**Kate:** Good afternoon this is Kate Moore for the National Park Service. Today is the 29th of June 1994. I’m in Seattle Washington at the home of Don and Serene Forsman with Martha Forsman Zachman, who came from Finland to the United States in 1920 at the age of 15 years old. Why don’t you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth please?

**Martha:** My name is Martha Alice Forsman Zachman. Born 1905 June 16th.

**Kate:** How do you spell your maiden name?

**Martha:** F-O-R-S-M-A-N.

**Kate:** How do you spell your surname now, your married name?

**Martha:** Z-A-C-H-M-A-N.

**Kate:** Where were you born?

**Martha:** In Terjärv.

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

**Martha:** T-E-R …

**Kate:** J?

**Martha:** J-A-R-V

**Kate:** What size town?

**Martha:** I couldn’t tell you.

**Kate:** What was the major industry of that town? Do you know?

**Martha:** It was mostly farming.

**Kate:** A farming area. What was your father’s name?

**Martha:** Alfred Forsman.

**Kate:** What was his occupation?

**Martha:** He was a tailor.

**Kate:** Do you remember what he looked like at all?

**Martha:** He was sort of a good looking man, wore a moustache.

**Kate:** Was he tall? How tall was he?

**Martha:** About 5’7” or something like that.

**Kate:** What about his personality and temperament, do you remember anything? Did [inaudible 00:01:47] you anything?

**Martha:** Everything had to be just so, he had a temper when he wanted to put something order that set.

**Kate:** Did your family tell you a story about your father ever, any funny story or something about him?

**Martha:** Not exactly, not that I can remember.

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

**Martha:** Olga Marie Forsman.

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

**Martha:** Sosunbacker.

**Kate:** Do you know how to spell that?

**Martha:** S-U-S, I don’t want to spell it in English S-O-S-U-N-B-A-C-K-E-R, Sosunbacker.

**Kate:** What was her occupation?

**Martha:** Whose?

**Kate:** Your mom’s.

**Martha:** Mom was housewife.

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

**Martha:** She’s quite good looking, they have a picture here of her.

**Kate:** Could you describe her for the tape, assume they can’t see her?

**Martha:** She was slender, kind of queenly looking woman, that’s what I heard, that’s what my dad said.

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

**Martha:** Very nice, she was a very good person.

**Kate:** Was there any story about your mother you remember?

**Martha:** No, I couldn’t tell you.

**Kate:** What about brothers and sisters?

**Martha:** I had Ed, this guy’s father, Don’s father. Then I had Alfonse, he there died of course and Morris. We were eight all together and they all died except, I’m the only living.

**Kate:** Could you name in order? Do you remember in order at all? The eldest?

**Martha:** That’s Edward Forsman, Alfonse and Morris Forsman and Hilda, my sister, she died just a year, it will be two years this summer, and me.

**Kate:** That’s five.

**Martha:** That was living.

**Kate:** What about your house, what do you remember about your house back in Finland?

**Martha:** Not where I was born, no I couldn’t remember that.

**Kate:** Do you have pictures of it?

**Martha:** No I don’t.

**Kate:** What about where you grew up when you were a small child, do you remember that?

**Martha:** I grew up with an aunt who was crippled, they called them [inaudible 00:04:21], in Swedish I guess. She raised us part time, my sister and I. Then she got ill and couldn’t take care of us, so then our aunt from Esse took me for about two years I think it was. She was quite strict with me, I couldn’t stand it over there so then I moved to [Jurva 00:04:53] to my uncle’s place.

**Kate:** What was your first aunt’s name, the one that was crippled, what was her name?

**Martha:** Zelma Sosunbacker.

**Kate:** Then you stayed at what ages with her?

**Martha:** I imagine I was about a year and a half, two, but I think I was four when they took me to Esse.

**Kate:** She was the strict one?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** You stayed there how long?

**Martha:** That I don’t remember. It turned out that it was a real snowy and windy day and I put my boots on and I walked through that storm and I went to [Jurva 00:05:33]. I said I’m not going there and if I have to go back I’ll jump in the river. I stayed there, I got to stay there.

**Kate:** Whose house was that?

**Martha:** That was my uncle’s house.

**Kate:** Which uncle?

**Martha:** That was my dad’s brother.

**Kate:** What was his first name?

**Martha:** Johan.

**Kate:** Do you remember that house where you lived?

**Martha:** Yeah. I got a big picture in our living room.

**Kate:** What was it like? How could you describe it for the tape?

**Martha:** You know the old farmhouses in Finland don’t you? It’s something like that.

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

**Martha:** Logs.

**Kate:** It was logs?

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

**Kate:** Was it painted?

**Martha:** Yeah red with white trimmings, you slept in that when you’re over there.

**Kate:** How many rooms?

**Martha:** There was a very big living room and then there was a bedroom in between and then a long room on the one end of it and a big upstairs. The way I remember it, I don’t know if it looks that way anymore.

**Kate:** Who lived in the house with you and your uncle? Who else was there?

**Martha:** His wife, my aunt, you called them aunts, uncle and aunts. Two boy cousins and a girl cousin and I and my sister and another brother, Morris, we were all living there. Then also a Russian lady with her little boy that was doing the work there kind of a like maid. They also had a maid.

**Kate:** Who did the cooking actually there?

**Martha:** That one girl, that maid, that young girl, she was about 20 I imagine I don’t remember. One of the boys ended up marrying her, my cousins. That was Evett.

**Serene:** He married?

**Martha:** Yeah he married her, she was a Finish woman, or a girl, she was just around 20 I imagine.

**Kate:** What was her name?

**Martha:** Ida.

**Kate:** Do you know her last name?

**Martha:** I don’t, she was Finnish.

**Kate:** How was that house heated by the way?

**Martha:** By that big fireplace and [inaudible 00:07:50], you know what that is?

**Kate:** Yeah I know.

**Martha:** That’s how they were heated those rooms.

**Kate:** What lighting did the house have? How was it lit?

**Martha:** They did have electricity they got from their own mill down below the river there. In fact, little mischief Martha got in there one night and turned off the electricity. You’re not supposed to touch that and I got up on a stool to turn that thing off. They wondered, who in the heck got in that dynamo room and it was Martha. They never found out, I’m not telling it, so they’ll find [inaudible 00:08:32].

**Kate:** You’re safe now.

**Martha:** I used to run and snatch cigarette packages off the boys because I didn’t like them to smoke. I did that too. I got a [inaudible 00:08:50] one time from my cousin for doing that. I still don’t like smoking, I would do it now too.

**Kate:** What about plumbing in the house?

**Martha:** Good old privy outdoors.

**Kate:** Where did you get the water in that house?

**Martha:** From a well.

**Kate:** How far was the well from the house?

**Martha:** I would say about as far as, up to that tree out there.

**Serene:** 25 feet?

**Martha:** Yeah something like that.

**Kate:** 25 feet outside.

**Martha:** It could have been more.

**Kate:** Did you have a garden at all?

**Martha:** Yes, they had gardens. They used to have carrots and beets and they used to plant little radishes in the summer time. They had tomatoes, used to plant little tomatoes too, but that didn’t grow very good over there, it was too cold but they tried.

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

**Martha:** Yeah, they had a little farm. They used to have about five cattle and they had two horses, they had a lot of sheep. Then they had a flour mill, that was their main source of income. Because a miller over there they used to say, when you want money we have a chest full of money at [Jurva 00:10:21].

