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AB: 00:00 Mom, the worst thing, we should hide it better. And then she gets nervous, you know.

KJ: 00:08 And I just try and ignore it.

AB: 00:10 Yeah. That's what I learned, too. If there's anything crazy, hope you don't get a bad mark.

KJ: 00:15 Okay. Let's see, I just start with some background questions. When were you born?

AB: 00:24 I was born in September 22, 1922.

KJ: 00:30 My birthday's the 18th. How long have you lived here in Stevens County?

AB: 00:36 On the county, let's. I lived here—

KJ: 00:41 Most of your life?

AB: 00:42 No, I was raised in Cyrus. I lived in Cyrus—

KJ: 00:46 So that's in Stevens County. It's not?

AB: 00:48 No. Pope. Then I lived up at Alberta. That is in Stevens.

KJ: 00:57 I thought Cyrus was—

AB: 00:58 No, Cyrus is Pope County. Cyrus, Starbuck, Glenwood, Villard, all in Pope County. Oh, let's see. Say, 48 years, I could say.

KJ: 01:13 Okay. So did you grow up—okay, so you grew up in Cyrus. Okay. Did you live in town?

AB: 01:21 Lived in town. My dad was a mechanic.

KJ: 01:24 Okay. How many people were in your family? How many brothers and sisters?

AB: 01:28 I had one brother and six sisters—five sisters.

KJ: 01:32 Five sisters?

AB: 01:32 Yeah. We were seven.

KJ: 01:34 Okay. Big family.

AB: 01:36 One spoiled brother.

KJ: 01:39 I know how that goes.

AB: 01:41 Sixty-six and he's still spoiled.

KJ: 01:43 Oh, no, does it mean my brother's going to be like that? I have a little brother, too. Okay. When did you get married?

AB: 01:52 I got married when I was 19.

KJ: 01:54 Nineteen. Okay. And then, okay, when you married your husband then did you move to Morris or Stevens County here?

AB: 02:00 We moved out in the farm with his mother and father up by Alberta, Minnesota for two years.

KJ: 02:07 Okay. And so then he was farming then, so you farmed the rest of your married life?

AB: 02:10 Yeah, we farm and then we moved to Morris within—farmed three years, and then moved to Morris. And then we lived in Morris for—when all the kids were growing up. [inaudible 02:25], not really. And he worked in Standard Oil Station.

KJ: 02:31 Okay. Let's see. When did you first listen to the radio?

AB: 02:36 I listened to the radio, my sister bought a secondhand radio, and this was in 1937. And a small table model ring.

KJ: 02:48 Okay. Was it the kind with the earphones or was it just like—

AB: 02:51 No, an ordinary one.

KJ: 02:52 Just like—okay. So that was when you're still living back at home with your family and stuff?

AB: 02:57 Yes.

KJ: 02:59 Okay. So it was a tabletop model, battery run then?

AB: 03:03 No. Not battery, we had electricity. But when I moved on the farm with my husband, the kids' dad, we had a battery. So then we only had certain programs on. Now, because I was young, so I didn't pay much attention to the news. Like Amos 'n' Andy and Jack Benny and—

KJ: 03:23 Did you listen to those?

AB: 03:23 Yeah. Those things we listened to, but we just used the radio just very little so it wouldn't run out of batteries. We had no electricity out there in the farm. So I went from one light bulb to out in the farm with lamps, kerosene lamps.

KJ: 03:40 Quite a switch, huh?

AB: 03:42 Oh, heavens, yes.

KJ: 03:45 Were there a lot of stations available around here?

AB: 03:48 I can't really remember. We didn't have no KMRS then. We've had, I'd say WCCO, I think it was in the Minneapolis area, I suppose. I can't really recall because I didn't pay that much—I listened to music, but I didn't pay attention what station it come from.

KJ: 04:06 Okay. Let's see. So you listened to the radio mostly for music?

AB: 04:13 Yeah. When I was young. But when we moved to town, we got a console with the big platter phonograph.

KJ: 04:24 Did you get a lot of news off the radio?

AB: 04:30 See I didn't pay attention much the news myself because I was young.

KJ: 04:34 Because you were younger then.

AB: 04:35 Yeah. And I had two babies, they were born two minutes apart.

