

Interview with Wilhelmina Schmuhl. Conducted by Laurie Ann Radke. Tape # 66.  
Transcription by Laura Wadsworth.

LR: OK, we're talking about the torchlight (indecipherable)

WS: Yes, the Political Parades they would have. They'd have these torchlight parades. People would carry these torches and they'd march all over town yelling about the candidate that they were for. And they were always very personal things; it was always man to man. And you'd find men standing on the corner, fighting over these political things until their faces were red, you know they'd get so angry about things. It isn't like it is today, it seems now everything is done sort of in secret or in back rooms or something. But these things were out in the open and you could just hear people arguing for and against things all the time. Washington Street used to be covered with what they called the block pavement. Did you ever hear of a block pavement? Well, they were blocks of wood about, I would say, 8 inches across, and they were round, and maybe 6 or 8 inches deep, and they laid those blocks just like they did... like they do bricks, you know. And when they tore up Washington Street and they paved it, I remember, all the neighbors along the street were given these blocks, they could take these blocks to burn in their stoves because they were still using wood burning stoves, very few people had furnaces at that time.

LR: About the Torchlight Parades, did the women ever get involved in these?

WS: No, oh no, they could stand along the side and watch them, but they were never involved in politics in those days at all. Well, I think of personal things, but I don't think they would be of any help to you. I remember at one of these political rallies, it must have been about 1920, Josephus Daniels, who was Secretary of the Navy at that time, came here to speak, and the Democratic Party at that time was so disorganized and of such ill repute, that I think even for Josephus Daniels there were probably 20 people in the audience to hear him speak. And he was a great person, you know, the Secretary...if you'd look up history, you'd find him. Now, I was thinking of Mr. Fetter who used to be the Mayor of Michigan City. His nickname was Hemp, Hemp Fetter, and I don't remember what his real name was. But, anyway, Hemp Fetter, he was a gay fellow. He had a ...before he became Mayor, he had a barber shop on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and he was noted all the time..all over town for his ability to do the cakewalk, did you ever hear of the cakewalk? Well, that was a certain kind of dance that they had in those days and it was a sort of a prancing thing. Not a waltz, but something where they had to show off their ability to...I think the cakewalk was a great thing.

LR: Did you dance with partners for the cakewalk?

WS: Yes, I had a partner. There were just two people performing, you see, together.

LR: Was there a lot of dances in Michigan City?

WS: Yes, they had sort of neighborhood dances. Things were very much of a neighborhood thing in those days. It wasn't so much a community thing as it is now. Like Indiana Days, for instance, now what do we call it now, in the summer...the summer festival, when it started out, it was called Indiana Days, and I can't remember the year they started them...but...

LR: How would...where were the neighborhood dances be held?

WS: Well, there were little halls...for instance, the mill property that the school has acquired up there on Pine Street, that used to be called Polsonville. P-O-L-S-O-N, Polsonville. Now Mr. Polson was a very modest and, oh, I don't know what kind of a man you would call him, but he wasn't what you'd call one of the big wigs, but he built several houses there and rented them, and though some of those houses are still standing on the other side of the street, but he built one building and then the upper part of it, he had like an assembly hall. We used to play basketball up in the Polson Hall, and they could give dances up there, and you could have family parties there. That was one of them. Now, all over town...there was one down on 5<sup>th</sup> street, was another place. They had these small halls where you could have parties and dances.

LR: You said you grew up in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward?

WS: Yes.

LR: What was the boundaries of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward then, 'cause it keeps changing all the time?

WS: Well, I can't tell you exactly what the boundaries were, but it was the neighborhood of Washington Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street and all around the Polish...or the Catholic School. I think it took the Polish School, too. It was that whole area where it was sort of, I would say, West of Franklin Street and maybe North of 9<sup>th</sup> Street. That area was the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward.

LR: Was it mainly Germans or...?

WS: There were Germans and Polish and, for instance the Dobeski's would come into that ...and the Tims...of course, Julius Dobeski...maybe Alex is still alive...Alex would be a wonderful person to talk to if you could get him. I tried to think of things more recent...you see an older person remembers things from way back...from childhood.

