

**HELEN YOUNG (PEACE PILGRIM'S SISTER)
INTERVIEW 1993**

Conducted by Claire Townsend as part of the Spirit of Peace documentary. Recorded approximately 1993.

Interview by Claire Townsend
Filmed by David Mueller

Claire: Now starting from the beginning again, you lived in a very big family. How many were there?

Helene: There were nine, six adults and three children... my mother and father and my father's three maiden auntie's and bachelor uncle... and uh, then my sister Peace Pilgrim, my brother Al.

Claire: Now, now whose siblings were the auntie's and the uncle?

Helene: My father's sisters and brother.

Claire: And how come they all lived with you?

Helene: Well, they uh...sort of... felt they were needed in our household. And uh, they also, I think the... to uh, to them the satisfaction of mothering the children because they didn't have any of their own. And so they sort of took over the situation and they became our mothers. We had... we always felt we had four mothers, our birth mother and three adopted mothers.

Claire: So, was... that must have been kind of neat.

Helene: Well it was for us. We had a very easy time of it when we were children. I mean, actually I always felt we had more advantages than people with a lot of wealth. And we didn't have that. But we had all of the love and attention that many in more favorable circumstances financially do not have. I mean uh, we uh... were never farmed out to uh, strangers. We always had someone at home to care for us.

Claire: Now what was the home situation there in the beginning? Were you in the city?

Helene: No we were in the country. We had a poultry farm. And of course we also raised all our own vegetables. And uh, we lived on the outskirts of the town of about 4,000 population and uh,... we lived in a wooded area so we were really very much in the country. We didn't have close... very close neighbors.

Claire: And this was outside which city?

Helene: Egg Harbor City... Egg Harbor City which was and where my ancestors settled. And my great grandfather was one of the founders in the first year. And my grandfather on my father's side was the... a teacher in the school in the area. So we had moved there.

Claire: And this man who was a schoolmaster, he was whose father?

Helene: My father's father was the schoolmaster. My father was born in school because uh... this was actually in (*) township outside of Egg Harbor City. He did teach in Egg Harbor Schools but at the time when my father was born he was the schoolmaster in (*) County School right outside of the town. And it was customary then for the schoolmaster to live in the schoolhouse on the premises. So of course all of his children started school at an early age, sort of like nursery school. They sat in with the other children. Incidentally my husband's mother was one of the students.

Claire: And what about the maiden auntie's? Is that how come they were so well educated?

Helene: That's right, they started their school at an early age. And they were raised in the school. So they were surrounded by it.

Claire: Now tell me a little bit about your father. What kind of man was he?

Helene: My father was a man of few words but when he spoke everybody listened because they knew he had something to say. He was not given to idle gossip or...uh...you know he stuck to really important things. And he was well liked in the town where he lived and in fact he was getting ready to run for public office when he met his untimely death.

Claire: Was he, did he have a good reputation in town?

Helene: Oh yes, his reputation was so good that when we were kids if we wanted to go to a store and buy something on credit, there was no problem because they knew it would be taken care of. Although we were not people of wealth. My father had the responsibility of the whole... for that family of nine. And uh... of course he wasn't in business but uh... I mean he had the poultry business, but aside from that it was more or less a scratch and go, you know, situation . (*)

Claire: Now your father earned the money that came into the house?

Helene: Right

Claire: But a lot of the work was taken care of at home. Tell me about that?

Helene: Yes, I mean in those times uh, ...you, you raised your own vegetables. We had our own poultry, uh... chickens to supply us with meat and uh, you bought only what you actually couldn't produce yourself. And uh... the auntie's, uh two of them, uh... were dressmakers, professional dressmakers. They used to go up regularly to Philadelphia and they had people there that they did dress making for. Uh... so uh, all of our clothing was made at home and all the food was preserved at home, everything that we had. So uh, actually it was more or less, uh, uh a way of life that having today doesn't exist for most people now. Uh, so folks don't have the time. The time I guess maybe is more valuable. In those times we had time more to stay at home.

Claire: Who did the cooking?

