DP-54
MARY MASARE THOME
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CZECHOSLOVAKIA (AUSTRIA-HUNGARY), 1909
AGE 7
SHIP NAME NOT MENTIONED

DALLETT: My name is Nancy Dallett, and I am speaking today with Mrs. Mary Thome. This is Interview Number 428, [SIC, DP-54], for the Ellis Island Oral History Project, and we're beginning the interview at 1:25 PM on Monday, November 6, 1989. We're going to talk with Mrs. Thome about her immigration experience from Czechoslovakia in 1909 when she was seven and a half years old. Okay, Mrs. thome, let's start back at the beginning of your story, and could you tell me where and when you were born.

THOME: Well, I was born in what is now known as Czechoslovakia. At that time it was Austria-Hungary. My birthday is February 26, 1902, in the little village of Mjezgovce.

DALLETT: Can you help me spell that?

THOME: M-J-E-Z-G-O-V-C-E.

DALLETT: And can you pronounce once again?

THOME: Mjezgovce.

DALLETT: And you say it was a small village?

THOME: Very small.

DALLETT: Can you tell me about the village?

THOME: Well, probably not, I doubt whether there were two hundred people in it, and the village school was across the street from my grandfather Frano's home. And there was this, there was, and still is, a little brook running along in there. We were back in '74, and I was surprised to see the brook still there. And my grandparents Masare, M-A-S-A-R-E, lived on the other end of the village. And as far as school is concerned, it being Austria-Hungary, we had to speak and read and write Hungarian. Our parents taught us our Slovak language at home. If we spoke Slovak on the street, we were punished. So we didn't do much of that, except at home.

DALLETT: Who would punish you?

THOME: Who? Oh, the teacher, I imagine, it was. Because we'd probably get reported, just like people do things like that, especially kids. They hear someone doing

something that you don't think they should do, you run to the teacher and tell her.

DALLETT: How big was your family? How many in your family?

THOME: I had two brothers at that time. And my brother, and a sister. My sister Anne died in infancy, and my brother John died when he was about two years old. And then there was Michael. He's three years younger than I am. And then when we got to the United States my mother had two more children. She had Stephen in 1910 and Milan in 1912.

DALLETT: Tell me a bit about, more about the village, or the house, how about, that you lived in. Can you remember the house where you lived?

THOME: Well, we lived in quite a few houses. When I say, I don't mean a house like you're thinking of house. The family had two rooms. One was the kitchen, living, dining room, everything, and the other was the storage. And that was, and the houses were built like, they had a common wall. It would be a row of houses with maybe six or eight families living straight in a row, each having only two rooms. And we had brick stoves, and sometimes we slept on the brick stoves at night to keep warm. (She laughs.) Now, I can't remember too much about it, aside from, unless you remind me in your questioning.

DALLETT: Were there any animals attached to the house, any barn animals?

THOME: Oh, yes, the barn, the cows and the horses. And they helped heat the house. That is, my grandfather had a house like that, but the one we were living in, we were poor people. We didn't have, we were renting. So we didn't have all those comforts of having the animals heat the house for us. And, of course, there were chickens and ducks and geese. And the outside plumbing, which was kind of-- (She laughs.) That was, even when we went back in '74, it was quite an experience when you had to go out to the outdoor plumbing and the ducks and the geese had been, and chickens had been all over the yard, all the, it was quite an experience.

DALLETT: Did your father work the land? Was he--

THOME: No. He worked in a factory in a town about, it couldn't be ten miles away, it must have been about five, because they walked to work. And it was a cane factory in Uhrovce, U-H-R-O-V-C-E. And my mother worked there too. She said she worked there when she was a mere child, about ten years old. And they would leave early in the morning and walk, take their dinner and supper with them. If the weather was bad they stayed overnight, slept on the floors, and worked all day. It's hard to believe, but they walked that five, I think it was about five miles. I went back to the church where I was baptized when we were there in '74, so I think it must have been about five miles. It seemed much longer at the time, if you're walking.

