

Mrs. Radcliffe

- Telephone Operator
- Nike Middle School in Gardner
- Downtown Olathe
- Rationing during WWII
- War Bonds
- WWII
- Naval Air Base
- Army Munition Plant—Hercules
- Red Cross Sunday
- Urban Renewal
- School Life
- Kayettes
- Family life
- Entertainment
- Changes in Olathe
- Olathe Churches
- Olathe Library and Literature
- Civil Rights
- Tornado in her adult life
- Olathe Centennial
- Old Settlers
- Strang Line Streetcar
- Olathe Newspapers
- Introduction of Television
- Olathe Hospital
- Olathe Hotel
- Depression

Mrs. JoAnn [Kordes] Radcliffe

What is your favorite color?

Favorite color is probably, green.

Why do you like green?

I don't know. I just find that very restful. I have to be really careful at my house or I've got too much green, because it's not my husband's favorite color. *(She laughs)* but green.

So what did you do for a living?

Well, I was a telephone operator and a...here in Olathe after I got out of high school. And a...we used the old plug system and I would say what number please and they would tell me what number they wanted and I would connect them. And then I did that until my first child was born. And I was fortunate enough to stay home and be an at home mother with my three sons. And when my youngest son got into fifth grade I decided that it was time that I started to have a life for myself again instead of waiting for them to come home and fill me in and so I went to work for the school district in Gardner. I worked there 24 years and retired from there. I was the bookkeeper and secretary in the office at the middle school.

Was that Nike Middle School at that time?

It was. When I started it was just in town and it was really small and yes, it became Nike.

And wasn't Nike like a missile base?

It was. It was an old army missile base and we had a congressman at the time it closed and he arranged for the school district to get that for one dollar. It's a great big bunch of land. Now it's an elementary school. I think maybe fourth to sixth grade maybe or something...it is not really a middle school.

What was your childhood like?

Well, I brought this picture of the house that I was born in. It was at 514 W. Santa Fe. And if you know West Santa Fe up close to town and you go across Santa Fe railroad tracks. The 500 block is about two blocks from there. My great grandfather built this house with four others, I mean three others and this was the house he lived in. And as you went down Santa Fe his house was back toward town and ours was on the north side of the road. One of my great aunts lived in one of the houses and my folks owned one of the houses and that is where I was born.

And I had a wonderful childhood. I look back with just a...just awe about the family that surrounded me. I went to Central Grade school and my brother was older and sometimes I would walk with him but, the days he wasn't going or I wanted to walk by myself my mother let me do that and now as an adult I looked back and there were eyes on me all the way.

I had grandparents...my grandparents lived on Pine Street; I had three great aunts that lived on down the road and I would walk with Ruth Scott would was a fourth grade teacher at Central. So I would walk from my house to her house and then she and I would walk on to school. And now I realize that somebody was watching me the whole time. And I thought I was so independent and doing things on my own. *(She laughs)* And I think a lot of you don't have that advantage of having this wonderful support system that I had.

And I brought a little purse. My friend Betty Sundby and I on Saturday afternoons would often times get to go to the show. And this is a little purse that my mother made and it always had a hanky in it. And then I had two nickels one to go to the show and one to buy an ice cream sundae at the drug store afterwards. And I thought maybe you might like to see how quant that it is. *(She laughs)* I have a memory box and a...and...of things from my childhood...I dismantled it in order to get this purse out to show you. *(She laughs)*

What was the town like, what was Olathe like?

Well the square block was where the courthouse is and then about two to two and a half blocks around that was town and there was nothing out on east Santa Fe or out on the other side of I-35. I-35 wasn't there. It was a very nice little town and I felt very safe there. And a...my dad ran a filling station at the corner of Kansas and Santa Fe. And then later had a grocery store and an implement...on down where...I don't know if you remember the corner of Chestnut, no, Water and Santa Fe. There used to be Wonder Bread outlet, well my dad had that building. And he sold implements and he had a grocery store and he sold feed. It was just a big supermarket almost in those days. So I had him up town all the time.

So what were grocery stores like inside back in the day?

