

Interview with Edna Meunier
Interviewer: Jennifer Schwartz
October 4, 2009

Q: Ok, and we're started. Ok, first question. What is your full name?

A: Edna Clara Meunier, I didn't put the Clara on there.

Q: Yeah, got that on there. Ok, do you know why your parents selected this name for you?

A: It was a, I was named after an aunt.

Q: Ok. Was it on your mom's side or your dad's side?

A: It was on mom's side and my middle name was from a godmother.

Q: Ok. Did you ever have a nick name growing up?

A: Yeah. In high school I was Eci Boom.

Q: Eci Boom.

A: (Laughs) because it was Boehm, they spelled it B-O-E-H-M, and they just said boom.

Q: Oh, ok, well that's funny. Did you like it?

A: No, I didn't like it.

Q: Oh, ok. I probably wouldn't either! Ok, when and where were you born?

A: I was born at home in Spencer County near New Boston, Indiana.

Q: Ok, in '27, I have your birth date down. How did your family come to live here?

A: Do what?

Q: How did your family come to live here?

A: Uh, my great grandparents came from Germany, and then my grandparents settled in Troy, no, they settled in Fulda, and then came to Troy, and then they bought a farm out at New Boston when my father was six weeks old. They moved out there when he was six weeks old, but originally, they came from Germany, my grandmother's and my grandfather's side. So, it's my great grandparents that came from Germany.

Q: They were the original descendants from Germany?

A: Yes.

Q: That is interesting. Um, did you do a lot of farm work?

A: Oh yeah, with children you know how you do. They kept you busy, you went out to hold the corn, and pull weeds out of the corn field. And you worked the garden and milked cows. You know anything that came along. Kids were expected to help.

Q: Was there anything you liked to do the most?

A: I would rather stay in the house and cook than go milk cows.

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Q: Really?

A: And I had a sister, I was the oldest girl, and my sister next to me loved to work outside. She loved to drive the horses, and we had everything done by horses when we were children, now my father got a tractor later. She liked to work outside, so mom didn't care if we traded jobs. So sometimes she'd let me do the housework, so we'd trade jobs

Q: How many sisters and how many brothers did you have ?

A: I had three sisters and two brothers.

Q: Ok, were you closer to any particular one?

A: Well I was closer to my sister next to me because we were just eighteen months apart, and the other two sisters were younger, and my brothers, well you know, you're just not as close to your brothers as you are to your sisters.

Q: Yeah. What was your house like? Can you describe you many rooms, bathrooms?

A: It was six rooms, it was a big two story house, built a lot like that one, (points to house behind hers), but it only have three rooms up and three rooms down, but it was built in the, uh, ooh, built before my parents got married, they got married in '21, so in early 1900's is when it was built.

Q: Oh, ok.

A: Because my father moved out there, they just had a small, like when the really early houses were built, and I never knew that, all I knew was the old house.

Q: Oh, so he added on to it?

A: No, he just tore it down, I mean he built a new one and used the old one for a granary.

Q: Oh, ok. Did you have electricity, indoor plumbing, any of that? Or do you remember when you got any of that?

A: We always had a telephone, as far as I can remember, we always had the telephone. We didn't have electricity until in the early fifties, because when we got married in '46 we didn't have electricity, but we had it, well yeah it was the early fifties when we had electricity.

Q: So, the whole time growing up you didn't have electricity?

A: No, well we had a radio, because it's coming back now you know the wind energy?

Q: Yeah.

A: My father had a windmill on the top of a building, and it would charge the battery that would run the radio.

Q: Oh, wow!

A: But when we got electricity did away with that.

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Q: So, um, was it weird to get electricity? What did you think about that? Is it like getting new now?

A: Well yeah because we would go to visit my relatives in the city and they had electricity and we didn't, but nobody else in the neighborhood had it so we were just kind of with the rest of them.

Q: Right. Did you like it a lot better? Did it make a huge difference for you?

A: Oh yeah! Electricity was a big thing because we had to study by kerosene lamps and that was all we had candles and kerosene lamps.

Q: Would you want to go back without now?

A: Oh, heavens no! No way.

Q: Ok, what school did you go to?

A: We went to New Boston it was a two-story school building, four grades on the lower level and four grades on the upper level. And you know, you just lived for the day you were in the fifth grade so you could go upstairs.

Q: Really?

A: That was a big deal! You get done with the downstairs you get to go to the upstairs. We didn't have anything like kindergarten; it was just first, second, third, fourth downstairs.

Q: And then it went up all the way through high school upstairs?

A: No, no, then we went to Troy high school, and by that time it was the buses running so they would come pick us up. My first, I don't remember how many years it was, but my first at least three years I walked to school, and it was over a mile from my house to New Boston.

Q: Oh my.

A: And we had to walk.

Q: Even in the snow?

A: Yeah, well they weren't as particular in those days, if the snow was too deep, well you just didn't go because you knew there wouldn't be no school, the teacher couldn't even get there! Because they were mud roads and because my dad, he had a model T Ford, and he went to mechanic school in St. Louise, Missouri because he was going to be a mechanic before they got married, and then, he was the oldest, no he wasn't the oldest, anyway, he didn't want to farm, but then my uncle Vic, the woman that he married was not going to live on a farm, so uncle Vic told dad, "You're just going to have to stay on the farm." Because somebody in those days always had to stay on the farm, with the parents, that was just the thing, so he ended up on the farm, so he was always interested in mechanic work. So, we had a car we could drive in summertime but in wintertime he would put it on blocks because the roads were so bad, we had to take the horse and buggy.

