

**Sally M. Edlund Oral History Interview, 04/18/2011**  
**Administrative Information**

**Narrator:** Sally M. Edlund

**Interviewer:** Linda Sunderland

**Date of Interview:** April 18, 2011

**Place of Interview:** South Windsor Public Library

**Length:** 27 pages, 1:30:08 minutes

**Biographical Note and Abstract**

Sally Moulton Edlund was born in Manchester, CT, and grew up South Windsor, CT on Beldon Road near her extended family. Her family owned a farm, where they raised cows, chickens, tobacco, and food crops. After graduating from Ellsworth Memorial High School, she attended the University of Connecticut. Before graduating from high school and afterwards, she worked for Travelers Insurance Company in Hartford, CT. She later earned an elementary teacher's license and taught as an elementary school teacher.

In this interview, Edlund discusses growing up in South Windsor during the Great Depression and World War II, including the privations and resourcefulness necessitated by both. She talks about helping her father and grandfather with farming. She also discusses her memories of going to school in the one-room Pleasant Valley Schoolhouse, the flood of 1936 and hurricane and flood of 1938. She also discusses what it was like to work at Travelers Insurance, and her first year of teaching as a first grade teacher in Groton, CT.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed April 18, 2011, title to these materials have been assigned to Wood Memorial Library. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

**Copyright**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the archives staff.

**Transcript of Oral History Interview**

This transcript was made from an audio recording that can be found in the archives at the Wood Memorial Library. Transcripts were edited for clarity and were approved, sometimes with additional edits, by the narrator. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the draft transcripts and recordings.

**Suggested Citation**

Sally M. Edlund, recorded interview by Linda Sunderland, April 18, 2011, (page number), Wood Memorial Library Oral History Program

Sally M. Edlund Oral History Interview  
April 18, 2011  
Interviewed by Linda Sunderland

SUNDERLAND: **00:05** I am talking to Sally Edlund, and we're at the South Windsor Public Library in the Quiet Room, and it is April 18, 2011. Sally, perhaps you could tell me when and where you were born.

EDLUND: Well, I was born in Manchester, CT at the Manchester Memorial Hospital, because my mom and dad lived on Center St. in Manchester at that time. They lived in a 2-family Cheney built house, and my Aunt Evelyn, Uncle Floyd Marshall, and my Cousin Jane lived in the other half of the house. And I lived there for a year and after a year, I moved to my dad's house on Beldon Road in South Windsor. He had been involved in getting that house, because he had been working as a partner with his father, George Moulton, who lived down the street where the driveway for the Unity Church is now. And when they were farming, when he was really just a school boy, they needed more land, because they were raising vegetables, and melons, and different things to sell. And they needed more land, so they bought this other farm which was 23 acres off Beldon Road, and Dad was given the mortgage for it that Uncle Charlie Tuttle held, and it was quite a high rate of interest.

And even though shortly after the Depression came and interest rates went a lot lower, Dad's interest rate never lowered. And for many years, he worked hard just to keep paying the interest on it, although, I don't think he paid much off the principle for quite a few years. But anyway, at age 16, when he was given the farm, he was farming. And actually during the Depression, it probably was a good thing, because we always didn't have a lot of food, but we had enough food to go around because we raised cows, and chickens, and horses, and vegetables, and they had a big asparagus bed and a big strawberry bed. And we always had eggs, milk, and vegetables from our farm when a lot of people wished they did.

But anyway, Dad worked very hard all his life on the farm. And apparently it's good training, because I always wondered how he got so he knew somehow to do so many different things that farmers had to do. Whether it was repairing, or building, or plumbing, or electrical, or whatever; somehow or other, he knew how to do those things.

SUNDERLAND: Did he learn that from his father?

EDLUND: Probably. Although my—

SUNDERLAND: Was his father a farmer?

EDLUND: **03:27** Grandpa [George Moulton] was a farmer. And his father [Turner Moulton] had lived in the red saltbox house right in front of Rye Street Park that's still there.

SUNDERLAND: Oh. Did he—did your father grow up here?

EDLUND: Yes, he did. He was born in the little red house that Wayne McKinney lives in now on the corner of Governors Highway and Ellington Rd. on the southeast corner. There were 3 in his family; had an older brother, Albert, who we always call Pete, and he was born in one of the Hayes' houses right down the road from where Dad lived. Cecil was born in the mill house. Where the Podunk Mill is there was a house where the parking lot is now.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: And then Grandpa bought his farm down the road which was—his little house was part of the hired man's house for the Weed farm which was where Lakewood is now. So they had a farm there, and Grandpa had vegetables and they raised tobacco for a money crop. So they raised tobacco on the 2 different acreages. He raised such good melons—muskmelons—that Mr. Fuller from the Fuller Brush Company used to drive out with his chauffeur to buy Grandpa's melons because they were so good. But when I was a child and moved into the other house that my dad owned, which he had been renting out to the Cooley family for some 10, 15 years before he moved into it, because he was still living at home, that when he moved into that house, I was very fortunate, because I had many of my relatives right nearby.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: My Grandma and Grandpa, my aunt, my uncle, cousins, and second generation people.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: And my mother's family had always lived in Manchester. They were of Danish descent and they came over to work in the Cheney Mills. So I had a lot of cousins nearby, and that's what we always did on Sunday afternoons. On Saturday, my mom always baked a pie and a cake for Sunday. And dad took all of our shoes and lined them up, and polished all our shoes and had them ready for Sunday mornings so we could go to Sunday school looking decent. And it was nice to have the relatives, because what we did on

Sunday was have a big dinner at noontime after Sunday school. Quite often we would have some child that might accompany us home, and we would have the Sunday dinner which consisted of a roast of some kind and the pie. And then the cake we kept in case somebody came to visit, which is what we did Sunday afternoons.

SUNDERLAND: Uh-hunh [affirmative].

EDLUND: **06:48** Some relative either came to our house or we went to their house to visit on Sunday afternoon and quite often stay for supper, and so we had to have a cake on hand just in case. And my mother was very methodical. She always did things on certain days. She always washed on Monday, ironed on Tuesday, cleaned the bathroom on Thursday, changed the beds on Saturday, and she always had—all of our meals were sit down—the whole family—together—meals. At breakfast, nobody could eat until everybody was around the table, and quite often we'd have a hot breakfast of some kind. Either eggs or French toast or hot oatmeal or cooked cereal. And she was a great one for serving fruit which was probably good for us. We didn't have too many desserts during the week except for fruit dishes. And fortunately, since we were not near a store and there weren't really any big stores in South Windsor, she did a lot of canning. She canned vegetables from the garden, and she made grape jelly, she made ketchup, she made root beer, and so our cellar was always well supplied with rows of canned things that we could have.

SUNDERLAND: Yeah.

EDLUND: Our big stores were all in Hartford at that time, but there were small stores on Main Street in Manchester. So usually, Thursday evening, the stores were open late so we would travel out to downtown Manchester and House and Hale had the first self-service grocery store where you got a little basket and you could walk around and pick out your groceries off the counters or the walls.

SUNDERLAND: Really.

EDLUND: Because before that, you always went to a grocery store and you stood at the counter with your list, and the grocery man—we would say, "Box of Corn Flakes" and he would go to his shelf and bring it down on the counter in front of you and write on the paper bag what you bought and the price. And then at the end, he would add them up, put the things in the paper bag, and you could bring them home.

SUNDERLAND: How did you get to Manchester? How did you go there?

EDLUND: Well, we drove out Pleasant Valley Road.

SUNDERLAND: So you had a car.

EDLUND: **09:34** Yes. Dad always had a car.

SUNDERLAND: Okay.