KJ: 04:39 You had your hands full.

AB: 04:41 I had—my grandma helped me when we lived with them the last couple years.

KJ: 04:49 Well, you talked about certain shows like Amos 'n' Andy and stuff.

AB: 04:53 Yeah. And Jack Benny, and I remember those two, my [inaudible 04:55] and I called them. I was married twice, and I was left with five children, my first husband. Found another woman, he ended up getting married six times.

KJ: 05:09 Oh, my goodness.

AB: 05:10 I always thanked God that he didn't have anymore kids. Is that on tape now?

KJ: 05:16 Yeah. But don't no worry, nobody's listening.

AB: 05:18 No, you're going to take that to class.

KJ: 05:19 No.

AB: 05:20 Oh, good, thank God.

KJ: 05:22 Don't worry. You can say anything you want you. All right. So were Amos 'n' Andy and Jack Benny, were those your favorite programs would you say?

AB: 05:32 That was that little time I spent on the farm. And when I got to town, Arthur Godfrey, I think was one we listened to.

KJ: 05:40 Arthur Godfrey?

AB: 05:40 Yeah. Arthur Godfrey Show. I didn't even listen much. We used to have the phonograph records going. Well, I liked western music, I still do.

KJ: 05:53 Really?

AB: 05:54 A lot of young people are going back to that.

KJ: 05:56 That's true.

- AB: 05:57 Christy Lucken's boyfriend, Mark something, and he loves western music.
- KJ: 06:02 I like some of it. It's kind of neat.
- AB: 06:04 I got an uncle that plays at dances, he's got an accordion too. Not uncle, brother-in-law, he's 53 years old. And western, he sings a lot of western.
- KJ: 06:18 So did you hear any western music on the radio when you had radios back then?
- AB: 06:24 I suppose that's one thing we did listen to I'd say more than anything. We never listened to any high-pitch singing stuff. But the kids' dad was a real good singer. He took lessons, music lessons out here when it was called the ag school. And then he had his own concert out here one time. I remember going to that. He liked that classical, semi-classical music, so he sang a lot of that, like, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald records, things like that.
- KJ: 06:56 So did you go to a lot of concerts or did you go to a lot of movies? What did you do?
- AB: 07:01 Oh, we went to movies. That was our going away on the farm, go—that night, they had been on the little theatre down there.
- KJ: 07:09 Did you go a couple times a week or like a special event, once a week?
- AB: 07:13 Once—just not in the wintertime. We'd probably go if the weather was nice. But otherwise, where we were in the farm, they were too busy to go to—
- KJ: 07:23 It's hard to find time to get away.
- AB: 07:26 Yeah. There wasn't so many that went to movies. Now, there isn't hardly any again when you got that television going.
- KJ: 07:32 I know, just sort of taken over. So how many radios did you have in your house? Did you have just that one at first or did you end up getting more?
- AB: 07:43 No, they only ever had just one radio.
- KJ: 07:48 Okay. Who usually picked what programs were on?

- AB: 07:51 Well, I didn't—I never paid attention to be honest with you. It didn't matter, really.
- KJ: 07:55 So nobody in your family liked the radio more than someone else or nobody really—it wasn't really that big of a deal?
- AB: 08:01 No.
- KJ: 08:03 Okay. Did you tune in at specific times, say, "Oh, I have to sit down at 5:00 and watch Amos 'n' Andy or did you just—I suppose you didn't really leave it on in the background when you had the battery run because you wanted to conserve the batteries, but—
- AB: 08:15 No. And I was too young then, I wasn't really that interested, really. And then when we came to town, I don't know, God, I had five kids in eight years, I didn't have much time to listen nothing but the kids crying, I suppose. They were hungry.
- KJ: 08:34 Did they listen to the radio at all?
- AB: 08:38 I can't say really too much. They listened to music as they grew up.
- KJ: 08:44 But no programs really?
- AB: 08:47 No. [inaudible 08:47].
- KJ: 08:49 Because I was just wondering if there are certain programs that you weren't supposed to listen to maybe because they were scary, like, what was one we listened to, the Inner Sanctum or something like that, or the Shadow Knows.
- AB: 09:02 They were so active with their friends and their school activities and stuff that they never did pay much attention to it. Until they got a hold of a phonograph, portable phonographs, then they would get records, the boys would.
- KJ: 09:18 Okay. You said you were real busy with your kids and stuff, did you usually do stuff when you were listening to the radio, like, just watch after the kid was tucked and just have it on the background at all?
- AB: 09:29 Well, I imagine that's almost like something on it especially now. I got one small radio over here and one in there.

