FILENAME: T-NolenLucille-2014-03-20-complete

ORIGINAL FILENAMES: T-Nolen Lucille-03-20-14-Rachel Woolery-1022-1034

INTERVIEWEE(S): Lucille Nolen (LN), Judy Hylton (JH)

DATE INTERVIEWED: Thursday, March 20, 2014

WHERE INTERVIEWED: Hotel Floyd, Floyd, Virginia

INTERVIEWER: Rachel Woolery (RW), Catherine Pauley (CP), Angela Myers (AM)

TRANSCRIBERS: Floyd County High School students, Radford University mentors

DATA CHECKER: Kathleen Ingoldsby

AUDIO TOTAL LENGTH: 73:21

FILE/TRACK: 1022 05:10

RW: Hi, Mrs. Nolen, how are you today?

LN: Fine.

RW: So, when were you born?

LN: When was I born?

RW: Yes.

LN: June the 5th, 1922.

RW: How long have you lived in Floyd?

LN: All my life.

RW: Have you liked it?

LN: Mm hmm. [yes!]

RW: What did you like to do when you were younger?

LN: I always liked to sew.

RW: Who taught you how to sew?

LN: Well, my mother sewed and I learned from her. Then I went to work at the factory, down here at the sewing factory. I worked there for thirty-eight years sewing.

RW: What were your parents' jobs?

LN: Well, my mother just stayed home. My daddy was a carpenter.

RW: Did you ever learn anything about what he did?

LN: Did I do what?

RW: Like did you ever like learn anything about what he did?

LN: No, nothing more than just what he when he built houses and things you know.

RW: What was life like growing up for you?

LN: Well, I guess it was kind of hard, but you know back then, we didn't have things like we do now. You had to walk. There wasn't no cars much. I walked to church about a mile and a half on Sunday and Sunday School, because there wasn't that many cars. And I had to walk a good ways to meet my ride when I went to work, about a quarter a mile. So, I don't know, just things like that.

CP: Which factory did you work at?

LN: Down here Skyline. Was Freezer then, J. Freezer and Son.

CP: What did you all make?

LN: We made shirts at first, men's shirts, and then they turned it into blouse factory, we made womens' blouses.

RW: Where did you and your husband meet each other?

LN: Ma'am?

RW: Where did you and your husband meet?

LN: Well, they came up to church one time and we went to Pinnacle of Dan, me and some friends of mine, and them, and that was the first time I went with him.

RW: How long did you know him before you got married to him?

LN: About two years and a half, about three. I can't remember exactly

RW: How old were you when you got married?

LN: Nineteen.

RW: How long before the war did you get married?

LN: Well, we was married in December, and he had to go to the Army in June, six months.

RW: How did that make you feel?

LN: Made me feel terrible.

RW: Do you have any kids?

LN: Did we have any? Well, we had one--she was born. I got the card that he had landed in England in October, the 16th, she was born the 15th. The 15th of October, after he went overseas he landed. Well, I guess he had been over there several days, but you know I hadn't got the card that he had landed 'til then.

RW: How did that make you feel that, what, that he was away when you had your daughter?

LN: Well, you know, it just makes you feel terrible because you just didn't know when he would be back or if he would ever come back.

CP: What hospital was Joyce born at?

LN: She was born at my parents', at home by Doctor Bedsaul.

CP: Did he come by horse or did he have a car?

LN: He had a car, Model A.

JH: He stayed there all night.

LN: He stayed all night 'til after twelve o'clock the next day, before she was born. Because it was hard to get him and he was afraid that if he left, you know, I might need him right quick. So he stayed all till it was over.

FILE/TRACK: 1023 05:12

RW: What were some things you liked to do for fun, things you like to do for fun, like what did you enjoy doing?

LN: Well, I always liked to do sewing and things like that you know.

CP: Did you all have any activities or things you could tell us about, like pie suppers or community activities or church activities?

LN: They did, yes. When I was growing up, we used to have pie suppers out there at the Mount Ruffner School.

CP: Could you tell us how those worked or what they were like?

LN: Well, just different people would take a lot of pies and cakes and then they would put them up. And people would bid on them, you know, to see how much they bring and some of them would bring right much. That's the way they made some money for the school.