I can remember my aunt, when I started riding bicycles here, when I used to go out with my girlfriends. She used to give me 10 markkas so I could treat the other girls, because they were from such poor families. We’d stop and have popped and goodies, and I’d treat them, I learned how to be that way. That was …

**Kate:** What about the furniture in your house? Do you remember any of that?

**Martha:** Yeah, they have pretty nice furniture.

**Kate:** Was it store-bought or homemade or?

**Martha:** I think it must have been because there was a nice desk. I wonder if that desk isn’t still in the house there.

**Kate:** Must have been what, store-bought?

**Martha:** Yes, it was. It was mahogany with a lot of fancy little handles on it.

**Kate:** What was your favorite food as a child?

**Martha:** Rice pudding.

**Kate:** Seems to be everybody’s favorite. Did you help cook at all?

**Martha:** No, I didn’t know how to cook when I came here, I didn’t have to.

**Kate:** What was meal time like then? When did you eat? How many meals a day did you eat?

**Martha:** They would have some coffee and bread and stuff and butter and bread in the mornings. Then there were meals in the middle of the day, that would be a lot of times oat meal with a lot of other little things, bread, different kind of breads.

Made their bread out of [inaudible 00:12:01] out of [inaudible 00:12:02] because it [inaudible 00:12:03] up sometimes. They had to, it was too many people. I remember they made that with those round breads with the hole in the center. [Inaudible 00:12:15] …

**Kate:** Did the family eat together?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Everyone?

**Martha:** Yes. We used to be, sometimes, 20 at the table, because they have working people there, they used to come in and eat too.

**Kate:** Did the working people eat with you?

**Martha:** Yes. The miller, flour miller, he was always eating with us.

**Kate:** How about grandparents, where did your grandparents live?

**Martha:** The step-grandmother she lived across the river, she was I think about -I don’t know how old she was, but I know she was pretty old.

She used to come and get her milk when they milked in the mornings. They divided that with the older people that was living by themselves, they kept them going that way and us …

**Kate:** Were you very close to her? Did you know her?

**Martha:** Yeah I used to sneak over there when I wanted to be alone, away from the other kids. She used to give chocolate, [inaudible 00:14:19], make out of milk and then put pieces of chocolate in there. I used to maybe that’s what lured me over there.

**Kate:** Did you get lured often? Did you see her often?

**Martha:** Yes.

**Kate:** Who are you closest to in the family? What about your other grandparents, were you close to them?

**Martha:** No, that was the only ones I remember.

**Kate:** That was your step-grandmother on who’s side was that again?

**Martha:** That was on my dad’s side.

**Kate:** What was her name?

**Martha:** I called her [mukka 00:14:55].

**Kate:** Do you remember her first name?

**Martha:** I believe her name was Sophie.

**Kate:** Who were you closest to would you say? Was there anybody else you were close to or who were you … ?

**Martha:** I was close to my uncle and aunt, very close.

**Kate:** Do you have any stories about your uncle and aunt at all?

**Martha:** No, I don’t remember any stories. The only thing I can remember was they had their daughter and three boys and of course my sister and I and Morris, the three of us. When there was any dirty work to be done, he would say they do it and we’re not to do it. Because that way they couldn’t say that we were being treated mean or badly. I remember that.

**Kate:** You were the mischief maker?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What else did you do?

**Martha:** Take a little time to think what I was doing.

**Kate:** If it comes back to you, you tell us.

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** They treated you well?

**Martha:** Yes they did.

**Kate:** What was your first memory? Before your uncle and aunt, do you have any memories before that all? What’s your very first memory that?

**Martha:** That’s the one that I told you about my aunt I was with in Esse there. She used to beat me.

**Kate:** Gave you spankings?

**Martha:** She was going to teach me to spell ABC, and if I didn’t remember it she took a stick and just hit me. Put me down in the cellar, she had me down there sometimes -Her husband was a shoe maker. One day somebody come to call for their shoes that they had made or [inaudible 00:16:51], you know what they are? That’s what he was making.

They heard me screaming down in the cellar. They asked him, who is that. When I heard that I started harrowing and screaming, I took something and pounded and they have to let me out of there. I was bound hand and foot.

**Kate:** They bound you?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Did they have other children?

**Martha:** No, she had two daughters but they were grown up. That was [inaudible 00:17:22], that was one of the daughters.

**Kate:** Because you were mischievous, they punished you?

**Martha:** I probably was mean, I can’t remember.

**Kate:** How old were you then?

**Martha:** Probably about five, five and a half, six, but I remember it.

**Kate:** You had enough courage to run away?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** You were how old when you ran away?

**Martha:** About six and a half or something in that order.

**Kate:** How far was your uncle’s house from there when you went?

**Martha:** How far would you say is between [inaudible 00:17:59] and [Jurva 00:18:01]? It’s three, four miles at least.

**Serene:** English mile.

**Don:** English mile.

**Kate:** Let’s stay at five and a half six years old you went that whole distance by yourself?

**Martha:** Snow and storming and blowing. Snow, a little kid I was almost covered up to my neck sometimes, no kidding, I was almost froze to death.

**Kate:** When you arrived there, to your uncle’s and aunt’s house and they saw you in the storm, what did you say to them?

**Martha:** I can remember, I’ll never forget, I remember, “I’m not going back there and if you send me back there I’ll jump in the river.” I think I would have.

**Kate:** Your sister then was living where that time?

**Martha:** She was living there with them.

**Kate:** Your other sister was already living with your aunt and uncle?

**Martha:** Yeah she was there all the time. She was lucky.

**Kate:** Then was there any more discussion with Essie and her husband, the shoemaker, at all about this?

**Martha:** It got around [inaudible 00:19:10] there that she had treated me bad so they all knew about it. When I grew older and got to be about 11, 12, she wanted me to forgive her but I wouldn’t. She died without my forgiving her. That’s a fact.

**Kate:** Where did you go to school? If you’re five or six and a half, when did you start going to school?

**Martha:** I was about seven, eight. We had just a small school there in the village. In fact that’s burned up now.

**Kate:** How far?

**Martha:** It must have been about, in English miles, about six miles that we had to go.

**Kate:** How did you go to school then?

**Martha:** We walked.

**Kate:** You walked?

**Martha:** Sometimes when it was ski weather we skied over there.

**Kate:** Who did you ski with? You say we, who’s we?

**Martha:** My sister and other kids around there, we used to go get together.

**Kate:** Describe the school, you said it was a small school but … ?

**Martha:** It wasn’t a school exactly when I started there, it was a house. In one end, you know those old farmhouses have big rooms and that’s where they had the desks.

**Kate:** How was it arranged? You went into school and what did it look like inside?

**Martha:** It was just like an old house, big old school.

**Kate:** Regular house.

**Martha:** Regular house yeah, farmhouse.

**Kate:** What type of desks were there?

**Martha:** Regular desks like they have in schools.

**Kate:** You mean individual? Individual desks for children?

**Martha:** Yes.

**Kate:** Do you remember any specific teachers in school?

**Martha:** Ida was her name but I don’t remember her last name. She was a great big woman but very nice person.

**Kate:** Did you enjoy going to school?

**Martha:** Yes I did.

**Kate:** What was your favorite subject as a student?

**Martha:** My favorite subject was to do fancy work.

**Kate:** What do you mean by fancy work?

**Martha:** I didn’t like writing and I still don’t, and I didn’t like arithmetic. When it comes to embroidery and doing knitting and stuff, that was on Thursdays and I loved that. Then they used to tell me at my home there, [inaudible 00:21:35] Martha wants to go to school so bad. When it was writing, I was sick all the time.

**Kate:** Thursdays were your big day?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What about religion? How religious was your family?