Helene: My mother basically did the cooking. My mother was a strong person physically. And uh, she did really, she would do the laundry which was all done by hand. We had no washing machines. She did the laundry and the cooking. But everybody had their job to do. And the auntie's would always have their chores and on laundry day, one would do the hanging out. Of course there were no dryers. It was all done on the line, so one would be hanging out and another would have something else to do and uh, with the cooking we always had dressings or some sort of finishing they called it, the finishing to do. The auntie's would help with that and serve the meal and so forth. They would always come in. My mother just did the baking. And then my mother would wash the dishes. So....

Helene: Yes, the oldest and the youngest. They.....

Claire: What were their names?

Helene: Uh, Birdie, we called them Birdie. Bertha and Katherine but we called them Birdie and Rena. Aunt Birdie and Aunt Rena always dressed alike when they were younger and did things together because Aunt Lissette, the middle one we called Aunt Setta, she was the odd one. She was the more intellectual one, uh.... she was more serious. She was an avid reader and uh, uh more or less philosophical. The others were uh, more into uh, taking care of the home and the children and so forth. But they each had their function and they coordinated very well. And we had so many people wonder why so many adults, women particularly, four women in the kitchen for instance. I mean they couldn't understand how that could be. But we didn't have any problems. They got along fine. My mother was very easy going and so she didn't object to anything that they would want to do. So uh, we didn't have any problems.

Claire: Did each Aunt take primary responsibility for one of the children?

Helene: Well, uh, Aunt Birdie uh took care of Alfred. She had the boy. Aunt Rena had both of us girls. She had Mildred, Peace Pilgrim, and then when I came along she had me too. We were, I just sort of felt she was my mother of the three aunts. Because we always slept with her and uh,... you know she just took care of our everyday needs. Of course the others took a part. I mean they would uh, pay for our music lessons for instance. And they would... Aunt Birdie did a lot of the sewing for us. They all did their part but basically Aunt Rena was Peace Pilgrim and my mother of the three.

Claire: And what would dinnertime be like at home?

Helene: Well at dinnertime of course we all sat around the dining room table. And my father was always the first to be served because he always had to go to a business meetings or had some social function to attend. And he was a very fast eater. So he would be finished eating practically when we just about got started. So he was the first to be finished. And my mother was the last from the table because she ate very slowly. And she said she never had any problems with her digestion because she always ate very slowly. But it was a lively time because there was a lot of discussions. And after dinner we always had a reading session. Aunt Birdie was the reader. She would read us... her favorite author was Dickens, Charles Dickens. We have all his books. And she would read from one or the other of his books and then she would read us something current

from the newspaper stories. And of course after that we all gathered around the piano. Peace Pilgrim would lead us. And my father and I would do the singing. And Al would play the violin. There was no radio, no television.

Claire: Now what would Aunt Setta be doing all this time? How did she participate?

Helene: Well, she was uh, uh... she would sit around with the group you know and have discussions. But she was mostly to herself as I said she was a great reader. And she would spend a lot of time reading. She wanted more time for herself because even when she worked out for someone else, she wouldn't work for anyone who wouldn't give her time for herself and for her reading.

Claire: Who was in charge of the garden?

Helene: The vegetable garden. Aunt Lissette was mostly uh... the one who uh... took care of the garden and she also took care of the pigeons. Now Aunt Birdie took care of the flower garden and the chickens. And Aunt Rena took care of the house cleaning.

Claire: Well what did you kids do?

Helene: Whatever we wanted to do. I mean there really wasn't that much required of us. And uh... the only thing that was required was when they had an order for squab. They had to have the feathers removed and Al had to be the executioner. And Mildred and I were the squabbers. We would argue about which ones because some had more pin feathers than others. But we were paid two cents a piece and that is how we got pin money picking pin feathers.

Claire: Now who did Mildred take after the most?

Helene: Well intellectually I think Aunt Lissette because uh... she had a very good mind. And as far as I... the rest... my father's family were more intellectual. And my mother's family were physically fit. And she got her stamina and her physical condition more from my mother's side. And uh, intellectually she was influenced more from my father's side because of course there were more of them there too. Naturally they would have the greater influence. And my mother's family we only saw on the (*).