Well I know they delivered if you lived in town. They had...you could...we didn't have a phone in our house but you could go by and tell them what you needed, and then they would bring it so you didn't have to tote it home which was good. Very small but you know we didn't know any different and so...it met all our needs. It was only until the Second World War that the town began to grow and we had grocery stores that were...oh, there was an A & P that was certainly a super market.

And a...I brought a picture and I may be getting ahead of you, but a...during the Second World War everything was rationed. And these are some of my paper dolls when I was a little girl and

these are my rationing stamps. You couldn't buy shoes except with stamps. You couldn't buy flour and sugar anything that the soldiers needed or war effort was rationed. And we were each given a book, every family.

And I will let you look at them a little closer because you probably never seen anything like that. And you see that they are different. And this is my name: JoAnn Kordes, and how old I was, and you had to be there personally to get your own book. My parents would never have thought to have used all the stamps. Everybody was very patriotic. They had that many left of many of my books and I was able to save one. But as you see there are different pictures on them and you had to have like if you wanted to buy a pair of shoes you had to have "x" amount of stamps in one kind of a book. That entitled you to a new pair of shoes because of leather being used in the war effort. And so *(she laughs)* it's a whole different thing and I often worry about if we ever have to go back to that how we would react, because we couldn't just go out and buy things that we needed.

And also in my grade school every Wednesday we took dimes to school and it was a government program and you had these little books and after you got a...I think it was \$18 in these little dime books you turned it in and they gave you a war bond. And that money went to help the military too. And when I was married many years after that my folks had still kept those at maturity they were worth \$25. And so I had war bonds that I had bought with my dimes as a little kid in grade school to help the war effort. So we were very patriotic *(she laughs)* and the whole town was.

I don't know if you want me to elaborate on the Second World War...but a...at that time the Naval Air Station went in and also the Army's munitions plant that's called Hercules out by Desoto. So thousands of people were employed at Hercules and then gobs of sailors in the Navy was at the Naval Air Station.

And a...Olathe was very small and didn't have hotels a...well we had three hotels but one of them was a resident hotel and both of the others were small and couldn't hold a lot of people. And a...I think it was expensive for people at that time. So...these people that lived in town by this time my family had moved from 514 W. Santa Fe out west of Olathe. So we didn't take part in that. But my aunt and uncle had just two bedroom house but they put one bedroom aside and let someone stay there that work at the munitions plant in Desoto. And almost every house in Olathe if they could...had a little apartment set or a sleeping room or something to accommodate those extra people.

And then also the Red Cross, I think I put that in there, the sailors that were stationed out here were just like our guys now in Iraq they were sent away from home. So the Red Cross had this program that parents to could sign up people...could sign up, my mother did that and I think it

was only once a month, but I have kind of forgotten, that we would have up to three sailors come and eat with us on Sunday. And that was a great experience, in fact, as a little girl at the house, I was probably fourth to fifth grade. One of the young men who we had a dinner ended up staying in Olathe is still my lifelong friend. He was stationed here and met a woman he liked they got married and they lived here in Olathe. Mother always looked forward to having it because my brother was in the service and she couldn't do that for my brother so she wanted to do that for the sailors. I thought that was a neat thing.

Do you remember Urban Renewal?

I do. It was a big fiasco, I think. And maybe Mr. Anderson will tell you different. But I don't recall a lot about it except that they closed a street all around the courthouse and put this ugly old fountain and it was just the laughing stock of the community and they finally tore that out because it didn't sure didn't serve any purpose. So basically that is what I remember about it because there were a lot of newspaper articles and a lot of outcry from the people. Seem to me we thought and they did that the money was wasted where it could have been used to better the community. It was really used furiously you know and not the way Olathe wanted it to be.

Can you tell us about your school life?

