

This interview is being conducted on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at the home of Lloyd H. Lundberg. My name is Fran Prokop and I am speaking with Lloyd who served in the United States Navy and is a veteran of the Korean Conflict. Lloyd learned of the Veterans' History Project through me and he has kindly consented to participate in the National Archives Veterans' History Project. Here is his story:

Lloyd, when and where were you born?

I was born in Joliet, Illinois on March 4, 1931. My Dad barely made it to the hospital; there was a foot of snow on the ground.

Yeah, it snows in March. What were your parents' occupations?

My mother had worked at Goldblatt's Department Store for a while and my Father was a machinist – diemaker at the American Can Company in Rockdale, Illinois – and they made Morton Salt in “cans” – they were fiber, and they still are.

Interesting – you're right, they're fiber cans. How many sisters and brothers did you have

I had two sisters and I was the Mister in between.

Did you have any other family members serving in the military?

I had a brother-in-law. My sister married John Forcell and he was in the Navy '51 to '53.

So he was your contemporary.

Yeah, he was, but he was not in the Korean Conflict. He was on the East Coast tracking Russian subs.

Was his being in the Navy – did it have any influence on your decision to go into the Navy?

No.

Why did you choose that branch of service?

I didn't know him at that point.

But why did you choose the Navy?

Well, there were three of us that were in the Joliet Junior College Choir and we were talking one day, and we said, hey, maybe we'll get drafted, we're not sure. So we said why don't we join the Navy and I don't know how, but we decided to go in together – that was Roy Larson and Ken Swenford.

Good. And they were high school friends of yours?

High school friends. Roy Larson had been a friend since we were young kids.

That's okay; we won't go into that.

What did you do before entering the service?

I was a student at Joliet Junior College.

How old were you when you entered the service

I was 18, I believe, probably 19, have to look at the --

So you enlisted at age 18 –

I enlisted – was I 18?

What year was that?

1951 – I was 19.

You were 19. And why did you choose that specific branch of service?

Just because you were with your friends and you were all talking about it.

Yeah, we were all talking about it; decided the Navy was probably going to be the one.

So how was your departure for training camp – for boot camp – where did you go for boot camp?

Went to Great Lakes Naval –

And how did you get there?

I left in Chicago –

With a group or on your own?

No, there were three of us – and then we got more when we got to Chicago.

Okay.

We got on a bus and they drove us up to Great Lakes.

How were your early days of training – how was boot camp? Could you describe a typical day

A typical day was – we got up – time to get up guys -- We had to pop out of bed and get going – and then we had to do our shaving, brush our teeth, etc. and then we had to make our bed, which wasn't a lot. And we had to make sure it was -- it was perfect – otherwise we'd get demerits – ha, ha

Right, Okay – and what did your training consist of – did you have classroom training?

We had classroom, we had marching, we had swimming – we had to qualify. We had to jump off a diving board and we had to swim to the shore. There were – a couple guys didn't quite make it so they had to give them the pole, ha, ha –

And what about –

\We did physical activities –

How about weapons training?

The only weapons training we had – we didn't do the M – we shot .22 calibers –

The small one –

Small, yeah. I guess, as I remember, they didn't have very good --inaudible -- but we did have some training. And then we did a lot of marching; classroom – we learned basic things of the Navy. We learned how to tie knots –

Navy Rules and Regulations.

Yeah, Navy Rules and Regulations, yes, we had that.

Did you have any specialized training? This is boot camp –

Not in boot camp. I did – the three of us sang in the Blue Jacket Choir because we had training in high school and Junior College – in the choirs there.

So you three went through boot camp together?

Yeah, we all went together.

Nice.

We didn't end up in the same Company – when you come out they assign you –

Right. How long did boot camp last?

January to April.

Did you have a little graduation ceremony?

Beautiful graduation – and my parents came to that, of course.

Well, of course, you're right here. So where did you go after you got your training?

I stayed on at Great Lakes and I was enrolled in Electrician's Mate School.

So that was your specialized training.

Yes, that was my specialized training.

And how long did that school last?

That lasted until July.

So from April to July – three months. And what did you learn to do there?