Claire: Do you think uh, I was just thinking this the other day, do you think maybe Peace Pilgrim heard about Scott marrying first from...

Helene: Aunt Lissette

Claire: Tell me about that?

Helene: Aunt Setta, well she had these books and all these books were in our library and uh... so she uh, no doubt... got uh... read the books there in our library. And then later on she... part of this came from these publications... from Philadelphia.

Claire: Tell me about the library you had at home. What kind of books did you have?

Helene: Well, Aunt Lissette subscribed to uh... there was a publishing house, I believe in St. Louis (*). And they put out these little booklets, called blue books, little blue books. And they were on a vast variety of subjects. We as children could look at these publications. And she would send off an order of whatever she had an interest in. So we had a variety of information from those. And uh, we had uh...books of course by uh... we had some of course that were in German but tha uh...from my grandfather. But they uh,... had uh books that they bought evidently. I mean because we had quite a few. And my Aunt Birdie wanted Dicken's books so Dicken's books were on our shelves.

Claire: Was anybody in charge of the library?

Helene: No, just uh...uh... it just accumulated in the space you know. Uh, it wasn't really that extensive but uh...those little blue books don't take up a lot of room you know. They were small. But I can remember my interest in bird watching stimulated by a book we had...uh "What Bird is That" by Chapman. And that was my introduction to bird watching.

Claire: How would Scott Nearing's books had gotten there?

Helene: Well, it was Aunt Sita's really. Uh evidently this uh...the books were in the library. They got there because whoever had a book put it there. You know I really don't know who bought the book. I do know that my father, he liked the western novels. I mean because he you know, he was, he had a lot of responsibility in the business and so forth and he needed something to relax. And he didn't want it to be too deep. So uh, every year for his birthday my mother got him a different novel, a western novel you know. And of course they had Upton Sinclair and Sinclair Lewis. We had all of those books.

Claire: Would you say that there was a lot of, um, social history kind of books? Philosophy, sociology?

Helene: Well no, not really. Uh I don't think so... that we had a lot of books along those lines. I mean we have many in our library now which were, which we accumulated. My husband went through college and so forth.

Claire: Well, did Aunt Setta have a particular interest or just wide interest? Helene: She had wide interest. She would go around. And she was very accepting of the modern trends too you know. I mean... although she was very serious an all, still she or course no doubt she was well read. She was more accepting of those trends.

Claire: Did you have any kind of religious upbringing?

Helene: No, we had no religious upbringing generally. But, I feel that our upbringing was equivalent to it because we uh, uh... were taught the ten commandments. And we were taught to live them. It was uh... we felt that to be accepted by our family we had to follow these precepts. So we just uh, couldn't deviate from them because uh, uh... the... that was expected of us and uh...we sort of developed a consciousness, a conscience that if we did something wrong our conscience would bother us. We were just taught to live a good Christian life although we were

not affiliated with any church.

Claire: What was Walter, Uncle Walter like?

Helene: Well Uncle Walter was uh, like bachelors, he was a little uh... you know... it wasn't that he was antisocial. He was the one who went to all the funerals and represented the family at any function like that. He wasn't antisocial... But uh, he wasn't, it wasn't that he was against families but he uh... he wasn't, he didn't have the ambition and drive that the family man would have to have to support a family. He had no one to support. So of course, uh, he was uh... a little on the dreamer side.

Claire: Did he do any work around the house?

Helene: Well yes, I mean he uh... you know he had his duties around the home. You know when you are living in the country you have wood to chop and there is always something to do. But he wasn't a go-getter. He wasn't... he would deliver the eggs you know. We had a poultry business. Basically it was an egg business because we... he sold the eggs. They weren't meat chickens. They were egg chickens. But he would deliver the eggs to customers and things like that.

Claire: Hold on one second. David? Can you see? (Pause)

Claire: Now I want to ask you about your sister, your big sister. Do you have uh... she was how much older?

Helene: She was six and a half years older than myself and two years older than Al.

Claire: And so when did you start kind of noticing her around the house? Do you have an earliest memory of her?

