice little things from people sending, there at Ellis Island they had for you, clothing and stuff like that. In that school we got post cards that people had sent that you can cut out, just to get your time going. Then books to read.

**Kate:** How big was the school?

**Sylvia:** We were quite a few children there at the time. I would say there was at least 15 of us there at that time.

**Kate:** How long were on you on Ellis Island?

**Sylvia:** I think we had to be there, three or five days, but we were busy the whole time. Then they’d serve in afternoon when the grownups had their coffee hour, the kids were all eating milk and saltine crackers. Oh were they ever delicious.

**Kate:** Do you remember your mother how she took this?

**Sylvia:** Mother just wandered around. I had to always keep track of her, where she was, so that she wouldn’t wander where she shouldn’t be. On the ship too, coming over Atlantic, I had to always watch her. Because I was scared she was going to jump over. She didn’t want to hurt anybody else but herself.

**Kate:** Do you remember what happened? Did they give a medical examination or anything?

**Sylvia:** Yes at Ellis Island we were still checked so that we didn’t have any contagious illnesses. Because if they did they were isolated, like my sister now being she had been operated on. It’s like TB, that type of a bone TB, that’s the type she had.

My sister had been operated on. I think about five times, five different places. It just would go from one side to the other side. She didn’t die of that, isn’t it amazing?

**Kate:** I think they call it [inaudible 01:01:04].

**Sylvia:** Yes. She was in the hospital ward there. They had all these accommodations for you. They had the prison for the ones that were awful criminals. They had the less sick people in then the regular hospital they had there, hospital ward. Then this ward where us kids went to school.

**Kate:** Do you remember the food?

**Sylvia:** We weren’t starving I know for sure. As far as I know that food was mostly soup and milk, we always had milk. Fruit, we had a lot of fruit.

**Kate:** Were there other Finnish children there?

**Sylvia:** Yes, there was one girl, and her mother, and father from Back East. I lost contact with them then.

**Kate:** Back East meaning?

**Sylvia:** Yeah they were like from Minnesota area out there. I never contacted her after we arrived to Helsinki then, I never did.

**Kate:** What about the voyage over then to Helsinki how was that?

**Sylvia:** Very good, very nice and easy.

**Kate:** I just want to go back for a moment, the medical examinations; did everyone get the same examination?

**Sylvia:** I am not sure, but I guess we had a card that we gave officials there. When we left from Finland, we had that [cruel 01:03:01] examination there. Then we had a card that said, if there was anything that they were suspicious of. Then you would have a marking on that card that would say, please examine.

**Kate:** You just mentioned, a moment, ago that the trip to Helsinki was great.

**Sylvia:** It was great, yes, lots of fun and entertainment.

**Kate:** What kind of entertainment?

**Sylvia:** There were stage shows and there was dance playing. Like I said, there was these little bars, coffee bars, that they call [inaudible 01:03:42] bar. There was a lot, all kinds of games that we played.

**Kate:** Who paid for that ticket to go back? When you are deported what happens?

**Sylvia:** Government.

**Kate:** The government sent you back on the Estonia?

**Sylvia:** Yes. That was I think a Polish line ship, Estonia, I think that was a Polish line.

**Kate:** What about the accommodations?

**Sylvia:** Good. We had a roomy cabin, very roomy cabin.

**Kate:** To yourself?

**Sylvia:** Yes to ourself.

**Kate:** Actually your deported voyage was better, in the accommodations, than your one coming over where you paid yourself?

**Sylvia:** Many times.

**Kate:** How …

**Sylvia:** They had been so much more in this travel then, because so many people were coming over in those years.

**Kate:** What was your family’s attitude about this trip back home? How did they feel about it? How’d you feel about it? Home meaning Finland.

**Sylvia:** Sad, it was very sad. The whole Southside cried here when we left, that’s how we felt over there in that side [inaudible 01:04:52] lives there.

**Kate:** All the other Finns cried?

**Sylvia:** Yes. They didn’t think it was right. They thought as hard as my dad worked for that citizenship, me helping him with the language, fifth grader.

**Kate:** They thought it was a tragedy?

**Sylvia:** Yes they did, they couldn’t believe it. Being that he was still working, but see I know that eventually my mom would have been a ward of the county because of her illness. We could have never managed to pay those bills.

**Kate:** What happened on the boat trip over? How was your mom then, back to Helsinki?

**Sylvia:** She just combed herself and dressed herself nice and feminine, and went around with a hand on her hip, and just nonchalantly walked around. I had to sometimes take a hold of her and then we’d walk together, so that she wouldn’t be so …

**Kate:** Preyed upon?

**Sylvia:** Yes. There were these guys that would come around. This one guy especially he came into our cabin even, and he said, “To fight seasickness, you better take some wine,” and he bought us a wine bottle.

