

The Change Millie Maltas has Seen
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Oct. 22, 2015

TRUMBULL, Conn. – Mildred (Millie) Maltas, 88, has seen many changes in her lifetime, having lived through World War II, the moon landing in 1969 and the creation of the cellphone in 1983. She was born on Dec. 28, 1926 in Bridgeport, Conn. Maltas loved growing up there and she recalls enjoying being out in the neighborhood and going to school. When she was 16-years-old Maltas went to work at General Electric, which then hired many teenagers so they could aid in the support of the war. Before the war, her family had a car, a 1941 Buick Road Master. They kept that car because few cars were made during the war. There was rationing of all goods.

“Girls couldn’t get stockings, the beef was rationed, they didn’t have a lot of butter. You had to know what you were able to buy because that was the war effort at the time,” she said. “Even the gas was rationed. If you wanted to get gas, there were lines for when you could go, or else you weren’t driving.”

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When WWII ended in 1945, Maltas said that all of a sudden high technology came in and that was the biggest change that she has seen within her lifetime.

“The phones that we had were like party phones; we had to share with other families. You couldn’t call on the telephone if somebody was on it already. You had to wait ‘till they got off,” she said. “But then eventually everyone got their own private phone.”

She said her father wouldn’t know how to react now that there are cordless phones and cellphones. Maltas said he was surprised with all the technology as it was coming out.

“He was shocked when television came into homes,” she said. “All of this was totally new.”

Maltas said when she was a kid they didn’t have washing machines, and all of a sudden people had them and refrigerators. There were also changes in travelling because of technology, like airplanes Maltas said.

“People started to earn more money so they could travel by air. That was something. And now you talk to anybody and everybody takes a vacation it seems and they’re flying all around the world, which is something we didn’t do when I was a kid.”

Maltas added that the technological changes became more recognized after the United States went to the moon. She said that the flight and landing on the moon not only shocked many people but, showed them that the world is changing and advancing.

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Maltas has also seen a change in the youth and how kids act nowadays. When she was a teenager she would go to the movies with her friends once or twice a week, which would cost her around only a quarter. When she was around 20 she began to go to the Ritz Ballroom on Saturdays and Sundays.

“We danced what they called the jitterbug,” she said. “We were Bobby Sockers, we had the skirts and the ankle bobby socks and the shoes.”

Maltas went out on the weekends with her cousins to the Ritz but in the summer they would go to Pleasure Beach Ballroom. According to bportlibrary.org, Pleasure Beach Ballroom was a huge attraction for the young people.

The Maple Dancing Pavilion became the biggest attraction, featuring the largest ballroom in New England, said the site.

She mentioned entertainers like, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Frank Sinatra, Benny Goodman and Guy Lombardo. She met her husband at the Ritz Ballroom. He had just come back from the Navy, which is why many girls went to the dances with no dates so they could meet the servicemen. She then married her husband at the age of 21 and had 3 children. Maltas said now kids like her grandchildren have an advantage in this world.

“It seems in the United States we work, we work hard and we try to progress and make life easier for ourselves and our children and grandchildren,” she said.

Maltas said that her grandkids can go home and the fridge is full of food, and they have fruits and snacks all the time. Back in her day, they didn’t have that. They weren’t poor but they had to live within their means. Maltas said more kids now

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have the opportunity to go to college and get a degree because their parents and grandparents worked hard. Maltas' father was born in Czechoslovakia and came to this country knowing very little English. She says that if her father didn't work hard to be able to support his family she wouldn't know if her life would be what it was. Working hard was a huge aspect back then, Maltas says, if you weren't working and making money, you couldn't survive. She is grateful for her parents and all that they've done for her. When she and her husband were looking for a house in Trumbull to get out of Bridgeport, her parents gave her \$5,000. Maltas took that money and bought the house that she lives in today. She has been there for nearly 56 years and is now living on her own.

She said the most important thing that she wants people to remember about her was that she is a good individual, a person that cares about other people.

"I would like to think that I was a good daughter, which brings tears to my eyes because I do miss my parents," she said as her voice began to crack. "I would also like them to know that I was a good wife and mother. I wish the best for everybody."

Being 88 she says she is concerned about the future of her children and grandchildren but knows there is little she can do.

Mildred Maltas knows that the changes she has seen in technology are steps in the right direction.

"Changes that happened, there's a lot and with that it makes life easier, but by the same token we live in a fast world in the United States."

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She sees this technology not only affecting the everyday life but it has changed the family dynamic as well as children in general. She knows that what she has seen is only the beginning of what is to come.

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1. <http://bportlibrary.org/hc/entertainment/the-legend-of-pleasure-beach/>



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