Helene: Well, uh, I really don't know what the earliest memory was but the... uh when I was small we... we weren't too much together because of the age difference. She was far advanced. And she looked upon me as a little brat sister as she wrote in some of her papers that I had seen later. But I was closer to my brother because he was closer in age and then I had only boys to play with when I was a kid. So I was with the boys more.

Claire: Were you a tomboy?

Helene: I guess so. I climbed trees and things girls might not, and things that boys do.

Claire: And what about Peace Pilgrim? Was she a tomboy too?

Helene: Well she was very active physically. I mean she was an excellent swimmer. And she could outswim me. I mean this is where I uh... could never have held a candle to her. I mean I would get out of breath. I couldn't, I couldn't swim as she did. And she would dive. We had a swimming... our city bath we called it... which was uh... was a dammed up creek that ran through our property. And it was about a block away. And so of course it was like having our own private swimming pool. We went down there every day in the summer. And uh... they uh... uh... all the people from Egg Harbor would come there. So I...

Claire: Was she a dare? Was she kind of a daredevil?

Helene: Well that's it. I mean I, while I was just swimming around with the rest of them, she would be out there perfecting her swan dive or her jack knife. She was always at the diving hole and uh, doing things that uh... the others weren't doing. She was, she was always at the diving hole and doing things that the others weren't doing. She was a very (*) because not only did she do these things in our swimming hole but she would go down to the river, Mullica River seven miles away, and she would dive off of the bridge. And uh... this was very dangerous because you don't know what's down there. But she would do that. She wasn't afraid.

Claire: And was she always very stylish with her bathing suits?

Helene: Well she was the first to come out with a one-piece bathing suit. Uh... it was uh, or course her auntie's always wore these little cotton skirts and so forth. But uh, she wanted a one-piece bathing suit. That was what was being worn. Of course the Aunties, Birdie and Aunt Rena didn't approve. But Aunt Setta, like I say, she was more liberal. She said "Why not? This is what they are wearing and it doesn't do any harm so she got her one-piece bathing suit.

Claire: Do you remember what color it was?

Helene: Blue.

Claire: So already she was in blue.

Helene: Yes, it was a lighter blue than she wore in her tunic.

Claire: Did Peace Pilgrim have a favorite color at this time?

Helene: I really don't know what her favorite colors were. She uh, wore a variety. She did wear, I can remember her wearing, she had a pink outfit. And she had shoes dyed to match which she would go to Atlantic City to have dyed and uh... pocket book and hat and gloves to match. I remember she had a pink outfit like that. But she had other colors too and I guess the pink one stands out in my mind for some reason but... I don't know whether it was her favorite color.

Claire: Did she love clothes?

Helene: Oh yes, clothes and make up. She was always... spent hours, it seemed to me, in front of the mirror. She used to bring the mirror down on the dining room table where she had better light and she would be putting on her, uh lip stick and make up, uh and then she would go out on a date. So she was always dressed and uh.

Claire: Would you sit and watch her?

Helene: Oh yeah, it fascinated me to see all this. Of course I was too young for that sort of thing. I never cared for it really. I just wasn't that type. I never, never cared for make up.

Claire: What, were there any outfits of hers that were your favorites?

Helene: Well, I mean I did inherit many of her clothes because our auntie's being dressmakers and money being scarce we made over clothes so I inherited many of her clothing. But I guess uh, I did sort of, uh, like to walk in her shoes so to speak. I suppose I was a little thorn in her side at times because I would like to go in her bedroom when she wasn't there and look at all her make up and her clothing. I was just a little bratty sister and it was only later on when we got older that we really became close because then we were more of an age to do things together.

Claire: What was your impression of her when she was in school? Was she popular?

Helene: She was popular and she was very uh... a very good student. She had uh, an excellent mind and she was always popular there.

Claire: What school did she go to?

Helene: A very small school really, Egg Harbor High School. I mean really it is interesting, I believe it may be only a few years before she entered high school was the first that they had a school four-year program. Before that it had been only two years. So it was a small school and she had only about a dozen or so in her class. And even when I graduated six and a half years later we were only about thirty. It was a small school.

Claire: Did she have any close girlfriends?

Helene: Uh, yes she did but uh, there weren't that many in her class, you see.... And the girls that were in her class weren't really her best girlfriends, I don't think... uh, because I don't think they were on the same basis. But she did have friends after she left high school. But uh, she uh traveled around.