I learned how to do everything electrical, ha, ha, you know, oriented to the ships.

Of course, what you had to do on a ship.

Basically covered 220 volts, so you had to be careful handling it and so forth.

How did you adapt to military life, like the physical regimen, the barracks, the social life and whatever – the food – how did you adapt?

I adapted very well.

Did it help that you were so close to home? Because you weren't really far away –

Yeah, that helped. You're not taping this –

Of course I am.

Oh, you are.

Of course I'm taping it.

Oh, okay, good, but you're writing too.

I'm doing both, so if I don't hear something – I have it

Okay, so anyway, the first day up there it was 20 below zero – in January – and I was lying in my bunk and I usually said my prayers in the evening. I did and I said, "Lord, help me, you know I'm a stutterer, and I don't think I can make it through boot camp with this stuttering that I have. Lord, I will follow you the rest of my life if you will help me." The next morning I awakened and I did not stutter.

Really!!! You put your mind to it –

You know, I believe in the power of prayer – and that was a life-changing moment in my life.

WOW!!! Wonderful!

I had heard about other stutterers – and she learned how to kind of breathe out – nobody in high school or Junior College ever said a word about my stuttering.

Wow!

They didn't have any speech therapists at that time.

Right, yes.

And my family just kind of went along with it and they didn't really talk about it. I did things. I could sing.

Oh, you don't stutter when you sing.

That's right, like Jim Nabors, he's one.

Right –

We got to sing –

Did they have shows on base that you sang for.

We didn't have a show but we performed –

For the sailors who were there?

Yeah, some of them there and I think we did a couple of other programs outside – I don't remember exactly when; that was so long ago.

Okay, so, yeah, It is a long time ago. A lifetime ago –

Yes, isn't that the truth.

Right. You described boot camp – so now your specialized training is over and where did you go? What Orders did you get after that time?

Okay. I had a choice. I could've gone to a cruiser – can't remember the name of it; it was stationed out of the East Coast – and I elected the USS Piedmont AD-17 – a destroyer tender based out of San Diego, California. And that meant that I had to fly, not to Japan – it was stationed at that point – it was in Japan – so I had to hitch hike and take a ship from San Francisco, from Treasure Island to Japan via Honolulu.

How long did that trip take?

That trip took – on the ocean, a total of 18 days.

Wow – and did you encounter any rough seas?

Yes. Three days out of San Francisco on this CVE, which is a Carrier Escort – it has planes on the top deck and on the storage deck, where they store some planes. And we had rough seas, a storm, the waves got up to about 25 feet and the wind was blowing at about 60 miles per hour – 60 knots –

Knots, right.

And I got sea sick and a lot of us got sea sick. I didn't have anything to do. I was a passenger – so I didn't have duties –

Right, right. You were just a tourist, ha, ha.

So I really got sick and the second day I said, Lord, help me, I'm so sick, I can't take it anymore. Then I went down to my bunk and I was going up and down; the ship was shaking and creaking – and up and down. The third day I said, Lord, take me, I can't take this anymore. And the next

day, of course we were going, out sailing west and the seas calmed and I felt good. So did everybody else that had been sick at that time. So, on into Honolulu -- Pearl Harbor -- and we went by the burned out hulks of the Arizona and the other ships that had been bombed. And we stayed there for about three days. I didn't go on leave at that time. I stayed on board ship. I may have gone off ship, walked around a bit but that was it. Then we set sail again and ended up in Yokohama, Japan. The planes are down over there. I took a train to Sasebo, Japan, which is in southern Kyushu -- the southernmost island of Japan, where my ship was buoyed. And then along the way there we went by Hiroshima -- the first city that had received the atomic bomb.

So this was 1952 maybe?

No, this was in '51.

So that's only five years --

Five years after --

How did it look?

Oh, there was just nothing except for this one building that had some superstructure, steel and so forth that was standing there in the midst of nothing except grey rubble, you know.

Rubble, yeah.

We were not allowed off the train, but I would say you could see out from the train. That really made an impression on me.

You were taking the train to continue on to your ship?

To go to my ship, right, yeah.

So finally you get to your ship.