I went to Central Elementary and then I moved to the country. This great grandfather (**and she points to a picture**) who house was there had homesteaded a place out west of Olathe and we moved there. I went fourth to eighth in a country school. At that time, Johnson County had little country schools...one room school every two miles at the outside of the city limits. But no one had to walk more than two miles to a school and I had a wonderful experience there. One room schools are...you hear...you help the little people and you hear what the older people are doing and so it is really a good learning experience. Then I came to Olathe and I a...went freshman through senior at St. John's downtown, graduated, had a wonderful high school experience. And my show and tell...I brought my senior yearbook and I marked some pages I thought you'd might want to look at. I know yours are just big like encyclopedia volumes. But a...I was one of the editors and that's me back then (**she points to a picture in the yearbook**). We were the class of '50 and my husband was also in that class and we graduated together.

Did you participate in any clubs? Did you have any clubs?

Yes, but not, certainly not...I was in Kayettes, which was a girl's organization...service club. I was president of the pep club and back then it was a sorority kind of thing.

You were voted in?

Certainly was...there are some pictures I marked. And this is my uniform sweater *(she holds it up for them to see)* which is 57, 58, 59 years old. *(She laughs)* This...I was in the pep club for three years and president for one year, my senior year. This I earned from service projects. *(She shows them a patch on her sweater)* And this you had to buy. *(She shows them a patch of an Eagle on the back of the sweater)*. Olathe eagles still...way back then. We had our 50th school graduation reunion seven years ago and I am the only one that still has her pep club sweater. This is me yelling at a football game *(she points to a picture in her yearbook)*.

How was it different?

Just small...smaller and we played on a football field that is where Dillon's is on Santa Fe. And it was behind an elementary school and not lighted properly or anything. It was very strange. This is our cheerleaders and our pep club. *(She points again to a picture in her yearbook)*

Were there a lot of people that got involved in school activities?

Pretty much I think, although looking back I think we were very cliquey. But having worked with junior high age children for 24 years I think that continues. I think you still have your little groups that are interested in this so they go to those clubs and stuff but a...I hope everybody had as good of a high school experience as I did.

Did you have a favorite subject?

Well...I was pretty involved in everything that went on. But as far as...this is my husband, Jim. *(She points to a picture in the yearbook)* As you can see my book is much autographed. *(She laughs)*

Do these letters and numbers mean.....

That stood for the groups of organizations that they were involved in. *(they are looking at the yearbook)*

Did you meet your husband after high school?

No we started dating in high school, we were seniors. Here I am and these are the things I was involved in. *(she turns to the page in the yearbook and points)*

Were there teams and competition in sports?

We played teams just like you do. The class of '50 had some wonderful sports personalities. You probably will visit with some that were on the team, I hope. They were second at the state in

basketball. I think they were champions of the league in football. I don't think the football had a tournament after the season was over. You know you just played your games and then whoever won the most there wasn't a tournament. But there was in basketball. We are still friends with a lot of the...our schoolmates. We keep in touch.

Did you have town rivals?

Probably, although I don't remember. Certainly not what you people have when you play high schools in your own town. And we never had bus service you know so. When we went to games some of the parents had to drive us. I was fortunate enough to ride with a family that went to all the games. *(She laughs)* I got to go to all of the away games. There wasn't any team buses that went...even the team was transported by cars.

What were the fashions like?

It was be hilarious for you to see. When I was a freshman we wore pleated shirts that were above our knees. And by the time I was a senior we were wearing...these a...pep club uniforms...*(she looks into the yearbook to find a picture)*...you had to wear a blue skirt and then you had to wear your pep sweater...my blue skirt when I was a senior was clear down at my ankles almost. So I had gone from those three years from too short to too long a skirt. *(She laughs)* And that was the fashion you know.

What about your college experience?

I did not go to college. I married shortly after I got out of high school so I didn't have college experience.

What was the cool thing to do back then?

Well...two of my friends were fortunate enough to have cars in high school and we ran the Fe much like you do now but it was a much slower street. And a...there was teen club out on east Olathe out on Kansas City Road and we would go out there on one night a week after games particularly on Friday nights. And then downtown there was a church that had been the community church and it was a teen town and they were open every night with activities.

So if you were able to go then you had something to do all the time. And I think that you don't have that now whether you can go somewhere and dance or talk or just hang. You know and a...we were fortunate to have that big old church building. And a...the Red Cross was in the upstairs and had offices and the main...what been the sanctuary they cleaned out so it was a huge big room and a...that was for teens.

