

**Dorothy Wendell West.**

***Clinton Radford West.***

What were your addresses during the war?

**1046 Walter Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois.**

***Linden Street. I forget the exact address. I know where the house is though.***

Can you tell us about your parents and any sisters or brothers?

**Well, my father worked for a bank. My mother was a homemaker. My sister, when she was 21, decided, well the war had started, and she decided she was going to go and enlist because there wasn't a son in the family. My parents said okay because she had always been kind of frail in health, and they didn't think that they would take her. And she came bouncing back and said, "I have three weeks to get my affairs in order and I'm going to be a WAC." And that was not received very well by my parents; they didn't think that was so good. But she did. And she went through officer's candidate training and became an officer. And she was stationed in, let's see it was Camp Tyson, Paris, Tennessee. And that was a unit where they had blimps that was sent out to protect the White House and the Capital if they had an air raid. I don't know how they worked that but that's what it was. And let's see, I was in high school and I was writing Christmas cards when the radio said that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. And I went downstairs and asked my dad because they had an Orson Welles program that was a hoax, and I thought maybe this was another one. And he said no, this was for real.**

Can you tell us about any sisters or brothers you had?

***Well, let's see. I came up here my junior year. My father was in aviation. I grew with it. I was a mechanic on these aircraft which interest you along with a brother. My view of the war is completely different. First, I came up with a southern accent, where I could not go into a store and ask for something and not ask again. They knew what I said. They just wanted to hear the accent. Lived in Pride Town, Des Plaines, that's what they called it. It was a swampy area and they built it up in there. I was interested in aviation mechanics. They paved the road there with a real steam roller. I talked to the man how we went through testing it because I understand mechanics, which you have to do with a boiler so you are not killed. Oh, I don't know, it's just a... I did not... I think maybe brother John may have worked at Douglas. I don't really remember. I did with my father, repair an aircraft as a child. Recovered it, did a good job, and learned to fly. And then joined the service while it was still legal. So I am a legal veteran. I can be buried in a military hospital if I elect. I'm not going to do it.***

**Cemetary.**

***Well, her father is buried from World War I. My father was an airplane mechanic, World War I. And he is buried in a military hospital. Two uncles professional.***

**Cemetary.**

***It just goes on for a long time. Let's just stop.***

Can you tell us about your neighborhood growing up?

**It was a small town. Des Plaines was small town at that time. You knew all your neighbors. In fact, the high school, Des Plaines people knew everybody from Des Plaines because we went through from grade school, you know, kindergarten on up. Same thing with Park Ridge. And I hate to say it, but we were rather biased the influx of people coming from all over the country to work at Douglas Aircraft. And it did change a little bit in our outlook. They used to say that Main East was the country club of high schools. And I think we were rather spoiled because we had golf, they had a plane. They could go down in the basement and have rifle instruction. Is that enough?**

Yes. Can you tell me what your parents did for a living?

**My father was with banks- Cell Bank, Citizens Bank, and then finally Citizens Bank. I guess Citizens was in Park Ridge. Cosmopolitan was the third one. My mother didn't work. Clinton?**

***My mother was a school teacher in Des Plaines. And when she had trouble with the kids, she'd say, "Sittin' ze down" and all these little German kids shut up and sat down. [LAUGHTER] My father, as a I said, was a mechanic, an aviator. And going back, as a child I lived in a lot of places, including the middle of the Mississippi River with water under the hull, which is a completely different story.***

**His dad bought, what was...**

***He bought a 2000 ton sailing barnacle, Linda, and a cherry soffit [05:52] for \$500, which was a humongous amount of money. You could buy a new car for that. Because he was an incurable romantic. He eventually had to scrape it and probably the iron went to Japan to build the war machine.***

The country was coming off of the Depression when the war started. How was the economic situation of your family?

We never had any difficulty. I had friends that would tell me about - when I started working in the city - that would tell me how hard it had been. And we just never had that. There was no break, you know, in our finances. And I had a great childhood, so... I don't know.