LR: That's what they're interested in...I'm interested in all the times, it doesn't matter, you know. 1910's, 20's, 30's, 40's, 50's....

WS: I graduated from High School in 1910, for instance.

LR: (indecipherable) the high school used to be Central School?

WS: Yes, and I have a spoon with a picture of the school building in it.

LR: Did they give that to you, or...

WS: No, they used to commemorate things by casting silver spoons, and you know, they'd have pictures on it of different things. Turn it off for a .....I suppose you heard about the development of Sheridan Beach.

LR: Very little.

WS: Well, the first house was built there, was built by a family by the name of Wellnitz. The Wellnitz...have you got that, hon? The Wellnitz family had a bakery on North Franklin Street. It was rather a large family, and they were a wonderful....it was a German family, and they had one son who was not well. And the doctor had told them that they should get him down in the sand at the beach and...down at the beach. And they built the first house and they called it Sand Suzi because the Kaiser had a little place that he went to...vacation place...called Sand Suzie and they were German so they named their house Sand Suzie and it's still standing down there. It was in 1905.

LR: Did people think they were strange for moving down on the beach?

WS: Oh, yes, everybody thought they were crazy. How could you build a house down there and have the sand come up and cover the house, because you know how the dunes move and they thought it was crazy. Well, it wasn't long until people began to follow them and especially people from Chicago, they realized what a really...resort place it was. And then there was no zoning of any kind...for instance, they would buy a lot and maybe put two or three houses on one lot, just to get rent for it because people would pay rent. And they...oh, what do you call it...they had hyperion rights, you know what I mean, they had hyperion rights, they had rights to the waterfront. And then later on, somebody, as the lake receded, there was more land appearing, you see, and somebody challenged their hyperion rights and so another whole row of houses was built in front of those people who had hyperion rights. I don't know...

LR: When you were growing up did you play on the beach a lot? Did the neighborhood kids, or...

WS: Oh, yes, but you always walked. You would take the street car, the street car ended down there at the railroad tracks, and you could take the street car there, and then you walked, or you walked all the way from home. And we lived on 11<sup>th</sup> Street, near Washington and we would walk from there to the beach and walk back. No one thought of getting...hitching up the horse to go. We did have a horse, and my father built us a sled, it was about 12 inches from the ground, he put it on runners, and it was rather large and we put a layer of straw on it, and he put a quilt on top of that and we kids would get on it, and we'd drive all around town, and as we drove around town, our friends would come along and they'd hop on the sled. It was big enough to hold 8 or 10 kids, you know, and it was low enough so nobody could get hurt. And that was fun.

LR: That was in the wintertime?

WS: Well, of course, that was in the winter. We had a sleigh, we had a horse, we lived right there in town. With all that....

LR: Did you have a barn?

WS: Yes, had a barn. We'd play in the hayloft. Right there in town. It's incredible as I think of it now. Well, let's see.....I don't know...

LR: What other kinds of games did you play?

WS: Well, just ordinary games like the kids play now, you know, lie, sheep, lie, and hide and go seek, and king of the hill.

LR: Didn't you say that St. Anthony's Hospital was a sand hill?

WS: Yes.

LR: What did you call it?

WS: Bunker Hill...it was called Bunker Hill.

LR: Was it a big sand hill?

WS: Oh, yes, to us of course, it was a giant. We were small and to take our sleds and slide down you know, in the wintertime, we had all the neighborhood kids would come...we'd probably have 40 or 50 children playing on that hill at one time. All these different slides that they'd make.

LR: You told me about...one time before your grandmother took you to a German Church?

