

Koewler: Dorothy Koewler

Interviewer: And where are you from?

Koewler: Ripley Ohio.

Interviewer: And what year were you born?

Koewler: 1927

Interviewer: And what day?

Koewler: January 19th.

Interviewer: Okay can you tell me about your family please?

Koewler: I grew up in a large family had ten sisters and four brothers, mother and daddy.

Interviewer: Where did you rank in the family the oldest or the youngest?

Koewler: I was the third oldest with ten younger sisters and two younger brothers.

Interviewer: Wow can you tell me what a regular day growing up on the farm or anything that you can remember about that.

Koewler: I can remember going to school it was kind of hectic every morning with six or seven of us getting ready all at once trying to eat breakfast catching the bus. We had to walk like oh a quarter of a mile to the end of our lane where the bus picked us up that was later on when I was a senior.

Interviewer: How many people went to your school?

Koewler: There was 32 kids in my class.

Interviewer: Thirty two kids did all of your siblings and you graduate high school?

Koewler: We all graduated except one brother.

Interviewer: Except for one brother. Tell me a little about the great depression anything you remember about that and the conditions that you guys lived in.

Koewler: It was pretty pathetic no one had any money nobody knew any different though.

Interviewer: From the regular conditions everything was just pretty much the same?

Koewler: Right

Interviewer: Because you were growing up out on a farm and not in the city.

Koewler: Right of course we raised our own food so.

Interviewer: Did you guys have a car?

Koewler: Yes we had one.

Interviewer: Where did you all go? Did y'all go anywhere during the great depression?

Koewler: The only place we went was a mass on Sunday morning.

Interviewer: Just to church on Sunday mornings. Do you remember the rations or any of the programs from Franklin Roosevelt or anything?

Koewler: Like rationing

Interviewer: Well that was later but anything like the farm subsidies or social security or the welfare?

Koewler: My grandparents got social security.

Interviewer: That was 1939 if you were born in 1927.

Koewler: Right

Interviewer: Were you aware of anything that was going on did you guys get a newspaper or anything?

Koewler: No

Interviewer: Did you have a radio at that point?

Koewler: No we my dad had a crystal set and he could listen to it and he would tell mother of course us kids were little too small to understand. Except I can remember the day we went to war. My cousin was there from Dayton and he had some kind of radio of some sort and he heard the news and dad came running in the house and listened to radio and turned around to mother and said we are at war.

Interviewer: Did your parents or could you tell did your parents have any idea that anything like that was coming? Or were you guys you were concerned about anything like that?

Koewler: At my age I didn't know anything about it.

Interviewer: Do you remember your siblings or anything when you first found out how old were your brothers?

Koewler: They well they were just a year older Bernie was two years older.

Interviewer: Okay so 13 and 14 okay. Did the rations as the war progressed and got on and the country kind of evolved into a militaristic build up state do you remember anything about the rations?

Koewler: Yes I remember we all got ration books.

Interviewer: Okay

Koewler: And of course we didn't need the meat which you were allowed so much meat and so we had some friends from Cincinnati would come up and they would trade us sugar which we wanted because mother would do a lot of canning and use the sugar. But the meat we would trade and gas of course we didn't need too much because we didn't go very much.

Interviewer: Right just went to church on Sunday.

Koewler: And to ____ to get groceries.

Interviewer: Right how far away out in the country were you guys?

Koewler: Like two miles from ____.

Interviewer: Two miles how far were you from Cincinnati do you remember?

Koewler: Fifty two miles.

Interviewer: And that's the biggest town near where you guys grew up was Cincinnati?

Koewler: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you remember you didn't know grandpa at this point did you? Did you know grandpa my grandpa?

Koewler: No

Interviewer: I couldn't remember when you guys met or anything like that.

Koewler: No he was in the navy and I didn't meet him until at the end of the war.

Interviewer: Okay

Koewler: He had gotten discharged from the navy.

Interviewer: Okay

Koewler: And that's when I met him.