*No problem. My father always had work and later on my mother taught school. So that was alright.*

Can you tell us about what you both were like as teenagers?

[LAUGHS] Well, I wore braces and I had glasses, so I was a little intimidated by that fact all of the sudden to have that. I had friends. We did lots of things. We would go into Evanston to go shopping, the girls. We went downtown. One friend and I would go to Carsons so we could buy modern library books for a dollar out of our allowance. It was just a very easy life. I guess after I started working and heard some of the other stories of friends of mine, I realized it was not what everybody else had.

*What was the question? [LAUGHS]*

What were you like as a teenager?

*Well, like I say I went to three different high schools. The first one, the high schools in Texas, the freshman year is in the junior high. And the three sacred things in Texas is football, ROTC, and prayers in the, by the local Baptist minister. Now they got rid of it in Texas, and those crazy Texans are trying to bring it back. If it's your religion, that's great. Then I decided I wanted to learn things. I took a streetcar across Fort Worth to a technical high school because I wanted to learn woodshop and other things. That was a mistake because I was the only kid in class who wanted to learn. I had a fight; I beat the guy. I got a B just because I had to do something. Then I came up to Main, where you people are much more civilized.*

Can you tell us about the atmosphere at your high school when the war started?

*Well, I have to say it really, except for the senior boys leaving to enlist and the sale of war stamps and things like that, it really didn't affect us that much. I am ashamed to say that. But it was true. It was only after they started having movies depicting battles, you know, that you became aware of what was happening. I will say, when I was 15, I was working downtown during the summer for an export/import firm, typing Spanish form letters. And I had to check lists of people that were Nazis sympathizers because we didn't, we couldn't do business with them. And I was there when D-Day happened, and they closed the office and we went down Madison. Everybody was shouting and hugging. And we went to the Palmer House Empire Room. Of course they could have drinks; I couldn't. I was only 15. And now I wonder how I had job, because I think most students needed a*

pass, sixteen year old, but because I was younger and with them, they probably assumed I was sixteen.

Can you tell us about your friends when you went to high school?

Well, I had like two sets of friends. And [LAUGHS] if one was doing something I wasn't interested in, I would see what the other set was doing. [LAUGHS] Well, I had one set, one particular friend, that we both like to read and we would swap books. That was the one we would go downtown to buy books. I had another friend that was very frivolous and kind of ditz. And she was fun to go shopping with in Evanston. We just had a nice friendly group. Well one thing, I think we rode the bus, the same school bus. We got it locally. And so you had probably half an hour, forty-five minutes that you could gossip on the way to school in the morning. In the afternoon, it was whatever you... Sometimes you got a ride. Sometimes you walked.

*Just want to make sure you go back. There's that part about what do you remember about the start of the war. Just make sure. It's in the beginning. There's a little section there. And Clinton didn't... What do you remember about the start of the war? The second page. There you go.*

Clinton, what do you remember about the start of the war?

*I don't remember it at all, I don't know why. The only thing I remember was when Japan, when Hiroshima was bombed, I was on an elevated train and I read a newspaper over a man's shoulder. And I'm not ignorant [12:14] to most people. Thousands of people in this world knew about the possibility of the bomb, including me. And I misread it. I thought it said they dropped it. My first thought was we've lost the war. And then I reread it and then I realized we did win the war. What people don't know, in about 19... early... I believe it was Popular Science or something had put in the possibility of that bomb. And we got on the program, they went through all the libraries and confiscated those. It was known all over the world by most advanced scientists and learned people that that bomb was possible. And since I have a background in chemistry, the real problem was how to get the material, not how to build a bomb.*

Did you work or do any volunteer work as a student?

*No, if I did, I don't remember it. I think my father required me to do a number of things. I did for him whatever he asked.*

What did you think of the war?

*Well, my hobby is history so I can go on for hours. And it may overlay what I know now what I thought then. It was the most destructive war in history. Maybe not on a percentage basis, because there were some really nasty ones. But in the total it was there. I've*

***gotten into the personality of the people that drove it. I say, my hobby is history, so that's something we want to go on right now.***

Okay. Did any of your friends enlist?