WS: Yes, a German church on East 8<sup>th</sup> Street. It was a German Methodist Church. It was a family church, I mean, everybody was very close. I think I told you when it was time for prayers, people knelt on the floor and put their heads down on the benches, with their backs to the front of the church. The minister wasn't necessarily the only one who participated. If you wanted...it was time for a prayer, why he would just call on someone in the congregation get up and pray, and they'd get up and pray. Which is very informal, or course. And one of the greatest prayers, as I remember, was Mr. Arndt. Now Mr. Arndt had a farm south of town...southwest of town...and I think the Zemmer family, have you ever heard of the Zimmers, Louie Zemmer? I think he was a grandchild or great grandchild of Mr. Arndt. Mr. Arndt had a long beard and he was a great one to get up and pray and his son married the Hutchinson girl, and Mr.....W. B. Hutchinson had formed the Citizens Bank and Charlie Arndt became the head of the Citizens Bank. And his son is an actor out in California, and his daughter is down in Stewart, Florida. Her name is Blackwood. If you ever heard of Immogene Blackwood. Well, anyway, I was trying to think of some later things that happened. For instance, the Girl Scouts, do you have anything on the Girl Scouts? Well, there was one troop of Girl Scouts in the high school and the leader was Madeline Smith. The original leader was Lillian...can't remember her name...she organized.. this Lillian somebody...organized it in spring and then she gave up teaching here and Madeline Smith took over the troop. And then there were many parents in town, mother especially, who wanted their children in the Girl Scouts, and there was only this one troop and it was full and they couldn't take anymore. So they called a meeting of the women of Michigan City, they invited different organizations to send a representative, you know, like the business and professional women, and I was asked to represent the AAW. And at that meeting, they made me chairman of organizing a Girl Scout Council so we could have several troops. And, I think there were 6 troops that were formed at that time, and I became the first commissioner of the Girl Scout Council. Now the...there were a lot of people who were very active and one of them was Mrs. Crosby...Katherine Crosby, and if you ever go out to the Girl Scout Camp (indecipherable) you'll see a plaque there with Mrs. Crosby's name on it and Mrs. Simpson's name on it as two of the people who were very active in the

camping program of the Girl Scouts. But it was formed in 1928. And it was a very local thing at that time, it was just Michigan City, and we were always close, very close together, this whole group. There were so many women who contributed. Mrs. John Carrigan...John B. Carrigan was a very active person. Min Hunson, who was a high school teacher was very active and stayed in it for a long time. Mrs. Harry Kramer was active. Oh, you'd have to look them...(indecipherable)

LR: (indecipherable) the girls to join?

WS: Oh, they were all just wild to join the Girl Scouts, because they had nothing like that. We did have, in high school, something that they've overlooked, they made so much fuss about organizing the girls into a basketball team here, we had a basketball team in 1906, and I have pictures of some...of several of the teams.

LR: Did you play?

WS: Yes, and we played St. Joseph, we played (indecipherable)high school, and East Chicago...we played...and we played a whole area. But it seemed a thing that girls basketball was something sort of new, well, it isn't. We played five people on a team and two girls were in the guard area. The field was divided into three places. Two in the girls area...two in the center...or is it center...sub center...two in the forwards. And you couldn't go out of your own area because it was considered unhealthy for girls to run the whole length of the court, you see. So you played in your own court.

LR: You mean..the two guards would be against the two guards from the other school?

WS: No, two guards would be against the two forwards, and in the end areas...in the middle, the center and the sub center would be against the center and sub center and there were five on a team. Well, I don't know...

LR: Did they get...was it real competitive.

WS: Oh, yes. And the boys used to cheer us because we'd go and cheer them for their football, you see, they had no boys basketball team.

LR: They didn't?

WS: No, just the girls. The boys played football. Basketball wasn't rugged enough for those boys. They had to have contact sport. So we would cheer them at their football and they would cheer us at our basketball.

LR: When did the boys start playing basketball, then?

WS: I couldn't say. You'd have to get that from...

LR: You were already out of high school and they still weren't playing?

WS: Yes, um hmm. Yes, that's true. Now the Girl Scouts hadn't developed until they...national had insisted that we service Valparaiso and LaPorte and other

places and that was a hassle because they were used to being LaPorte, they were used to being Valpo, they were used to being Michigan City, and we wanted to have our own little club, you see. And I lost interest in it when it was a great big area taking in South Bend and everything. It just got too big and I didn't....but, I was in it...I was on the council for 21 years.

