

Howard Horn: Hi, I'm Howard Horn, and I'm sitting with Kathryn Louden. We are sitting here in PDR-E in the Forum of Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa. I'm here to do an oral history. Today's date is April 22, 1993. And, um, I'd like to begin with just asking you, um, where and when were you born?

Kathryn Loudon: I was born in the Methodist Parsonage at a little place, um, I can't think of the name of it now. It's in Delaware County.

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: And, um, I was born the Eighth of August in 1919.

HH: Ok, um, and what, um, was your family back then?

KL: Um, I had one older brother whose 20 months older than I, and um that's my mother and father.

HH: Uh-hu. Do you have any other brothers and sisters?

KL: No.

HH: I was just checking.

KL: That was it.

HH: And um what was your early family life like?

KL: Well, I think I was a very happy child, but I was... um... I don't quite know how to say it, I just think that I experienced happiness and I, um, was very satisfied with my life. I think, um, if I remember things in my childhood, they're generally, um, um, associated with happy things, and mother will tell me, um, has told me of different traumatic experiences that happened in my childhood, and I don't recall them at all.

HH: (laugh)

KL: Um, and, um so I think that I was just kind of oblivious of things that were problems to the rest of the family. Um, but, um, um, I... my brother and I got along very well until we became teen-agers, and then the, um, relationship changed.

HH: Uh-hu, uh-hu. Um, what do you remember of school... going to school back then?

KL: Yes, I remember going to school, and um, ah especially certain teachers. My fourth-grade teacher, um Miss Horn, I remember vividly. Now, I don't remember why that is, um but she stands out and, um, I remember going to school, walking to school, and walking home, um, I um I always did like school. Um, ah, I don't know that I was an exceptionally smart student, but, um, I enjoyed school.

HH: And what did your mother and father do?

KL: My father was a minister, but, um since he, he had some ill health problems, and, um, I was fourteen when he died, and he'd been several years ahead of that. He had been, um, an invalid, so I didn't really get much living in a parsonage. And um, so I can't really relate to, um to being a preacher's kid, um in the sense that some other people whose parents were in that field can.

HH: But you were then, um, very religious?

KL: Oh, we always went to church. I don't know if you'd call that very religious or not? (laugh) Yes, we always went to church, and um, at the time that I grew up, um, the church... also served as a social center. That's where your best friends were, and um, that's where programs were. Um, it was more than just a Sunday morning experience. There was also a Sunday night

service, and in the church I went to in my teen-age years, there was also a Wednesday service. And, um, ah I didn't feel that I was... particularly more religious than my friends.

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: And, some of the best friends I've had are friends that came from that experience.

HH: And do you remember some of the experiences with your friends from back then?

KL: Oh, I don't know. Um, a bunch of us girls would, um, get together in the afternoon, and, um, on Sunday afternoon sometimes, and just walk around town. Um, by that time in my life I was living in Witchitaw, Kansas, so, which is rather large, a large city. And, um, still we'd get together, or else we'd go and rent bicycles, and, and um, bicycle without the traffic problems that, um (laugh) that came later. But, um, that was the kind of thing that we did.

HH: Okay, and um, did you grow up in Witchitaw also?

KL: I moved to Witchitaw when I was about seven years old.

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: And um, I spent the rest of my growing up years there until I left for college.

HH: And um, then with your father an invalid, mother basically brought you up then?

KL: Uh-hu. Although I remember my father's influence on me, but he died in 1933, which was right in the middle of the Depression. And, um, for several years before that my mother had worked at the only jobs that were available. Um, she worked cleaning house for people. She got 25 cents an hour. Can you believe that?

HH: Well, in today's standards...

KL: Yes.

HH: that would probably be very different...

KL: Ah, yes.

HH: still...

KL: But nevertheless, um, she worked hard, and um, I look back now and wonder how I could be as blase and happy as I was when my mother was just working her fingers to the bone practically. And I was seemingly just taking it for granted that, that um, she would provide for the family, and it took me a long while to mature enough to um, ah realize what all she did.. to bring up the family, because I was fourteen and my brother was not quite sixteen, um, when my father died, and so, um, she had a big responsibility.

