**Paul:** Good morning, this is Paul Seacrest for the National Park Service. Today is Sunday, April 30th 1995. I’m in Greenfield Center, in upstate New York with Olga Max. Mrs. Max came from Czechoslovakia in 1928, she was 20 years old at that time, and she has a very interesting and somewhat complicated immigration story which she’s going to tell us about. Thank you for letting me come out.

**Olga:** You’re welcome.

**Paul:** Mrs. Max can you give me your birth date please?

**Olga:** 1908, July 21st.

**Paul:** July 21st, 1908. Where were you born in Europe?

**Olga:** I was born in Frydek.

**Paul:** Can you spell that?

**Olga:** F-R-Y-D-E-K.

**Paul:** Where is that?

**Olga:** That’s Czechoslovakia. It’s more of the Silesian part of the country. Czechoslovakia is very small, smaller than the smallest state, Rhode Island. It’s the smallest state we have here. That how big is Czechoslovakia, 15 million people.

**Paul:** Was that area of Czechoslovakia known as Czechoslovakia when you were born?

**Olga:** No, when I was born it was Austria-Hungary.

**Paul:** Part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire?

**Olga:** Yes, we were under Austria then after the First World War it changed to Czechoslovakia and we had our own president, Tomas Garek Masaryk.

**Paul:** Can you spell that for me, please?

**Olga:** Tomas, T-O-M-A-S and Garek G-A-R-E-K, Masaryk M-A-S-Y-R.

**Paul:** He was the first president of Czechoslovakia?

**Olga:** First president of Czech. He was a good fella. He was a general at the army but because he’d been just voted for to be the president he was older fella, around 70.

**Paul:** When he became president.

**Olga:** Yes. I’ve got some place picture of him. I didn’t think of it I would have shown it to you. He was in our hometown towards the depot. Then in the schools everything changed to Czech.

**Paul:** Let’s talk about your earliest memories. Tell me a little bit about Frydek and what the town looked like.

**Olga:** Frydek was a small town but it was a very beautiful surrounding the country around. Everybody, even the tourists came in they always admired it. It was the main tour of the road going right where we lived. We lived in state- built apartment.

**Paul:** State-built apartment.

**Olga:** Yes, for those people that been working for the government and working at railway route.

**Paul:** Did your father work for the government?

**Olga:** Yes, he worked for the government and was a lot of trouble too when I was gone to school. My father did not believe in the German government, so whenever he had a chance he shift me to the Czech school. There was a Czech school even if there was a German government as far as that goes.

Every time I would end up in a Czech school came a letter. It says, “You eating our bread. You better send your kids to the school that they belong.” So I had to go back because he would lose the job. But the teachers they loved me when I was gone. One year I was gone in and out two, three months in and out and that’s the reason I failed in class. It was broken up, but they loved me. They didn’t want me to go back to Czechoslovakia, today Czech country. The people were Czech but when the government comes you don’t have much choice.

But it was in many ways a good government. They were strict in many things as far as health concern and prices. They were good. I remember.

**Paul:** You say that they were strict about health concerns. How did the government control public health at that time?

**Olga:** It’s such a small country. It It’, three monthsating [garlic]is easy because every part… with bigger cities then that’s different. They got small government like over here we have but in a small country there’s still laws made like those days the farmers would come with milk, butter, and cheese.

They would stop along the road as they travelled because they had customers. People came out and bought the stuff. But they were now in town and there were big tables in the centre of the town, and that’s where they put their merchandise out and the people came and picked what they wanted. An inspector came every time if it was milk or whatever it was wasn’t good enough, out it went and they were penalized.

**Paul:** So the government supplied inspectors that would look over the food that was being sold?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** Anything else? What about medical health, did the government try to…?

**Olga:** No, there was not much. We were injected with some…because I think I was in second grade. My mother she didn’t believe in it. She wash it out. So three times I was injected because of that. We said, “Well, it didn’t catch.”

**Paul:** Because your mother kept washing it.

**Olga:** I still got marks left. They grew big because they just put them up.

**Paul:** Do you remember when you were a girl, say before the age of 10 or so, that somebody in your family or somebody in your town became very ill or hurt themselves somehow?

**Olga:** There was people getting sick but they were poor. They could not afford and the government was not supporting them.

**Paul:** How would different illnesses be treated? Did they use folk medicine of some sort? How would they…?

**Olga:** They were not treated unless you had enough money to go ahead, because we had only one doctor in our town and one eye doctor. It wasn’t much doing neither because those days the doctors was not as knowledgeable as they are nowadays, so they could not do much for you.

**Paul:** Do you remember any home remedies that your own mother used?

**Olga:** Yes, lot of herbs from my grandmother.

**Paul:** What kinds of herbs?

**Olga:** Talinac.

**Paul:** Talinac?

**Olga:** Yes. That’s the very bitter stuff. I cannot think about what you call it here.

**Paul:** How would she use that?

**Olga:** They would go out in the fields, in the woods and pick the herbs, and they bring it home, dry it up, and keep it on a roof. They knew just by the looks what it is for, what it will help. Like when my father got very ill one time and there was five of us kids, my grandmother came and he was in bed and she says, “What is your husband doing in bed?” My mother said he’s very sick he’s got pneumonia.

That time the doctor came and that was the day that the doctor said, “I do not expect him to live tomorrow morning when I come in.” So my grandmother said, “You go ahead. Go up to a farm and get some oats, regular oats. You know the way they get it out the field.

**Paul:** Like what you eat?

**Olga:** It wasn’t like you eat. It was just that natural ways it comes out. She said, “Put it in a pot, heat it up good, put it in a bag, and put couple towels on his chest, put that hot oats on him and cover him up good”. She did.

In the morning when the doctor came, he seeing he was still alive in the bed he said, “I will never believe that that man could not pull through.” But then mother told him. From that hot oats he had on his chest, his chest got all black. That’s the way it was. His life saved.

**Paul:** Was your grandmother the person in the family who had this information?

**Olga:** Yes, she was the only one that knew more than anybody else in the family.

**Paul:** What other kinds of treatments do you remember your grandmother doing?

**Olga:** For coughing, like children get all types of coughs and problems. It was better the herbs when they use them, that knowledge, than many times the modern way. I think it wasn’t as harmful to you, bad to your system like it is now. You get side-effects from every medication you take.

