

Maria VonTrapp/TC1992.0054
Mad River Valley Project/VFC1991.0004

JB Jane Beck
MA Maria VonTrapp
Place Waitsfield, VT
Date 05/26/1992

JB I am with? [.58] (hard to hear)

MA _____. It starts already.

JB Well we'll see if it's working. Yeah, I think so.

[1.15] If you just say your name, and the date.

MA And the date.

JB It's.

MA Today is what?

JB May 25th. 26th. [1.25]

MA 26th.

JB Well I just was testing it. So.

MA The 26th, so shall we start again.

JB So if you just say your name and then we can.

MA I'm, no, hey okay. Now?

JB Yeah.

MA Oh!

JB Ha! Ha! You don't have to lean on it.

MA Well my name is Maria VonTrapp, I belong to the Trapp

family singers, and I'm number three, and I'm giving an interview today, today is May 26th, 1992.

JB That's perfect. [1.54] (tape shut off and then on) So let's, you said.

MA Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB Number three, but what did you mean by that?

MA Well I belong to the first family, and I'm the third child, the oldest is a boy, was a boy he died the other day, and then is my sister, and then myself.

JB And, I explained the, sort of what we were doing, what I'm after is sort of to get your story, about, coming to this country, we're. (tape shut off and then on)

MA Music enough.

JB Yes.

MA But, I have an accordion, here, so I play it, all sorts of things on it, of the Austrian.

JB Yeah. But.

MA You know we don't, we don't, no special, it's not running now is it?

JB Yeah I turned it. Do you want me to turn it off? (tape shut off) (Tape back on) [2.54]

MA Not for the public.

JB We, we will extract from this for the.

MA Yeah. Yeah. For the public. It's all right.

JB So I, I guess let's start with, how you came?

MA How I came to this country. Do you mind if it's a long story?

JB No.

MA No. Well, it really starts a long time before we left for America, because, have you read the book?

JB I haven't read the book.

MA No. So I have to start from early, hun? Well, you see when we, when I was eight years old, and we were seven children at the time, my first mother died, we all had scarlet fever and the, so she, got scarlet fever too and then she got, she got over it, but then she caught pneumonia, and she, at that time there was no penicillin, so she died, and left seven children behind, and we were, we loved music, even, as children, mother _____ sang little Austrian folk songs and we always sang those songs. [4.12] And, we at that time we lived also to Vienna, and the, then my

father wanted to have his own house and he bought one in Salzburg, and we moved to Salzburg, so we moved from Austria to Vienna to Salzburg and we went to school. And, I was, always a little bit on the, since the scarlet fever I was sick, I couldn't, I had to repeat second grade although I have, I had good notes, but, good grades, but I was a little allowed to go to school, so they let me repeat, and so I was always sickish, and in the, when I was ten years old, I was supposed to go to high school and the doctor said, no way you cannot go to school. [5.02] So I decided to study alone, I love to study by myself, and my father said, you cannot do that, so he brought, he said, I will get you a teacher, so he got me a teacher who became later our second mother, and in that time, we lost our money. The thing was that my father was a Navy officer and when he had, graduated from Navy Academy, they had to go around the world in a sailing boat without a _____, so they went around the sailing boat and came through the Pacific and he loved the Pacific Islands, and he was only eighteen years old, but he decided when, when he gets married he will

take his family to this island, and he loved the Marchesis Islands, so that was in his mind, and my mother did not, my real mother did not want to, go to the Pacific, she had no idea what that meant, so she didn't want to go and when he married again, my second mother she, she was all for it, and we, I was fifteen at that time, and we were all enthusiastic and so my father ordered a boat, in Germany, in Bremen, and then it seems God didn't want that plan, so we lost all our money in a bank crash. And, all we had left was my father's, pension from the war you know, and some grounds we had, you know we had to sell some land, so that we could survive. [6.52] But it didn't disturb us, as children you know, we had plenty of money before, before my mother was rather rich, so we didn't really mean, know what it meant that, you know to loose money, and it must of been a shock for my father, but when my second mother came, she found already musical children, in the family, we played every night, with my father, musical instruments, we called it, it's called a [7.26] schamaquatra, it's a certain combination of instruments, an accordion, I

played the accordion, my father played the violin, later on another sister played violin, and the, my another sister played guitar. So we had music, all the time, in the house you know. And, so, she, but she had belonged to a, youth group, called N_____, who loved to walk through the countryside you know, and the, sing, collect Austrian folk songs and back to, you know, this was a time when jazz came in and they wanted to, dig out sort of the Austrian music doesn't get lost, so they, this is what they did, you know. And, they sign in the, during the summer when everybody had holiday they went from village to village through the mountains and sang and collected money. So that they could live. And, they played Yedoman, every man, you know, so this is what they did, and so when, and she played, they sang not only folk songs but madrigals, and all church music, you know this was a musical group. So she introduced this kind of music, to our family and we picked it up rather fast, you know. So we, we would sing all day, and we could no, never go alone because we wanted to sing, so every body went for a walk, we sang, we were

invited every body went cause we wanted to sing, and so my father wrote once to, to his cousin here in America, my children sing all day long. [9.00] And, so we were, this was quite a happy time.

JB This was when, 19? In the 1930's?