Claire: Did you ever go hear her debate?

Helene: Well unfortunately I didn't get to hear the debates because I was younger and I was left at home. My brother Al, he went but he was in high school at the same time as she was. She was a Senior and he was a Freshman. But I was still in grade school. And I had to go to bed early. I guess I wasn't allowed to go. And I remember them going to these debates but uh... and all the discussions about it.

Claire: What did they say about it?

Helene: Well one thing they thought was an unfair decision because of the subject. It was something to do with coalmines and uh, uh, I think one of the judges was a little prejudiced. I think it was quite a socialistic issue, which of course (*). He was anti-socialist. (*) ownership of the coal mines. I was just a child and I really don't remember that much about it. But I do know there was a lot of discussion about that because they thought an unfair decision had been handed down on the basis of the subject.

Claire: Uh, was Peace Pilgrim a good loser or a sore loser?

Helene: Oh no she wasn't a sore loser but she uh felt uh... of course that there had been some bias in their decision.

Claire: What did the family think of Mildred?

Helene: Well, I don't know really what to say about that because the uh, I mean we were all accepted in our own way. I don't think that there was any.

Claire: Well it's like you say Lissette was the odd one. Was Mildred considered odd?

Helene: Well I don't know that she was really considered odd. I mean we were all different in our own ways. I don't know that they considered her as being odd. She was a... uh, just herself. You know we each had our own personalities.

Claire: Did she ever talk to you about what she wanted to do when she grew up?

Helene: Well uh there was a problem there. Due to the lack of finances she uh, really had limited possibilities. She took the commercial course in high school because it would fit her for a job as a secretary. She really could have been a schoolteacher or something that required a higher education but uh... it was not affordable. College was not in the picture for us. So uh, the possibilities were limited. There was no use discussing what you'd like to be. It was what you had to be. So she became a secretary which stood her in good stead because she used her secretarial skills in her later life. And so uh I guess it really didn't go for naught. But I knew right away that that was what I would like to be to. So she just didn't have the choice.

Claire: Did she ever privately confide in you that there was something she really wanted... that she wished she could have done?

Helene: Well, no not really. I mean we didn't have too many private discussions among us as children. I mean, when you're younger you are not that serious about things. I mean you know we were into having a good time, into having a social life and getting our education as much as we could. And that was it.

Claire: What did your social life consist of?

Helene: Well we belonged to the Grange in Egg Harbor. And there Mildred was very active. She uh, she was uh, in charge of the programs. And she put on some excellent shows. She would get us all involved. She was in charge of the lighting, the stage and my father was in the skits. There was always something going on at the Grange. And of course that was our big social time because dancing was the order of the day. After every meeting there was always dancing. And uh... we went there to the dancing. Mildred was a very avid dancer. She uh, did a lot of it.

Claire: Now this was the roaring twenties. Do you consider that you were flappers?

Helene: Well there was a period when Mildred was... I can remember one picture of her in particular that stands out very much in my mind where she was very much the flapper. It was a,

of course... she would be dressing more or less with the styles at the time. As far as I'm concerned, I am not that type. I mean I never... I'm not the type that goes into the latest styles. So I never thought about being a flapper. I mean the only time that I thought about wearing something that was currently popular was when Lindberg flew over the Atlantic. And I was very air minded and I had to buy a hat that had... that looked like an aviators hat you know. But other than I don't recall thinking about style that much.

Claire: Describe the picture where she is a flapper.

Helene: Well the one I am thinking of that stands in my mind is where she had her hair cut short and uh... had it short straight down, you know. It was very uh, very much ... very different from the way styles had been. And that was in the twenties at that time. But I don't remember.

Claire: Remember the color of the dress?

Helene: It was a white dress with red trim. But uh... I just remember the color coordination, things like that because that was what was important to me. And I just don't remember too much about the style.

Claire: Well tell me about her color coordination.