HH: Ok. Um, now what do you remember of the Great Depression, at least its effects on you personally?

KL: I guess, um, like others at that time, we were poor, but um, we didn't pay much attention to being poor.

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: Just everyone was. We didn't have a car, but we were within walking distance of, well, there was a grocery store close, and um, a drug store close, and the school was right near. And we were, oh, seven or eight blocks from the church. And, ah, also, there was a good bus system in um, Witchitaw. Everybody rode the bus, and, um, there when I felt like, that yes, I wished I could have something that I didn't have. But um, there were a few

times when I can remember being hungry, but um, those are few.
HH: Uh-hu.

KL: And, um, I know that my mother supplied me with as much as she could.

HH: And, um, ok. It was during the Depression, social life was pretty similar to what it was before?

KL: Uh-hu, uh-hu.

HH: You still had enough money that you were able to go off and rent bicycles and that sort of thing with your friends?

KL: Well, um, ya maybe that came a little bit later, but, um, we had one bicycle, but my brother had it. That, I think, is probably the thing, that, that came between us was my resentment of the fact that he was a boy, and he could do this, and he could do that, and I couldn't. So you see, there comes my stubborn streak.

HH: (Laugh)

KL: But, um, when he wasn't riding the bicycle I could ride it.

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: So, um, I don't know whether mother insisted that we share or not, but it seemed to me that he got the lions share of the deal.
(Laugh)

HH: And, so you said you, you quarreled with him then in your teenage years.

KL: Well, I think that um, my father dying when he did, um, maybe Edward realized that he was the man of the family, and um, he began criticizing my friends. "Why did I run around with Pat? And, you can't go out with that guy."

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: And, um, he, he got very dictatorial I thought. And, um, then he would tease me and tease me, and I would get mad and cry and, um, throw things, too. So I wasn't exactly, you know...

HH: Innocent.

KL: (Laugh), No, um, I, I, um developed me temper. (Laugh) but, I think that, um, um, we were just getting to know each other-- just getting back together as adults...

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: when he was killed in the Second World War. So, I've, um spent a lot of time wondering how our relationship would have been over the years, because that's been...well, in June it will be 50 years...

HH: Right.

KL: that he's been gone. So, um, one can't help but wonder how the relationship would (inaudible) because we did get along so well when we were children.

HH: Right.

KL: It was just, well, the tempestuous teens--they're teenagers that no one can get along with. And I probably was one of them.
(Laugh)

HH: (Laugh) Ok, so you lived in Witchitaw up until you went to college. Where did you go to college?

KL: I went to college at a college that is now something else (laugh). I came to Oskaloosa, Iowa and went to a college called John Fletcher. And, um the buildings are now occupied by a bible college.

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: Um, but, um I went there. That, that was my mother's home town. And, um she had gone to it when it was still another institution. And, um, so um, my grandmother, my father's mother, helped with a little bit with my expenses, and I worked. About two years was all I could afford. And, um, in those two years I did get a, um, um, a teacher's certificate. That was the time when, um, um, high school graduate could even take a, um, summer course at, um, Cedar Falls and still teach in a rural school.

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: Well, I taught, I taught in the town of Newberg, which is just north of Grinnell...

HH: Uh-hu.

KL: seven or eight miles. And mother said, "Oh, you'll go up there, and you'll find a farmer, and you'll marry him." So I did. (Laugh)

HH: (Laugh) Um, you had mentioned now that, um, you were working, and going to college at the same time. What kind of job did you have back then?

KL: Well, I was working at the college for my tuition. Um, for a while I cleaned, cleaned the bathroom, and, um, and I think we cleaned the halls, too. And then I got the job of waiting tables in the dining room. I liked that much better than cleaning. So I worked all to years. I guess I only worked one semester cleaning, although my second year I came back early and helped get the dormitories ready before school started. So I helped a little then, too.

HH: What do you remember of college? What was your general impression of college?

KL: I met an awful lot of neat people.

HH: So you enjoyed your experience.

KL: Yes.