***I wouldn't have known because I came up here. I didn't... What few friends I got in high school, they're all, I've all lost them or their gone or dead. So I have no idea.***

And did you enlist?

**Yes.**

When and what branch?

***1946. United States Army. And I was assigned to the Air Core, and was I set to become a C-54 mechanic.***

And what did you do?

***Worked on these things. Started them, whatever they needed. Tried to outrun my goofy commanding general. And you can't outrun a B-25 with a Jeep. And that idiot, we had a safety officer who was a civilian, and he ate him out with gut, because he was an idiot. A lot people don't realize it, B-25's are relatively easy aircraft to fly so they issued them to officers. Very often the co-pilot did the work, and the general took the credit. [LAUGHS]***

So Main High School had assemblies when student soldiers were killed. What do you remember about that?

**I don't recall that. I do know - was it Rickenbacker?**

***I didn't hear.***

**Rickenbacker, was that the one that was, who had been in...**

***I wouldn't know.***

**Well, we had a well-known war hero come and I think it was Rickenbacker. And one of the things he told us, he said, "When you are starting to work", he said, "set aside a certain amount of your salary, so that you can tell, if you don't like the job you can tell them to go to hell and leave." And that was one thing I remembered. And I always saved money. I would quit jobs and I never had to worry because I had my little backlog.**

The war bond drive to buy a C-54 built at Douglas Aircraft happened in 1944, 1945. What do you remember about that?

**Well, I was not actively involved in selling. The only thing I did was save stamps. And I think that I was given war bonds as a gift. But I myself didn't do too much. I think Park Ridge really spearhead that drive and did very well.**

*I may have bought some stamps. But since I worked for my father and was not paid, I had no money anyway, other than just an allowance to go to school.*

So, neither of you sold bonds to anyone?

**No.**

**No.**

[FEMALE VOICE] Make sure you ask her the top questions. You forgot to ask her those ones.

Okay.

[INAUDIBLE WHISPERING]

Okay.

**I did think of one thing when you asked about home life. We had a neighbor across the street who would rent rooms out. A gentleman had gone over there and decided he didn't like the house. It was overrun with cats. And he came to our house because we had the flag with the star showing that we had someone in service. And he asked if he could rent a room. And my father said, "No, we don't do that." And he said he was in security for Douglas Aircraft and he thought (he had a very good spiel) that if they needed places for people to stay, that you might just be stuck with anybody. And he said, "You've got somebody in service. Don't you want to, you know, do something for the war effort?" So my father said okay. But they took my room. [LAUGHS] And I got my sister's, which was larger. But, so he did stay with us. And he had been with the FBI and had said that his wife left because they wanted to get revenge on him. He even had a steel door put on his home. And I know he used to, he had a target set up in the closet. And with an air rifle, he used to do gun practice up there. And one time I answered the telephone and they said, "This is the Chicago Police and do you have someone, do you know someone by this man's name?" And I said yes. And he said, "I'm sorry to say, we have taken a body out of the river and it had the wallet in with this man's name." You know, we/re were startled. My dad said, "Don't worry, I don't think it's him." And sure enough, about an hour and a half later, he showed up. And he said, "Oh, it's just all a mistake." So either a pickpocket picked on the wrong man and ended up in the river or it was something else. But nothing**

was ever... nobody ever contacted us again. Nothing was ever said. So I don't know. But this man was very... He looked like a French Canadian. He had huge shoulders. And my father was not afraid of most men. But he said he would be very difficult to win a fight with. So he stayed there until D-Day, and then he decided...he had a new wife. And my father said no, he couldn't stay. So they left and I got my room back. [LAUGHS]

How did you guys feel about all the changes you experienced during the war years?