MA No this, yeah, yeah, in 19, in the 20's end of 20's, beginning 30's. And, so when the, when we lost our money, we had to rent, our house, and in the summertime we went to the Adriatic sea, my father was very much at home there, he knew an island, he knew the owner and we could camp there all summer. Which was great for us. Ha! Ha! Was the best time, and meanwhile we rented the house to people who came to the festivals in Salzburg, you know people came from all over the world, from America we had American people, renting our house and one summer, a lot of laymen came, who was a famous German singer, she played Yodeman in, in that play, you know in Salzburg, so she [10.04] rented our house, and she came to look at, to look it over and we were singing and she listened, and she said, children you have gold

in your throat, you know. Ha! Ha! Well we just sang for our own enjoyment, you know, but she encouraged us to take part in a, in a singing competition that went on in Salzburg. So we went there, and one, first prize or second prize, we won something. [10.36] And, then we were asked to sing at Christmas time, on the Salzburg radio, and one day, our Chancellor Shuslick, wanted to give a party and he asked his secretary I would like to have something real Austrian, but whom could I invite for music, and she said, well I heard a family in Salzburg sing for Christmas, maybe you would like me to invite them. So he did and we, we of course we grabbed the opportunity to go to Vienna, and in that time, my second mother, already, had the idea to use the singing, you know to make money, and she rented a house in a, a hall, in a big house which is built for lecture halls, concert halls, a small one and big one and so, so she rented a hall, and we had, it was not our intention, we, and we all, we used to wear Austrian, you know, this Austrian outfit, because at that time it was already brought back into society and if you went to big social due, you know they, you

could wear this, it was equal to a, silk dress or you know what, men wear, black suit, you know these kind of things. And, so we wore this and a, well we was, waited for a concert. Ha! Ha! We didn't have to practice it was already there. So we sang this concert in the, in the intermission, you know, the, the critiques came over, from the big hall where they played the, they performed, the Messiah.

JB Ah ha. The classical.

MA Yeah they were wondering what is running around here, in this Austrian outfit, and the, ha, and they came over and they gave us the, the most beautiful critique you know, so we came home with that thing, and the next, next time we sang it was in, Berlin, we sang for, three thousand, housewives it was a special occasion for the housewives, three thousand housewives.

JB Did you used to get nervous when you would sing?

MA Not for the singing but for I've got nervous for when we played the recorder, because we sang by heart and we played by heart. We had no music, you know, so it was all up here. [13.06] Well we did it all from the

_____ home, you know just for _____, so and this is started and then we sang in, in Belgium and in Paris, which was a big success. In, and then we went to, Italy we sang in Milano, and Rome, and then we had two weeks time for a rest in Assisi, and we gave a concert, a benefit concert.

JB And this would be all seven of you, and your?

MA All seven of us.

JB And your second mother, and your father?

MA My father didn't sing, no, my second mother sang, and then we, meanwhile, we had, we picked up our conductor, you know, well you want me to tell that story, how he got to the house. [13.58]

JB Sure.

MA Well see when we rented our house, we had to make money, so we, we squeezed into one floor, and rented another floor, and one of, our renters was a priest who was teaching at the, _____ university, [14.14] Doctor Dilis _____, and [14.19] because he was a priest we changed a, our dining room into a chapel, it was a bay window, and we had two living rooms, so we used one living room as a dining room, so

we had a chapel there, and when he, this priest went on a holiday, he said, I'll bring you, I'll ask one of my friends to say mass, while I'm away and he's musical maybe he can help you. And, he was the, the superior of the seminary, in Salzburg, and so he came out to say mass and then we sang for him and then he had a little, a few suggestions, what we could do better, or whatever. And so we asked him to help us on, and so then he came with us, to Vienna, and conducted them, from then on, ever since. So, now when we went Assisi, you know we, one day we went, we went, for a walk, and there we saw, the sky over Perugia, all red, and we thought was burning. [15.30] And, but then the, the redness came up, over the sky, so we knew it was not the fire, we didn't know what it was, but then when we came home, people said well this was the, Aurora Borealis, you know, which is in that southern place unusual, you know.

JB Yes.

MA And see they said, that means war. And the, you know, Hitler was, in that time he came, and I think that he visited Schusnick, and he said never will he come to

take Austria, but he said a lie, so when we were home on the, thirtieth, the twelfth of March, on the day of my sister's birthday, we were all sitting in the, in my father's, well he's, his room, his?

JB Study.

MA Study yeah. [16.33] And celebrating her birthday. And it got midnight and all of a sudden we heard in Salzburg all the bells, ring, the church bells, you know Salzburg has, maybe thirty-two churches, now this was quite a, a noise, ha, ha. You couldn't over hr. Although we lived three miles south of Salzburg, but you know, we heard it. And we couldn't imagine what it was, so we called the police, and they said, Hitler just moved in. And they took over the towers and rang the bells, you know and all this kind of thing. So, now Hitler was in the country and the, we already knew about his ways and we, my father did not agree with his ways, and so. And. [17.23] You know, at that time then you had to be careful what you said and, because you know we had already the people were put into prison, and they gassed out all the people

from the, mental hospital, you know and so. It was not very nice to, for the future you know, and but at that time, a manager from Vienna, well I remember he was in Salzburg and he, we had a concert already, doing the festivals, we were not part of the festivals, but in that time, we sang a concert in, in the Mozartaer, which is a music school, and also, a concert hall, you know, and the, he came and he said he should come to America. [18.12] And now through the film people, you know they made research, and they met the, a lady in the, community concert, in New York, she's ninety, over ninety two years old or something like this, and she, she said, she told him that, we didn't know that, she sent this Mister Vaugh, this manager over to Salzburg to get us, so she was really the reason why this manager went to our concert and, and asked us to come over to America. And of course you know, people are around, we were glad to have an opportunity to go away, but my father did not want to go unless we agreed. [18.58] You know he didn't, he didn't command us to, and now we are going to America, no. He called all of us together, and he said, we have this offer,

but we only go if every one of you says yes. Of course we had no idea what, anything about America because, at that time, there are no planes going only ships, and you know only ships and the few Americans came over who wanted to take part in, in the festivals, or? Or came to listen. And, when he asked us, what, so he asked us and he asked each one, do you want to go, do you want to go, do you? So we all wanted to go, although we didn't know anything about America, but you know, but we wanted to go. [19.51]

JB And how old were you at this point?

MA Well I was already twenty-four. See I was after school.

JB Um, hum.

MA We, and but my younger sister was still, were still in school, and the little ones from the second mother, of course they were still in school.

JB And so how many of you were?

MA We were nine children, at that time. And, and the tenth on the way, Yohannis was on the way.

JB Ah ha.