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Q: Do you remember when he first got it, or did he always have it?

A: No, no, see he, my two brothers were older. We have pictures of us, when we were younger, standing on the running board or whatever he took pictures of us, but the picture that I have of me, I was probably about three years old when he got the new Model T.

Q: Oh my. Were there any special items in your house that you remember?

A: There was a small, my grandfather was a school teacher, he and of course mom and dad had moved in with them, that was another story, mom and daddy got married they were dating and dad went out and told mom he said, his mother, my grandmother, was getting too old to milk cows, so he said, "If we don't get married we're going to have to sell the cow, because I don't milk."

Q: Oh my!

A: So, mom said "well I guess we'll get married!" so they did! So, she could milk the cow. But anyway, grandma and grandpa were living there with them, but he died when I was six months old, they think he had stomach cancer. He was a very educated man, and he thought he knew better. But then he finally died of it, because he had a very serious stomach problem, but anyway, I lost track of where we were.

Q: The special item from your house.

A: Oh yes, there was an organ, a small, what did they call it? They didn't call them organs, it was a small thing, but he played that because they played it in church, and he always played it at home. I wanted it, but my other sister got it when mom died, but anyway we was always so proud of that, and us girls we would try to play it, and we never took lessons. We lived during and after the depression, and there was no such thing as lessons or anything. Grandpa died when we were so little, we never learned how to play it, but we still loved that organ.

Q: Yeah. Does she still have it?

A: Eileen has it, my sister next to Maxine, she lives in St. Meinrad. She has it but she's never done anything with it. She just has it there as a thing, because it was important to us, it was something different. It was like a luxury more so, by us living through the depression we didn't have a whole lot of luxuries until you know we grew older, but as children we didn't.

Q: Speaking of the depression, what do you remember from it?

A: I don't remember a whole lot other than we didn't have a lot, but we always had plenty to eat because we raised our meat, we raised our vegetables and fruit and canned and we never were without anything to eat, but I remember my parents talking about money. My dad had lost a couple hundred dollars in the bank, when the banks all closed in the depression, and he always, boy that was just terrible because he saved so hard to save that money, and then to lose it when the banks went down. But as far as living, everybody else in the neighborhood is just like we are, so we didn't care, we didn't even pay attention to it! But I'm sure that my parents worried about it because they talked about it afterwards, I remember Sunday morning we'd go to church, and mom and dad would look for pennies to put in the collection.

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Q: Oh, my!

A: Because living on a farm, you didn't sell a whole lot, and what you did, you needed to actually live on, then the necessities, you know you'd have to buy your flour, but he had that ground, you had to go to the mill, but you had to buy sugar and stuff like that. Just the bare necessities that you needed for a family, like shoes they would repair until there was just nothing left of them.

Q: Wow.

A: Because back at the farm, it's still up in the attic, I didn't bring it with me, but he had a thing that he could put the shoe on and then he would buy the leather soles and then he would put new soles on our shoes.

Q: Your dad did that?

A: Yeah.

Q: Wow! So, he knew how to fix shoes.

A: Yeah, in those days, during the depression, right after, because it took a long time to gain back to what you were before.

Q: Right.

A: And yeah, they'd repair everything imaginable.

Q: Wow.

A: We had wood heat. Well there was one stove we used that had coal, but the rest of them we used had wood and we'd have to cut the wood for it. You had the wood stove to cook with in the kitchen.

Q: What is your earliest childhood memory?

A: In the first grade, otherwise it was just normal, you just didn't even think about it, but in the first grade, I counted on my fingers and the teacher, you were not allowed to do that, and I had to hold my hands on the desk like this and she hit them right one time with a ruler. I'll never forget that as long as I live because, you know my parents they would correct us and everything, but you never got punished like that.

Q: Right!

A: So, I remember that. I was about six years old, I guess.

Q: Yeah! How'd you feel about your teacher after that?

A: Well you know, it was just something we were told we shouldn't do it, so I knew I shouldn't do it, but I was trying to do it without her seeing me and she caught me. (laughs) so I learned my lesson!

Q: Yeah! Wow!

A: But now they say they let them count on their fingers. It's one of the things they do.

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Q: Really? I didn't know they did that now.

A: Yeah somebody said they count on their fingers, one of the great grandkids.

Q: Huh. Weird.

A: But we were not. The idea I guess was to do everything in your brain, rather than to do it on your fingers.

Q: Yeah, wow.

A: I remember that!

Q: Well yeah.

A: Otherwise it was just daily living and we enjoyed it because there was six of us and we had a lot of company, we had relatives that lived in the neighborhood that would come visit so it was just a normal life otherwise.

Q: Yeah. Can you describe the personalities of your family members?

A: Well, everybody had a different personality. My sister, Eileen, she had a temper and she was chubby, she was born chubby, and she was chubby, and she's still chubby, and we used to tease her and that would raise her temper and that was a mistake for us too! But otherwise, I don't know if there was anything just that normal, everyone was pretty well normal. My parents they seemed to get along. You know, when I got married, I didn't think that couples argued, because my parents never argued in front of us.

Q: Wow.

A: They were very calm, collected people. Now my grandmother, she lived with us and she used to tell us right from wrong and she did a lot to help educate us I guess in life.

Q: And how old were you when she died?

A: When grandma died?

Q: Uh huh.

A: I was pregnant with Jim.

Q: Oh wow!

A: She lived to be 89. Yeah, she lived to be 89 years old. Now my grandpa died when he was in his fifties, I guess.

