

**Interview with Virginia
November 9, 2009
Conducted at the Virginia's home, Kinsley, Kansas
Interviewers: Joan Interviewer: and Rosetta Graff**

Interviewer:: What is your full name?

Virginia: Virginia May Rapp.

Interviewer:: And where do you currently reside? Your address?

Virginia: 530 Atwood.

Interviewer:: And this is Joan Interviewer: and Rosetta Graff and we are interviewing on November 9th, 2009. Okay, when and where were you born?

Virginia: Nine miles north of Kinsley. February 27, 1918.

Interviewer:: And who are your parents?

Virginia: Hannah and William Lippoldt.

Interviewer:: And what was Hannah's maiden name?

Virginia: Hannah Winter.

Interviewer:: Winter. And your grandparents? What were their names?

Virginia: Gottlieb Lippoldt. Mother's parents I don't know what her mother's name was. Winter.

Interviewer:: Okay, do you remember his name?

Virginia: I don't.

Interviewer:: They were just grandma and grandpa?

Virginia: I think Fred but I am pretty sure that is right, Fred (*Winter*).

Interviewer:: What brought your grandparents or parents to Edwards County?

Virginia: My father was born in and raised in Illinois, and he came out here to homestead, and he came to Edwards County, North of Kinsley. He homesteaded.

Interviewer:: So he was a farmer?

Virginia: A farmer, yes.

Interviewer:: And do you know what year that was or no?

Virginia: It was in the late 1800's. I can't tell you the year. I know the folks were married in 1899. So it was several years before that.

Interviewer:: So he met her out here?

Virginia: My mother was born in Germany. She came over about five years of age and her brothers wanted to get out of Germany to not go in the service, in the army. So her brother came, and he went to Bucklin, Kansas. Then the other boys came, and then the rest of the family came. Mother came over here, and she worked as a girl working for Grandma Lippoldt. Then she met my dad, and they were married.

Interviewer:: She was working for your grandparents, his grandparents?

Virginia: Yeah. Grandma Lippoldt.

Interviewer:: Well that is interesting. Okay, so describe the household you grew up in. How many brothers and sisters and what was it like growing up in your household.

Virginia: Well, I had 3 brothers and 3 sisters.

Interviewer:: Where did you fit in?

Virginia: I was the last one. I am four years younger, mother was 40 years old when I was born, which was a little old in those days. I was the baby, kind of a pet, some of them told me.

Interviewer:: So what was the farm like that you lived on? You raise crops?

Virginia: Yes, yes. We had kind of a large farm. One of the biggest red barns, one of the biggest ones in that township. People knew that place by that big red barn. Then we lived just across the pasture from the Salem Cemetery which is now still Salem Cemetery. Most of my relatives are buried in this cemetery.

Interviewer:: So you raised cattle?

Virginia: Oh yes, cattle.

Interviewer:: What other livestock? Chickens? Pigs?

Virginia: Oh yeah. Chickens, yeah. I don't think much of anything else.

Interviewer:: Not pigs?

Virginia: No. They would buy pigs. Yes, they would raise them and butcher them I suppose. Sure. You would get them when they are little and cute. They would bring them home and they would raise them. Then I would hate to see them butcher them, but they did. We ate them, and cattle. We ate our own cattle. During the Depression some people didn't have enough to eat. We didn't even think about

that because we had more than enough. We raised our own garden,⁷ and our mother canned. We had plenty of food. Plenty of meat, plenty of everything.

Interviewer:: Then you grew wheat?

Virginia: Oh yes, yes. Raised wheat. Yes, yes. We usually had a pretty good crop until we came into the Depression years in the 30's. During the Dust owl which everybody had a little rough time with it too.

Interviewer:: What do you remember about that time?

Virginia: Well I found this old diary, just happened to be looking though it the other day. I was 17 years old and it was in March. I belonged to this 4-H Club which is a big thing for the kids. We had gone over to Ray Field's. Probably Rosetta remembers them. May and Ray Field and their kids were in 4-H. We went over there for this meeting that night, and I drove with my brother. I know after the meeting we kids got ready to go home, and some of the boys went outdoors and they said, "We can't go home." You can't see a thing. So the Fields said, well you kids are not going to leave here. You are going to stay all night. Some of us girls thought that was a good deal. We laughed you know. We sat around and we played games and I think sang songs. I don't know, until finally they went outdoors and realized it had cleared up. That was going on at 1 o'clock. So we drove on home then. My brother was driving at that time. I was 17, he would have been 21 yes. That day it had been (my diary said) 81 degrees which was real hot. Then the next day turned down to be about 32 degrees; so it was a front coming in. Then we kept having, I looked up there, we kept on having these storms until about, that was in March, until about June we started to get rains. From then on we had several good rains, and that seemed to be the worst of it. It had ended, at least for that year. And I think that might have been the worst year. I think we may have had some dust up in later years but I am not sure.

Interviewer:: Was your home pretty tight or did you go though the usual putting rags up?

Virginia: Oh. It was terrible. You cleaned dust before you could set your table and eat. You just wiped off a place you know and your dishes you would wipe them off, oh yes. I remember that very well. Oh yes, yes. Some people hung wet cloths on the windows. I don't remember that we did that. Our house was built in about 1900 so it was pretty good shape, but nothing kept out that dirt I don't believe.