Interviewer: Did that did he did the government and did the war change his day to day life at all as far as the farms? Did he produce more was he paid more or anything like that for his crops were did any changes happen there?

Koewler: Not that I can remember.

Interviewer: During you were still in school throughout the war?

Koewler: Yeah

Interviewer: What did you guys talk about in school in your classes?

Koewler: The guys going off to war a lot of that. And then maybe we could write letters to them.

Interviewer: You guys wrote a lot of letters to troops overseas?

Koewler: Occasionally we would.

Interviewer: Did you guys ever get any letters back?

Koewler: Oh yeah

Interviewer: And what did they say?

Koewler: Just ordinary letters telling us where they were and how things were and wanting to know how things were back home.

Interviewer: What all did you study when you were in school?

Koewler: ____ subjects.

Interviewer: Just the basic subjects?

Koewler: Math, English, History, Government, Geography, Spelling.

Interviewer: The school that you went to was it just one big school or was there the individual schools like there is now?

Koewler: No there was one school.

Interviewer: One big school.

Koewler: One through twelfth.

Interviewer: Did you know anybody in the high school any of your sisters friends or anything like that that might have any of the guys that might have been looking forward to going off to war or thinking about that at all?

Koewler: They were all scared of going off.

Interviewer: Were they scared at that point just kind of apprehensive about it?

Koewler: Very much so.

Interviewer: Was anybody in the area that was not in favor of the war that didn't necessarily like the idea of going to war or thought that we should stay out of it?

Koewler: No no everyone said well if they call me I'll go.

Interviewer: Do you remember Pearl Harbor was bombed but yet we started fighting over in Europe. Did that surprise your family or do you remember anybody saying that was kind of unique or anything like that?

Koewler: Well I think they didn't like the idea because they were originally from Germany.

Interviewer: Right right

Koewler: And they were kind of concerned about that.

Interviewer: At this point did they know what all was going on and what all Hitler was doing and they weren't aware of anything like that?

Koewler: No they didn't have TV like we do today.

Interviewer: Right right when did you guys first get a TV or electricity even?

Koewler: Like at the farm they didn't have electric until after I was gone and I moved on to get a job when I was 18.

Interviewer: What was your first job?

Koewler: Working in a restaurant.

Interviewer: And what restaurant do you remember?

Koewler: Bus station at _____

Interviewer: Oh yeah do you remember how much you made?

Koewler: Ten dollars a week.

Interviewer: Ten dollars a week how many hours did you work a week?

Koewler: Forty hours.

Interviewer: Forty hours so you made four dollars.

Koewler: Right

Interviewer: Wow how long did you work there?

Koewler: Maybe a year two years at the most.

Interviewer: Okay and you got married or?

Koewler: Then I moved to Ripley Ohio.

Interviewer: Okay

Koewler: And then I got married.

Interviewer: Okay and did any of your siblings go on to college?

Koewler: No

Interviewer: None of them went on?

Koewler: No, no one had money to and they didn't have the grants like you have today.

Interviewer: Right right did you guys conserve anything being on the farm any metals or anything like that? Did you guys have anything did they do anything like that?

Koewler: Not that I know anything about.

Interviewer: What about the stars the gold and the blue stars that we talked about earlier?

Koewler: I remember mother saying we'd gone someplace and there was a gold star in the window and tears came into her eyes and she said she lost her son.

Interviewer: What was her son's name?

Koewler: I don't remember.

Interviewer: Don't remember and how old you don't know how old he was?

Koewler: I was only like 12 or 13.

Interviewer: Oh alright okay. All of your family came back alive?

Koewler: Yeah

Interviewer: What was it like when they came back to you remember I mean the day that they came back and you saw them for the first time? And how long were they gone for?

Koewler: My brothers weren't gone too long. To start with they were drafted and before they had to go they were allowed to stay home long enough to get their crops in and then after crops then they had to go. And the day they were to go Ripley got a big flood and the buses couldn't run so they got like deferred another week or two then they went.