Finally I got down to the ship and I went from the loading docks -- people that come in and so forth -- I had my Orders with me; and I had my seabag with all of my belongings over my shoulder and I went out on a launch to the ship and reported in to the Officer of the Day -- up the long stairs and reported to him, said who I was and I was reporting for duty, Sir. They showed me where I was going to be staying and then I got some of the people in the ship's company -- electrician -- that's what we were --

Right, so you met the other electricians that you were going to be working with.

Yes, that I was going to be working with. Then the Chief Petty Officer was in charge of us. So they outlined some of the things I was doing; showed me where my bunk was, and we were three high; the canvas part that you slept on --

Like a hammock type?

It wasn't a hammock, no, not a hammock.

It was solid.

Yeah, they were metal frames with canvas springs, at least they were soft. Then we had a little storage cabinet right next to it.

What were your duties there on the ship – your regular duties?

My duties were primarily, for one thing we had to stand a rotating watch m, a four-hour watch; that ran 24/7 obviously. When we did other duties, we would have to go out and help out – maybe getting power to a destroyer tender or a destroyer escort that pulled up alongside. Because we were a repair ship; we had to repair electricity as well.

So your ship was a repair ship.

Yes, a repair ship.

And you were assisting adjoining ships when they berthed next to you.

Yes, yes; they were ships that had been up at the firing lines --

Oh, I see, they returned from duty –

They returned from duty –

Lloyd is showing me a photograph of the ship he was on – the USS Piedmont AD-17.

How large of a ship was that?

That was 550 feet long.

How many men did it carry – the crew – not just the crew – everyone.

Yeah. Everyone was on there – ship's company, repair company. I think we were close to 500 or so, roughly –

How long did you remain on the Piedmont?

I remained until I was discharged.

And how long were you in?

I was in for – let's see, what was my –

'51 you went in –

Yeah, a total of – I was mustered out in -- 22nd of December 1954 –

Oh, it's four years.

So it was little less than four years.

You went in in January of '51 - so almost four full years.

Yeah, close to it; actually I think they have the time here – I remember –

Did you stay in Japan or did you move around?

Actually what we did, when we were there we would get leave—

Oh, yes, R & R?

R & R and we did a little traveling locally. And then our ship also would go out to Korea.

One time we made a trip to Pusan Harbor and we buoyed near the USS Missouri, a battleship, had been up on the firing line. I got leave and I was to go on – there was a friend of mine from Joliet who was a Corpsman in the hospital at the Army base in Pusan. This is in South Korea.

So we had a nice time – don't remember exactly how we connected, but we did. And on my way back, I was waiting for my launch to come, and I saw this man coming towards me, must have been 100 yards away, and as he got closer I yelled out "Art" – and it was Art Hicks from the class of '48 from Joliet Township High School. We had sung together in the choir. So we had a chance to talk together for five minutes. He was in the Army; he had been up at the front lines and he said, "Lloyd, it was worse than hell."

Oh, Really –

Yeah, it's – there were over 5,000 that were killed there –

Over 5,000 Americans –

55,000 – around 50,000 plus –

You never really saw any battles, did you?

No, we did not because we were a repair ship – part of the team needed as backup, you know.

Right. Yeah, but when you're there in Korea, something could have happened to your ship –

Oh, yeah, yeah, it could have –

Been hit as a target – coming or going –

Yeah, we were pulling into a port there – we went up and I think it was about three or four different ports, one was the Naval Academy that we docked at. But we didn't get to travel much away from the port, at that time. They didn't want us to, obviously.

So, how about your friendships formed and camaraderie of service. Are you still in contact with friends or these three fellas that you went in with? Are they still friends of yours today – if they're still alive.

Well, yes, Roy passed away a couple of years ago, and then Ken – we lost track of after boot camp; we never got together again. He never went to a reunion –

Did you go to reunions?

I went to reunions – of Joliet Township High School.

Oh, I'm talking about reunions of the military.

No, I didn't go to reunions. I never got back with them, although they do have an organization

They do, yes, they do. When you were in Korea, how were communications from home? How did you stay in touch with family and friends?

Writing letters.