Interviewer:: Because it was so fine.

Virginia: Yes, very fine, very fine.

Interviewer:: Some people have told us about the grasshoppers and things. Do you remember that?

Virginia: I remember later when the grasshoppers came, I can't tell you what year that was. Yes, they were bad. I think maybe they ate the crops. But that must have been later, I am just not sure of that. I remember all of it, but dates I don't know.

Interviewer:: Yeah, that is fine. You said you were the baby and the spoiled one but did you have chores to do?

Virginia: Did I have what?

Interviewer:: Did you have chores to do while you were growing up?

Virginia: Oh yes, yes. I even milked cows. Which I didn't exactly enjoy it. But I sort of kept up with my brothers, and I had to show my older brother that I could milk as good as he could. I could milk a cow faster than he could. Showing off a little bit, you know. And I always milked cows. I worked in the house, and garden which I didn't like. I would have rather worked in the house and cook and did general house work while I was home.

Interviewer:: Now where did you go to school?

Virginia: Well I just went to the old country school.

Interviewer:: Do you know what school it was called?

Virginia: Pardon?

Interviewer:: Did it have a number or whatever it was called?

Virginia: District Number 9. It was called, Church View School in the olden days. And I didn't get to come on in to high school at that time. I had to get my, finally got my GED Diploma after I was 65 years old when I finally got all that.

Interviewer:: So how many years did you go through this school? You know, formal school?

Virginia: Out there I just went the eight years.

Interviewer:: Eight years. Why did you quit after that?

Virginia: Well, my dad didn't think girls should go on to school. Which I didn't agree with at all, but what are you going to do, a little kid 14 years old. You don't have much to say. I always regretted not going to high school and getting my diploma. So when I finally got it at 65 I was real happy. Then I went on and I took classes at the college here. I took 5 classes and loved every minute of it.

Interviewer:: Now did you brothers go on to school?

Virginia: No they didn't. No.

Interviewer:: Did they finish high school?

Virginia: No.

Interviewer:: No? Everybody just went to the eighth grade.

Virginia: My oldest sister did. Matilda. She finished her school. Then she went away to become a deaconess in a Methodist church. She was basically in Ohio. She spent all her life back there and married a minister. Then they moved to Florida. But she is the only one that got out and got her education. When I took my junior college, no it was when I got my GED, we were in Kinsley. I would go every Monday night. I enjoyed every minute of it. It was so easy for me 'cause I have read all my life. It wasn't any big deal. So when we got through with our school and ready to get out diploma, they took us to the junior college and had a dinner for us. They called these names, those who had scholarships. Out of 70 some, I was one of them. There were 4 or 5 of us. They neglected to tell me that

I had gotten a scholarship. So they call my name, and I was sitting by a man, alphabetically. They said “Virginia Virginia for scholarship come on up to the stage.” I just sat there. He said, “Isn’t that you?” I said, “Yeah but there has been a mistake, I won’t go.” So when they called it the third time I felt like I had better get up and go up there. I went up there and received my diploma and also the scholarship. My husband was so proud of me. I think I was one of the oldest in the class.

Interviewer:: Probably. You said all your read all your life, even though you didn’t go on to school, were you reading then? Like when you were 16 and 17?

Virginia: Oh yes.

Interviewer:: Where did you get your books?

Virginia: Kinsley Library! Oh gosh, I think you have asked me that before. We decided that 80 years ago I came in there, and I read the *Bobbsey Twins* . You said you might have still had them. I loved to read. I thought that was wonderful; I still do.

Interviewer:: So did the family come to town like once a week back then?

Virginia: Yes. Every couple of weeks I guess. I can’t remember how I brought the books back, whether I sent them back with somebody or I just what. But I thought was great where you could read all these books and it didn’t cost you anything. ‘Cause I didn’t have a lot of extra cash.

Interviewer:: Okay, let’s see. You were born in 1918 so in December 7th, 1941 that makes you how old?

Virginia: I am 91 right now.

Interviewer:: You were 23 years old on December 7th, 1941. Is that right?

Virginia: Yes, yes. I would have been.

Interviewer:: You got married in 1940. Where did you meet your husband? You want to tell us about that?

Virginia: Well as I showed you the picture in there I was about 12 or 13 and I liked the looks of this guy. I said when I grow up and get big I am going to marry a guy that looks like that.

Interviewer:: And you were talking about what?

Virginia: I was talking about Howard.

Interviewer:: But you had seen the pictures where?

Virginia: I had come to town with my girlfriend, and they came down the street here with the Stachs, and that was her aunt. She said, that is the guy I am going with. Howard Rapp. Well, okay that is fine.

Interviewer:: So you saw his picture and you thought that would be somebody you would like to marry?

Virginia: I said, "I like his looks. I hope to marry a guy that looks like that." So then, I came to town later. I was about 19 I guess. This lady who I worked for died. So I went to her funeral along with my mother and sister. This woman was a neighbor of my husband's parents. He worked at Burdett, Kansas at that time in a general merchandise store. It (*the funeral*) was in the old Methodist church. I knew who he was and he knew I was that Lippoldt girl. But we have never met. I looked back there and I saw this guy. I thought, "Gee I know him." I swear I looked at him and every time I looked he was looking at me. I don't know what, we just kept looking at each other. It must have been love at first sight, you suppose? Anyway, he wrote me a letter. Those days you didn't call. He wrote me a letter and asked for a date. I was engaged at the time, so I had turned him down, but we were not getting along. So later I wrote him back and said I would be glad to go with him. From then on, we went together two years.