Interviewer: Where did they get deployed to do you remember?

Koewler: No I don't.

Interviewer: Okay do you remember when they came back though?

Koewler: Yes

Interviewer: What was that like can you tell me about that?

Koewler: It was a very happy time.

Interviewer: Was it

Koewler: Very very happy.

Interviewer: Go ahead I'm sorry.

Koewler: The neighbor boys had gone too and they all got together and it was a very glorious time.

Interviewer: I know that you guys were real big in your church. Did the church do anything for them have a special mass for them or anything like that?

Koewler: There was always prayers.

Interviewer: Always prayers but there wasn't like a recognition when the boys all came back or anything like that?

Koewler: Every Sunday was prayers for all the service boys.

Interviewer: Okay um did any of your sisters get jobs that they normally wouldn't have gotten because of the war? All of the women went into the factories or something like that.

Koewler: No

Interviewer: No they didn't um did you ever go to Cincinnati did you ever make it back to the city when you were young or anything like that or did you just pretty much stay do you remember going to the city and seeing thing different or anything like that? Could you tell there was a difference if you made it to the city?

Koewler: We didn't go to the city we didn't have gas there was rationing and we didn't have gas to go there.

Interviewer: When the war was over could you tell that it was worth it or what did everybody I mean was it one of those things we did what we had to do but or was it just this real patriotic. I mean how was it the sense I mean the newspapers and the news and everything when everything was over?

Koewler: I remember when they said peace was declared everyone was out on the streets screaming and hollering.

Interviewer: Oh really

Koewler: Yeah every place I was in _____ then and everyone in the buildings came running out and hollering just a glorious time.

Interviewer: Was it a lot of people have said that was like the best time of their lives is that kind of how you remember it?

Koewler: Yeah

Interviewer: Was it?

Koewler: Yeah

Interviewer: Was there anything that grandpa would tell you about later on that was kinds of interesting or anything like that from his service days?

Koewler: From his service days he was he said he saw places had gone places he never would have seen he really and truly was thankful that he got to go and then he got home safely.

Interviewer: How old was he when he got drafted or did he just enlist?

Koewler: No he was drafted too. He went to the nay though.

Interviewer: Okay

Koewler: He was I guess he was 18.

Interviewer: Eighteen how long was he in do you remember?

Koewler: Three years I think.

Interviewer: Three years and then how old were you all when you got married?

Koewler: He was 23 and I was 21.

Interviewer: Okay so you were actually about my age when you were getting got married. Going back to your childhood when you were little tell me about your house I mean 15 kids and two parents. Tell me about the house that you lived in a little bit and let's talk about that a little bit.

Koewler: To start with I started school in ____ then my parents moved to Servenia. And we lived in a log cabin for I don't know three or four years maybe before we moved over to the farm where

Interviewer: Where grandma's house is now right.

Koewler: And where we really grew up of course there was no electric.

Interviewer: Right

Koewler: And we no phones but we had each other we played neighbors it was a time of communicating with your neighbors. Because Sunday afternoons it was always the neighbors would gather they'd have watermelon ballgames make ice cream and that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Like a social event on Sunday. Did you guys ever have like a barn raising I've heard about those and where everybody just gets together and I read about a farm where everybody got together and built the barns or anything like that?

Koewler: No

Interviewer: Didn't have anything like that?

Koewler: Not that I can remember.

Interviewer: What was it like at dinner time when you had 17 people come together for dinner what was that like?

Koewler: It was nice.

Interviewer: Was it?

Koewler: It was nice. All the children we had benches the children would sit on the benches. And mother and daddy made sure that we were very mannerly and after meals we would clean up the kitchen and this and that. And when there was days when the farmers would all come in when they were putting in the crops and the neighbors would come in and help with the crops and then we'd have to feed all then and that was quite an ordeal. But the neighbor ladies came in too and helped cook it. Cooking was all day a field day.