EDLUND: In fact, one day when he was going out—when he was courting my mother in Manchester, he was a little late getting there, and she said, "You know, how come you're late?" And he said, "Well, on the way out," he said, "I stopped at the dealers and bought a new car," which he was driving. Because you didn't finance a car, the notion hit you—you might stop on your way someplace else and buy a new car and pay for it. I suppose they cost probably \$250 or something like that.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness. Yeah.

EDLUND: And so he had always had a car. In fact, when he was growing up, we have quite a few pictures of him where he would be camping up North with his old car. You had to have a lot of extra tires and tubes, and he had an air pump to pump them up, because the roads were so bad.

SUNDERLAND: Yeah.

EDLUND: The tires weren't too good and the roads were bad, so you had to do a lot of replacements, and they would have a tent and, of course, the fish pole, and they would go up North in New England.

SUNDERLAND: My goodness. Just where he was already living and farming, that wasn't isolated enough, he had to go further north to go camping.

EDLUND: He went with some of his friends from town that he had grown up with.

SUNDERLAND: That's funny.

EDLUND: He went to the little one-room Pleasant Valley District 5 Schoolhouse for 8 years, and when I started school, I went there for 4 years. My first year of going to school there didn't seem to be many other children near me, so I walked to school. My dad would usually take me in the car down to Grandpa's house, which was a little ways down the road, and then my grandpa would walk me to school and when school was out, he would be waiting for me and walk me back again, which was very nice. Ellington Road at that time was a very busy road—it was the main road between Boston and New York, and it had a lot of traffic—a lot of truck traffic. And they had thought they had come up with this good idea for

Ellington Road and made it so that it had a high crown which meant it was higher in the middle and it sloped down on either side. That way the rain would run off. Unfortunately, when it was snowy or icy, the vehicles also fell off the road, which as I recall, walking to school on a snowy morning, you would look down in the lower places where there was a curve in the road and there would be trailer truck lying down there with snow on top of it or a car that had gone off the road and tipped over.

SUNDERLAND:     **12:34** That must have been quite an event back then.

EDLUND:           Well, we got sort of used to it. On a snowy morning we always looked where the road curved and went up the little hill, you could almost count on there being some kind of a vehicle that had gone off the road during the night sometime. But the second year I went to school, there seemed to be more kids walking, and so we picked up different children along the way and walked together to school and back home again. There were some that came from further up Ellington Road than me, so when they arrived, we would try to be there and we'd all walk together to school. The road itself had like black creosoted posts along the edge, and it had a heavy cable that ran that was supposed to keep the cars from running off the road quite so much. [Both laugh] But it also confined us as to where we could walk, because we had to walk in the little narrow place between the edge of the road and the fence. So my dad always was worried about it, and he had us trained so that we were to look at each vehicle as it came along, and if it looked like it was going to slam into us, we leaped over the fence.

SUNDERLAND:     Oh, right.

EDLUND:           On the way down there, we had to go over the Podunk River Bridge, which when I first started school, was made out of heavy planks, and when the trucks and vehicles went over them, it made a loud rumbly noise, and they even pitched up and down a little bit. So we would never want to be on the bridge when the vehicles were going over. So we would wait on one side until there was a little empty space in the traffic, and then we'd run across to the other side.

SUNDERLAND:     Oh my goodness. [Laughs]

EDLUND:           During the big flood in 1936, that whole wooden bridge went out and they built a cement bridge which didn't rumble. We were safe.

SUNDERLAND:     So what was the schoolhouse like and the teacher?

EDLUND:           Well, the schoolhouse was just the one room, and it had a double door in the front, but one door was never used when I was there. We went in the north door, and they had a little coat room there, and then it had one main room. And in the

basement, which had a stair access where the other door had been—they built a stairs—when they moved the school back to a place with a foundation underneath it, they had put in indoor plumbing which was a boy's and a girl's toilet and a sink in the middle.

But it was very dark and spidery down there, and I didn't like to go down. I got so I would not use the bathroom—I'd wait until I got home. But they had a sink and it had a little glass soap dispenser that you could punch and the soap would come out. So the teacher, who my 4 years there, was Beatrice Manchester, she would not go downstairs. So I was assigned the job of bringing her up a wet paper towel with soap on it and a dry paper towel for her to dry her hands, so she could wash up before she ate her lunch, and that way she never had to go into the lower reaches down there. [Laughs]

**SUNDERLAND:**     **16:18** Oh my goodness.

**EDLUND:**             And we had the 4 grades which meant there was quite a variety of sizes of children. So the first couple days of school seemed to be mostly concerned with finding the right size chair and desk for the child that was going to be sitting in it for the rest of the year. Sometimes kids outgrew their desk before the year was over, and you would have to get a different one; try it out, put your feet flat on the floor, could you sit in the chair, can your arms reach the desk.

And we had fairly small number of children—the year that I went, I had 3 other kids in my class. Frances Pastula, Stuart Grisel, and Johnny Krawski. But the year that my sister went, which was 2 years later, she was going to be the only child in first grade, and we were concerned that it would be not too nice for her to be the only one. But right before school, Frances Burnham moved in, and we were so happy there would be 2 kids in the first grade. But unfortunately, or fortunately, I had been teaching her whatever I learned at school; we played school. So she had only been in school for 2 weeks and they put her in second grade.

But we had a morning recess, an afternoon recess, and an hour lunchtime. We ate—all of us ate our lunch at school; we carried either paper bag or a tin lunchbox with a thermos bottle in it with hot soup or cold milk or something. Those thermoses were very fragile; they were always breaking, and then your milk would leak out on the rest of your lunch, and if it was a hot day, it would turn sour by the time you got to eating lunch. And it seemed to me that a great deal of the time the thermoses leaked. But anyway, we survived that. And we played games—we had a very small schoolyard. We had 3 swings and we had a big pile of ashes in the back from the coal stove where the janitor piled the ashes up. So we would play King of the Mountain where you stood on top of the ash pile, and when the other kids would try to run up and push you off, and you could push them down, and see how long you could stay up there. As I recall, it caused quite a few skinned knees, but we were hard up for something to do.

**SUNDERLAND:**     You must—everyone must have been black. What a mess.

**EDLUND:**             **19:08** We played Red Rover, Red Rover, and giant steps and dodge ball



and tag. And when the big elm trees around the schoolyard shed their seeds and seedlings in the spring, I think it was, we had a lot of fun scooping them up into little partitions and made little houses with little rooms in them and those were the walls—they weren't tall walls, but you could tell the divisions. So we didn't have any fancy play yard things.

And at lunchtime we were allowed to go down to Burnham's Station which was the gas station and little store down on the northwest corner of Pleasant Valley Road and Ellington Road. And we had a school monitor that came down—he wore an official band over his shoulder that would check the traffic and help us across the street so we wouldn't get run over. And we would go in and buy a penny candy or two to bring back. Burnham's also ran quite a famous lunchroom which was right north of the gas station and they were well known as the stop to take between—traveling between Boston and New York, because Ruth Burnham made wonderful chicken pies and desserts, and they also had 3 cabins in the woods where you could stay overnight if you wanted to.

SUNDERLAND: Really.

EDLUND: But our school day at Pleasant Valley was broken up because we had all these various ages of children, and there weren't many things we could do together. So many times, the older children or the higher grades taught the younger ones—you know—if they needed flash cards or they needed help with their arithmetic or we had very little preschool education for kids, and many of the families that were Lithuanian farm families did not use English as a language at all at home. They spoke either Lithuanian or Polish, and so we would spend lots of time opening up the crayon box—what color is this? Blue, blue, red. Because the little kids that came in didn't know that.