Interviewer:: What was your first date?

Virginia: How was it?

Interviewer:: What was it? What did you do on your first date?

Virginia: Oh I don't think anything, just rode around getting acquainted and all. Drive along and I remember we use to ride around and I would play the harmonica. Or he would play the harmonica with one hand and drive. I would sing, oh we would be silly you know.

Interviewer:: And you said that this time you were working for other people as a house keeper?

Virginia: Yes, at that particular time I was a house keeper for Gracia Beeler Beck. She was the librarian at the school. I think that is correct. She had this little boy, Pierson. So I just stayed there all through the week, I would go home on weekends.

Interviewer:: So you were like a nanny for the little boy?

Virginia: Yes. He was a good kid, real good kid. I did the cooking and I had a lot of free time. But Pierson, of course, he lives now in Manhattan. Rosetta knows him I am sure. When my 91st birthday picture came out in the Kinsley paper, he saw it. He wrote to me, he said, "I will never forget how good you were to me." I got that nice letter. He said you took care of this little boy. I helped him with his music and helped with his studies.

Interviewer:: How old was he back then?

Virginia: He was eight when I first went there. So now he would be 78 or 79. He was not a hard kid to take care of though. One thing I didn't like there was the dog. He jumped up on you. We didn't train him or nobody ever trained him. Then about once a month we had to give him a bath which was awful.

Interviewer:: So your husband to be was in Burdett and you were here, how long did you go together or engaged before you got married?

Virginia: A couple years. We wanted to get married but that was 1939. He had come back over to Kinsley and he was running the Phillips 66 station up in North part of town, she knows. I would see him a lot. In fact he lived with his parents at that time.

Interviewer:: And where were you living?

Virginia: I was with ...

Interviewer:: You were a live-in.

Virginia: So I knew when Howard went back to work. So he would honk at me, and I would go to the window, and we would smooch a little. We couldn't afford to get married so you know. But anyways, finally, Oh I will tell you about the wedding if you would like.

Interviewer:: Okay, you said you were 19 and you put off getting married cause you didn't have the money?

Virginia: We didn't think we had enough to live on, yeah.

Interviewer:: Okay.

Virginia: Yeah, he wasn't making too much money.

Interviewer:: Alright, so tell us about the wedding.

Virginia: Well, it was in '39 the Kinsley Methodist Church women was trying to make money as they always were. Somebody came up with the idea that they would have a wedding dress review which somebody had heard of that before. You would borrow women's dresse; they had been married in these dresses. Then some high school girl or young girl would model it. So then, somebody else came up with the idea and said, "You know what would be fun? If a real couple got married." They said, "Well yeah, but who would we get?" Well my mother-in-law, or to be mother-in-law (since we had been going together and she and I became really good friends) she said, "Well maybe my son and his girlfriend would consider getting married 'cause they have been wanting to get married." So she approached me and I thought "Oh, that sounds like fun! You bet!" Well Howard said, "I don't know. You mean in a church full of people? Well, if that is what you want, then okay. Alright." So we agreed. It cost you 10 cents to go and the funny part about it was that Mrs. Stukenbroker, who was a friend of the family, saw me one day and she said, "Virginia, I am selling tickets for this wedding dress review, and I would like to sell you a ticket." You know, I never lied. I make it a point to say that I never lied. I said, "Well I might just have to work." I didn't know what to say. So, okay. Then she found out that it was us that got married.

Interviewer: So people didn't know you two were getting married that day?

Virginia: Nobody knew it (*except the family*).

Interviewer:: Nobody knew at all?

Virginia: It was a secret!

Interviewer:: It was a secret?

Virginia: It was a secret and ...

Interviewer:: Did they advertise that somebody was going to get married or just that there was going to be a bridal dress review?

Virginia: It was a wedding dress review and a surprise wedding.

Interviewer:: And a surprise wedding.

Virginia: The old church, I think the balconies were full. There were people every place. They made money on that. The women said they'd furnished all the music, Rev. Little was the pastor and of course, he performed the ceremony. A lady would make me a veil, which she did. And of course my husband thought it sounded like a good deal 'cause it wasn't going to cost very much. So we marched in. Walter and Nadine Stukenbroker. They had the spot light and they put the spotlight on us as we walked down the aisle. We went in style. I think the only folks that knew were my family and his parents. You know, but it was a big surprise to a lot of them. I met people up town a couple years after. "Yeah I went to your wedding," they would say. It got to be real fun; it was real funny.

Interviewer:: Isn't that something.

Virginia: But I liked to be anything, I liked to try. Like, my beauty operator said, she gets something new, "You will try it won't you Virginia?" She said, "You are usually ready to try anything new." Not everything.

Interviewer:: So then did you have a reception or a honey moon? What happened after the ceremony? How do you top that?

