**Paul:** Good afternoon, this is Paul Seacrest for the National Park Service. Today is Thursday October 12th 1995. I’m at the recording studio at Ellis Island with Mary Vogt.

Mrs. Vogt came from Germany in 1930. She was held at Ellis Island overnight. She arrived on the second of October 1930 and she was 20 years old at that time, 20 and a half. Can we begin by you giving me your birth date please?

**Mary:** April 16th 1910.

**Paul:** Where in Germany were you born?

**Mary:** In Stetten.

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

**Mary:** S-T-E-T-T-E-N.

**Paul:** Where in the country is Stetten?

**Mary:** In Bavaria.

**Paul:** Can you tell me a little bit about what you remember as a child about that town?

**Mary:** I remember that when the First World War started I was a child.

**Paul:** What do you remember about the First World War starting?

**Mary:** When the soldiers had to go and they went with horses to [inaudible 00:01:17]. From there they went, I just seen them go by. My mother and dad and grandpa and grandma was there. Of course my dad had to go to service too afterwards.

**Paul:** What do you remember about your father having to go into service during the First World War?

**Mary:** In the First World War it was in 1916. He was not healthy and they let him come home. He passed away then on a heart attack.

**Paul:** You remember that as a child?

**Mary:** [Inaudible 00:02:10] remember it as a child.

**Paul:** Can you talk a little bit about how your father’s death affected your family?

**Mary:** He was a harness maker. I was too young but they tell me afterwards then I came to a farm and my mother was alone.

**Paul:** You came to the farm after your father died?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What happened that you were sent to the farm? Why did you have to leave?

**Mary:** Because I was, what do you called that? My mother wasn’t married to my father. Then when I was 11 years old I lived with my grandpa and grandma and my mother, then my dad died before.

In 1921 my mother got married again. They didn’t like me so well, from my stepdad, they didn’t like me so well. I came to a farm to relatives in 1921 and worked there for nine years before I came to America.

**Paul:** Can we talk a little bit about when you lived with your mother and her parents on the farm. What do you remember about?

**Mary:** My grandparents, my mother’s parents, he was a wagon maker. They had soldiers there from the First World War they made those wagon wheels and for the [inaudible 00:04:28]. I remember that. Then when my mother got married and I had a stepdad, I wasn’t too welcome there.

**Paul:** Before that happened though I’d like to talk about life on the farm with your mother and your grandparents. What were some of the things that stick out in your mind about living on that?

**Mary:** I was grandpa’s girl and grandma …

**Paul:** Can you describe your grandfather for me, what he was like as a person?

**Mary:** He was a wagon maker.

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

**Mary:** He was real nice.

**Paul:** What did he look like? Describe him in words to me.

**Mary:** He was a wagon maker. I had to go to an uncle of mine to have those wagon wheels made and then it had to go to the blacksmith. They put the iron rings, they finished the wheels to make the wagons.

**Paul:** What did your grandfather look like? Describe his face and his body to me.

**Mary:** He had little whiskers and he liked to smoke the cigar. We had a little farmland [inaudible 00:06:05]. When grandpa went to out I had to lead the cows, when [inaudible 00:06:14].

**Paul:** We were talking about your grandfather and you were going to describe what he looked like to me, whiskers you said?

**Mary:** Yes he had whiskers. I was grandpa’s girl.

**Paul:** Is there a story that you like to tell about your grandfather?

**Mary:** He was wagon maker and there was Russian soldiers, they was in prison during the war.

**Paul:** What do you remember about the soldiers on your grandfather’s farm? What sticks out in your mind about there being soldiers around the farm?

**Mary:** They was prisoners. They had to know how to make wagon wheels. I had to carry it to get my uncle with a little wagon. I had to take this about a hour, nine years old, to get those trimmed out because he had a machine already.