Well, when you don't know, you just accept. I mean, everybody else was collecting tin cans. You had to smash them. Collecting all the grease that you used in, you know, cooking. And that was taken to the butcher. Everybody had gas rationed. I meant that was... Shoes. I do know we didn't have gas rationing to enable us to go up to Wisconsin, but our neighbor was someone who had unlimited. So he gave us some of tickets. And we got up almost to where we wanted to go, but we ran out of gas. And the gas station said, "They haven't made a delivery yet. You have to wait until they deliver." So a little line of cars was waiting there. We waited about an hour and a half. And finally the truck came, and then we could get gas and continue.

[INAUDIBLE WHISPERING]

Okay. What do you remember about VE-Day?

Well, I really don't remember that much about that one. How about you, Clinton?

*Well, like I say, the only thing I remember was I **owned [27:08]** the bomb, that was it.*

It was just over. I think everybody was amazed at that effects of that bomb. And there was a lot of controversy that the United States had used it. But they said they saved so many lives by cutting the war short with it, that it actually was more humane.

*The order had gone out from the Japanese high command to kill all of the prisoners. And that bomb saved those people's lives. If you get into Japanese psychology, Japan was run by a minor group, the warlords, and they would kill anybody, any Japanese that opposed them. I could go on. We won't go on with that.*

Okay. So what do you remember about VJ-Day?

Oh, well VE... I called it VD-Day because that was the first that was Europe. That's right. That's when I was downtown and everybody was celebrating. VJ-Day was the one where I don't remember where I was or...

You graduated at almost the same time as the end of the war. Can you tell us about your life right after graduation?

Well, I had a scholarship and I could have gone to college. I decided I didn't want to. I just wanted to get out into the business world, which I did. And I did finally go to business school and the girls in my class were all going to, I think it was Ms. Gibbs, which was supposed to get you ready for higher positions. We had to wear gloves and hats. I decided I didn't want that. I'd rather go to the Brine and Stratton School, where they were accepting veterans because that would be coed. [LAUGHS]. So that's what I did, and I left that and went into... The first interview I had was with a railroad. And they hired me. I was 19. And that was interesting.

Clinton?

*Well, I joined the service. I spent three years in the service. I spent two years in the Crown Colony of Newfoundland before it was part of Canada. So I understand those people, how they think, what goes on. I still follow their news.*

Looking back on your experience as a teenager during the war years, what would you want to tell today's generation about your experience?

Well, I think even though we went through a war, I think young people now a days are more aware of world affairs and politics. And I think we were rather naive at that time. So you people are really better off [LAUGHS] than what we were.

*Communication today is completely different than it was in the past. You are flooded with it. But you still better know who is telling the truth and not. It is very difficult. Also, your own personal experience will affect how you receive news. That's something I've learned from history.*

Does anyone have any other questions?

I have a few.

*Yeah, why don't you go ahead.*

Should we switch?

*Yeah, why don't you switch?*

[INAUDIBLE WHISPERING]

Alright, so I just wanted to talk about your personal life a little bit more.

Okay.

How did things change in your family when the war started?

**Well, my sister left. Other than that everything went on as usual. Except we did have the introduction of a stranger in our household. We didn't, we weren't able to travel as much because my parents were both from Wisconsin, and we had spent more time with them, which we were not able to do because of gas rationing.**

So then about the gas rationing, what was it about your neighbor that allowed them to have unlimited gas?

**He worked for the telephone company. And he had to have gas, you know, to service because they were short of young men in AT&T then, and he was older. So he was doing double time.**

So you were trying to go to Wisconsin to visit your family up there?

**Mhmm.**

Okay. And then about you, how did things change in your family?

***The gas, I never saw it. We didn't really require it. And that was about it.***

Did food rationing kind of...

***I didn't.. It didn't bother me at all. When I grew up, I saw abject poverty. I saw people walking to school barefoot in the snow, and you get to where you are inured to it. It wasn't just, but that's life.***

**May I say something about the food?**

Sure.

**[LAUGHS] Food rationing, we had some very peculiar recipes that came out at that time so that you could save on... You didn't get as much meat, and so they had vegetables that were supposed to have protein. Lots of, I guess, mushrooms, were touted as having protein. And squash. And things that the army might not want [LAUGHS] is what we subsisted. But, I mean, with food, you still had food so...**

That's important. Also, how was dating like in high school? Was that high importance to you?