What kind of music did you dance to?

Well, we would jitterbug. It was just about '49 and '50 is when that started coming in so we danced that. I loved that music. *(She laughs)*

Did you have a favorite artist that you liked or anybody you looked up to?

Oh gosh, I've never been a big have a hero...I love music...and a...I sang in my church choir for years and just retired...I got old enough where I was the oldest in the choir. *(She laughs)* So I decided to quit. But no I don't have any special hero figure.

What was your family like?

Well, I had my mother and father and my brother is six years older than I am. He just died within the last two years. We had great bonding between my brother and I. He told jokes about...he was a happy little boy until he went home one day and he had this sister. *(She laughs)* But really he loved me. And when he used to take me to school in elementary school because he was in high school by that time and he would drive his car so I always kissed him goodbye and a...and everybody that see me get out of the car say "you kissed your brother goodbye!" *(She said that in a different voice...she laughs)* I said YES! So we had a great time. My mother and dad lived close by. My mother died very young and I was only 39 when she died and that was way too soon to lose a mother. My dad continued to live until he was older. And a...my brother and sister-in-law, my husband and I were best friends had a lot of trips together and stuff so...

What did your mom and dad do for a living?

My mother was a homemaker. She had worked before she had her children in a dairy store where they bought cream and stuff from farmers and sold eggs and stuff like that and she was their bookkeeper. But after Dean was born why then she stayed home. Dad I told you had a filling station for a while and then the other store.

So you mainly lived in the city?

Well a...had a city address but lived west of town probably more years than they actually lived in town.

What did you do for fun?

A...talked on the phone to friends...had two particularly good friends that I spent a lot of time walking around town. There a soda shop that was right...just off the corner of Park and I can't even think...you know where Warren Hannon Jewelry is on the corner of...by the library

there...back up the street west there a place we'd just go after school where we'd buy cokes and listen to music and stuff like that. And so...we hung there a lot. Went to teen town...

Did you go to movies?

There were two movie theaters in town and the one my friend and I went to and the other one my brother usually went to. I think they showed Westerns or something. But a...then by the time Jim and I was dating there were drive shows you know. Drive in movies.

Hi I am Paul Williams, I talked with you on the phone.

Yes you did.

Where was the drive in?

A...well...it was out off of 119th Street now, but it didn't look like anything that you know...it was a farm out there and they had bought some property and put a drive in out there.

Do you remember any controversies in Olathe?

We spoke briefly about Urban Renewal that kind of got everybody going. I can't think of anything else. If there was I wasn't aware of it.

Can you describe the changes in Olathe over the years?

It just continues to amaze. I'm so glad that there are people in Olathe who have taken pictures of Olathe the way it was and now they present the slide shows, because to you it wouldn't mean a thing but to me I think oh my gosh I forgot that building was there and I will remember what I did in regard to that building. It's just completely different. Just...west Santa Fe is pretty much the same from the rail road out to where I live, but a...to begin to explain it.

The only thing I'm really proud of...ever since I married my husband I belong to the First Christian Church. Which is the only church in downtown Olathe. It's right in back of the library we use their parking lot. And a...before that...before I married him I belonged to the Olathe Methodist and it was just up the street. And a...all the churches were within a two block area, probably. Then as the town began to grow then they started leaving and we're the only one that is still there. From Catholic to Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, our Christian church, the Community Church it was called and I am not sure if it was a nondenominational church or what...but they all were just right downtown. *(She laughs)*

Was there any interesting literature at the time?

I've always read. I love to read. And as a matter of fact, this week there was an obituary in the paper that had the poem, "If", by Rudyard Kipling. And in my drama class in high school we had to memorize different poems and different readings. And when I saw that "If" I thought oh my gosh I haven't thought of that forever But as I re-read it I remembered a good deal of it You know if you have to memorize something it's there like the ABC's. *(She gestures to her head ...she laughs)* And a...so...I read all my life I still read all the time. Have library books *(she laughs)* in my basket at home all the time. So a...we didn't have any major fights over what books were written or what we read in school like you have now you know now with some of the controversial books. And a...I just remember literature being really important to me. I took all the English and literature and speech I could and a...in classes that I could 'cause I really enjoyed that.