LR: What kind of activities did the girls do?

WS: Well, they did crafts, and they learned homemaking things, you know, baking and we went camping, and they did sewing, and I remember one troop I was working with came to the house and we made beach coats to wear over their bathing suits. Very simple things, we made them out of butcher's muslin, if you know what that is. And then we took crayons and decorated them on the back...put any decorations we wanted and then we'd take a hot iron and paper, as I remember it, and put them over the design, and heat it and the crayon, you see, would absorb into the material and it would stay on as a decoration. I mean, that kind of thing the girls did. Course, they all wanted to go camping. I have some film, some Girl Scout films, downstairs.

LR: You mean from early camping...?

WS: Well, the one I...that I think is the best one is 1949, we went up to Mackinaw, and there was another one when I took them with Mrs. Simpson, we went to all of the.... not all, but most of the State Parks. We started it by going down to Turkey Run, then we went on down South, I can't remember the names of all of them, stopped at the mounds, and we did sort of a historical trip. We'd go for a couple of weeks and take a jeep and a car, and maybe take just 6 or 8 kids at a time, because it involved money and not all adults could afford it. But Mrs. Simpson could give you a lot on the Girl Scouts thing later on, because she's younger than I am. Those films I've got are 16 millimeter if you'd ever want to look at them. They are interesting. (No, you're a naughty dog...)

WS: Some of the things from the depression...

LR: Oh, no, I don't have very much at all of that.

WS: Well, the depression was a terrible thing. No one would ever know what people put up with. For instance, I remember, we were fortunate because Mr. Schmuhl was working at the prison, and that job went on no matter what, you know, there was always a prison. So, although his salary was cut in half, we still had a salary and there were so many people who had nothing. I remember one of my neighbors came in one day and asked me if I had any bacon drippings and I said yes, I had a can on the stove that I had put some drippings in. And she asked if I would always give her the bacon drippings because all she had to feed was to fry bread and she didn't have anything to fry it in and I let her have the bacon drippings so at least her children would get a little fat. It was a terrible thing, you can't imagine. And I remember there was a grocery store on Michigan Street, it was called the Blue something.....oh...can't remember now. But anyway, they had a sale one day and they had pork rolls for 8 cents a pound because people couldn't...some of them even couldn't pay 8 cents a pound, and then the government formed the CCC camps, you know, and that took care of some of the young men, they went....these were headed in this area...I don't know about in other parts of the country, but engineers ran...who had graduate degrees and with years of experience as an engineers,

you know, men who's salaries were way up there would take charge of these camps at a very small salary, you know, with the government just to have food on their...on the table. And, there was one out at the Beaver State Park, of course. That...those camps, the idea was wonderful, but so many men abused it...would get into fight...they'd, the WPA, the Works Projects thing...they learned to loaf. I said that's when people really learned to loaf on the job. Because the whole point was to have a little income for some of them, whether they did the work or not didn't matter, and they would be supplied by the government and all their shovels and their axes and saws and things they had all were marked WPA, and the boys would go home and they would steal the stuff and take it back home with them, you know. There were bad sides to the CCC camps, too. So when they talk so much about forming them and all, you can see why I hesitate about just how much good it's going to do, whether it's going to teach them to go on loafing or whether it's going to teach them to really work.

LR: What was the public opinion of like, the WPA and (indecipherable)

WS: Well, everybody thought it was good because it put food on the table for those families, you see. But as far as accomplishing a great deal, I don't think that they felt it accomplished much. It was simply something to give people something to do rather than to sit and twiddle their thumbs. That's all it was, it really wasn't a productive thing, I don't think, as far as the government was concerned.

LR: What about....you said they gave young men jobs, what about the young women that were....

WS: I don't think any young women considered it. We still didn't have women's lib, you know. I don't know....is there anything else you....

LR: Yes, about the great depression, how was it people were able to survive it if it was so hard?

