

This is an interview with Mary Odontiadis on Friday the 25th of January 2013 at her home in Mile End. The interviewer is Helen Haltis and the interview is being conducted as part of the Greek Migration Experience, Oral Histories Project, an OEEGA initiative. It is funded by the Australian Government's "Your Community Heritage Program - Sharing Community Heritage Stories".

As indicated in the Oral History Handbook:

Punctuation: Square bracket [] indicate material in the transcript that does not occur on the original tape recording. Sentences that were left unfinished in the normal manner of conversation are shown ending in three dashes, - - -.

Hello Mary and thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed.

It's my pleasure Helen.

Now can we begin Mary by you giving us your full name please.

My name is Mary Odontiadis.

And when were you born?

I was born on the 15th of the tenth 1939 in Rhodes.

In Rhodes, in the city in Rhodes?

In the city, in the old city.

In the old city.

Nothing flashy.

Where were your parents from?

They came from Asia Minor which was called in Turkish, Kalkan, in Greek it's called Kalamaki. That's what I remember.

From there where do your parents go, from Asia Minor.

From Asia Minor I just won't give you the details but just -----

Briefly.

Yes they were summoned to go to Castellorizo where they had relatives, because in Kalamaki there was the exodus happening where people were leaving and they summoned them, that's when they went back to Castellorizo because they had relatives.

Your mother would have been a young girl at the time.

She was, well to go from Kalamaki to there [Castellorizo] she must, I think have been a teenager. Now goodness I got to think about that. Well she was the eldest out of the

three. When they were going - the exodus - and they had to leave home and they walked and I don't know for how long they walked to go to the main city in Kalkan, she was eight, her brother was six and her sister, from what I remember she was about five years old roughly. My mother was the eldest, so in between that when they went to Castellorizo, my mother got married to my father and then she had my brother and then from there, from what I remember as a young girl, we went back to Rhodes.

Your parents and your brother.

And my brother we went back to Rhodes and that's where we stayed in the old city and that was during the war. I remember, I remember the fear, the bombs, the shooting, the Germans, the Italians, remember not having food to eat and my mother was trying to keep us alive.

So as a young child you remember all that?

I do remember and I still remember now and I remember sitting outside, it was a bit of a sunny day, outside of the house and I looked up in the sky and I said my prayer and I said "God why don't you send me some food, ψωμάκι", [bread] I do, I remember that very clearly, very touchy about that. Anyway that was a survival so ---.

You had German soldiers?

German and Italians.

And Italians as well?

And Italians yes. One thing I do remember one of my uncles, because they were after him, thinking that he was involved in something, which [he] wasn't and they caught the wrong person. My mother put him in the trunk in her home when they came searching and that's how she saved his life luckily. Of course he passed away too, so she saved him a couple of times but it was very very scary, I can still remember the bombs and my mother used to put me on her back with the blanket, I used to cover myself, and she used to run and walk to go to the, it was called, Roufoutsio in Italian but it was the underground tunnel and as soon as the sirens would stop the people would come out again.

Underground bunkers?

Underground bunkers that's right and a lot of people died and [were] killed inside, you could hear the screaming carrying on, I can hear it now when I hear the sirens from the ambulance and the police I am thinking ahh, there's a horrible feeling.

What did you do for food then?

Well to tell you the truth, it wasn't lack of money because when my mother came to Rhodes she did have, they did have a little bit of money but money was no good then. They used to go to the villages because the people in the villages had farms and they had things and they became rich because that's what they lived off but in the main city you had nothing. You couldn't even find a piece of orange peel on the ground, people would go for it, this is how low it was, how horrible. My mother, I used to ask her why she didn't have her money or her gold and she says "Well I didn't want my children to die so I went to the dentist, I had gold teeth". They used to call her χρυσοδοντού which was golden teeth and this is a story that I remember her saying. "I went to a dentist he took my gold teeth out, went to a village and bought something". Well she sold her [gold teeth] - the money she got she paid the villagers to give her some food, vegetables or whatever I don't know exactly what it was. She says "I needed to keep my children alive I didn't care about the money or the προίκα [dowry] that I had". So I remember that and another thing I always remember when I cook now. I remember my mother if I throw something out I think "Oh my God if my mother was here she would kill me". She used to remind me always "Have you forgotten the war, have you forgotten the hunger we had and now you are throwing things away" and I always feel guilty.

