

Floyd ML AMERICA 250 1 Transcript

Biographical Sketch: Mary Lucy Campbell married Bill Floyd in 1939, moved to Enterprise from Dothan, then to Salinas, KS, and back to Dothan where she lived with her parents for the duration. She worked at Blumberg's and Son department store. She and her husband were both active in community life. In 1967, Dothan's Business and Professional Women's Clubs elected her Woman of the Year (Bill had been Man of the Year in 1966). In the 1970s, she was a founding member of the Dothan Landmark Foundation, Inc. board of directors. She passed away in 2011.

00:00:00 Marty Olliff

Mary Lucy Campbell, a longtime resident of Dothan, married William Jefferson Bill Floyd in 1939. The couple lived in Enterprise before Bill was drafted in 1943. After a short stint in Salinas, Kansas, while Bill was stationed nearby, Mary Lucy returned to her parents' home in Dothan, living there until Bill was discharged in 1946.

Mrs. Floyd offers a compelling account of life in Dothan during World War II. She describes working for Bloomberg's department store, how Dothan closed at noon on Thursdays, and how her family knew about wartime developments.

Mrs. Floyd was elected by Dothan's Business and Professional Women's Clubs as the city's Woman of the Year for 1967. She passed away in 2011.

This interview was conducted by Marty Oliff in 2003.

In this first clip, Mrs. Floyd opens by introducing her life between her marriage to Bill Floyd in 1939 and his being drafted in 1943.

00:01:09 Mary Lucy Floyd

Bill, my husband and I were married in 1939. I had just finished high school and we moved almost immediately to Enterprise, Alabama, where we lived for three years, and it was from Enterprise that he was drafted into the Army in World War II.

I came back to Dothan to stay with my parents. We had no children at the time, and he left, and I stayed with them the entire time that he served, which was a little over three years.

00:01:40 Marty Olliff

Much of what we captured in this interview was Mrs. Floyd's wartime employment at Bloomberg and Son Department Store in downtown Dothan, Alabama. Her description of her work provides a view into home front life in World War II.

00:01:56 Mary Lucy Floyd

While my husband was away, I worked at a department store in Dothan called Bloomberg's and Son. They had a store across the street called the New York Store, and I worked there one day, the first Saturday, as a salesperson. I was so proud. I remember distinctly that I sold more than anybody else in the store that Saturday. So I thought that's what I would be doing.

But the next week when I went back to work, I was put as a cashier on the second floor. I did that for maybe three months. And then Mr. Herman Bloomberg, who was in charge of the office, asked me if I would like to be the accounts receivable clerk. I wasn't sure exactly what that was because I had no experience, but I did go to work there and worked there the rest of the war.

When my husband came home from the war, he didn't want me to work anymore. I really had had a taste then of working out[side the home]. It was my first experience of having my own money, and I really wanted to continue, but he said no. And anyway then, I did become pregnant right away. My first son was born just a year later, so I would have had to stop in a little while anyway.

When I worked there, I walked to work and I walked home and there was never any fear. I never gave it a thought about having anything happen to you.

We went to work about eight o'clock in the morning and do whatever your chores were in the office. And then at 10 o'clock, we always had a break. We had an hour for lunch. And then I left about five in the afternoon.

Then on Thursday afternoons, the store was all closed for everybody not to work. Now, I would go and visit my in-laws on my time off. They lived across town, you might say. I remember that they had big pecan trees in the backyard, and I remember with my father-in-law that we would go out and pick up pecans during the fall season. I just visited every time I was off with them and did any little thing that needed to be done, we'll say.

And basically, just had a very quiet existence.

00:03:55 Marty Olliff

Mrs. Floyd provides other views of home front life as she recounts the single telephone call she received from her husband while he was overseas, and how Dothanites knew the D-Day invasion had occurred.

00:04:08 Mary Lucy Floyd

One of the little experiences I had during the war, too, was that my husband was allowed to call me once from overseas. That was a really big event.

My great aunt was visiting us overnight at that time, and I remember when my husband called, she just couldn't believe that you could hear across the waters. And she said, "could I listen for just a minute?" She got to listen and was thrilled. I remember everybody got to listen for just one minute and hear him say hello.

But that was the only time that I talked to him.

I remember the bonds that were sold. They sold dollar chances on a \$500 war bond, they called it, and I remember my father bought a chance and he won the \$500 war bond -- \$500 was a big amount.

The one thing I do remember when D-Day came in Dothan, 00 in the morning. I'm not really sure, but it was in the middle of the night. I remember that.

The siren sounded and woke us up. And because it was sustained, went on and on and on, we knew that that's what meant. We had heard that when it started, that we would hear that. So we did. And I remember my father walked outside with me on our front porch, and there was a lattice work across the front of the porch. And I remember that he leaned his arm up against the pillow to which the lattice was attached, and that we talked about D-Day had begun.

And it was a frightful time as we waited and listened, and that we didn't hear anything except what we'd hear by radio. Most of our news came from the newsreels in the movie theaters. We had the newspaper and the radio, but when you went, you really saw the war.

I don't remember the *Dothan Eagle* publishing many pictures of bad things like that. It was not that graphic. They didn't have that much access to it. And Dothan being a small town, I'm sure in cities it was different.

We didn't know that much about the war.