**Paul:** Good afternoon. This is Paul Seacrest for the National Park Service. Today is Thursday October 26, 1995. I’m at the Norwegian Christian Home in Brooklyn and I’m here with Martha Anderson Larsen.

Mrs. Larsen came from Norway in 1923 and she was 20 years old at that time. She hadn’t quite turned 21. Present also is Peter Ham who is running the tape recorder and our friend Corry who is the social services person here and who’s been with us throughout all this interviewing of Norwegians.

Mrs. Larsen, can we begin by you giving me your birth date? Your birth date.

**Martha:** February 10th.

**Paul:** What year?

**Martha:** 1902, I believe.

**Paul:** Where in Norway where you born?

**Martha:** A part what you call Easter [inaudible 00:00:59].

**Paul:** What part is that?

**Martha:** [inaudible 00:01:05] it’s in the south part of Norway, all the way south.

**Paul:** What do you remember about that part of Norway when you were a little girl?

**Martha:** I remember nothing since then. I’ve been home like two times visiting since I came over.

**Paul:** What do you remember as a little girl when you over there?

**Martha:** I belonged to a single society in [inaudible 00:01:39] of young people. I don’t know. I can’t think of.

**Paul:** Can you describe the house that you lived in when you were a little girl?

**Martha:** Well, I had my house [inaudible 00:01:53], my home.

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

**Martha:** Well, a regular house. We had a house with two big rooms and a kitchen and the bedrooms were [inaudible 00:02:06] on the second floor.

**Paul:** What was the house made out of?

**Martha:** Wood, I believe.

**Paul:** What color was your house?

**Martha:** White paint inside and outside and oh well, I can’t just remember.

**Paul:** Do you remember any of the furniture in your house?

**Martha:** I have [inaudible 00:02:33] my mother and father have because I didn’t really…

**Paul:** What your mother and father had in that house.

**Martha:** Yeah, like regular … they had some chairs in like bedrooms [inaudible 00:02:49]. They had the bedrooms upstairs and the dining room and parlor and the kitchen they’re downstairs.

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

**Martha:** How did I?

**Paul:** How did you heat the house? How did you keep the house warm?

**Martha:** We had an oven that you put wood in and [inaudible 00:03:17] and kept heated. The oven had [inaudible 00:03:23] and heated one room. They didn’t have … for that one room. They didn’t have heat for all the rooms, no.

**Paul:** What was the weather like in Norway? What was the temperature like?

**Martha:** Well, there could be very nice weather for some time but in the winter some time you had a lot of snow like you have here for that matter.

**Paul:** What would happen when it snowed?

**Martha:** What would happen? It could happen to get [inaudible 00:03:56] you could walk like you know.

**Paul:** How did you light your house? How did you make the house light inside?

**Martha:** In Norway, that you see I was not in Norway living [inaudible 00:04:20] visiting my mother and father but [inaudible 00:04:22] I stayed over here.

**Paul:** When you were a little girl, when you were a little girl, how did you light the inside of the house?

**Martha:** I can’t say I had much even to think about that. You are talking about [inaudible 00:04:39].

**Paul:** What kind of food did you eat as a little girl?

**Martha:** All kinds of different ... they had their own lamb intestine [inaudible 00:04:50]. The food it would happen to kill and have homemade meat. Somebody would put together salt and some we would have and it was used to make. Yeah, you did the best you could.

**Paul:** Did you own the lambs? Did you raise the lambs?

**Martha:** Yes, we raised the lambs themselves there.

**Paul:** Did you take care of the animals when you were…?

**Martha:** Yes, sometime we went after them in the market like we had [inaudible 00:05:27] and had to move them so they had places to eat. In the winter, you couldn’t have them out. No, [inaudible 00:05:40] in the house there and gave them to eat inside.

**Paul:** What other kinds of animals did you have?

**Martha:** They didn’t have no horse because it was a small farm. They didn’t have no horse but they had about two or three cows.

**Paul:** Who took care of the cows?

**Martha:** My mother. Basically, my mother and my father and when I’m old enough I would help in doing something.

**Paul:** What did you have to do? When you got old enough, what was your chore?

**Martha:** You won’t believe it but there’s sheep and then we were used to them. You open up your door very well and they would walk and go up some steps and go into where they going to eat for a while. Then we would come in and take that and open up and they would go down in [inaudible 00:06:40]. Sure.