SUNDERLAND: So you were teaching English as a second language.

EDLUND: Well, yes. And it sort of reinforced—of course, you had to know your arithmetic if you were teaching a younger one or your reading or whatever.

SUNDERLAND: Absolutely. And you grew up to be a school teacher.

EDLUND: Yes.

SUNDERLAND: You loved it so much.

EDLUND: I did.

SUNDERLAND: **22:17** So what was it like during the Depression on your father's farm?

EDLUND: Well, the Depression was a very hard time, but it seemed like everybody around us was in the same boat. I do know there were some more families that were wealthier, but it seemed like nobody put on airs and we all were pretty poor. We all had not very fancy clothes. In fact, if you had animals at home, as we did, chickens and cows, and we went to a store that sold grain products in North Manchester near the railroad tracks. It was sort of an agricultural co-op store, and we would buy our grain and we kids would sometimes go there, because we could pick out the pattern on the grain bags that we liked—whether you wanted purple or blue—and the grain bags came in a cotton bag that could be re-used afterwards. I don't remember having too many clothes being made out of it, but we had pajamas made out of it, dish towels, curtains out of the grain bags. And we used everything.

People—it was sort of a matter of pride that you re-used and salvaged things. After the hurricane many sheds and barns blew down, and my Uncle Pete used some land at the extreme side of our property—he built a chicken house—he raised chickens commercially there for a while, but he also brought loads and loads of lumber that had been used on tobacco sheds that blew down, and he piled it up there and it was sold to be re-used. And since it was full of nails and hinges for the doors on the tobacco sheds, we kids spent lots of time out there with a hammer, pounding out nails to re-use. Of course, we found out that if you re-use a nail and you hammer it enough, that it loses its temper, and when you go to re-use it, it bends very easily. But nevertheless, we did lots of salvaging, and we all built things and used things over again, and found new uses for old things.

I built myself a greenhouse when I was 12 years old, because I liked to grow plants, and I made a pit greenhouse with tobacco sash on top of it. I spent my allowance buying putty, and tobacco sash ordinarily wasn't puttied glass, but I puttied mine in so no water would leak through it. And it had a little door with steps that went down, and I had a wood stove in there. So I could start my plants quite early in the spring and keep them warm if necessary.

SUNDERLAND: That's amazing, Sally.

EDLUND: And of course, my dad who raised tobacco had a pond. We stopped up a little brook and made a dam there so it had a pond. When my mother couldn't find me when I was little, she would always go look in the pond and see if she saw any ripples coming up. But Dad had a water tower where you pumped the water up to the water tower. It was made out of like a great big wooden barrel up there on legs, and then when you watered your tobacco beds that had the small plants growing in them, you had just a gravity flow of water coming down. But during the Depression, everybody made things over to use, and we had always had horses which I liked, because at the end of the day they would let me ride the horse back to the barn. And in fact, when I was down to Grandpa's, he would let me ride on the wagon seat, and we would bring a bag of corn up to the old Podunk Mill to be ground into finer pieces that could be used for baby chicks or grain. And he would let me hold the reins and drive the horse up and down the hill until we got to the mill.

SUNDERLAND:     **27:01** Uh-hunh (affirmative).

EDLUND:            The mill inside was quite interesting, because it had the great big stones that went around from water power where the water from the mill pond went down through the shoot and made the gears turn and made the grinding wheels turn. But everything in the mill, as I recall, I was very impressed, that everything in there was covered with this fine, white flour dust. The cobwebs, the walls, the—every little crevice had this fine, white powder all over it from grinding different grains I guess.

SUNDERLAND:     Not just corn. Different grains.

EDLUND:            No, I guess, whatever you had. We had corn, but other people—there was a lot of—over the years—rye raised in this town. In fact, we have a Rye Street and in the early Colonial days, I guess, one of the favorite things was that people didn't drink water; they drank rye or alcoholic drinks. Or most everybody had a barrel in their cellar where you put cider, and it would be cider in the fall and pretty soon it would get to be alcoholic cider. So when the men came to visit, they would go down to the cellar and pull out a hole in the side of the barrel—it was called bung—and put a glass under it and you could have a glass of hard cider if you were daring enough to do that. [Both laugh]

SUNDERLAND:     Oh my goodness. And you had mentioned the—is it Doodle Bugs?

EDLUND:            Oh, yes. Well, we, as I say, we had a horse to do the farm work, and the horse was good because it went in all kinds of weather. Some years my dad used his woodlot in the back to cut wood to sell. We cut down trees and I was happy to help him pull a 2-man saw which you had a man on each side or a child, as the case may be, and you never pushed the saw, you pulled it towards you, and when it got to the other side, the other person pulled it towards them, and you could saw down a big oak tree, and that was the kind of saw that you needed to do that—no chainsaws in those days.

But the horse could pull the length of wood in the winter over the snow up to the house to be delivered to make railroad ties—somebody would come and get them, and they were made into railroad ties. And then of course, every year we cut wood out of the woodlot for us to burn in the stove. And, as I recall, there were a couple years when we sawed the wood and we couldn't get a saw machine to come to the house, so they did something where they put a belt on the back wheel of your car, which would have been one of the old Ford Model-T type cars, and jack it up, and then when you ran the car, the thing that made the wheel go around made the belt go and hitched onto a saw so you could saw your wood that would be put in the woodshed for the winter's supply—

SUNDERLAND:     **30:32** Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: —of wood. But anyway—

SUNDERLAND: Yankee ingenuity.

EDLUND: Yes. But it got too expensive and my horses got old. In fact, we had—this is a very sad story with one of them—the brown horse, which I can never think of his name now. We had finished the tobacco crop in the fall, and Mr. Newberry came over and asked to borrow our horse, because he was still taking in tobacco. And the next day he came over and said to my father, "You've got to go over and bury your horse. He died last night." And Dad had to go over on a hot day and dig a hole, cause you couldn't cart a whole horse home. It was Mr. Newberry's land and we had to bury this horse.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: And we think he did not water him or rub him down after he had used him that hot day.

SUNDERLAND: That's sad.

EDLUND: But anyway, we no longer had horses, and we needed some kind of power for the farm machinery, so he made a tractor out of an old Buick car. It was quite a big fancy car in its day. I remember the inside of it had lovely velvet seats, and it had big windows that cranked up and down, and it even had little vases on the partition between the front and back windows where you could put flowers in it, which cars had in those days.

And he would cut out, with a welding torch, the metal part of the car and take the engine part and the front seat to make the tractor out of. And then he would shorten it and put the rear tires on so that it made an engine in the front with a seat for the driver and a 4-wheel kind of a strong tractor. And then in the back, it would have a thing that you could hitch onto your farm equipment.

In a way, it wasn't as good as a horse, because when we had the horse, the farmer would sit on the plow seat—the metal seat—and there he would have, on either side of him, the levers that worked the plow up and down to go in the furrow and lift up at the end when you're turning around, and then he would drive the horse at the same time. But when you had the Doodle Bug tractor, which is what we called those tractors, you had to have one man to drive the vehicle, and then somebody else had to sit on the plow in the back. And since I was the oldest one in the family, I used to do that for my dad. And it was hard, because when you got to the end of the row, you had to lift it up, but there was big clunk of dirt stuck on the plow so you had to lift up not only the plow but the clunk of dirt would have to be lifted up.

SUNDERLAND: **33:34** Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: But I liked to do it, because I felt like my dad could not do anything without me helping him.

SUNDERLAND: He probably couldn't.

