

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Kelli Ekland

Elizabeth "Bette" Ekland, 72, Grandma

Sound Recording

When talking with my grandma about sound recordings the first thing she told me was about the record player or "stereo" that her family had growing up as a kid. She told me that the stereo she had **was a piece of furniture**. I found this very interesting because look at how portable our stereos are these days. It seems as though you are able to bring a stereo with you anywhere you go. She remembers being able to buy records at some "dime stores," and mainly at stores that sold instruments, and other music memorabilia. My grandma then went on to say that she remembers them being **only 99 cents or one dollar**. I found this very interesting because just the other day in class we discussed how much CD's are and were each dollar goes, and she made a valid point in saying that they were a lot cheaper back in the day because artists did not make as much, and she feels that music was more of an art back then, not just something that everyone can do, like today.

Radio

We then moved on to discuss the radio and her experiences with that. My grandma explained to me, that she basically grew up on the radio. Her main shows that she could remember listening to were "Shadow," and "I Love A Mystery." She said that when you listened to these **shows they would do the voices, and everything, and it was neat because you had to use your imagination**. My grandma also said her and her brothers, and sisters would listen to this show, and they would all race for the stairs when it was over, and the last one had to turn off the lights. I thought this was cool because that is what I do with my brothers now, but with the television, and I thought it was unique how they had to use their imagination, and not have to see a picture. She described her radio, as the "big round ones you see on old movies," and it sat on a table. The neatest thing I thought she told me about the radio was that they would listen to all the football games, and baseball games on the radio. She said they always listened to the Notre Dame Football games with her family, and when the World Series was on during school, they would get to listen to it at school in the classroom.

TV

When TV's first came out my grandma only remembers ABC, and NBC, and there was no cable, and your TV either had "rabbit ears" on them or on the roof, and sometimes the reception was terrible so that the show you were watching was slightly fuzzy. The first show she remembers watching on TV was the Ed Sullivan show, and she was in nursing school at the time, and her and her nursing girlfriends would go into the main lounge in the hospital during break, and watch TV. **The first year my grandma was married, her and my grandpa could not afford a TV. Then in 1956 they bought a 19 inch used TV for \$100.** Wow! That's crazy, when I looked up some prices on the internet of a 19 inch TV; they start at close to \$700. The main thing my grandma remembers about the quiz show scandals was that she believes that they were "coaching," the people on the show to help them win the tough questions, and they wanted the program to be popular. When talking about the commercials she said that **they played**

music to make things popular, and when Ronald Reagan was a movie star at the time he sponsored General Electric. This was interesting because in class the other day we just saw a video about how commercials are using artist's songs to make products popular, such as Pepsi with Britney Spears. I guess they had the same mind frame back then, bringing the public in with popular tunes. My grandma then went on to say how she enjoyed the shows on TV more back then, feeling that they are more appropriate for families, and people of all ages to watch. She remembers **in shows if they showed two people in a room, or a bed together, the one person could be laying down, but the other person's feet had to be touching the ground at all times.** Wow! Now look at what they show on TV, everything, and I mean everything. She feels that **"sex" should not be a dirty word, and TV has done that to people.**

Movies

The thing my grandma got so excited about to tell me, and she said "will blow my mind," was when she was in nursing school in Chicago, you could go **see a show, and in between the show they had a "stage show," you could see all of this for 50 cents.** This is when she got to meet Nat King Cole, and Jerry Lewis, who are some of her favorite entertainers. She said that she did not see the movie Gone With The Wind the first time around, but she remembers it being a slightly big deal because they said "don't give a damn," in the movie, and cursing in movies really hadn't been around. She also remembers that there were no actual rating systems, but the Catholic Paper would rate them "B" or "C," and the reason they got a **"bad rating," was because they could have got divorced in the movie.** Look at our movies now, even the Disney movies for children have sexual innuendos in them, much the less every child in America thinks divorce is common, and not a "bad rating." The last thing she talked about was how it wasn't an every weekend deal to see a movie such as it is today, her and my grandpa in the seven and a half years they lived in California only saw one show, although she did go on to laugh and say that can happen when you have five children under the age of eight. I enjoyed this assignment because it gave me a chance to talk to my grandma, and she also enjoyed telling me about her life. It gave me a whole new perspective on our world today.