**Martha:** They were Lutheran. Then when I lived with my aunt she was [inaudible 00:22:03], never [inaudible 00:22:05].

**Kate:** Which aunt now?

**Martha:** That was the one that was mean. I had enough religion to last me the rest of my life, what I learned from both sides.

**Kate:** When you went to live, when you were between four and six, with your uncle and aunt, were they religious?

**Martha:** Yeah very.

**Kate:** When you say ‘very’, how often did they go to church?

**Martha:** Every Sunday.

**Kate:** Where was that church?

**Martha:** In Esse in the …

**Kate:** Esse is the name of the town. How big was that church, could you describe it?

**Martha:** How many people do you think Esse Church holds? About 300?

**Don:** [Inaudible 00:22:50].

**Martha:** I think about 300, probably more. It’s a big church.

**Kate:** The church was made of what?

**Martha:** Wood.

**Kate:** Wooden church?

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

**Kate:** Did you learn prayers before meals to say?

**Martha:** Yes.

**Kate:** You said prayers?

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

**Kate:** Individually or as a group?

**Martha:** As a group mostly, they always had to do that.

**Kate:** How about before you went to sleep, did you have any prayers then?

**Martha:** Yeah, I remember I used to have to say, I’m excited now I can’t remember the -[Foreign language 00:23:28] Amen.

**Kate:** Somebody else remembered that prayer as well. What were the biggest holidays that your family?

**Martha:** I think Christmas and Easter was pretty big holiday.

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

**Martha:** Christmas.

**Kate:** Why was that a favorite?

**Martha:** I don’t know, I guess just like all the kids, we thought we would get something.

**Kate:** What did you eat at Christmas?

**Martha:** There’d be lutefisk and usually I don’t eat that. I remember that one aunt used to make me eat and I was, you know what, all over the place.

**Kate:** Which one aunt, the one that was mean?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** At Christmas, did you have a big dinner as such?

**Martha:** Yeah, there always had company too, lot of company.

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

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** When did you go to church?

**Martha:** Sometimes Christmas Eve and Christmas day.

**Kate:** What about music, did you have special music at Christmas?

**Martha:** Yeah. They used to sing Christmas songs. Used to have Christmas tree in the bed or the floor and us kids get together go around the Christmas tree, we had a lot of fun.

**Kate:** What about gifts, did you give gifts at Christmas?

**Martha:** Yeah. At that time, when I was kid, you used to wrap up little gifts and go to houses and throw them through the doors then run. You actually didn’t know who you got the gifts from.

I remember one Christmas while I was with that mean, we’ll call her mean aunt, I’m sorry I have to do that but that’s the truth, my brother came and gave me a box, it was about that long I remember. He was dressed as Santa Claus and he handed it to me. I opened it up it was a [inaudible 00:25:41], you know what that is? A blinking doll and it was real fancy. I remember I would take it out of the box and play with it.

Do you know what? After I had been here in this country, probably 19 -When was it that I discovered I got the [inaudible 00:26:06] paper. Here was an auction stating what they were selling [Jurva 00:26:13] where I was raised, here was my doll being sold at auction. My fancy work in the chest that I had upstairs that I’d drawn school and my schoolwork.

They thought that it belonged to another cousin that had gotten married and got a bunch of kids, that was on sale. That was Allan’s father, they thought that it was their sister’s things, that was dead and they let them scribble all over that. Then they sold all that.

**Kate:** When did they sell all that?

**Martha:** That was in 1950s.

**Kate:** Did it mention the doll [inaudible 00:26:56]?

**Martha:** Yes.

**Kate:** Did it mention it was in the box?

**Martha:** Yeah. It was in that. I still got it, I don’t know now who wrote the paper, but I saved it.

**Kate:** As a child how did you save money for buying gifts and candy and things?

**Martha:** I used to pick berries in the summer time and make money with lingonberries or blueberries. I was always one of those that was saving money even then as a kid. When I went to this country, 15 years old I had 30,000 bucks saved up. I had it in a co-op, what do you call that like they call these supermarkets but it wasn’t that? They sold everything at [inaudible 00:27:46], I had that money invested.

**Kate:** How did you get that much?

**Martha:** Dad sent money to keep us and they used to give us most of that money he sent to take care of us. I saved it. I used to errands for people and even baby sit just to make money, I was a regular penny-pincher.

**Kate:** You were raised by your other relatives, where was your mother and father then? You were raised by your aunt and uncle, where was … ?

**Martha:** My mother died, as you know already, I was only a year and a half. As a result of that my dad was a tailor he went to this country.

**Kate:** What did your mother die of for the record?

**Martha:** TB.

**Kate:** In what year? That would be a year and a half after your birth?

**Martha:** [Inaudible 00:28:36].

**Don:** 1907.

**Martha:** 1907? Okay.

**Kate:** Your father came to the United States when? What year?

**Martha:** I really don’t …

**Don:** 1909.

**Kate:** 1909?

**Martha:** Was it 09? Okay.

**Kate:** How did you get to the United States and why did you come?

**Martha:** My dad sent for my sister and I and our step brother. He was married then and that was her son that came with us, he must have been around 19 then. My sister …

**Kate:** Married to whom now? He remarried?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** To someone from where?

**Martha:** She was from Terjärv too and he knew her.

**Kate:** Her son lived where then?

**Martha:** He lived in Terjärv.

**Kate:** With her?

**Martha:** No, he lived with somebody else too on a farm, sort of like a farmhand you might say.

**Kate:** What was her name before she married your father, do you know?

**Martha:** I think her name was -I never knew what her name was.

**Kate:** Her son’s name?

**Martha:** He got the name Forsman after we come here.

**Kate:** What was his first name then?

**Martha:** Wadley. He’s deceased, he’s dead.

**Kate:** You said your father sent from you and did he send you the money?

**Martha:** He send us tickets for each one of us to come.

**Kate:** Was there any discussion about this? Were you asked if you wanted to go?

**Martha:** I said I didn’t want to come.

**Kate:** Why not?

**Martha:** I could write so I wrote that I didn’t want to come here. He said, “Well its better you come when you are young you can go to school and learn the language it’s easier.” I decided probably better.

**Kate:** Did your sister want to come?

**Martha:** Yeah, she was happy to go.

**Kate:** You got a letter from your father with tickets is that it?

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

**Kate:** Then did you discuss with your aunt and uncle?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What was their feeling about it?

**Martha:** They thought it would be better, we have better chance to come here than to be there, to grow up there any longer.

**Kate:** Did you write regularly to your father?

**Martha:** I think there was some letters in the trunk that got destroyed. I wished I had them when your dad died. Yeah I still have the letters.

**Kate:** How often did he write about would you say?

**Martha:** He didn’t write too often, it was pretty hard I think he felt bad too to have left us behind and couldn’t raise us.

**Kate:** When he did write, what did he tell you about the United States?

**Martha:** I don’t think he said too much. He said it was hard times that one time it was approaching the time when it was that crash in 1928 and 09, when the banks failed. It was bad.

**Kate:** What did you know about the United States before you came actually?

**Martha:** I learnt going to confirmation I had to go individual to a confirmation I couldn’t finish because I was too young. I went to the minister, I went for two weeks I [inaudible 00:32:08] was his name in [inaudible 00:32:11].

**Kate:** Hold on for a second. Where were we actually? You were …

**Martha:** Going to confirmation.

**Kate:** Yes to the ministers house for two weeks?

**Martha:** Yeah. I went every afternoon for about two weeks. I got confirmed in the church in front of the whole congregation. I remember I had a black dress on I was going to travel in. I was [inaudible 00:32:45] crawled under a desk [inaudible 00:32:48] for a little kid in one way.