MA So, and you know that was so nice, because my father

wanted to be sure that it was in God's will that they go, he wanted to know that we have his protection. Because to go into a country where we had no idea, what it was like, with ten, with nine children, the tenth on the way, you know it was a big, responsibility for my father. [20.42] We didn't feel this responsibility we just, it was, adventurous spirit. Ha, ha, you know. So we all said yes but he wanted to be sure. And he had a bible there, a big bible, and he closed his eyes, he opened the bible took the pencil, and went into the page, and you know where he hit? [21.05] Where it says, well God speaks to Abraham, take your family and leave and we take you to the land, and I will give you, or something like this, you know. Now, I was, I couldn't forget this, the others forgot this moment, but I couldn't forget it because later on I did the same thing, which I will tell you later. So he was assured that it was in God's will, it must of been a big, comfort for him, for this decision, you know, so we said to Mister Vaughn, yes we will come. [21.41] So, then we, I cannot go into the details, but the, we finally arrived, on the

American Farmer, it was a boat, from La Ava, from France, we came to New York and I still remember how we, arrived and you know, the view of Manhattan, you know, coming from the east, against the west was tremendous. And so and then we started, we went to New York and, of course all this, traffic in New York was tremendous, red and green lights, we went through the red lights, we didn't know what the red light meant. Ha! And in Saltzburg there was no red and green lights at that time. Ha! Ha!

JB Well when, when you came, you took a boat, you didn't have any trouble getting out of Austria?

MA No. [22.42]

JB It was fairly.

MA No but's that's another story. You want me to tell that story. Why we could get out.

JB Sure.

MA Because you see, my father, my father's father came from Germany, and he, he became a citizen of Austria, he wanted to join the Navy, and Germany at that time, was not allowed to have a Navy, so he came to Austria,

because he wanted to go at sea, you know. And, so he became an Austrian citizen, a citizen of Treest, you know opposite of Venice, and my father was born in Zarra, which was a, Italian city, on the Yugoslavian coast but it was Italian, and so, he was stationed there, so my father was born there, but so he, he also became a citizen of Treest, because in Europe you are a citizen, of the place where your father is citizen, you know, and because my father was citizen of Treest, we all were citizens of Treest you know. And at that time, it was Austria. But after the first world war, this part became Italy, you see every, South _____ and all these places. [[23.58] Including Treest, became Italy again. Italian, and my father once said, he never knew why he did not change the citizenship from Italian, Italy to Austria, because we lived in Austria, all we did in Italy was spent the summer there. But he, yeah and then when he wanted to become a citizen, we had lost our money it was too expensive now we see really the hand of God in there, because when Hitler came to Austria, we took our, Fascist, pin out, which we never did, because we didn't want to be

Fascist either, but at that time we wanted to prove we are not Austrians, you know, so he couldn't touch us. [24.44] And that's why we could go, but we had to go, because my father was invited to join the Navy in Germany, you know. [24.52] Although he didn't know that we were Italians, and my brother who was already a doctor, he became an Austrian citizen, so he could practice in Austria. You understand? And, so that was our protection really that from March, till October, they couldn't touch us. Although I'm sure they would of liked to put us in the gas chamber or something like this. You know. [25.20] And, so this is how we escaped.

JB Because of your Italian?

MA Citizenship.

JB Citizenship.

MA So we became out, unmolested. But you cannot, my father said, you know we cannot stay in the country where we are all the time against the regime. So you know and we had this opportunity, really it was a God sent opportunity, we would have never had the money to move out with ten children, nine children, into what,

into nothing, my father only knew how to run a, a submarine.

JB Ha!

MA You know he was a perfect Navy officer, he was a hero, you know a celebrated hero, in Austria, but, how to make money for the children. And, so we really, we, we thank God for, for this opportunity to provide this opportunity. So, now we were here in America, and the, Mister Violet provided the bus for us, we had to pay off slowly our fare, you know through the concerts, he provided the fare, but we had to pay it off. So, and then we travelled around, in the bus and sang, almost every night, and he had a schedule ready, where to go and so.

JB So you started in New York and you went?

MA All over, yeah, in the east well I forgot which place, Farmingham I think was the first, concert we sang here in Massachusetts or something. Ha! Ha! And we had no idea how the Americans like our music, we had, we had classical music, you know. [27.01] Only in the second part we sang folk songs, you know, with the recorders, or alone, and the first, yeah. And people thought we

should, our manager once said, you know, this, we sang, yes, _____, _____ you know, and they thought we should sing with funerals, but not in America. And they suggested we should sing, old black Joe and the Carolina Moon, and something the Americans know you know. At that time, classical you know, baroque music was not so, well known, and we called the music all these kind of things, and but, now of course there is so, it came, it's all over the place, now. But at that time it was still new, so we had to learn Carolina Moon, and Old Black Joe and. Ha! At least for encores, you know, something that people knew. But, we were still all the time a success.

[28.07] And, so, now I want to tell you how we get to Vermont.

JB Well let me ask you one question, you say you were all the time a success.

MA Yeah.

JB What do you attribute that to, was it that you were a family, was it your music, or?

MA That's an interesting question because the movie

people asked the same question you know, and it's very hard to say but I was thinking the other day, why was it, why were we a success, you know my brother thought, part of it was that we were a family and our voices blended. But also I think it was the choice of music, we sang songs which, maybe we were a little bit, over the head of the people at that time, but it was pleasing, you know, songs, they either should move you to joy, or to sadness, you know, and I was thinking, and then, I tell you something else, I think really that God was with us, I mean he, arranged sort of that we started singing in our family. That was, you cannot arrange this, organize this, yourself. I always think, my second father came with all that music to the house, you know the music was already in us, but she, she channeled it into a part singing, you know, and all this was prepared by God and he was with us when we sang. Because we could always feel, peace coming over the, audience, especially at Christmas time, you know when we sang Christmas carols, we came in with lanterns we had a big Christmas tree on the stage with, with real candles which was at that time,

forbidden but still allowed. Ha! Ha! And, and for many people when we stopped, they said, oh you know this was really Christmas for us, we sang three concerts in town hall in New York, in Jordan hall in, in Boston, and the Constitution hall in Washington, in Chicago and all these big places, but also the small places, it was Christmas many times it was Christmas for the people. And, but the other day I was thinking of, of a, saying of Longfellow, where he says, God sent the singers up from earth, with songs of sadness and of mirth. To touch within the hearts of men, and bring them back to heaven again. And, you know I thought, this is really true, music should move you, to happiness, or peace, or sadness. But what you hear now of the others, radio sometimes this rock thing, it, ou, it pulls you apart. I mean it, it, it destroys you, but people to hear nothing but that music so.