Q: Oh really? Oh, because he had the stomach cancer, they think it was stomach cancer.

A: Yeah, they think it was stomach cancer, but he refused to go to the doctor. You know how these men get! (laughs)

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Q: Yeah. Ok, what kind of games did you play growing up?

A: Well I remember playing baseball with the boys because I sprained my ankle. In grade school, and I couldn't hardly walk for a while, but because enrolment wasn't that large in school, it was just a country school. So, it was the boys and the girls, and we would go visit at some of the other schools like maybe once or twice in the spring of the year and play, because we used to go to Evanston and somebody in the area would have a car to haul us. We'd pile in a car and go to Evanston. Course that was when I was in the upper grades, not when I was in the lower grades, that was the upper grades. And then you'd hopscotch, we played cards quite a bit. My grandmother couldn't play cards except old maid, and we'd play old maid with her and she would get so upset if she was old maid! And then of course we learned to play Euchre later on as we got older, because my mother couldn't play cards, except old maid, but my dad he used to play cards, play Euchre and Sheephead, and they'd go around and play neighbor to neighbor and they'd play cards at the neighbors and us kids would just sit in the back and do something. I don't know, we played dolls and whatever, but as far as game wise, around home you'd just do what you want to! Andy Over, we used to play Andy Over, we'd throw a ball over a building.

Q: Oh, I've never heard of that. How do you play?

A: Oh you, if you got your ball over, you made a point, and if it didn't go over well then, the other side got a point.

Q: Oh, so there was people on the other side?

A: On either side of the building, and you'd throw it back and forth. Andy Over was the name of it. I don't know where that came from but that's what we played.

Q: Do you remember any of the kids you went to school with still?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Do you see them?

A: Uh huh. Well the man that Maxine married was in my class, but he's gone too, and Maxine is too. And yeah, I know some of them. Irene Stroebe she's a Miller now, and yeah there's a few of them around yet.

Q: And you still talk to them?

A: Oh yeah. And these guys that called my Ece Boom I see them! Well one of them is my brother-in-law. (laughs) Yeah, Charles Meunier he lives over here by Santa Claus.

Q: That's funny!

A: Yeah, I remind him of that every once in a while, how mean they were. Oh yeah, I remember some of them, but a lot of them are gone.

Q: Yeah. um, what was your favorite toy and why?

A: We didn't have a whole lot of toys. I remember dolls, we always got a doll but then mom would make new clothes for it for the next Christmas, and it was just normal I guess for girls to have dolls as far

as a lot of toys you just didn't have them. You shared what you had, we'd get a game, I think we had a checkers game, and otherwise we got fruit and candy for Christmas, but as far as toys, you didn't get too many.

Q: So, Christmas has changed a lot.

A: Oh, it's changed so much. The Christmas tree, we'd cut it, and put it on a wagon, on a toy wagon, and set it in the hallway, we had a hallway that went through the house, and then it would disappear. And then on Christmas Eve it would reappear and be decorated with the gifts and the wagon.

Q: Oh wow! I've never heard of that!

A: Yeah, that was our Christmas. And mom would have us singing Christmas carols until, and dad would have to go to the barn. And when he would come back into the house, well we'd sing another carol and then mom would send somebody out in the hall and well there it was.

Q: Ha! That's funny. So, was that supposed to be Santa Claus?

A: Yeah, well, and then I had an uncle who would come on Saint Nicholas, which was December sixth, they would come dressed like Saint Nicholas, he and some of his, they were from Fulda, and they would come in and make the whole neighborhood, they'd make us kneel down and pray.

Q: Oh wow.

A: And of course, when we were little, we didn't know who this was, Uncle Paul and all of his friends.

Q: And did they give you any little gifts or anything?

A: Oh yes, we got a piece of candy. This was all during the depression and right afterwards, so it was kind of rough. But we appreciated every little thing we got, that's what I can't understand now-a-days people don't appreciate anything.

Q: Right. I was going to say, "so what do you think about Christmas now?"

A: Oh, it's just gone too far. And they don't appreciate it, they have Christmas year-round they get toys and stuff year-round. We looked forward to Christmas because that was the only time, we got even close to toys. Now later on as I grew up, we kind of exchanged little things, you know within the family we would maybe buy a scarf or a pair socks, you know whatever. It was never anything elaborate.

Q: So, when you had your kids was it different, or was it still kind of...?

A: Well no, they each got more, but it was still one new toy for Christmas and then everybody got a game to play and that was about it. Because there wasn't that much income and you had your bills like you do now-a-days and you didn't get anything that large, because I remember I had some friends from Evansville when we lived in Patronville, had some friends from Evansville come up, and she just couldn't understand how many toys were under the tree. And I said well that's because we got, at that time we had five children, and I said that each child got a toy and a game, so there was a game for everybody to play. Well yeah, she could understand that then.

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Q: Did she not have kids?

A: She had two!

Q: Oh ok.

A: And they were adopted. There was a lot of things she didn't understand about families, and that was ok, that was just her way of living. No point in arguing with her!

Q: Yes. Um, what was your favorite thing to do for fun when you were really young?

A: When I was really young?

Q: Yeah, or even when you were a teenager.

A: As teenagers we liked to go to dances. And during the war there was a few fellas that didn't go to the war, and they had a car that was so jammed full of people you wouldn't believe.

There was a tire rationing, there was gas rationing, and you know, a lot of them had to drive to work, but then we all congregated together. The whole neighborhood got together to go to a dance! But as a child, it was just common things. We played with our dolls, we played house, and you know just whatever we could find to play with. We always enjoyed the cousins, when the cousins came to visit because they had new ideas; some of them weren't so good! (laughs)

Q: Yes!