Yes.

Thank the Lord.

So for the whole time during the war years you were in Rhodes, at the end of the war your family decided to come to Australia.

Well my uncle sponsored us to come to Australia.

So your uncle, your mum's ---

Brother Chiko.

Your mum's brother was already in Australia?

Yes.

In Melbourne.

Yes.

Yes and he sponsored you.

He sponsored us.

The family.

We came on the ship it was called Meirs, but it was a cargo ship because it was during the war and they were just taking soldiers and men, not ladies. My mother and I stayed in what was, well you could call it a hotel, it wasn't even two star and we had a room. We stayed there in Port Said [for] about five to six months and we had to rely on my uncle sending us money to survive.

So your brother, yourself, your mother and your father all left Piraeus together.

Ρόδο [Rhodes].

Ρόδο, oh straight from Rhodo?

From Ρόδο we came.

And you went to Port Said.

Port Said yes.

And then your father and your brother left.

They left us there, because they were taking only men, they went on the next ship going to Australia, my brother and my father. Well they all got established, they went to Port Pirie and we came out after, five or six months it was.

Do you remember those five or six months in Port Said?

Yes because I learnt how to speak Arabic --- fluently.

Who from, who taught you?

From them as we used to walk around and of course --- The robes they wore were called κελεμπίες και [and] κάνανε [they had] μουζαχάρες [demonstrations].

Μουζάχαρα [Demonstration] was yes --- Anyway I learnt it there and when I came to Australia of course I forgot all about it because I didn't talk Arabic here, yes that was something.

So you came to Melbourne to your uncle first.

We came to - the ship docked in Perth.

Fremantle.

Fremantle where they would stop and from there we stopped in Melbourne that's where all the ships that came with all the migrants. My uncle picked us up he took us from there. The day after we arrived in Melbourne, on the plane we went straight to Port Pirie. Well that's when we were altogether. Fortunately my uncle had the farms, my father went to Port Pirie thinking that he would be working with them but he didn't stay long. He wasn't the farmer, so he ended up leaving, leaving us behind. He left and walked from the farms to the Port Pirie centre, went to a friend, who he asked for a loan of two pounds. From [there] he caught the train and went to Adelaide in Hindley Street where he found a job. It was a restaurant, that's where he was working and then he found a job in Holdens, saved some money and then he sent for us to come down to Adelaide.

So how long were you in Port Pirie without your dad?

We only stayed a few months not even a year. See my dad wasn't a farmer and he didn't get on with my uncle so he escaped one day, went to the city centre and Mr Kiosoglous, he is a Cazzie [Castelloresian] also, loaned him the money. As soon as he got to Adelaide in Hindley Street, he actually repaid him, so that was - yeh it was hard. After that, when he found a place for us to stay, he actually got us to come back to Adelaide and he was working in Holdens so we survived that way.

So you came down, your father had accommodation ready for you. That was in the city. Do you remember what street you were living in?

Actually the accommodation was not the five star hotel either it was worse than Port Said. It's embarrassing to say this, but it was actually --- one of my mother's old uncles owned it. It used to be a stable and then we cleaned it out, well my mother and my father not me, I didn't do very much, cleaned it out and the whole four of us lived in that place slept, cooked and did everything there.

In one room.

Yep no showers, we managed to sponge ourselves but I guess we weren't that dirty but then I had to share a bed with my parents. My brother had the single bed and we had one of those old what's those gassy things that she used to cook but we seemed to survive. That was the street off Waymouth Street it was called Crowther Street I still

remember, just off the main road and we were paying rent to this uncle of my mother's who we called Scrooge'.

And you went to school.