[31.35]

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MA _____ up and, channel into the wrong way of thinking, you know, it stirs you up, sexually or, or angry or

you know, this is not music is not meant to this, to bring them back to heaven again, that's what the music is meant for. So. Now where am I love. I forgot. And then besides you know we, or a, when my second mother came into the house, you know, she thought we should all consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart, now the catholics will understand it, but it really means to concentrate yourself to the Lord. [.48] And we did that, you know as a family, and I think really God took over and he used, he, this was, it was his, his plan to send us around with, songs of sadness and of mirth, and so he was with us. [1.09] And, we cannot move hearts of people it's God who moves, you know. And so, many of us thought that we, we all want to sing for God, and I think this was also the reason why we stayed together so long, we stayed together for twenty years, can you believe that, the English thing is, matter. Ah, how do you say this? Well the sang the longest at that time, of any choir, they sang ten years together they were not a family you know. [1.41] But we were a family and we stayed together twenty years. Now you can imagine this is in a way unnatural,

but because God was behind it, he, he helped us that we stayed together. And we enjoyed singing. We enjoyed travelling, too. Well he has to give some joy otherwise it's, it's a pain in the neck, you know. And you cannot sing with a, as a pain in the neck. Ha! Ha! You know. And, so then we travelled all for until 56. We travelled all over the states you know, and one day we also travelled through Vermont. [2.25]

JB So you were here from 1930.

MA 38, yeah then we went once back to, 39, spring of 39 we went back because we had contracts for Sweden, Holland, Denmark Sweden and Norway. So we went back and we still were Italians so the Italians could go back to Salzburg, and then, my brother could not go back with us, our conductor could not go into Austria either, so he went to South _____ and waited for us there, and then we, we went to Salzburg and then we went up to Sweden to spend the summer there. Lake _____ see, you know. [3.07] And, and at that time Hitler, moved into Poland, and we thought we'd never get back, we land up in a, concentration camp, in Sweden. But, our manager stayed and worked hard to get

us, a place on the _____, a Norwegian line, [3.29]
to take back, at that time already lots of people
wanted to go back to America, so they, built in
another floor on the boat, you know where the, where
the water slide, you could hear the water slush back
and forth, in the bottom under the, it was smelling
awful but we could get over, so this is how we got
back to America. Then we landed up in Ellis Island,
because they asked us, they asked mother would you
like to stay in America, and she thought it was just
a, a socialist questionnaire, and she said sure. And
so that made them suspicious that we want to come into
America, now and then stay illegally, so we landed up
in Ellis Island, but my brother I don't know how he,
he didn't have to come Ellis Island and with the
Austrian, I don't know how this happened. [4.24]

JB This is the doctor?

MA The doctor. Yeah. So he went to the Archbishop,
Cardinal of Philadelphia, and he got us out of the
four days. You know. He was, politically ha, ha,
criminal. Ha! Ha! But, you know it was quite an
experience.

JB Yeah. Well now this was in?

MA In 39.

JB In 39.

MA So then we got out and then we started our second, two in America, and Yohannis was born, was already born, yeah. In 38, 30, Yohannis was born January 39, so this was the year. The, during our first tour through America, we, over Christmas we rented the house in Germantown and this is where, because Yohannis had to be born so, this is where he was born and then we were ten. [5.34] And he travelled with us in a, well he came back with us to Europe but he came back with us to Europe and then, then on tour we had a little, cradle hanging in the back of the bus, and this is where he travelled with us. Ha! Ha! Ha! [5.54] Ha! And so we came, we went all over, over the states, you know every year back and forth. Over, all over Canada, but in one of those tours we also came to Vermont. And we loved Vermont because it reminded us of Austria. You know, this you know pastures and farms and just beautiful. But our drive said, never settle in Vermont, because all they do is raise gravestones. Ha!

Ha! Because there's a, you know there is marble in Vermont, in Barre, they have a, a.

JB Granite.

MA A what?

JB Granite.

MA Yeah granite, and of course all the fields are full of stones, so every year the frost heaves it out and they have to, farmers have to collect stones, not for gravestones but a lot of stones. So we settled, well we came to, well I was telling about the whole story, we settled, we had a concert in Philadelphia, and somebody came back stage it was afternoon concert, in Philadelphia, and he said, you have to come out to Merriam, I have a friend there, he's a lawyer, Henry Drinker, who translates Bach, all the Bach _____ to English, and he loves to direct so he invites his friends every month, you know the preview on that day, it was also God's guiding. And he gives, they have to sing for him, in all his translations, you know, and he conducts, he has a big hall there, and he would

love to hear it, because he was impressed with our Bach. What we sang and I forgot what we sang. [7.43] So we went with him, and we just busted into, into this party, you know, they are just eating you know, so we were invited to have dinner there, and then we sang for them. And he was so impressed that he say do you have a place to stay? You know. His headquarters, he said, we said no. We just travel around in the bus. And he said, well he, he has a house, opposite the street, that belongs to his mother but she just died, and if you want to we can use this house. Now this man was really God sent. So we, we moved into this house and the nice thing was you know, people came from all over and brought us things to, to make the house more liveable. You know, there was pictures and curtains and things which you think it little bit unnecessary, although it's necessary, to make yourself felt at home, but, I mean feel at home. So, so this is where we done stayed and we, and then of course we had to sing every month, we had to go over and sing for, for him. Well that was, was no trouble. And he was very, very nice. And his wife and the two, three children.