**Not to me. There were, a lot of my girlfriends were very... well, they were very interested in John [LAUGHS] because he was extremely good looking. And I tended to like older**

people. Well, for the turnaround dance, I took a senior when I was a sophomore. I thought some of the boys my age were rather juvenile. [LAUGHS]

*I remember going to two dances. Once I invited a girl from Park Ridge. Her name passes out of my head right now.*

Good. [LAUGHS]

*[LAUGHS] And then her girlfriend asked me to the girl's choice, and I went with her. I was interested in girls. You are at that age. You people are aware of that. When you are just bubbling with hormones, but so be it.*

So did neither of you work as a student during high school?

She worked.

Okay.

I did. Well, I tried. Most of my friends were waitresses. Two of them worked out at Douglas in the cafeteria. And I think a lot of the students from the high school got jobs. That review that you had with the class of '45 and '46, some of the fellows said they had worked at Douglas. And they got 65 cents per hour, which amazed me because I was paid \$25 for my work, but of course I had to spend a good part of that getting a train ticket down.

*You said 25 a month or week?*

It was a month.

*Okay.*

But I had to spend a good portion of that just getting down and back. But that was much better. I tried waitressing and I didn't like it. My neighbor's mother had a restaurant in Arlington Heights, and I went there one afternoon. The neighbor said, "Well, I knew it was Dorothy because I could see her picking things up like this around the table." And I didn't go back. So the one I had downtown was the only job I had.

What did you say you did downtown?

I typed Spanish form letters and I was responsible for checking out the Do Not, the Nazi sympathizer list, that we were not supposed to...

*Did you find any matches? Anybody? What would happen then if there was a Nazi sympathizer?*

**I went to my boss. I think I only found one or two. And I went to him and then they just ceased, because they would have been fined and...**

So are you multi-lingual then? You know Spanish?

**A long time ago I might have. I took Spanish lessons from the wife of the Columbian counsel. And we were required to speak only Spanish. I was getting pretty good. But then I quit the job I had and I went to San Francisco, so [LAUGHS] that was the end of that.**

*So tell us about how you guys ended up, meeting, dating, and getting married.*

**Well, I worked downtown and my mother had had an operation. My dad worked for the bank. The bank was open Friday nights, so that kind of killed my social life. And I went to the church. They had a young adult group and they had contacted me. So I figured okay, I'll go, that will be something to get out of the house. And I met Clinton there. [LAUGHS]. He was the catch of the day I guess. All of the girls went out [LAUGHS] with Clinton.**

***No, that's flattering, but... I had my choice, and in the end I chose this one.***

*You chose well.*

**We've lasted 53 years, so I guess we did do...**

*Congratulations.*

**Thank you. Well, he had one girl that he would... He had a Jaguar sports car, and when it would come over the railroad tracks you could hear it RRRUMMM. And if he wasn't at my door in five minutes, I knew he was seeing Sue on the next block over. So I could [LAUGHS] kind of keep track of, you know, with what was going on.**

*Did you have a car in high school, Clinton?*

***No, the...***

**Very few did.**

***During war time. I grew up partly in Louisiana when there was no driving license. And you would see eight year olds driving. I'm not kidding you. Well, they did. There was not... What little driving I did, I did not have a driving license. I remember getting stuck under the L when the car got two gears at once. I ran into a tavern. I don't remember ever***

***being in one. And grabbed some matches and dived under the car. Reached up and said, "One of these levers will get me in the proper gear. I hope I pull the right one." I took it and drove it back, picked up my father. And we fixed the car and went home. I did understand mechanics. I worked with them too much.***

*Was it difficult when you came up here from.. where was the last state you moved from? Was it Tennessee or what was it?*

***I came here up in the sophomore, I mean I was a junior up here. And I graduated in '45, so that would be '43.***

**Texas and Louisiana.**

*Oh, you're from Texas.*

**Yes.**

*Was it really... did people really give you a hard time for being from the South when you came up here?*