EDLUND: Well, I guess he could. I'm sure I was more of a pest than an aid, but he made me feel as if I was somewhat useful. [Laughs]

SUNDERLAND: I'm sure you were. And the top section of the Doodle Bug—

EDLUND: Yes. The one with the roof and the velvet seats and the windows that went up and down, we had as a playhouse. You didn't have a lot of room for things in it, but it was nice and snug. And we had the fancy velvet seats, and you could open the door and put the windows down, and we had that as a playhouse. We also used the tobacco sheds when they were empty for playhouses and the chicken houses that Uncle Pete didn't use anymore, we made playhouses out of.

SUNDERLAND: Never a dull moment.

EDLUND: No. Well, I was fortunate that I had kids after I got going to school that would come and play at your house or you went to their house. I got so I could climb trees as good as any of the boys. We roller skated up and down among the truck traffic—

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: —on Ellington Road. And we skated on the mill pond and swam in the brook. Spent a lot of time grooming the little brooks; catching fish and putting them in little ponds that we made, and making little dams to make the pond and putting moss along the side and then we always had animals. We always had dogs and puppies, and cats and kittens, and pet chickens and baby chickens. So we didn't know that we were missing out on all the electronic things that kids have today.

SUNDERLAND: And you used to ice skate on the Podunk?

EDLUND: **35:40** Yes. Yes. It seems to me we had awfully cold winters. I can remember looking at our thermometer on the north side of the house and seeing 30 below zero in the winter and the wind blowing.

SUNDERLAND: Wow.

EDLUND: Our ell part of our old house which was well over a hundred years old, had no cellar under it, so the kitchen floor that was in the ell had been made out of an old cobbler shop—it's apparently—somebody that lived there had been a shoemaker, and that kitchen would be pretty cold. We had a stove in there, but if you had the stove banked at night and we were sitting in the main part of the house where the living room was where it was warmer, the kitchen would get pretty cold and you had to be careful, because if you dropped water on the floor it might freeze to ice. In the fall, some years, Dad would take bags of leaves—we had many maple trees around the house—and he would bag up leaves in the old fertilizer bags and lay them around the perimeter of the ell part, and it would give us extra insulation so that we didn't have so much cold going in under that floor.

SUNDERLAND: Did you have running water?

EDLUND: Well, I understand that when I first moved there the first year, we had electricity put in the house. We had to have new poles put up our road, because nobody had ever had electricity up there, and all our years that I lived there until I was grown up, we paid an extra charge called a line charge, because we had to pay for those poles. So we did have electricity in the house, but I think the first year I moved there we didn't. We had a hand pump—an iron pump—with a hand pump that you had to prime and pull the handle up and down to get a pail of water. And I vaguely remember that we had a black soapstone sink before we had the white sink put in. And we had a well right outside the house that we could pump water which, in case of crisis, and we had a few of them over the years with hurricanes and floods and things, you could always get fresh water if you needed it.

SUNDERLAND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative].

EDLUND: But the well was a round brick well—not very wide and not too deep, because the water level in our area was fairly near the surface. But it was probably at least 3 times a man's height. So every year somebody had to go down the well to clean the well.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my.

EDLUND: Because the maple roots would come in around the roots and things and maybe leaves would fall in or whatever. It had a cover over it. But somebody had to go clean the well every year. So whoever was the youngest, slimmest child usually got lowered down the well. They used to tell us that if you were down there and looked up out of the opening at the top you could see stars, but I don't think that was true. And the last year that anybody went down to clean the well—well, I should explain—that while you're cleaning it, you had something and you popped the roots and you took all the water—you scooped all the water out of the well so it was down to just the dry sand on the bottom where the

fresh spring water would come in—cleaned it all out. Then you brushed and cleaned the sides of the bricks to get all the roots or any moss or anything that had grown on them, so that the water would be cleaner. And then somebody up above had to keep putting the bucket down and you would fill it, and it would get hauled up and put down again. So the last year it was done, was the year that—we had nobody of our kid's generation living at home, and my father went down to clean the well and he couldn't get back up again.

SUNDERLAND: Oh no.

EDLUND: So my mom had to go to get the man across the street to come and haul Dad up out of the well. And I think after that we did not bother cleaning—well, I think they had city water put in. (both laugh)

SUNDERLAND: **40:18** Oh boy.

EDLUND: But anyway, when we had the big flood of 1936, I remember it because a great deal of our town was flooded. There was no flood control on the Connecticut River at that time. Where after that, different big places were built along streams and rivers it could contain a lot of—a large amount of water instead of letting it all come down at once. The meadows and Main Street in South Windsor was so badly flooded that my dad drove me over one day and we stood in back of the Masonic Hall and there were no trees there then and I could look down and I still remember it—this huge brown ocean with little white caps—wind blowing on it—and as far as you could see, just brown muddy water. And of course, it came up over Main Street in quite a few areas. In fact, there is a story about Bossen's Store, which was a little grocery store there on Main Street, that the river was rising one year and they could tell that it might go in the store. And they had the sand bags, but they didn't have them arranged around the outside of the store. So they went over to Union School and got all the older kids to come over and fill the sand bags, and put them around the store which saved the store from being flooded.

SUNDERLAND: Wow.

EDLUND: And Bossen's Store was quite important to us, because many people didn't drive—not everybody had a car. So Peter Bossen would come with his little truck and come to your house with his notepad and go in your kitchen, and you would tell him what you needed for the week's groceries, and he would write down your order, and then he would go back to the store and fill cardboard boxes and deliver them to your house in the afternoon. And there were a couple of other stores in town; one was Patritis's Store on Sullivan Avenue and the other one was Snow's Store which was next to the old Sadd Library right in Wapping Center. Most of the stores would also have a gas pump in front, because that was an

important thing when automobiles were first coming into vogue, it was a way of adding a little extra cash to your business.

SUNDERLAND: **43:04** Right.

EDLUND: Of course, it was very limited stock. You certainly didn't have the variety of things that we have to choose from in grocery stores today.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: For all we knew, it was enough.

SUNDERLAND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative].

EDLUND: And then almost everybody had a small garden.

SUNDERLAND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative]. And chickens?

EDLUND: And chickens and cows and—

SUNDERLAND: Were the cows used mostly for milk? Or did anybody use them for meat?

EDLUND: Well, you could have both. In order to keep your cow freshened so that it would give milk for a year, the cow had to be inseminated—you had to have the bull come to visit—and then the cow would have a calf. And you could either sell the calf, keep the calf for a few weeks and sell it for veal or sell it for somebody that wanted to raise it for veal or beef.

But some years we would keep the calf and raise it for a while. But, of course, we got very fond of the calves. We had a good time tending them. We had one calf named Bootsy, who use to somehow or other break down her fence, and get out and eat the garden. And at night we'd be sitting in the living room with a light on, and we'd hear ba-doomp-ba-doomp-ba-doomp outside, and Bootsy would be out running around the house, and you'd look and she would be looking in the window. You could see her eyes. And we'd have to go out and try to catch her and put her back where she belonged.

But mostly we always had a milk cow. In fact, Grandpa always had a milk cow, and a cow has to milked twice a day so you were pretty well tied down. You couldn't really go away very long unless you had somebody come and tend to your cows. They had to be milked in the morning and again at night. And Grandma used to sell milk. She had different ones that would come to the house and pick up some bottles of milk to take home. At one time, she had 3 sets of twins coming to buy milk, and we used to think maybe there was something special about that milk. [Both laugh]



SUNDERLAND:     **45:33** Wow.

EDLUND:            After the cow was milked, the milk would be brought in in the sterilized silver-colored pails that they put the milk into, and Grandma would set some of it aside in these enameled pans that were blue and white—kind of shallow pans. And after it had sat in the cold pantry for a half a day, you could scoop the cream off the top and make either whipped cream or butter. During the war it was nice, because those things were rationed and we could make our own.