DALLETT: Do you remember the church from when you were a little girl?

THOME: A little bit. Uh-huh. My uncle wanted me to sing so loud that

everybody would hear me. (She laughs.) And I had laryngitis, and it was so hard for me. He'd poke me and say sing, "Spievat."

DALLETT: So you spoke a combination of languages then.

THOME: Yeah. Hungarian and Slovak and then I tried to learn English. (She laughs.) That was fun, too.

DALLETT: When was it that your family first started to make arrangements, or even to think about coming to this country?

THOME: Well, my father left two years before we did. And--

DALLETT: Do you remember the circumstances under which he to this country first?

THOME: Well, there wasn't enough work, and he wanted to get ahead. So he left. And unfortunately he came at a very poor time, because there was a Depression in 1909, '10 and '11. But there was man living at, my father came to Kenosha, Wisconsin because he had, he knew people there. And he didn't let my father know that he wasn't working. But there was philanthropist, is that the word? Who helped people come from Europe. And he asked my father whether his wife was a hard worker and he said, "Of course she is." So he loaned him enough, I think it was two hundred dollars, to pay for our passage. That was in 1909. My mother, my brother Michael, and I. My sister and my brother John had died. And I was the only that could walk around on the boat. We were in

the steerage and I remember getting water for everyone who was, anyone who wanted it and who wasn't able to get it. I'm trying to think of, that's about all I remember about the boat trip. I think it took about two weeks. Oh, what I wanted to mention was that we brought our own food. We had dried fruit, dried meat and dried bread. (She laughs.) And that lasted us all the journey, and all the way to Kenosha. We never bought any food of any kind. Oh, and I was talking about the man who loaned my father the money. I don't know how long it took them to pay him back, but i a very short time, we moved to Racine and rented a house with five rooms, four bedrooms and a kitchen. And we had boarders. Not roomers, boarders. Sixteen of them. They slept two in a bed, four beds in a room, and two bedrooms. And my mother and my brother and I, we shared the third room. And my poor mother, I don't know how she did it. She baked bread every day. She bought flour a hundred pounds at a time and baked bread and cooked and washed on a washboard for twenty people. And it took them a long time to get a home of their own. My brother, I had two brothers, one born in 1910 and one born in 1912. And the one, Milan, who was born in 1912, was born in a house that my mother and father had built. And then we only had, we still have, we still had four bedrooms and a kitchen. (She laughs.) And eventually we got so we did have a spare room and oh, I didn't tell you about going to school in Kenosha. Would you like to hear about that?

DALLETT: Yeah. Sure.

THOME: Before we ever moved to Racine.

DALLETT: Actually, let's go back in time a little bit before we come up to that point, if you don't mind.

THOME: Okay.

DALLETT: I just wanted to ask you, you mentioned your two sets of grandparents. Did you say goodbye to them before you came her? They didn't come to this country?

THOME: Oh, no, no. They stayed there. Yes, indeed, we said goodbye. Lots of tears were shed. Because my mother and my father never got back to see their parents again. I wanted my mother to go back with us in 1972, but she didn't. She didn't feel up to it. So we didn't. It was sad.

DALLETT: And at that time you were seven, so you already, in addition to your family, you had friends and you had to say goodbye to them.

THOME: Oh, yes. I had friends, one of whom immigrated to this country about forty years later, and she claims she recognized me, because I had been, we had been out in the field. My mother was working in the field, and while they were having lunch I took a hoe and tried to hoe and I hit her in the head. (She laughs.) So she said she recognized me the way she saw, forty years later, forty or fifty, whatever it was. That was remarkable. But she had something to help her. People said that I resembled my mother very much, and so she saw my mother, and then when she saw me she knew who I was. But she forgave me.

DALLETT: Did you, I don't know if you can remember, but as a child

did you know anyone who had come to this country? Did you have an idea of what it was going to be like?