The Olathe Library? What Library?

Yes, and it was right there where in town too. It's right there now where the post office 61...66061 post office is...downtown. There was a library there given by Carnegie. Funds from the Carnegie Foundation and it was a great old thing, but I had a library card from the get-go. *(She laughs)* You had to be really quiet. And there was wooden floors in there and a...there were two librarians, bless their hearts, and a...they didn't even want you to make noise when you walked on the floor. *(She laughs)* I have great memories there.

Did they tear that building down?

Oh sure. Olathe tears all of its buildings down.

Do you have any idea when they tore that building down?

It was probably about Urban Renewal. They did away with lots of buildings and made parking lots out of a lot of neat buildings. I don't know for sure.

Was it a two story building?

Well you walked up to go to the library. There were probably eight to ten steps up on the outside that you went up to. Then there was a basement underneath it that they stored and that they had their displays and stuff. But we never went down there like as library students. Maybe college kids could go down there for research. But the books that I read was up on that level.

Would you say Olathe changed for the better?

Well...oh sure. I sometimes wonder were all the people come from that live here now. But a...made us all grow when the town grew. And sometimes my husband says nobody works because they are all driving their cars during the day since we are retired. *(She laughs)* But by in large I think...

Do you remember anything about the Civil Rights Movement?

No, you know a...on west Santa Fe where I was born just two blocks to the north was where the black people lived in my day. And that was very segregated they had their own grade school, but we all went to high school together. And my dad being in business I never knew that there was any reason to think any different of them than anyone else. And so...I know they had a struggle, but it certainly wasn't anything that I was ever taught or anything about there...And I think in Olathe they were pretty well treated although I even hate to share this story, but when I first moved to Gardner, and shortly after we were married there I went to the store one day really early. There were two grocery stores and I had forgotten something for my husband's lunch I think so I ran up there and there was a Black man in front of me with a loaf of bread and when he got up there the owner of the store was clerking and he said I am sorry sir that loaf of bread is not for sale. And I was in a hurry and I went I got to the car I realized how I did not do anything that I should have done. I should have bought the man the loaf of bread. You know...I just have hated myself for that. That I didn't step up and say oh, my gosh I will buy that bread and give it to the man. I didn't have the presence of thinking and I was younger and I am really sorry about that. But over there in that small town at that time there was quite a bias against them but I never had any of that or knew anything about it.

How often did you go to downtown Kansas City?

Oh probably every other week. There was bus service from the drug store on the square to downtown. Ran every hour and a half. Well my mother and I...well I bought all my clothes down there almost. And a...we would go every other week probably. And a...have dinner...lunch together buy whatever we needed and then ride the bus back. We didn't drive down there ever.

How long did that take you?

I don't know. It certainly wasn't something that I dreaded doing. It was treat. *(She laughs)* And they stopped several places, but a...it wasn't just a stop at every street. It would pretty much go downtown. Had lots of great stores down there.

Was there any major weather events?

Not when I was small that I remember...Well a...only as an adult. I don't remember traumatic like that as a child. Since I been married we had a tornado go through our place out west of town. That was quiet an experience. We didn't lose our home but two houses the two houses across the street and north of us were both destroyed and we had window breakage and the front door thrown off and our awnings all ruined. The wind...we had metal awnings.

What year was that?

Oh gosh I am so bad about that...it was one that we watched come. It was on the ground for just hours. And a...we could look out the west and in fact I have pictures of the tornado we watched it for a half an hour hoping it miss us and then we went downstairs and took our little dog. Our three sons we knew was ok because they weren't within the path and we sat in the southwest corner. And when the tornado...well...we had this awful hail and it was about this big **(she uses her hands to show the size of the hail)** what it was little pieces of ice frozen together into a big ball. And we have an outside entrance to our basement and so my husband looked out and saw them and he said I've got to go out and get one of those. So he went and got like three of them and brought them in just about the time the tornado was on us and put them in the freezer and we got in the corner and our little dog suffered terrible because of the pressure.