CP: Is that like in the movies when the woman had to have lunch with whoever bought her pie?

LN: Well, some of them I think would get them and eat with the one that made the pie and some of them didn't.

CP: Did the church play an important part in your life?

LN: Yes, it always has.

CP: Could you tell us a little bit about where you went to church while your husband was overseas?

LN: I've always went to New Haven Church. I used to walk and go when I was six and seven years old from where I lived, so, I practically gone all my life.

CP: Did the church offer support while your husband was overseas?

LN: No, not really, well they give me support too, but I mean, you know, just spiritually.

JH: At that time, it was a little white church with a wooden stove, back then. I bet that's hard for y'all to imagine.

RW: So, how did you find out about the war? Like how did you find out about it was happening like radio, newspapers?

LN: I don't know we, you know, you had places of hearing it, and then when he went you see he didn't get to come back home but just about twice, two weekends.

RW: Did he enlist or?

LN: Mm hmm, he was drafted.

RW: Did you get to see him before he went off the first time?

LN: He got to come home twice is all, but not well the last time he was home he knew he was going but he didn't tell us, so he went right after that.

RW: When he came home did you know he was coming?

LN: No. I didn't know he was coming home until he come to my parents.

RW: How did that feel when you saw him?

LN: It felt great, but it seemed like an hour, I kind of recognized him a coming in the car before he got there so time he got there and stopped, me and my daughter was down there to meet him.

JH: See the day that he had to leave to go, they didn't know that he would be going that day.

LN: No, he went and didn't come back, so I didn't see him then for several weeks, and then he just got to come home on the weekends--on Saturdays and had to go back on Sunday. And I just got to see him about twice before he had to go overseas.

RW: What branch was he in?

LN: The Infantry, Ninth Infantry I think it was.

JH: The Army.

RW: Where did he travel in the war? Where are all the places he went to?

LN: Well, he went to England and then he went to North Africa I think and Sicily. He was in North Africa and Sicily. That was two places he was at.

LN: He got wounded in Sicily, when they was fighting in Sicily.

RW: Do you know how?

LN: Well, he had shrapnel in his body and then it burned his thumb, his hand, and his arm.

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CP: Where was he stationed when he was here?

LN: Fort Meade, Maryland.

RW: Did he send you a letter letting you know that he had been injured?

LN: Well, I got one, but he had been injured a little while before I ever got the letter. I know, I mean I hadn't heard from him for a while. You see and I didn't know what was going on, and then I finally got the letter that he was in the hospital, and had been injured.

CP: Oh okay. Is that the one that you have with you? Would you mind to read that whole letter for us?

LN: Well, it says, "Dearest wife, I will write you a few lines to let you hear, I am well for the shape I'm in and hope it will find you the same. I guess the baby is big enough to walk now. I am in the hospital wounded in the hand. About the first of August. It was done in Sicily. I am back in Africa now in the hospital. Don't worry about me for it is not, not bad. I guess I will be out in two or three weeks. I'll close this time. love, Edward."

AM: How often did he write to you?

LN: Well, he wrote pretty often, but I would just long time getting, and when he had a chance. Well, you see he was in battle a lot and he couldn't write then. So it was about six months one time before I heard from him, and I done went to Ma Sue Hall over here, she was in the Red Cross then. Then you know, to get her to check into it to see. And then I heard from him right after that. That was when he had told me that he had been injured.

JH: And they didn't let him come out of the Army after he had got hurt. They put him as a chauffer, driving.

LN: He got a job as a chauffeur, hauling the generals around, after he got wounded because they didn't put him back into battle.

RW: Oh okay.

JH: But they didn't discharge him either.

LN: But they -- he wasn't discharged, 'til the war was ended.

RW: Wow. What was your job during the war?

LN: I worked at a shirt factory.

RW: Oh. Was it hard being a single mother?

LN: Yes, it was pretty hard, and of course I went back to live with my parents, you know, and that helped a lot. It wasn't like being out by myself. She kept Joyce while I worked.

JH: Tell them about having to move.