HH: Do you have any particular fond memories of college?

HH: Well, yes, but they all involve the people that I met and the things that we did together. Of course I remember my teachers there a lot better, and the relationships that I have to this day with the people that I got to know there, and we still keep in touch with each other. I sang in a trio, and we had a lot of fun with that. We weren't very good, but we did okay. There were other aspects of the social life that were fun, and I think I didn't put my studies at the top of the list of the things that I enjoyed doing. I'm not going to share my report cards with you (laugh).

HH: (Laugh) But you still managed to get a teaching degree.

KL: Yes. I still managed to get a teaching degree, but it wasn't with honors. I think I learned a lot since then, so I can't go back though (laugh).

HH: Right. Now what years were you in college?

KL: '38. I stayed out of high school for a year at home, and then I graduated from high school in '37. So the fall of '38 I went to college. So '38 and '40...I came out to Newberg in the fall of '41.

HH: So you were in college...

KL: No, the fall of '40 I came out. Okay.

HH: Oh, don't worry about it.

KL: Oh, I'm not worried. I think it was that fall. Yes.

HH: You were in college in 1939 which was the start of WWII at least in Europe. What was going on on campus about the war in the community?

KL: Well, I think the main impact on the campus was that a man, I'm trying to think of what his name was. He was a Jew, and he had gotten out of Germany. He came and he was a music professor, and he made quite an impact on the student body. It's a small school, and we all new him. But the fact that so much over there was happening to the Jewish people, it just was, I think, very important to us. Of course the guys were talking about joining the service. I don't remember that any of them quit school to do so, but then the war didn't involve the United States at that time.

HH: Right. So then you went and you took the teaching job...

KL: Uh-hu.

HH: And then, of course, America then joined the war effort. How did that effect your life?

KL: Well, other than my brother joining...he did join the army. He joined the air corps in the glider division. Other than that, by the time just before Warren and I were married, why the war broke out, Pearl Harbor happened. Warren was a farm, he never asked for deferment, but he was given deferment because he worked on a farm. I think sometimes that bothers him a little bit to think that he didn't leave the farm and join. It doesn't bother me because I know that he was doing what he was supposed to be doing.

HH: His part.

KL: So, the happenings of the war were very real. Of course we had the radio, and kept up on the news. And the things that happened we followed it on the maps and in the papers. And we all knew people who had gone, and we were like any concerned citizen. I started to knit--well, I had knitted. But there was a group of women in that area who knitted. We knitted socks, and we knitted children's clothing, and I ran across some instructions the other day that were left over from that time. They would provide us with the yarn that was khaki. And, then we would knit. I was not responsible for sending things off, but I know that I did quite a bit of knitting at that time. When you think back on it now, you wonder how much good it did, but I'm sure it did some good. Of course we had the stamps, the coupons. When my brother was killed, he was still in the United States when he was in an airplane accident. They were going from one field to another field practice, and he was in North Carolina, and the plane went down killing all 20. So his body was taken back to Newton, Kansas which is where his wife was from, which is just a few miles from Witchitaw. So, we had services for him. It wasn't quite like my cousin who was lost over the Pacific, so there was no service ever for him. Nevertheless, we could not get gas to drive to Witchitaw. We went on the train. I had an uncle in Oskaloosa who met us in Des Moines--my husband and I. So, they had pulled out of moth balls old train cars, and they were old! They had the swinging lights up in the center of it,

and the seats were hard. You could flip them back and forth, one way or the other, and there were about a third more people on the train than could find a seat. Then we ran across in southern Iowa an accident place where we had to sit and wait and wait and wait. And that was quite a train ride. But, I guess they were doing the best they could.

HH: How was living with food stamps, well not food stamps, with stamps, rationing?

KL: Well, of course you know you've heard it said. You go, and you see a line, and you get in it, and then you find out what it's for (laugh).

HH: (Laugh).