KJ: 09:37 So you just have company in the background sometimes?

AB: 09:40 Yeah. Something on.

KJ: 09:41 Yeah. Some more noise in addition to the kids, right? Okay. Let's see. Did you—okay if you'd hear a certain show on the radio, did you discuss it a lot with your neighbors, with your friends?

AB: 09:55 It wasn't much of that them days.

KJ: 09:57 Really? Nobody was into soap operas?

AB: 09:59 When I got here, I wasn't very keen of the television. It annoys me to talk about anything on television. Now, I mean, I listen to a lot of news because I got the time all day and you listen to news on television.

KJ: 10:12 Yeah. Did you listen to the news on the radio at all?

AB: 10:16 Not too much. Can't recall that we listened too much. We listened at supper time.

KJ: 10:21 At supper time?

AB: 10:21 Yeah, 6:00. And then when you're putting food on the table for a big family, you don't pay much attention as the main cook.

KJ: 10:30 Yeah, I suppose. What kind—was that local news or national news?

AB: 10:36 Well, we got KMRS, and I can't remember how many years. Did somebody ever tell you on—

KJ: 10:42 How many years—

AB: 10:44 KMRS has been on?

KJ: 10:46 I'm not sure. When we talked to Mabel, she mentioned KMRS, listening to that, but I'm really not sure about the dates or anything.

AB: 10:53 I don't remember how many years that's been on. We did listen [inaudible 10:57] with my second husband. My name is Benson, it used to be Clausen. And then I—yeah, I lived with him for about 20 years, so, yeah, me raising the kids. It was real good, too.

- KJ: 11:13 Can you talk about the news? Do you remember any specific events or hearing anything in particular that really struck you? When we talked to Mabel, she talked to about the war a little bit.
- AB: 11:23 Oh, I imagine because my kids' dad went to Camp Haan before the war with the National Guards, World War II. But then he got deferred because his—my father-in-law, I always called him Grandpa Clausen. He ended up with a serious heart condition so he had to come home, they had to get the crop in. So every six months they would come, the big wheels to check it and try to get—could get him back, and then he never went back in. So when the war was on, yes, we did listen. But me as the woman didn't listen as good as perhaps the men.
- KJ: 12:09 Would they tell you about it then or you really weren't interested in that, or—
- AB: 12:13 Didn't have time.
- KJ: 12:15 Yeah. So it's a big responsibility to raise five kids.
- AB: 12:19 Yeah. It sure is. [inaudible 12:22] the girls are only about 18 months apart, 2 years apart. So there's a little space between Dennis and Pat, three and a half years. Kept very busy with kids.
- KJ: 12:36 I'm sure. Did you ever listen to household tips or anything like that on the radio?
- AB: 12:44 We didn't have much of that them days. And we don't have much it now. If you want to listen to household tips, you could get it on television.
- KJ: 12:55 On the TV, yeah.
- AB: 12:55 Or reading like Women's Home Journal or McCall's, Winnie brings a lot of magazines, my youngest daughter, and there we have household tips and stuff.
- KJ: 13:08 So for stuff like that, did you read a lot of magazines?
- AB: 13:12 I read a lot now.
- KJ: 13:13 Did you back then? No, you didn't read?



AB: 13:16 Nobody could afford them or there wasn't very many published, I'm sure, not as many as there is now. Maybe there was, but we didn't have very many of that.

KJ: 13:25 What about a newspaper? Did you get a regular newspaper or just a Sunday paper?

AB: 13:29 I don't know if we got any or have it on the farm, but we did when we got to town, we got the daily paper. My son buys that for me, because everything's gotten so high, I couldn't afford to keep it up. So he buys me my daily paper and my daughter Pat and her husband usually give me the Sunday paper.

KJ: 13:49 Okay. Is that probably where you get most of your news then or where you got most of your news?