We had made those, what do you call them now? Those wagon wheels. I know when he had to pull them out, where the spokes and everything went in. That was fun for me because I could take the chisel, not the chisel, what you call it? The rim hook, no.

**Paul:** The tool that you use?

**Mary:** Yeah. To get the wagon together. My uncle had a machine already then. I took the whole piece of wood there, my uncle had to drill them out to make the wagon wheel. Then it has to come my grandpa had to make it and he had some soldiers there that was captured.

Some was German who had immigrated first to Russia and they came back, was captured as prisoners. They could talk German. That would interest me too.

**Paul:** Were you allowed to talk to the soldiers?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did the soldiers ever try to teach you anything?

**Mary:** No. They was real nice.

**Paul:** Did they live in the house?

**Mary:** No, they had to go back to the place where the prisoners was kept. In the day time they came, was a little village and they come by [inaudible 00:09:37] to farmers. Some of them worked on the farm, some of them worked on like my grandpa was a wagon maker with this wheel just for the cannons. There he had a help.

**Paul:** That’s very interesting that the prisoners of war were actually put to work.

**Mary:** Yes. Then Germany was against Russia, but then it said something [inaudible 00:10:08]. You couldn’t say that we got punished in school, when we walked to school, if you said something like that we was punished in school.

**Paul:** What else do you remember about going to school, when you were a little girl? Where was the school when you were growing up?

**Mary:** About a half an hour to walk.

**Paul:** You had to walk to school?

**Mary:** Yeah in snow banks in the winter time, they had pushes set out where the walking was, when everything was [inaudible 00:10:47] tidy and all. Then we walked over the snow banks.

**Paul:** What kinds of subjects did you learn in school? What did they teach you in school?

**Mary:** I should know more now but I can’t say it now, I’m here 65 years.

**Paul:** It’s a long time ago I realize.

**Mary:** Yeah it’s a long time ago.

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

**Mary:** Yes.

**Paul:** Your grandfather I’m sure probably could?

**Mary:** Yeah. Have a real good writing, only we said a long S, it used to go like this and now it goes just like the Americans. That changed all during the war.

**Paul:** During World War 1 that all changed?

**Mary:** Yeah that was all.

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

**Mary:** Soell.

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

**Mary:** S-O-E-L-L

**Paul:** That was her first name or her last, her maiden name?

**Mary:** Yeah maiden name.

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

**Mary:** Mary.

**Paul:** Tell me a little bit about your mother and what was her personality was like?

**Mary:** My mother too, she had me …

**Paul:** Illegitimately?

**Mary:** Yeah illegitimate. She was home. They had dowry out there in Germany the girl got so much money from home and furniture and a cow.

**Paul:** The cow was part of the dowry?

**Mary:** Yeah, and some money too. Then she married, because my dad didn’t have so much money, there was grandpa wouldn’t give him the dowry. He didn’t want my mother to marry my dad. That was, at that time, the style.

**Paul:** Because the grandfather didn’t want that to happen he didn’t give the dowry?

**Mary:** Yes, because my mother have to work on a farm because there was eight children.

**Paul:** Eight children?

**Mary:** Yeah, and she had to work on the farm. Then they had to bring the money home that got saved for them, for my mother. When she got married then she got furniture, so much money and a cow.

**Paul:** When she remarried that’s when she got her dowry?

**Mary:** Yeah. When she remarried she got that.

**Paul:** Did your mother ever tell you a story about when you were born? Did she ever tell you a story about the circumstances or?

**Mary:** The circumstances was that she lost my father, the other grandfather wouldn’t give her the dowry, that was …

**Paul:** Like you just told us.

**Mary:** That was the style at that time.

**Paul:** What was your mother’s personality like? What was she like as a person?

**Mary:** She was a hard worker.

**Paul:** What were some of the things that your mother taught you as a child?

**Mary:** I was mostly with my grandparents when my mother was home. They sent me to school, to first grade and we had up to seven grade school. We had to go had long school.