**Paul:** How would she treat a cough? Do you remember?

**Olga:** Honey. You know what they did? Many of the children they had pneumonia very bad. We had a dog catcher. They had to pay for allow them to have their animals running loose. If they didn’t they were penalized and many of them would catch those dogs. They would use the fat for medication and they ate up the meat. They were just robust if you wish, and then they use for putting it on the chest. That helped for the pneumonia or that cold. Many of them would even drink the fat. They would fry it out and then they would let them drink it. That’s the way they’ve been curing the people.

**Paul:** Did your grandmother use the dog fat also?

**Olga:** No, she didn’t. But I know lot of others did.

**Paul:** That’s very interesting.

**Olga:** It’s a long time ago and as I say, people were very poor those days. I was interested in people because I’ve been walking for about three quarter of an hour into the woods looking for mushrooms and then we were picking blueberries. There was lot of them those days. There was a lot of people sometime too going out there. They were small houses. There is no wooden houses in Europe, not even today. The government was not allow it and it comes very high. It’s expensive because they do not have enough land to have woods.

**Paul:** Describe for me what a typical house looks like at that time.

**Olga:** Stucco it was. Not everybody lived there but there was some along the road when I used to walk always into the woods I did love to go out. Many times I was wondering how those people living there. I know they had children, I think, so I went into couple of them. I was real aggressive. I knock on the door and I said, “I’m interested in how you people living in such a small house and you have children I know because they’ve gone to school”, so they let me in. Maybe it was more square than this kitchen without that corner.

**Paul:** Maybe 12 feet maybe by 15…

**Olga:** No, this is 14.

**Paul:** 14 feet by 20 feet.

**Olga:** Something like that. They just had a table, they didn’t have many chairs. I think it was sitting on small stools and in a corner they had a chicken, or another place I found they had a pig in the corner. It was miserable.

**Paul:** What kind of roof did these little houses have?

**Olga:** They have those red shingles like.

**Paul:** Tiles?

**Olga:** Yes, the tiles. Most all of those roofs, and they’re good. They have no problem with it. Sometimes there comes hail, big hails. It happens and they cracked and they just replace it and it’s good. Most houses did have it.

**Paul:** Did the little country houses have windows in them?

**Olga:** Yes, they have windows. Now there’s… then after I got older they have big windows, twice as big window in our place where we lived. This in the kitchen, and in the back was the kitchen, in front was the living room where we could see on a road.

**Paul:** This is in your house?

**Olga:** Yes, and my mother always had flowers outside planted and they looked pretty.

**Paul:** You just said that you lived in a state-built apartment building.

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** How many apartments were in that building?

**Olga:** 12.

**Paul:** What floor did you live on?

**Olga:** Second floor.

**Paul:** Walk me from the street into the building and then from the building into your apartment.

**Olga:** There was stairways and each week everybody rented had to clean that part that he used to his entrance.

**Paul:** What did the front of the building look like? What did the entrance to the whole building look like?

**Olga:** It was two entrances like if this would be the building where here was the entrance, here was the entrance.

**Paul:** So two on the side?

**Olga:** Yes, and there was six on each side rents.

**Paul:** When you open the door to your apartment, walk me through the apartment, through the rooms.

**Olga:** There was only one apartment downstairs when we walked in, but when we started going up the stairway then the apartments doubled.

**Paul:** How many rooms did you have in your apartment?

**Olga:** We have entrance, we had a porch, we had kitchen, and we had the living room.

**Paul:** What about bedrooms?

**Olga:** That was through the whole width of the…

**Paul:** Each room opened into the next room?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** What about a bedroom?

**Olga:** There was no bedroom. There was bedroom in a living room. Those days’ two beds and two in the kitchen.

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

**Olga:** There was stoves built in each room. In the living room, beautiful, tiled, nice tiles decorated. When you made fire in it good for couple hours. In the evening it was long enough four- five days to keep the heat in the building. In the kitchen was regular built from tiles and regular kitchen cooking stove and hot water on tap. It had oven too.

**Paul:** Did you have running water in the house?

**Olga:** Yes, there we had running water.

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

**Olga:** Electric.

**Paul:** This was a very modern building for that…

**Olga:** Partially it was modern.

**Paul:** Was it a new building when you lived in?

**Olga:** Brand new built.

**Paul:** Is that the only place that you lived as a child? You were born and lived there?

**Olga:** No. When I was born we were living out of the city in a suburb. There’s a big shrine, Saint Mary and most of the other parts of Czechoslovakia, it wasn’t too far, they were coming two, three times a year to that shrine to pray and they procession like event, they had three or four musicians that’d be playing as they walked, and they were singing. When they came they slept in the church if there was no room, some people maybe had little space to give it to them, and many if it wasn’t too cold slept outdoors.

**Paul:** What was the name of the shrine?

**Olga:** Saint Mary.

**Paul:** Saint Mary. What did the shrine look like?

**Olga:** Beautiful, it had two steeples and it had the bells would be ringing when they already knew somebody who’s came notified the church that there is another procession coming of people even from Poland and other surrounding countries.

**Paul:** People making pilgrimages to the shrine.

**Olga:** Yes, that’s what they did.

**Paul:** And that was near where you were born?

**Olga:** Very near, all around that because they had a big shade and in there they were selling all kinds of saint pieces and some… they’re over there. You see that heart?

**Paul:** Yes.

**Olga:** They had all kinds of stuff with the horses and the soldier on it and all…

**Paul:** So this pastries in shapes?

**Olga:** Yes. It was lot of people in there. It was first part of June and they all already had pickles pickled in barrels. They would bring that out, selling it for a crown or so, and they were delicious. And hotdogs, they give you a croissant and two hotdogs, always little of the mustard.

**Paul:** This was a big tourist attraction, the shrine.

**Olga:** It was. Then we had like a big market two, three times a year. People brought everything; from clothing, from material, all kinds. The needs you needed for a house. The streets from the square this way, that way were all filled up.

They put the merchandise, either had a blanket or some kind of a cloth and they put it on and they [unclear 00:19:28] on even chocolate, and cookies and all kinds of stuff, “Here is for Mary. Here is another one for Frankie. Here is for Louis.” And they piled up. “It’s all for 10 crowns” they tell you.

**Paul:** Did your mother or father ever tell you any stories about your birth?

**Olga:** No. My father most of the times he would go even for three, four days out on a trip with train being loaded with some kind of merchandise.

**Paul:** He worked on the trains?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** What was his name?

**Olga:** Joseph.

**Paul:** What was his name in was it Slovak that you spoke in Czechoslovakia?

**Olga:** No, Czech; Moravian, more of the Moravian type. The northern part of Czechoslovakia was Silesia, the centre part was Moravia, and the western part was Czech.