THOME: No. I had no idea.

DALLETT: Did your father, you said your father wanted to get ahead and thought he could here, but as a child did you have an image of it?

THOME: I didn't have any, no. I had a miserable childhood when I came because I couldn't speak the language, and the only school my father knew was the parochial school where they taught German in the morning and English in the afternoon, and I couldn't, I just couldn't fathom anything. So I used to sit in the park during the school hours and then go home. And then of course my mother couldn't write an excuse, because she couldn't write English. Eventually, oh, I looked so funny, too. I had different kind of clothes. I had old country clothes on, stockings with circles around them, long dress down to my ankle, and I had to wear all the, those were the only clothes I had for an awfully long time.

DALLETT: What do you mean stocking with circles around them?

THOME: Uh, striped. I couldn't think of the, striped stockings. And, of course, the kids made fun me because I was dressed so funny and I didn't know what was going on. Eventually, I did, the following year I went to public school and I started to learn a

little bit. And I'll never forget, I don't know what grade it was that the teacher tried to explain to me what "opposite" was. And she pointed to the book. O-P is opposite of P-O. And I had no idea what she was talking about. But eventually, because I could read, and I could write, it didn't take me too long. I skipped second grade and I skipped seventh grade. So it wasn't hard for me to learn. But we had to do it without any help. And then my folks, then my folks thought because I did go to school to eighth grade I should be real smart, I should know all the answers. They asked me something and I would say, "I don't know." "Well, but you go to school, you learn." Well, eventually I did. I did learn. But it was fun, in a way, but it was also kind of tragic. It was hard. There was no question about that. But we survived.

DALLETT: In that period where your mother had all those boarders, you had to help with them?

THOME: Oh, in the morning. (She laughs.) I had to get up and clean all the lamp chimneys, because we had kerosene lamps. We probably didn't have more than four or five, but, and then empty the spittoons, because all the men smoked or chewed, yeah. And I had to take these out, water, empty them and put water in those, and do the lamp chimneys. That was my job before I went to school. Then when I came home from school my mother was probably kneading the dough for the bread or doing wash on a washboard, and I had to help her with that. So I don't have too many happy memories of early childhood. Later on I made my own entertainment, but for many years it was work. And my mother worked

too, so there wasn't much we could do except help. Of course, the boys, well, Michael, I don't know what he did. He didn't do much, I don't think. Because boys didn't do much.

DALLETT: And the boarders were coming from where? They were--

THOME: They were all from Czechoslovakia. Yeah. They, at that time, people came somewhere where they had someone they knew, a relative or a friend, and so that's the way it was.

DALLETT: So they were young men who were coming to work here. Young women, too?

THOME: And young women. And the young, oh, one incident I must tell you about. When we came into Ellis Island my brother Michael had a boil on the back of his neck. And he was, he was stooping over. I should be looking at my notes. (Shuffles papers.) He walked stooped over-- (Break in tape.)

DALLETT: I just wanted to catch that, because the microphone, hold on one second. Okay. You were about to say something about your brother at Ellis Island.

THOME: Oh. At Ellis Island, he had the boil on his neck, and he walked rather stooped over, and my mother told him to straighten up and walk straight, so the doctor won't know what's wrong with him. But, of course, the doctors did. And we were separated from our,

from the friends that we were coming over with. And believe or not it took my mother ten years to get to see them again because it was her cousin, and she went to Chicago to work, and she got a job as a maid. And Racine was, oh, my goodness, it was fifty miles, how were you going to get there. You can't walk. You can't take your horse and buggy. And it cost too much on the train, you didn't have enough money. So it took them ten years before they got together. Can you imagine that?

DALLETT: Tell me, you were about to tell me what happened on Ellis Island with your brother. We haven't talked at all about Ellis Island, so tell me what else you remember about coming through there.