**Paul:** That was your job to …

**Martha:** Well, me when I’m old enough but otherwise my brothers. I had four brothers.

**Paul:** Do you remember your brothers’ names?

**Martha:** Yes.

**Paul:** Can you say them?

**Martha:** Alfred and Albert and … Alfred and Albert and … yeah and [inaudible 00:07:03].

**Paul:** Are you the only girl?

**Martha:** I’m only one girl. There was me because I had four brothers. One of the … Alfred he was older then there was me. He was born in 1898 or ’99 and then I was born in like I said, in 1902.

**Paul:** 1902, right.

**Martha:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Paul:** Which brother were you the closest to?

**Martha:** We were pretty close to them all. They were pretty nice, yes.

**Paul:** What did you do with your brothers when you were a child?

**Martha:** What did I do with my brothers?

**Paul:** Yeah, how did you … Did you play with your brothers?

**Martha:** Yeah, but there was neighbors there would play. We play with kids in neighbor houses.

**Paul:** What kind of games did you play when you were a little girl?

**Martha:** Hide and seek. You would go and hide some place and then a certain place you were supposed to if you got there yourself before they found you then you … you know, yeah.

**Paul:** Were there any other games that you can remember?

**Martha:** Yeah, there jumping ropes.

**Paul:** Jump rope? Did you say little songs? Sing little songs when you jumped rope? Did you sing little songs when you jumped rope?

**Martha:** I can’t remember really. No, I can’t.

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

**Martha:** Emmanuel.

**Paul:** Emmanuel and what did he do for a living?

**Martha:** It happened he was away some time like in a fishing-type since he make a little money but otherwise he needed to be home to take care of things, yeah.

**Paul:** What was your father like as a person? What was your father like as a person, his personality?

**Martha:** He was very nice, then my father was nice. They were both nice, yeah.

**Paul:** Is there a story you can tell me about your father when you were a little girl?

**Martha:** My father and mother they were over here in a place called … do you know some place called Green Point.

**Paul:** Green Point. Green Point in Brooklyn?

**Martha:** Yeah, it’s [inaudible 00:09:45] from both here. That’s where my mother had a … she lived for eight years there working for fire … she was in the fire … the men in the house.

**Paul:** Firemen?

**Martha:** Fire, yeah, and my father was on the boat going out from there and coming into [inaudible 00:10:10], that’s where they meet in that place there.

**Paul:** Do you know what year your parents got married?

**Martha:** My mother and father? 1898 or ’97 or ’98.

**Paul:** About a year before your brother was born.

**Martha:** Yeah.

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

**Martha:** My mother’s name was Anna.

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

**Martha:** [inaudible 00:10:41].

**Paul:** Can you spell that?

**Martha:** That’s a name like two A’s together, the [inaudible 00:10:45]. She came from a place called [inaudible 00:10:48]. It was a little away. You had to go with a boat to get from where we lived until where she’s come from.

**Paul:** I see. What was your mother’s personality like? What was your mother per … what her personality was like? What was she like as a person?

**Martha:** She was a very good mother, a very nice mother, yeah, and sewing the clothes and things for the boys that get big, she would sew their shirts and things. She was really busy. I don’t know if you know where they would make the owner material but [inaudible 00:11:36] yeah.

**Paul:** [inaudible 00:11:39] material.

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What kinds of clothes did you wear when you were growing up in Norway?

**Martha:** We wore … well, dresses most of the time. Most of the time, they were things that my mother had made the material.

**Paul:** How long were the dresses?

**Martha:** We had maybe down a little bit [inaudible 00:12:07] not down, no.

**Paul:** How did you wear your hair when you were a young girl?

**Martha:** We had the hair like low. We didn’t cut it like it you do here and put any [inaudible 00:12:21] or anything. We would happen to make ready. Your hair was a little long and then we would make a little bit wet and again, a little curly. You make it how to …

**Paul:** Hair up to … twist the hair up to make it curly. Did anyone else live with you in the house? Did anyone else live with you in your house?

**Martha:** There were others living [inaudible 00:12:46] but not in our … but not in our area, no.

**Paul:** What about grandparents? Did you have any grandparents?

**Martha:** Yeah, when my mother and father went home then … from here then he took over his parents’ house and they had to move and get to another place to live.