Yes, we lived in Gouger Street. After a while, when my mother saved money and bought a house in Gouger Street, I went to Sturt Street school for a short while. Then I went, now I don't remember why, but my parents then sent me to Sturt Street where there's a Catholic school and I learnt all my English. I learnt religion there and opposite the school, after school hours, I used to go to Greek School which was right opposite.

Which Catholic School did you go to?

St Marys Dominican Convert School which was all nuns.

You said you did Sunday school.

Yes I did Sunday school but I also went to, it's still there, I've forgotten sorry I've just blanked out a bit I went to Adelaide City Mission. That's where I went and they were very good, I learnt more there and they even taught me how to do exercises and dancing so it was very very nice I still have those good memories.

Yes excellent and at St Mary's school did you do any extra curriculum activities?

Well we did actually. In the morning they used to have, those years, they used to actually, in the opening [yard] where we used to do exercises, we used to have a bottle of milk. They used to supply everybody milk. The nuns used to come along and check to see our fingers are cleaned and if you weren't you used to get it, [with the ruler on the hands] on the fingers, finger nails yes. No I enjoyed it I made friends but of course there was one thing that I did, I was a bit cheeky. I sneaked into the room where they had the piano lessons, not because my parents could afford it but I did go and play with the piano a bit. That was it, luckily I didn't get caught.

And you never went back to learn how to play the piano later on in life.

No I tell you what I did later on in life. I didn't have that opportunity but --- to just jump the gun now, when I got married and had children, all my children learnt music so I did that. One with the bouzouki, the other one piano accordion and the other one had a μπαλαμάς [stringed musical instrument] I missed out but at least my children got that.

But you gave your children the opportunity that you had missed out. Do you remember any of the entertainment that you had as a young child here in Adelaide. Did you go to any outings as a family?

Actually the outing was on a Sunday afternoon we used to get dressed and we used to walk from Gouger Street right down to the River Torrens. It was called Bonython Park then, and all the younger lads and mums and the teenage girls, we used to go down to the lawns. They used to have the old fashioned photographers and took photos and that's how you used to meet different people, it was great. There was only one swimming pool it was called, I forget the name but all the young lads used to go swimming.

Where was it?

It was just off, as you were going down to the River Torrens it was a building then where the Entertainment Centre [Festival Theatre] is now.

The City Baths.

The City Baths, that's it City Baths.

Yes I remember that too.

All the young boys, not the girls oh dear oh dear yes no, that was only for guys.

That's really good. What about the Franklin Street Greek community. Did they provide entertainment for the new arrival Greeks?

Some of the Greeks came from Athens from Greece from all over different places. There was the little building, was our Greek school, but they had a room and when the other guys used to come they used to get together and discuss things and they used to ask about different things. I was in the grade one which is the lady teacher, she was a lovely teacher actually. That was the grade one teacher, her husband was a teacher also, he was Cyprian, very nice gentleman but he used to teach the higher class. I didn't get to learn too much but I can tell you I did learn my Greek here and my English here also, so I read, I wrote and I will speak Greek and of course I passed that on to my children thank God.

So you went to primary school, you finished primary school did you get an opportunity to go to high school?

No. I wish I did but I didn't have the opportunity because first of all I had parents that couldn't talk English. I didn't have anyone to help me with homework and things and

we couldn't afford a lot of things, I didn't even have a proper uniform --- In fact, I think I still [have] a little scrap book --- I used to love singing and when we had a little break in the yard in the open yard afterwards and we had a special day, the teachers used to get us to sing and do different dances and I've got some special songs that I've written in my school days in Greek. I had lovely writing I don't do it as good now but I still got it as memory I had the headings of all the songs.

Your family coming over here in 1947, were probably one of the first Greek people to come to Adelaide, it wasn't until the early '50's that most of the others came out by which time you were a little bit older. Were you able to help with language for all these other people that came out, new arrivals,

Yes because I was learning English and it's easier to pick it up, yes, and it was a pleasure because, a lot of the older migrants, like my parents, they used to ask me to go and interpret for them, because when we came and my mother needed [an] interpreter, she used to get an interpreter, she had to pay him the money. But of course I wasn't there for that but I enjoyed it because they used to take me by the hand and I use to interpret and talk Greek. Actually, I think something else I haven't told you, when I used to work at Woolworths in the city I used to have a lot of Greek ladies come in and they wanted to ask questions in Greek, because they knew I was the Greek one there, or [speak in] Italian. I'd say to the girls that were Italian and I said "Well why don't you help them". They were too embarrassed to speak. They didn't know Italian or they were too embarrassed to talk their language which they should have. Anyway that was another hardship but pulled through that one too.