Strictly writing letters. How long do you think it took a letter that was – either way – going or coming – how long did it take for a letter to reach you?

I don't remember exactly what Mom would say – I got your letter, it was postmarked so and so

Two or three weeks probably.

Yeah, two or three weeks.

That's generally what it was. So it was strictly letters and packages you probably received packages from home.

Occasionally I'd receive a package of goodies; that wasn't very often and then I sent packages to them.

Oh, like when you went on trips you sent things home – souvenirs?

One day I saw this beautiful Japanese bride doll that was red and I said, you know, I'm thinking about this – maybe I'll buy this and send it home and maybe I'll use it to put an engagement ring on for my future wife.

How about that?

And I sent it and I said Mom, hang on to this and I'll call you some time – yeah, okay.

So you sent her the doll –

Yes and I sent her some other things –

Of course you weren't married when you went into the service.

No, I was not. I didn't get married until quite a few years afterwards.

While you were in the serviced did you receive any medals, honors or awards?

Well, of course we got the awards for being in Korea – in the battle zone.

Did you get your DD-214; it sometimes states the awards you received.

It does have them on there, yes. Good Conduct, Korean War Medal; at one time I had them but I think they disappeared – National Defense Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal with three stars and the Good Conduct Medal.

I see them there now. What is the highest rank you ever achieved?

Second Class Petty Officer. I was offered to become a First class Petty Officer – take the test and my Chief Petty Officer told me, he said, Lloyd, you have the qualities; you could become a Chief Petty Officer like myself. You know, I've got other plans.

That would require you to remain in the service.

Yeah, yeah, so I said No, I'm gonna take a pass but I'll think about my days but I'm planning on going back to school and become a teacher.

Oh, okay. I was going to ask if you used the G.I. Bill.

I did.

Wait, I want to continue with – how did you leave the Piedmont? Did the ship remain there and you left or did you sail on the ship home?

No. In December of '54 I was released at the San Diego –

How did you get to San Diego?

By ship.

That ship?

That ship, by USS Piedmont. It was coming back so it was perfect timing. I was able to get out before Christmas, get back home, I had to go on my own, but I did get a little money, you know, so I flew back home.

From San Diego?

From San Diego to Midway Airport in Chicago. My parents picked me up and I went back to Joliet.

But you're lucky that you were on that ship and that ship was coming back home and you were coming with it.

Definitely; perfect timing.

Perfect timing for you, right.

I was lucky. I didn't have to hitch a ride or something like that.

So your ship was never hit or in any kind of combat?

No, it wasn't.

You were strictly repair of other ships.

Yeah, repair – but we would go out –

Did any incidents happen? That you know of or people told you about – did you ever witness any destruction or any kind relating to combat?

No, we never did.

Or you Personally?

Never did, no. Not personally. I witnessed a destroyer that had been hit by enemy fire and I could see the area that was damaged, and so forth –

You saw the damaged ship.

And they lost two men – and we had to patch them up, so to speak, so they could go to dry dock. They had – we couldn't get it back into service so they had to go to dry dock. That was the only one that I really remember that had any significant damage.

Anything else you can say about your time on the ship – any incidents that were humorous or scary or anything –

I can remember a time we were up in Vallejo, California, which is an area where they do repairs on ships. We had a fire in one of our electrical boards; fortunately it didn't spread to the other two, so we had two backups; we needed to get that taken care of so we went from San Diego – when we got back to the state, we went over to Vallejo and we were there about three months. At that time I was afforded leave when it was available and went into San Francisco and we went to the USO and got tickets for some of the great programs – saw Sammy Davis, Jr. and the Will Masten Trio; went to a symphony or two, saw a couple of plays. Locally there right on that base there was a 9-hole golf course, so I was living in luxury because I learned to play golf when I was a youngster in Joliet as a caddy – that was ideal.

You came out of the service now and how was your reception by family and friends?

Do you have time for a couple of things while I was on the Piedmont?

Yes, yes, of course, definitely, I still want that.

Okay. One time when we were in the States, we went up to Seattle, Washington, and we were invited there to be a ship tied up at a dock called the Wayfarers Celebration – kind of a week-long celebration.