WS: Well, they had to double up, young people had to go home and stay with their parents, and couples would double up, you know, to save. People went in debt, they had to go in debt, they couldn't survive. And then, in 1936, when the storm clouds began to gather around Europe, well, then people began to come out because they knew there was going to be a war, and then there would have to be more things, so, you see, from '29 to I would say 30....

Side two of tape

LR: You said from '29 to '35 it was bad.

WS: Yes, it was bad still...beyond that but it began to pick up then, you see. Of course, we didn't get into the war until later...four years later, but, you could see what was coming in Germany.

LR: What was the mood of the people before they thought a war was coming. I just don't understand, you know, when things are that bad, how people would keep themselves going, you know, mentally. Were there a lot of suicides or anything around in this area?

WS: The suicides came in 1929 at the beginning of the depression, you see. But there was...but, well...I don't know what else to talk about.

LR: Your old neighborhood, the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward, did that (indecipherable) it wasn't in a part of town (indecipherable)

WS: No, it was just called the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward. I told you that the hill was called Bridal Hill on Washington Street because those young brides built their houses up there, but...and He'll tell you about some things maybe... (addressing Mr. Schmuhl) What did you call that Polish neighborhood, back there.

MS: Polsonville.

WS: No, Polsonville...I told her about Polsonville, but I mean the Polish people...

Husband: Killgovern....Killgovern was across the tracks.

WS: Oh, I....I've heard the word Killgovern, but I didn't know what area it was.

LR: (indecipherable)

WS: No, it would be across the railroad tracks. You see...are you familiar with the West part of town at all.

LR: Not very well, no.

WS: Well, you know where the prison is? Well, in that area, the New York Central, which at that time was called Michigan Central, those...all those tracks come along North and South and then they turn East, you know, and come in on Franklin Street. Now, if you lived on the other side of those tracks, you were, you know...well, that was the other side of the tracks, if you lived over there. And I think that's the area he's talking about. The, uh, near the prison.

LR: Did any of the kids from your area ever cross the tracks to play with the kids on the other side?

WS: Oh, yes, they did. There was rivalry there. There was also rivalry...you know the section of town they called Canada?

LR: I've heard of it...I never got exact....

WS: Well, on the other side of Trail Creek, you know how Trail Creek runs....I was trying to think of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street bridge...and there's a railroad bridge there and all that. Everything on the other side...between Trail Creek and the lake, that was called Canada, and the rivalry there was terrible. If a boy had a date with a girl from Canada, he'd go as far as the 6<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. He wouldn't dare to go any farther 'cause the boys on Canada would beat him up.

LR: What kind of people lived in Canada, were they German or Polish or...

MS: Everything. You see, between the railroad tracks on the West side there and the railroad bridge on the East side there, was a little community, what I mean, as far as I was concerned, we'd fight with those boys on the other side of the tracks and then we'd go to the East side and have to fight with those boys. You couldn't take the lady, couldn't take a girl on the other side of the tracks there... you couldn't take her home. And you couldn't go on the East side either, on the bridge there, couldn't take her home, 'cause they'd beat you up.

WS: That's where he meant....the Canada...that's what you meant...Canada.

MS: Yeah, Canada, yeah. Canada and Killgovern.

LR: Do you know how Canada got its name? Why it was called Canada?

WS: Well, I think it's just because the United States was separated by water...

MS: I don't know where the name came from...it's always been Canada to me, ever since I've been around here, which, I've been around here all my life.

LR: What happened when kids from Canada would go to school with the kids from the rest of area.

WS: Oh, they had their own school.

LR: Oh, they did?

WS: Yes, it was called....it's called Harrison, isn't it...Harrison school, that the colored people bought.

LR: What about high school?

WS: They didn't go to high school. In 1910, when I went was in high school, we had 300 people in the whole high school, and in my graduating class, there were only 20 people. You know, it's...I mean people didn't go (indecipherable - Wilhelmina is unfolding a map) Here's the lake, here's 12, and you see the railroad coming across there, and the railroad comes this way, see, that's the railroad. Now, all here was the West Side, or across the tracks. Now over here was Canada, you see, on the other side of the...Trail Creek there. Well, on the other side was Canada, and all this...