And your parents eventually bought their own home.

Yes.

And where was their first home?

The first home was and that was with the help of my mother, she didn't go to work and didn't work but my father and brother did, but she saved from what she was doing, she saved, and we bought our first house in Gouger Street. That's still standing but I don't know what people are doing there anyway, so that was then, we helped and we paid it off. Those years you were only allowed to buy one house unless you were naturalised.

Oh that's interesting.

Yeh you couldn't because, if we could have, we would have bought more but no and then that came after the naturalisation. No you couldn't that's just the one house for us I can't remember why but that was the law then.

So you all got naturalised eventually.

Yes I have still got my papers.

Yes and then eventually your father bought more homes.

Oh yes you can do that that's right yes.

What did your parents, your dad do for a living.

Actually he was, as I said, he was pretty good with his mathematics not that he knew how to write but he knew his --- He used to actually buy little houses, fix them up and then sell them and each time he did that he would always help the grandchildren. This is how I ---

That's what they do don't they, grandpa and grandma.

Yes of course he was wonderful.

Yes

But the last time I remember, he sold the last little house it was off Light Terrace Thebarton. He used to give money to the children to put into their bank account. When I had the younger lad, which was the third son, it was John, I thought "oh he's young he doesn't need the money in the bank" so I actually kept it, not for myself but I had a reason for it. Yes so I used that money, I might have been cheeky, but it turned out to be all well at the end. Without my husband knowing, I took driving lessons and that's how I spent the money so it became good for at least after those years it came in handy.

Well that was very unusual for a young Greek girl back in those days to learn how to drive.

It took a lot of guts. I was afraid that I might get caught, which he did catch me on the road, when he drove home, actually it was an old Holden Kingswood I think it was. He stopped the car, he was coming from work and he stopped and he said to the driver "how come you're driving with my wife, aren't you scared?" he says "no she's alright". I thought oh my God I am going to cop it now. He asked his mother first, this is funny, he asked his mother and said to her "where's Mary" she says "I don't know" but you see in between that I did say to her "I am going to learn to drive a car and then I'll take

you out but don't tell your son otherwise I am not going to do it". The poor darling and my mum, they never stayed long enough for me to use it because they passed away. Anyway that's a spring back so thank God and to this day that was the best thing I did. Because a lot of my Greek friends used to say especially my sister-in-law "I should have learned how to drive a car, look at you now and I used to ride a bike" I said "well you could have, I didn't ride a bike" so it really really helped at the end.

Okay so when you left school you went out to work and where did you work?

The first job I got I was fourteen years old, it was a little deli down the Wayville showgrounds, down at Goodwood. I didn't stay there very long because, instead of working behind the counter, which I thought was really exciting, the lady used to get me to wash her dishes and tidy her beds and I thought "no this is not what I want". Then after that I got a job at a factory where they used to do shoes, it was Alma Shoe company that's right and after that I got my best job at John Martins. They were celebrating, I don't know what years it was, their birthday, and I was put into a counter straight away and not knowing where to start, it was in John Martins that was lovely. I stayed there for quite a few years, I got married and most of the staff were invited to my wedding. I got pregnant with my first daughter and I used to catch the bus to go home, because I was still in between breast feeding, you didn't have help. My mother used to baby sit for me. After a few years I got a job at Hindmarsh, we used to live in Brompton and I got a job in Woolworths, they transferred me there so I did a bit of experience in working. Then the last and best was when I started to really live my life as I was asked to do Tupperware and that's how I got my confidence. I met people, I enjoyed my job, I went on holidays, I saved money and started to get my confidence back.