I was already leery then about that fellow. I told my mom, “Keep the cabin door locked.” Then us children when we were going in and out, in and out, it was hard, so that she didn’t always have it locked. My sister was also on the hospital side on that ship. She was watched and taken care of.

**Kate:** How long was that trip then?

**Sylvia:** We left November 22nd or 24th.

**Kate:** 19?

**Sylvia:** 29. Ocean travelling was about 14 days.

**Kate:** Then where did you go back to?

**Sylvia:** To Helsinki.

**Kate:** Not to Pori?

**Sylvia:** We were in Helsinki a few days. Then my aunt said that, being she wasn’t sure if we have anything to live on. In Finland, at least them days, you had to go to the county where you are born if you want social welfare.

My aunt said, “I don’t want to send your sister who is not very well. But you and your brother and your mother, you go to Pori and establish yourself there because that’s where your mom will get help.” This was all explained to me.

My sister was left in Helsinki and we went to Pori. Later on, my mom got worse and she was well enough, she went to the school officials. Asked them to relocate my brother somewhere where he could go to school and get up, build up, because he’ll be on the streets. My mother still had that much mind left.

They did and he went to boys’ school in [inaudible 01:08:36], that’s near Pori. He went confirmation, and he went through school the rest of the two years. Then he had carpentry training there, and he got a very good job. [Inaudible 01:08:56], he worked there for years I think he even went back there to work after war. He had luck being trained.

My sister was taken to a farm because she needed good nourishment. My aunt saw the children’s welfare office and they recommended this place. That they had sometimes given their name that they would gladly accept someone in my sister’s age.

She went to the farming area, which was near [inaudible 01:09:31]. I was on my own I was working for a family, so I was in domestic work.

**Kate:** You were how old then?

**Sylvia:** 12 years old, 13, 12, 13 years old.

**Kate:** How long did you …

**Sylvia:** I was because I went that last year, when I went from here then to Helsinki in 29. I was in fifth grade here, just started fifth grade here and they put me into sixth grade in [inaudible 01:10:05]. I thought, "How I’m going to ever do this?"

I had learned in Sunday school my Fin and then what we spoke at home. My pronunciation and my spelling and everything wasn’t so correct in that Finnish language. I thought, this is the last grade and I’m not going to -They’re going to leave me in this class for another year.

The principal said because of my age, being 13 that I should be in that class. That’s where I needed my guts again; I was third from the upper.

**Kate:** At the end?

**Sylvia:** Yeah third from the top. I was third from the top. My aunt said, I was in Helsinki then with my aunt, my aunt said, “You’re going to be crazy with that kind of reading.” I said, “But I’m going to make it.” I did.

**Kate:** You stayed in Finland then?

**Sylvia:** Yes. Then I went back to Pori, after I had completed school there in Helsinki I went back to Pori, but I didn’t care to stay there. My mom was in that [inaudible 01:11:21]. I always had such a sad feeling there. Otherwise it’s a lively town and I have a lot of relatives, I still wanted to go back to Helsinki. I wanted to do something better, something more advanced. I didn’t get too far but I got a better job anyway.

**Kate:** As what? What did you get a job as?

**Sylvia:** I was a housekeeper for a bachelor and he is aristocrat or was [Lamani 01:12:00] Ugla. Ugla was his name. He’s long since been gone. He was a bachelor. My aunt was the one that said, “You can take care.” I said, “I cannot be responsible for a man and his household. And buying the food, and cooking the food, and having the parties.” Good gosh time shows you can, you can do anything.

I worked for him five years because that’s where I got married from. He was kind of mad because I got married and didn’t stay in Helsinki then. He would have gotten a job for Sulo then too, but Sulo wanted to go back to [inaudible 01:12:48]. Because that’s where his job was when he entered the military field. Then he got a chance to go back to his old job so he went. Of course that my place to be then.

**Kate:** How did you ever get back here in Washington? You lived there all those years?

**Sylvia:** Yes. I always remembered my dad, my dad was here. I always corresponded with him. I always thought, one of these days I’m going to, if I’m going to go alone or how, I’m going to make that trip. That I’ll see my dad yet before he pass away.

It was a good thing that we didn’t pass away, Sulo and I, in the turmoil that we were in. It so happened then that we had a chance, we got those sponsors. I came first again like my dad came first. My dad saw my husband who came a year after I did. He saw our son, who was nine years old right on the day he arrived here in Aberdeen.