LR: This right here was Killgovern?

WS: I think...I don't know about that, that's his territory. See...(indecipherable) there's Washington Street, and here's 11<sup>th</sup> Street, it was then called Baltimore Street. And, you know the funny thing, I was talking to my son, who lives in Maryland, and he said when did our family live in Baltimore, I said we never lived in Baltimore, he says not even the grandparents? I said no. He said, well, why do I get the idea that we lived in Baltimore? I said because we lived on Baltimore Street, and he heard us talking about Baltimore.

MS: Baltimore, Boston, Washington Street.

WS: Yes, 5<sup>th</sup> Street was Boston Street, no... which one was Market? 10<sup>th</sup> Street was Boston Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street was Market.

MS: Boston...10<sup>th</sup> Street was Boston Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street was Market Street, I'm quite sure...I don't know.

WS: What happened to little Walter Dowley, the first Walter Dowley, I mean, you know Dowley had his little boy who was on a street car...was he hurt on the street car?

MS: I don't know.

WS: You remember, he always had on his desk the nickel that the little boy had held in his hand?

MS: Yeah, but I just don't...

WS: You don't remember the accident.

MS: I don't' know. I remember he died, but I don't....it doesn't....come to me at all.

LR: Were there a lot of accidents...street car accidents?

WS: No, no. No, the street car was a wonderful thing, I wish they still had them. Public transportation, it was really good.

MS: All the way from the prison to Doll Park.

WS: Doll Park was where the Eastside Shopping Center is now. That was another one of those parks with the dance hall.

MS: Boys go over there, a roller rink there at times, and a baseball field. And a big saloon. I mean a saloon.

LR: Really? How big of a saloon?

WS: Well, we had saloons in Michigan City...I think there were 90 saloons here. And, they...now they have this law...you can't have a saloon within so...you can't be near a church. There were saloons...all the politicking was done in saloons. My father never drank a thing until he was 26 years old and he got into politics. My grandmother...my mother used to tell me, he never drank a thing, but in order to be in politics, he had to go in the saloon, and if he went in the saloon, he had to drink, and that made a difference.

MS: We had four saloons in my block there. In the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward there. Four saloons...Kennebick's and McCloskey's and...(indecipherable) had that big...I can't figure who was in the Gus Miller's Place there on 10<sup>th</sup> Street there before Gus Miller moved in that saloon.

WS: Do you have anything on Company G? The Indiana Guards?

LR: Very little.

WS: Lump, show her your roster, maybe she'd like...maybe they'd like to take the picture, or maybe they have one...I don't know. See he was only 17 years old and all his friends were going into the National Guard, so he finally convinced his mother to sign for him and he lied about his age. So he went into the army when he was 17 and he stayed in until he was 60, in the Reserve, and he was in both World Wars, and he was on the Mexican border. And then he had an awful time when it was time for retirement because his age didn't tally with the records, so he had to go through an awful mess to get Congress to accept...

MS: Here's the gang down at the border with us, that must have been at Fort Hollis.