**Kate:** Bashful to whom?

**Martha:** I’m surprised I’m even talking to you now, but being a child, that’s all you are at 15. I remember the minister sat down with me one afternoon that’s all he talked about, he had been in this country.

He said, “Don't do this when you come and don’t discriminate against black people,” he said, “they’re people too and they’re good people.” He said, “Don’t think because they’re black that they are bad people.” I can remember that, I learned that. I had that in my mind, all white people are bad too. That’s a fact.

**Kate:** What else did the minister tell you?

**Martha:** Morally, all the things that you shouldn’t, like going out with boys and all this and that. You will fall prey to a lot of things when you’re travelling.

**Kate:** He tried to prepare you, is that it?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Did you know any English at that point?

**Martha:** No, not a word.

**Kate:** Do you remember anything specifically he told you about America then?

**Martha:** No, not too much.

**Kate:** Where had the minister been, do you remember?

**Martha:** Back East near Chicago, places like that.

**Kate:** Where was your father at that time that you were going?

**Martha:** In Tacoma Washington.

**Kate:** He was working as what?

**Martha:** Tailor.

**Kate:** You went to confirmation, you were confirmed early?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** In front of everyone?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What else did you remember about getting ready then?

**Martha:** I remember getting to a dressmaker, getting some clothes made.

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

**Martha:** I had some skirts made and I had a blouse, I had a brown blouse I loved with a white collar, it was beautiful I remember. A black dress, I already had that made because I wore for confirmation. I had another skirt that I made myself out of an old coat and everybody thought that was cute.

I didn’t need very big skirt I wasn’t very big but I remember making that thing and I had buttons on the side. I was going to be fancy going to this country. A knitted top, like we’re wearing now, that’s one of my aunts made.

**Kate:** Did you take anything with you? You remember packing, tell me about packing now?

**Martha:** Then we packed, I got a suitcase. My cousins went and bought a suitcase for us, for my sister and I, so we wouldn’t have two heavy, no we didn’t need too much. Of course I said, we got to have underwear.

My aunt had this woman knit underwear out of wool yarn so we be nice and warm. I remember getting on the ship, I told my sister we would throw these things in the ocean and we did. My step mother sent us underwear that they wore in this country so we put those things on. The underwear they went in the ocean, [inaudible 00:36:39].

**Kate:** What did your sister pack? Anything different than you did?

**Martha:** No just what we had to. They told us not to take any more things with us than we needed, they’d buy clothes when we got here.

**Kate:** Did you bring anything special from home at all, that you … ?

**Martha:** Yeah, [inaudible 00:37:04], you know what that is? My cousin sent that and I got in trouble in New York with that. They thought that I was bringing something like dope or something. It was in a package, she packed it and she didn’t think we’d get in trouble for that.

I couldn’t explain what it was. I couldn’t talk English when we got to the customs. They opened this up and tasted it, and that was for my aunt in Tacoma, my dad’s sister.

**Kate:** You brought that? That’s special. How about any other foods? Did you take any food with you?

**Martha:** We had a little basket of food to survive on the boat if you didn’t like to eat what they had.

**Kate:** What was in that basket?

**Martha:** It was cob, blodcob, and that was all homemade, and butter, homemade butter and bread. We enjoyed that better than the food they served on the boat, or ship as you say.

**Kate:** You brought clothing? You didn’t bring anything from the house at all?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** Do you have anything now from that house?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** You packed your suitcase, what happened did they give you a party or a dinner or anything before you left?

**Martha:** That’s what we had in the basket.

**Kate:** When you were leaving, how did they say goodbye to you?

**Martha:** We got on the train and we all said goodbyes and they told us in religious words that …

**Kate:** Do you remember the night before you were to leave? Did they have food for you?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** How did you get to the train then?

**Martha:** They brought us by horse and wagon.

**Kate:** You and your sister went in a horse and wagon, with whom? Who went with you?

**Martha:** With my oldest cousin.

**Kate:** Do you remember saying goodbye to your uncle and aunt?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What was their reaction? Did your friends have parties for you or anything?

**Martha:** Yeah, I had a lot of girlfriends, I was one of those kind that was kind of a party maker when I was a kid. We would have a lot of fun. Then they would kid me about America that, “Oh when you get to America you walk on gold streets and silver sidewalks. Boy you must become a movie star one day,” and all that kind of stuff. You know how kids fantasize.

I said, not me, I said, “I’m going to stay five years in America and I’m back. I’m going to make my own fast money and be able to come back here and live.” I felt that way too after I lived in this country, that I wanted to go back.

**Kate:** Did you leave behind anybody, a boyfriend or anything in Finland?

**Martha:** Yeah it was during when I was supposed to go to confirmation I liked one boy, he was my age. He’s still living over there in Esse. Ironically, he looked just like my late husband, it was funny. When I come back there I said, “You’re exact an image of my husband.”

[Inaudible 00:42:01] you didn’t meet them over there no. He was my age when he left, when he said goodbye, he said, “Why don’t you write to me when you get to America.” I said, “I’m not going to marry no farmer.” That was it, I never wrote to him.

**Kate:** Talking about regrets.

**Martha:** When I came back there the first time, the first thing he did when I was staying with my cousin, [inaudible 00:42:36] every time he came to see me while I was staying with them for two weeks, that little kid had to [inaudible 00:42:50]. [Inaudible 00:42:58] safe he didn’t need to worry about me, I don’t know about him but.

**Kate:** You’re getting on the train, what was the town that you left from by train?

**Martha:** Kallby.

**Kate:** You left and can you spell that?

**Martha:** K-O-L-L-B-Y-E, Kallby.

**Kate:** Then you went from there to where? From the train …

**Martha:** To Helsinki.

**Kate:** To Helsinki by train?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Did you stay overnight in Helsinki?

**Martha:** Yes we did. My stepbrother knew part of a lady and a her husband they came with us right from Kallby, just came to be with us.

**Kate:** What was their names do you remember?

**Martha:** I can’t remember their name anymore, they were strangers to my sister and I.

**Kate:** Where did they live in Helsinki?

**Martha:** They lived in apartment and they took us to the apartment. Then about the next day we boarded the [Adriani 00:44:01], a boat to Copenhagen. That took over night to get to Copenhagen. I remember it was very stormy over the ocean or that straits over the -I remember we were scared to dead.

**Kate:** What were the conditions on the boat? What type of accommodations did you have?

**Martha:** My sister and I had a room by ourselves and my stepbrother had one. There were several people and it wasn’t a big boat, it was maybe might have held about 100 people something like that.

**Kate:** Were you sick?

**Martha:** No I never got sick, my sister did. I think Wadley got sick too but not me, tough me. We arrived in Copenhagen and we stayed there two nights. I remember the name of the hotel Santana Hotel.

**Kate:** Did you see the city, what did you do in those two days?

**Martha:** We just walked around with another girl, she was older than us but we used to go with her. One day we traveled by the water there, it was a big ship and the sailors were in there. Some sailors came by us and they start talking to her, Olive Newman was her name.

She was about 21 and they flirted with her. They wanted us to come on board ship. She said, “We can go, they won’t hurt us.” I said, “You go ahead.” I grabbed my sister and ran, we went to the hotel, I wasn’t going around, I was warned before I left.

**Kate:** By the minister?

**Martha:** Yeah, boy I tell you.

**Kate:** You got back to the hotel and stayed two days?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What was the food like there? Did you eat well?