AB: 13:54 Now, yeah, since I've gotten to be alone. Well, we took the paper when Lyle and I, when Lyle was living. I've been living here for 12 years. And we read the paper at night, especially after everybody left home, graduate and leave home and then you're all alone. And I'd get something to read, the paper.

KJ: 14:16 Okay. So that was probably where your main source of news came from then?

AB: 14:22 And then local news.

KJ: 14:25 Did your husband ever listen for farm information or farm reports or marketing, anything like that?

AB: 14:30 Neither one of them. I'm sure they had them on though, the radios. Grain prices or whatever, stuff like that.

KJ: 14:44 What about soap operas, did you have any—I mean, do you have any friends or anybody—

AB: 14:49 That, I'm not great on.

KJ: 14:50 No? You don't like them?

AB: 14:51 I don't like anything continues.

KJ: 14:53 Really? You don't stop and watch the next episode?

AB: 14:56 I like talk shows, game shows. Jeopardy and all those. But I mostly liked a variety of talk shows.

KJ: 15:08 Were there any of those on the radio that you remember?

AB: 15:11 No, there was never talk shows.

KJ: 15:17 Weren't there variety shows of any kind?

AB: 15:20 Well, the variety shows, would they be—they weren't really variety shows. Were there?

KJ: 15:25 Do you remember the names of any of them?

AB: 15:31 1940s or 1950s?

KJ: 15:33 Yeah. Where they gave away prizes and stuff like that. Or they had talent contests or anything like that on the radio? Because we listened to one in class.

AB: 15:42 Did you?

KJ: 15:43 Yeah.

AB: 15:43 Oh, what year was that?

KJ: 15:45 I'm not really sure. I think it was in the '40s. I want to say late '30s or early '40s.

AB: 15:54 I don't think [inaudible 15:55] farm. Let's see here. Got married in '41, and we only had that small radio for a couple years, really. No, I didn't listen to anyone. Mostly music.

KJ: 16:11 Mostly music. And that was Western music radio?

AB: 16:16 Western or whatever they had. Or these old time dance orchestras. Those old time waltzes and all that. Used to have a lot of that music on. Mostly music and news, that's about it. There wasn't too much to listen to. Well, we didn't have the time, really. Could have music and still do your work.

KJ: 16:42 Yeah. Right. You didn't have to necessarily sit down and listen to it. And I suppose, because you were so busy and stuff that you didn't always have time to sit down and concentrate on one thing. Whereas the music, you'd have in the background. Let's see, did you know anyone who was really into soap operas or anything like that?

AB: 17:03 I don't know. If any of them are here, they probably are, I don't know. I don't think so. Very few are—much for radio or television as far as the ladies I know. They probably are. Most of them, I don't even know, I go to bed early... [inaudible 17:17] for this already. And what a job, you did shut it off and put some hot kettles in the freezer, but I saw—what a mess.

KJ: 17:32 Fun, huh?

AB: 17:34 Yeah. It's kind of... should have had self-defrosting up here. Talking about getting new appliances sometime, I guess, self-defrost. I had one and sold it when I sold my house, so go back to the same old crap.

KJ: 17:55 Let's see. I'm trying to think of anything else we've touched on. A lot of things already here.

AB: 18:01 Yeah. I wasn't—I can't recall there was that many programs as far as years ago or as far as radio.

KJ: 18:09 Some people were more into it than other people were into—just like TV, some people are more into TV and watch more programs—

AB: 18:15 And see the ones that are about, say, 75 to 80 or 85 years would know more—maybe they listen more than I.

KJ: 18:26 Yeah. Well, it's good to get all the perspectives.

AB: 18:28 Oh, sure.

KJ: 18:31 I'm trying to think of anything else. When you had your radios, did it—one thing we found out a lot that there was just a lot of static. So was the reception bad?

AB: 18:43 Yeah. Real bad. Just like when the first TVs came out, they were no good. The box television sets, poor reception, poor pictures.

KJ: 18:53 Do you think you would've listened to it more if there would've been so much static on the radio?

AB: 18:58 I don't know. I imagine if I was living—well, we lived with our in-laws for two years when we lived on another farm. I don't know if I would've. I would've headed out with the music. I'm sure I did have the radio on all the time when I moved to town because there wasn't a television. And if

there would've been, I wouldn't have time to sit down and look at nothing anyway.