And I have folding doors that close across my washer and dryer down there. And they stood right straight up with the suction that comes with a tornado. And we heard all the glass break and everything, but we felt so fortunate that we were safe and our sons were safe. We were without electricity for four days and a...of course the ice melted in the freezer **(she laughs)** so my husband could never show anybody.

Then our church caught on fire in the chapel part several years ago and a...and my husband has been long time property chairman there...just retired recently. And a...that was very scary to get that call and come in and see the flame coming out of the chapel windows. But it's been fixed and we didn't lose the whole building.

How long has that church been there?

Oh a...about hundred and a...mmm...I was going say twenty six but I think it's been more than that. The addition where the Sunday school classroom and stuff had been built in the '60s I think. But the old building itself has been there forever.

Is that where the church originally was?

No. It has been in two other places in Olathe. The building that they first built there at Chestnut and Loula burnt to the ground on Christmas Eve in the early 1900s before I was a member there. And then the natural rock room was built after that.

Do you remember the centennial in Olathe?

Yes, I do. All the guys grew beards. *(She laughs)* To see who could grow the biggest beard and mustache. If that wasn't a bunch of ugly guys. *(She laughs)*

Was that a contest they had?

It just got spread I think...probably the newspapers something said the old...And all the pictures we have of our ancestors you know have beards and very stern looking. And so...all the guys decided to do that. It was fun. They had a lot of celebrations and a lot of things going on. But a...to be involved in that...

Was it a yearlong celebration?

Pretty much. I think everything in Olathe back then settled around Old Settlers time in September and a...even back when my mother was a little girl she and her family would come in with horse and buggy to Old Settlers. And what it was a...was a family picnic on the square. And a...then as a little girl I knew it...celebrate Old Settlers all this time.

What was it like?

They always had a horse tank and a...at the corner of Park and Cherry. And they had ice in there with watermelon. And you could eat free watermelon. Everybody brought their own picnic and they'd have gab fest and they had picture taking and stuff like that and just everybody came. It just lasted the one day. On a Saturday.

No parade or anything like that?

I don't recall that was when I was a little girl. In fact, I don't know when I was in high school if there was a parade that would have been in 47, 48, 49, 50. Because I remember being involved with band and going to football games and performances. But I don't ever remember marching in Old Settlers. So I...I should look that up and see, but I don't think there was a parade back then.

Can you tell us a little about the Strang Line?

My husband really recalls that but I don't at all. I remember that...where the round house was, which was at Kansas and Park Street. As a little kid I thought...and well...through...when they tore it down, I just thought that was fascinating because they would come down there was a brick building at the corner and they somehow turned around there and went back you know...the other direction. And then after they quit the Strang Line that was a restaurant there for many years in that little brick building on the corner and I think it had something to do with their offices or people that had office space there waiting for the Strang cars that they actually turned around there. No, I don't remember ever riding on it or anything.

Can you tell us a little about politics at that time?

The two newspapers, one was call the *Olathe Mirror* and one was the *Democrat* and they were the Republican and the Democratic papers. And so we had politics all the time and a...they were very bias about **(she laughs)** you know...what they put in their papers if it was a Republican it was the *Mirror* it definitely was a Democratic if it was a Democrat. But a...my grandfather was a great Republican who just worried about the country when Truman got elected president because he had been involved with some business dealings and with the Pendergast organization. And Truman was a front man for the Pendergast. So my grandfather just mourned the fact and I thought oh gosh I wonder what will happen to the country if my grandfather is so upset about that. Course he was a great president. **(She laughs)** So I think politics come and go but the country stays pretty good I think through it all.

So you said that you got the news through the two newspaper what other ways did you get the news?

We had radios and of course no television. I am sure other people have told you, but my first experience with television was a...Bill Payne, he was in my class in high school and a...one year must have been in 1949 his parents invited about six of his best friends up and they lived on Hyer and Cedar...on the corner of Hyer and Cedar and they had this thing called television. And it must have been about this big and **(she shows how big with her hands)** it was very fuzzy and not a clear picture. But it was in a beautiful Mahogany piece of furniture and then here was this little screen.