But I remember the cow because when Grandpa would bring me home after school, we would go and cut corn stocks, and bring them in for the cow to eat—the green corn stocks or some of the corn from the corn crib. I'd like to get in the corn crib, because it was full of cobs of corn, and you could stomp around, and they'd fall on your feet. Except that Grandpa kept big traps in there to keep the rats out. Several times I caught my foot in the big trap. Had to have Grandpa come and take it off and he'd tell me not to do it and I guess I did it again. But we would have to go and walk up to the pasture to get the cow, because during the day, the cow was in the pasture way up in the back part of the farm. And on the way up, Grandpa would show me things that were interesting to a kid; where the bird nests were, where the wildflowers, the blue gentians or the bluets, or the different things were, or the rabbit holes or the fox holes. And we would get up to the pasture and we couldn't see the cow. She was beyond the trees and bushes somewhere. So Grandpa had this thing that I thought was interesting. He would pick up an insect called a daddy long legs and hold it in his hand and say, "Daddy, daddy, where is Bossy?" And daddy long legs would pick up one of his long legs and point—point to the section of the pasture, and Grandpa would say, "Oh, yes. There's Bossy." He knew where Bossy was. And we would walk Bossy back to the barn, and she would get milked. And he always had a pan in the barn where he would squirt some nice warm milk so the kittens could come over and have a drink. And over top of the part that held the horses and the cow was the haymow with all that nice soft fresh hay up there. So we liked to climb up and you could get in the hay, and slide around and play in the hay. I don't think it did the hay any good when the cow had to eat it, but it was fun to do.

SUNDERLAND:     It probably added spice.

EDLUND:            Yes. Haying was quite a big job. I know my dad—we had hayfields and you had to have a wagon and you had to go out and cut the hay with a mower, but then it had to be turned by hand. You'd go out with a pitchfork, and go along and turn it over so it would be good and dry for when it went on the wagon. And then it had to pitched up onto the wagon—usually on the hottest day of the year. And then carried to the barn and then pitched from the wagon into the—had a big door on the side of the barn that the hay went into. And I can remember that was one of the odd jobs that my dad would do for other

farmers around. They would come and get him to help with the haying. Farmers helped each other. If one crop of tobacco was ready, they'd all go and work on that one.

SUNDERLAND:     **49:34** Oh, that's nice.

EDLUND:            Or the hay or whatever needed to be done at the time. Or building a shed. Or roofing a roof or whatever. During the Depression, when it was very hard to get a job and many men were standing on the street corners selling pencils or apples or something just to get a few cents—of course you could buy a loaf of bread for \$0.10 then and enough fish for supper for \$0.15. So you didn't need too much. But he got a job from the government, which had an agency called the Work Progress Agency [Works Progress Administration] I believe it was.

SUNDERLAND:     Right.

EDLUND:            It was also called We Putter Around. Anyway, he worked for the government as an aide that Franklin Roosevelt started to help poor people, and he trimmed trees—roadside trees and trees in front of public buildings and schools.

SUNDERLAND:     In Connecticut?

EDLUND:            Yes. All around the state. So that when we went for rides, we would have to go and look. "Now see that big tree there? I trimmed that tree." It'd be a huge elm tree—had no branches near the ground, so you had to be able to rope, somehow or other, throw a rope up and then get up into the top of that tree to trim the branches off. But he kept all the trees well-trimmed, and he did get some money doing that. I remember when the war started that he went to work for Colts, doing something making of guns. There were so many people that came to our area to work in the war plants which consisted mostly of Pratt & Whitney Airplane and Colt's Gun Making, that there was not enough housing and there was no new housing being built during the war, and many people came down from the top of Maine or Canada or Vermont down here to work. And they were finally earning pretty good money, but there was no place for them to live. And they would come and beg my father to let them live in a chicken house or the garage or the tobacco shed or whatever. Oh if they could just bring the family and have a place to live. We never did that because we had no place suitable really.

SUNDERLAND:     **52:04** Right.

EDLUND:            But it was hard to find enough living space for the workers that flowed into the area to work. And of course, during the war, everything was rationed; gas was rationed, food was rationed, shoes were rationed, tires were rationed. And you

had to have your ration book when you went to the grocery store and figure out what you could get. And of course, we had 5 people in the family.

We each had a ration book, so that was easier for us than for some families that only had 2 people. But some families were accused of hoarding, because if you knew the grocery man, he might let you have an extra bar of soap or whatever, and you would keep it because you didn't know when you might get another one. So we always took the wrapper off the bar of soap, because it would make it hard and it would last longer. But you'd go in some people's cellar and they would piles of soap and piles of this and that that they were keeping on hand in case they needed it. And of course, during the war, everybody worked—in World War II—everybody was involved. The kids who bought Defense Stamps at school—you brought in your 10 cents and you bought a stamp. Every week you pasted it in your book, and when you got enough for \$18, which took a long, long time, then you could buy a War Bond which would increase to a larger amount of money.

And we all saved every bit of scrap metal that you could find and they collected that. And they had paper collections where they came and collected your newspaper and took them to be recycled. And we had, in those days, tinfoil toothpaste tubes. So when you got through with the toothpaste, you washed it out and put the toothpaste tube in the—it probably was aluminum salvage. And your cigarettes had like a little tinfoil wrapper, and you took the tinfoil wrapper out, and you made little balls of tinfoil that were contributed to the war effort.

And then everybody that could went to school to learn the look of the war planes that were being used in that war, because we were very afraid that we would probably be bombed since we had important defense industries near us. So we had blackouts at night where you had to have black shades that you pulled down so no crack of light could be seen from outdoors. And your car headlights were painted black on top so just the light could come out the bottom. And Air Raid Wardens came around and visited your neighborhood to make sure that they could not see any light that could be spotted by airplanes overhead. And when we went to the school, we studied hard—you had to see what the plane looked like from the side and from underneath the silhouette, and then we had tests on it. Then we all volunteered like 4 hours at a time at the Air Station which was up on the corner of Ayers Road and Graham Road. It was built up on sticks so that it stuck up in the air, and it had a little building with glass windows and a little walkway outside and a telephone. And you watched and listened for planes. If it was foggy, you just listened and see what the motor sounded like, and when you heard one, you went in and got on the phone and reported it; what direction it was going. If you could identify it, you would identify what plane you thought it was, whether it was a bomber or a P-38 and call it in, and some person in the government would look on the schedule of planes flying and find out whether that was one that belonged there or not. So we always felt the safety of the country was in our hands.

**SUNDERLAND:**     **56:39** And you were how old?

**EDLUND:**           Well, during the war I would have been around 11 or 12.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: And there were all ages. Some were older folks—almost everybody went to war if they could, except in our town, anybody that had a farm that was doing something was considered exempt, because farming was vital to the war effort. And tobacco farming, especially, was vital to the war effort. In fact, most of the young men had to go to war—they were drafted. And one well-known farmer in town's son could not go because he was working raising tobacco, but his best friend across the street, Sonny Rose, was drafted—went to war and was killed at the beginning of the war, and we all felt kind of bad that his good friend across the street got out of going because his father was raising tobacco. It seemed like everybody worked. My mother went and learned how to fold bandages that were sterile bandages—you had to wear gloves—rubber gloves—folded the bandages that were sent over for the troops, and she went to a class to learn how to make dinner when you had hardly any food or not much of a variety of food.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: We had to have Spanish rice once a week which was tomatoes with the rice without meat, I think, which we didn't like very much. But anyway, we made do with what they had, and most people had a Victory Garden. And my father caught the mumps. We were in school—you didn't have shots for diseases like that in those days, and we had the mumps and we were in bed. My father caught the mumps when he had to register for the draft, so I remember the man coming and registering. My sister had a big fat face, and my father had a big fat face. The man had to come and register him for the draft. But he was 40-something with 3 kids and a farm, so he didn't have to go to war. My Uncle Norman Reynolds, who had no children, he was planning on going, he wanted to go. We gave him a party. I remember I gave him a writing pad with a pen and paper in it so he could write home. But when he went for his final health checkup, they discovered he had flat feet and he didn't go. But he did quite a bit on the home front.