Interviewer: What was your mom's role in everything? Your dad was the farmer he worked out in the farm and plowed he didn't have tractors right?

Koewler: No they didn't. Daddy got up early in the morning plowed all day with a horse and now they've got tractors so it takes

Interviewer: A lot less time

Koewler: Oh there is no comparison. Mother was just a mother stayed at home did the cooking, laundry, canning, cleaning

Interviewer: Was your dad still farming when tractors came around or had he quit at that time?

Koewler: No he was still farming.

Interviewer: Was he

Koewler: Uh huh

Interviewer: Was he able to afford one or how did that work?

Koewler: Yes well money got better as the years went along and we got a tractor and all that big farm equipment. Well he didn't get that but my brother has all the new farm all of it everything like that, a far cry from a horse.

Interviewer: What all did you all raise on your farm what were the crops that you guys brought up?

Koewler: Corn mostly

Interviewer: Corn mostly did you have any tobacco or anything like that or you guys weren't raising that at that point?

Koewler: No ____ was not a place to raise tobacco.

Interviewer: Okay I just remember grandpa raised tobacco.

Koewler: That was in Ripley.

Interviewer: Right

Koewler: Ripley ground was much better than _____.

Interviewer: How did all fifteen of you go to church on Sunday how did that tell me about that?

Koewler: They didn't have seatbelts then in the car. One of them would sit on each other's laps and like that.

Interviewer: Wow

Koewler: Oh let me tell you about our school bus.

Interviewer: Okay

Koewler: It was a very little dinky thing. The roads were not gravel even they had mud roads and the bus would come around there and pick us up. They had an oil heater in the bus because it was pulled by a horse and that's the way you would keep warm in the winter.

Interviewer: Wow you told me earlier that you didn't have a telephone but you had the party line if you will.

Koewler: That was later on.

Interviewer: That was later on tell me a little about that what that was like.

Koewler: This was later on I guess I'd have been about 18 at that time. We got a phone and it was a party line there would be two or three people on the same line if you got one ring maybe that was you whatever your ring was or two or three whichever one it was you could. And some of the neighbors would eavesdrop especially those that didn't have children that could be very quiet. So you made sure you didn't say anything on the phone you didn't want heard.

Interviewer: Did you were able to write with your brothers back and forth that went over or were you not?

Koewler: Do what?

Interviewer: Were you able to correspond write letters back and forth to your siblings.

Koewler: Oh yes

Interviewer: Do you remember any particular letters from any of those guys?

Koewler: No but I remember sending them boxes of cookies.

Interviewer: Boxes of cookies?

Koewler: Yes and then my brother Herb sent me his friends address and I would write to him. And then after the war was over I met him.

Interviewer: Oh really what was that like did he have any idea remember you from the letters?

Koewler: Yes he looked me up.

Interviewer: Did he really how did that happen tell me a little bit about that.

Koewler: It was a chance meeting it was nice to know he had been in the service with Herb.

Interviewer: Oh okay how many of grandpa's brothers served in the army?

Koewler: Charles was in the Korean War.

Interviewer: Charles was in Korea so grandpa was the only one that was

Koewler: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay any other oddities that happened that you can remember?

Koewler: I remember going to school and we were all talking about all of our brothers would have to go to the service and the teachers were very concerned too and it was a kind of scary time. But then everything turned out wonderfully.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything about the nuclear bomb that was dropped? Do you remember reading anything about that?

Koewler: No

Interviewer: You don't remember anything about that. How long did you did you have any idea how long the war would last or was there a point where you were just like we just want it over even if we lost tie of it bring everybody back. I mean did it ever get to that point that you remember?

Koewler: No no everyone said you know they would serve until we won. And we won.

Interviewer: Which was the bigger celebration obviously the victory in Japan was a little bit was a lot bigger because the war overall was over. But were there big celebrations when Germany surrendered?

Koewler: No

Interviewer: Nothing like that just the realization that now came Japan.

Tape ended