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

**Olga:** Pishek.

**Paul:** Can you spell that?

**Olga:** P-I-S-H-E-K, that’s in English. When you made… it was‘s’ but if you put a birdie over there it, it was ‘esh’.

**Paul:** ‘Esh’ like a ‘shhh’ sound.

**Olga:** Yes. That’s what it made a difference; just putting birdies on lot of things.

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

**Olga:** He had a father and mother. I know that she was a very good grandmother but his father was a watchman at a factory. He had his dog there all the time and most of the time that was mostly his job.

The grandmother was staying in the house. They had two daughters. They were very religious. They married to the church themselves and that’s just the way he died. One of them got very ill and before she died even my brother… one brother I got left, there was five of us, two sisters and three brothers. This what I’m talk is my father’s family.

**Paul:** They’re your aunt.

**Olga:** Yes. She got so sick she was already around 70. Pain, very painful she says, “As much as I believed in God, I don’t believe in Him no more to let me suffer like I am suffering now”.

**Paul:** What was she ill with?

**Olga:** I don’t know. She didn’t know. She had lot of pain and my brother never told me anything, what really it was. Whether he didn’t know, because I was here already and he was over there. I’m the only one that came to this country.

**Paul:** Out of your whole family?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** Tell me about your father’s personality. What was he like as a person?

**Olga:** He was kind of quiet, he didn’t do much talking. He was a good man, had no trouble. When somebody had in Europe, especially when it was apartment building, birthday they all would go and treat everybody. Something made them happy. When we had got many of them, all of these together, when they were birthdays or somebody came play accordion, they celebrated as far as that goes. They were all happy.

**Paul:** What would they drink? What kind of alcohol were they drinking?

**Olga:** It was just like brandy and regularly treated whisky, stuff like that.

**Paul:** That was used for special occasions?

**Olga:** Yes, only when they had special occasions. Otherwise when if somebody from a family or friends would come, we had a store right across the street and they had rum and vodka. They didn’t have much bread there but they did.

They had, it’s like bad cheese, smelly. They were little, round cakes and they were all padded up they hid it always under the glass on a plate. But if you open it, oh my, but it tastes so good.

**Paul:** It didn’t taste like it smelled.

**Olga:** One incident, if you don’t mind I tell you. In 1960 we went with my husband first time back, since we got married to Europe. They still had it then. I think they still have it but they changed the quality of it. I wrote one time to my sister and said, “Send me some, I’m so hungry for them.” She did send a packet but the paper is very poor quality. It was broken up.

When mailman was blowing the horn and I went out, we lived on a farm then, and he says, “There’s your package from Europe” I said, “Package?” “Boy, what a stuff”, he says, “We had to aerate the whole post office for a week before we carried out.” [Laughs].

**Paul:** [Laughs] it’s very smelly that stuff.

**Olga:** Yes, like limburger.

**Paul:** Is there a story about your father that you always associate with your childhood?

**Olga:** No. He would come, he would sit down, and he would smoke his pipe and I hated it. It smelled up the whole thing and we had to sleep in. I said I’ll never marry a man that’s going to drink and smoke and I didn’t. That’s just what I said and I kept to it.

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

**Olga:** My mother, Agnes.

**Paul:** Her maiden name before she was married.

**Olga:** Helenka.

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

**Olga:** H-E-L-E-N-K-A.

**Paul:** That was her name before she married your father?

**Olga:** Before she married, yeah.

**Paul:** What do you know about your mother’s background?

**Olga:** She worked a lot. We had many textile factory about three, four huge ones in my hometown. The curtain came in big bundles like from the south when they packing it up and then in a factory they work it through till they was real thin thread and spools, because I worked in one of them too. That’s one reason we had three big factories.

**Paul:** Did your mother do that?

**Olga:** Yes, she worked in one of them too… and they making material damask. They are very complicated I never knew until I went to one of the part of the rooms where they’d been making only damask, if you know what it is.

**Paul:** It’s like a very fine linen.

**Olga:** Like my drapes, that’s damask. It’s very complicated.

**Paul:** You said that you worked in the mills also before you came to this country.

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** Can you explain to me exactly what you did in the mill? What kind of work did you do?

**Olga:** First when I started I was piling those spools that were already worked into the thread for material-making.

**Paul:** How old were you when you went to work?

**Olga:** I think I was 16 or 17. I was frail. Before that I was working in where they’re making alcohol-liquor and they had all kinds of fruits. There’d been canning and putting it in huge barrels. It was just regular syrup and that fruit went there and stayed there for a year, then they pull it out, and they dried it up, and the fancy fruits you’re buying? That just what that place was making and the have alcohol. I was working there about two, three years.

**Paul:** Was it customary for young women to go to work in the town?

**Olga:** Yes. Soon as you got out of the school you had to go ahead, most of them. I must say my mother was not a good housekeeper because there were other women, other families, maybe they had one or two more and their husbands been working same occupation where father was and they saved to build a house.

We had always shortage of money. You’ve got to go to work, we don’t have enough money. I was giving everything to my mother. What I made I didn’t leave myself a penny until I got about 17 years old.

I told mother I rebelled. I said, “I’m giving you all the money and I don’t have hardly two, three dresses and things what I need.”, “Okay, leave and get your forsus.” That was before the main payment. Every two weeks you got main pay, but this was just to start you a little bit and then one week and you got all that crowns probably, so I could have that.

**Paul:** How much did you get paid when you worked in the factory? Do you remember? In the textile mill?

**Olga:** I got paid that first week. It would be 100 crowns, almost. The called it forsus.

**Paul:** Called it what?

**Olga:** Forsus.

**Paul:** Can you spell that?

**Olga:** That was more German.

**Paul:** Do you know how to spell that, forsus?

**Olga:** Yes, I know how to spell it but it’s not Czech. It’s more German. It was F-O-R-S with a birdie-U-S again but no birdie.

**Paul:** Forsus.

**Olga:** Yes. 100 crowns I kept that and when it was the regular pay day every two weeks you got the regular pay whatever you… if you sometime you worked by the hour, sometime you work by the job, what you had. That was according. So I got around 3, 400 crowns every two weeks. Did all went, gone.