Is that similar to the one in San Francisco that they call Fleet Week?

It was similar to that.

Because I've been there.

I don't remember how many – I think there were a couple of ships along with our ship, the USS Piedmont. At that time my sister and brother-in-law were in Tacoma, Washington and he was in the Air Force. So I asked for leave and I hitch hiked down to Tacoma. And I stayed with my sister and brother-in-law and they took me on a little trip up to Mount McKinley and so forth – and I found out that my sister was going to have her first baby.

Oh, wow!

So after a nice stay I hitch hiked back to the ship. I wouldn't hitch hike to day, of course.

No, never. But that was very common and everyone would pick up a serviceman then. It was considered safe at that time.

And then there was the time we were in Honolulu – four of us on leave took a trip around the island. We rented a car, so we got to see the pineapple fields – not as many now – and we were able to –

Not that big – only 32 miles around Oahu.

We got to see the Punch Bowl, from a distance and that was impressive because you know of all the men who are buried in that cemetery. You've been there.

Yes; my husband was a Marine so when we went to Honolulu we had to go there.

Thank you for his service.

Yes, sorry he wasn't around when I was interviewing veterans. I never got to interview him. But he told me a lot of things; he was a Marine but he was mostly on a ship – he sailed the Mediterranean.

Yeah, well the Navy – would say we took you Marines around, you know –

Right, exactly.

All you are on board ship as part of our guard.

Right, exactly; that's what they did, just went around.

And then there was one other situation where I actually met my brother-in-law George Baxter; he was a Lieutenant in the Air Force and we connected. He was at Pukeopo (phonetic) Air Base and he used to fly the two-engine work horse planes into Korea carrying supplies (inaudible)

And we actually had dinner together. We couldn't meet in the Officers' Quarters because I wasn't an officer; Otherwise we would have, but he was happy.

Oh, it's great meeting up with somebody you know from back home – 5 or 10 thousand miles away from home. That's great.

Okay, your service days are over and you're back home, how was your readjustment to civilian life?

Well, I'll tell you, it was – I just loved the bed – a normal bed – and of course I had to see friends, and Roy Larson being one of them – we applied to Augustana College to finish our Junior College – well, actually, to get a Bachelor's Degree.

Did you use the G.I. Bill?

We used the G.I. Bill.

And you did get your degree.

I got my degree, Bachelor's Degree in 1957.

In what discipline?

That was in teaching Biology. Then I went to the University of Illinois to get a Master's Degree for teaching of Science.

Which school in Illinois?

University of Illinois in Champaign. And I stayed there for about a year and I did a summer there –

So you used the G.I. Bill.

I used the G.I. Bill one more time and I got another Master's Degree in Curriculum and Supervision at Northern Illinois University at DeKalb. So I felt I was blessed. But I always remember the story that I heard from somebody who said there was a Congressman in Washington, D.C. who said to a friend in Congress, "What a waste of money, giving the G.I. Bill." As you know, some of our people down there don't really have it all together. They don't appreciate what other people do for this country.

Right, right. It's a terrible thing to say for a politician or anybody, really, for that matter.

So you said you didn't not have much contact with fellow veterans over the years and did not go to reunions.

My contact was basically when I got here, I joined the VFW.

So you are a member of the VFW today.

Yeah, and I'm also a member of the American Legion.

And do you use the VA Services?

I do not use the service because I have a medical program through teacher retirement.

Okay.

So I feel I don't really need to use it; let somebody else use it who really needs it.

Right, who really needs it.

I've had problems, physical problems, you know.

You were never injured during the service?

No, not during the service. But I think I've lost a little bit of hearing because I had to stand next to a 5" – 38 gun – BOOM!! And we didn't have any ear plugs or anything at that time.

Right. You think they would have something.

They didn't have them; just think of all the people that lost their hearing –

Yeah, I know –

Or lost part of their hearing. But anyway, I wear hearing aids so that's fine, and that's paid by my insurance company – Aetna.

Right. How do you think that your military experience affected your life?