**Paul:** Do you remember your grandparents?

**Martha:** Yeah, sure.

**Paul:** Are these your father’s parents that you remember?

**Martha:** Yeah, they were father’s parents.

**Paul:** What do you remember about your grandpa and grandma?

**Martha:** They used to go … they used to take us down and we would stay with them when you get a little bit older, stay with them when there were no school. Some days they were in a place called [inaudible 00:13:35]

**Paul:** What religion where you? What religion where you?

**Martha:** It was the regular religion like you have here. Not Catholic or you know.

**Paul:** Was there a church near where you were?

**Martha:** Yeah, we walked to it but about half an hour walk to get to it. That’s where I was confirmed and everything.

**Paul:** What do you remember about being confirmed?

**Martha:** We were all for [inaudible 00:14:16] that year. It was nice. Once a week we went for … we had lessons. We went for some lessons and like you know until we get … I think we had to be 14 years, you get confirmed and there quite a few. Yes, quite a few.

**Paul:** Did you get a present for being confirmed?

**Martha:** Yeah, they had a party for us home in my mother’s house, yeah, yeah.

**Paul:** Do you remember what that present was?

**Martha:** I can’t say that, mostly I think they gave us a card with some money.

**Paul:** Did you go to school in Norway?

**Martha:** I should say so.

**Paul:** How old were you when you started school?

**Martha:** Seven.

**Paul:** What do you remember about going to school?

**Martha:** They called it small school and [inaudible 00:15:15]. They didn’t have the best small school but if you were very good, you could be moved from that to the other. They did that and I was one of them and some other that got moved from there and up to the … so I got the … you know, because I was pretty good at school.

**Paul:** What was your favorite subject?

**Martha:** I can’t remember, no.

**Paul:** Could your parents read and write?

**Martha:** If they write?

**Paul:** Could your mother and father read and write?

**Martha:** Yes, they did, oh yeah.

**Paul:** How did they feel about education?

**Martha:** About what?

**Paul:** How did your mother and father feel about the children getting an education?

**Martha:** My father … with my brothers, my father would sit [inaudible 00:16:16] or things like indefinitely and he went to go out and [inaudible 00:16:25]. With me, they would… my father sorry. I got to small school and to [inaudible 00:16:30] learn in [inaudible 00:16:40] different things.

**Paul:** Do you want some water? Here.

**Martha:** Yeah, my throat is not so good. Yeah.

**Paul:** But you enjoyed school. You enjoyed school.

**Martha:** Yeah, yeah.

**Paul:** Tell me about holidays. Tell me how you celebrated Christmas in Norway.

**Martha:** We had more than one day. They celebrated more than one day, two days or maybe even more because you had your festival and things at that time.

**Paul:** How would they celebrate Christmas? What would you do to celebrate Christmas?

**Martha:** School.

**Paul:** Christmas. Christmas.

**Martha:** Yeah, Christmas. They had some … my mother and dad when we were small they would buy us some little, something that would be wrapped under the Christmas tree and then it would … maybe you’d have things here too I think. Then they would be opened on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day or something.

**Paul:** Where did you get the Christmas tree?

**Martha:** They went out in the wood and cut themselves. They were trees that were growing there, first tree. Then [inaudible 00:18:11] he would have to have a little watering so it would keep fresh.

**Paul:** Then how would you decorate the tree?

**Martha:** Things we had bought in the store. As a [inaudible 00:18:29], we had made from colors and paper things.

**Paul:** Were there any other important holidays that you celebrated in Norway?

**Martha:** I don’t think they had … no. Did you have any Thanksgiving in Norway? I can’t remember.

**Paul:** Did you celebrate the first of May, May Day?

**Martha:** We celebrated but we call it Easter here, you called it [inaudible 00:19:03] in Norway.

**Paul:** How did you celebrate Easter?

**Martha:** That we would happen to get some [inaudible 00:19:09] to eat.

**Paul:** What were the special Easter foods that you got to eat?

**Martha:** We liked to get some bread because mostly we would happen to … we would eat them but in my home there like potato cakes and yeah, yeah [inaudible 00:19:36] very good and all. But we liked very much to get home bread from the store too.

**Paul:** It was a treat to get bread that came from the store?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Who usually made the bread at home?