Virginia: Well in those days, didn't seem like you did anything at the church. But my husband's aunts were living right here in this house, and they decided that we had to have something. So all the relatives and all the close friends came here, and we had coffee and punch, right in here that evening. We rented the little cottage right in the back here, and we moved in there. That was in 1940, and 5 years later, we moved over here and I have been here ever since. So I am not a mover.

Interviewer:: You like new things, but not in houses. Okay, so that brings us up to December 7th, 1941. Pearl Harbor Day. Do you remember Pearl Harbor and what you were doing?

Virginia: I don't. I remember it, of course, and we heard it. We thought horrible and all that. But I don't remember what we were doing.

Interviewer: It was a Sunday.

Virginia: Yes, yes. We were home here I think. Probably came in and turned on the radio. I just don't remember, you know. Until the paper or the radio starts talking about it. I realized how terrible it was and my brother Robert was one of the first called up to go to service. Howard didn't get called, but he thought he would like to go. But he went in and found out that he had a punctured ear drum, so they didn't want him to go to service. That went on for awhile, but then about a year later, they called him anyways. He went in. He was in then. His buddies were being sent to England, and they thought they would work in the postal department but there might be loud shells 'cause they were bombing through there. They said, a loud shell could make you deaf for life. So we did not think you should go. But if you go with your group, you will not go with your buddies. You will go in limited service. You have your choice; you can go in limited service or you can come home. Well, he wanted to go to England, but he wanted to come home too. He said, one of his buddies in his group said, "How do you puncture your ear drum hole? Will a broom straw do it?" Them guys actually thought they would like to puncture theirs. His was punctured when he had an abscess, that is what they did in those days. I

understand that they still do that. But anyways, after they called me, “Oh, I said, come on home.” “Well,” he said, “how will I ever get that trip to England?” He thought about it, but he decided to come home. So he got discharged then.

Interviewer:: Okay, he was in the Army and worked in the postal ...

Virginia: Postal department, postal unit.

Interviewer:: What branch of service was your brother in? Your brother, what branch of service was he in?

Virginia: Military Police.

Interviewer:: In the Army again?

Virginia: In the Army, yes.

Interviewer:: And he went in right after Pearl Harbor you said, right?

Virginia: Yes, he went in very shortly. The group from Edwards County I think he was in the first group. Robert Lippoldt’s name was right up there. They drew names I understand, and his was on of them.

Interviewer:: And how old would he have been then?

Virginia: Well let me see, 26 or 27. He wasn’t married.

Interviewer:: He wasn’t married.

Virginia: No, no.

Interviewer:: So that would put him in the first group too.

Virginia: Yes, yes.

Interviewer:: And where did he serve? Was he in Europe?

Virginia: Oh yes. They would bring prisoners over and back and forth. I don’t know where they brought them, to California I think.

Interviewer:: So he transported like, German prisoners of war?

Virginia: Yes, his good friend was Vernon Kirkbride. They were just buddies, and they were both in the military police. But Robert was in four years when he got his discharge then. He was married when he came on the furlough. Then he had one son. Then those other boys must have been born too. He had three boys. They all lived in Wichita.

Interviewer:: So he got married while he was in the service you said?

Virginia: Yes, yes. He did. He was married right here in Kinsley. I stood up for him. He and I were buddies, always had been.

Interviewer:: Did you correspond with him during the war?

Virginia: Oh yeah, definitely. I worried about him, oh gosh, over there where they were fighting. I just knew something would happen to him, but it didn't. Thank goodness.

Interviewer:: So he was going with the woman that he would marry?

Virginia: Oh, yes, yes. When we were married my brother stood up for us. He walked down the aisle in the Methodist Church. Poor guy, he was so pale; he was scared to death. My husband was scared to death.

Interviewer:: Well all those people.

Virginia: Yeah. And his girlfriend who he had been going with, Helen Wagner, at that time. She was my bridesmaid. Yeah.

Interviewer:: Okay well ...

Virginia: I would like to tell you.

Interviewer:: Okay.

Virginia: One thing about while we were in service, he was stationed in West Chester, Pennsylvania and those guys were stationed at the college. They wore uniforms; they dressed up everyday. Anyways, I went back there to ...

Interviewer:: How did you get there? Train?

Virginia: I went on the train, yes.

Interviewer:: What was that like?

Virginia: It was so crowded, my goodness sakes. Seems like part of the time you had to sit on your suitcase or something, put your suitcase right beside you. Oh it was quite an experience. I had never been on a train before. And mother worried about me going and I said, "Oh don't worry about me. I'll get along fine." I went on back there. I stopped on the way in Ohio which my sister was married and her husband was a minister there so I stayed a few days with them. On the way back there, they lost my suitcase and good thing I could wear her clothes because I had nothing to wear except my underwear. Anyways, my suitcase came a little later and I went on back to West Chester, Pennsylvania. And a couple of his buddies, their wives were there also, and they had rooms in the area. So we three girls became real good friends. I lived with this family, a man and a woman. He worked for the postal department which is kind of interesting. I don't know where she worked. But he would get home early in the day, so he and I would visit a lot. I had just the run of the house. They decided I was a pretty good kid, and I could do anything I wanted to. Read all their books. I could cook if I wanted to, but I went up town everyday for my noon meal. Which the other girls did, Jeri and Helen did also. So we girls would trot along to town. This woman came out of her house one day and said, "I see you girls go by everyday. Do any of you happen to be from Kansas?" Jeri said, "I'm from Iowa." Helen says, "I am

from Missouri, Kansas City.” I said, “I am from Kansas.” She said, “Well, my husband has relatives back in Kansas. It is a little town, I don’t imagine you have ever heard of it. The Henry Drauts live there. The little town called, Kinsley, Kansas.” I guess I dropped my teeth. I said, “That is my hometown!” She couldn’t believe it and neither could I. She told her husband, and they wanted to meet my husband. So they had us over for dinner, and we had a very good time visiting. But that was very unusual I thought.