THOME: Oh, I remember the big, big wooden benches, and sitting on them, and I remember they gave us some kind of a box lunch, and I think it looked like what I now know is a cracker box, and I think that's what we had. Crackers. And I had never Tasted, crackers and bananas. And that was the first food that we had given to us. And on the way from the boat to the railroad station, my mother had a large wicker trunk and a, sort of blanket that tied up and those two pieces contained all our worldly goods. And she had the trunk and the bundle and Michael and me. So she would take me, and one of the bundles, and walk aways, turning back all the time to watch the other child that she left behind, and the other bundle, then go back and get the other one. And at one point a man offered to help here by taking the bundle, and she agreed, and then she was scared that she'd never see it again, but he was a kind man. Now, the next thing I remember was being on the

train. And out train had a collision with a freight train. And all kinds of things were scattered out on the ground and the conductor, or whoever he was, told the people that they could take whatever they wanted. So everybody went out and came back with boxes and parcels and cartons. And my mother got some lovely salt and pepper shakers. I still have a couple of them. And hat pin holders, and a beautiful vase which I unfortunately broke quite a long time ago. And that was when I heard my, or understood the first English word. There was a young lady on the train who was trying to tell me and show me how to wash my face. So "wash" was the first word that I heard and learned.

DALLETT: You mentioned that your mother had all your worldly goods in this wicker basket and the blanket. What was in the wicker basket and the blanket?

THOME: All our clothes, and whatever food was left over, if any. And that was all. We couldn't, maybe there were pillows. Probably. And duchna, beds, feather beds. Can you imagine carrying that huge bundle and trunk and packing all your things in that and, I don't know how she survived. And then when we got, finally, when we got to Kenosha where my father was waiting for us, it was joyful and it was confusing, and disappointing. Because the streets weren't paved with gold, and there was no money growing on trees. (She laughs.) Then we lived in a, we lived in Kenosha twice, and then in Racine twice, and stayed the second time. My father, changing jobs. When there was work in Kenosha, we lived in Kenosha. When there was work in Racine, we lived in Racine.

DALLETT: What kind of work, if you remember, did he find in Racine?

THOME: Well, in the first place, he wasn't too well, and factory work was, well, he had to do factory work, but it wasn't easy for him. And then later on when, oh, I must have been , oh, let's see, in 1912 we built the other house. He bought coal by the carload and had a horse and wagon and sold coal. But he had to shovel the coal off the box, off the car, onto the wagon, bring it home, unload it there. And when someone, when he had an order, then he had to load it again on to the wagon, and carry it in. And there were no driveways. You had a coal chute, and you out it in the coal, in the basement window, and you carried the coal by the bushel, and threw it down the chute into the basement. It's hard to believe how much they did, how much work they did, and how hard it was for them, too.

DALLETT: Okay. We're going to pause, if you want to have a look at that. Hold on. (Break in tape.) Um, you'd come across this, uh, some writing that you did, so if you'd like to read from it you're welcome to.

THOME: Okay. We had no rugs on the floor, and there were only boardwalks, and the roads were either dusty or muddy depending on the weather. So the floors had to be scrubbed every day. There were no screens on the windows, so several times a day we would open the windows and doors and shoo the flies out by whirling towels around. There were no automobiles, just horses pulling wagons and buggies, and sleds in the wintertime. The