**Martha:** Bread there was a [inaudible 00:19:49] do them things. Two of my brothers when they get old enough they were even [inaudible 00:19:59] help in bake them.

**Paul:** Your brothers were taught how to do that?

**Martha:** Even when they get over here, they worked in a baking shop one of them. There’s a Larsen’s baking shop in … called the Larsen’s baking shop downtown some place.

**Paul:** Tell me what you remember about World War I, the First World War.

**Martha:** It was not an easy time. That it wasn’t, I know because we had … only get some [inaudible 00:20:35] something that you could buy from us like in a [inaudible 00:20:39]. But if had a little farm, then that’s not a bit because then you were … but when you didn’t have no farm to inhabit a cow or two or something to get your own milk and that was not easy.

**Paul:** How did your family do during that time?

**Martha:** How did he…

**Paul:** How did your family survive during that time because you had a little farm?

**Martha:** That’s when my mother and father, they had a farm. In that time, the War then I was already confirmed there was. I was working for some other people and there, they too had like a farm in the outside [inaudible 00:21:32] water from a big [inaudible 00:21:33]. They had tank of some type, [inaudible 00:21:35] fall down in that water. It is true, the childhood.

**Paul:** Do you remember seeing soldiers?

**Martha:** Seeing what?

**Paul:** Seeing soldiers during that time.

**Martha:** Yeah, oh, yes because my youngest brother was four years in the last World War. He was my youngest brother.

**Paul:** Did you have any … he was in which War? Which War did your youngest brother fight in?

**Martha:** What?

**Paul:** Which War did your youngest brother fight in?

**Martha:** It was it was that last…

**Paul:** The Second World War.

**Martha:** Yes, the Second World War.

**Paul:** Did any of your brothers have to fight during the First World War?

**Martha:** That I can’t remember really. I can’t really remember.

**Paul:** How did your father feel about the First World War?

**Martha:** What could he feel? Poor thing, he tried to do the best he could. It wasn’t easy, no, no, no.

**Paul:** You said that after you were confirmed you had a job at somebody’s farm.

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Tell me about that experience.

**Martha:** That [inaudible 00:22:53]. I was not supposed to be doing all that work but I did do there but I did. It doesn’t mean I went out to get water outside and had a cane and a string, [inaudible 00:23:10] do like this and get water and put it up here and carry it.

**Paul:** What were some of your other jobs on that farm? What were some of your other responsibilities on the farm?

**Martha:** To keep the house, to clean up the house and to wash some clothes.

**Paul:** Did you get paid for this?

**Martha:** Yeah, but not very much.

**Paul:** Do you remember how much?

**Martha:** I think about13, 14 Kroner. Kroner [inaudible 00:23:44] Kroner.

**Paul:** Did you live on the farm?

**Martha:** Yeah, I lived there with them, yeah.

**Paul:** How often did you visit your parents? When you lived on that farm, how often did you visit your parents?

**Martha:** [inaudible 00:24:03]. It was a little while I wait before I be able. My father got me a bike otherwise it was I had to walk, which it was not so easy because it was … it took more than an hour to walk it. I was supposed to be off every like either Sunday so I could go home to be with them but come back the same day.

**Paul:** Your father bought you a bicycle?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Paul:** How did that feel to have your own bicycle?

**Martha:** I couldn’t even ride a bike when my father went to Fosen, a place called Fosen in [inaudible 00:24:44] and I met him. My [inaudible 00:24:46] he couldn’t ride a bike so he had to walk with it here. When I got it, I had to walk from there in two hours walking.

**Paul:** Who taught you how to ride a bicycle?

**Martha:** That I had to learn myself. I keep on trying.

**Paul:** Did anything ever happen when you were learning how to ride the bicycle?

**Martha:** No, no, no, no.

**Paul:** Tell me why you wanted to come to America?

**Martha:** What?

**Paul:** Why did you want to come to America?

**Martha:** That happened so quickly. The [inaudible 00:25:25] that I was together with in school the same about age. Got to find out that they were going, go and then I started I want to go but my father didn’t like it because I don’t talk to him. But then I get my ticket and got to go with them. I was only 20. I was 20 years old.

**Paul:** Your father want you to go to America?

**Martha:** No, he said he wanted me to be home to be with [inaudible 00:25:54] because my brothers, two of my … my oldest brother I think only him that’s over here when I came over here. Then the others came later.