**Paul:** Was there anything that your grandparents or your mother taught you at home to do?

**Mary:** Embroidery, knitting, and spinning.

**Paul:** Can you describe for me how you spun? The spinning process, what did that entail?

**Mary:** When they spin, we had the flax. That was grown out in the field and we had to cut that. We had to bleach that in the river, in the little river when it was hot, put that in. Then we had something we had a …

**Paul:** Another tool?

**Mary:** Yeah another tool. We had some kind of tool and that we had to sprinkle water over put that [inaudible 00:15:44] in the water and sprinkle water over it. Then turn them. Then pound them with some machine to make the flax to spin them.

Then we made during the First World War. After the war in the 20s, there was everything, they made flax out of it and they made skirts, bed sheets, pillows, with that weaving and spinning all that.

**Paul:** Did you enjoy doing that sort of thing?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What was your favorite thing as a child to do around the house?

**Mary:** We wasn’t so much for the house, we had to go out or bake cookies for the soldiers. I remember that the soldiers was in a war we had to make cookies and send it to them or knit socks and stuff. Up to 1914, 18, the First World War.

**Paul:** That was patriotic duty to make socks and bake cookies for the soldiers?

**Mary:** Yeah. I had to take it to the train station where they take the packages. That was about a half an hour to walk.

**Paul:** How old were you when your mother got remarried?

**Mary:** I was 11 years old. Then I got away. The trouble was she got a more bigger farm and then the parents, my stepdad’s parents lived in the same house and it wasn’t very clean.

My mother, before we’d go into the house, at that time we had the manure pile in front of the house. [Inaudible 00:17:57] like a walk and that was red plaster like this collar here. My stepdad and he would throw the manure on the thing where my mother washed.

They didn’t like me. They made something out of potatoes and I liked that so much. Then the mother of my stepdad she came and she says, “Well, you eat so much of that, I give you some more.” She opened my mouth and pushed it down.

I cried I felt bad. Then I went back to grandpa. Grandpa he give the farm and the wagon shop, he had the wagon shop at the farm he give over to my aunt and he worked it. Then we lived in the same house and there was no room for me anymore. Then I came to my grandma’s sister.

**Paul:** How did your grandparents feel about your mother’s remarriage?

**Mary:** It was all right.

**Paul:** They were happy about that?

**Mary:** They was happy about it. You know how it is when the daughter-in-law comes in, you don’t always find daughter-in-laws like I have, I’m very happy with mine. It didn’t work so good so I had to go to some relatives, my grandma’s sister. I was 11 years old.

**Paul:** Did she live in the same town?

**Mary:** No.

**Paul:** Where did she live?

**Mary:** About an hour and a half walking distance at that time.

**Paul:** How did you feel about being sent there? How did it make you feel inside?

**Mary:** I didn’t feel so good but I had to go to school there. I liked the teacher and they liked me. I like to brag about myself, but it wasn’t hard for me to learn.

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

**Mary:** Arithmetic, reading, writing.

**Paul:** Did you ever have to memorize any poems in German?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Do you remember any of those poems now?

**Mary:** Not now anymore. I knew some of the parts but I’ve been here for so long, with grandchildren and great grandchildren, I don’t have so much anymore.

**Paul:** Do you remember any songs or nursery rhymes that you learned in Germany?

**Mary:** Nursery rhymes?

**Paul:** Something you could say for us in German on the tape.

**Mary:** Now what would it be? [Foreign language 00:21:24] I’m already going on 86.

**Paul:** What are you talking about? Wald is woods right? What is the story that you’re …

**Mary:** From the Bohemian woods. That they [foreign language 00:22:11], that’s a place. The [foreign language 00:22:17], that’s the Bohemian woods. [Foreign language 00:22:28]. That’s all I remember.

**Paul:** Is that something that you learned as a child to say?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Thank you for saying that. How long did you live with your aunt, with your grandmother’s sister, your great aunt? How long did you live with your grandmother’s sister?