milkman would come every morning in his delivery wagon and come to the door carrying a very large milk can with a spout or lip on it, and my mother would have her pitcher ready, and he would take his quart measure and pour as much milk into her pitcher as she wanted. There were no dairies as we now have. The milk was not pasteurized, and they had not even heard about homogenizing. Because of this, tuberculosis sanitariums were usually full. The grocery boy would come every day and deliver groceries to your door and taking you order for the next day. You see, there was no refrigeration at that time, so you bought your food every day. Iceboxes came later. The bakery wagon would come by every day calling out his wares. Everyone baked their own bread, so his trays contained rolls, gingerbread squares and sponge drops. I can still taste and smell the good gingerbread squares and those sponge cake drops were so good I still get hungry for both. We had two coal stoves, one in the kitchen for cooking and heating, and the other for heating the rest of the house. When it was real cold, everyone sat around the stove and warmed one side, and when that was warm you turned around and warmed the other side. Besides that, we were pretty much bundled up because the stove, even when red hot, would only heat the space close to it. We had kerosene lamps, and before I left for school, I had to fill them with kerosene, trim the wicks, and clean the chimneys. I still have the kerosene lamp I used to study by. And I also had to make nine beds and empty spittoons before going to school. It was about a two mile walk to school, and we walked it four times a day, rain, snow or shine. Everyone walked everywhere unless you had lots and lots of money, which we did not. There was no bathroom in the house, just an outhouse in the backyard. We did have what were known as chambers, or ceramic pots, which we used at night in case of stormy weather. These, too, of course, were emptied in the morning. There were no radios, no telephone, no television. Not even a newspaper, nor did we hear airplanes flying overhead. We didn't even know about airplanes, and if anyone had told us about them we wouldn't have believed

them. About five years later we built a house in the next block. We had a barn and had two cows and a horse. The cow gave us all the milk we wanted, and my mother made butter and cheese and sold some of the milk. My father sold coal. I told you about that. So that, I think that's all.

DALLETT: That's very nice.

THOME: Huh?

DALLETT: That's very nice. We're going to just pause here so I can turn the tape over. Okay. That's the end of side one of Interview Number 428, [SIC, DP-54], with Mary Thome.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

DALLETT: This is the beginning of side two of Interview Number 428, [SIC, DP-54], with Mary Thome. We sort of glided over your experience at Ellis Island. So I'm sorry to make you go back in time again, but just in case there's anything else you can remember, I'm interested in what it must have been like when your mother knew that she wanted to hide the boil on your brother's neck and if you remember anything about the medical inspection process and what happened.

THOME: Well, the reason that everyone had to have a physical was

they would take care of minor illnesses, and if it was something serious, you were sent back to where you came from. And that was a disaster to anyone that it happened to. But fortunately they took care of Mike's boil and aside from getting separated from our friends there weren't any bad after effects.

DALLETT: So did they separate you from Mike?

THOME: No.

DALLETT: No.

THOME: No. We were all together. I imagine he just opened it up and cleaned it and out a band-aid or bandage on it. So we were all together then. But in the meantime people were being processed through, and our friend s were gone.

DALLETT: So you were separated from them.

THOME: So, we were.

DALLETT: Were there people there to help with the language difference? Was there an interpreter to help your mother understand?

THOME: No, no. Nothing at all. And many of the people, I learned later, their names were changed. They wrote them the way they sounded.

DALLETT: Did that happen in your family?

THOME: No.

DALLETT: What was the name when you were coming through?

THOME: Masare.

DALLETT: Masare.

THOME: Uh-huh. That didn't have, that was a pretty easy name to write, I guess.

DALLETT: Did you have to spend the night there, at Ellis Island?

THOME: Well, if we did, I don't remember sleeping. So whether we went directly to the train, I imagine. I don't remember stopping off to sleep anywhere, so I imagine we just went to the train there and rode on, I don't know how long it took us to get to Kenosha either. I just remember the train crash, and people carrying in boxes and cartons and all kinds of things. And learning how to wash my face.

DALLETT: Who was the woman that taught you that first word, and to wash your face? Was she someone on the train?

THOME: Wash? Well, she was some young lady on the train. I imagine, I'm sure she felt sorry for us. So she showed me how to wash my face.

DALLETT: And then when you met your father was it in Kenosha that you just--

THOME: Yes. We came to Kenosha.

DALLETT: You changed trains in Chicago then?

THOME: I imagine so. I really don't, you know, that was such a time of confusion and worry because I hadn't seen my father for two years, and we were in a strange country, didn't understand anything anybody was saying. It was, it was confusing, very. And that kind of blocked out memories, or it blocked out looking around to see what you could see and ask questions. You couldn't. You were just too confused and too--

DALLETT: Once you got settled with your father again, how long did it take before you started to feel comfortable here?