WS: Our son was in prep school over at Morgan Park Military Academy, and he was in his Junior year and they called me up and asked me to come over, that Bob had accumulated enough credits, so that if he could go to summer school and take certain course in history, he would have enough credits to graduate, and they wanted to graduate him ahead of time because they thought I would send him to college and if he had one year of college in before he was called into service, that he would be inclined to go back to school, but they were afraid if they kept him another year and he went directly from the academy to the war, that he would lose interest in education. So, that's what we did, so he graduated when he was 16, he was 17 that summer. So the next summer, he had finished a year at Wabash College, and the first thing he did after his birthday, in fact, the day of his birthday, he enlisted because his father was in the army and he was going to be in the army. Of course, he was sent overseas immediately because he'd had military training, and then he got a field commissioned, was commissioned in the field. And he went up to Anzio Beach went up to Rome, and he has a citation from the Pope, you know, he was in the group that liberated Rome, then he went down into Southern France, and went up into France and up into Germany from there, and there he was wounded. He was wounded twice, the first time he was returned to action, but the second time he nearly lost a leg, so he came home. That was a long story too. That was hard for me, to let him go, and then to have Mr. Schmuhl go, because at that time he was 44 and he was old, and you don't think of a man 44 as old, but he was in the Reserve and he was called up, I think, the first call came on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, Pearl Harbor was on the 7<sup>th</sup>. He was called up in December and he was at the prison and he couldn't just leave immediately, so they delayed him until the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. But he had to go in on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. And then we were stationed...he was stationed down at Fort Harrison, and I went down to live in a little town named Lourdes, which is nearby, and he was permitted to come and be with me except when he was on duty. And, everything was going fine, then one day we were sitting at the dinner table with a group of officers, and one of them looked over at him and said, you lucky dog. I said, what do you mean. He said here we're all just itching to go overseas and he's the one that gets the call. That's the first I'd heard of it, he hadn't told me that he had orders to go overseas. So, there I was with both of my men overseas. In the meantime, my mother, who had lived with me had died. My daughter was in college in North Carolina and there I was all alone with these men overseas. And it was hard. And I think I have a little mean streak in me, because I could look at my other friends who were in their forties, and they were getting fabulous salaries at these factories, because everybody was paying double and triple time and they were just soaking away the money, and their wives were getting fur coats and they were getting all

kinds of fancy things in the house because their husbands were making all this money. And here was my poor men were overseas getting a military salary, and it used to burn me up, because they were going to parties and they were having a high old time, and there I sat alone.

LR: Did you move back to Michigan City then, or...?

WS: Yes, we had a home here and I kept it. But...as I look back at it now, it was a sort of mean streak in me. I did grieve then a great deal, because I couldn't go because they were all couples, I wouldn't be invited to these things because I would just be a fifth wheel on the wagon.

LR: What kind of activities were going on in Michigan City during the wars?

WS: Well, .....

MS: Before I went to service, we started a USO here. I was contacted by the USO people in Washington there, and we had a meeting there and the second meeting we had I was elected....(indecipherable) he wanted me to take it, but he didn't know I was on call, see, and I finally told him they wanted me to take charge of it and I said nope, I'd had my call to service and I was reporting the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. Then they had some fellow in Long Beach...I don't remember who he was now, but he was the first one that ran the USO here in Michigan City.

LR: Where was it, the USO?

WS: Down at the armory or someplace...you'd have to...

MS: I can't remember where the meeting was or when we had our first meeting I don't know where we were.

LR: When the USOs got started was it in the Naval Armory, or did they hold it, or....

MS: No, they didn't have it in the Naval....

WS: No.

MS: I don't know whether it was in the YMCA or where it was, it was a large room there. They had about 50, 75 people there. Most of them women. I see Doc Sellers wife was up to the Catholic Organization there, some society there, something like that. I don't remember where...

WS: That USO was something.

LR: What kind of activities did they hold?

WS: Dances and they would feed them things, you know, they'd serve things.

LR: What about things like Liberty bonds there, did they sell...

WS: Oh, yes, there was a lot of that. Course I wasn't active in that because I was in a different category. See the civilians were having all of their activities, but I was strictly army, I was with the army. All my interest was army, and that made it different.

LR: What about World War I, were you married then?

WS: No, no. We weren't married until 1920.

LR: Did you get involved in any of the activities that were going on in town for that? I know they (indecipherable) saving toothpaste tubes to make grenades out of...

WS: No, I didn't participate in that. I owned A & W at that time, I don't know, I belonged to my own study club, and to one departments, and those things kept me busy, you see. Of course in 1928, when we formed the Girl Scouts I was really busy. I have some of the things.....I don't know.

MS: (rummaging through box) All the stuff that was in here at one time, I guess it (indecipherable)

LR: Let me change the subject totally, you were telling me a story about the first time you ever had grapefruit?