**Martha:** Yeah, we ate pretty good. We paid for our own food there. Luckily I had money.

**Kate:** Yeah you had money all right.

**Martha:** I even kept Wadley, my step brother.

**Kate:** How much money did you have with you?

**Martha:** I took all I had. I drew the money out of that co-op store.

**Kate:** You had it on your body? All that money?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** 30,000 Finish markks?

**Martha:** Yeah. When I exchanged it here in this country it was quite a bit. I kept my sister and I and [inaudible 00:46:39] money all went after we got here.

**Kate:** How much did it change?

**Martha:** I forgot, that time the markka was worth a lot more than it is now. Yeah I don’t remember that, but anyway …

**Kate:** You got on the ship?

**Martha:** We got on ship.

**Kate:** What was the name of the ship that you came to the United States with?

**Martha:** [Inaudible 00:47:03].

**Kate:** We’ll get later, the name of that.

**Martha:** [Inaudible 00:47:07].

**Kate:** Do you remember seeing it for the first time, that boat?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What did you think?

**Martha:** I was scared, I said, “We’re going to be on water on that thing, it could sink.” My sister said, “You’re afraid.” I said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m with you and Wadley.” We got on. Then those Jewish people were quite dirty, we got put up on a higher, this was steerage you might say.

**Kate:** That was the original accommodation in the steerage?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What was that like?

**Martha:** That was awful.

**Kate:** How?

**Martha:** It was just like a bunch of cattle riding.

**Kate:** How was it arranged, the sleeping?

**Martha:** I can remember there was a big table where we all sat and ate. All those pigs were at the table, Jewish people.

**Kate:** Wait a minute, how did you sleep in the steerage?

**Martha:** We had our own bunks of course, we didn’t sleep with anybody, but we had our own bunks. You could see the urination come on the floor from some of them. They were dirty.

**Kate:** Where did they board, when you said that there were Jews on board, where did they board? Did they get in the same town that you did?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** In Copenhagen?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** You said that you were put in a higher class, why?

**Martha:** That was to get away from filth.

**Kate:** How did you arrange that?

**Martha:** We didn’t arrange it, those kids didn’t. There was a couple, a minister and his wife, they were from Chicago, [inaudible 00:48:54]. Now I can’t remember their name actually I’m too excited I guess.

They took a liking to us, my sister and I especially. The lady said we had such beautiful hair, which we did. It was blonde and my hair was long way down, and it was when you opened the top, she put a black bow in the back and dressed us up and washed that for us too.

Took very good care of us, those two. They said they wished we didn’t even have our dad or parents, they would adopt us. They went to Chicago.

**Kate:** They were Finish?

**Martha:** They were Swede Finns. I cannot remember where they came from, if it was from [inaudible 00:49:50] or from maybe [inaudible 00:49:53], I don’t remember.

**Kate:** They arranged for you to get into a better class?

**Martha:** Yeah, we were in the same floor of the same, whatever, they got the hot for us.

**Kate:** Did you have to pay anymore?

**Martha:** That I don’t remember, we must have, maybe they did. Being we was minor kids.

**Kate:** Did you complain to them about your accommodations?

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

**Kate:** What did you say?

**Martha:** I just said that I don’t like to be living in such conditions, I come from a clean family and clean surroundings.

**Kate:** What was the difference between steerage and that next class? Was it first or second class?

**Martha:** It was second.

**Kate:** What was the difference between second class and steerage then?

**Martha:** There were so much cleaner and the food was much better.

**Kate:** What was the difference in the food? What did you eat in steerage?

**Martha:** I wouldn’t say the food was that bad, we didn’t like the [inaudible 00:50:58] and mashed potatoes.

**Kate:** That’s what it was in steerage?

**Martha:** Yeah a lot of that same old stuff every day.

**Kate:** What about in second class, what was it there?

**Martha:** You got a lot better food and maybe it was handed down from the first class, I don’t know. It was better food anyway.

**Kate:** What about your accommodations how you slept, was that better?

**Martha:** A lot better too, it was clean and comfortable.

**Kate:** Did you have your own room there?

**Martha:** Yes.

**Kate:** Did you go on deck at all?

**Martha:** Yeah, we were on deck when it wasn’t stormy. It was quite stormy at times.

**Kate:** Were you sick?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** Was your sister?

**Martha:** No, she wasn’t on that ship, on the little one we were on first she was sick.

**Kate:** Was Wadley?

**Martha:** Yeah I think he was sick.

**Kate:** What do you remember about that voyage? How long was it?

**Martha:** It lasted about 12 days over the ocean. Then we ended up in New York, then it turned out we had to stay a month, some kid had scarlet fever, we were quarantined.

We liked that, when you are a kid everybody treats you nice, got gifts, it was around Christmas time in December. I remember one day my sister and I and my step brother, and this girl I tell you she was 21 Olive Newman. She’s still living in [inaudible 00:52:45] but she’s very sickly.

Anyway, this boy his name was Emil, he was from [inaudible 00:52:53], came and put his arms around me, like this. I was a kid I was pretty well developed already at 15, but I wasn’t fat but I was beginning to show, how I was going to look like I guess. He put his arms around me and put his hand on my bust. I gave him a black eye.

**Kate:** You gave him a black eye?

**Martha:** Yeah, then he had to go to the infirmary.

**Kate:** What that minister taught you.

**Martha:** My step brother, Wadley, got so mad at me, he said, “He didn’t mean nothing by that.” I said, “I don’t care what he meant he can go and pick on his own size.”

**Kate:** Do you remember coming into the harbor?

**Martha:** Yeah I do.

**Kate:** Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

**Martha:** Yes I do, it was great.

**Kate:** What was that like?

**Martha:** It was a good sight.

**Kate:** Was everybody on deck?

**Martha:** Just about everybody.

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

**Martha:** It was very good. It was a cold windy day.

**Kate:** Do you remember seeing the skyline?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Did that make any impression?

**Martha:** Kind of, it was high buildings, of course was so different from what we were used to.

**Kate:** When you went into Ellis Island, you said you were quarantined, where were you quarantined?

**Martha:** On the ship.

**Kate:** You weren’t allowed to leave the ship?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** Did you have a medical examination before you left Finland?

**Martha:** Yes. We had one in Copenhagen. We had to be in a room where they fumigated the clothes and everything in Copenhagen.

**Kate:** What else did they do?

**Martha:** Just to see if nobody had any diseases of any kind.

**Kate:** Did they check you at all physically? A doctor did?

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

**Kate:** What specifically did they check for?

**Martha:** They wanted to see if you were lousy.

**Kate:** You weren’t?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** They gave you an examination in Copenhagen?

**Martha:** No, that’s a fact.

**Kate:** In Copenhagen they gave you an examination. Did they give you one in Finland?

**Martha:** Yeah I had to go to the doctor too to be sure.

**Kate:** In Finland?

**Martha:** Yeah, that I didn’t have any tuberculosis or anything. Although I was coughing and having a very bad cold. I was sent on the trip with a bottle of cod liver oil.

**Kate:** A bottle of cod liver oil?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Yum. Did you have to take any?

**Martha:** Yes I had to take it. Then we got on board ship I threw it out.

**Kate:** With the underwear?

**Martha:** Yes. My dad when he found out that I had done that, my dad went and bought cod liver oil and made me take it. Because on account of my mother dying when I was about that young, the doctors over there were afraid I would go into that too.

**Kate:** That you had caught it perhaps?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** You have a tendency to catch sickness?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** We are in quarantine now, did the doctors come on board and examine you a third time?

**Martha:** No, they didn’t.

**Kate:** They didn’t?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** How long were you in quarantine?

**Martha:** Almost four weeks.

**Kate:** Do you remember the news that you were going to be quarantined?

**Martha:** I was happy.

**Kate:** How were your friends going to Chicago? How did they feel about that … ?

**Martha:** They felt that they should have let them go, but they didn’t. Nobody could get off, not even the one on board to visit any of us, no you couldn’t, not that kind of stuff going on.

