

Voula Bettas Interview Summary

Interviewed by: George Katinas

Interviewee: Voula Bettas

Translation and summary by: Angeline Boswell

Part 1:

- Voula was born at Halki of the Corinth prefecture in Greece.
- Growing up, she had a mother, a brother, and a sister. Her father was killed when she was two years old. In her village, there were about 200 families.
- She came to Canada in 1965 to marry Pandelis, who she met through an arranged marriage. Voula was not even 19 years old when she arrived in Canada.
- Before she came to Canada, the only thing she knew about it was that it was cold.
- The decision to emigrate was supported by Voula's mother. But Voula did not know where to go alone when she was so young. She made the decision to come to Canada because of Pandelis.
- The travel by ship was nice; it docked in Halifax.
- She arrived to Kingston from Halifax without papers, as she said all the immigrants did not have passports.
- The trip on the ship was very good except that she got dizzy. After Lisbon, she got very dizzy and didn't get up again. All of them were dizzy, on the ocean and then when they got to Halifax and her fiancé showed up he was waiting for her. She met him then and they got to know each other.
- her fiancé (Pandelis) came from Kingston to Halifax without papers and he showed up with all the immigrants with no passports. "We had an episode which was frightful for me because he was yelling and all the officials were yelling at him. He had some papers but no passport, but things got sorted out and we arrived in Kingston and my father-in-law and my brother-in-law were waiting for us. There was no police there, the commotion was finished."
- She found Kingston to be a wonderful city. Very clean, and very green in the summer. She finds it even more beautiful than Montreal.
- Within 40 days after her immigration, she needed to be married. They wed, and they had three children. They were married at the Greek Church, as it had just been built. The priest who did the ceremony was Fr. Glouftis (sp.?). This was in 1965.
 - They had their reception on Princess Street. They did not know many people yet at that time, since she had just immigrated.
- She worked at a dry cleaner store beside the Superior restaurant at first. She found it a little difficult with the language barrier, but she had people who could explain things to her if she didn't understand. She only worked there for half a year.
- Afterwards, she stayed home with the kids for 5/6 years. She worked for another year at a grocery store, and then stopped. Once the children were all in school, she started working for the hospital for 3 hours a day (11am – 2pm) so she could be home when the children were done school.
- Her mother eventually came over from Greece too, and she lived with them. Her brother and sister came over too; they all lived together until they got married and moved into different houses.
- She worked at the hospital for 26 years; working in the kitchen, making the meals for the residents in the hospital.
- Her children are Sofia, Spiro, and Apostolo. They all live in Kingston. She always spoke Greek at home with them; she wanted them to learn Greek, and she did not know English very well. Her grandson also speaks Greek well, since her children speak some Greek in their homes.

Part 2:

- "My daughter was always quiet. My second child, Spiro was very zoiros and started fires on in the fireplace. He became a paramedic."
- Her third child is very interested in machines. When Father Drakos came over to bless the house once, he opened his room and it was filled with machines. They spoke about them for a while.
- They went to Greek school and Sunday school; she brought them to church every Sunday. They learned Greek; they learned how to Greek dance. The boys didn't enjoy it as much.