**Paul:** You older brother, where did he live in America?

**Martha:** He lived in 56th Street in down Brooklyn.

**Paul:** 56th Street in Brooklyn and what was he doing for a living?

**Martha:** He would be doing carpenter work like building houses.

**Paul:** What year did he come to America?

**Martha:** He had gone a couple of time to two, three years before and he had been home and he visited before I got to be here and had gone back again before I got to go over.

**Paul:** I see. Before you got to America, how did you think about America? What did you expect that you would find when you got here?

**Martha:** I can’t remember what I think but I can’t remember anything, no.

**Paul:** Do you remember what changed your father’s mind to let you go to America? What…?

**Martha:** Well, he was … not that. He did everything [inaudible 00:27:21] before that. After being in that place where I first worked that he got me into [inaudible 00:27:29] school and there I go into what you called [inaudible 00:27:34] school. I went and learnt about a lot of cooking and things. But then so many of my friends went to America so dad made me go.

**Paul:** What did you pack to take to America? What did you take with you to America?

**Martha:** Just some clothes in a trunk, just some clothes I think. We went to Ellis Island.

**Paul:** Do you remember taking an object? Did you take anything that was not a piece of clothing like a book or a photograph or something like that?

**Martha:** No, I don’t think so.

**Paul:** Just clothes.

**Martha:** I didn’t really hear what you said.

**Paul:** You said that you took clothes to America. Did you take anything else?

**Martha:** No.

**Paul:** Just clothes.

**Martha:** Yeah, just clothes, yeah.

**Paul:** What did you have to do to get ready to leave Norway?

**Martha:** It was so quick. Like I said, when I heard my friends were going. That didn’t take me long before I got my ticket in.

**Paul:** Did you have to go to a doctor?

**Martha:** I think so. I don’t remember but I think so.

**Paul:** Where did you have to go to get your papers to leave Norway?

**Martha:** Yeah, you had to get that [inaudible 00:29:05]. A place called [inaudible 00:29:11]. I think I get them through there some place.

**Paul:** Did your mother and father give you a good-bye party?

**Martha:** Yeah, there was. It was hard for … especially for my mother as she had a lot to do. Like I said, you have your [inaudible 00:29:33] farmer had to go up there to milk the cow and bring it home and make their own [inaudible 00:29:44]. My mother had a … they needed so much they would pick blueberries and sell as many as you could to make a little bit extra money.

**Paul:** How did your mother feel about you going to America?

**Martha:** Well, she didn’t say anything. Like I said, she was … I don’t know how many years, she was here seven or eight or maybe nine years in the Green Point.

**Paul:** That’s right. She knew about America. She had lived here. Yeah, she lived here. Where did you have to go to get on the ship?

**Martha:** To get on the …

**Paul:** To get on the ship, the boat. Where did you have to go to get on the boat?

**Martha:** I went to Svanøya.

**Paul:** How did you get there?

**Martha:** By boat.

**Paul:** You went on a boat to Svanøya.

**Martha:** I was the first one to … Svanøya, yeah.

**Paul:** Did you go by yourself?

**Martha:** Yeah, when I was there … my friends were there before but they had [inaudible 00:30:53] so I got on the same boat.

**Paul:** What was the name of the boat that you took to America?

**Martha:** I can’t remember that, no, I can’t remember.

**Paul:** Can you describe for me how it felt to say good-bye to your mother and father?

**Martha:** Like I said, [inaudible 00:31:15]. The worst was for my youngest brother. He felt bad when I was going. Yeah, that I know.

**Paul:** Why do you know that? How did you know that he felt so bad?

**Martha:** Yes, I knew. It was later on when he grown up. He came over too. He had that poor [inaudible 00:31:36] like I said, I said it before when he came he was used by the War. He got put into the War and had to be in the War.

**Paul:** This was the Second World War.

**Martha:** Yeah, in the Second World War, yeah.

**Paul:** What do you remember about the voyage to America across the Atlantic? What do you remember about being on the boat going to America?

**Martha:** We were pretty lucky with good weather. Then it’s okay. We got [inaudible 00:32:07] already made and I think we … I was sitting in a room all day to get it into a room. I can’t remember that.