**Kate:** What do you remember about those four weeks?

**Martha:** I can remember we had a good time. A kid will have a good time no matter what. Away from our surroundings in Esse where I was raised.

**Kate:** Then what happened, how did you get off?

**Martha:** Then we all got off like a bunch of cattle on a small boat and they took us to Ellis Island.

**Kate:** When you started out, did they tell you the amount of time you would be quarantined? Did they tell you right away?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Do you remember the news coming on boat?

**Martha:** Yeah, they told them they had to wire my folks that we’d be delayed because they didn’t want to have him worried, my dad. Then we got into Ellis Island I remember I was so mad that they gave us a hunk of bread and a bowl of this cabbage soup. It was like being in jail.

**Kate:** Describe Ellis Island, what do you remember of Ellis Island?

**Martha:** That Ellis Island they can keep that. I don’t even want to remember it. We had to stay overnight, they thought maybe my dad was a citizen I see no reason I had to go in there at all. In fact, he wasn’t, but they got their opinion that he was a citizen of this United States. We got off. Then we got to go on the train in New York.

**Kate:** Lets back up a bit. What was it like? You don’t want to remember but for a short moment try to remember. What do you remember about Ellis Island? When you walked in what do you remember?

**Martha:** I can remember we were a bunch of people getting off and hurrying and wondering what’s going to happen to us. I can imagine if you are put in jail, that’s the way you would feel.

**Kate:** Were people nice to you in Ellis Island?

**Martha:** The personnel was nice, but not the people around you they would take a poke at you. These people they weren’t well educated or anything, they were just a bunch of tramps, you might say.

**Kate:** Were there all types of nationalities in the hall?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Did they give you a medical examination at Ellis Island?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** You didn’t speak English?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** How did you communicate?

**Martha:** I’ll tell you that was hard when we got to the station, to the people there, I had a heck of a time. That’s the time when that malt I had in my suitcase, that’s when they got English translator to translate the thing I had in my suitcase. It was harmless, it wasn’t anything that would interfere with any narcotics. The narcotics agent had to come and investigate that, that’s just what they thought it was.

**Kate:** Did they let you keep it?

**Martha:** Yeah. My aunt got it after all that trouble. We got to drink that drink, what do they call that in Finnish?

**Don:** [Inaudible 01:01:08].

**Martha:** [Inaudible 01:01:09], exactly.

**Kate:** Is that the only thing they had an issue with?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Nothing else?

**Martha:** Nothing else.

**Kate:** They made you sleep overnight, why?

**Martha:** That was at Ellis Island.

**Kate:** Why did they keep you overnight?

**Martha:** There was too many people to try to get straightened out where they were going. Some were going to Chicago, some to different states, it takes a while to …

**Kate:** Yeah separate them. Was the building, was it dirty, clean? What was it like? What were the facilities like there, when you went then?

**Martha:** They were clean all right, there wasn’t anything wrong with that. They keep that clean, but I remember when we slept that night we slept on hammocks, there was no regular beds. I went on top, my sister was under here.

She kept poking me she says, “How long do we have to stay here?” She said, “I don’t like this, let’s skip.” She would say, I say, “We don’t go no place here, we are in jail.” I told her.

**Kate:** Why do you say jail, why do you use the word jail? Were there windows and everything?

**Martha:** It was just like a prison, at that time I guess.

**Kate:** Describe the building, do you remember anything about the building?

**Martha:** Great, the hall, you know what it looks like have you seen it?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Martha:** On pictures.

**Kate:** Why don’t you tell me what you remember?

**Martha:** I remember it just like a very big, like the dome stadium, quite big thing.

**Kate:** It was lots of people?

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

**Kate:** You stayed overnight, you ate their cabbage soup?

**Martha:** Hot cabbage in the morning with, I don’t remember what we had to drink, that’s all we had. I bet you prisoners are treated nicer than that.

**Kate:** You woke up and how did you know you could get out? How did you know you could leave?

**Martha:** We got orders, everybody had to be up and going.

**Kate:** Did they call your name out or?

**Martha:** No, we were just a bunch of us going through a gate and then you had to show your pass. Then you were ordered to go a certain direction, another direction for somebody else. Finally we had to be put on a boat to go to a different pier to get off of there.

**Kate:** Were you ever frightened that you were going to be sent back?

**Martha:** No I wasn’t.

**Kate:** You weren’t in ever fearful of what was going to happen?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** If we back up a bit before you left, when you were quarantined on the boat, how did you get from the boat to Ellis Island then, your other boat the one you came across the ocean?

**Martha:** They had a boat alongside the big ship. We had to go down, it was dangerous looking. We all had to climb down into that boat through, it was regular steps like they rolled down that comes off of the ship, I remember that.

That little boat was rocking. We were scared then a little bit. Those that was American citizens had been on a visit of course get to get off and go on their way, but those that come in as tourists they had to go through the Ellis Island at that time.

**Kate:** There were American citizens on that boat who were quarantined too?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** The entire boat was quarantined?

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

**Serene:** Can I ask her a question?

**Kate:** Sure.

**Serene:** Did you get to have a suitcase with you then?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Serene:** Down onto the boat?

**Martha:** Yeah, all that stuff had to be fumigated, I guess, before it got off the boat too.

**Kate:** Where did you keep your suitcases when you were sleeping?

**Martha:** We had them with us in our rooms.

**Kate:** Did anyone warn you about your possessions? Did anyone give you any warnings?

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

**Kate:** Because at one time they were doing that. We’ve got to the point where you’re being released, where were you going from Ellis Island?

**Martha:** To the depot to get a train out to Tacoma.

**Kate:** Which depot were you going to?

**Martha:** I don’t remember I guess a big depot there in New York if I remember right. I can’t remember the name of it.

**Kate:** Penn station?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Hoboken?

**Serene:** What did it look like?

**Martha:** It’s a main depot there in New York.

**Serene:** Was it brick?

**Martha:** Great big one. That’s where we got on, then stop in Chicago and got on another train to come out to Tacoma.

**Kate:** When you took the train, you had the tickets already?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What were your instructions from your family about this?

**Martha:** Instructions where to just get on the train and stay on and then change train in Chicago. I remember in Chicago it was so cold and windy, my sister was so tired I almost had to carry her.

We laid on a kind of round thing where you sat on the seats, she fell asleep. We stayed there about four hours. My step brother got some wieners, hotdogs and wieners and he got some pop or whatever it was.

**Kate:** On the trip from New York to Chicago, was there anything you’d never seen before?

**Martha:** It was bad weather, it was snowing. Going through those farm lands and all that stuff was kind of …

**Kate:** Were there any types of people or food or anything you’d never seen before?

**Martha:** No, it was about normal.

**Kate:** In Chicago then, you waited for the train?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** You had all the luggage?

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

**Kate:** Did you lose any luggage at all?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** You made it with your possessions?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** You got in Chicago and then what happened?

**Martha:** Just got another train after we got a nap, I think it was four hours we had a layover.

**Kate:** You got another train bound for?

**Martha:** For Tacoma, Washington.

**Kate:** Again on that trip, from Chicago to Washington, did anything happen that was new to you at all?

**Martha:** No. All we wanted was sleep.

**Kate:** How did you sleep? Where did you sleep?

**Martha:** Sat up in the seats.

**Kate:** How long was that trip from Chicago to Tacoma?

**Martha:** It must have took about a couple days or something, four maybe three.

**Kate:** Where did you eat?

**Martha:** We had our own food with us.

**Kate:** From where?

**Martha:** From Chicago, this Swedish person got us food to take –Sandwiches to take with us on the train.

**Kate:** What Swedish person?

**Martha:** I don’t remember his name. It was an old man he said, “You kids are not going to have much to eat on the train between here and Tacoma, Washington, you better have some food with you.” He went and got sandwiches for us and oranges and apples and bananas. We were really loaded.