A: We used to walk from one farm to the other and all because that was the only way to go when we were kids because we couldn't drive and finally we got a little horse with two wheels and a cart and Maxine and I used to hitch up the horse and go to the neighbors on Sunday afternoon, because otherwise by the time you, you didn't have electricity so you had to get your work done before dark and work was a big thing. Just around the farm.

Q: Just doing your chores around the farm?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, you didn't really have a whole lot of time to just...

A: No, especially not in the wintertime. Now in the summertime you had more time, you know when the days were longer, but we all had our little chores to do and we were expected to do it, and we didn't know any better, so we did them!

Q: Right. So, do you remember when, like when the war started?

A: World War II, I remember, yes. I remember when it started and Pearl Harbor, it was horrible, because we knew that that was it. Because they were discussing it ahead of time that war was going to come but you just kept thinking "well maybe it won't" but then when Pearl Harbor was bombed you knew you were in it.

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Q: How old were you?

A: I was a freshman in high school, or was I a sophomore? Because I remember I was in high school when that happened, but I was already fifteen when I started dating Albert, and he and my brother went to a single course school in Lexington, Kentucky but then they were both drafted. They both went to they had their basic training together in Missouri but then they separated, because my brother went to Telephone and Albert went to Electrician. So that separated them when they came out of that school at basic training. That was horrible, that was a shock when that all started out. You'd heard about Hitler and all that he was doing and everything. You didn't hear a lot because communications weren't very good at that time, but that was terrible.

Q: What did you think about Hitler?

A: Hated him. Oh, I hated him. I went to see "Hitler's Children", the movie, this was after the war started and that was just about the most horrible movie I'd ever been to. The way he treated those children, you know he took the children and if they didn't look smart to him, he'd kill them. And, you know, afterwards you found out the concentration camps, and all like that and he was just a horrible man. So, you had to feel like the war was necessary just to get rid of the Gestapo and the Nazis.

Q: When you found out about Albert being drafted how did you feel?

A: Well you just hate to see them go. World War I, my uncle was in World War I, uncle Vic, and he would come back and tell the horrors of world war I. Well, world war I I had airplanes and a lot more things to fight with and so with that you knew it was going to be horrible, but you had no choice because they were drafted, they didn't have a choice on it.

Q: Did you, was there like a lot of, you know like now how there's Patriotism, right when this war started. Was it a lot like that?

A: Yeah, there was Patriotism. They were selling war bonds and I remember even as kids we would save our quarters, well by that time I was working, it was during my senior year, and you bought war bonds. You also bought stamps until you filled a book with the war stamps and then you applied that to a bond. You paid, let's see, a twenty-five-dollar bond was worth eighteen something. Because I remember my mother, after dad was gone, she first cashed hers in. They had a big iron safe and she had it in there for all those years, and they weren't doing anything, they were just sitting there! They weren't making any more money because after a point that was as far as they would go. But you had that and yeah, you had patriotism, you had a lot of that. A lot of talk. People would hang flags and especially if you had a person in the service you'd put a star in your window, or a flag in your window and it was, of course, you always dreaded when are you going to hear it, because you didn't know, then they couldn't tell you what they were doing. When they came back is when they first told us actually what went on. Now my brother was behind the lines in Germany, he set up the telephone system as they advanced in Germany and he said they would take over like hotels and stuff where they would set up their equipment because they had to know what was going on, you know from one outfit to the other.

Q: So, you mean, our troops would do that?

A: Yes

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Q: Ok

A: And as, you know, the Americans were pushing the Germans back, so then he would follow his outfit, he'd follow the troops with the telephone to where they could set up their communication and report back.

Q: Oh ok.

A: They would set up there. Because he brought back some things, um, they went through, no he didn't go through France, they didn't. Now Albert was stationed in England, and he, when the airplanes would go out and bomb and come back then he would have to rewire them and put the new electrical in them. So, he never worked on the front, but he had bombing close by, where he was at in England.

Q: What did he say about that?

A: Well, it was just something they did. They were young, they were young men, and it was something they had to do, and they just did it, and they had plenty of company, because there was a lot of other fellas in the same boat they were.

Q: Oh my, I don't know if I could do that.

A: Well they're doing it!

Q: I know!

A: But that's what's so odd, even in Vietnam, Jim was in Vietnam, and there too, you heard it on the news. Where in World War II, you might hear it months afterwards, but you didn't know at the time what was going on. But that was like the, where Albert was, they weren't allowed to tell you because we didn't know where Wilfort was, my brother, until after because they couldn't tell us where they were at and what they were doing. We knew he was in the signal corps, but we didn't know what point he was. Because he got a Dear John letter while he was in Germany.

Q: What is that again? I've heard of this.

A: He was engaged to a girl before he left, and then while he was gone, she wanted to split up with him, she found somebody else. So, she wrote him a Dear John letter, and we didn't know this was going on and they had, I don't know where they got the liquor, but they got liquor somewhere. Of course, they would get into taverns and whatever when they got there, and they just took whatever was there.

Q: Right.

A: And he got drunk and jumped out of a second story window.

Q: Oh my!

A: And we didn't know anything about that, and he never did tell my parents.

Q: So, he lived?

A: Oh yeah, he was bummed up for a while, but he didn't get to come back they kept him. I guess they could take care of him right there.

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Q: Right.