And, one played the flute, so, yeah, and then we had a, a friend who was a teacher, of the school where mother went to school in Vienna. And she, they kept in contact and this teacher had married an American citizen, so she came over here and she spent the, and he died, and she spent the summer in Stowe, and one day she called up and said, there's a house, available it would be big enough for you, the owners are two brothers who were drafted and they want to rent the house for the summer, so if you want to, you could come up and spend the summer in Stowe and it was so hot in Philadelphia. We were glad, you know, that we had an opportunity to come to Vermont, so we, we agreed and we packed up and came for the summer to Vermont, to Stowe, Stowe away, you know this little, well it's an inn. [10.16] For the foot of the mountain, and the, and at that time my father was thinking, eventually we should settle here, you know, and he and mother went all over the place to look, look up the, the houses that were advertised in the newspaper, that were for sale, you know, and, and then they came home, and said you know we found out when it

says in good condition, then it is not so good, in fair condition it's bad and then in, impossible, in fair condition you cannot even move in. [10.47] So we had, put down a hundred dollars but I forgot the place, some where south of Vermont. And it was a lake, a little lake but surrounded by mountains, it was a little bit tight, you know. But we thought it was great. [11.08] And then, on the, but we did not really know should we buy it or not. And we, we thought we'll pray. So we, we, we changed this, the broom closet into a little chapel and we took turns every hour somebody else came in, you know, to pray for an hour. Ha! And so we prayed three nights, and three days, for a place. But, still we couldn't find anything. And so and then we had to go home, to practice and go on tour again, you know, and this, the step son of this friend you know who called us up, said, he was an architect. He also knew Austria very well. And he said, there was just a farmer at my place and he said there's a, a, his farm is available, on top of the hill up there somewhere. [12.06] Would you like to well, and we said, no we, no more interest you know we know all

ready this good and air conditioned, so we. Ha! We said we have to go home, I said let's go up just for the ride, it was a beautiful Sunday. So some of us went, we came there, you know.

JB Is this is Stowe, now?

MA Yeah. And it was, you know we went up, loose hill and saw the view! My, it was breath taking! The house was in fair condition. Ha! Ha! But we bought the view. [12.42] It was so beautiful. And we, not, and then in March, my brother, my two brothers went up to help, a carpenter to raise the roof, and put in another floor, because it was too small and too, you know to renovate the thing. But the blizzard came and the whole thing collapsed. And it was a blessing you know, ha, ha! So then they were drafted, they had to go to, Camp Hail, Colorado and so in May then we came up and all the girls started cleaning up the place, take all the old boards away from the falling down house, and Mister, what was his name? Emmet, Emmet was his name. He, he was not able to go to the Army to be drafted but he helped us you know with the hard work. And mother went to an auction to get a bed, and she came home with two

horses and there was a horse barn there, you know, so we, used the horses and the stone, not the stone, a stone boat too to take all the thing away but you know what do you call your scoops, you know where they dig into the ground and take, it looks like a, dust pan.

JB A plow?

MA No it's not really, it looks like a, a big dust pan, and you push it into the ground.

JB Oh I know what you mean, yeah.

MA Yeah and then you have, you have a spoonful of dirt, and the horse pulled them away and you dumped them some where. [14.18] We didn't have a machine you know to dig out the cellar, so we, we had to do this all ourselves and then, we got another carpenter, Mr. Sears, and so, you know all the summer we worked and we stepped on nails, we had to get tetanus injections, ha, ha, and end of the summer the house up, you know with the, two by fours, and I don't know, trap boards, I don't think trap, yeah clapboards, where there, but no roof. You know. And we didn't know how to get it on

the roof before we had to go on tour. So we, we had sung for the school, once so that they could fix their roof. And when they heard, that we need a roof, that was really very nice, because all the Vermont husbands, I mean the, Stowe husbands came up to shingle the roof, and the carpenter class of that year, in the school, came also, during the week, you know and they finished and when we left the house was under a new roof. That was really nice. And, so, we felt a part of the community then, you know. Because in the beginning, they were very suspicious what we wear and, there was this Uncle Craig, Mr. Bird, Craig Bird, we called him Uncle Craig, because he was a real friend. When we spent the summer in Stowe Away, he needed somebody to entertain, at the, there was a military police came, first it was CCC Camp, at the foot of the hill, you know it was Nebraska valley, and these soldiers, wanted you know he thought we should go and sing for the soldiers. So we went there, and sang for the soldiers, and there was sort of a bell, you know it must of been a gravel pit, it was a slope, and like a stage, sit down there, and so we sang here,

and the soldiers were sitting on the slope. [16.50] It was like a theater. So we knew, we knew about the existence of this camp, and then in 40, I think it was in 43, or 42, when we came up to, no it was the next day it must of been 43. Mother heard that they wanted to take this camp down, and she had already the idea of music camp I guess. Because she said, oh no, we will rent it, and she rushed down to the town, and asked if you could, get a lease on this, barracks, you know, because we wanted to start a music camp, in the summer. And they did, the lady gave it to us for twelve years and so then we, next year, we went down and fixed all the roofs, you know and put new tar paper on and, and steps were broken so we fixed that and that was a big undertaking, to fix up the camp for, my mother sent out already leaflets. Ha! Ha!

[18.01] And, then the first year we had quite a few people you know to come for the music camp. And it was very nice because when they came they sort of looked at each other very suspiciously you know and, but after they sang together for the first time, they were already melted together. Ha! Ha! Yeah it was really

nice to see how they, and they remained friends for years. You know. [18.27] It was a very good thing and we, they followed us, and we conducted them in their singing and that I was teaching a recorder, and then we played in the evening we played for the people for folk dancing, I have a picture here somewhere. So then we took them on different trips, and they sang, on top of the mountain, and _____ falls, Mt. Mounsfeld, Lake Mt. Mansfield, [19.01] that, you know, in the _____ valley, the end of the _____ valley. And so we took them and they sang there which was very nice, they got out of the camp, you know, and so different things and we put, bought the food there, and we had a great time.