It gave me the – how can I say it – I was kind of lost before because of my stuttering, and I didn't know where I was going to go, so when I got there, it clarified. I had a goal.

Guidance.

And I had guidance, yes. And I decided no, I did not want to continue in the Navy, but I did want to go back home, continue my education and try to become a teacher, which I did.

And you enjoyed it? Enjoyed being a teacher.

Yes, yes, I was a teacher / administrator for 35 years.

And now you are a real estate agent.

Yes, I do that part time; that was to supplement my income –

Oh, you did this for many years –

Since 1975

Since you were working –

Since 1958 – telephone ringing – interruption

We were interrupted but we're back on the record. Lloyd was telling me he was in real estate since 1976 working part time – when did you retire from teaching and being an administrator?

I retired in 1991 after a 35-year career.

Wow!

I didn't like it too well – one of those things.

Ha, ha, yeah, okay. But Lloyd is still working today as a part-time real estate agent.

Yes, yes.

And he's very busy too. So what life lessons have you learned from military service?

You have to pay attention; you have to listen; and you have to be kind to each other. There were times when we were able to do things for orphans and -- inaudible -- which was kind of nice to be able to do – to help people. And I still, to this day, I like to help by donating my time and my money.

Yes.

I've been blessed; I have both. And I do things for veterans – when I went to the VFW I was a member of the Honor Guard – so we used to go to wakes and funerals to have our ceremony. I worked in the American Legion. I donate my time at church – lots of things.

Right.

Sing in the choir.

You still sing?

Still sing,

Oh, good for you.

Sometimes.

Lloyd is actually a neighbor of mine; we live in the same community here in Carillon so we have a choir. Are you in the Carillon Choir?

I may join it when I move in entirely. Probably will.

Okay, good; they need more people there.

Okay, I think that we are mostly completed. Is there anything else that you would like to add to the story or any other anecdotes – anything else? If there is something that you recall, we can always add to it. We can't detract or change but we can add to it.

Can I add something about the Honor Flight?

Oh, yes, you've been on the Honor Flight?

I've been on the Honor Flight in September of 2018 and I was lucky enough to go with my brother-in-law, John Fausel. I got him to go with me.

Great!

And he needed my help a little bit with the wheelchair at times. It was an experience that I would recommend to anybody that served. Now of course, they're doing the Viet Nam Veterans.

Right. They'll take whoever.

Yeah.

My brother-in-law was in the Army in Korea and he went on that Veterans' Flight – take off and land at Midway Airport – the whole day, from 5 in the morning till 10:30 at night – Big band coming in to meet you at the airport; it was great! Ha, ha

It was an experience!

Yes, it was.

I had been to Washington, D.C. I had seen the Korean War Memorial in the process of being finished but it wasn't finished yet; so I did see it when it was finished. I of course saw the Viet Nam Wall, the World War II Memorial –

They're all there – that's a newer Memorial – the WWII one.

I understand they'll be moving the Air Force Memorial – talking about expanding the National Cemetery.

Arlington?

Arlington. (turn tape)

I turned the tape, we were just talking, if there is something more that Lloyd can remember I will be happy to add it. Lloyd just showed me an 8 1/2x11" color photograph cartoon – what is this? It's one of the Seven Dwarfs – Doc. Please explain this cartoon.

That was actually done by Walt Disney.

Oh, you're kidding!! –

For our ship –

Really – why don't you tell that story – Walt Disney – I see that.

And we sold those in the ship's store for about 25 cents, I think, and I said I've got to have one of those.

What was the occasion – why did he do this?

I don't remember the history of it. I never found out about that. I think he did some things with other service groups but that one particularly because, you know, here's Doc – from the Seven Dwarfs –

Would you want to part with one of these ?

It's yours. It's yours. (Lloyd has two copies and will donate one).

I will send this in with the interview – and there's Walt Disney's name under there. He didn't sign this; this is a copy; he probably signed the original.

That's a copy –

But this is done by Walt Disney for your ship.

Yep.

Wow!! So that had to be done in the 1950s.

It was some time in the 1950s.

But you don't know the story of how he came to do this?

No. I'm sure it's recorded someplace. I went online and tried to find out more about the Piedmont; I do know that it's been decommissioned.