**Mary:** Nine years. Then I came over here.

**Paul:** What did you know about America when you lived in Germany?

**Mary:** Different ones went to America. I had a cousin here in Wisconsin and then a girlfriend of mine came over here.

**Paul:** How did you think about America? What did America represent to you when you lived in Germany?

**Mary:** When I got older different ones went, friends of mine. Some of them are gone already. I’m here 65 years and some was relatives.

**Paul:** Before you came to this country did you have expectations about what you were going to find when you got here? What did you hope to find when you came to America?

**Mary:** A friend of mine went to farm, she came to the same farm where I was with my grandma’s sister. She was harmonic and she came out a time was so poor in Germany, there was not to eat during the war and after the war. She was my age.

Then the people came for food, for meat, for eggs, different stuff, they came on the farm to my grandma’s sister. They brought stuff about chicken and eggs and different stuff and fruits and whatever was around.

Then that girl came to America, her dad was in Munich and mother. The dad went over here first and then the rest of the family went afterwards. She used to write me from there, she likes it over here.

She was a niece to the family that was here in America’s wife. My husband, the one I married afterwards, was a relative of my husband, my future husband.

**Paul:** Did you know your husband-to-be in Germany?

**Mary:** No. I was [inaudible 00:25:43] his parents wrote me. Then the priest from us wrote to the parish in my husband’s home while the family [inaudible 00:25:57]. He enquired about me. I came then to those people, out in Friesenheim.

**Paul:** Friesenheim, is that in Wisconsin?

**Mary:** No, Friesenheim in Germany. Because we was writing for two years almost, we writing letters and inquired about each other. Then my husband was related, his wife was [inaudible 00:26:32] to that girlfriend of mine but came from the same place in Clinton, Wisconsin. My future husband was there too and we wrote for two years, almost, together.

**Paul:** What was he telling you about himself in his letters?

**Mary:** What he was telling me that he heard from Rosie was her name, I like to come over here too. He wrote that Rosie was related to the uncle for my husband were here, that time a lot of them came over here too, he was working for them and through that.

**Paul:** Was it exciting to get a letter from America?

**Mary:** Yes. Then five dollars was one D-Mark in Germany when we had the inflation and all the money was gone.

**Paul:** That’s that terrible inflation that hit Germany in the 1920s.

**Mary:** We had to sell the cow. I took that cow to the market, two weeks later couldn’t get enough for two pair of shoes [inaudible 00:27:57] everything my dad paid for me with money for me in bank.

**Paul:** This is your stepfather?

**Mary:** No, my dad. My dad, because I wasn’t living with my dad then. That’s why, I believe that Rosie and then my husband’s folks, invited me to come out. Was my friends folks and they liked me very well and I liked them very well. We went forth and back lots of times since I’m here, they still come. My husband passed away already in 88.

**Paul:** Can you tell me what you packed to take with you to America? What did you pack to take to America?

**Mary:** I took where my husband worked on the farm, his wife was from Munich too and she wrote me, no through her I came over here. She wrote me a note, already she wasn’t [inaudible 00:29:39], she ran cooking. I know that where [inaudible 00:29:44] is and so I went and I go to America.

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

**Mary:** With me?

**Paul:** Yes what did you actually take with you from Germany?

**Mary:** Farming.

**Paul:** What objects? What did you put in your suitcase to take to America?

**Mary:** Clothes.

**Paul:** What clothes, do you remember specifically?

**Mary:** All kinds, what was style out there. I couldn’t wear over here.

**Paul:** Why not?

**Mary:** Because I wouldn’t go with a great big rim hat to church or nowhere. They had to buy [inaudible 00:30:28] here go to the store in Clinton and buy a hat to go to church.