Interviewer:: So then you would get to see your husband at night or while you were there? Did he get to come and be with you at night?

Virginia: Oh yes. It was just a ways away, and they would come over every evening. We’d go out; sometimes go out and eat; go on a picnic. We had no vehicles, we would all hike you know. We went to a dance one night. We three couples pretty much.

Interviewer:: Was the dance at the, was it a USO dance or was it just a city town dance?

Virginia: You know I can’t remember. They treated you pretty special. I know while I was in Westchester, we had our anniversary. I guess when I first got there. I got a new suit and new shoes. We decided we would go some place for our anniversary. So we went in to Philadelphia. We took the train in. I wore my news shoes, and they had heels on them. Can you imagine what happened? I had walked all day and came back on a little train at night and my feet hurt me so bad that I took of my shoes on the way back to West Chester. I couldn’t get my shoes on. And so I had to walk in, of course, I am carrying my shoes. Anyways, oh boy, I wanted to look nice. You don’t dress up in jeans like nowadays.

Interviewer:: And your husband was in the service just the eight months and was discharged because of the ear drum?

Virginia: No, he was in Westchester. Then he was sent to Arkansas. Little Rock, Arkansas for further training. It was July. He said, “I don’t think you can stand it. Do you want to go home?” I said, “I sure do.” So I came home, and I went back to work for Ray Smith in the confectionary which Rosetta probably remembers. And I would work there while Howard was in service. and then Ray liked me so I just went back in there and went to work.

Interviewer:: And you were living in the little house then?

Virginia: Yes, yes. I had another girl live with me.

Interviewer:: Were their other girls in town whose husbands were gone?

Virginia: Oh my goodness yes. The whole town you might say. All my friends and people I would meet would come in the store. Everybody, yeah you bet.

Interviewer:: So what did you girls do on your own? Without all your husbands?

Virginia: We would work then we would come home and write your husband a letter. That is about it amounted to. I remember wages weren’t very much. I remember there was a little restaurant across the street and I didn’t think I could afford to eat there except on Sunday. I would eat there at Sunday noon ‘cause I would get a good big meal for 50 cents. You know, otherwise I would keep my money.

Interviewer:: You got money from the service also?

Virginia: Yes, yes. I can't remember. Seems like it was \$80 a month. Something, I am not sure. It was enough. I had money when I went back to Pennsylvania.

Interviewer:: How did the community support your girls? What was the community like? Did they support you and the war effort?

Virginia: Yes, yes. I think our whole town and everybody. You were treated (*special*) back in Pennsylvania. You were really special. I remember we went to the zoo, and they saw my husband in uniform. We were in the line and they said, "Come on let this soldier and his wife up here." You got treated special, you were special. Well, the people I stayed with said that you were not just ordinary soldiers. You were high class 'cause you were in the postal unit. So it really helped you know. They wore uniforms all the time; they were dressed up.

Interviewer:: How about back here in Kinsley? Did they treat you special here too?

Virginia: Oh no. You were just a hometown kid. No, you weren't special. No, no. I went to work for Raymond Smith. We stayed there and then when Howard came home for good I said I wanted to quit. And he said, "No Virginia, won't you stay and work for me? I depend on you too much." So I did. Then finally he decided he wanted to sell out so we bought the place. So we were there for 1948 to 1984. I haven't told you. I don't know if you are interested in my trips. Oh first I wanted to tell you about transportation. My sister-in-law and I had a round trip to Portland, Oregon. And that is from Dodge City on Amtrak Round trip for \$225.

Interviewer:: When was this?

Virginia: 1983.

Interviewer:: Okay, before we get up to the more modern stuff let me finish up a couple of things I think on World War II.

Virginia: Yes.

Interviewer:: At the end of the war, do you remember the fellas coming home? I mean, your husband was already home but were there any celebrations? What was it like when they started coming back from war?

Virginia: No, I don't remember too much. I remember when we came home, they were wanting people to work in the defense factories. We thought we didn't own anything, and we lived in the little cottage. We thought maybe we should go. California was really wanting people. In fact, Howard's sister, Myrna Rankin, Myrna's her husband was in service, and she went back there to work. So I said, "Let's go." Of course, I always wanted to go some place or do something, and we almost decided to. Then he said he hated to leave. He said, he didn't want to leave the old home place or the old hometown. So we didn't make it out to California.

Interviewer:: What were some of the sacrifices you made during the war here? Do you remember some of the things?