And so we sat around that and watched it some kind of musical that was on and a Mr. and Mrs. Payne thought we would enjoy that and so we got to see that. Then in about the early 50's, my in laws who lived up on Church Street got the first television in their whole neighborhood and it was black and white. And it was only on two or three times a day, there was a Howdy Doody Show that was on in the afternoon and then I think maybe there was an hour of some other kind of programming. And the neighbors would all come to my mother-in-law's house about

five minutes before the television was going to come on (*she laughs*) and if Jim and I would go there you couldn't hardly get in because all the neighbors were sitting on the floor and on the chairs to watch Howdy Doody or the test pattern. And we have laughed about that over the years...but a...we always had radio.

When did you get television?

Oh gosh, probably shortly after we were married. Which would have been in 1951. We didn't have color until about probably '56. I think 1956 we got our first color set. At that time we found out that our oldest son was colored blind. When he would watch black and white and we watch like the Rose Bowl Parade or something like that or anything, he would say, isn't that the prettiest red color and it would be in black and white. And we thought his imagination...he was a very imitative little boy anyway. And when we got color we realized that he had already in his life shades of grey represented different colors to him. And he is completely color blind and doesn't see what you and I see, but he has over the years been able to categorize the grey shades that he sees. Isn't that sad? I think...oh.

When he was in school he would often ask me if I would lay out what he wore the next day, but never explained why and I presumed at some time he went to school in clashing colors or something and was made fun of. Because he couldn't tell the colors good enough and he would get so he knew this would go ok together after he had them a while. But you know...going into a new school year or something he would always have me lay his clothes out. And a...I just think what he's lost not being able to see color. Oh my...But that's when we realized that he was seeing color in the parades in black and white.

Did you talk about your family and how many kids you have?

I have three sons.

What schools did your kids go to?

They went to the Gardner Public Schools we lived west of Olathe by that time and we still live in Gardner mailing address west of Olathe.

We've had a lot of people talk to us how big and how important it was for the hospital to be built. Can you reflect on that at all?

When I was pregnant with my oldest son I had to have him at Bethany in Kansas City, Kansas because I had an Olathe doctor but of course no medical facilities here. And yes, everybody worked toward the hospital. But my sister in law she was a registered nurse from St. Mary's Nursing Academy down on the Plaza kind where Union Station is used to be a big nursing school there and she had gotten a grant during the Second World War they had nurses training and

she was able to get her pin to go to St. Mary's on government issue, because they were needing so much medical personal at that time. Well her and her mentor who was, Margaret Deshler, a name you may hear in Olathe they were working constantly to get the hospital there. And so I have lots of memory of...and then I was able to have my second son at the new Olathe Hospital, which was down across from where Dillon's is kind of where the Walgreens store is that is where the first hospital was. Lot of joy that was to not have to go to Kansas City, Kansas.

How long was the hospital located there do you have any idea?

I don't know for sure. And I should because I volunteered at the hospital for 10 years after I retired. But you know then they built one much bigger out there by the aviation. I think they now own that. But that was the hospital for a good many years until they moved out there where they are now. So it was the bigger building was there much longer than the small one down on Santa Fe.

What kind of food did you eat?

We didn't eat at restaurants very often, because there weren't any in Olathe. The one time I can remember eating at a restaurant...Hotel Olathe had this really nice restaurant in it and when my brother was in the service during the Second World War my mother became very melancholy about November knowing that he was overseas fighting. So my dad made reservations and we came to Olathe and ate at Hotel Olathe that way she didn't have to cook and have the memories that was a wonderful experience.

And a...but normally my mother had this wonderful green thumb and she had this big garden and loved to do that. She'd get out early in the morning. We had everything. I realized now that, my mother grew celery, broccoli and cauliflower and turnips anything you could name in the grocery store my mother grew in her garden. So...as far as favor food there is hardly any I don't like. *(She laughs)* But a...we didn't do fast food or anything like that. That little soda shop that I was telling you about where we went after school when I was in high school they served hamburgers and we'd buy coke. Few of us had money to buy hamburgers on a regular basis. That was about the only place that you could go and eat except the hotel.