SUNDERLAND: Yeah, I'm sure.

EDLUND: **59:40** So it was the year I was going to camp—4-H Camp—and my mother was kind of afraid to let me go, because if we were bombed, we would be separated. But I did go—we didn't get bombed. And I remember when Pearl Harbor was bombed which was very frightening to us, because we figured if they could come and fly planes way across the ocean and attack Pearl Harbor, that they probably would attack us on the Mainland. And actually, if they had attacked at that time, we were very vulnerable, but they didn't so we were fortunate.

SUNDERLAND: Goodness.

EDLUND: We suspected some of our neighbors of being spies. If you were of German descent like Mr. Lipgen, who ran the mill, we always wondered if he was radioing back to Germany, information about what was going on around here. Poor man, he had gone back to Germany right before the war for the first time in his life, so we always suspected him that he was using his shortwave radio. Poor Mr. Lipgen.

But I also lived through the hurricane of '38 which was a frightening thing. At the end of the tobacco year when we harvested tobacco and they had it in the shed, we didn't have a lot of work to do on the farm, so usually we would go on a short vacation, and that year we went to Provincetown out on Cape Cod, and we had terrible rainy weather.

Of course, in those days, we didn't have forecasts so you didn't know what was coming. But farmers were very sensitive to the weather. They learned to read the clouds and the barometer as to where the barometer was low you would be having a storm.

But anyway, we were at Cape Cod, and we had rainy days and rainy days. And my dad said he felt we should go home. The water was getting very rough, and it rained and rained. So on the way down through the Cape we stopped, climbed up the sand dune and we could see the angry waves coming our way—high waves, high surf. So we continued on, drove through Providence and came home, pulled the old car into the tobacco shed where there was a place we always kept the car, and we unloaded our seashells that we had gotten at the Cape and we went in the house. And my dad went back out and he took the car out of the shed which he had never done before, and he parked it at the end—far end—of the driveway. And we went in the house and a hurricane came that we had never remembered anybody having a hurricane. I guess there had been some way back, but not in those recent years. And I remember being in the kitchen and just looking out and never having seen our trees bend so much in the wind and the wind howling around the house and soon it tore all the leaves off the trees and pasted them onto the windows with the water, and you couldn't see out anymore.

And the house shook and the wind roared, and both tobacco sheds full of tobacco blew down. And 5 huge maple trees around our house blew down. Most trees that went down came up by the roots so the roots stuck up in the air, because the ground was so saturated from the rain that the trees could not withstand the wind. So my dad took us down to the cellar and he put some big 4 x 4 poles—slanted them up against the wall, and we sat under that. And suddenly it got very quiet and the storm stopped, and we went upstairs and we went in the yard and looked and the sun came out, and everything was crashed down all around us as far as you could see. And all of a sudden, the storm came back, because that was the center of the hurricane—the eye of the hurricane. And now we were hitting the wind from the other side. So we had to go back into our shelter. But not one drop of water came into our house—that hundred year old house. No shingles blew off and no trees that went down hit our house or the car.

SUNDERLAND: **1:04:47** Wow. The car was spared too.

EDLUND: Yes. And we don't know why Dad moved the car out of the shed, because if it was in the shed, it would have been crashed into.

SUNDERLAND: He had a premonition about it.

EDLUND: Yes. He did. And for weeks—2 or 3 weeks at least—we had no electricity, because it took a long time for it to get restored. Uncle Fred Chapman had a portable saw rig mill that he could move to your area. It had the saw and the engine that ran it, and he moved it around town to where a large stand of trees had come down and sawed lumber, because he knew that people would have to do a lot of rebuilding. I can remember the piles of lumber—the huge piles of sawdust—and what they call slab wood which was the outside part. A lot of it had the bark on it that they sawed up for firewood afterwards. The pine was not good for firewood, but I think we used it anyway.

SUNDERLAND: My goodness. Did you have animals during that storm?

EDLUND: Yes, we did. The cow was down to Grandpa's and his barn did not go down. We didn't have horses then. But our chicken coop went down, but most of the chickens survived. And the roof came down in one piece, so we moved the roof out to a different area and built another chicken house under it and put the roof back on it again.  
[Laughs]

SUNDERLAND: Perfect.

EDLUND: And my dad rebuilt 2 tobacco sheds that had come down. He got some of that newly sawed lumber, and we had a lot of old used lumber, but it was pretty well broken—they were old tobacco sheds anyway. They were pretty well smashed up.

SUNDERLAND: So people must have spent the next decade rebuilding.

EDLUND: They did. They did.

SUNDERLAND: **1:07:02** And everything started changing from there I'm sure.

EDLUND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative].

SUNDERLAND: The war was ending.

EDLUND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative].

SUNDERLAND: Do you remember that? The war ending.

EDLUND: Yes, I do. Well, for one thing, it ended two times. Of course Europe ended first.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: And then Japan was later. And of course, many people my age or just a little older were involved in the war. And my cousin's husband was in the D-Day landing, and he was only one or two people out of his whole unit that survived. And he was shot in one leg and lost the other leg, and he had a cast on his leg, and Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] came and autographed it for him. And he was a young—very handsome young man that married my cousin. And while he was away, my cousin had a baby which was her family connection since her husband was away in the war, and her baby died of SIDS disease or whatever that is. They never really knew, but the baby died of no particular cause, and it was a terrible blow to our family to think John was away and Barbara's baby died.

But many young men were coming back, and they all had free government education when they came back as part of the GI Bill. So it was right at the time that I was getting out of high school and so it was practically impossible for a girl to get into a college and get on campus. But my Uncle Norman, who was on the school board and knew Coach Greer [Hugh Greer], who had been the winning coach over at Ellsworth School where I went to high school, he managed to get me in on the UConn Campus, and I was one of a few girls that got to go in at that time on the UConn Campus. And unfortunately, I had to do it by somebody pulling a few strings.

When I was in high school, I didn't really think I'd be going to college, and so I didn't take the right courses which made it hard for me when I did go to college. And I worked at rather young ages, especially, during the war when they were so hard up for help. I worked in tobacco when I got old enough to do that, and then I worked in G. Fox Department Store selling little kid's dresses. And then, when I was in high school, Travelers Insurance Company sent a representative out to our school to interview kids to come in and work on Saturdays and vacation weeks and summer, and I was hired to work in Travelers, and I worked there part time 5 years for Travelers underwriting department.

SUNDERLAND: And you liked it?

EDLUND: **1:10:28** No, I was not too enthused—I didn't mind doing it. It wasn't hard work, but it was boring for me to sit at a desk all day, and we had to know what form and what words were correct for each state. I was in group underwriting, and we had big companies like RCA and yet every state that they had employees working in, had to have a different contract. So my job was to go through, find the right words to go in that contract, and fill it out. And I worked with a lot of other young people my age which made it more exciting.