Virginia: You know, I guess I was lucky. I really didn't have to sacrifice. Even my husband came home which some girls, I remember Dorothy Belcher in town, she was crying. Her husband had lost a

leg. And some of them were killed. I don't know anybody particular close that I knew. So I realized that it was a horrible thing, and all that, but it didn't affect me.

Interviewer:: Did it change your brother any when he came back? Did it change your brother any?

Virginia: Well, yes, it did. Because you get him started on it, and he could just go on and on, and on.

Interviewer:: He would talk about the war?

Virginia: Yes. He was in so long. No, I guess maybe some of that is cloudy in my mind. Since it didn't affect me personally, I don't remember too much about it.

Interviewer:: You remember the rationing? Rationing during the war?

Virginia: Yes. Oh yes, yes. You bet.

Interviewer:: What was rationed?

Virginia: The gas was the worst thing. Because when I had been in Pennsylvania, the people I lived with would want to take you places. Of course I could give them my (*gas*) card 'cause I didn't have any car you know.

Interviewer:: What types of food? Sugar?

Virginia: Oh yeah, yeah. I can't remember. I can't remember. I guess I wasn't deprived. It didn't stick in my mind.

Interviewer:: Do you know if, well I know they sold war bonds didn't they?

Virginia: Is what?

Interviewer:: Sold war bonds.

Virginia: Oh yes. We all bought the war bonds. You bet.

Interviewer:: Do you remember anything else? Did woman wrap bandages or do anything else like that?

Virginia: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. It wasn't the people I associated with at least. I think maybe they did in school or something I heard. But see I was an old 24 year old woman.

Interviewer:: And you talked about being on the train and it was crowded because there were a lot of service men and service men's wife coming and going.

Virginia: Oh yes. You bet. You bet.

Interviewer:: Do you remember stopping places where they would feed the service men or anything?

Virginia: No, no I don't. I think it was going on, but we didn't stop that much, or I didn't notice it. Some things you know you remember and other things you don't. If it didn't affect you.

Interviewer:: The trains didn't stop here.

Virginia: No. Like I say, I went on to Pennsylvania and then back on the train which is a new experience. But they treated you fine except trains are bumpy, and they used any kind of train I guess to transport all these people. To take the boys and then to take the wives. It was crowded.

Interviewer:: You were a woman and you did go to work, do you think the war changed what you did as a woman?

Virginia: Personally I would say probably not. Since my brother, my special brother, got home in good shape, my other brother got home alright, Roy.

Interviewer:: So you had another brother in the service too?

Virginia: Yes, another brother in the service.

Interviewer:: What branch was he in?

Virginia: Just plain old Army I think.

Interviewer:: And did he serve in Europe?

Virginia: Yes. He went over there, something about they were driving tanks, you know. Some of that made him so nervous. He got kind of a, not a medical discharge but a discharge where he wasn't too ...

Interviewer:: What we would call post traumatic syndrome today? Post Traumatic Syndrome?

Virginia: Yeah. Probably.

Interviewer:: So it did affect him then. Did the effects last for him?

Virginia: No, no. He was married while he was in service too. My nephew and his sister was born while they were in California. No, it didn't affect me like a lot of people I am sure.

Interviewer:: Well and some of the women went to work in the war plants are sort of changed the role of women, did you see that at all?

Virginia: Yes, yes it would. The sister-in-law, they went to California and they were there for years. But since Howard came home, and we just kind of carried on our lives as we had before. So I am not a person that could tell you too much about it. Not that we weren't affected. We were all affected and all concerned, of course. We all wanted the war to be over, of course. Goodness.

Interviewer:: Do you remember VE Day or VJ Day, or the bombing of Hiroshima. Do you remember any of that at the end of the war?

Virginia: We were all concerned about it and my husband was very interested, you know. I just didn't pay that much attention to it. Too dumb to know what was going on. I hadn't been over there and I didn't know anybody.

Interviewer:: Were there any celebrations or anything when the war ended?

Virginia: I don't remember that. I don't think so particular not in our small town.

Interviewer:: That is what most people have said that there wasn't.

Virginia: There wasn't that many coming home at once you see. There would be one come home, and you would all be so glad that everybody was okay. And we would ask about, we would see people and say, how is your husband? Have you heard from so and so? You know, so we were all concerned for everybody of course. I know that, yeah.

Virginia: Oh the dust storms, when it doesn't affect you, you just don't remember as much.

Interviewer:: We are finding that Edwards County was a little protected, you know.

Virginia: I think so. I think we weren't in too bad of shape, just maybe like we are right, now with our recession. Maybe it affects some people, but some of my friends it doesn't make that much of a difference.

Interviewer:: Another question we have been asking everybody simply because we are kind of curious. As far as minorities go in Kinsley, blacks and Hispanics. What do you remember about them during this time? Did you go to school with any?

Virginia: No, I don't remember. Of course the Gaines were always here in Kinsley and Martha Gaines became friends. She talked to everybody. Little Negroes, you didn't associate with them so much. I remember going to the school house in the gym and sitting there and here come Martha bound to come over and sit by me. Well I talked to her, but I am a little squeamish. Wasn't that silly. You just didn't sit next to a Negro. The Mexicans some how, I never felt that way with Mexicans. I don't know where I got that idea. I still don't think as much as Negroes as Mexicans now. I just think Mexicans or Spanish are great people, in the hospitals and all, nurses and all are wonderful people. I am sure the Negroes are too but I just never knew them personally as much.