WS: My father went to Chicago, and he came own and he had half a dozen big oranges for us, there were six children in the family and each one had...in those days you didn't have oranges except at Christmastime you'd get an orange on the tree and things like that. And here we saw these big oranges and we were so delighted and we bit into them and they were so bitter and we didn't know what to think of it, well they turned out to be grapefruit, we thought they were oranges. I don't think there was a store in town that sold grapefruit because those tropical fruits...things weren't shipped in the way they are now.

LR: What kind of food did you eat a lot of then, I mean now, if you wanted to you could get it from all across the world (indecipherable)

WS: Well, just the basic things that came from the farmers. The farmers used to go around and peddle things, you know. They'd have a wagon and it would have vegetables. Carrots and cabbage and parsnips and rutabagas. And they'd bring corn and they'd bring melons, and we bought those things. We ate things in season and out of season, you ate things like baked beans and the dried foods, you know. Everybody canned a lot of stuff. Everybody had canned peaches and canned cherries and canned berries and they made jelly and they made pickles, and they had (indecipherable)

MS: Sauerkraut, don't forget sauerkraut.

WS: Yes, there..the food had to be simple in the winter. We had our potatoes and our onions that we could store and certain vegetables, but they were just basic foods.

MS: Most families had a hog or two, you know, and then cut that up salt it down and smoked it and made sausage. Like my father did. He bought two hogs

and he bought a half a beef. We'd come down in the barn and froze it, see. We used to have one we'd start on Thanksgiving Day and we'd have one that (indecipherable) till springtime. Everybody put potatoes in the basement.

LR: Did you have your own gardens, too?

WS: Well, we were in town, we just had small gardens.

MS: Little, little gardens.

WS: In the spring you always had the lettuce and radishes and those things, but those small gardens...not enough to store things.

LR: The trucks down here, they came around to sell things door to door?

WS: Yes, um hmmm.

LR: How did you get your milk?

WS: That was pedaled. We...there was one thing that we used for cooking, it's a personal thing again. The Barkers had a farm, you know where Barker Road is? They used to supply the executives at Pullman with milk from the farm. The Charlie Porter family lived just a block from us and Charlie Porter and my father used to hunt together. And Charlie Porter's family used to get the milk and they would skim off the cream and use the cream and then they didn't want to just dump the milk, so they would give us what you would call now 2% milk. And we could use that for cooking. But for drinking, we had a milkman that came around with his wagon, and he had a big pail, you know what a milk pail...and a long dipper and you would take a pitcher and go out and he would measure out, this was a pint measure that he had and he'd measure your pint of milk and you'd pay for it. And every once in a while, he'd give me an extra drink of milk cause he liked me. His Flagel...F-L-A-G-E-L.

LR: What about things like cheese and cottage cheese, and sour cream?

WS: Oh, you made your own sour cream, you made your own buttermilk, or you'd get buttermilk from the butter lady. We had a butter lady. She came around once a week with butter and we had little jars, oh I've got one here yet...it would hold just a pound of butter and you'd exchange them.

MS: All your grocery stores had what they'd call farmer's butter. The farmers would bring it in there in, oh, maybe 5 or 6 pounds with a loaf of bread, see. And I used to be around the grocery store when I was a little shaver, slip out (indecipherable) and you bought some butter there, the lady of the house would want some butter. They had these little baskets, you know, chip baskets and you'd take off a little piece of that and a little piece of butter on that from this particular loaf, and you'd taste that, see, if that didn't satisfy you, why, you'd get another one. See some butter was more salt, and others...well, you got just what you wanted. All the eggs came from the farmers here at that particular time and all your butter came from the farmer. And, uh...the grocer didn't have any milk at all outside of condensed milk, you know, evaporated milk.

WS: Oh, dear, there are so many things to talk about.

(indecipherable)

LR: What about meat, besides what you said you put up your own hogs.

MS: Uh, the butcher used to go around and I was involved in that, too. I don't know how old I was, maybe 12, 13 years old. There was a butcher on our block there, name of Eddie Miller. Every so often he'd go out...

Tape ends