**Paul:** How much is that? What is the American dollar equivalent of 300 crowns roughly?

**Olga:** Nowadays the exchange is different. I’ve been asking my sister- in- law, she passed over so quick in March, she wrote to me she said, “You get 27 up to 29 crowns for an American dollar.” It don’t stay steady.

**Paul:** And it was back then, it was a different exchange.

**Olga:** It was as low as 10 crowns for a dollar, already two.

**Paul:** Tell me about some of the things that your mother did in the house. What was some of her household responsibilities?

**Olga:** One thing I know when I got older, around 12, I had to wash the kitchen floor, scrub it with brush, and soapy water every week. I didn’t like that much. Then the hall going out, that had to be all clean and scrubbed too. I thought it was too much over there and I was the oldest one, so I had to watch the children all the time. I couldn’t go play with the kids, I remember. You take the kids I got other things to do. Fix the supper or stuff like that.

**Paul:** Can you name your brothers and sisters for me? You’re the oldest, Olga is the oldest. Was Olga your birth name? Is that what you were born with?

**Olga:** Yes. I was supposed to be having a different name but they got godmothers. My godmother I don’t know what they were celebrating, when you go to be christened, and I think she mixed it up. I was supposed to have Bozena but she mixed it up with Olga.

**Paul:** What’s the name you were supposed to have?

**Olga:** Bozena.

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

**Olga:** It is goddess like. B-O-Z-E-N-A, with a birdie over the Z.

**Paul:** Birdies over everything.

**Olga:** Yes. It’s easier than putting ‘C-H’ over here to pronounce it different. Put a birdie in it and it changed the whole thing.

**Paul:** Olga is the oldest, that’s you. What was your name before you were married? Your father’s last name, what was it?

**Olga:** My mother had me out of wedding so it’s just Helenka like hers.

**Paul:** So Olga is the oldest then?

**Olga:** Bedrech.

**Paul:** Spell that please?

**Olga:** B-E-D-R-E-C-H.

**Paul:** Is that a boy or a girl?

**Olga:** Boy.

**Paul:** How many years between the two of you?

**Olga:** Four years.

**Paul:** Then who’s next?

**Olga:** Then it was Louis.

**Paul:** And his second name is?

**Olga:** Alois.

**Paul:** Spell that.

**Olga:** A-L-O-I-S.

**Paul:** You didn’t know this was going to be a spelling bee, did you?

**Olga:** No. You’re lucky I can spell.

**Paul:** It’s great, I’m very happy. Okay, who’s next?

**Olga:** Then it was my sister, Stephanie; Stepanka.

**Paul:** Can you spell it in Czech?

**Olga:** S with a birdie-T-E-P-A-N-K-A, because she was born at Christmas time so the next was Stephanie’s holiday. That’s why they gave her name Stephanie. Then it was Joseph, the last one. That’s all I got left in Europe, just my younger brother.

**Paul:** Were there any other children that didn’t survive?

**Olga:** No, there were no other children.

**Paul:** Do you remember the birth of one of your brothers and sisters?

**Olga:** No way. We all being shooed out when the midwife came, no doctors, only midwife. That same day I remember, that was a year before I got bigger, my mother was scrub up everything, clean up everything, washed the floor and everything. I thought it was too many children already when I was young.

I said, “It’s going to be a baby”, to myself. You wouldn’t dare talk anything if grown-ups came for a visit; family, or so, out you go. We always were pushed out. We’re not supposed to be listening what they’re saying, but they’re talking.

That was the system those days, but we didn’t mind. We kids we went and played and let them talk anything. I know that I was always against that because it was already four more than me.

**Paul:** Tell me which brother or sister were you closest to as a child.

**Olga:** My brother Louis and my sister. We slept together in a bed.

**Paul:** Is there a story you can tell me about an experience that you shared with your brothers and sisters as a child?

**Olga:** Yes, you won’t believe it. My next brother to me, Bedrech, he was a kid you could kill him. He had his way of doing what he wanted when he wanted. Many times we had policemen go looking for him. He just disappeared, nobody knew, it was midnight already and he wasn’t there. He borrowed somebody’s wagon and out he went places God knows how far.

That just the way he was, and mean. One time we had… I was about between eight and nine years of age, and we had argument. By the stove there was a whole pile of wood to start it when it needed to be or start a fire or keep on putting because we burn coal too and sometime it went low, you had to put piece of wood to start it again and things would cook. He turn and he pick up piece of that wood, it was split, was sharp and he hit me and it hit me right over the nose right over here.

**Paul:** That’s on your left side of the nose.

**Olga:** Yes, and it cut the skin through but mother wasn’t home. I don’t know where she was. I just let it and it heal up, no problem.

**Paul:** He was the wild one in the family.

**Olga:** He was the devil, yes. Last year I was going to the eye doctor, regular doctor, and they noticed that thing for all those years since childhood. They say, “Next, you better go to a skin doctor because this might turn into a cancer.”

I know it was getting infected so I did and I had it operated by conducting [unclear 00:38:41]. It healed up and that just the way it is. He still wants to see me next year at the same time whether it is doing anything or not. I said, “Maybe these things use took for it to come alive again.”

**Paul:** You said you slept with one of your sisters in the living room.

**Olga:** Yes, that was the only sister I had.

**Paul:** Your one sister; what did you sleep in?

**Olga:** We had straw mattresses from a regular straw. Those days, I’d been many times the farmers they had big barns and they had a nice wooden big boards of [unclear 00:39:20] in the barns. When they harvested wheat, or oats, they first cut it down the big bundles. Put it together so it dry up more. It had to get hard.

When it got good and hard, they would bring it in with the horses and they put it. This is the head, where all the grain is. They put two of those heads together and the straw was down and here. Then they had sticks. On the end of the stick there was another stick, smaller one, very hard wood, and they beat it and beat it till all that grain come out from the straw.

When that came out then they go ahead and bundles up and people buy it at once every couple years or so, they filled up the mattress. It was big clothes, is what they needed for the… but that thick. But in time after you lay and lay, it was breaking up, it wasn’t right, so again it had to be renewed. That’s the kind of mattresses we had those days.

**Paul:** They started off about a foot thick when you first made them and after…

**Olga:** Yes, it was nice to sleep on it on the first night but then it was getting harder.

**Paul:** Was the straw in something?

**Olga:** No, you had to put it. It was all made up. The cloth was made just for the regular mattress. I understand there was an opening and then you pulled here and pulled here…

**Paul:** You stuffed the straw into this…

**Olga:** Level it off so it evens out.

**Paul:** Where did everybody else sleep in your family?

**Olga:** Some on the floor. My brothers they slept on the floor.

**Paul:** Did they have a mattress to sleep on?

**Olga:** No.

**Paul:** Just right on the floor?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** What about your mother or your father?