Helene: That was uh... something that she did which a lot of people didn't do. She had to always have everything coordinated. She would have an outfit. She wouldn't just have dresses and shoes. It would be a coordinated outfit. And everything had to match. She had her shoes dyed to match with the color of the dress. And uh, then she would have gloves which not everybody wore. But she had gloves and a hat to match. It was... it made her stand out more from the crowd because in a small town like Egg Harbor not everybody was into that sort of thing. You know they weren't as fashionable. I think she was more fashionable than average for a small town.

Claire: Did she ever wear furs?

Helene: Yes she did. She wore furs. Of course she wouldn't have done that later on because they were in those days made from real animals. I think the white fur she had was artificial. But she did have some furs that were real furs.

Claire: Did she ever make her own clothing?

Helene: Uh, she did make... an outfit for herself before she embarked on her... I guess the Appalachian Trail before the pilgrimage. Actually we never had to do much sewing because we had a couple of auntie's who did it all for us. But she was the type of person who could put her mind to do something and she would do it. I mean I took sewing in school. But she never did. But if she wanted to do something she would do it. She made herself an outfit that was sort of unique because it was reversible. It was plaid on one side and plain brown on the other so it actually was two outfits. She could reverse the whole thing. And she had shorts I think, and skirts and a blouse and uh, a scarf whatever to go with it. I mean they weren't wearing slacks then but she had shorts. And uh, I think she made these before her Appalachian Trail. I'm not sure but I know she made it for some purpose. Maybe when she was hiking with a group in Philadelphia

she used to go hiking with. She belonged to a hiking club there. So she made this outfit.

Claire: As a young girl, while she was still in school, what would you say her strongest interests were?

Helene: Well as far as I can remember... I can't remember the earlier years, but... uh when she was a pre teen or an early teen age I can remember her being very interested in writing. And uh, she was interested in writing movie scripts. She had a little trouble. I don't think she got very far with it but she did make a few tries at submitting scripts for movies.

Claire: Was she popular with the boys?

Helene: Yeah, she had many dates. She knew a lot in the Grange and at work later on.

Claire: Would she, would you say that she exhibited qualities of leadership even then?

Helene: Well I would say that she was always a strong personality and that uh, ... that she did exhibit early signs of leadership.

Claire: Did she start, when she was a baby you told me that it took her a while to learn how to walk.

Helene: Yes she was really was a bundle of contradictions. Her early life, uh, why basically she may have had a lot of uh... early traits that were similar. But there were many differences in her life style. Uh, besides her uh... her being, uh... into clothing and into make-up and all that sort of thing and went directly opposite Peace Pilgrim style. She also was different in other ways. She uh, well for one thing she was basically a meat eater as a child. She was always asking for more meat. About the only vegetable that she ate was green beans. And then she became a vegetarian. So there you have quite a opposite way of life. And also...she was not as accepting of people in every walk of life in her early days as she was later on. She was more uh, you know critical of my friends perhaps when she didn't think that they were the type of people I should be friends with. Not that there was something wrong with them basically but she thought maybe intellectually I should not be with them. She was just maybe a little critical at that time of people's lifestyles which they were not so bad at all. Later she accepted all regardless of race, color, creed or what.

Claire: So how old was she? Tell me about when she learned to walk.

Helene: Well learning to walk, that's another thing. After all the miles she walked as Peace Pilgrim she had a very late start. She was nearly two years old before she would walk too well. A year and a half I think she started. She was a very late starter at walking but she made up for it in later years.

Claire: Now you also said that she, you told about her health as a young woman.

Helene: Well her health, she had very good resistance to disease. She didn't get uh, a lot of the

communicable diseases that my brother and I got. But she did have headaches occasionally and tonsillitis also, things like that. But that's about all I can remember.

Claire: She did O.D. on ice cream once.

Helene: Oh yes, yes she did. When she was working at the Liberty Glass Company they went out every day at lunchtime. And she would have a big ice cream sundae and all this rich food and she did get sick from it. Of course she never binged in later life. She ate very conservatively. She could eat a lot at a time. And she had the ability to store food like a camel. You know she could eat a lot and then fast a lot. But she ate healthful food later on that she didn't do when she was younger.

Claire: You also said that she would go to the bathroom out in the woods or something. What did she....