KL: The thing I...sugar, we always needed sugar, and there never were quite enough sugar stamps, or there wasn't enough sugar in the stores. The one line that we always watched for was the line for nylons. I don't know when it was invented, but nylons hose was kind of a new thing for women, and we all loved them because the skill ones would catch, and oh, they were a mess. We all just run if there was a line we thought we could get in and hope they weren't all out so that we got to where we could claim our nylons. Gas was rationed, and that of course had an effect on the amount of travel we could do. And like I said: sugar and nylons--I think those were the things that effected me most.

HH: Okay, let's talk a little bit about your husband. Where did you meet him?

KL: Well, I went up to Newberg to teach school, and there he was. He wasn't in school of course (laugh).

HH: (Laugh)

KL: He was in the community. I suppose we probably met in the church. In my contract...by the way, I received a salary of \$70. I had to spend \$35 for my board and room across the street from the school. Then in my contract was also the stipulation that three out of every four Sundays must be spent in the church in town. I had to go to church, not that I would not have gone anyway. It was kind of interesting. In the second semester that year, a girl from Iowa City came and taught, and she was a Catholic. So you see, that posed a problem for her. However, she went to her priest and talked to him, and he said, "You better go to the Congregational Church." So when you think back on that you think, "My God! Weren't we narrow minded then?" It seems to me like we were. So, nevertheless, so I met my husband. Oh, we started dating, oh around the first of December or so.

HH: Was it a long courtship?

KL: Well, we got married a little over a year later. We got married in January of 1942. So, it was long enough for us (laugh). And, we're living on the farm he was born on. For a few months, we were living with his parents, they were there, but they had purchased a house in Grinnell. They moved then to Grinnell, and we stayed out on the farm.

HH: Was rationing particularly hard on farming?

KL: Well, chemicals were not used then quite to the extent that they are now, or I'm sure they would have been rationed. But no, I think that the farmers other than the gas rationing, I think they were able to get the seed they needed. Sometimes getting

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help was hard, because there were not very many young boys to come and help you make hay and that sort of thing. They had all gone to the service, a lot of them. So I think manpower was in a short supply. And new machinery was very hard to get. I guess this isn't a farm machine, but I remember the first new car we had. Our name had been into the Studabaker dealer for months and months. We knew that when it was our turn we'd take whatever came, and we got the neatest little red Studabaker (laugh). It was, of all the cars we had, I think it was one of my favorites. We waited a long time for that one.

HH: And even then, you couldn't get very far with it.

KL: Oh, I think we still had rationing then. I think we did. I forgot when that quit. I also remember when FDR died. Isn't that strange, you remember what you were doing. I was on our inclosed back porch, and we had the radio on and...Oh, I know what, there was a man there was putting insulation in our house, and our first son, he wasn't even two then, I don't think, I think FDR died in the spring of...

HH: It was '45.

KL: Yeah, I think, '44 or '45. Maybe it was '45. Cause Jerry wasn't two, but he wasn't a baby either. I heard it on the radio, and I told the man who was working on the house. Of, course, because it was in the spring, I had to wait until Warren came in to tell him about it. But, that was a big shock, a big shock for the nation, and it seemed to effect everybody.

HH: Were you particularly worried about the state of the nation at that time?

KL: No, not really, I don't think...I think we're raised with the fact that no one is indispensable--with our type of government, it isn't as if the head of some other state had been killed or had died. But, here we knew there was a successor. And with our type of government, we have safeguards built in so that there wouldn't be any violent upheaval because one certain person died. So I think we have that built-in faith in democracy, an din the way it works. I know it's flawed sometimes, but basically, we have that confidence in our government in the fact that it will continue. Maybe not just the way we vote or the way we think maybe it should be done, but it will get past one crisis and move to the next one (laugh). But Truman I think surprised everybody we the way he took over as Vice-President. I think he surprised everybody with the way he took over. But he's from Missouri, so what do you expect? (laugh)

HH: Okay, you said that your first son was already born by then.

KL: Yeah, he was born in '43.

HH: How was childbirth?

KL: Pretty awful. There was a dearth of doctors in town. There was two doctors in town. I went to the doctor who was the Louden family doctor. You know, I didn't know one from the other. But I went to the one that they had been going to. It was Dr. O. F. Parish, whose son John was in the service at the time, and he had left, he was in the Navy. And he left. He was in with his father in practice, but he went off to the service. Dr. Parish had old-fashioned ideas, and the nursing staff was stretched to the limit. I didn't...I just had a difficult time in having him.