**Kate:** Wait a minute, what turmoil were you in in Finland? You mean …

**Sylvia:** The war.

**Kate:** The war?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Was your …

**Sylvia:** Living in Helsinki at that time.

**Kate:** What happened during that time in the war?

**Sylvia:** We heard the bombs all around us there in Kaivapuisto, where we lived. I just saw now that that [inaudible 01:14:08] they’re building a great big new high-rise. They already had a high-rise in that old building was torn apart. [Inaudible 01:14:20] lives right near [inaudible 01:14:21], all of that area there. We were surrounded with bombs; [inaudible 01:14:27] house got a bomb. The Jews?

**Kate:** Yeah go ahead.

**Sylvia:** The Jewish people lived across the street, in the night time they all went and left for Sweden. We could see all this because we were sitting higher up, so we could see all this which was happening.

One of our walls, window pane [inaudible 01:14:56] and we were in a part of the wall and we were in the cellar. You thank your lucky stars if you saw daylight when you got out of that cellar. I guess there is somebody who watches over you. It sure watched over my husband and me, and my brother, although he was wounded three times.

Sulo was transferred to home front, they had to recruit younger kids and they needed trainers. He was recruited, I couldn’t believe it, he was out there in the Eastern Frontier there. I don’t know, sometimes there is, like I say, miracles happen, and we were both spared. Then we start thinking of coming to America, maybe it’ll be peaceful here.

**Kate:** How old was he when he was recruited for the Eastern Front?

**Sylvia:** He was in his military age, he was five years in. He was 19, 20, started 19 and he was five years in. Both of us had really pure luck.

We had bombs fall next to us once when we were walking, it went in the water. There was a high fence right there in the water it splashed over. It was one of these planes that came in without making a sound. Like I said, I left that halfway, my brother was not killed in the Pacific, the one that was here. He was never killed in the Pacific.

**Kate:** That was a rumor?

**Sylvia:** That’s a rumor.

**Kate:** Wait a minute, you got back here, so you came first and Sulo?

**Sylvia:** Sulo came a year after with our son.

**Kate:** How did you get here?

**Sylvia:** I had sponsors.

**Kate:** Who paid your trip?

**Sylvia:** I did.

**Kate:** You came and you had sponsors, you came like your father before you?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Did you come through Ellis Island then?

**Sylvia:** No I didn’t then, no.

**Kate:** You came all the way here and your dad was alive.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** Did your dad tell you that your brother was alive?

**Sylvia:** No he didn’t know.

**Kate:** What year was that?

**Sylvia:** 1955.

**Kate:** It was after the war in 1955?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, wasn’t it 45 that the bombing was in Pearl Harbor?

**Kate:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** Yes 45. 55 I came here, that’s 10 years later. My dad had also that opinion that, the boy is lost. He didn’t realize [inaudible 01:17:53] and contacted those people in Portland, they would have told him.

When you are adopted, that boy never knew he was adopted. This is what they did wrong, they should have told him from the beginning that he was adopted. Because he didn’t know it until he went and got his papers to enter military service from Olympia, his birth certificate.

That’s when [inaudible 01:18:24] he was adopted. A man of that age, getting the first time to know that he was adopted, it hurt him. He didn’t even know why he was adopted or anything, because his adoptive mother had passed away. The dad had remarried, so he had a third mother.

**Kate:** Now wait a minute, how did he finally find out?

**Sylvia:** He found out when he got his birth certificate.

**Kate:** How did you get a hold of him?

**Sylvia:** How did I get a hold of him? That goes then into the Fin [Finisterra 01:18:57], this brotherhood lodge that I worked for over 40 years.

**Kate:** Before you do that, you came here for a year and what did you work as when you came in 55?

**Sylvia:** Domestic.

**Kate:** Then your husband and your son came a year later?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** You all lived here in Aberdeen?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** What did your husband do when he came here?

**Sylvia:** Sawmill. I had sworn that he’s not going to go into sawmill, because he was a tool grinder by trade but he didn’t know the language. The measurements are different here than they are in Finland, so what happened, into the saw mill?

**Kate:** How was it for him learning English?

**Sylvia:** He learned that mill man’s English.

**Kate:** Your son, was it difficult for him?

**Sylvia:** No, not at all. In three months he was talking there with the kids out on the street.

**Kate:** This [Finisterra 01:19:56], what happened?

**Sylvia:** This brotherhood lodge that I belong. We have sister lodges in Portland we have and all of the West coast here. A secretary that we knew very well from Portland Lodge says, I told him, “Frank, would you look into this problem.