Helene: We had, of course we had outdoor facilities for our bathroom. I mean we lived in the country. There was no plumbing. There was no running water. You had a pump and uh... so of course there was the outdoor privy. And uh, we (*) like my brother-in-law wanted indoor facilities. So they had the chemical things at that time for people without running water, which we had in our basement. And of course we... but she objected to that. She would always use the primitive one and whether there was snow on the ground, or rain it didn't matter. She would rather go there and walk out in that to get out there.

Claire: Did she love animals?

Helene: Yeah, she did. She loved animals. We had innumerable animals around us and I mean cats galore...

Claire: Hold on a second. Plane. (sound of plane overhead)

Claire: Where was I?

Helene: About the animals.

Claire: You had cats galore.

Helene: Yes we had cats galore... of course to keep down the population of rodents in chickens and pigeon houses. And we had dogs. And she... when she had her first job and was working, she went to the pet shop and bought a pedigree German Shepherd. And uh of course uh, later on he became more or less my dog. They say they are a one man dog but she just didn't have the time. She was too involved socially.

Claire: Was she good with animals?

Helene: Yes, she got along fine with animals. I mean I never heard of her having a problem.(*)

Claire: And how about flowers. Did she like flowers?

Helene: Flowers. She was really very artistic. She would make flower arrangements. She would make fish gardens... would go out in the woods and gather moss and lichens and uh, she was acquainted with all these things. I don't know how. She must have read up on it somewhere. And uh, it was fun to go on a nature walk with her because she could tell you what many of the things were which I have lived with all my life and never... still don't know now. But she made uh, a fish garden and raised flowers. And at one time when she was uh, after she uh, uh.... had been married and separated from her husband, she had a little roadside stand which her brother Al put up for her. And she sold her fish garden and her flowers.

Claire: Did you use to wander in the woods with her?

Helene: Well walking in the woods was part of our lifestyle. I mean, we felt as though we lived in the woods. As children we went to school through the woods. We had what we call the cut road. We didn't go on the highway. We went through the woods. And uh, of course they built a bridge across the creek that was on our property. So that was a good walk across the bridge. One of the things that Uncle Walter did was... you know he would brush out the path and so forth. That's the way we went to school, through the woods. It was a little way from our property and of course we had to take the road. So we were accustomed to walking through the woods a lot and uh, uh... she did do a lot of walking in the woods.

Claire: And did you notice that she would like go off by herself.

Helene: Uh, well later on when she was contemplating her lifestyle she did a lot of walking in the woods . When you live with a family with a lot of people there is always a lot of talking and disturbances going on. And if you would want to meditate and think about things, you are better off going off by yourself. And what better place than the woods?

Claire: So what was the first job she got?

Helene: Her first job was with the Liberty Cut Glass Works. And unfortunately the night before she was to start work the fire siren blew and we saw the blaze in the sky in the direction of the Liberty Glass Works. So of course we went rushing down there and she says, "There goes my job." But fortunately they uh, set up temporary quarters and she did get her job. They rebuilt. She worked there for I don't know how many years exactly. But then they were calling for help at the Renault Winery. Well I can tell you probably how many years because she graduated from high school in 1926 and went immediately to work at Liberty Glass Works. And uh, then, the repeal of prohibition was in December of 33 and she had just gone to the Renault Winery a year or so prior to that. So they uh, she was working there prior to uh the repeal of prohibition.

Claire: So her second job was?

Helene: The Renault Winery. And there is another... difference in her lifestyle. She never drank alcoholic beverages, never smoked, but she worked for a winery. Uh, well you couldn't be picky in those days. Jobs were scarce and you worked where you had to go. And that was an industry

that was thriving actually when they repealed prohibition especially. They were working around the clock. Everybody in Egg Harbor worked there at one time or another if they were able to work.

Claire: What was your first job?

Helene: My first job was as her helper. She was secretary to the sales manager. And uh, business was thriving so that they needed more help. So that's how I lucked out. I mean, I became her assistant. I mean there were long lines waiting outside for jobs. But if you knew somebody, it's still true, you have your foot in the door. And I got my job.

Claire: Somewhere around here she meets Stanley Ryder.