JB Was that the Mt. Mansfield house? You sang there?

MA Where we sang?

JB Yeah.

MA No, no. We sang, no it was there, but we didn't sing in the house, we sang at the foot of the knolls.

JB Oh. Oh.

MA Ha! Ha! Outside you know, we played a recorder also, outside which was sometimes hard when the wind blew.

And, and we hired the buses, the school buses you know and _____, critiqued. [19.47] He would take our crowd you know to the mountains, or to where ever we wanted to go and we took our pick up, filled it up with, milk and water and coffee, and sandwiches, and then on the last day, the last night, we had a picnic at the farm, at the, we called it the farm it was not a lodge you know, that's a beautiful view into the Nebraska valley and the _____, and hot dogs and then afterwards we would dance and my brother and I, he played the clarinet, I played the accordion and then we usually had somebody from the crowd who played guitar, and we put on a jeep, and very dramatically were brought into the sight and the people danced around us. It was very nice, and then they walked home and then we had a big bond fire at this _____, you know, where we sang for the soldiers. [20.39] And they sang all little songs they learnt by heart, already by heart, you know it was very, very nice and lots of friends, friendships were, came to be you know, for the rest of the, still you know.

JB And so that first summer you had how many people

roughly?

MA Well we must of had about seventy.

JB For the.

MA Yeah and sometimes it was over a hundred, we sometime we had to send them to the village or up to the house, to stay you know, because we couldn't house them in the barracks.

JB And this was, the first summer you had, as many as seventy. Or?

MA Yeah. Something like this.

JB Gosh.

MA Yeah. [21.21] Yeah well you see the people knew, had heard us already in concert, so they knew about us.

JB Um, hum.

MA Yeah it was quite a, quite a thing. And, of course Stowe, gained through our guests, you know.

JB Absolutely.

MA Yeah. But you know that the nice thing was that we made friends with the people, you know, that was Mr. Stafford in the hardware store, you know, and his wife, I went quite a few times, to visit her, you know, and so several people you know with whom we kept

up contact, you know, they are dead now. But. Ha! And Uncle Craig was a real, benefactor for us, you know, he many times he came up to visit us and took us around and showed us all over, those sides you know, and whenever we needed help, he would give advise, he was a real good uncle. Ha! Yeah.

JB So the that was the start of the music school which you did every.

MA Every year until 56. Yeah. And then in 56, 55, in fifty we went all over, South America you know.

JB Oh my gosh.

MA Yeah and then in 1955, we were invited to go to Australia. And we sang, of course, in Hawaii we had sung before, but we, on the way out we sang in Hawaii again, and then Fuigi, New Zealand, and then we came to Australia. It was cold I'm telling you. [23.10] They don't have heat in the houses, the hotels are not heated, it was absolutely, ha, ha. One priest was in England during the war he said, actually hell is not a fire, it is a freezing lake. Ha! Ha! Ha! [23.27] Ha! Ha! And this is what we said in Austria, never, never

again, we said, never, ever will I go to Australia or New Zealand in the winter. They opened the hut, the windows you know, and let the whole cold air come in. Ha! They don't even heat their houses. And they had, children have to go to school still, you know without stockings. Shorts, shorts, the boys shorts in the winter. Anyway. Ha! Ha! So we, we went to Australia, and you know, I always wanted to be a missionary, since I was a little girl eight years old, I wanted to go to the mission in Africa, what it involved I didn't know, but we collected, we collected silver paper, you know for the missionaries, it was down at that time, you know they could buy, children to come to school and then they converted them and so forth. That was the way in getting people into the church. [24.21]

And, so when the, when school was over, we were already singing so, I knew, I cannot go now, and then I thought, well maybe, the mission is my, is the singing, my mission is the singing now. So when, when we went to Australia there was a priest from New Guinea, I didn't even know New Guinea was on the map, there are so many islands you know, that you don't

know which one is which, and the, and he told us all about his mission on that last isle of, east of New Guinea, Russell Island, and so I thought well, maybe I go there, as soon as we stopped singing this is where I want to go. And, my brother, had a, already American had five children and the sixth one was born while he was in Australia, and he was too much, he was six months gone, you know, and he knew that his wife had to struggle all by herself with six children, you know, so he said he cannot go anymore. [25.20]

JB This is Yohannis?

MA No this is Valna. And, we had to, you know there was already Yohanna was married, Lorrie was married, Martina married and died in her childhood, and so we had to take in other people and, it was not the pure family anymore so we, we thought we had sung enough. And we decided to stop. The next tour of us would of been to Japan. But, we said, enough. [25.50] I said, all right, I go to New Guinea. And ask Yohannis if he wanted to come with me, and he wanted to come, so we wrote to them, if we can come to the New Guinea, you know, for one of the islands. This was the, this

priest was working where the islands east of New Guinea, so he, he said, we will be most welcome, and then was married, joined us in the last minutes so the three of us went out in 1956, the fall, November 1956, we went to, New Guinea, and it was this island where we landed that was called Ferguson island, and we still, you know not many white people, there's a hospital of, which is run by white people, but, down the coast you know, but the area is, was not many white people, no, no white people. [26.44] So we were the only ones. In this little area. The priest and the three of us. And this is where, and then after my brother had to, he built a church, he learned the language, pretty well, and that, he built a school, and a house and a church, there with the people. I mean he, but his job was to over see, because the, when they go out, you know to cut, material, they come back, not enough or too long or too short, and then they have to go out, so he had to overlook all this and organize the people and so, and he did a good job and he learned the language very well. He's a very talented in languages. And just being with the people,

he picked it up. And my sister and I had to teach, and do medical work, now we had to give injections. If we, we practiced on a papaya. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! And you know but this is, a story all by itself. And so, then Yohannis went home, back in, after four years and after two years, and Rosemary and I after four years, but if they both stayed in here, and he went to school, the university school you know, and Rosemary wanted to become a nurse, so she went to New Haven and I couldn't stay here, I had to go back. So I went.