***No, no they were just interested in the voice, that was all. It was a different culture. My mother did not understand some of the speech patterns. I did. I have never had any trouble understanding English, whether it is spoken by New England, Canadians, India. I can, I read that.***

**But do they have certain colloquialisms from the south. My sister married someone from Tennessee. Very well educated, but he would still say, "You wait on me, Cindy." And she'd say, "I don't wait on anybody." [LAUGHS] And so he finally got some of those out of the vocabulary.**

***Oh, you become aware. There are various words. Toy, down south it's play pretty. "I got my new play pretty. You want to see my new roadster?" It could be anything.***

**Yeah, your mother always did that with the children. It startled me because she was well educated, and to me play pretty is not a [LAUGHS] good description. You know, it just...**

***No, she and I, we were able to look at the difference in culture. She's Scandinavian, which are cold in public, very warm in private. And, well, Italians are loud all the time and I became aware of the black population, their differences and how they think.***

**Those are stereotypes now, dear. You don't do that [LAUGHS]**

***They aren't always stereotypes, you find out. I mean, it's fine, but you can't say any one person is any one thing because you don't know. And since I grew up in the South, and because I cussed in the same color, I will ask black men sometimes where they were brought up. One fellow was a pilot in Nebraska, so he had Midwest, and you can go. And I can hear the accent from a mile away. Even in the local area, around Fort Worth, there are two of them. One is very melodious, and the other screeches. These are the white people, not the blacks.***

*Was there anything...*

Do you want to switch? Do you want to switch seats?

*Okay, yea. So when you came up, was anything surprising or different about Illinois or coming north? Or not too much?*

***No, it's just colder. Learned how to shovel coal, bout it. That's about it.***

*Did you guys have coal fire furnaces?*

***Yes, that's what it is.***

**[LAUGHS] We were lucky.**

***I like to rise early. I'd get up and fire the coal. My brother, John, who was in the other class of - what was it?***

**'46.**

***'46, would do it at night. And that was it. It didn't take long to learn. Course you have coal dust and other things but...***

**Now that was one thing after the war, we got in line to get oil. You had to sign up. And if you thought about it and got in there from the beginning, then you could get off the chore of shoveling coal.**

*Right. Right. I forgot. I've heard about it, but no one has it anymore. I forgot.*

***It's not hard to learn, but you have to be shown once how to do it. How to make it burn fast. How to bank it so it lasts all night. There's a technique to it. You have to rake out the cinders. It's a messy thing.***

**They put that on the driveway, used the cinders on the driveway lots of times.**

*Oh, okay.*

***Now, there is a ship on the Great Lakes that's still burning coal. And there's a big deal about them dumping the ashes. Interesting ship. We took a trip on it once just out of curiosity. Since I like ships I understand it.***

*So, Clinton, you enlisted... did you enlist before you graduated or after?*

***A year afterwards. My brother graduated, it was 1946. Legally, he and I are veterans of World War II.***

*Right. Now, did you guys, you didn't know anyone else who joined the service, other than your sister?*

***My sister. Oh, my cousin, George, from Wisconsin.***

*Oh yeah?*

***He was an expert skier, and he hoped to get in the ski troops. And of course he ended up in the Pacific [LAUGHS] on an island, a rock.***

*Of course. So what happened to your sister. She was a WAC officer, and then when did she come home? And what was she...*

***Well, she met her husband in the service. And they married. And when they were closing up Camp Tyson, they were shipping personnel over to the eastern, the Japanese war. And she was pregnant by that time, so she was out of the service. My brother-in-law was an MP, and apparently he was still needed while they were closing down the camp. You know, you're talking about having problems, when I went down to Tennessee to visit them, Memphis, I got all of this, "this is a Yankee girl. They carry their own bags and open their own doors."***

*Really?*

***Yeah, they teased me.***

***We were trained down south to open the doors for women. You gave them their seat on the train or whatever, the streetcar. And up here - BANG - you finally learn you just take it yourself.***