**Kate:** Had you eaten bananas before?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** Is that the first time you saw them?

**Martha:** Yeah. I my sister said, “[inaudible 01:09:31].” I don’t know if you understand that, “I don’t want to eat that stuff.” I said, “Eat it.” I said, “Eat, whatever you get hold on now because it’s going to be a long time before we get to Tacoma.” We enjoyed the fruit I tell you right now, that was a God sent.

**Kate:** How did you manage? You spoke no English, what happened with the language?

**Martha:** We got along. Conductors had fun with us kids I tell you. They had more fun, we were kind of [inaudible 01:10:12] a little devil as I was. We got along real good.

**Kate:** What had you imagined Tacoma would be like before you got there?

**Martha:** I imagined what my dad was going to look like and when we arrived in Tacoma, I think it was in the afternoon. We got off the train and got into the station there in Tacoma and a man come walking towards us and he looked like a big shot.

Dad did look like a big shot, he was a tailor and he was well dressed. It was the winter time he wore a rover coat, he was dressed like a millionaire, a nice hat.

He walked towards us and he said, “Martha?” “Yeah.” I said. “Hilda?” “Yeah.” “Wadley?” “Yeah.” “Are you our father?”[Foreign language 01:11:19]. I was suspicious right there and then, I was going to make sure he was our dad. Talk about me, I was suspicious through the whole trip about something.

**Kate:** How did he prove he was your father?

**Martha:** I had a picture and I pulled that out of my coat, I had a little purse [inaudible 01:11:50] they called it. I pulled that out and I compared him and saw it did look like him.

**Serene:** You checked the picture before you let him give you a hug.

**Martha:** Finally he grabbed us and hugged us and took us home. Here was his wife, our stepmother. I tell you I liked my stepmother from the very start, we were the best of friends to tell you the truth.

He used to be jealous, he said, “You always tell her everything, but you don’t tell me nothing.” I said, “Well women to women.” I remember she cooked coffee and I said, “I don’t drink coffee, if we could have some milk or chocolate.”

**Kate:** Back to the chocolate again?

**Martha:** Yeah, here comes the chocolate …

**Kate:** One question, how did your father know who you were?

**Martha:** I think we had our passport picture I send him one of me and my sister so he could compare us that way. Wadley had sent one too that’s what we did when had our pictures taken, in fact I have the passport left.

**Kate:** Do you?

**Martha:** Yeah, I got Hilda’s too.

**Kate:** You got to the house, what was the address? Do you remember the address you went to?

**Martha:** 1414South K Street.

**Kate:** What type of dwelling was it, what type of place was that?

**Martha:** There house was an, of course it’s not there anymore, it was an old house. We [inaudible 01:13:36] the train we came on.

**Kate:** How?

**Martha:** You come in through the front door there were steps going upstairs, then you walk to the left there was his tailor shop. Then was the front room, then was the dining room, then came the bathroom in between the kitchen.

Then the kitchen, a great big kitchen at that time, they had it remodeled. Then another bedroom, there were two bedrooms upstairs. It was a long house, but a comfortable house, it was very -Don’t you remember the house. Yeah it was very neat. Then she crochet curtains for all those windows.

**Kate:** How was the house heated?

**Martha:** By the heating stove, regular with wood.

**Kate:** A stove?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What did they burn in the stove?

**Martha:** They burned wood …

**Kate:** Wood stoves.

**Martha:** Chunks of wood.

**Kate:** How about lighting?

**Martha:** Electricity of course.

**Kate:** How about plumbing of the house?

**Martha:** There was nice plumbing, like any other house.

**Kate:** Indoor?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** How long did you stay in that house? Did you live there very long?

**Martha:** I stayed all winter, I went to school over there and I learned English. Then in the summer in June I went to Seattle here my brother of course they were living here. I liked Seattle I said, “I wouldn’t go back to Tacoma.” I remember my brother also he worked for [inaudible 01:15:11] that time, he was a tailor too.

**Kate:** Which brother now?

**Martha:** That’s his father, the oldest brother, Edward Forsman. I stayed with them I think about two or three weeks. Then one day I decide I’m going to do house work, go to work for a rich family.

My brother said, “You’re not going, you’re going to go to school and learn something different. You don’t want to go and do house work.” I said, “If I go to school and learn a trade or go to office work, all I do anyhow is to get married and wash diapers. I don’t need that.” Which happened to me. I did work for a family.

**Kate:** Let’s back up a little bit, when you first went to school, how was it to learn English? Did you …

**Martha:** I learnt that awfully fast.

**Kate:** Did anybody ever make fun of you?

**Martha:** No, they didn’t.

**Kate:** Call you any names? How about the neighborhood, what type of ethnic group was in that neighborhood?

**Martha:** There was black people and Japanese in the particular neighborhood where my dad lived.

**Kate:** Was it a Scandinavians, other Scandinavians?

**Martha:** Not very many.

**Kate:** Did you know any Finish families?

**Martha:** No, not then. My aunt lived there but she lived quite a few distance away, about let’s say three miles away or something like that, maybe four. My sister and I went to school and we started in with the first grade. Imagine, with little kids.

**Kate:** Do you remember any of the teachers?

**Martha:** [Inaudible 01:17:06] was the teacher in the first grade, I remember him. I don’t remember the rest of them. I just got through school in Finland, when it come to subjects I told them, “I can teach them, I don’t need to go to school to learn here, I already known that stuff.”

**Kate:** What was the name of the school you went to?

**Martha:** Lincoln.

**Kate:** Lincoln School?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** What was that like going to school with the little kids?

**Martha:** That was fun. Kids they have fun. When I start to learn English he would have me up there helping, I was a helper really. Helped her with the kids through the subjects and everything. Finally I was put up and up right through that school at winter, that’s a fact.

**Kate:** When you came to this country and you lived with your family here, did you maintain your religious Lutheran habits [inaudible 01:18:17]?

**Martha:** Yeah, not as often as I would have if I’d have been home.

**Kate:** Did your family attend church every week?

**Martha:** No, I don’t know they didn’t.

**Kate:** How often did they go?

**Martha:** Probably once a month or maybe, whenever there was special things going on they’d be in church, but not steady.

**Kate:** What church did they belong to?

**Martha:** Lutheran.

**Kate:** Were there other Finns and [inaudible 01:18:46]?

**Martha:** Yeah, quite a few that went in Tacoma there in the church they went to.

**Kate:** Where was the church in relation to where they lived?

**Martha:** That was, I’d say about seven, eight blocks from there. I don’t remember the denomination of that church but I know it was Lutheran I don’t know which one.

**Kate:** What was the language of the service?

**Martha:** English and sometimes Swedish.

**Kate:** There was a Swedish service?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** How did your father do with this country, did he adjust?

**Martha:** Yes.

**Kate:** His English, did he become …

**Martha:** He spoke broken English, but he managed.

**Kate:** Through the course of his life, did he ever want to go back to Finland to live?

**Martha:** No and he never did.

**Kate:** Did he talk about it at all?

**Martha:** No, he said he had too hard times in Finland to make a living.

**Kate:** What about your stepmother, did she talk about it ever?

**Martha:** Not too much, no.

**Kate:** Did they ever mention that they were homesick?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** How about you, how did you feel, did you have homesick?