- KJ: 19:24 What else? So do you remember any specific shows that you really liked? Did you really get into Amos 'n' Andy or anything like that?
- AB: 19:37 Well, the one I really like and of course, I didn't control the radio like out in that farm with my in-laws, you know what I mean? Mr. Clausen put it on and we listened to whatever. Jack Benny and his wife, Gracie Allen?
- KJ: 19:52 I think that was George Burns.
- AB: 19:53 George Burns. Yeah. George Burns and Gracie Allen, I listen to them and Jack Benny. Jack Benny's the one had the violin or tried to play with it.
- KJ: 20:04 Tried anyway. So those were the shows that they wanted to listen to?
- AB: 20:09 Yeah. They had them on Sunday nights. So we did sit and listen.
- KJ: 20:14 So did you all listen together then? It was a family thing to do?
- AB: 20:18 Yeah. No farm house, old cold farmhouse. Freeze to death. Yeah. We didn't have very good homes them days.
- KJ: 20:30 Which ones did anybody else listened to that you know about? That somebody was really into it where they had to watch a certain thing?
- AB: 20:41 My in-laws?
- KJ: 20:41 Yeah, your in-laws.
- AB: 20:42 Well, my... Grandpa Clausen, Sunday night was really the night that they had that on. Otherwise, we didn't have it on very much, the radio. Yeah. That's when they had the good programs but didn't listen to.
- KJ: 21:01 Did you hear the War of the World's broadcast? Because we listened to that in class, too.
- AB: 21:08 Did you?

KJ: 21:10 And did you hear about it, War of the Worlds?

AB: 21:13 [inaudible 21:13]. Well, were they scared? Because the world's coming to an end.

KJ: 21:18 Yeah. What it was, it was a story about Martians invading the United States, and it was made to sound like a news broadcast, so it was just a big hysteria.

AB: 21:31 I've heard of it, But I can't recall that we listened to it.

KJ: 21:35 Was there anything that you ever did here on the radio that really got a certain emotion out of you, like, made you really happy or made you really sad or really scared you?

AB: 21:44 I'd say happy music would make me happy.

KJ: 21:46 That's true.

AB: 21:51 And I like sad songs, too, a little bit.

KJ: 21:56 Like the war, did you really hear the war on the radio? When the war started or something like that?

AB: 22:00 Well, I'm sure we had that on quite a bit, the news part. But like I said, I was all doing something with kids. I never got to sit down and listen to them when they're little. And when you got seven at the table, you're a pretty busy cook.

KJ: 22:19 Yeah, sure.

AB: 22:20 So you don't know have much leisure time.

KJ: 22:24 Did you—do you remember the radio commercials? Do they—what'd you think of them?

AB: 22:30 That I do not remember at all. Did they have many commercials on?

KJ: 22:37 Now or then?

AB: 22:38 Then.

KJ: 22:38 Then they did. Yeah. Because I think a lot of the programs like Ma Perkins was sponsored by Oxydol, so I think a lot of the products sponsored and put out a show.

AB: 22:51 And they're supposed to tell us [inaudible 22:52] and all that.

KJ: 22:53 Yeah. [inaudible 22:54], I'm sure.

AB: 22:57 But you're getting to know more about it than—I'm no good at knowing any of that. You're going to learn a lot by some other people now.

KJ: 23:04 Oh, no. Everybody has a different point of view. We're not coming for you to give us this—we're not expecting just straight facts from you or anything like that, but we just want to know how it affected you. So there's no right or wrong answers or anything, we're just really interested in hearing what you're saying.

AB: 23:23 It's just that we didn't have—I mean, people didn't sit there and just listened very much. I don't remember, very few.

KJ: 23:35 It was just more for the background—you sound like you were just mostly into the music.

AB: 23:39 Yeah.

KJ: 23:40 Were you the only one in your family that really liked music or did your husband really like it?

AB: 23:44 Well, my first husband, he was a singer. He would sing for weddings and funerals and things like that. And he supposed to sing at least eight, ten songs when he had his own concert up here. But that's a long time ago. My second husband, he was a painter. Interior and exterior. But I think he was mostly in for news, and I don't think he was great to care about much music at all.

KJ: 24:19 Really? Did either of you listen to politics on radio, listen to the president talk?

