

Melissa and John Adsit
Narrators

Mike Gridley of the Baldwinsville Messenger
Interviewer

Interviewed on
May 25, 1994
Baldwinsville Public Library
Baldwinsville, NY
MG: Mike Gridley

M: Melissa Adsit
J: John Adsit
MG: Mike Gridley

MG: Okay, you're...?

M: Melissa Adsit.

MG: Okay and why don't you just tell me what you remember?

M: My experiences, we had five, oh no, we just, at the time, we just had at the time Nineteen-forty-four, two children... and all I can remember is how hard it was to get sugar, to get milk, to get coffee, well, everything and we had to have the ration stamps and uh, and it was really something, but it ...but one thing, one thing about it, it was a, ah, sad time and a nice time. So, I don't know what else, we weren't spotters. We weren't...John worked at Englebert Heller in Syracuse and it was really tough to get gas, but everybody traded ration stamps and that's about all, I can remember how hard it was when the two babies were still...

MG: Your children were very small, at the time?

M: Yes, one was two and one was one and then we had three others after that, but, life was...we had a lot to be thankful for.

MG: Now do you remember the blackouts and?

M: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

MG: What did you do when the sirens blew?

M: Well, the siren blew and the lights went out or we turned all the lights off, and it was really kind of a tricky situation. But, on D-Day it was just wonderful, everyone was so happy and so glad the fellows were home. We had two or, we had two people who lost their sons. I had three brothers in the service... I...I. really, I don't know what Eleanor told everything was great.

MG: What was it like with the rationing, what's an example of a typical week's worth of stuff that you had?

M: Well, we would get a phone call from a couple of friends that they just got coffee and down at the A and P. Well, we would head right down to the A and P and we would trade ration stamps down there for something like, evaporated milk to use for the babies formula. It was really, really hard and someone would, I'd trade coffee stamps for the milk and as for meat we'd head right over to Bill Murray's and we'd see people over there that would give us the ration stamps to trade, it's all we did was trade them back and forth, you know?

MG: A little bartering?

M: Oh, It was, it was something, anyway. So, now ask me another question?

MG: Okay, on actual, what do you remember about the actual D-Day, any memories about that specific day, June Sixth?

M: Oh, I do remember that the year when that happened, we had, oh, we have a big porch and it seemed all the neighbors were so happy to be, but, but what got me there were, neighbors there that their sons were in the service that they weren't home yet, but we had so many things to be, to celebrate about with still with the rationing and so on. But, I remember one of our very best friends was, I called them the watch tower, that these towers that they had and you know, and really I always think he was a farmer and boy every single night I don't know how he worked on the farm and still every night at twelve o'clock he had to be up there on Thirty-one. We weren't in on that one but...

MG: Is that the same tower that Eleanor was talking about out on?

M: No, Eleanor's from Van Buren and we're here from Lysander and this one was up on Thirty-one, my husband says he just saw the stand there yesterday, as we went by, right across from the Brewery.

MG: Oh, okay, so there's still a remnant of...?

M: Yes, as you're going out Thirty-one toward Gradison, it's up on the right. Then they said there was one up on Cyril Hill Road, which we never saw that one, and I think Eleanor was talking about that one, John?

J: I don't know.

M: I don't either, but that's that's about all we can remember, we...we had sad memories and nice memories then.

MG: Uh-huh, John, you were working at that time?

J: Yes, I started at Nestlé's Chocolate in Nineteen-thirty-four and I moved to Engelbert Holler in Nineteen-forty-four because I was always working to my high skill and in Englebert Holler we made a lot of tools for the war effort. Tools and, uh, bomber hangers for the big tanks and they refilled these tanks and they went over and then when they were empty they released them, ditched them, and I got quite a lot of experience in making tools.

MG: Now we're they really geared up for that operation, for the war effort as far as...?

J: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

MG: What kind of shifts were you working then?

J: I worked days. I worked seven to three, I think, or was it eight to four.

M: Eight to four.

J: Eight to four, I guess, yes and some overtime, do overtime.

MG: Now where was that plant located?

J: On West Fayette Street.

M: In Syracuse?

J: Englebert Holler, we made rice and coffee machinery, and I designed rice mills for all over the world. I got a rice mill in Burma and I was responsible for every nut, bolt, screw, pulley, belt, machine, and everything else for the whole mill. And I went in at four o'clock in the morning and loaded it out on a boxcar and the box car went right direct to the one on the ship and over to Burma.

MG: Uh-huh, Now as far as the war related things that they were making, were they doing that at the same time as they were making their other stuff or were they focused on the...

M: the rice and coffee...

J: I think it was mostly the war effort.

MG: Yes, during this time, fifty years ago,

J: Not much production on the ...that's all closed down now, closed up and gone.

MG: Uh-huh, do you remember anything specifically about the actual D-Day, where you were then?

J: Not particularly. I guess we were on the front porch [laughter].

M: Maybe, you didn't go in.

MG: Were people, do you remember what people were talking about then the kind of conversations that you would have?

J: I don't remember particularly but...

M: I don't either, darn it all, there's so many things that I wish, that's when I wish I kept a diary that I started a diary in Sixty-seven.

MG: So, did it seem to you that people were anxious about the invasion and what might happen?

M: I don't...I wish I could remember more, but I can't. I remember all the sirens and the church bells going off and it's all I can remember. I wish I could remember more, the kids will ask me those things too. Well, I think that's all I know, we know.

MG: And you already said your two small children were...

M: Yes, they were babies, yes.

MG: At that time, okay.

J: I just avoided the draft because I was just old enough and working and as I say moved to this Engelbert Holler to advance the war effort so....I had a brother that was in the service. He was an airplane mechanic.

MG: Uh-huh and where was he?

J: He was in St. Louis.

M: Too bad that they didn't come today, he could have said everything...didn't think about that, that's it.

MG: Okay.

End of interview.