**Paul:** Your clothes were all out of style when you got to America?

**Mary:** It was all out of style. We had to start and then we worked -There was two houses on the relatives for my husband. We moved into second house, got married …

**Paul:** That’s in America though when you got here?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Let’s get you here first. When you were in Germany you packed clothes to take with you to America.

**Mary:** I couldn’t wear that over here.

**Paul:** Did you take any objects? Did you take anything other than clothes with you, any things?

**Mary:** No, just my clothes. I left others because I thought maybe I go back again.

**Paul:** You were thinking that maybe you’ll return?

**Mary:** Yeah. I left money out there too; I had some money in the bank where my dad paid.

**Paul:** Where did you go to get on the ship?

**Mary:** In Bremen.

**Paul:** How long did it take you to get from your town to Bremen? How long did it take?

**Mary:** It took to Bremen, I think about a day because we had to walk so far to the depot. Then from there we went to Munich. Then we had, in Munich, had to wait for so long to get to a train to go to Bremen.

**Paul:** To take the train to Bremen?

**Mary:** The train from Bremen yeah.

**Paul:** From your town you went to Munich?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** From Munich you went to Bremen?

**Mary:** Yeah, with the Yorck.

**Paul:** You came on the?

**Mary:** Yorck.

**Paul:** The Yorck, the ship. Do you remember saying goodbye to your mother?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Can you describe that a little bit and how you felt when you said goodbye to her?

**Mary:** It was hard. I hoped and prayed that I have to write. There was writing.

**Paul:** Did your mother give you any advice before you left for America?

**Mary:** She gave me her blessing because she had three children from this marriage.

**Paul:** From your stepfather?

**Mary:** Yeah from my stepfather. She had to work hard.

**Paul:** How do you think she felt about you going to America?

**Mary:** It was hard for her too to take it, but I was 20 and a half, she didn’t say much anymore. She cried and then she had the other three children.

**Paul:** You were an adult; you were all grown up when you left.

**Mary:** Yeah. She was then already too because I was nine years old, over nine years after I came away from her.

**Paul:** How long did you stay in Bremen before you got on the ship?

**Mary:** Just one night.

**Paul:** What happened to you that one night before you got on the ship?

**Mary:** We took a ride first for luxury. Then we found a friend, how we are and we got friends together, she came from Cschien and went to America too via Chicago.

**Paul:** What was the name of the town she came from? Chlezwick?

**Mary:** No, Cschien.

**Paul:** Can you spell that?

**Mary:** C-S-C-H-I-E-N, Cschien [inaudible 00:34:41].

**Paul:** Did you have to undergo any examinations in Bremen?

**Mary:** Yes.

**Paul:** What did they do?

**Mary:** They examined and they said we had lice. I said, “It can’t be…” but I didn’t have it. That was so embarrassing.

**Paul:** How did they examine you for lice?

**Mary:** I don’t know, we had to go to a bathroom and they search your body.

**Paul:** Did they do anything to you when they thought you had lice?

**Mary:** No.

**Paul:** They didn’t offer any kind of medicine or anything?

**Mary:** No, we just went in and went out again then we went on.

**Paul:** You were embarrassed by that?

**Mary:** I sure was. Then the next day in the afternoon we left at four o’clock, our boat left Bremen and we went on the boat.

**Paul:** How did you feel about getting on a ship?

**Mary:** It was hard, but I doubt I have to take it, I started, have to finish and go.

**Paul:** Had you ever been on a ship before?

**Mary:** No. They told me, “Don’t stay down in the cabin, go up the deck.” Many got sea sick. I was one night and that’s the only meal I missed, the first night, that’s the second night. We was 12 days in the water.

**Paul:** Where did you sleep on the sip?

**Mary:** In the boat, underneath it was first and second class. Then we all went to eat in two shifts.

**Paul:** How did you know when it was time to go and eat?

**Mary:** They call it out.

**Paul:** Do you remember the food that you ate on the ship?

**Mary:** Yeah, I liked herring. They had good food too. Then we came to Halifax. From Halifax to New York down here. Then we had to go out, I don’t remember anymore we had to go in a long building from one room to the other.