At that time—you can't picture it today when smoking is limited—but I was in a big room full of desks, and every desk had an ashtray on it, and every desk had somebody that

smoked so that you had like a blue haze that hung over everything, and here was an insurance company. And at that time—we talk about health insurance today—every big company had their own health department. Travelers had a whole floor in their big Main Street building that was like a hospital. It had doctors, nurses, every kind of equipment that you would want. Before you went to work, you had to go in and have a complete physical with blood work and all kinds of tests and the doctors checked you over and then once a year you went down, or if you were sick, or you had a headache at work, you went down and there was a complete health department at your disposal.

SUNDERLAND: Really.

EDLUND: And Uncle Norman, who worked for Connecticut Mutual, he was almost diabetic. His sugar was always high. So he would go down almost every day and have his sugar count taken to see how his diabetes was. It was one way I suppose for the companies to keep their employees healthy and working.

SUNDERLAND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative].

EDLUND: Something that nobody ever thinks about today. Of course, we have so much expensive sophisticated machinery—equipment today you probably couldn't do that.

SUNDERLAND: Right. That's interesting. And from the insurance company, where did you go? After—the year—were you in college when you worked there?

EDLUND: I came back and worked a year, because at that time, there were jobs available all over the place, but I hadn't really decided where I wanted to go to teach. So I was still working at Travelers. They asked me to do something which bothered me. I had been working there 5 years partly part time, but after I graduated too, and they wanted me to go back to the UConn Campus—they would pay for me to go out and spend a week out there in like a hotel room and go every day to the campus and recruit more workers to come to Travelers. And I was to make it like a contemporary person—I was the same age more or less that they were—try to get them to come to work for Travelers. And I was to offer them this good salary package which I found out was more than I was making after 5 years working there.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: **1:14:17** And I didn't think they were dissatisfied with my work, and they had given me a small raise every year, but I said, "Well, I'm not going out and get people to do the same job I am and offer them more money than I'm making." "Well, you'll be going. We'll pay your expenses. It'll be fun." And I said, "Well, I'm not gonna do it



unless you raise my pay to the same." And they wouldn't, so I went to summer school down in New Britain for one year with a friend of mine, May, who drove like mad, and never hung onto the steering wheel. She just draped her wrist over the top of the steering wheel and steered that way. It was a little scary getting down there and back, but we got a elementary school temporary permit to teach.

Before that, I had to have—my major was sociology and high school education, but I had done my practice teaching in high school, and I found for a young teacher it was rather difficult, and I wasn't too enthused about doing that, but I loved teaching elementary, and I could've gone into almost any town in the state. They were all hiring. "Please come, please come." But I went to Groton because they paid a little more. They had many military families down there, and they got a government stipend to add to the salaries. So little did I know, I would have 37 first graders in a bare room without a book or a puzzle or anything for them to do.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: And it was quite a job doing it because with 37 children, some of them got neglected.

SUNDERLAND: Yeah.

EDLUND: They were all good children, but I knew that I couldn't spend the time that I needed to bring some of the younger ones that needed a lot of extra attention along. I kept a couple of them back. I even used to keep them after school a few minutes so I'd have a little extra time to work with them. They walked home and I would try to keep them a little longer.

SUNDERLAND: Did you find the parents back then coming in to help?

EDLUND: No.

SUNDERLAND: No.

EDLUND: No parents came to help.

SUNDERLAND: No.

EDLUND: **1:16:57** And I used to get invited out for lunch to some of the houses since the children walked home. Those children in first grade had to walk to school if they were in a mile and three-tenths of the school, and this was near the shore. We didn't have snow too much. We had a lot of rain and sleet—freezing rain—so they would come in in the morning soaking wet. The shoes would be wet, the clothes, the mittens, the hats. We'd

get them off and arrange them around the radiators in the room. Then they all went home for lunch, so we had to get them out, bundle them up again, send them out, they'd come back soaked again, take the things off and put them around the radiator.

SUNDERLAND: What time period was this?

EDLUND: This would have been in the early 1950s. Late 19—yeah, I graduated in '51, so it would have been '53, '54.

SUNDERLAND: So were there school buses then? But just not—

EDLUND: Well, there were, but not in this town. Or if you walked—lived within a mile and three-tenths. Some of the kids did take buses to further places, but most of them walked. There were sidewalks in that area.

When I went to school, after we walked to Pleasant Valley, they did have school buses. There were 3 bus companies all within sight of each other in town. There was Harry Frank and Harold Collins and Stubby Collins, and they all had like one or two buses. So they had a bus for us to ride to Wapping School where I went for 4 years. My driver was Herb Rose, who would get off the bus when he came to our street. I don't think they had the law that you had to stop your car if you were traveling and met a school bus—a stopped bus. So he would get off the bus and hold us by hand—my sister and I—and cross the street with us—walk across—and after we were safely across, he would go back and get on the bus, and no child ever drove the bus away while he was doing that. [Both laugh]

When I worked in Hartford, we used to take the Stafford Spring's bus back and forth which started in Monson, Massachusetts and came down through Stafford and Ellington and South Windsor. You never were quite sure what time it was gonna get here. It ran 2 times in and 2 times out during the day and for people that went to work, people that shopped and came home again. And it was so crowded with people, that they would pack people in the aisle—you would be squished up among other people standing next to you, and when somebody needed to get off, a whole line of people would have to get off and stand by the roadside and wait until that person got off and then get back on. On and off, on and off until you got to your stop.

SUNDERLAND: This was when you were in high school. Late 40s, I guess.

EDLUND: **1:20:24** Yes. During the war—you know—I don't suppose they made more buses for civilians. You couldn't buy a new car, so it was a way of getting back and forth. Oh, I remember going in on Saturdays to work in Hartford, and Hartford would be so windy and cold. The tall buildings made the wind whip around, and it was always kind of dusty and the dirt would actually sting your face.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my.

EDLUND: And the bus went in at 7:30 in the morning and got us in there around 8-o'clock, but my building didn't open until 9 or 9:30.

SUNDERLAND: Oh.

EDLUND: So I had time to kill, but everything was locked up in Hartford, so you'd sort of wander around, find a warm spot that you could stand, because we didn't have cars very much.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: When we shopped, we mostly took the bus into Hartford, but some days, my dad would bring us in and pick us up in Hartford. Later when I had a car and could drive to Hartford, it cost a lot to park in the parking lots, but you could go down a block or two and park on the dike for nothing. The dirt dike was accessible then and you could go down and park your car there.

SUNDERLAND: Where was the dike?

EDLUND: Well, the dike was between the city of Hartford and the Connecticut River. It's still there but it's hidden by the highways now. But then Market Street, Front Street ran right down, and there was this big dirt place and you could park your car there. Because if you parked in one of the parking lots where you paid, it would get—your car would be way in the middle, and when you came to get your car, you would have to wait while they moved this car and that car to get your car out. Where if you parked on the dike, it was immediately accessible.

SUNDERLAND: [Laughs] That's great.

EDLUND: The other fun thing we used to when we were working in the Travelers was the Wadsworth Atheneum was right there and there was no charge to go in. And in the summertime, it was always nice and cool in there with the marble stairs, and quite often, we would go over and spend a half an hour or so in the Wadsworth. There was always something more to see because it was such a big interesting place.

SUNDERLAND: Yes. It was not air conditioned where you worked.

EDLUND: **1:23:08** No it wasn't. No. Because I know when we worked in the tower,

it was way up. But if you opened the windows, we would get a wonderful breeze through, but we all had papers on our desks, and if you didn't have paper weights on them, they would go flying. Sometime they would even go flying out the window. [Both laugh]

SUNDERLAND: That's quite a vision.

EDLUND: Important papers flying out.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness. Now you—when you were growing up, you didn't come down to Main Street very much.

EDLUND: No.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: No, we didn't. I mean Bossen's Store was on Main Street, but we didn't shop at Bossen's. And we went to the Sadd Library which was up in Wapping Center.