**Olga:** They were in the living room sleeping. They had two beds there so many times my youngest brother was sleeping with my father or mother and if the father was not home, he was out on a trip, then they went slept in his bed.

**Paul:** You said your father was off quite frequently. He was not there a whole lot.

**Olga:** No, because they had to make long trips with merchandise.

**Paul:** Tell me what recollections you have, if any, of World War One and that period.

**Olga:** Bad. When the First World started we lived out in the country, not where we lived [unclear 00:41:58].

**Paul:** You hadn’t moved yet into the apartment?

**Olga:** No, we lived out in the suburban… in back of the shrine that I said, Saint Mary’s Shrine. My brother next to me, Bedrech, was born, small baby and my mother was going to go to a doctor because he was sicklish. Back, there was open field, level like a table. Mostly they cut it for hay and there was about three, four big apartments built out in the country. We lived in one of the apartments upstairs.

As we were going, there was one general that was training the soldiers. They were men of 50, 55 years old. We stopped and looked at them because we had to go buying and we go downtown. We stood there and we seen how that general he kick those men and everything as if they didn’t do as they were told exactly. It was German. My mother spoke German too. I spoke fluently, read and write. You wouldn’t say I was Czech.

She told him, “Can’t you see that those men are already old men, they are not so flexible like a young… and you treat him like dogs.” He told her, “If you don’t shut your mouth up I’ll put a bullet through your head.” After a while we left. It was pitiful because I was with her going. I remember it just as today if it would happen.

**Paul:** Was there any fighting that ever took place anywhere near where you lived?

**Olga:** No, not where I was but we suffered hunger. When that happened all the food was cleaned out from the stores, everything went for the army. One time it was at night, one o’clock, the whole regiment came in our backyard. They start to build a place where they had [unclear 00:44:10] whatever they needed, and a big pot, copper, where they cooked the stuff.

They went from house to house whatever you had they had the right to take it, whether you had small children or how many children. They took everything, what they needed and out they went, cooked and that’s the way they fed themselves.

Next morning, they moved again a little farther. They were going to the part of the countries where the fighting was going on. That happened because of Yugoslavia. One of the royalties got killed and that’s the reason the war started.

**Paul:** You remember the German army? Is that the army that you remember?

**Olga:** Yes, we were… no matter what you was you belonged to the Austria so you went ahead and…

**Paul:** And you remember the troops as they were setting up camp one night…

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** In this period of hunger what did you eat?

**Olga:** We eat. We could go ahead and steal something. From beginning everybody we had whatever people had that had more value. Money was worthless, nobody wanted money. You could buy nothing for it. So you have valuables in your home… I know my mother went three, four times. She always take me with her all day from morning till night till we got through.

She stop over the farmer there. He says, “What do you got?” She showed you what she had. He needed it, okay he gave her bread, he gave us few potatoes, or little flour. Some were good, they had butchered pig, gave you little piece of bacon.

In the city, if you had a baby up to one year you got one pint of milk a week. Those girls that’d been dishing out that milk to the people, they were so weak they were fainting. There were many times you could see they’ve been carrying them away. They couldn’t stand do the work, they were so weak already. Even us we were very weak too.

I remember after the war ended up we were getting lot of merchandise, mostly food, even clothing, from US and then they build big barns, they put stoves there, they put soups and nourishing things, so us kids would build up our system because we were undernourished.

Many times I know we always find my mother always found some cabbage and then they made [unclear 00:46:55] into small barrels. Though even that because ladies many times we just got a little dish of [unclear 00:47:03] and we went sleep. That was our meat, maybe little soup from potatoes or two. There wasn’t anything.

We used to stand with stamps. One evening my mother didn’t go but she said she’s got to stay with the kids. She always push me, I was the oldest one. That’s not good to be the oldest one. They clean up everything with you.

In line 9, 10 O’clock I went there and stayed there until eight, ten o’clock till the store open. Whenever he had for you stamps for it and many times he run short so you went ahead, you had to be there a second day again.

**Paul:** Where did you get the stamps? Who gave you these?

**Olga:** The government. We had a small town but it was well known because it was built exactly… I tell you that country of ours, that Czechoslovakia was stolen many times. There was many wars going on, small wars not like the First World War that they occupy the people and they had to obey the law till some other aggressive came again. He thought he’s stronger then again he overtook that country.

It’s such a good country. You can raise everything there and it’s so fertile. Over here if I plant anything under the [unclear 00:48:37] I wouldn’t get no vegetables from there. It would die, it would be so miserable. Up there, everything grows beautiful. I don’t know what’s in that ground.

**Paul:** During the First World War, did you personally ever have any interaction with a soldier that came into town?

**Olga:** No, only my uncle. He was in the army and he got there and he came back from the army. He had malaria and he had those big knives, what do they call them?

**Paul:** Like a machete?

**Olga:** Something like that and he was already so sickish and they had no way of curing it. He was just going out of his mind and many time, because it was shown on a wall because everything is stucco in and out. He was found digging that wall with that big knife, full of holes, chipped up. He went entirely and he was the most miserable human being you could see before he died.

**Paul:** Did he die from that malaria?

**Olga:** From that malaria. There was no help those days.

**Paul:** Do you remember the end of World War One?

**Olga:** Of course I do.

**Paul:** What sticks out in your mind about when the war ended?

**Olga:** There was a revolution then after that. All the stores there were… there was a big square and here in the centre it was built like a pond with marble stones. I’m always jumping little bit up. That was a nice, white merry-go-round and there was always water in it.

One time us kids we were going and just running around trying to playing catch, and I fell into the water and there was a drug store. The kids yelled, “Somebody come and help us because she’s drowning!” I was drowning. The pharmacist he ran there, he got me out of the dirty water because [inaudible 00:51:08]. I walk home like that and then I got help from my mother.

**Paul:** You were describing the end of the war…

**Olga:** People were hungry, they were mad. That was the revolution started. The stores were bursting, whether there was anything, shoes, clothing, food, it was stolen, people been carrying it away. It lasted about two weeks, almost everything empty.

Finally it quieted down and then we became Czechoslovakia and we got a president and had everything had to be started over. The farmers they were good. They raised that food, they had the cow, they had the field but when you lived in the suburban or in the city people, you had nothing. That was the worst part of it.