The others all went. I had to go to a separate place where they said, there is so much unemployment here and I have to be sure that my husband has a job. Then I didn’t know anymore what to do.

I came, then they said we have to get married, the agent out in Germany told us we don’t have to get married from the immigration. We heard here, if we don’t get married we have to go back in the same without going to Wisconsin. He signed and he had to sign papers and send them in to immigration, that we get married in two weeks.

**Paul:** That all happened here at Ellis Island?

**Mary:** That all happened here. Then we started farming.

**Paul:** Wait, before you started farming. When you came across on the ship, were you traveling alone? Is anyone with you when you’re coming over on the ship?

**Mary:** No.

**Paul:** You’re all by yourself?

**Mary:** Yeah. [Inaudible 00:38:54] there was a lady in the train.

**Paul:** Before you got to America, when you were on the ship, are you traveling alone?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Did your husband to be come here and pick you up?

**Mary:** No.

**Paul:** I’m a little unclear as to where you signed the papers.

**Mary:** I signed here I marry him in two weeks.

**Paul:** When was the first time you met the man that you were going to marry?

**Mary:** Before.

**Paul:** In Germany?

**Mary:** No. We wrote letters across and I was with my husband’s folks for three months.

**Paul:** Where did you actually see him for the first time?

**Mary:** In Clinton.

**Paul:** You don’t actually even see this man until you get to Wisconsin?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** That’s interesting.

**Mary:** We had to get married in Clinton. Then we worked for his relative, there was two houses and he had a big farm. My husband worked there.

**Paul:** Tell me what you remember about being here at Ellis Island? You said that they took you aside?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Everyone was going in one way and they made you go a different way?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What happened to you during that one night that you slept here?

**Mary:** That one night? I had to stay overnight and then the next morning in the depot, but I don’t remember that depot anymore.

**Paul:** Do you remember any details about where you slept? Do you remember anything about the room where you slept?

**Mary:** No. Then we went the next day to Wisconsin but the train, went as far as Chicago, then I had to stay overnight in Chicago. There I remember it more because I had to sleep on a bench like. There was pillows filled with sawdust on the bottom, newspaper as a sheet to cover. I never forget there. Here when I slept here, there I had a bed, just like a single bed.

**Paul:** Here at Ellis Island where you slept?

**Mary:** Yeah. When I got to Chicago, that train took so long at that time to come up. We got the second and I got the third to Chicago and there was no more train going out, it was so long. Then …

**Paul:** Is that why you had to sleep in Chicago because you missed the last train?

**Mary:** Yeah. Then I saw some colored people.

**Paul:** Had you ever seen a black person before?

**Mary:** I had never seen one.

**Paul:** What did you think when you saw?

**Mary:** They give me on the train, they was working then they gave me something to eat. I thought I’d get black hands.

**Paul:** You’ve never seen a black person before?

**Mary:** Never seen.

**Paul:** Were there any other things that you found here when you got to America that you had never seen before in Germany?

**Mary:** We had nice depots, here you went out of the train there was no [inaudible 00:42:35] and nothing, out there it was all closed in. You had to have a ticket to be opened when you went into the depot into the train and when you went out too. You had to show your ticket. Then when I got to the train, those colored people, I couldn’t sleep I was so scared and at four o’clock in the morning.

**Paul:** When you got to America, going on this train trip to Chicago and you’re seeing black people, you’ve never seen them before, you were held over her overnight. What’s going through your head at this point? What are you thinking?

**Mary:** I didn’t know. I was nervous, just so you know. I couldn’t [inaudible 00:43:32]. There was a lady in the train and I think she was supposed to watch so I get out at the right place. When I got there, there was my friend, with [inaudible 00:43:48] flower. Then we got to Clinton.