Going back to John Martins, were you involved at all in the good old fashioned Christmas pageant.

Yes I was, it was a pleasure, twice I was and I was in the May Pole. They used to give us time off to go and do all these crepe paper costumes, it was exciting, it was very exciting it's not the same now. Now that was wonderful I've got photos from there too.

And where did you meet your husband.

Well when my parents bought the house in Gouger Street, a lot of migrants used to come and they used to always land in Hindley Street, that was the 'in' place. There was

a shop that used to have all the latest Greek records, the young boys used to go and get their records. My brother did too and there was the Star Grocery next door. My father, he used to always bring some new arrivals to our place, he used to bring them home and say to my mother "you put something to eat for these boys they're all new boys, they have just come and they don't know anything" he used to do that quite often and then -----

Continuing with Mary Odontiadis after a short break.

Now Mary we were saying about how you met your husband and you said your parents used to provide accommodation for the new arrivals.

At the back of our house there were a couple of rooms and we put boarders in there and that's how my mother was working, she used to cook for them, clean and everything else. I met my husband through his friends too and well --- In those years we didn't go out together and it was just well something clashed there because of course my parents used to bring different people and I thought "no I don't want to marry him I don't want this one I don't want to get married" but anyway we got on after a while and then I was working at John Martins, he used to come and meet me from a distance. My father used to make sure that --- Yes anyway, nothing happened like that - to make a long story short, we did get engaged and we had a bit of a party at the house and well after a short while we got it altogether, so we got married and we had three children, four children sorry I forgot, one was the latest one after ten years he came along, surprise.

So you had a baby.

Yes he is still my baby I still call him my baby. Yes. Anyway that was a good ending so.

And what sort of work did your husband do?

My husband, when we were first married, he worked in the factories and then after that he did take up night school to go and learn how to do electric welding and he learnt to talk proper English. He used to send correspondence, they used to send him books but because I knew a bit of English I could help in that way. It was good because I helped him in his English but after the years, when I started to practise all my Greek too, he used to help me because he was very intelligent in that part.

Anyway after that he actually started to --- He worked at the building sites, he was a carpenter, worked building sites which he liked. That was a lot of work for a time and

that's how we saved and we bought our home after that and of course we had our children and life sort of went on. They grew up, we had expectations, paying off our mortgage, fixing our home, sending the children to school, to high school, uni [university], so what I missed out not going to high school and uni at least my children did, that was my goal, that I wanted them to do something better in their lives

And that gives us satisfaction doesn't it?

Absolutely, absolutely.

Now when you were married and you were pregnant with your first child did you continue working while you had your children.

Yes yes I did. First of all I started in Hindmarsh Woolworths, I used to walk from Brompton to Hindmarsh. I worked there, then I got a job in the city and then I used to catch the bus to come home. Luckily my mum used to come and help me all the time. I worked when I had all my children, yes but when it was towards the end when I had them I had to stop for a while because I used to breast feed all of them too and also I had a mother-in-law that stayed with us so I was kept busy.

That was a lot of work for you wasn't it?

Yes

Because do I take it your first three children were fairly close, one after the other.

Well, the first child was Tammy and after five years, I had the second daughter Angela, and after that came, well you know how the Greeks they have to have the son, you know well the way it worked, it worked out alright. My John came along and I remember my mother was there, but then after that, she went [for] the first time, she went to Sydney to see her cousins. She went there and when she came back, well that was the only trip she ever had on her own. So I had the three and after working and coming back and changing work, after 10 years I got pregnant. It wasn't planned but it was yes, anyway. My son to this day says "mum, you didn't want me", I said no, "it's not that I didn't want you darling". Yeah anyway, so I had Michael when we shifted from Brompton and came to this house in Mile End.

And you gave up your work at John Martin's and Woolworths?

Well in between having the children, I had to give up the work, yes. So I was never out of work and then anyway to make a long story short, the last job that I had was when I

was introduced to doing Tupperware. That way it gave me flexible time to be home with my children and go and earn some money too.

And you were very successful with Tupperware?