AB: 24:27 Oh, my second husband is great on that, because he was in World War II. He was in Guam and New Guinea. Fought in different places. Picked up our dead soldiers, put them in the trucks. He became kind of a nervous, was a very high-strung person from it. A lot of nerve damage. But he was very interested in politics.

KJ: 24:56 Yeah. Did he hear FDR's fireside chats?

AB: 25:01 Well, I wouldn't doubt it. Probably did. But he was a bachelor you know. He was in his 30s before we met. He was raised on a farm by Cyrus, in fact I went to school with him, and a freshman, but he was shy. And then he joined

the CC Camps, you heard of that? That was—it's something for the youth at the end of the school. To go and learn things, to make things. What did they—they out in the woods and clear up trees and all this here.

- KJ: 25:36 I think I have heard of that. So you never did that, but your husband did?
- AB: 25:43 Yeah, they did. The young people they couldn't afford to go to school. There was no buses back then in Cyrus at that time.
- KJ: 25:51 Where did you go to school?
- AB: 25:52 Yeah, I went to school in town, in Cyrus. But we lived in the farm and there was no bus service and school buses.
- KJ: 26:00 And so you said you—you were a freshman, or how many years did you go to school?
- AB: 26:03 Yeah. He went as a freshman and then he went to the CC Camps, what is the definition of that. And then of course, I finished. Yeah, I graduated in 1940.
- KJ: 26:16 From high school then, or—
- AB: 26:17 But that's where most of us went. A few went to normal teacher's training for two years and could be a teacher in country schools and stuff. Did house work, yeah, in town, clean other people's houses before I got married.
- KJ: 26:42 Did you live with them by doing that or with people that you're—
- AB: 26:46 No. Because my folks lived in Cyrus and an old lady, Saturdays, I go clean her house and stuff.
- KJ: 26:55 Was this during the depression you did that?
- AB: 26:57 No, it was—well, one of the depression in the '30s.
- KJ: 27:03 Early '30s.
- AB: 27:04 Yeah. And the '40s.
- KJ: 27:09 And I suppose you were pretty young still when the depression was?
- AB: 27:12 Well, I sure remember it.

KJ: 27:13 Do you? What do you remember about it?

AB: 27:15 I remember that we were a big family, there wasn't very much to eat, to tell you. I mean, you had to be—and then there was a lot of things you couldn't buy. I remember that. But my dad kept on working as a mechanic. And what he would do, he would get to—he would—the doctor in Cyrus, the family doctor, he would keep his car up for—if we got sick, then my dad—because there wasn't much money exchange, it's mostly services.

27:48 And if he did anything for farmers or go out and fix their tractors, get chickens or half a hog and that you have to be in the winter because we didn't have fridge or refrigerators. Hang that half a hog, all clean of course in the cold room, cut off what you're going to eat. I remember that.

KJ: 28:10 Okay. And so you were, what, about 10, 12, 15 during the depression, somewhere like that? You were still living at home?

AB: 28:18 Oh, yeah. I was still at home. My sister graduated and spent two years in the farm. And that was in the late '30s, it was a rough time.

KJ: 28:37 Can you think of anything else we haven't touched on? Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

AB: 28:43 I can't think of anything, really, no, I can't. Not as far as radios. Although that—my radio, know I'll be putting on. I'm not a night person as far as television, so I like this [inaudible 28:57] this guy, and you can call in your problems.

KJ: 29:01 Where is this, on the radio?

AB: 29:02 KMRS yeah. And you'd be surprised how someone, they call in.

KJ: 29:10 I'll probably hear that person that call in, "Help, I need help."

AB: 29:14 Oh, but you know, everything under that—and it puts me to sleep, so that buggers on until 5:00 if I go to bed and shut the radio off. So if I get tired of TV, I like to listen to the radio.

KJ: 29:31 Well, you can close your eyes, too.



- AB: 29:33 And then another thing, you can still read the paper or something when you have the radio on, whereas you know with the television, you can't hardly read, too, at the same time.
- KJ: 29:43 Yeah. You have to have more of a one-minded concentration right on the TV.
- AB: 29:51 Have you seen my cactus blooming?
- KJ: 29:53 Oh, that's pretty. It's supposed to be a Christmas cactus, and it blooms before—