**Paul:** When you finally met the man that you were going to marry, what did you think?

**Mary:** We wrote quite a bit. We wrote a year and a half. The mail took at that time two or three weeks before it got across.

**Paul:** When you actually saw him, were you happy, were you disappointed?

**Mary:** No, I wasn’t. I liked to see him. I know his parents, I did know his brother and sister. We went [inaudible 00:44:37] back since I’m here. My husband died in 88.

**Paul:** Do you remember what you were wearing when you met him?

**Mary:** I had to buy a new hat because we had no relatives, we had no wedding. The priest was Catholic, he thought I should go to a German wedding, have a German wedding. He changed [inaudible 00:45:10] Wisconsin there was a German church and their priest married us.

**Paul:** Were you Catholic in Germany?

**Mary:** Yeah.

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

**Mary:** Paul.

**Paul:** Paul Vogt?

**Mary:** Soell.

**Paul:** What was your maiden name before you were … ?

**Mary:** Soell.

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

**Mary:** S-O-E-L-L.

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

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Right I remember you spelling that for us. You said your husband had a flower for you when you met him?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Tell me how you felt during the ceremony, when you were married, how did it make you feel?

**Mary:** We had [inaudible 00:45:58] before I came. I had sent him a picture and he sent me pictures. I was by his folks and by his brothers and his sister.

**Paul:** You knew what he looked like?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** You had had a photograph?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Tell me about the German wedding, what is a German wedding like?

**Mary:** Just in church, from there it’s big weddings, music and dance and eat. Here we had some relatives, more relatives, my husband came in 27 over here.

**Paul:** He had been born and brought up in Germany?

**Mary:** Yeah in Germany too. He had relatives too here more relatives, from his dad’s side, that I know.

**Paul:** Was there a big German community in Wisconsin? Were there lots of Germans where you were?

**Mary:** Yeah, all German.

**Paul:** It was all Germans?

**Mary:** Yeah all German and my husband’s home too.

**Paul:** Did you miss Germany once you got here?

**Mary:** No, I didn’t because I had to work hard out there on the farm. I had to go out by three o’clock in the morning sometimes. When we made hay and sold [inaudible 00:47:39] for the next day or two, to bring it in and load it up. We had cows in, we had calves and pigs.

I found the same thing over here. We was on the farm, we started a farm and that was hard. We had four children. We tried to go back because it was so bad in the 30s. We had milk strikes. Then we rented a farm and we had no water for the cows to drink. We couldn’t cool the milk and there is no income and you had to work. That was hard.

**Paul:** That was during the depression?

**Mary:** That was during the depression from 32 until from 34. The folks wanted us to come home. My husband so much land where he could build a house. We would have a job right away.

Then we got writing from the Hitler, they were schooling at that time. We ought to come home to help the father. We had the two boys was here with me already. He said, “No, we’re not going to go home, we’re not going to do that. What we do we stay here.”

Then a friend of ours went out to Germany in 39. He was already stuck he couldn’t go, he was friend from Chicago. We’re not going to take it, then we stayed. Then my husband’s side was so close to French, right over the French River was [inaudible 00:49:46] the war.

When Hitler wrote us we ought to come back and we said in 34, “No, we’re not going to come now.” We had land and there was prohibition in America at that time. We had a higher [inaudible 00:50:06], we had a [inaudible 00:50:09] valley and we had a low land and it was the dry year in 34. Then in 36 was dry too. We tried to cool the milk and we couldn’t cool the milk. We rented a farm.

**Paul:** In the 1930s things get very difficult for you?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Just day to day life becomes more complicated.

**Mary:** It was bad.

**Paul:** It’s interesting that of course your life in America is not all that different from what your life had been in Germany?

**Mary:** No.

**Paul:** Doing all these farm things.

**Mary:** Yeah. We had a hard start.

**Paul:** Tell me, you said you had four children?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** Name your children for me.