A: He just thought that was what he was going to come back to, to her, and get married and everything, but uh, so that just happens. And there was a lot of that going on in World War I I because you know they were gone for like three years and that was a long time.

Q: Yeah, to wait and not hear anything.

A: Yes, because Albert and I, we were just dating, and I dated other guys while he was in service. Not too many because I was writing him the whole time, he was in there for a few years, but I was young. Now Lorene, Wilfort's girlfriend, she was a lot older, so she should have known better, but she didn't. Now he lived through it.

Q: And he went on to marry somebody else, right?

A: Yes, he came, and he didn't date this girl very long and he married her pretty quick.

Q: Wow. Did you know her before?

A: Katherine? Oh yeah, yeah. She was from out in Perry County, she was Katherine Evrard.

Q: Oh, ok. Wow. That's awful!

A: (laughs) yeah, there were things that went on during the war that were just unbelievable.

Q: So, do you have any other stories of anything that went on?

A: No, other than we did without, and sugar was rationed and a flour, dad had to take it to the mill, and that kind of thing. And of course, everything else you know that was all during the war, we had to save all our drippings during the war, and we turned them in, I can't remember where they turned them in at, because that was out of my category! But they would turn in these leftover oils and stuff that they would use, and it was all towards the war. And we had food stamps to buy that sort of thing, you know you were only allowed to buy what you had food stamps for.

Q: Oh my.

A: Yes, so it was all, it was a different kind of war from what we've had, Vietnam and this war.

Q: Yes, because this war they don't really ration anything.

A: They don't ration anything. They were, I guess the country just needed supplies like that, well we would even save chewing gum wrappers with the silver stuff, what do you call that?

Q: Foil. Aluminum Foil.

A: Yes, we had to save that, we'd make balls of it.

Q: Oh my, I've never heard of that. And they'd just recycle it?

A: Yeah, the recycled that for something during the war. So, there was a lot of things like that used. You didn't throw much away!

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Q: Yeah, wow.

A: No. But we survived, my parents, I can remember them really, you know they weren't, you know there was a lot of other parents in the same boat they were, but that was the most in their minds all the time that Wilfort was gone and all.

Q: Was he the oldest?

A: He was the oldest, and nester he didn't have to go because if there was one, if you had two sons, no if you had three sons, one was allowed to stay home on the farm because they needed that. They needed the produce off of the farms and all, so they would allow one brother, or one son, to stay home. So, nester did because Nestor was working on the farm where as Wilfort had already kind of, well he had gone to school, a single course school and all so he was just automatically in the war, but there was some of them that had three or four boys and all but one of them had to go.

Q: Oh my. Wow.

A: The draft was horrible because of course the Vietnam war was too, but you know it wasn't as bad as what world war II was.

Q: Did Albert, Albert had brothers, did they?

A: Yeah, Albert had brothers, his one brother had pneumonia has a child and he, his one lung collapsed so he didn't pass, so he got to stay home, but the others all had to go.

Q: Oh my. How old was Albert, was he the oldest?

A: No, he was, let's see there was Ferd, and Walter, and he was second, but he didn't have to go, and then there was Edna, and Albert, and Edith, and Charles and Alfert. Charles and Alfert, they didn't go to the war necessarily, but they went after the war and had to help clean up a lot of these things. They had to go to the service too, but uh, I know Charles was in Italy and you know they tore up a lot of those cities and they had to go back and clean them up and restore them.

Q: Even after the war was over?

A: Yeah, even after the war was over, they still had to draft fellas to go over there and clean up.

Q: Wow, I didn't know that. Did Albert have to do anything like that?

A: Oh, no he done his share while he was in there, because he was in there three years and that was pretty well his share of the time. He had been overseas, and that all helped, and so did Wilfort. And when they all came back, now Wilfort came back and pretty well stayed home when he came back from Germany. But Albert had to stay at Shonutfelt, Illinois for, oh gosh, I don't remember how long he was out there, but he was probably out there six months at least or longer. And he'd come home on weekends, and that's when he decided he wanted to get married. He didn't want to live with mom and pop, so we had to get married!

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Q: That is so funny, I can't believe he said that!

A: Well he did! And you know in those days' guys didn't just go out and rent an apartment, they stayed home until they got married, and if they didn't, they just stayed home until their parents died and they just stayed there some more! They just didn't go out on their own unless some of them would go out west to the farmers that worked out in Iowa and places and they would you know, work for farmers and they would live there until they got married. You just stayed at home until you got married! Now it's altogether different.

Q: Yeah. Let's see, I guess we can go back to when you were little again, um, did you, well you didn't receive an allowance.

A: Oh, heavens no! I remember we used to have, the government would provide the milk in school for a nickel a carton, and we didn't have a nickel for a carton of milk.

Q: Well, I didn't know about that. So, what where you, how long were you at school for a day? How many hours, from like eight to three? Like they do now?

A: Oh, yes, probably like what they do now.

Q: And then so I guess you would just bring your lunch or something?

A: Yeah, you'd bring your lunch, and then you'd, when I was in grade school, I remember taking molasses and butter on bread. They raised that, we had our own molasses and we had our own butter and mom baked the bread, they had the flour from the wheat, and you'd take the wheat to the mill and get it ground up into flour and yeah, that's just what we had. Everybody else had the same thing until after the war then there was, no it was before the war was over, we had a family move in from out of state, and he worked for the government and they had money. And you know, we remembered that because they had a different type of food than what we did, they could go to the grocery and buy what they wanted.

Q: Oh wow.