I’ve had a brother that was adopted into a family in Portland, and I have heard what their name was. So would you look up [inaudible 01:20:25] people if they are still living? I would so love to thank those people that they have helped a child get a good upbringing. When we couldn’t, my mom, dad and us couldn’t. I’d love to see them and meet them. Look if they are living.”

Frank says, “Okay I’ll do that.” He calls me one day, he says, “Sylvia sit down, your brother’s living.” I said, Oh no, oh no, where?” “Not too far, in Scappoose, Oregon.” “Oh my God.” He said, “I told them, those parents,” his dad was still living; his stepdad was living, not the stepmother but the stepdad. Frank said, “I told him you are here you would like to contact him.”

This old man is so leery at the time he says, “Have her call me and I will ask her questions.” I did, I called that step dad. He thought we were wanting something from them. I said, “Oh no, now you have all the wrong reason to start thinking that way.”

I said, “All I wanted to do is thank you.” “You’re welcome to come but your brother is living in Scappoose. And I will have to speak to him first if he wants to meet you.”

We went, headed for Portland, it was Easter time and obstacle came on the highway. We lost all the oil in the car where we were standing. This is the first meeting with my brother. We went and had us towed to a service station and rented a car from [inaudible 01:22:33].

I said, “We’re going to go.” Veikko, our son was so petrified, he said, “Dad can’t drive this car.” I said, “Dad can drive it, we’ve got an automatic shift dad can drive it.” You know with an automatic shift, it goes before you know it.

We left our car there at that service station, and off we went to Portland. Because I had spoken on the phone that we would be coming and they knew it. We got there. I talked for six hours straight, there weren’t too many words said from anyone else. I was so tired after I had visited my brother’s house that I thought I made up for the whole time I was away.

The wife was listening and she shook her head and said, “I can’t understand how parents could give up a child.” I thought to myself when I listened to her I thought, haven’t you listened to what I’ve been talking about at all? You would have had that reason right there. I think to this day she thinks that we were horrible that we gave up a child.

**Kate:** Which woman was that, the stepmother?

**Sylvia:** No this is my brother’s wife.

**Kate:** Was he happy to see you?

**Sylvia:** Yes. I have a lovely letter that he wrote to me, I’ll never depart from that letter. We always exchange birthday greetings, but I don’t exchange them with his wife. Because I was so hurt and I thought, certainly woman, you should go into child psychology or something and study. She’s a read up woman, she should have known. That’s how my brother was found.

**Kate:** He understood though when you told him what happened?

**Sylvia:** Yes he did. You know you carry on that kind of, how shall I say? It hurt him awful lot to find out in Olympia via his birth certificate, it hurt him so deeply. When he didn’t even know why he was given up.

I told him I said, “Listen here George, if ever there was a wanted child, you were a wanted Yankee,” I said, “you were one of those that was wanted. And no way would have they given you up.”

**Kate:** You stayed in this country then after that? You stayed your whole life then after since?

**Sylvia:** Since 55.

**Kate:** What happened to Pentti?

**Sylvia:** He was also serving in the army and he got wounded. He’s on military pay of course, but he’s able to do little chores. They live in Pori, in a beautiful condominium on [inaudible 01:25:51]. Very nice house, 92 we visited there and I said, “Now this is something.” I’m really proud of him, what he has done.

**Kate:** How about your sister? What happened to your sister?

**Sylvia:** She died, I think it was 1972 or 3 that she passed away. She never got married, she worked all her life. She was always sickly, she had this thing or that thing, but she was …

**Kate:** How about your mom? What happened to your mom?

**Sylvia:** My mom stayed in that [inaudible 01:26:32] the institution until she passed away. She passed away then and she’s buried in Pori [inaudible 01:26:39] there, has a nice burial place there. My brother and I, we had the stone for her and she’s resting in peace.

**Kate:** Your son? Your son is grown now?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Our boy’s family is right there in that picture. He lives in Central Park, not too far from here. Has an 11 year old boy he’s got, and this is his family. That picture isn’t the best of them, but then. Yeah she had been married before and had the girl and then he got married and they had the boy.

**Kate:** When you look back on your life now, as to everything that’s happened. You’ve had many things happen to you. What do you think about your father’s first fever that he had?

**Sylvia:** I think there were just hundreds of them that had that same illness. Some were cured early, some later on in life. Some got good start, had a chance to earn a good living. We were fortunate to stay healthy and that’s the main thing. When you are out in the world that’s what you need, you need your health and your guts to fight through.