To be honest at first I was too scared, I wasn't sure. I didn't have a car to drive and my husband said "oh you can't do this" but because of saying that, I'm a person that if you tell me "you can't do this", I get determined to do it, which turned out to be okay. I learnt to drive, luckily I learnt to drive. So starting from scratch I used to ask friends to come with me when I had to do a party and anyway, I won't go into that. I started off, I was only going to do it for six months and then I'd finish with Tupperware.

Why six months?

Well I thought I'd, because I was going out mostly nights, I used to do six, seven parties a week, and I used to go just about everywhere in Adelaide and I'm thinking --- Now, if you ask me, I won't do it [now]. No, it helped me, it gave me my confidence, my security, I always had money, I wasn't short of money, I didn't ever need to ask my husband for money because we were actually paying off the house, we did quite a lot. But I don't regret it, I enjoyed what I did, it was hard work but it was rewarding. So I worked with Tupperware for over thirty years.

But only after what, five or six years when you worked as a sales person, representative, they made you manager?

Absolutely, yes, yes that's right.

And state manager at that.

State manager and I used to go to conferences, the rewards that I got was just unbelievable. They were a wonderful company and the product was wonderful but the best thing is I made such a lot of close friends and that was nice, yeah, up until now they are still in touch with me.

Did it give you an opportunity to travel at all?

I did, well I did travel, yes, yes I did. Just naming a few, which I would never in my whole life would I have been able to afford to go. I went to Bali, in fact sometimes I did double work and that gave me extra points, I used to take my husband too without him paying, he liked that of course. We went to New Zealand, we went to Bali, we went to Lindeman Island, Hamilton Island, America, we went to Disneyland, and I used to feel

guilty thinking my grandchildren should be here not me, it was fantastic. When we went to America, we even went to Alcatraz, wow, it was a little island, I used to hear about it, it was amazing. They put us through, to walk with headphones on, we could actually hear them, how it was, going through the lanes in there, you know you'd walk and listen to them talking. And then it showed you the window when you look from there, the poor guys used to have a window and they would look across the beach the ocean, opposite was the city, and you could see the lights. Nobody was ever able to escape and if they did they would drown. That was something interesting too. The highlight was, just before I did finish in Tupperware, my last trip was in Hawaii, well what a dream. I always think of my boss, I said to her "you actually helped me to get there didn't you?" She was wonderful. That was an eye opener. So doing Tupperware gave me my freedom and my comfort, because all I did before was a mother, children, had to be home to cook the dinner for the husband but of course after when he saw the rewards, he never complained. So I can't complain, it's wonderful, just my children are all spread out now.

It changed you as a person?

Absolutely, it changed me as a person, very honest at what I did and through the people, the respect that I get when I see people, "Oh Mary are you still doing Tupperware?" or "You've changed" and this and that. The rewards, the fun and the excitement, what can I say, to go to conferences, the food was spread on, we used to go to all different places, make friends all over Australia because we had connections we used to get together. It was fantastic, fantastic.

Wonderful.

Absolutely

And why did you stop?

Well I think I did my bit, no, I tell you what, I actually gave up about three years ago, when my husband wasn't well. I didn't like going and leaving him on his own because he wasn't very well at all. So, then the rest of my life I devoted my time looking after him until the end, so that's life.

Did you ever go back to Rhodes?

Yes, I went back to Rhodes, the first time we went back to Greece, because I always looked forward to going with my husband and going to these islands and going to the parties which I thought in the villages, didn't work out that way. I had a message from Greece from my niece who was there, "Aunty Mary grandpa [my father] is not well, he's in hospital". When I went, we went with my husband and my youngest son, so he was six years old, his thirty-six now. We went to Greece, when we went to Greece he [my father] was still alive.

In Rhodes?