THOME: Oh, a long time. Until I learned, knew enough about the language to know what was going on. You know, one thing I remember in Kenosha, somebody had dropped a banana peeling, and I didn't know a banana from Adam, I guess. And I remember scraping the inside of the banana on my teeth to find out what it tasted like. And I think after that I did quite often, because I don't think I got bananas at home. We, not that we ate very little, but we ate very economically, probably mostly bread and beans.

DALLETT: And when your mother was preparing food for all these people, how did she manage to do all that? Did she adopt American customs, or did she carry on with here original?

THOME: No. Actually, let's see, the boarders, some of the boarders would buy their own piece of meat and she would roast it for them. And some of them ate at the table. And what my mother made on the, for all the work that she did, was to put, was to pay for what we ate, the family. She didn't get any money for that, no.

DALLETT: For all the cooking and washing.

THOME: Cooking, washing and keeping house and everything. And a lot of the time father was unable to work, so that was all we had was our food, and clothing. (She laughs.) No. You'll have to ask me more.

DALLETT: Okay. Let's talk a bit about the kind of work you began to do, because you mentioned before that, uh--

THOME: You mean around the house?

DALLETT: No. When you got your first job outside the home.

THOME: I worked for, my first job was for Mitchell Motors and among the

young people, Slovak young people in our neighborhood, there were only two of us who went beyond the eighth grade. Most of them stopped at the sixth grade and then went to work either as maids or in some factories. Well, I wanted to go to high school, and I talked it over with my father and he said, "Well, if you can skip a grade, then you can go to high school for a year." So I went to my principal and I told him that, and he looked at my record, and he said, "All right. We'll put you in the seventh grade." But I would never do that again with any child because I'm, it was a crucial grade for me. There were some things that I missed that I never made up. Anyway, I got to high school for one year, and then my mother got a bad infection in her finger and I had to stay home and take over. So then I got a second year of high school. And by that time I was sixteen, which was normal, because I had skipped two grades in the grade school. And I got an office job at Mitchell Motors. And, of course, at that time, office pay was very small, and the girls in the factories and other places were earning much more money, so my mother and father thought I should ask for a raise. And practically in tears I went into Mr. Armstrong's office and wanted a raise. And actually, I don't remember whether I got it or not, but I didn't stay there very long because at that time you could quit your job in the morning and get another one in the afternoon. And from then on, that's how I got most of my raises. It was just, rather than going to ask for them, Id get a job that paid more. And eventually I became a secretary, then a confidential secretary. And I worked till '29 when I got married. And then when the war came along and Dave must have been about, when was the war,'41, and he was born in '32, ten, twelve years old. And I used to tell him, I only worked till four thirty or four o'clock, and the youngsters came home a half hour before me. But Dave would never be home. So finally I sat down and talked to him and he said, "Mother, it's no fun coming home to an empty house." So I quit my job. Even, then I got a part-time, half-day job, so I was home whenever they were home. And then during the war I got a job at a ship

building company. We built two ships, I guess.

DALLETT: Was that here in Racine?

THOME: Uh-huh. A wealthy family by the name of Falk, I shouldn't be saying things like this, but I don't think they will ever hear it anyway. He was a drunk, alcoholic. And he wouldn't be accepted in the, couldn't be accepted in the service, but his family had enough money to start a ship building company in his name. Really. And can you imagine making an air rescue boat in Racine and shipping it to the Pacific Ocean? That's what the whole thing was about, because he wanted, his family wanted him to be patriotic. He was, after all, he was building ships for the government. That was his, we had fun during that time. My husband Jerry worked nights at that time. And he'd come, walk through the park coming home, and he'd find, the Coast Guard station was in Racine. And he'd find a sailor sleeping on the bench in the park. And he'd wake him up, and bring him home, and wake me up. And I'd make, if we had eggs and butter and canned Spam, we were okay. Because then we could just scramble the eggs and we had, make toast, and have Spam. And I remember one, either sailor or soldier he brought home, and I made that for him. After he ate, he said he'd been eating the same thing for a couple of weeks in the army. But that's all we had, because food was rationed. And I used to make a deal with the Coast Guard station. If they gave me the sugar, which was rationed, and butter, which was also rationed, I would make pies for them. So we had a deal.