Did you have any jobs through high school?

No. I did not work when I was in high school. Right after I got out of high school I was hired by the city to do the census for that year. And you had to go...you had a territory. I had to walk there. I didn't have a car. And then you had to actually go into every house and ask questions of every person. And I thought afterwards I wondered how thorough I was. You know I was very proud of the job and I hoped I did well. But when I got older I wondered how well I did that.

You know if you didn't find them at home you had to leave a note and appointment to go back and then I went to work for the telephone company. But...nothing through high school.

Did you do any babysitting?

No I did nothing. I was spoiled rotten. *(She laughs)*

Where was the telephone company?

It was at the corner of Park and Cherry. There's an office building that they have kind of kept and restored there it was upstairs in that building. There wasn't any air conditioning in the summer you were just dying up there on the second floor. And then the windows that faced out of the west weren't caulked or anything and in the winter you froze. *(She laughs)* But it was a great job for a woman because at that time there weren't very many jobs for young ladies and a...they had a thorough background check of you. You couldn't just go to work there. Now it would not be allowed you know. But you had to be a person of moral conduct, and a...they paid a pretty good wage for that time, better than I could of done anywhere else.

Have there been any changes in society? Have people gotten meaner or nicer?

(She laughs)...I don't know. You know I've always worked with young people for so long and I see that there are great changes from the family in values of mom being home most of the time home when the kids get home from school to go to latch key kids. I worry about that type of thing because it seems like the support system isn't always there for young people.

But I also think the young people are greatest you know I think they find a way to adapt and a...So as far as morals I think you are challenged so much more so than I was when I was growing up. With doing what other people do and wanting to be your own individual self because when I was growing up we are were almost in the same financial basis which was poor. And we didn't know we were poor. Because everybody was in the same position as us.

And then after the Second World War things picked up and we all were raised into the financial area that was a little more comfortable. But you know you guys have so many more challenges than I ever did and a...you hear more things and...and...exposed to more things than I ever was. I was really naive growing up. So I think you face your challenges much better than I would have. I hate to say that morals I don't think there's ever been a time when everybody was just the way they should be *(she laughs)* I think we all have our faults, not you any more than me. So...

What are the main differences between the two generations?

You mean your generation and mine?

Do you know what your generation was called?

I don't think we did that back then. Just the "class of 50". *(She laughs)* Which identified my high school life. But no we weren't "Generation X" or anything. What is your "generation"?

"Y"

"Y"?

And then there were the "Baby Boomers".

I know, and I was before all of that.

Do you consider yourself part of the World War II generation?

Absolutely.

So you are the "Greatest Generation". That is what Tom Brokaw calls that generation.

I think possibly my brother was the "Greatest Generation". He fought in World War II and I was just kind a "after that". *(She laughs)* Six years later but yes, the Second World War affected us all greatly.

Do you remember anything about the Depression?

Well, like I said, we were all poor and a...didn't know it. I mean it wasn't something that we whined about. I can remember my mother saying that she got a little aggravated...my dad ran a grocery store at that time and she said people would say, well at least you don't have to pay for your groceries. Like they didn't know that dad had to buy the groceries I mean he wasn't given them to sell and then he didn't give them to us.

And a...I didn't recall any complaints about the Depression I know we went through it and everybody has their stories about like I had some shoes one time that I wasn't time for me to get more and I had to put cardboard in the bottom of my shoe because the sole had a hole in it. But everybody could tell those kinds of stories and wasn't different than anybody else so I don't think I was affected adversely at all about it. I am sure my parents would say different things if they were alive to talk about it. But a...we didn't know we were poor. And then like Second World War the financial level increased and we were all better off financially. Wasn't a big deal to me at all.

What would you want for the future of Olathe?

Well...I hope that people who have both those very expensive homes will be able to live in them and not lose them financially because of a...you know they are in debt so far. That is something

that my generation pretty much paid for as they went and didn't have big debts. My husband and I haven't had a house payment or anything for most of our married life because we were of the generation that you pay as you go. And a...that gave us a comfort I think that your parents won't know. They have had to invest way more than what they can actually ever pay off. You know...and that worries me.