***But they were just teasing. 'Cause my brother-in-law is 11 years older than I, I was his kid sister, so...***

*Well, I think that those are, I really appreciate that. Those were all the questions. Did anyone else have other questions, follow up questions?*

[INAUDIBLE WHISPERING]

*Oh, go ahead, you can ask.*

[INAUDIBLE WHISPERING]

*Oh, okay. So I will just tell you a little bit about. We found the, you know the plane they dedicated? So it is actually still in existence. It's not flyable, but it's in a boneyard in the desert. But it's a town...*

*It's on a Native American reservation.*

*It's on an Indian reservation.*

***I think it's with a with a whole bunch of other aircraft.***

*Yeah.*

***They chop up for parts or whatever.***

*Right. But we've located it and actually talked to the tribal leaders and may be able to get some of the parts out of it.*

*Oh.*

***Now, there is a **Conegan [42:26]** outfit. It still flies 54's in North Canada with the piston engines. It interests me because I know something about it. My father flew it with a German pilot after World War II. He flew the Mexican president's loot into the islands so it's not seen. He flew freshwater porpoises out of the Amazon to Florida, and a number of other things. So we got interested in what it did. They flew it overweight. And a lot of aircraft have various weights, which is legal down in South America. Which is scary, because if it is loaded with explosives and he loses an engine, it may go boom.***

*Did you know... During the war, did your father work at the Douglas plant?*

***He was a mechanic, kind of a co-pilot. He would check them. Well, one thing, all kinds of things you have to do. You have prim tabs, you have to see if they are correctly installed. In a large airplane, if they are miss set, you cannot overpower it. You are going down.***

That one article said he was a test pilot, too. I don't know if that was just making it more interesting.

*I'm not sure. My father liked to exploit things. But he was aviator, and he did understand aircraft. And before he came up here, he had been building North American T-6's. Like I said, his aviation went back to World War I.*

*So he did work at the Douglas plant?*

**Yes, he did work at the Douglas plant. I still have a 1000 watt bulb out of the Douglas plant.**

*Oh, okay. Yeah, so that's one souvenir you had from there?*

**We had the filing cabinets from there.**

*We had all kinds of things. And he liked to build things. And he took a lot of lumber out of there and built the garage that has been torn down long years later.*

**We got lots of lumber too to use in the one little... Well, that's another thing, you got to have hot water. It was a little kind of a furnace thing. And you heat that up, and then the water would get hot in the hot water tank. Otherwise we had cold water.**

*So how did you keep... did you have a little coal fire for the hot water tank or?*

**We did. I don't know.**

*Most places, you want hot water, you go turn the gas under the water heater for your bath. It did not run. It was not regulated.*

*Huh.*

*But much by that, you heated on the stove and pour it in the tub.*

**And if you had a date and you washed your hair, you had to stick your head in the oven because there were no hairdryers at that time.**

*Really?*

**Well, maybe, I don't... We didn't have any, I know.**

*That's right though.*

**Then later on they got those huge things that you could buy and have it at home.**

*Wow, that's great.*

**Well, when you woke up in the morning, I always had the top of my dad's pajamas. And I would sleep in that, put my clothes on top of the radiator. My dad would get up early, start the fire and the radiator would get warm. My clothes would be warm and I could get dressed underneath the top, because it was cold. You know, by that time the furnace had gone out during the night and you had to start it up again.**

*I see. Right, you had to stoke it again in the morning.*

**And in the morning, if you washed your face, it was ice cold water. [LAUGHS] So you bathed in the evening when you had the hot water heater hot.**

*I see. Huh, didn't know that.*

**Well, camping was nothing, you know, because that was what we had at home when we were growing up.**

*Sure.*

**Except the first, oh, nine years of my life, I lived in the city. And there we had a co-op apartment. And there we always had hot water. We always had heat.**

*Right.*

**So, we moved out to Des Plaines. There were less than 10,000 people at that time. And that was rural.**

*I forgot to... did you have a Victory Garden or anything?*

**No, we didn't. We didn't have room for something like that.**

*Oh, okay. You guys didn't have one. Did you guys have one?*

***There was a little bit in Texas before we came North. We had a lot in Fort Worth. It was a small house. There was plenty of room. We weren't very good farmers at the time. I know more about it now. I know how to make it go. But it really doesn't interest me too much. But if I had to, I could do it.***