SUNDERLAND: Right.

EDLUND: But when I was older and went to high school, I enjoyed my ride on the school bus up and down Main Street, because it had such pretty places.

SUNDERLAND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative].

EDLUND: And when I went to Ellsworth High School, Ellsworth was built out of the old seminary [Hartford Theological Seminary], and when they knocked down the boarding house that went with the seminary—they salvaged the bricks and made the 2 ells on either side of the pillared part in the front. And it was quite a new school when I went there, and it was a school with a very good reputation, and we had winning basketball teams, because we had Coach Hugh Greer and many years we had winning—state winning teams for our size school. And we went to as many basketball games as we could, because we didn't have a football team and it was school spirit. But we had to take buses at night and go take a bus to Hartford, take a bus to Suffield, wait for the Suffield bus to go back.

SUNDERLAND: **1:25:16** Did you play basketball? Did they have women's basketball?

EDLUND: They did, but I didn't play.

SUNDERLAND: You didn't play. Okay. So you went to the games.

EDLUND: Yes. We went to the boy's prize winning—trophy winning team games in different towns around. When my friend, Kathy, got her license when she was 16, she used to take us to some of the games in her car. And I remember some—getting stuck on the side of the road—she didn't know how to drive. We had so many kids in the car. We would have to get some of the kids out of the car, because when the policemen came, we didn't want them to see how many we had. And then the policemen would say follow me, and we'll help you get out of here, and we would have to leave some of the kids behind, get out, turn around, come back, pick them up. [Both laugh] I'm sure our mothers didn't know all that was going on. And many a cold night we walked from the bus on Main Street or Route 5 over the back roads to get home. My father had to get up very early to go to work at the war plant, and we did not expect him to stay up until 11-, 12-o'clock at night to get us home. [Laughs]

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness. That's very late—a very dark roads to be traveling at night.

EDLUND: Uh-hunh [Affirmative]. But we didn't worry as much. I suppose there was dangerous people around, but they weren't much publicized. And when I worked in tobacco with Mr. Jensen, he would take his truck in in the morning, and drive around Hartford and pick up homeless people that slept on sidewalks and in doorways in Hartford. Because during the war there was just not enough help to put in crops certain times of the year when you need a lot of people. And he would bring them out and we worked with them all day long, they seemed nice, harmless people. They didn't work too hard, but as soon as—at the end of the week came and the pay slips came out—had your money in a little envelope—we would get ours and hope we had a rainy day so we could go to Hartford and spend it. But the people that he would pick up in Hartford would usually never come back. They would have money enough to buy enough liquor so that they didn't have to work for a few days.

SUNDERLAND: Oh my goodness.

EDLUND: Sometimes they stayed. He had a hired man's house, and his wife, Eva, who wore little crocheted tops that were a little peek-a-boo for our tastes, but anyway, Eva had to cook their meals, and they lived in the hired man's house during the week. And some of them stayed longer, because many of our fields here were originally quite wet in the woods where blueberry bushes that grew in the bogs, but all the fields were ditched. They had deep ditches along the edge to drain them, so that the tobacco wouldn't be standing in standing water when it rained. And they also had tiles underneath the ground in the tobacco fields that drained down to the brook so that the land was drained and not soggy. I guess it wasn't good for tobacco to be soggy.

SUNDERLAND: **1:28:59** Right.

**Sally M. Edlund**  
**April 18, 2011**  
**Page 28**

EDLUND: But anyways, some of the hired men would stay, and when they weren't working on tobacco, they would be doing other odd jobs; fixing the fences around the cow and horse area. I remember Mr. Jensen had big horses—Clydesdales—that pulled the rig and his farm equipment. And the men would work on keeping the ditches open.

SUNDERLAND: And this was here in the Ellington Road, Pleasant Valley Road area.

EDLUND: Yes.

SUNDERLAND: And Governors Highway area. To think that was all open farmland at one time with just a few houses.

EDLUND: Yes. Well, everybody had a woodlot. You had to have a woodlot, because we all burned wood in the wintertime.

**[audio ends 1:30:08]**

Index

**1**  
1936 Flood, 5, 13  
1938 Hurricane and flood, 19, 20

**A**  
Attack on Pearl Harbor, 18  
Ayers Road, 17

**B**  
Basketball, 26  
Beldon Road, 1  
Bossen, Peter, 13  
Bossen's Store, 13, 26  
Burnham, Frances, 6  
Burnham, Ruth, 7  
Burnham's Station, 7

**C**  
Canning and preserving food, 3  
Cars, 4, 9, 10  
Chapman, Fred, 20  
Cheney Mills, 2  
Collins, Harold, 24  
Collins, Stubby, 24  
Colt Firearms, 16  
Connecticut Mutual, 22  
Connecticut River, 13, 25  
Connecticut River dike, 25  
Cooley family, 2

**D**  
D-Day, World War II, 21  
Dodge ball, 6  
Doodle Bug tractor, 10, 11

**E**  
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 21  
Elementary school, 4  
Ellington Road, 4, 5, 7, 11, 28  
Ellsworth Memorial High School, 21, 26

**F**  
Farming, 1  
Ford Model-T, 9  
Frank, Harry, 24  
Fuller, Mr., 2

**G**  
G. Fox Department Store, 21  
GI Bill, 21  
Graham Road, 17  
Great Depression, 1, 7, 8, 16  
Greer, Hugh, 21, 26  
Grisel, Stuart, 6  
Grocery shopping, 3, 13, 17

**H**  
Hartford, CT, 3, 24, 25, 26, 27  
Haying, 15, 16  
Health departments at large corporations, 22

**J**  
Jensen, Mr., 27, 28

**K**  
King of the Mountain, 6  
Krawski, Johnny, 6

**L**  
Lipgen, Mr., 19  
Lithuanian-American families, 7

**M**  
Manchester, Beatrice, 6  
Marshall, Evelyn, 1  
Marshall, Floyd, 1  
Marshall, Jane, 1  
Masonic Hall, 13  
McKinney, Wayne, 2  
Moulton, Albert "Pete", 2, 8, 11  
Moulton, Cecil, 2  
Moulton, George, 1, 2, 15, 20  
Moulton, Turner, 2

**Sally M. Edlund**  
**April 18, 2011**  
**Page 30**

Mumps, 18

**N**

Newberry, Mr., 10

**P**

Pastula, Frances, 6  
Patritis's Store, 13  
Pleasant Valley District 5 Schoolhouse, 4, 5, 6, 7  
Pleasant Valley Road, 3, 7, 28  
Podunk Mill, 2, 8, 9  
Podunk River, 11  
Podunk River Bridge, 5  
Pratt & Whitney, 16  
Provincetown, Cape Cod, MA, 19

**R**

Raising chickens, 1, 8, 11, 14, 20  
Raising cows, 1, 8, 14  
Red Rover, Red Rover, 6  
Reynolds, Norman, 18, 21, 22  
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 16  
Rose, Herb, 24  
Rose, Sonny, 18  
Rye Street, 2, 9

**S**

Sadd Library, 13, 26

Selling timber, 9  
SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, 21  
Snow's Store, 13  
Sullivan Avenue, 13  
Sunday school, 2

**T**

Teaching first grade, 23  
Tobacco farming, 2, 8, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28  
Travelers Insurance Company, 21, 22, 25  
Tuttle, Charles, 1

**U**

Union District School, 13  
University of Connecticut, 21, 22

**V**

Victory Gardens, 18

**W**

Wadsworth Atheneum, 25  
Wapping School, 24  
War Bonds, 17  
Water well, 12, 13  
Works Progress Administration, 16  
World War II, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 27