LN: Yes, well we had done started housekeeping, so then I had to, after he left, see I had to tend to the moving, so I got this guy, he was called--his name was Phil West. And he would move people. So, he came and moved my furniture all out to my mother's, but our cookstove it was real heavy and they couldn't move it. So, they had to finally move it with a horse and sled down at Mr. Nolen's and they managed to get it into the mill down there and keep it till he come back.

JH: She had just bought that cookstove.

LN: Oh yes, it was a new cookstove.

CP: Were you making payments on it or had you bought it outright?

LN: No, we paid for it when we got it.

CP: When you got married?

LN: Bought it from Fred Sweeney when he run the store down here.

CP: Where was that located?

LN: Well, he was at several different places, but I think he was--well let me see. I'm just not sure. He was in that old mill part that used to be out there across from that factory, one time, and then he moved down the street aways. But I believe it was when he was down here across from the factory was when we bought the stove.

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CP: Well now, what parts were really hard for you as far as trying to take care of yourself and your child while your husband was gone?

LN: Well, I really don't know because I had help, you know, from my parents and my work and so it was just --

CP: Did you all can and --

LN: Yes, we canned food and stuff, and 'course then we had those had to get those ration books.

CP: Would you tell us how they worked?

LN: Well, they had stamps, had pages of stamps in them and each stamp, I mean in, you had to have them for sugar and coffee and canned food. And then you had to have certain ones for gas, and if you had to go to Roanoke to the hospital or to the doctor or anything you had to get extra stamps for gas to go, and then I had to get stamps to go to work to buy gas to go to work.

CP: Now if you worked, did you get more stamps than people that didn't work?

LN: Well, we, of course we got stamps for gas you know to buy the gas with, but we had didn't have no stamps we didn't get no gas.

AM: Why did they do the ration books?

LN: I guess food was scarce on account of that war, I imagine. And sugar, sugar and gas seemed like was the worst things.

CP: What about coffee?

LN: Yes, and coffee too, that was --

JN: And shoes.

LN: Yes, and shoes, and see, I could use Joyce's stamp for shoes until she got to wearing hard soles, then I had to use them for her.

JN: And you went here in town and picked up those books.

LN: Yes, we had to go down here to the, I can't remember now what the place was, it was in the courthouse that we had to go and get those books. [one word not clear]

CP: Did they usually allow you enough to get through the month or did you ever run short?

LN: No, I never did run short, I usually had enough.

CP: You had to be real careful with it?

LN: Oh yes, you had to be careful, and of course at home we had canned food too you know, where we canned ourselves, that helped us.

CP: Did you have a cow?

LN: Mm hm. Well, I didn't, my parents did.

CP: Could you tell us how the cow, what kinds of products and things?

LN: Well, we get to milk and then churn and get butter and make butter, we used the butter for food and Mama had extra prints of butter she would sell it.

CP: Where did she sell it?

LN: She would, well sometimes neighbors would want to buy it, buy the butter; and sometimes we'd bring it to town to the grocery store.

CP: Would you explain to these young people what a print of butter is?

LN: Well, it’s whenever your milk sours. The milk that we milked and we save it well, we save cream too and then that cream’s what made the butter on the milk; and the clabbered part down under the cream would make buttermilk. So that’s how you got your buttermilk.

JN: But you had to churn it.

LN: Yes, you had to churn, we had a churn that you had to go up and down like that it was had a dasher in it a wooden churn mine, ours was and made that butter and print it and we had a butter printer I wish we'd have thought and brought that.

CP: Can you describe it to them what it looked like?

LN: It was round, it would hold a pound of butter, and you'd, you'd put it you'd kind of ball it up and put it down in that printer. And it had a design in the top of it and when the butter come out it would come out in that little kind'a round shape, but you know it was in a prettier shape and it had that design on top of it. It was real pretty.

CP: What kind of design did your all's print have?

LN: I think it was a wheat design in the top of the butter print.

RW: Were you friends with other women whose husbands went off to war?

LN: Yes. There's one some of them, no, well there's a few of them around close, their husbands had gone from around here.

RW: Did that help?

LN: Well, yes, it helped some, but in the factory, I had a special friend. She worked beside of me, and her husband was overseas too; and he was in the same group that my husband was in. And so that kept us comfort with one another, but her husband got killed over there.

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