Another thing I have to be proud of the Finnish people, although they at that time even they suffered quite a bit. Finnish nationality is a proud nation, they are proud. Even if they don’t own much, but they are proud of what they own, and they want to keep it. They want to do the right thing mostly, they do. Here and there, might somebody be slipping a little? Alcohol is one bad thing there.

**Kate:** Do you have any regrets? Did your father have any regrets about coming to this country?

**Sylvia:** [Inaudible 01:28:49] that, but I know deep down he cried many a times. You say a man is a wimp if they cry, it eases them. If like, the Finnish nature, if they didn’t have music and singing and dancing to ease their life and their health. Many a times you feel very low, you put some of that Finnish music on. Boy your work goes just spickety-split, you don’t even notice it.

**Kate:** Do you have any regrets?

**Sylvia:** No, not at all. We get social security. We get a little pension from Finland, even Sulo gets his and I get mine. Life is okay, there is nothing to splurge on, but we don’t need nothing. What the heck, if we haven’t gotten it to this day we don’t need it anymore.

**Kate:** If you look at your whole family though, in terms of your father’s American fever. How do you think, as a family, it affected you, as a unit?

**Sylvia:** It broke the unit, ours did, ours broke. I know like in Finland, my father and mother would have done okay, they would have done just swell. Because my dad was a great worker and he could do so many things. Maybe my mother would have stayed healthy. Us kids would have grown up and left them.

I think we could have done well there too, us Sulo. I could have done well in Finland because he was working for [inaudible 01:30:38] and he had a good job. We were starting to build, we had the lot. Then we decided no, let’s try it here.

**Kate:** Basically you also had the American fever?

**Sylvia:** It’s because I was more or less my dad’s girl, and my dad was here.

**Kate:** You say you’re your father’s girl?

**Sylvia:** Yes. My father was a nature lover also, he loved nature. He’d go in the woods and he’d whistle. He loved to dance where my mother didn’t. I give that credit also that I love both music and -Although I never had a chance to learn any, except to play a tape and phonograph.

**Kate:** You said earlier that you contributed, and we’re talking privately, that you contributed to the Statue of Liberty in the Ellis Island project. Why?

**Sylvia:** Because, when I came back and I saw that Statue of Liberty. We were up that whole night on the ship, we were partying that last night. See, when I came back, I was seven days in the hospital because I had the mumps. There is another thing you missed out on.

**Kate:** When you finally came here?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Kate:** You had mumps?

**Sylvia:** In 55 I had the mumps and on both sides, horrible. I couldn’t even get a lump sugar between my lips when I drank my coffee, which I always necessary need. All the fresh fruit that were brought into my cabin were dumped into the ocean because I couldn’t eat them.

We had a real ball there the last evening on that ship. We said, “We’re going to watch when the” -What’s that long point called when you enter into New York? It’s that long point there? I can’t remember the name of that point, but soon after that point and then you can start waiting for that Statue of Liberty to come.

“Whoopee,” WE all said, “here we are entering into New York harbor.” When I left that time in 29, this coincides with that, I was standing on the ship then as a young girl. That’s true I saw Statue of Liberty then too, but I didn’t pay that much attention to it.

I said, “I’m I ever going to see this shore anymore in my life, I wonder?” That hit me when we got to New York and that Statue of Liberty came up. That got me because that came out just so clearly that I stood on a ship before thinking if I’m ever going to see this shore in my life. Here I am. I’m passing Statue of Liberty again. Going the opposite way, coming back to America, then I was leaving to Finland back.

There is a drastic difference when you get closer to the shores of Finland. They look very small, low, primitive, when you look from a distance compared to those huge that are on that Manhattan mile-in.

**Kate:** When you look back now, are you happy that you came back the second time?

**Sylvia:** Yes. We’ve been back to Finland three times after that. 92 was the last time we were. They are expecting us to be coming soon again, I said, “It doesn’t look like [inaudible 01:35:17] then.” I’m a great one too, I play bingo and lotteries, maybe I’ll have money.

I always was hoping that I would win. Then I would send my brother money, so he could come back and see these houses in this area where he was running as a young kid. I never have had a chance, never.

**Kate:** What about your father, when did he?

**Sylvia:** He died two years after I arrived here, two years after that he died. He saw my husband and saw our son. My dad was the first one to buy our son a birthday cake on his ninth birthday and give him a two dollar bill. That was many, I think it was 47 [inaudible 01:36:11] and he still got the two dollar bill.

**Kate:** I’d like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for taking your time with us and giving us your life story. We will send you a copy of it. This is Kate Moore signing off from Aberdeen, Washington on June 25th 1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.