Interviewer:: And the theater was segregated, at the Palace Theater.

Virginia: I suppose they were. Yes, yes. See you know more about that then I do.

Interviewer:: We have been talking to a lot of people.

Virginia: Oh yes, yes. You would.

Graff: Okay, in Ray Smith's store could the Negroes and Hispanics come in and buy?

Virginia: There weren't any Negroes that ever came in, I don't think.

Graff: Okay.

Virginia: And I don't remember any Mexicans ever coming in.

Graff: But you would have waited on them?

Virginia: I can't answer because I don't know.

Graff: Okay.

Virginia: Negroes I probably would have hesitated, I don't know.

Graff: I just wondered.

Virginia: I am not prejudice to Negroes.

Interviewer:: Well, it was a different time period.

Virginia: Yeah. I don't, I just wouldn't want, I hope none of my relatives would ever marry with them. I think you know they have their place.

Graff: I was just curious.

Virginia: I don't know. You are asking me things I don't know.

Interviewer:: Okay, are we done with World War II?

Virginia: You probably got enough ...

Interviewer:: You can tell us some more since what you have done since that time if you would like to. Some of your trips.

Virginia: Oh yes. I started going, I belonged to Extension.

Interviewer:: Extension, was that around during World War II or was that something that started after?

Virginia: I belonged all my married life. FCE, and oh I might mention that in those days I am sure you knew that I started driving my folks Model T Ford, and I was 12 years old. My brother took me out in the pasture, so he could teach me how to shift, and I was just driving along. Heavens, by the time I was 14, I was driving into Kinsley and all around. Didn't need a license, and I loved it you know. I can't imagine my dad letting me drive the big Chrysler at 14 years old. I wouldn't have let a kid of mine drive that, but I did.

Interviewer:: You were probably pretty responsible.

Virginia: Well I never had a wreck fortunately. I don't know, I guess I was.

Interviewer:: Did you ever drive the farm vehicles?

Virginia: No, I had too many brothers. When you had 3 brothers and they were all farmers, they didn't need me. I use to go out and take lunch to them or take a cold drink. My older brother, Paul, he would get lonesome and would say, "Come on, Toots, and ride the tractor with me." So I would sit on the

fender and ride and of course I talked the whole time. He liked that. I would bring him something to drink and we would talk. Make the days go longer, shorter I should say.

Interviewer:: So you had your extension club and the Methodist women had an organization that you were probably active in right?

Virginia: Yes, this organization was called Farm Bureau that my mother belonged when I was a kid. Then it was Extension and now it is FCE. But I got to going, and they had trips. They would have a national trip and a bus would go from Kansas, and you could go to this national meeting. I went to 8 state meetings, no 12 state meetings, and 8 national meetings. My husband, we had some nice trips, but he didn't care to travel. We had gone to Florida, and we had gone to California, but he said, "If you want to travel, you go ahead. Go ahead and enjoy yourself. You don't have to stay home just 'cause I don't want to go." So I went, and I ended up going on 30 bus trips. I also went to all 50 states. We would get up on these bus trips and tell a little about yourself. I got up to tell about myself, and said, "I have been in all 51 states." Nobody said a thing until it was over. This ole boy back there said, "Virginia how in the world, where did you find that other state?" I said, "Did I say that?" I had just had my 51st anniversary, and I was a little confused. Well then I started going overseas, so I got to go to 7 countries over seas because I had a supportive husband. And when I came home, I would talk the whole day at least 'cause he wanted to know about the trips. I kept a diary, and I didn't take many pictures, but I kept little brochures about it. So if somebody said, "He is sure nice to let you go." I would say (I was a smart aleck) "I was free, white and 21" so away I went. They said, "Yeah but some of these men don't (*let their wives go*). He wanted me to go. He would say, "You do as you want to. I want you to enjoy yourself."

Interviewer:: Sounds like you had a partnership with him, I mean a real partnership?

Virginia: Yes, then we went into the store together, and we always worked together. Maybe that is why we got along as well as we did. Then when we moved over here. (*At this point Virginia is describing the house which began has apartments.*) We gave up the apartments after so many years. I wanted to move on this side. and we'd live over there and sleep upstairs. Howard said, "I have always lived over here so I would rather stay over there." He said, "You go ahead and fix this side up as the way you want. You have worked hard enough. You just get what you want." Good husband. So I did. But he said, "I will stay over there." So until he died, he walked upstairs to bed, and he slept upstairs. And I slept in there (*downstairs bedroom*). Somebody said, "No wonder you have such a good relationship, you don't have to live together." I said, "We live together; he has his apartment, and I have mine. He has his TV, and I have mine. And you do get along. He watched his ball games, and I could watch whatever. I think it helps. It is good for anybody. I don't have anything special."

I collect music boxes; I have 16 or more. I collect stuffed rabbits. And my hobbies have been travel and reading. I would still be traveling. I have this nice gal that works for me, Judy Kirkbride. She has been with me almost two years, and she is wonderful to me. She would do anything for me, that girl would. I say, "How come you are so good to me Judy?" She said, "You are not hard to be good to." I said, "You know if I didn't have this broken hip, we would still be taken some trips." We probably would. Now I get my cataracts surgery, and I'll have good reading. I can read and watch TV. So even if I can't walk very well I can still get along.