**Mary:** Paul Ernst, Thomas John, Marie Theresa and Frank Theodor.

**Paul:** Is that in order of age?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What year was the first child born?

**Mary:** In 32. In 33 the second one. In 35 the girl, and in 37 the youngest one.

**Paul:** Is there a story that you have about the birth of one of the children? Is there a story about the circumstances about the birth of one of your children that stick out in your mind?

**Mary:** Because I couldn’t talk in English and I was going with the first baby to the hospital. Then we had to pay the hospital, when I got home I had to have help when I got home with no money. It was hard. We worked for his uncle and he got so much wages so we could pay for it.

Then a couple of years, we was there three years and then we started for ourselves. There was the depression, we bought the cattle and the machinery and all that. We had to work that big farm.

**Paul:** You not only have to be a mother to your children, but you have to be a farmhand too?

**Mary:** Yeah, I was out milking, helping. I took the children along in the barn milking. Two big ones, the one was with me, they are the oldest.

**Paul:** How did you learn English? Tell me how you learned English.

**Mary:** By myself, through the newspapers and through the funny papers. We talked German all the time in the farm and the relatives talked German too.

**Paul:** Do you remember some of the first words that you learned in English?

**Mary:** What I learned, what bothered me, they always talked about -A neighbor lady she was from Norwegian, that relative of -She came from Bavaria where I come from and the husband from over here, the farm people. Their name was [Vehinga 00:53:32].

**Paul:** What was her name?

**Mary:** [Vehinga 00:53:35], they call it over here. She was younger and through her niece I came over here.

**Paul:** What were some of the first words that you learned in English?

**Mary:** They was talking about, it was German or something, the neighbors. No one over there was talking about German. Then she explained it to me what that means. Then through the newspapers. The children went to school and they couldn’t talk English at school because we talk German all the time.

**Paul:** Was that difficult for your children then too?

**Mary:** Yeah. Then there was a girl in school she taught the oldest one and then it didn’t took them long to learn it.

**Paul:** Did your children help you to learn any English?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** The children helped?

**Mary:** Helped me and the newspapers and the funny papers.

**Paul:** What about your husband did he speak English?

**Mary:** Yeah. He spoke some English because he was here three years before.

**Paul:** Did you ever want to go back to Germany to visit?

**Mary:** Yes we went back.

**Paul:** What was the first time you went back, what year?

**Mary:** In 52.

**Paul:** What did it look like to you? How did it make you feel to be back there?

**Mary:** Everything was bad at that time, but [inaudible 00:55:19] we got four mark and 20 pennies.

**Paul:** Was your mother living at that time?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** What was it like to see your mother for the first time?

**Mary:** She was happy too, she had the three children afterwards.

**Paul:** Did she look different to you?

**Mary:** She looked older, but she was happy. My husband’s folks was happy. We’ve been going home back different times. We were out there last time with the family.

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

**Mary:** I don’t think so.

**Paul:** Do you think your life would have been different if you had stayed in Germany?

**Mary:** I doubt it, because the children are so good to me.

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

**Mary:** That’s all they’re saying we have to follow. In Germany we had to follow what was out there and here we have to follow what comes here. They never brought me any shame, the children.

**Paul:** You have good children.

**Mary:** Four.

**Paul:** You’re happy you have good children?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** As you said before.

**Mary:** Yeah. I have a daughter-in-law here too, works here. She couldn’t be a sweeter girl than she is. I’m happy.

**Paul:** Mrs. Vogt, Vogt right?

**Mary:** Yeah.

**Paul:** I want to thank you very much for letting me ask you questions. I think this is a good place for us to end the interview. I just want to thank you very much.

**Mary:** You are welcome.

**Paul:** This is Paul Seacrest signing off with Mary Vogt on Thursday October 12th 1995 here at Ellis Island. Thanks.

**Mary:** You’re welcome.