**Well, our relatives in Wisconsin had a summer home and the home in town. And you could go down the bank and get on the river and take that down to where the summer**

home was, Lake Wausau. And he had a huge lot. And he had an enormous Victory Garden. It was watered by the lake. And lots of neighbors benefited. And of course you canned in those days. That's another thing. You got a ration for a hundred pounds of sugar if you were canning.

*Did you do that?*

**My mother did, yeah.**

*Did she? Did you help out with the canning?*

**[LAUGHS]. Only the grape. My mother didn't want to... You put grapes in a bag and you had to squeeze it to get the juice out. Well, your hands got purple. She didn't want to have purple hands, so I had to do that. [LAUGHS] And to this day, I don't like grape jelly. [LAUGHS]**

*I understand.*

**We would go into Michigan and get a bushel of peaches, and one of apples, and got grapes, and berries if they were in season when we went.**

***Fruit is not the same it used to be. If you had a peach, it was fuzzy, almost stung your mouth if you bit it. But some of them tasted better. If you start messing with it, they don't always keep the taste. So vegetables and that type of thing have changed a lot.***

*Sure.*

***In the old days, you didn't get... You can buy a watermelon and they were basically seedless. You didn't get that in those days.***

*Right.*

***That's not a big deal. Spa-tuey and you are done. [LAUGHS]***

*Right. Did you have rations- did you have like shoe rations?*

**Yes.**

*Did you have any problems with that?*

**[LAUGHS] Well, I bought shoes that were not rationed. The first time I wore them, the soles just separated from the top part. So after that I was more careful and I only bought, you know, with the coupon.**

*Right.*

**That was a scam. [LAUGHS]**

***Well, you used to resole shoes. Modern shoes you can't do much with.***

*Right.*

***'Cause they are made in one unit. And I've tried it. Just junk the things and buy some more. It's not cost effective. In the old British army and the Roman army, they had people who did resoling of the soldiers' shoes. That goes back for thousands of years. People are not aware of that.***

*Yeah, right. Okay. Alright, does anybody else have anything?*

You said something about a summer home one of your neighbors had on a Lake...

**It was Lake Wausau. It was up in Wisconsin.**

How do you spell that?

**W-A-U-S-A-U. And they had the end unit. Their property was next to the county silum. [LAUGHS] And they rotate their cattle. And when one pasture was down, they would move it to another. So we could play if the cattle were not in that area at that time. But, no they had chickens. First time - I was a city kid - the first time I saw a chicken get the head cut off, it was awful because it kept on moving. [LAUGHS] They said it takes a while for the nervous system to recognize it.**

***Well, when you walk or anything else, the spine runs it. Even human beings. You stand beheaded, they'll walk. It's not how the human brain is rigged and so forth.***

**Well, to this day, I don't really care much for chicken. [LAUGHS]**

*[LAUGHS] I can understand that. Well, thank you very much for coming. That has been really, really great.*

*Yes.*

**Well, it was painless. Thank you.**

*Well, thank you.*

Thank you.

*Any other? Just want to make sure.*

Yeah.

*Yeah, go ahead.*

[FEMALE] Did either of you play any sports in high school or were involved in any clubs?

**Well, I think I was in Latin and Debate. I can't remember. I think I had some golf. I can't remember if it was then. I know I had golf lessons, but I can't remember if they were private now or if that was from the school.**

***Again, I played freshman football. Learned the fundamentals of football, how to punch through a line. And in the service, when they put the young men to fight it out, the opposition never understood how I could go through him. I didn't tell him. [LAUGHS]***

*Okay, well thank you very much. And we'll keep in touch as we finish up the project. We'll want to show you the whole thing.*

***Okay.***

**That would be interesting.**

*Thank you very much for coming in.*

Yeah, thank you.

Thank you.