**Paul:** During those four years from 1914 to 1918, the people in the city had a harder time than the people in the country.

**Olga:** Very hard time. You couldn’t go ahead in the store and buy anything. There was nothing there only whatever came in from other parts of the country because we did get some from United States too. We’d been getting margarine, that was from coconuts made and that’s very bad for human beings but we didn’t care as long as we had something to… it was bad stuff too, I remember. I would heat up some potatoes and that margarine and melt it and believe me or not my potatoes were floating in that grease. I was eating it being hungry.

**Paul:** You ate what you had, that’s all you had. Do you remember seeing American troops in your town?

**Olga:** No, not in my hometown. Whatever I seen it was our soldiers when they came and they clean you out entirely whatever you have whether you have small kids, whether you have tomorrow [unclear 00:53:25]. We just went hungry.

I remember farther from about maybe half a mile. We used to walk towards the woods many times. There was a small place like a villa and they had iron fence around and two huge police dogs there. We sometimes did go in, get on looking, and the maid was feeding cornmeal to the dogs. We beg her we said, “Give us little bit too, we are very hungry.” They did. Few times then she said, “We don’t have anymore. We cannot give it because it’s for the dogs.”

**Paul:** Do you think that the wealthy people at that time had it a little easier?

**Olga:** Yes, absolutely.

**Paul:** Tell me a little bit about food. We talked about starvation during World War One but tell me a little bit about Czechoslovakian food and some of the types of food that you ate when you were a child during the good times.

**Olga:** Good times there was everything. When it was bad times the butchers been selling even the blood from the animal what they cut. I know we went down with container to the butcher’s shop to buy that blood and we when we brought it, my mother put spices in, put it on a baking pan, she bake it, then she cut it up, and we just picking it up and eating and running around.

**Paul:** That was something you ate on the bad time, during the starvation time.

**Olga:** Yes. During good time we did get lot of pastry baked, we had meat. Always you could go, the butcher cut what you want, not like now, everything is packaged.

**Paul:** What would be a typical dinner that you would have eaten at this time?

**Olga:** We always had some kind of soup. I don’t like soups anyway much.

**Paul:** What went into the soup?

**Olga:** In a soup some was with meat, some was just with an egg as it was boiling, and you made, they call it Zapraska, that’s flour, you brown it up little bit and you put the meat so it’s got little body, and then either potatoes there, rice, and then maybe some peas. That’s kind of a soup we made or make a little light dough with an egg, floured stuff, and then you drop it into a not filled up water. It’s tough.

**Paul:** But that makes a substantial meal.

**Olga:** Yes. You know what they do over here when somebody is from starvation or sick on the stomach, that’s what they do in the hospitals over here, feed them with that.

**Paul:** Soup is good food. Spell Zapraska, the name of the flour that you… can you spell that please?

**Olga:** Z-A-P-R-A-S with a birdie-K-A, Zapraska.

**Paul:** Tell me about like for formal occasion, like Christmas, what did you eat at Christmas time?

**Olga:** We had a big supper evening Christmas Eve. We had dried fruit, all kinds of cooked, we had peas soup, the heavy kind from a whole peas cooked, we had fish…

**Paul:** What kind of fish?

**Olga:** Fresh fish.

**Paul:** Do you remember what kind of a fish it was that you were eating?

**Olga:** No, just I know fish. It was a live fish. Maybe you bought it alive and you brought it home and then you butcher it, then you bake it. Bread and many times too, and fry it, it was very good.

**Paul:** Are there certain spices and herbs that are traditional in Czech cooking?

**Olga:** You buy all the spices almost what we have. One thing we used to have like vanilla. I don’t know whether it was the skin of a tree, or a bush. It was black, and it was just about quarter inch thick, and that was vanilla; beautiful. That stuff they’re selling is no more.

**Paul:** How would they use this vanilla? How would they…

**Olga:** They use it as flavoring when you’re baking like poppy seed. [Unclear 00:58:16] is the main thing what they put it in. You never seen poppy seeds?

**Paul:** Little black seeds.

**Olga:** They putting it on herb rolls too but you got to grind it, then you put butter in it, you put honey in it, you put flavoring, then put your lemon, grind some thyme too, and you have to boil lot of milk because you got to cook it up good.

It absorbs lot of moisture, those seeds. It’s unbelievable. You had maybe half of a pot by the time you get through with it, fixing it, put all the milk, boiled milk and everything else, they got a full pot. But we all like it in pastry, to make pastry.

**Paul:** What did people drink on a daily basis?

**Olga:** Those days there wasn’t just water. There was soda, but very good soda. Farmers, drug stores, they were in that business. My uncle was working there with a horse and he was delivering it and it was all bottled up but you cannot get no more soda like that like those days. Few stuff they make it from.

**Paul:** We need to pause right now so that I can put another tape in the machine.

**Olga:** We’ve used one tape already?

**Paul:** We’ve done one tape already. We’re going to pause right now.

This is Paul Seacrest. We’re beginning tape two with Olga Max. Mrs Max came from Czechoslovakia in 1928 when she was 20 years old. Mrs. Max we were just talking about food when the tape ended and now I would like to talk about religious life when you were growing up. What religion were you?

**Olga:** Catholic.

**Paul:** Tell me a little bit about how you practised your religion when you lived in…

**Olga:** In school you were taught. You had most subjects being half an hour and so was the religion. Once a week we went through all the subjects, what we were taught in school but as far as religion goes, we kids, that time we lived close in a city. It was just across the street like the next house, even closer yet it was a church.

Us kids we knew lot of places where there was beautiful flowers. We would go and pick bunches of it, and decorate the whole church. It was a big church too, it was Catholic also. After they wilted in few days we cleaned it up again and nobody said we shouldn’t do it, we did.

My mother was a little religious, not too much but Christmas time we used to go into the shrine Mary and there they had an organ, and they had a whole chorus singing and the church was beautiful, lighted up. That’s the reason we went to the church but the people were so loaded that you couldn’t turn. There were so many people because other people countries they came too.

**Paul:** They’re coming to the shrine. Is there a Christmas carol that you remember in Czech as a child that you used to sing?