A: But we just had common food, we'd maybe have an egg sandwich, but it would be cold and sausage, we'd have after butchering time we'd take sausage in our bucket. And you used to put your food into a half a gallon syrup bucket. We didn't have lunch buckets.

Q: So, it was like a pail?

A: Yeah, it was a pail, yeah. And at school we had our bucket of water with a dipper and everyone drank out of the same dipper.

Q: So that's way different now!

A: Yeah, now they're so picky about germs and all and of course you got sick. You got colds and sore throats, and had to stay home, but you know that was never a point like now.

Absenteeism is so important and all, but in those days, you just took it in stride, of course if you were sick. And you wanted to go to school, you wanted to learn and all.

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Q: Maybe get off the farm for a little bit?

A: Yeah, but it was quite different. Of course, after they war, they started having, like in our beds, we um, mom would buy this material, it was heavy material, and she's made like a big bag and then she'd fill that with corn shuck. When they shucked corn, they'd use the inside leaves off of the ear of corn, and they were softer and they would stuff this bag with the corn shucks, and that's what we slept on.

Q: That was your mattress!

A: Then after the war they started, they had all kinds of programs and all, like they do now, and they learned how to make mattresses.

Q: So, they had government sponsored...

A: Yeah after they war, they tried to sponsor different kinds of activities for them to do, because I remember mom used to go to meetings and she would learn how to embroidery and all that. She already knew that, but she would go anyway just to get out of the house.

Q: It was like a social thing.

A: Sure, it was, it was a social thing for them. But I remember when we got our first mattresses because we just thought it was heaven on earth sleeping on a mattress instead of the corn shucks, because those corn shucks would finally pat back down.

Q: They'd get hard again.

A: Yeah, we only did that like once a year when they would shuck the corn in the fall, then they would make it.

Q: Your new bed.

A: Yes.

Q: I did not know that.

A: Oh yeah. Now maybe they had them in the city. City life was a little different, but they were poor, too! You know after the depression they were poor and didn't have the money to do a lot of things, except the very rich, but there was always the very rich.

Q: In every situation.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, I guess a lot of big changes happened after the war. So how did that feel?

A: Oh, it was just like freedom!

Q: Really? Well obviously...

A: Yeah, well because you didn't have to worry about that. Now when we got married, we couldn't buy furniture, we had to buy used furniture because Albert even worked for a furniture company. There was a furniture store in Tell City, and his cousin, a Goffinet, well a King bought it from a Goffinet, on Main

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Street in Tell City, and Albert worked there because he repaired radios and electric appliances. But he had to still go off that list, what was it he sneaked us in there, because we had a used refrigerator that kept running out of Freon and we got a new bed room suite, yeah, living room suite we bought from his brother and his wife and our first table in the kitchen was a paste board card table and two folding chairs, and I still have the chairs.

Q: Really?

A: That was 62 years ago.

Q: Wow.

A: More than that. But anyway, but then gradually everything caught up again because during the war these factories all they could do was make war products that they could use in the war. And then a lot of the factories didn't have enough workers I guess, and they even closed down during the depression especially. That was before the war the depression was, and it was all just stuff, you didn't know any better you just did what everybody else did. Just lived it.

Q: Right. I've seen from World War II, or maybe it was, no it was in WWII, where a lot of the women went to work in the factories and stuff. Did you know anybody who did that?

A: Oh, yeah. Francis Kuntz, we go out to eat quite often, or we used to more so than we do now, but she worked in an airplane factory in Evansville.

Q: Oh wow.

A: And they made, they helped make airplanes and then a lot of the men went down and helped make these big ships.

Q: Like the ones who didn't go over and fight?

A: Yes.

Q: Huh. But what was it, did you just do it if you wanted to, or?

A: Yeah you weren't drafted to do any of that, but that was work, that was income. A lot of that up here we had Ken-Rad, because I worked there, but that all came, it came, after the war. No, it was there during the war because I worked there during the war.

Q: Did they make anything for the war?

A: They made tubes for radios and see that was a thing they needed, too, in the war, those radio tubes and then in all their equipment. But when I worked there, there wasn't so much as a need for them anymore, as far as government's concerned, but I heard other women talk about how they really, they had to work overtime and everything else and you made, let's see what was my first paycheck? Three or four dollars, I think.

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Q: The whole paycheck?!

A: Well, Albert, I remember his more than I do mine, our house payment was 35 dollars a month and he made 35 dollars a week.

Q: Oh my.

A: So, one week's paycheck went towards the house payment.

Q: Wow. That seems kind of how it is now, too, though.

A: Yeah, because they've talked about that when they advise people, they said never have a bigger house payment than one week's wages.

Q: Right. Well he had it right then.

A: Yeah.

Q: Where did you, you guys moved right into that house, didn't you after you got married?

A: No, no we lived in Tell, City in a small house we paid 6500 dollars for. It was a fairly new home and it was one of those four rooms down, and an attack, we didn't have any rooms upstairs. But we had four kids in there. And then we moved to Patronville, to a little farmhouse because Albert got a job in Evansville, and he wanted to get closer to his job, so we moved to Patronville. That was an older farmhouse that we lived in then. Because I remember the ceiling fell down in the kitchen. The whole ceiling came down! And then in, yeah, we lived in Tell City seven years, we lived in Patronville seven years, and then we moved up here.

Q: I thought you guys had lived there.

A: Huh, uh. And I swore I was never going to move again. But I did.

Q: Just one more time, out here.

A: Yeah, I did. I probably shouldn't tell this, but every time we'd move, I'd get pregnant.