But he came. He's okay; I'm okay (laugh). I had three more (laugh), so I didn't give up.

HH: Where was he born? Was he born...

KL: In the hospital here.

HH: Okay, What was community life like back then?

KL: Oh dear, well, we really didn't get terribly involved until the kids were a little bit older and we got involved in things like the PTA. Well, of course [inaudible] of which community? Because the Newberg community is what we were a part of, and Newberg and Grinnell did not emerge as a single school until Jerry was ready for his Junior year of college...of high school. So you see the first eleven...ten years he was in Newberg, and the other three were there too. And the Newberg community was a very active community. We had summer occasions. They had a big summer celebration in which involved everything. We had a fair and a talent show, and we never got outside talent because we figured we had enough talent of our own. They were a great community to follow the ball teams. The basketball team was very well followed. Even when are children were small, we'd always go to the ball games--every Tuesday and Friday we went to ball games when they were in Newberg. The women of Newberg had a federated club, and that met twice each month every other (oh which day did we meet on?) no I can't remember. But we met twice each month. They did things , they did other things. They bought curtains for the gym and the

End of Side One

HH: Okay, we're...

KL: We're with the Newberg Progress Club, aren't we (laugh)? And everybody took their turn doing things. It was kind of funny, the teachers, when they moved into the community, were expected to join the Progress Club. That was an expectation. The first time or two we went, we just hung onto each other. There were, I think, three new teachers and some that had been there before. We knew that we were getting looked over pretty thoroughly (laugh).

HH: (Laugh)

KL: We then went back to our rooms and discussed this one or that one (laugh). So we had fun out there, too, but I don't think any of us didn't like to go. It was just a way of getting acquainted, really, because it forced us to be a part of the community rather than teachers that didn't go because you didn't know anybody.

HH: (Laugh)

KL: So then, after I married, I was back in the club again. It was an active group.

HH: What are your memories of the end of WWII, which is pretty much around when FDR died?

KL: I think it was just one of great relief. You could see the end coming because we followed the news. It was just when was it going to come? It was one of great relief, and I don't know of any great celebration like after WWI that I've heard about. I think personally that we all just felt great relief, and we just

began wondering: when would the boys come home? because there were a number of good friends, not only from this community, but others that we had known. It was just sort of a great big sigh, and we won. You have different experiences come back to you. We went to Hawaii once and went out to the Arizona Memorial. I think I felt more moved and more, maybe more sorrow when I stood there and looked at those names and knew that those boys were buried right underneath where I was. Now, the tragedy of Pearl Harbor really struck us full blown, you know, but not all these little details as how many were killed, what happened, that was kept kind of a secret because of not wanting the Japanese to know how badly they had hurt us. You go and relive the moments (you can't relive them) but review them in your mind, it is something that is a very moving experience when you think of the lives that were lost.

HH: Were you happy that we were going into WWII?

KL: Oh, I wouldn't say happy, no, I don't think so. I think that we were distressed over what was happening in Europe, but I don't know if I was gung-ho for that. Then when Pearl Harbor happened, I think I felt with the rest of the country that we had to stand up. There was no other way then.

HH: Did you feel that dropping "the bomb" was the right thing to do?

KL: Well, when you realize how many American lives would have been lost had we prolonged the war in the quote/unquote conventional way, I think it's a toss-up. Do you sacrifice your army, your navy, you air force, or do you sacrifice the enemy's people? And, it brought such a speedy end to the war that it seemed at the time to be very justified. Now I think I can say that and still say I have compassion for not only those who were killed, but those who were injured. I think I can say that and really mean it. But, you know, war is a cruel thing. No matter how you look at it, it's cruel. Somehow when you go into war, you go in to win, and what is it they say, "All is fair in love and war." (Laugh) I don't know about love.