JB To New Guinea.

MA Yeah. And ever, back and forth until 87. I left 87.

JB I'll be darned. So you were in New Guinea.

MA Almost 30 years. You know, not really 30 years but in the, from 56 until 87 and I came home and stayed home because mother was sick or my sister was sick so then as soon as I could then, I went back again. [28.42]

JB Gosh I didn't realize that at all.

MA So the, my life after singing and the others, most of them married. And my older sister she has now a kindergarten in Baltimore, she started a kindergarten here at the, at the hillside, they had for two years I

think they had kindergarten, but they couldn't make out because there were not enough children. So they went to Baltimore. [29.10] But Uncle Craig, you know he was, he helped them with the kindergarten and he told his story, and my sister typed it out, for him, and I don't really know what happened to that story, I think his daughter Helen, must have the story now. It was supposed to become a book. Because he, he owned a lot of land, and had a saw mill in Stowe, that saw mill is gone now, you can't even, I know where it was, but otherwise you wouldn't think there was a mill, a saw mill you know. And, the ranch camp he started the ranch camp, I think he was also, instrumental with the skiing for Mr. Ruth, you know, and the road up to the mountain and the hotel and every thing, but this story you would have to get from somebody else. [30.08]

(telephone ringing) Excuse me, I think that. (tape off) (tape on) And, my, in 1980 I think when the house burnt down.

JB Well you started the.

MA Music camp.

JB The music camp, and then that, did that turn into the

lodge?

MA That turned into, yeah. Well you see, I told you we sent some people up to the lodge already when we had an overflow at the camp, so it started slowly up there, already and then, mother had, we, she, I'd forgotten which year, she added a wing you know.

JB Um, hum.

MA Which, which was used then for, to take people in because in case we had to stop we had to have an income, and, but it wasn't enough and in 69, my brother, we sort of went into the red, you know, and we [31.08]

END OF TAPE ONE

MA So he did and he pulled it off but he knew it was not enough, it couldn't make out, you know for paying taxes and stuff, he started the cross country business you know, up there.

JB In 69.

MA No 69.

JB Yeah.

MA He took over and in that time after then he started cross country and, [.26] and he pulled it out of the

red. But he knew it was not big enough, and he wanted to, enlarge, or change the house or, I forgot what he wanted to do but he some blue prints already and to change it, and in 80, 1980 then, the house burnt down, nobody knows really, probably so the, we had a baking shop, you know a baking stove in the cellar and maybe that somebody left the gas on and we don't know, all of a sudden the whole was in flames. It was ten below zero, I was in the Pacific.

JB You were in the Pacific?

MA Yeah. [1.13] It must of been horrible enough.

JB Yeah I remember reading about it.

MA Yeah mother had to escape through the ladder in the back and we had an old lady, as a secretary and she, she noticed that, they, mother lived in the wing, you know, that something, and she too, there was stuff flying around in her room, and she woke up and she realized the house was burning, she woke up mother and they went down the back stairs and another lady also, ninety, over ninety years old, a friend was playing cards with mother the night before and she wanted to

go home but mother persuaded her to stay, so she had to climb over that, and they said, all of a sudden a big man appeared and he carried these two old ladies over the fire ladder down as a, I say it was an angel. Ha! Ha! And, so then Yohannis decided to rebuild, and then in 84, he, he asked me to come home, to celebrate the opening of the lodge, you know and it was really touching how many people from Stowe, you know, had helped in the fire. [2.25] So the first evening was, was people were invited from Stowe, who helped in the fire, and then it was second night people were invited to help to rebuild, you know, the first night the fireman up, you know, invited them, and then the people who took the guests in that night, you know, in the village, I mean it must of been fantastic, one man was, killed, you know, was burned, because he was out, and he went back in again, if he had stayed out he could of been saved. But it's amazing, you know it was full house, ten below zero, twenty below zero, and, I mean this man could have stayed out, we don't go back into a fire. And, so, you know on the second night was for the people who, rebuilt it and the third one, who

helped, and the, and then I've forgotten, five nights we celebrated. [3.32] But that night, you know, the fire it really showed how helpful the people in the village were, you know, to open their hotels and inns, and to take the people in, who, who stayed in our place. So that was a, but Yohannis could tell you more about the fire, because I was not there, I can only tell you, you know, I was on a boat, and when I came back into the harbor I got a letter from a nun in _____by, tell me how [4.06] sorry she said that your house burnt down, I said, our house burnt down? You know, I couldn't believe it.

JB Um. Yeah fire.

MA For Yohannis it was hard because you know, it was his home, I mean he grew up in that house, you know and, it, but it was for him probably the saddest, and he had just tried to improve it and well then, then he built up that, big thing, so you know they say already, you know if you have a business, either keep it very small, or very big. Ha! Ha! But in the middle it don't make out.

JB So the, from, he rebuilt the lodge, and then, the

business mushroomed.

MA Yeah. [5.00] Paid too much, what, you would have to go to the different.

JB Um, hum.

MA Families, you know like Lorly up there, and my sister here and my brother down there, because most of the families settled here now.

JB They came from Stowe to Waitsfield then?

MA Yeah. Yeah. My brother, you know he couldn't make out with the family, in the family, up at Stowe you know, he, he used to run the farm, run the cows, but you know it was not, profitable enough and then he sang with us, and, and all this money went into the house, and taxes and _____ so there was no much left for him, so he, he decided he has to do his own until he, he bought this farm down there, maybe you should come back some other time. Ha! Ha!

JB Yes.