DALLETT: What kind of pies did you make?

THOME: Oh, apple, pumpkin, whatever was available. And I used

to make good pies. I still can.

DALLETT: Did you continue to make what you served me for lunch? I forgot the name of it now.

THOME: Kaloches, you mean?

DALLETT: Yeah. Kaloch, yeah. Did you make those, as well?

THOME: Oh, for the boys. No. There wasn't money for poppyseed and nuts and all that. Just what was available. And they gave me the stamps, the ration stamps. All the things that we've gone through.

DALLETT: Did it continue to be, where was the neighborhood that you lived, at this point that you're talking about?

THOME: A half mile from here on Villa Street. That was our first house we bought for four thousand dollars. And we didn't have money for a down payment, but the very kindly and generous Mrs. Lichter, out neighbor, who owned the house, was willing to take a lot as down payment, and the lot was one that my husband's mother owned, and she was just paying taxes on it. She, for some reason had bought a lot and gave it to my husband and his sister. She, in turn, gave us her share, and we gave Mrs. Lichter the lot as a down payment on the house. We got four hundred dollars for it. And many years later, when we felt we could spare it, we paid Geraldine back for her share of the lot. At that time, it just happened that she could have used it very well, so it all turned out.

DALLETT: And when did you become a citizen?

THOME: In 192-- Uh, I'm trying to think. Oh, about 1924 or '25, I think. I have the papers in a vault.

DALLETT: Did you do that on your own, or through your father?

THOME: No. I could, I, my father, I couldn't become a citizen under, with him. I had passed the age of eighteen, I think. So I had to get it on my own. And the darn judge asked me more questions than he asked anybody else because I had been here long enough and knew English and I was working at an office. I really had to study. I knew a lot more about it than I do now. (She laughs.)

DALLETT: Do you remember some of the questions he asked you?

THOME: Oh, the names of the presidents and the vice-[residents, and things about the Constitution. And, I was well-versed. I had studied for it, because I knew what was going to happen. So, I was working in Milwaukee at that time, and I had to come down to Racine to get my papers. I'm trying to get the times, the years straightened out in my mind. '24, I guess that's about right.

DALLETT: How about your mother? How did she fare after a while when she was here? Did things ease up for them during the war, too?

THOME: Yes. After we got into the house that they built, which was in 1912, then we had fewer boarders. And they had, the house was built so there were two six-, two three-room flats upstairs, so they had that income. And eventually, when S.E. Johnsons were expanding, my mother and father bought a house and moved it onto to the lot next to them. They had bought two lots in the first place. And so they, that gave them a little income for a few years. And then the Depression came along and it wasn't very good at all. But things got a little bit easier, but not ever really easy for her. Things were, because my dad was, my father wasn't too well, and she had to take care of him. And then she had the obligation of taking care of the two upper flats in the house next door, just like I have the five tenants upstairs now. So I guess it runs in the family, only I don't do their washing or their food or anything else. So--

DALLETT: Okay. I think I've asked you what I need to, unless there's anything else that you'd like to add.

THOME: I don't think so.

DALLETT: Okay. Well, then thank you very much, and that's the end.

THOME: Unless you want to hear something about Czechoslovakia?

DALLETT: Is there something you've written here? Yeah. Well, I think rather than read it in, I'd love to have a copy of this, and I might ask you to copy that and send it in to us, okay? That is the end of side two of Interview Number 428, [SIC, DP-54], with Mary Thome, and the time is 2:20.