HH: (Laugh)

KL: But I think that war is fought with anything you do is fair, because your objective is to win. So, I'm all for peace. I think ought to come and we ought to work for it, but it seems that it's a lesson that not many people in the world have learned, in spite of the Iowa Peace Institute and what they're doing.

HH: How long did it take for life to get back to normal?

KL: That was kind of a slow process. It didn't boom all at once. First they'd remove one thing from rationing and then they'd remove another. So things got back to normal, and I couldn't put a figure on any one time that something was taken of rationing. But my husband got a new tractor, and little things like that.

HH: What was it like in terms of what you had to do on the farm? Obviously, you had your teaching...

KL: I didn't work much after we were married. I did a lot of substituting back then. In fact that very year that we were married, I ended up teaching the last six weeks of school for a teacher that, well I think her husband had joined the army and

she went with him. So it wasn't like the girls today where I had to have a job in town. I had plenty of work to do on the farm. The chicken chores were mine. That one of the reasons I don't like chickens to this very day (laugh).

HH: (Laugh)

KL: I could go into chickens, but I guess I won't. Nevertheless, the chicken chores were mine, and the egg money was the grocery money. So, we would clean the eggs and put them in the crates and bring them into town and then go to the grocery store. So, that was really my responsibility. There were other times that I helped, but not very many. My father-in-law would continue to come from town to the farm and helped when there were jobs for two, and I was a greenhorn. I didn't know much about farming when I married and moved to the farm. I knew that if I would go out and start asking questions that I don't think my father-in-law would have liked that. I don't think he would have. That was not just my perception; I think it was true. Of course I did learn a lot, but I wasn't involved, for instance, like my sister-in-law who was raised on a farm and was able to just mesh right in with her husband. Nevertheless I had my chores to do, and of course I had to have the meal on the table, the meals on the table. That was kind of my job. I did help in haying sometimes. Later years, when my father-in-law was not able to, I did drive tractor and a few things like that, but then the children were a little older. Then, of course, when you have children, you don't go off and leave them. They were good help.

HH: Childbirth get any easier?

KL: Oh yes. (Laugh) the children were all good help on the farm. My daughter didn't help much, but she had three brothers--no need for her to go out there and do [inaudible] she was interested in. She grew up and ran for Iowa Pork Queen and got it (laugh).

HH: (Laugh)

KL: So, she had to know something about the pork industry, or else she wouldn't be able to do that.

HH: How was raising the kids?

KL: I don't see how people in town do it.

HH: (Laugh)

KL: I think it's...with the exception of the fact that they don't have playmates living down the street, I think it's an ideal place to raise children. In the first place, they can be with their father, not all of the time, of course. They know what he's doing. They can be with him, and when they get to a certain age, there are things they can do. They can open a gate. They can help drive hogs. There are lots of things that children can do on the farm. They can help gather eggs, when they get over the fact that the hen might peck them (laugh). But, it just is a freer place, and I never regret it, raising my children on the farm.

HH: Do you have any interesting stories about bringing up your children?

KL: Hmmm. I've got one interesting story--a little risque, but I think I'll tell it anyways. Are you from a farm?

HH: no.

KL: No, well then you don't know the details of castrating pigs.

You know what castrating is?

HH: Yes.

KL: When the hogs are quite small, they will castrate some of the hogs and have them grow up as...

HH: As neuters.

KL: And as market hogs. So they do that when their quite young, because it's easier to do, and that's just the way you do it. At the time, I was also dressing chickens a lot, you know we would raise chickens and dress them, put them in the freezer, or whatever. The children had always watched me do that. They would stand on the stool and watch me as I took the chicken apart and took the insides out and this and that. You know what a chicken gizzard looks like, too. Well, you have to cut that very carefully so as not to break the stones out so that you can get the inside out in a unit toss, and then you can cook the gizzard. I don't like them, but some people do. Well this one day, Warren's father was out, and Jerry was six maybe because Rosemary couldn't have been over three, between three and four maybe. They were out and they were castrating hogs. Rosemary was outdoors and I wasn't paying any attention to exactly where she was. She heard all the noise, and so she ran down to see what was going on. She watched them long enough to decide what that was, and she came running up to the house. "Mommy, Grandpa, Daddy, Jerry, they're squanking the gizzards out of the pigs!" (laugh).