**Olga:** [foreign language].

**Paul:** Would you sing one for us please?

**Olga:** [Sings]. I just like it, good night.

**Paul:** Keep going, there’s more to it.

**Olga:** I don’t know the words now.

**Paul:** Is there a prayer that your mother or father taught you in Czech?

**Olga:** [Foreign language]. I know it in German I think more than in Czech. [Foreign language].

**Paul:** Because your mother taught it to you in German because she knew German?

**Olga:** No, it was the school. He was of other church that was in the city. The shrine was little out of the city and next to it was the German school where I was going that time. There was lot of girls that spoke only German and if you want to associate with them or they want to associate with you since I’d been going to that German school, I learnt more than enough than ordinary in that one year.

**Paul:** So you could converse in German and in Czech?

**Olga:** Yeah, even I got a friend, she’s German, living in [unclear 01:13:13] and many times I’ve been singing some song and she said, “I don’t understand you. How can you remember all those German songs when I am a real German and I don’t know?”

**Paul:** Is there a German song that you’d like to sing for us on tape?

**Olga:** Yes. [Sings].

**Paul:** Thank you. What does it mean?

**Olga:** It’s the bird it in your homeland. They singing so beautiful.

**Paul:** I should explain for someone listening to this tape that Mrs. Max can sing in German because she learnt German as a child, so she just sang us a German song. How did you practise your religion at home?

**Olga:** We didn’t have no religion at home. My father had two sisters and they were very religious I told you from the beginning. They married themselves to the church. They got the rings, just like the wedding.

**Paul:** Did they become Sisters? Nuns?

**Olga:** No, but they were very religious.

**Paul:** And they literally had a symbolic ring that they were wedded to the church?

**Olga:** Yes, they were all time on this church. When my father sometime they had little argument, she says, “I’m going to tell your sisters how you are and that you don’t want to go to church.” He says, “Go ahead.”

**Paul:** Tell me a little bit about your life when the war ended. Of course you’re a little bit older by now. What happened to you in your life in your early teens? What was going on in your life at that time?

**Olga:** I had girlfriends. This was funny. One of the teachers she was mad about it she says, “You better learn instead of having all those friends around you.” I was doing lot of joking. They all would bring somebody around me in a ring and laughing or else I would be even sitting at work and I would go ahead and put a verse of something that rhyme together.

My brother even though he was older then he always said, “What happened to all those verses that were from your head and you just made a good one or some kind of a joke about somebody?”

I was interested in almost everything, only trouble was what disappointed me in my life. I wanted to become something, to learn some trade. I wanted to go in a bookstore and be a clerk selling it.

My mother refused. She said, “We don’t have money for that”. I wanted to learn on a mandolin. I like to sing, and play with it. I was kind of romantic. No, it always darken my life because what I had ambition for, I just could not have.

**Paul:** The result was you went to work at the alcohol production factory and then the textile mills at that time.

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** Was there any way that you could express yourself artistically at that time? Did you like to read? Or did you like to paint?

**Olga:** I love to read.

**Paul:** What was your favorite book when you were 15 or 16?

**Olga:** There was a library in school and those teachers whenever they seen over there they always gave me a tip. They said, “You get this one or that one.” So I did. Even when I was working there was magazines coming out while I was “Sitting with a nose in the books all the time”, my father said.

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

**Olga:** Yes. She was a dressmaker too.

**Paul:** We should probably start getting you to America at some point. Tell me, when you were growing up, what you knew about America.

**Olga:** I did hear here and there somebody would say they had somebody in America and what kind of a country it is, how good the people got there, because so many people went to America because of owning something, piece of land they could have. They work like a slave over here when they got here. Nobody ever gave them a penny or asked them “You’ve got a place to live tomorrow” like they do now.

All day immigration they come, they got a golden plate where they get everything on it, even hospitalization, social security, never put a penny and that as far that goes, which I still hold against the country nowadays. That immigration those days was in such a bad condition.

There used to be a magazine, small magazine, coming out for the Czech people in not far from Waco, Texas. It used to be in Omaha, Nebraska but they were printing it and twice a month we were getting it. I was getting it all the time too. They moved to Texas. They were giving all the history and the people themselves that came to this country been writing in letters you could read. It was unbelievable.

**Paul:** That was a nice country when you were here. So when you were in Czechoslovakia you had heard about people that were in America. Did you know anyone yourself that had been in America?

**Olga:** Nobody at all. I didn’t know nobody and that’s the funny strange thing. One Sunday, it was end of April, we got company. My aunt came. My sister of [inaudible 01:09:44] came with them. I was just about through with washing dishes. I was getting ready to go with my girlfriend. We were going to a next small town because in the park there was a military band playing and that band was playing beautiful.

So they came and they introduced themselves and start to talk who he is. My aunt says, “This is my brother-in-law”. My aunt, Cess, had a brother and he married that gentleman’s-my husband then- sister.

**Paul:** Your husband- to- be because you’re just meeting him.

**Olga:** Yes. I had known, I could have been married with younger fellas. I just didn’t care yet. My life is… I got in trouble with a lot of them. “We are related,” He says, “You know it? All way round from both sides where we were”. I pick up. I was dressed all ready to go because my girlfriend came, so we went out. What they were talk or doing, I don’t know.

Two, three days later comes a letter from my aunt and when I came from work… I was working those days. I was most of the times working anyway. She said, “Guess what your aunt writing in this letter? She says that that gentleman thought that you would want to marry him. You want to go to America.” Because I told him before I left to go to my girlfriend I was asking him, “Wouldn’t it be good to go to America? I would like to see it.”

He says there’s no way, not just like that. I said, “How about put me in a suitcase?” I meant it, do you know? He says, “You could never survive. It’s a long race.” It was, by the boat, 8, 10, 12 days I went in a republic boat. I left anyway, I wasn’t interested. I had other things in my mind.

Next Sunday they all came again and the same old thing. My mother got poisoned. “Oh yes, maybe you’ve always want to travel, you want to go, maybe it’ll be a good idea. You better get married and you go see America.”

**Paul:** When you say your mother got poisoned you mean she now was clued in to this?

**Olga:** With my aunt, that’s her sister. They did talk clearly about everything and I just kept shaking my head, “No, no, no” and usually we always had a plan of going as girls some place, so I didn’t stay much longer but when I came back that evening, my mother got into me and she preached to me.

I didn’t like it but she didn’t give up. Then in the evening, my aunt and her husband they came again and she got together with my mother and I think they brainwashed me.

**Paul:** They were determined to get you to America and married to this man.

**Olga:** Yes. My aunt said, “Why don’t you come following Sunday to visit us anyway?” I did go with my future husband. He was waiting in the park for me. I went down there and we sat and listened to the orchestra too. There was lot of music going on those days.