Q: Really? That's funny.

A: Yes. So, I swore I was never going to move again!

Q: Oh, that's why!

A: Yes! And I remember asking the doctor why and he said your body just changes when you do something that drastic. Like when we moved, we had to move all the kids, and the stuff and we had to get settled every time, and he said that's why, because you were off your regular schedule.

Q: That's funny.

A: It wasn't so funny at the time!

Q: Probably not!

A: Yeah, but they're all here and that's fine.

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Q: Well, that is funny. Let's see, did you participate in any school activities or sports? Did they have anything special? Well you said that you went and played baseball.

A: Baseball in grade school, but in high school, no. I was in a couple plays in high school and all, but you know by you living in the country, the bus took you in there, but like when I did have, well like play practice and stuff I would visit some of the girls in Troy and stay, you know how they do now, they sleep over and stuff like that. And I did that, but that was about the only thing I could be in because it was the transportation, and everything just wasn't that...

Q: Because you couldn't get there all the time.

A: So, I wasn't involved in no sports, but in grade school I was.

Q: When did you meet Albert? Was he someone that you always knew?

A: No, I knew of the Meunier family, because they lived between Troy and New Boston, and I lived near New Boston, and I knew of them, but I, Sunday afternoons they neighborhood kids would get together and play baseball, most of the time it was just the guys, but the girls would always go and we'd be in our little huddles like girls do, and all, because I've got pictures somewhere of it. And that's where I met him, at a ball game, out in the cow pasture. These ball games were out in cow pastures. And, anyway, that's where I met him.

Q: So, were you really young, or were you a teen?

A: Well I was young; I was about fourteen. But when I started dating him, when I was fifteen, mom and dad said my brother was dating his sister at the time, and they only would allow me to go with him if Nester and Edith would go too, double date. So that lasted for a while, and then finally Nester and Edith split up, so then they let me go out with him.

Q: But that had been after a while.

A: Well, see that was only about after a year, and then he went to service, so he was gone, and he never got to come home from the time he left until he came back from England. So, he was gone for about two and a half years.

Q: Straight?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh my.

A: So, I dated other fellas but I never, I just dated them and that was it. Only reason I did was, so I'd get to go to a movie or something.

Q: Oh! So, you'd get to go out and do something!

A: Yeah! That's why I dated them!

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Q: Did you tell him that you'd dated other people?

A: Yeah, when he came back, he knew I did. Because we had no promise, we wrote letters, lots, and I know it hasn't been too many years ago when I burned them all. But you know it just got too much moving. But you know, we wrote back and forth the whole time. I wrote to him and kept up on him, because that's how he told me where he was at, was something about a song, Birmingham Jail, and he wrote something about that, I forget how he worded it in the letter, but we figured out he was in Birmingham, England.

Q: That's funny.

A: Because you know they censored all that mail, so you had to, especially he had to be very careful what he wrote in his letters. And there was air mail, we got letters a little bit through that way, because they had free postage.

Q: Air mail?

A: They called it air mail in those days, I guess instead of sending it over here by a ship I guess they'd send it over by plane.

Q: So, it was kind of like they do now I guess, I don't know how they do it.

A: Yeah, of course it wasn't near as prompt. Sometimes now-a-days the mail's not like it used to be! Takes three days to get from here to Corydon!

Q: Ok, do you remember any fads from your youth? Popular hair styles or clothes, or did you participate?

A: Oh yeah, we got the curly perms. Then we had long hair because when I graduated from high school, I had long hair and I didn't when I got married. Oh yeah, you had fads, in high school days, as far as make-up and stuff like that.

Q: Did a lot of people wear make-up when you were in high school?

A: Not as much as they do now, but you wore your lipstick and at least you did that. And then nail polish came in at the end, but I never used nail polish. Never in my life, except the day I got married I used clear.

Q: Wow

A: I never used nail polish because I didn't like it when it chipped.

Q: Yeah that's true.

A: So, I just never did wear nail polish.

Q: So, did you think it was weird when it first came out?

A: Well, yeah but you know when you're young you just go with the flow. You just go with whatever comes out. I remember my grandmother used to make us wear long stockings until May, and going to high school and, well nobody in Troy would wear long stockings so we'd roll them down.

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Q: And then when you got back home, you'd put them back?

A: When we got off the bus, we'd roll them back up. Sneaky!

Q: Yes! Was that because she wanted you to be modest?

A: No, she thought we'd get cold, my goodness she didn't want us to get sick or anything. I forgot what I had, was it Scarlett Fever, yeah that's what I had Scarlett Fever.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, they thought I was going to die. So, they were really protective about taking care of ourselves, and eat, we always had square meals, we never had to worry about that because like I said a while ago, we just raised it all. So, we always had square meals.

Q: Do you remember when you had Scarlett Fever? Or were you too young?

A: No, I was young then I don't remember that.

Q: Um, do you know, did they have any special home remedies? What did you guys use?

A: Well it wasn't homemade, it was, I remember mom used to give us Castrol oil in orange juice, and you know to this day when I eat an orange, I think about that. I never made my kids take Castrol oil because I thought that was the most awful stuff in the world, but you know you had to get a dose of that every once in a while, to clean out your system. But then she'd give us, she bought turpentine and it was special because she'd get it at the drug store, and then put it on sugar for pin worms.

Q: Are pin worms the ones that are in you?

A: In your intestines, yeah.

Q: And you just got it from meat and stuff?