HH: (Laugh)

KL: Well maybe that isn't funny to you, but it's awfully funny to me.

HH: The whole concept of it all...

KL: Well they were squanking. The pigs, you know, were squealing. So she had them squanking. And of course, the testicle looked like a gizzard to her. So "They're squanking the gizzards out of the pigs!" (Laugh) I thought that would be a good one for Reader's Digest, but I doubt that many people understand my [inaudible] (laugh). Oh dear. Oh, we had a pony once. That was a pony that had its own mind. The kids did have friends, of course they went to school with them, but none of them lived closer than a quarter of a mile. Steven's one friend John lived about a mile and a half from us. So he would ride the pony up there if the pony decided that was the place they wanted to go.

HH: (Laugh)

KL: So, he and John had a lot of fun. That stop along the way and fool around in the neighbor's ditch down by this little creek. So, they had lots of fun with the pony. I can't remember its name now. They kept it several years, but it had a head of its own, and they didn't quite know how to take care of it (Laugh). Most of the times, we got together as a family. My husband is one of four sons. Three of them--one lived in town and one of them lived in the country close to us. And their children, well some were older and some were about the age of our children. So when the family got together, that was a good time for the children to interact. I think they felt as close to their cousins as they would have to brothers or sisters. They were close-knit, and enjoyed each other's company. So that was a

lot of their growing up time. We had birthday parties then, too. Then you'd invite the Sunday School class, or the kids at school. So we had some pretty neat birthday parties.

HH: I'm trying to think of something else to ask. Well the war was over with and it was the 1940'. By the 1950's things supposedly prospered in America. Were things better on the farm also?

KL: I think they were better. I think people look back to the '50's and say that was the best of the years for the farmer as far as comparing his wages with the town wages. They don't keep up with them but that's besides the point. Neither you nor I can change that. We always managed. We didn't invest any money. It seemed that there was always a place for the money to go. We did buy the farm from my husband's parents. That was an obligation that we did take care of, through the years, because you just don't plunk down very much money at a time. And then, the children, well, we were able to send each of the children through four years of college. So we felt that that was money well invested. That's what we wanted to do, and that's what they wanted to do. It didn't insure that any one of them would come back on the farm and take over because they haven't (laugh).

HH: (Laugh).

KL: But nevertheless, they're all well satisfied, I think, with their own lives and involved in their own families and their own communities. So we feel like the farm is the best place yet.

HH: You and your husband still take care of the farm?

KL: Well, we still live on the farm. No, he retired several years ago, and our nephew farms the land, but for a while he had pigs, and he's fed some cattle, but we don't have anything like that now. He rents the barn out to a man who has hogs in it. he likes to garden, so we've stayed out there where there's plenty of land to garden. We're involved in community activities. The schools merged. We still had two boys in junior high, no, two boys in grade school. Then Rosemary was in junior high and Jerry was in high school at the time of the merger. Well, that's when I got involved in the PTA here in Grinnell. I met a lot of nice people then that are still friends here in town. We did switch churches, and we left the Newberg church oh 20 years ago now it's been at least, and came to Grinnell to church--personal reasons, I think I'll just say that. And, the children wanted to do it. So, our friendships, although they have remained in the Newberg community, the Newberg community has changed. The people that live in Newberg...well, certain families that have just always been there, and others move in and out, and we don't know them. But we know the people that are more or less permanent residents. So we don't have an awful lot of dealings with Newberg as such, except just knowing people through...well we have a farm bureau group that meets, oh five or six times a year. We keep in touch that way, but most of our social events are tied up in Grinnell.

HH: Do you do a lot with the college also?

KL: Quite a bit. We have taken several foreign students when they have first come. You're new here; maybe you don't know the policy. They try to get foreign students into homes when they first arrive several days ahead of registration so that they can

sleep off their jet-lag and so that you can take them to town and show them the town and you can help them with the last-minute things they have to purchase because when you're coming from Bangladesh, you don't bring sheets (laugh).