**Martha:** I was homesick, I wanted to go home.

**Kate:** You mentioned originally that you came here you thought for five years, what happened?

**Martha:** I got married. I got foolish too like everybody else.

**Kate:** How did you meet your husband?

**Martha:** He was a [inaudible 01:20:25] from Finland. A lot older than me, he was about 18 years older than me. I was 16, going on 17.

**Kate:** How did you meet?

**Martha:** That was a funny meeting. Your folks lived up, the first years they lived up in Ballard. Johnsons were living down the street and your mother sent me to get soap and he was clerking in a grocery store for his brother-in-law this man.

This lady come in after me, she was born in Finland too in Terjärv. His name was [Inaudible 01:21:07] she said, “Martha wants you to take her to show tonight,” It was a Saturday afternoon. I said, “She does not.”

I ran home there and when your dad come home that night, your mother said that [inaudible 01:21:28] wants to take Martha out to a show and I’m not going.

He was going to come and get me and I ran in your folk’s closet and hid. Your dad made me come out and he said, “You are going to the show.” I’ve never been so disgusted in my life to go to show with him, but I ended up marrying him.

**Kate:** What made you change your mind or maybe you didn’t but you married him? What happened after that?

**Martha:** He was a nice man, there was nothing wrong with him. That part of being that much older, I figured I was going to get a tall, handsome, young guy, not a guy that was that old. He was telling me he was well-to-do and fooled me a little bit. That helped me get a pretty good life. I wasn’t in love with him, that was a fact.

**Kate:** What was his name?

**Martha:** [Inaudible 01:22:42].

**Kate:** Tell me then what happened? You married him?

**Martha:** Yeah we got married in a service [inaudible 01:22:49]. I had a baby boy with him, son. He’s over at my apartment today having lunch with my other guy now.

**Kate:** How old were you when you had a child? First how old were you when you married?

**Martha:** I was going on 17, I wasn’t even 17 when he was born.

**Kate:** When Fitz was born?

**Serene:** Lloyd.

**Martha:** Lloyd [Inaudible 01:23:23], no [Inaudible 01:23:23] Lloyd [Inaudible 01:23:23].

**Kate:** What year was that then when your child was born?

**Martha:** 23.

**Kate:** Briefly describe your course of your life then and what has happened, in terms of your adjustment to life here?

**Martha:** We were together but not too any years, [inaudible 01:23:46] was six or seven when we went to live with his grandparents. I couldn’t live with him anymore, he was mentally imbalanced, I shouldn’t say that. There’s relatives, they don’t know what happened I never told them. I shouldn’t tell it on this tape either, just leave that.

**Kate:** You were on your own then at one point?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** At what age?

**Martha:** I was a little over 20.

**Kate:** You had a boy?

**Martha:** Yeah, then he went to live with his grandpa.

**Kate:** Which grandpa?

**Martha:** My dad.

**Kate:** Your father?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Then what happened? What were you doing for work then?

**Martha:** House work.

**Kate:** What families, for example, were you doing house work for here?

**Martha:** Rich people.

**Kate:** Then what happened?

**Martha:** I worked for nine years without bothering having even, well I did have a boyfriend, but that was it. Then I met my late husband and was married for over 40 years.

**Kate:** How did you meet him?

**Martha:** At a dance.

**Kate:** Which dance?

**Martha:** It was a Swedish gathering, mostly no reasons and Swedes went to …

**Kate:** How did you know he was or did you?

**Martha:** Okay you mean?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Martha:** They knew him too, they knew you would know him, he was a nice man. In fact, from the start I knew he was okay.

**Kate:** What was his name?

**Martha:** Fred.

**Kate:** What was his last name?

**Martha:** Zachman.

**Kate:** You were alone for nine years? Then you decided to marry again?

**Martha:** Yeah, we were going together for two and a half years then we got married.

**Kate:** Why did you marry again?

**Martha:** It’s sort of like this, you get crazy about somebody, then decide that’s the one you want to be with.

**Kate:** Did you have any other children?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** You have one boy?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** When you look back on your life now, what do you think about your original decision to come here?

**Martha:** I guess it was a good decision, after all I didn’t think so at the time.

**Kate:** Have you ever gone back to Finland?

**Martha:** Yeah six times.

**Kate:** When you go back, what is your impression of Finland then?

**Martha:** I think it’s wonderful, the way things have improved and they’re just so modern, everything is convenient, everybody is living well. Even the farmlands look beautiful and the houses they are building and remodeling are so beautiful over there. I think it’s gorgeous myself.

**Kate:** Have you ever been tempted to go back to live?

**Martha:** Maybe if I had been alone I would have, but not longer, you’re married to someone that’s not your nationality. It’s pretty hard to get used to some other country.

**Kate:** With your son that you had, did you speak Swedish with your son? Did he learn Swedish?

**Martha:** No, I didn’t but when he went to live with the grandparents, he could talk Swedish now we don’t know. What is it he said the other day? It wasn’t very nice, I said, “Well you shouldn’t say that to people that don’t know.”

What the heck was he -I wouldn’t mind saying it right here we’re talking anyway. Different [foreign language 01:27:54], that’s what he used to say after my step mother [foreign language 01:28:02], he knows how to say that. Do you know what that is?

**Kate:** No.

**Serene:** Good God.

**Kate:** Did you speak Swedish to your husband?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** Either of them?

**Martha:** No.

**Kate:** The language that you used was …

**Martha:** English.

**Kate:** English primarily?

**Martha:** Yeah.

**Kate:** To whom do you speak Swedish?

**Martha:** I talk more Swedish now than I ever did. I belong to the choir and we sing Swedish songs all the time. I write Swedish letters back home.

**Kate:** You maintain your Swede Finn background? What about food and lifestyle, is there anything left that’s like back home?

**Martha:** Yeah, chopped potatoes, meat and potatoes with the onion and stuff like that a stew, we do that back home. That kind of stuff is about the same and rice puddings, when you make rice pudding, it’s about the same.

**Kate:** When you think of your identity, what do you feel you are? You started out as a Swede Finn, you came to the United States, how do you identify yourself now?

**Martha:** I’m still a Swede Finn.

**Kate:** You feel still a Swede Finn?

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

**Kate:** Do you feel American too?

**Martha:** In a way, but I’m an American citizen of course.

**Kate:** Does the citizenship make you feel American?

**Martha:** It don’t make any difference, in fact, I didn’t tell you when I got my citizenship papers what I did get into.

**Kate:** What did you do?

**Martha:** I got up in front of a judge and he start asking me questions. I had a girlfriend that took shorthand, she was my witness and one of my lady friends. He asked me, it was just at the war time, he asked me 50 questions, she put it down in shorthand. What do you call that in English?

**Serene:** Shorthand.

**Martha:** I answered every question promptly, quick, just as fast as he asked me, I fired right back at him. Then he came and he said, “Would you take up arms against Finland if we came to war with Finland?” I said, I stumbled, he said, “You wouldn’t, wouldn’t you?” I said, “Yes.” That’s all I said. I thought that was terrible, I wouldn’t shoot my own people.

**Kate:** You’ve lived now these years, what would you give advice to young people now? Do you have any advice you’d give to young people, you’ve lived along time, you’ve seen a lot.

**Martha:** I’d say, do the right thing and don’t criticize too much what’s going on, just do the right thing yourself. Be good to old people.

**Kate:** I’d like to thank you on behalf of the Ellis Island Oral History Project. This is Kate Moore in Seattle Washington.