**Paul:** Where did you sleep on this ship?

**Martha:** We had … I had a room with some other lady in the same room and not alone in the room, no.

**Paul:** Did anything happen while you were on the ship?

**Martha:** No, no, no. I can’t say that but when I went home [inaudible 00:32:40] home. I was together with another lady. She had a [inaudible 00:32:49] and I had two. We were all in one room. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Paul:** How long did the ship take to go from Norway to America in 1923?

**Martha:** I believe it took a week or something.

**Paul:** Did you see the Statue of Liberty when the ship came to New York?

**Martha:** Yeah, yeah, oh, yeah.

**Paul:** Did you know what that was?

**Martha:** From where I come from, I can’t because [inaudible 00:33:22] Statue of Liberty.

**Paul:** When you were on the ship coming into New York, could you see the Statue of Liberty?

**Martha:** Maybe we could but I didn’t know what it was, at least I don’t think so.

**Paul:** Tell me what happened at Ellis Island.

**Martha:** Well, like I said, so many people. They take the whole day. I ate my meal on Ellis Island.

**Paul:** What did they feed you?

**Martha:** We got some sandwiches and some coffee and things there. There my brother and a cousin of mine were staying together with other people. They couldn’t get in. They didn’t get to get anything. They stayed the whole day there waiting without having anything to eat, no.

**Paul:** What did it look like on the inside?

**Martha:** I didn’t get really to look most of any because I didn’t. When you are inside so I can’t say that but we went from New York. The boat had come into New York and we went from there [inaudible 00:34:31] guess where the boat and went over to … we had to go back with that and that’s where our suitcase and things were. We had get them when we get back.

**Paul:** You didn’t have your suitcase when you were at Ellis Island? You didn’t have your suitcase with you when you were at Ellis Island?

**Martha:** No, no, no, no.

**Paul:** Did you have to be examined at Ellis Island?

**Martha:** I can’t really remember. I can’t really.

**Paul:** Do you remember what you were wearing when you were at Ellis Island?

**Martha:** I can’t. Regular clothes.

**Paul:** Who came to meet you at Ellis Island?

**Martha:** A brother of mine that had been there before.

**Paul:** That’s your oldest brother.

**Martha:** Yeah, and he has a cousin.

**Paul:** Where did they take you when they took you off Ellis Island?

**Martha:** They had to get first over … right from there and over to where my … where the boat had come in so we could get our clothes, so I could get my clothes there and the suitcase. Then the one cousin there that I was with, she lived out in Flat Bush.

**Paul:** Out in Flat Bush?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Pau:** How did you get from New York to Flat Bush?

**Martha:** You had to go by … did they rent a car like, because I don’t think they had their own car. I think they rented a … more like you would say here like a truck, yeah.

**Paul:** But, you went in a car, you didn’t go by subway or …

**Martha:** No, no, no. No, no.

**Paul:** When did you get … did you get a job?

**Martha:** Yeah, I didn’t take a while long, then I got a … yeah, for Jewish people.

**Paul:** What were you doing for the Jewish people?

**Martha:** I couldn’t even be able to talk English. The Jewish people, they [inaudible 00:36:28] and they had two kinds of [inaudible 00:36:34] and not mix them. I got into it pretty quick, yeah.

**Paul:** Did you live with the Jewish family?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Do you remember how much you got paid?

**Martha:** It was … either $30 or $40 in a whole month.

**Paul:** How many days a week did you work?

**Martha:** I was off some hours on a Thursday and some on a Sunday but otherwise I had plenty to do otherwise.

**Paul:** What did you wear when you worked at the Jewish family’s house?

**Martha:** We wore regular working clothes and would get things for the evening or either for holidays and Sundays when I went to Brooklyn to my cousin when I came over.

**Paul:** When you worked for the Jewish family, did you see anything that you had never seen before?

**Martha:** The thing was that I had to be really careful about the [inaudible 00:37:47] not to mix anything up but [inaudible 00:37:51] had to be very careful.

**Paul:** Did any other people work for the Jewish family? Where you the only person working for them?

**Martha:** Not when I was there. They only had one worker and that was me.

**Paul:** I see. How long did you work for them?

**Martha:** I worked for them a couple of years at least. Then I had some other as you would say but I mean [inaudible 00:38:22] got a little bit [inaudible 00:38:31] somehow. I happened to mention something a little bit to his wife. It’s because I wanted to leave to get some other place so I had to say the reasons. I did all right anyway.