HH: (Laugh)

KL: Well, you don't. So, Sonya, do you know Sonya?

HH: No.

KL: She's from Bangladesh, and she's our latest student. We've enjoyed several students that way. In fact, we're going to Atlanta tomorrow, and we're going specifically to visit two Grinnell College students. Osar was from Pakistan, and we just kind of adopted him. He's a neat kid--well, he's not a kid anymore. He's been out now, let's see, this will be their eighth year. Nevertheless, he fell in love with a girl from Chicago. We went to their wedding, and the bride wore red. We have followed them and kept in touch, and they came back here for their fifth year reunion. He's at Emory University down in Atlanta, and they had a baby a year ago, and so we're going down to see them.

HH: Well, that's great.

KL: We think so. And, we've had a couple of gals from Sri Lanka that have...we still keep track of them and a neat gal from Greece. Michelle, she's just dear. Anyway, she's going after her Doctorate, and she's going to a school in Florence, Italy.

HH: Wow.

KL: Yeah, wow. So, anyway, so we've been involved that way, and then several of the faculty members have become good friends. The Drakes, we felt like we were really good friends with them and we'll be glad when they come back. And then the Wobbles, he was in the chemistry...he's taken a position on the east coast now. Then there are several families which go to our church: the Clockfelters, and the Ericsons--Jenny and Luther. So we've known people and some who have moved on to other places. So, we know a smattering of the faculty here. My husband comes to the ball games, almost without fail, and I make it to some things. We like to come. We don't take as much advantage of the things that the school offers as we should, but once in a while we'll come in to the lectures. Oh, and Dennis and Tommy Haas--Dennis Haas, your Chaplin, they're friends of ours. When we feel like getting away from our church, we'll sometimes listen to Dennis, because he still preaches a pretty mean sermon (laugh).

HH: Let's go back into the past a bit again, let's say the 1960's. Vietnam, I know at least on the Grinnell campus, the whole Vietnam War was a very sore point. What do you remember of that era?

KL: Well, I remember that both of my boys were in college and both got numbers. One of them was way down the list, and I don't remember which one. These were my younger boys. I think they would have gotten around to the other just in another month or so his number would have been drawn. But they were both in college at the time. So, I have mixed feelings. We had a nephew that went and was badly injured. He still carries shrapnel in his body. You look at the events of that war and you feel frustrated. It's a frustrating thing. Somehow we went in that

war not wanting to win and not knowing really what we wanted. I still don't know why we went into that war. And I know that as a country we've been probably unfair to the boys who did go, because a lot of them were drafted, and I think that they've sort of been given the short-shift until maybe lately when I think people began to realize you don't blame a whole war on one soldier. You don't take out your vent at what your country does on one soldier and treat him discourteously. And, this happened a lot of times. I know that the college was involved--quite an uproar at the time. I think, wasn't that the time when they quit the ROTC program they had here?

HH: I'm not very sure of that.

KL: I'm not either, but I could probably put a pretty good date on that because the son of the man who was in charge of that here was a good friend of our son's. They graduated from high school in '69. So probably they left...oh, it's hard to remember dates.

HH: Yeah.

KL: But I think the family moved away shortly after that. So they were cutting out that program here at the college, because during the Second World War, officer's training school was here at the college.

HH: Do you remember the moon landing?

KL: Oh you bet you! Oh yes. I was just thrilled about that. In fact, we got a copy of the National Geographic written up so beautifully with the pictures and the story and everything. You could get extra copies then, so I got a copy for each one of the children. I thought, "That something that we've always got to remember." I think I still have the Des Moines paper back in my file way at the back that has the write up of that because that was marvelous.

HH: Did you get to watch it on t.v.?

KL: You bet you. Yes, we did get to watch every minute of it.

HH: Okay, well is there anything else that you want to add?

KL: Oh dear, I don't know. I can't think of much.

HH: Okay, well I think this will be a good time to end it.

KL: This is a good time to end it. Goodbye! (laugh) The end.

Well, I can't think of anything.

HH: Okay, well I'll just stop the tape.

KL: You'll just stop it. Okay.