MA Because this is a. (tape off, and then on) [5.57]
Going on, you know like, Christmas we had Christmas, we celebrated Christmas in the evening before

Christmas day, and we light the candles, our Christmas tree with real candles and then read the gospel, you know, one of the, or one of the smaller ones, Yohannis always had to read the Christmas gospel and we sang Christmas carols and you know this was in the family and when we had guests in the house we invited them, for this thing and then the, the presents were already wrapped, like every, modern thing, in Christmas paper and ribbons, and so then we gave out the different gifts, also for the staff you know, so and then, we sang, then we would go to midnight mass, and we would go with the candles for the house, singing, a song, you know which is really inviting the shepherds, to come to the stable, you know, and we used to go through the house with the candle, the lanterns and wake up the people with that song, you know to come to midnight mass, you know, this is what we did. And, [7.19] and then Christmas day you spent just looking at presents. You know. But we gave the presents the night before, right in America here, you do this in the morning. Right, yeah. And then of course we had the Advent wreath, which was, had four candles, you

know, and for every Advent sunday, we lite one,
another candle. Well I tell you something it was such
a custom that nobody thought any more what the meaning
of all this is, you know, and I cannot tell you the
real meaning, you would have to look in mother's book,
around the, around the year with the Trapp family,
lots of customs in there but also customs which we
never did. Ha! Ha! [8.16] But we had songs for every,
every season, you know, we had Christmas songs and
Easter songs, and.

JB Well now this song you said you sang.

MA Yeah, _____. [8.33] So but they don't so this
anymore because they, you know. Ha! I mean things
change, and American custom moves in and, and
somethings you cannot do in a small family. You know
we were, we were always a big family so it was
different, we could all sing. Ha! Ha! And, we were
always available you know that was the, the fantastic
thing, another choir you have to call in from
different places and, but we had it in the family, we
could sing anytime, any songs that were opportune, and
here. You know.

JB Has that continued at all amongst the grand children,
or?

MA No. [9.25] My sister, actually sister-in-law Erica, my
brother's sister, she's from Austria too, and she, you
should go down, and because her house looks very
Austrian, you know, she has all this stuff around, and
ha, and they.

JB Now is she Bernie's mother?

MA Yeah.

JB And which brother?

MA Verna. Brother Verna, he, if you go down Palmer hill
road, you continue on cross road, and there is, a red
house set in further. You know there's a long driveway
and at the end is a red house, and this is where he
lives now. But the farm, he bought, is this farm down
there, you would have to turn right at the, bottom of
the hill and turn right. And as Tobie with his
greenhouse, now. And Martin, he inherited the farm,
and he milks the cows, and has sheep, and he is the
farmer who hangs on to the farm as long as he can, as
long as the government allows farmers to exist.

[10.38] But his sons are very, practical you know, and

his son, youngest son, jacked up the barn, and put in a new stone wall, and the barn is straight ever since, the big barns they start getting.

JB I saw, yeah.

MA Like this and he put in, I don't know he, they're very, very talented. But this is the, sort of the, only proving inhabitants of Austrian life, or, you know. And Erica she is the only one who still wears the Austrian outfit. Not all the time but, you know once in awhile. So you know, I don't, I really don't know how much Austria is left except, us who.

JB Well yeah and.

MA You see what I mean, it's very hard to, pin point what is Austrian, I play the accordion, with Austrian music, but we don't come together you know, so many, my oldest brother died two, two of my sisters died, one was an alto, one was taking soprano, she sang with me and then mother was the _____, so we cannot come together to sing our old songs anymore. [12.04] But the nice thing was, that, when, when we opened the house, the new house we invited as many people from the music camp as we could remember or find out the

addresses, because the, every thing burned. You know.
So we still had quite a few people from the camp, to
help us celebrate and they knew still there were
artists among them so we could sing for two hours.
[12.34] You know. Madrigals, church songs, you name
it, and we, they could, we could sing it, and then of
course the ones who sang with us, in the concert, you
know, these, you know, there were two, three of them.
Who, who sang so we could sing our songs, because we
sang it by heart and they still knew it, so that was
a, that was a real nice thing. But I cannot say this
is typical Austrian.

JB Yeah. No.

MA You see.

JB Right, and I guess my question and you already sort of
answered that but the grand children have become
American really.

MA Yes. Yes.

JB And.

MA I mean they all married Americans. The second
generation, after us. So, you know.

JB And, the.

MA They speak German, Val still don't speak German.

Lorless daughters no. [13.41] So you know, you will find more Austria, down there, but what is Austria, ha, ha. You know, I mean you have to talk to people, and you have to feel that, and the fact that they still speak German, you know, they spend some years or some months in Austria and Saltzburg, you know, with my sister who moved out too. To Vienna after she married, so. It's very hard, what is, what can it, you know, except that every body is very, talented in, in manual, you know, apparently. Well my brother is weaving and he did silver work, and, and these things he's still doing, he's making carpets and he spins his own wool and he weaves with his own wool, and he crochets and this is, his work. Ha! Ha! He is doing this you know. And, and so they are very handy on the farm, you know, Martin is very talented mechanically and so they, they all are good with their hands. Which is maybe an inheritance from my father. My mother too and we all used to, Erica knits like mad and ha, ha. And, my sister too. But I really wouldn't know what is typical Austria.

JB Well I think, I think the point is, that, things have changed and.

MA Yeah. So every body is doing all his own thing, so it's a different thing, my sister paints you know, and I can show you a picture here, but most of the pictures I have from her, oh wait a minute, I have, I have something in here, but you see, all of sudden Austria, realizes that we exist. You know.

JB Ha! Ha! [15.55]

MA And now, this movie comes over, at the same time the Austrian, this was an Austrian interview.

JB Oh it was.

MA Yeah. So they all of a sudden they want to know what is the truth about this. It's strange, the Austrian embassy is interested in my sister's paintings and I make, I make these cards you know. And they blew them up, in the pictures, now they make an exhibition in the Austrian embassy. There's another movie outfit, in Los Angeles, who wants to make another movie. [16.33]
A continuation from the Sound of Music. You know, when we arrived in, in the states, what happened in that time. But they want to play us. Okay. Now they are

interested all a sudden in the house. You know we live here like on an island, and nobody cares about us and all of a sudden you come and want an interview. And, it is so strange, you know, that all of a sudden, people want to know, maybe before we die what, what happened.

JB Well.

MA So, I don't think I gave you all there is.

JB You.

MA But if you want to come back, you're welcome. [17.12]

END OF TAPE TWO