In Rhodes. And he was on his own, anyway. We asked him to come with us to go to Castellorizo but he says no, no, no, he said "I'll skip that I've been before". [So we went to Kastoria instead]. Anyway, by the time we got back he had a head haemorrhage and he was in the hospital, so I left Pentavriso in Kastoria. I left my husband there with my little boy, went on my own on a tin little plane to Rhodes. Straight from the airport I caught a taxi and asked them to take me to the hospital. Well I went to the hospital, saw my father, he was still alive, so going through all that, he passed away while I was there. I did what I had to do. The church it was a different type of thing there, they buried you the same day. Anyway, I came back and after that I went back a second time, my brother was sick, he was in hospital, the hospice and after he passed away, we did a μνημόσυνο [memorial ceremony], all the things that we normally do. I went back on my own, I went to Rhodes again, it was a different atmosphere then but the third time was when I went with my son overseas and went to London. He said "mum I think you need to take a break and come overseas". We went to Rhodes for a couple of days, we went to Castellorizo for two, three days so it was only a short --- So, to end my story, God willing if I'm well I would love to go again but this time to really see the places that I didn't stay long enough.

And under happy circumstances?

Under happy circumstances, yes. It was always just something sad every time I went but it's an experience.

Why was your dad in Rhodes in the first place?

Well, from what I remember, they lived there when I ---

Because they lived here didn't they? Your parents came here?

Oh we all came here, yes, yes.

Yes but when he passed away he was in Rhodes.

My father, because he was a pensioner, he lived with me, and every summer, every six months he'd go to Rhodes.

This is after your mum passed away?

Oh yes, that's after my mother passed away. My mother passed away, yes, he used to go every summer because his two brothers in Rhodes were still living and the last time that he went, it's funny, we used to say to him why don't you just stay --- It was meant to be. So when he went back, that's when I went after and he was sick, he passed away there.

And with your son that you went the last time, does your son live here in Australia or ---

No, actually he lives in London. My eldest son went for the first time when I said "Go overseas to open your mind up". He actually found a job in London, in Oxford. He says "Mum I've got something to tell you, I went for a holiday but I've been offered to go to either Cambridge or Oxford and I'm not coming back". I said "Oh okay", so he chose Oxford but with my great big pride he studied there for about ten, eleven years, he got his degree. I went there and it was a high honour to see him graduate from Oxford Brooks. But him being in London his younger brother finished high school and he said "well why don't you come over here"? So I lost another son. He stayed there, he studied, he finished there, so he comes every year, every Christmas he comes. He came twice in one year when his father was sick and now he's back in London and his next trip and hopefully he probably might get better he's travelled a lot of places, he's going to South America.

Oh lovely

To go to all these places but he always rings me up he always rings and I yes ---

Is there anything else that you would like to say Mary that we haven't covered?

Like what to give me a hint.

If there is anything at all.

Well look some of these things that I have said --- Oh by the way, I did write a story about my mother. I had a passion to sort of, in her memory, to do what I did because it

was just in my heart for years. I used to start writing things and I used to stop, then I found a person [to help me] finally, because I needed to write something of her story her life.

So you wrote a book.

Yes

About your mother's life?

Yes well I wrote a book about my mother's life and that was a legacy to leave behind for my grandchildren to know where they came from. I've got a family tree also, so that we know where it started from. I can't complain about my life it's been a rough road but it was a very interesting life.

It was a hard life wasn't it for the first migrants that came from Greece, for your parents, it would have been very difficult, lack of language ---

Yes

They didn't know where they were going, for the young children even though they were young and they learnt quickly.

They did.

For them too it was difficult.

But you know what the hard part was, because some of the Greeks came a long time before us, when we came, even though they were from the same country they didn't treat you very well. Even the Greeks and they sort of --- they used to call us *ζένοι* [foreigners]. She went through a lot just going from place to place but we pulled through it and through that a whole new chapter of life the whole family has expanded.

Yes, as you said before though you know it was an opportunity for you to give opportunities to your children that you didn't have.

Yes and I say that a lot of times. I'm proud of them, they've done what they've done, they are fantastic citizens, they didn't go off the rails, that was my passion. If I had the opportunity which those times were hard, I would have wanted to study but at least my children did it, so I'm quite proud of them.

Thank you very much Mary that's a wonderful story.

Thank you for your time I hope it helps somebody anyway.

Thank you

It's a pleasure Helen thanks a lot.