We sat together, we talked, he told me how long he was in this country and where he travelled, how the life was better than over here than over there because here you were eligible for many things to have and get.

Europe was still backward; even nowadays they’re backward for that because you go ahead buying your vegetable, the way it come from the ground, they shake it up if they can, and piling it all in your bag what you carry, all your grocery you pile it in. It’s heavy sometimes and the bottles with soda. I say, “You people are slaves nowadays over here.”

**Paul:** As your husband-to-be was telling you about America, was it becoming more attractive to you?

**Olga:** Yes, it was.

**Paul:** You said you thought you might like to see America. What was it that you wanted to see in America?

**Olga:** I wanted to see the country is different because they got more stuff. As long as I was living there in Europe I never tasted banana. They had it, there were women that had little maybe half of this kitchen, they had all kinds of vegetables but they did not sell it on the tables, on the square, because that was only in the morning business going.

Then the women they left whatever they didn’t sell, they take it back home and that was it. But those women they had an open day every third day, vegetables, fruit all kinds shipped from Italy and all other countries that you could buy a lot of stuff but you didn’t have the money to buy and it was so expensive [unclear 01:16:10] I could afford to buy it.

He bought some bananas. I didn’t like it first time. That was over there when we were married and he says, “I don’t know how you’re going to be doing in America because you don’t like this, you don’t like that.” I said, “No, I’ll get used to it maybe”.

**Paul:** How long was it from the time you first met Mr Max…?

**Olga:** Two months till we got married.

**Paul:** What was Mr Max’s first name?

**Olga:** John.

**Paul:** Was he from Czechoslovakia?

**Olga:** Yes, he was born from Czechoslovakia. When he was a young kid, 18 years old, he wanted to go to the army to be a musician. He was a man, any instrument he picked up he played. No education about it, nothing. He was so knowledgeable, normal it was for him.

I still got accordion. I gave one to my grandson and I gave a violin to the other son and I got one accordion downstairs I was going to… I did, one time because he bought many accordions from button one to the piano type but the button one was really good one.

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

**Olga:** In 1903.

**Paul:** He had been here for a long time then?

**Olga:** Yes. He remembers when the big fire was in San Francisco.

**Paul:** Sure, 1906?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** You married him two months, your mother must have been very happy.

**Olga:** I guess so, so was the aunt.

**Paul:** Tell me a little bit about the wedding. Can you describe what you wore when you got married?

**Olga:** I got it on a wall, a picture.

**Paul:** Can you describe it in words?

**Olga:** Yes. I had a creamy material because my mother said get something… there was two of us we went to pick the material. She says so you can use it. She was always figuring just like in Europe when you pull you try and preserve everything and make something use of it that you can wear not only for wedding but after then too.

There was a nice material, I think it was satin and that’s what I did like but always in mind says, “My mother’s going to give hell to me”. I get something material, I had pleated skirt and was plain trimmed over here you can see them on the picture over there.

**Paul:** Did it have a hat?

**Olga:** No, it was veil. They fixed it up there. A neighbour lady from upstairs she came that day of the wedding and she fixed my head on the veil. The veil was not the long but just up to the bottom. I look good. That’s what everybody told me.

**Paul:** Did you get married in the church?

**Olga:** No.

**Paul:** In the house?

**Olga:** No, we got married in a court house.

**Paul:** How long was it after you got married, before you left for America?

**Olga:** My husband left before. He said he had business doing. In August, I think around beginning of August.

**Paul:** August in 1928.

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** You were married in ’28?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** What was the date of the marriage?

**Olga:** 30th of June.

**Paul:** June 30th 1928.

**Olga:** Yes. I did want to go with him too. He had already pay doctor, the fare on the boat and everything, but when I got to the court house I wanted… “You have to have a passport or permission to [inaudible 01:20:20] or we cannot do no business for you”, they told me. “You married an American citizen and you lost your citizenship. We cannot give you any documents that you can leave the country.”

**Paul:** They’re telling you that by marrying an American citizen you lost your Czechoslovakian citizenship?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** How did you feel when…?

**Olga:** I was stabbed, I felt terrible. The country betrayed me. I said I was born here because I’m married does not mean that I should lose it. I’ve already done everything. No, nothing doing, that was the end of it. So then we were thinking unless we got to go to a lawyer and see what they say. “We can do nothing”, the lawyer says.

After a few days he says, “I know only way you can get maybe you’ve got to write a letter to the government and ask them to give you the permission and that you do not understand you lost the citizenship when you were born and you are fully grown, matured woman and they forbidding you to do what you want because you’re married. You’re not doing nothing wrong by it.”

Maybe they didn’t want me to get out of the country because I don’t know what it is with Czechoslovakia, the population is not growing. Maybe in ‘50s, ‘60s if it was one million that’s about it. They got about 15 or 16 million population for 100 years already.

**Paul:** Did you go and write the letter?

**Olga:** I did and we send it out and it went to Prague, to the main office. I had to wait for about six weeks yet before they released it and gave it to me. I was ready. The lawyer that time he said, “I think you’re going to have the permit ready in a couple of weeks” so we went down there where it was and they said, “Maybe next week you’re going to have” every day. So I stayed there with a lady outside of the city for… I was going to stay there my intention was until I will get the permit.

**Paul:** This is outside of Prague?

**Olga:** Yes.

**Paul:** You had to go to Prague to…

**Olga:** Yes I had to go to Prague. That’s where the main office is. I’ll show it to you too, got a big picture we had made. I had to stay there two weeks with the lady. One day I got it so I went on the 8th or 7th of November when I got the permit and we went to…

**Paul:** It took time, it took months.

**Olga:** They took the time. If I didn’t get that time to the lawyer and he would have not tried to help me, I wasn’t able to follow at all.

**Paul:** All you could do was sit and wait.

**Olga:** Yes. That was terrible.

**Paul:** During that time did you stay with her for that whole six months before it all came through?

**Olga:** No. I stayed only the two weeks I went. We went three, four times. My mother went with me, my father went with me, we went to Prague and not ready, not ready… so we went back home again as far that goes. My husband sent three telegrams he said, “What are you doing? Why are you not coming?”

**Paul:** How did you feel when it finally came through for you?

**Olga:** I just didn’t care anymore. It was too long a wait but I went anyway. I am a person if I tell you something, I’m going to go ahead if I have to go over the mountains, over the river, no matter what I’m going to go ahead and do it.

**Paul:** Do you remember what you packed to take with you to America?