**Paul:** How did you learn English?

**Martha:** I learned by hearing all those people talk. That’s the way you learned it.

**Paul:** Do you remember what your first word was that you learned?

**Martha:** No, but I tried to look in papers to see if I could make out some words and know what it was.

**Paul:** Do you remember trying to speak English and making a mistake?

**Martha:** Yeah, maybe I did. I can’t say.

**Paul:** Was your brother still doing carpentry work all during this time? Was your brother still being a carpenter at this time, your brother who was here?

**Martha:** Yeah, he was a carpenter, yeah and that’s where the … my other brothers when they came over was too.

**Paul:** Did you miss Norway when you got here?

**Martha:** Yes, I did in some way but I don’t know. I can’t say I thought so much about it, only I missed by writing home to my mother and father

**Paul:** Did you send money home to your mother and father?

**Martha:** Yes. Often I did when I could but you know what I sent home they were put in a bank home there.

**Paul:** Who paid for your ship ticket?

**Martha:** See, I had to work something home in Norway before I went over here. I had a little money. I think I paid for my ticket myself.

**Paul:** Do you remember how much it cost?

**Martha:** No that I don’t. That I don’t.

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

**Martha:** I don’t think I was back before … yes. I can’t remember but I was forced back to come over.

**Paul:** Had you been over here for a while before you went …

**Martha:** Yeah, that I had.

**Paul:** Where you married when you went back?

**Martha:** That’s [inaudible 00:41:07]. I know I went home when I had two kids but if I went home before I … my husband didn’t. He came from Bergen.

**Paul:** From Bergen in Norway. What was your husband’s name?

**Martha:** Jan**.**

**Paul:** Jan and how did you meet your husband?

**Martha:** They happened to go to the same church and going home. He lived on Long [inaudible 00:41:37]. Yeah, yeah …

**Paul:** Staten Island?

**Martha:** Further, out than where the boatwent. I had to get off at one place and he had to go a little further. But I meet him in church. That’s where we got to meet and start talking to each other and everything.

**Paul:** You met him here in America?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What year did you get married? What year did you get married?

**Martha:** We went together for a couple of years. I think we got married in 1924 or something like that.

**Paul:** You came in 1923?

**Martha:** Yeah. No, no. I … it was further. I can’t remember all them things you know.

**Paul:** Did you have children? Did you have children?

**Martha:** Children, I had three girls.

**Paul:** What are their names?

**Martha:** Louise, Evelyn and Mabel. Only the youngest one alive and the two others are dead.

**Paul:** I see and you took two of the children to Norway, right. You took your children to Norway …

**Martha:** Yeah, when they were small, yeah.

**Paul:** Yeah, when they were kids. Did you become a citizen?

**Martha:** Here?

**Paul:** Here.

**Martha:** Yes.

**Paul:** What did you have to do to become a citizen?

**Martha:** It took quite a bit. You took tests. You had to be able to read. You had to do this and that. Yes, I’m a citizen, an American citizen.

**Paul:** How did it feel when you became a citizen?

**Martha:** I can’t say, no. I think I felt all right.

**Paul:** Do you think of yourself as American or Norwegian?

**Martha:** That’s hard to say too. I don’t know. I think of both things.

**Paul:** How do you think your life would have been different if you stayed in Norway? How do you think your life would have been different if you stayed in Norway?

**Martha:** I don’t know. When I was home there with the two children with me, I was home for almost a year with my mother and father and my husband. It was in a bad time there was little work to do. He was living with somebody and was working sometime over here and then coming back to [inaudible 00:44:22]. They had an apartment ready for me.

**Paul:** How did it feel when you went back to Norway? How did it make you feel to be back there?

**Martha:** I felt all right but you know [inaudible 00:44:35] over here. He was getting along because with a little work to have money to live on and paid his rent.

**Paul:** Mrs. Larsen, thank you very much for letting me ask you these questions. I appreciate it. This is Paul Seacrest signing off with Martha Larsen on …

**Martha:** Martha Larsen, yeah.

**Paul:** Thursday, October 26th …

**Martha:** I’m on the fifth floor there.

**Paul:** 1995 here at the Norwegian Christian Home. Thank you very much.

**[00:45:10]**