Interviewer:: You have seen a lot in your lifetime. When you think of your elderly relatives who probably lost their eyesight when they got older and here you are with cataracts surgery.

Virginia: Oh yes. My husband had cataracts surgery with Dr. Boehme and also my sister, Elsie Arensman. I didn't realize how wonderful Dr. Boehme is. He is great. He is just a real nice person. And it is really no big deal except I was a little nervous when I got ready to have it because I blink all the time. I said, "Can you give me something to settle me down?" He said, "Well yeah, I will give you a little anesthetic." So they did the first time. And then the second time I said, "I am not so nervous and I don't think you need to give it to me." He said, "Well I think I would rather 'cause when you see me coming, you start blinking." I said, "I don't want to." He said, "I know but you do." So he gave me very little, just enough to relax me. But I remember 'cause this was just last Tuesday. I was laying there and I could hear my hearing aid was starting to whistle. I didn't say anything. I don't think I did. I don't know if I did or not. I wanted to reach up, but they have you strapped down so you can't do a thing. It don't matter. I guess worse things have happened to me maybe. It was just a whistling. I remember when I came to and all it wasn't whistling. So I bet somebody reached over and did something.

Interviewer:: Do you have some other question Rosetta about Kinsley?

Virginia: I am sorry I don't remember much.

Interviewer:: You are doing really good.

Graff: You are doing great. You are doing great. You were active in was it the American Legion Auxiliary or the VFW Auxiliary?

Virginia: Both. I belonged to both.

Graff: You belonged to both, okay. 'Cause I can remember you marching in the parade not that many years ago.

Virginia: Oh yes. We had fun. VFW Auxiliary, yes we dressed in our formals and really had a good time. I was a joiner. I liked to go to things. Then Extension, I always belonged to Extension just to be with people. You know, I like people.

Graff: I want to ask downtown questions, okay? About how Kinsley use to be. Okay? Where the buildings and things were, okay?

Virginia: Well, you know I don't remember much changes. Howard was 95 when he died, and up until the last year he had a very good memory. Somebody was always calling him. Betty Burr called him a lot wanted to know about old time things. I couldn't remember except our old church. And I remember the old Opera house which is that building that is across the bank. We use to go roller skating up there when I was first married I guess. Because when I was a kid, I didn't get to town very much. I always wanted to live in town and I finally got to. I said I would never marry a farmer 'cause I didn't want to live in the country.

Graff: Do you have any pictures of downtown Kinsley or anything like that?

Virginia: Of what?

Graff: Of Kinsley.

Interviewer:: Pictures.

Graff: Pictures.

Virginia: I am going to have to look in some of the old albums.

Interviewer:: We would love a picture of the Opera House. We have none.

Virginia: I am sure I don't either, no.

Graff: Okay, I should have brought my notes. My memory is not likes yours.

Virginia: Oh I don't know.

Graff: Okay, Ray Smith built the shop that you have, right?

Virginia: I think so.

Graff: Okay, did he tear down something when he built that? Or do you remember?

Virginia: I don't remember that. That was before. I was still in the country.

Graff: Ray Smith had his old shop before he built the knew one? Where was that at? You don't know.

Virginia: Sorry, I don't know. I didn't know Ray Smith until I went to work for him. I worked for him for 3 years and became his right hand man I guess. Handled his business, you know. Made deposits for him and took care of his money. He trusted me.

Graff: Did your family get to come to town on Saturday nights?

Virginia: Yes, yes. My brothers would all come to town on Saturday night and I came with them. Yes.

Interviewer:: What was that like?

Virginia: Oh it was a good. I don't know what you did. You walked up and down the street, and you met everybody. You would go in stores. That was a big time, yes. Even after we were married, we would go into town on Saturday night; that was the thing.

Interviewer:: It was basically a time of just visiting and shopping?

Virginia: Visiting, yes. And then we had the store when I worked for Ray Smith. People would come in and have their drinks. And after we had the store, we were one of the few, well the only soda fountain that was open on Sunday. I remember so many people, and they were even clear out in the street on a Sunday afternoon trying to get something to drink you know. So the first year we were in business, my gosh, we made enough almost to pay for buying the place.

Interviewer:: Now did you work 7 days a week?

Virginia: Yes, I said 8. I felt like it.

Interviewer:: For how many years?

Virginia: From '48 to '84. What is that, 32 to 33 years. Yes, yes. '48 to '84.

Graff: When did you start closing on Sunday? Do you remember when you stopped working on Sundays?

Virginia: I guess, I don't remember. I just told Howard I was tired. I can't take anymore of that 7 days a week.

Graff: Okay, did you get any, did anybody complain because you were working on Sunday? Like the church people, did they say anything cause you working on Sunday?

Virginia: No, no not really.

Interviewer:: They probably wanted a drink.

Graff: Because that was very unusual to work on Sunday.

Virginia: I guess it was. You know, I never thought about it. The soda fountain, I never thought about it.

Graff: What else ... I think that's it.

Interviewer:: Okay I am going to turn this off.