Oh, --

Actually it ended up in Peru for a while.

You've got a "P" on here – for the Piedmont – right. Doc has a sailor hat, of course, and it has a "P" on it for the Piedmont. I'm going to submit this along with my interview.

I'm glad I popped that out – because that was part of my story.

Right. That's great!

Now with that, we are completed, so I want to thank you, very much, Lloyd for this most interesting interview and thank you for your service to our country.

Oh, you're so welcome and thank you for all you're doing for us.

Okay. Thanks.

We are back on the record – since Lloyd and I were talking, he did not – he was not a married man in the service. He got married afterwards but we’re going to go into that detail about the Japanese doll he purchased and his sweetheart at the time.

When you got back home what happened? Did you know her? Were you writing to her all along?

When I got back home and after college, after I started teaching, a roommate from Joliet Township High School, Bob Gutierrez, taught at the same school, North Campus of Lyons Township High School in LaGrange. His best friend whom he was dating was Marge

Marge and Jean had come together as new teachers at Lyons Township. She was a Spanish teacher at the North Campus and Jean was an English teacher at the South Campus but they became great friends. Well, eventually Bob and I became roommates in Maywood. I taught at Proviso East High School and Bob taught at LaGrange Township High School. One day he asked if I would like to go down to Florida on Spring Break. I said I would love to, I’d never gone anywhere to Florida especially Spring Break. “ I have Marge’s friend, Jean and they’re going to come down to Florida and meet us there.” And I said I’ll drive, so we drove to Florida in my green hornet – a green station wagon.

When we got there first Marge came in and then – first time I saw Jean – she came in – first time I met her, I said I’m gonna marry that lady.

Oh, really, you had that experience!!

Yes.

Wow!! So, love at first sight!

Yeah. And then afterwards, after we were dating, after we got back home, I found out that Jean had the same experience! She said I knew I was gonna meet the man I would marry.

Yes.

You’re kidding. I can’t believe it! How nice –

It was a great story.

It certainly was.

Jean Pancner became Jean Marie Pancner-Lundberg.

So tell me about the Japanese doll.

So we got engaged on Christmas Eve 1960 and I brought the doll, which I had gotten from my mother. I called her up and went down to Joliet and picked up the doll; she knew why I was coming for it – to get engaged.

Right, right.

We'll share all of this; you'll know about it – so I took it and met her – she lived above her parents' store that they had in Cicero on Cermak Road – the Cicero Book Store. So I brought the doll, said I have something I'd like to ask you – What's that? I said would you take a look at this doll. It's beautiful, she said, I love the red and so forth. So you really have to look at that left hand, I told her, and then she saw the ring.

How big was this doll?

It was about 16".

She had little tiny hands.

It's right here.

You have the doll?

I'll show it to you.

Oh, okay.

It's right here; I'm looking at it now – it's under glass.

Oh, okay.

Did you ask my parents? Her parents came from Czechoslovakia – I said No, I didn't, but I'll go and ask them right now. So I did, I said "May I have your daughter's hand in marriage?" And Jean's mother, Marie, was kind of the head of the family, and she said, "Well, that's up to Jean. Fine with us, but it's up to Jean." So I went back and said exactly what her mother said – it's up to you, dear. And she said would you mind waiting for another day? And I said, well, I'm waiting these years –

You weren't a kid.

I said I'll come back Christmas Day, later on -- had to be with the family -- so she said Yes.

Great. She probably wanted to talk with her parents about it too. Well, it's nice that they said yes right away without hesitating. How long had you gone out – dated?

When we got back and then Jean decided to get a Master's at Northwestern –

Oh, Wow!

So she said look me up in a year because I don't want to be distracted.

Right, right, exactly.

And I said I'll put it on my calendar and call you on this date, which I did.

Great.

So we got married in April –

Well, you weren't a kid. How old were you when you got married?

I was in my 30s.

You know your mind by that time.

Yeah.

Well, that was so interesting, Lloyd; it's a very good story; we're going to include that in this interview. Again, thank you for your service; your story was delightful, really. I enjoyed it.

Thank you.

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