A: I don't know where they came from. I think they were contagious, because if one of them in the family had them, but I don't remember having them. I remember my kids having them, but then they had a medication to give them for when they had them. And I don't know whether they got them at school or where they got them, but I remember them having them. But for us, at home, every spring, I think it was spring, we'd have to take that teaspoon of sugar with turpentine in it, and that was the most awful tasting stuff, but I guess it got rid of the worms.

Q: Eww! I can't imagine. Yuck!

A: And then they'd put this stuff, I forget what they called it, on your chest when you had a cold and they put a cloth over it to get it to soak in.

Q: Oh, yeah, like how they have that Vick's Rub. So, I don't, did it all come about, because they have a medicine for everything now, did that, when you think back was it a gradual thing, the shift to all that?

A: Yeah, of course we went to Doc Snyder, and the only time we went to Doc Snyder was whenever we were really sick, because otherwise mom would use her own remedies, and most of it was like Vick's Salve, and you kept warm, they always wanted to make sure you'd stay warm. When I was sixteen, I had

attacks at work with my side, and of course Doc Snyder was an old country doctor and you know he wasn't up on a lot of modern things, and they'd take me there, and he'd say, "Well, I don't know, she just must have had a stomach problem." And I was sixteen, so I knew everything that was going on, so finally my aunts at Louisville, I had a couple aunts up there, and they said, "Bring her up here, we're going to take care of her." So, they did. They put me in St. Mary Elizabeth Hospital, and it was a teaching hospital, and he were these young interns, they'd come in and look at me, and you know, I was very naive about that, living in the country and all, and they checked me over. They'd come in, and they'd pull those covers off and check me over. They couldn't decide what was wrong with me. So finally, they decided they were going to do an exploratory, and they did. They cut me open, and it was the appendix, and ever time I'd have an attack, that appendix would partially die.

Q: Oh my.

A: Because they said when they took it out it was almost all dried up or whatever, you know. So, I got it in time, because you know if it had gone too far...

Q: Busted or something.

A: Yeah, any of those attacks it could have, but it got so I worked at General Electric that summer, and I was on a machine, a testing machine, I tested tubes, and I couldn't run that machine because I had to do it with my right foot and it would be such a pain that I'd have to stay home and I wasn't making any money when I was at home! And you know it was just terrible, but they finally found that's what it was.

Q: It was appendicitis. Wow.

A: It was what you called a chronic, but now when Jim had appendicitis, when he was ten years old, they called that chronic, because they told us, we didn't have to operate at the time, but I said, "Well, I'm not going to wait until the next one!" So, they took it out that time.

Q: Wow. I know Adam had to have his taken out. That's funny. I guess that's a genetic thing.

A: I don't know.

Q: Did you ever know when you were younger any of your family who had it? Before your kids or anything?

A: Huh, uh, nobody in my family had an appendix operation.

Q: And it was just better?

A: Oh yeah, it was all over with then. But you know the funniest thing was, after I got home, because this was Louisville and they kept me up there a couple of weeks before they sent me home, that incision never healed. And it would drain, it would drain puss. Mom never took me to the doctor! She sent me, I was sixteen, so I was still living at home under her, and all she kept putting stuff on and she'd ask people what else, they'd put whatever remedies, whatever they had on it, and it finally healed. Now that would scare me to death.

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Q: Oh, yeah! Oh my gosh, if you had a wound like that now, you be on isolation.

A: Yeah. And it was the ugliest scare! It was all twisted and everything because that's the way it healed. But then when I had my tubule pregnancy, but that comes later, they cut all that out, and now I got a straight one!

Q: wow.

A: Yeah, but you've got to think the good Lord's with you on some of that stuff, because you just took it in course, you took care of it.

Q: But today I'd be scared to death, isn't that funny?

A: Yeah, it there's any kind of infection, because like Carol's husband now, he had his surgery in March, and that incision hasn't healed yet.

Q: Oh my. Well, they do it different now.

A: Yeah, I know, he's going to have to go through plastic surgery and I don't know what all because it just wouldn't heal.

Q: I think that's so funny how they just opened you up and didn't even think twice about it, and now I don't know that they would.

A: Yeah, because they kept checking me and checking me, and like I said I was sixteen and these good-looking interns would come in there and I was embarrassed to tears! And then they all got together and decided "Let's just open her up, there's got to be something in there wrong." But at the time I didn't have any symptoms when I went in because my aunt said, "Well you can't let that girl go on like that, bring her to Louisville, we'll take care of her." And they did.

Q: So, what were your aunts, were they medical professionals?

A: No, no they were just, but you know they were in the big city, and they thought the little people down here in New Boston, Indiana were peons! And which, you know, Doc Snyder was a good doctor for ordinary things, because he delivered all my babies except Jane, so he was kind of a young doctor, you know when he was doctoring that, and he lost two wives, he was married three times because his first two wives died. So, you know that he didn't know everything!

Q: No! Wow.

A: No, but we had a great lot of confidence in him and everything. So that's just the way it happened. I lost work and that was the worst part of it.

Q: Oh, yeah, I think that is what Adam said about his, "I had to leave work that day!" and I said

A: Yes, that was the worst thing, because at Ken-Rad, because General Electric bought it from Ken-Rad then later on, but yeah that was a wonderful place to go. A lot of the women, they had kids, they didn't worry about their kids, they had a sitter, and they were going to work there. No, when I had kids, when I got pregnant with Carol, I quit. Stayed home and raised my kids.

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Q: Got to do it.

A: That was a full-time job! And Albert always had a job, so that was ok for that.

Q: Well, I guess we can stop for today.