Helene: Well now I don't know exactly when she met him at first. From the way I understand she had been meeting him for a while before she brought him home. And uh, the first time that I was aware of it was when we had our annual fair. It was the county agricultural fair which was a big thing in this area. People came from all around, even from Philadelphia to this fair. And uh, she was there at the fair with him... was the first that I had seen him.

Claire: What did you think of him?

Helene: Well, he was tall and handsome you know and uh... uh... I got along fine with him. He looked fine but he wasn't my type. I mean I uh... I thought that he a handsome young man.

Claire: Well what type was he?

Helene: Well I mean he was more of a male chauvinist type I feel. I mean I uh... I could get along better with people who weren't as assertive. I guess I'm a little assertive myself.

Claire: And so was Mildred?

Helene: Right I think that is probably why they didn't get along, because the uh... she was not the type that would get pushed around. And he was the type that liked to do the pushing. So they had a lot of little arguments. I mean they didn't always see eye to eye. But basically there was a physical attraction. I think that's what you would stay so as long as she did I think she was attracted to him and him to her you know. But their personalities clashed and their ideologies were different. He was raised to believe that you went off to war for your country right the wrong. This was your duty. And she didn't feel that way. And they had very different views and their backgrounds were so different.

Claire: How did they end up marrying?

Helene: Well, they uh...uh...

Claire: You told the story, you know that great story.

Helene: Well the story was that they went, that she told they went out uh... it was a cold wintry day. It was in February, February the 17th, the day before my birthday. That's how I remember. They went out on a ride and in those days there was no heat in cars you know and it was cold and she was complaining about her feet being cold. And she was cold and all. And he said, "you know he could keep them warm for her and why not get married." So they went to (*) in Maryland where you didn't need a birth certificate or prior certification. That was a place for marriage there. And so they went there and were married and first thing you know we got a phone call. Eugene and I were not married yet at that time. But uh, uh... we went and picked them up. They had some car trouble and were up along route 30 near Philadelphia. We went up there and picked them up and brought them home. So that was, that was it you know.

Claire: Were you shocked?

Helene: No I really don't remember just how shocked I was. Of course they were going together at the time. But of course we were surprised you know, no doubt about that. Because uh... but they, I could understand why it was done that way because I had kind of thought about doing the same thing myself. Because being raised by three maiden auntie's uh, marriage and anything was just something that was sort of, we just thought we shouldn't do it. And uh, we sort of felt ashamed in fact that we had emotions that would lead us into something like that because uh, you know, we just thought they wouldn't approve. Well may Aunt Lissette would have. She may have approved but we sort of thought the others would be critical. We were very uh... we very much wanted to live the life that was respected by our peers. So it was difficult for us to do something that we felt they wouldn't approve of.

David: Tape Change

Helene: Children were not ever in her lifestyle. Uh, she uh, we always said she took after Aunt Lizzy and her Aunt Lizzy was not a child type person. She didn't relate also. Uh, and uh... Peace Pilgrim never had dolls when she was growing up. She didn't have mother instincts I think that most women have. I was just the opposite. I had so many dolls and all. But she did not and when I would come home with children... I was always baby sitting and I would come home with children. She never had any desire to hold a baby or to uh, to having anything to do with them. And children loved her. I mean uh, ...because she had a strong personality. She would have made an excellent teacher. It was... children really would have filed along uh... with her. But she was only interested in them when they had reached the age of reason. And then she could talk to them reasonably. But as far as talking baby talk and training a child up to that point, it wasn't her style.

Claire: Along this time your father died.

Helene: Yes, he died after she was uh, married and I was 26 and uh, at that time I know we were all there. So I don't know was she living with us at that time or not. Uh..

Claire: I think you told us that she and Stanley stayed in the barn.

Helene: Yes they stayed in what we call the colony house. It was an unused chicken coop and... they slept there because you might say there was no room in the inn you know. She just... we

had the night my father died we had nurses and doctors there and uh, it just you know... I think too probably they wanted to get away from it. I don't know just where they stayed.

Claire: Do you think Mildred was especially upset.

Helene: Well I'm sure she was because she and my father were very close. They uh... did a lot of things together. They were involved in the Grange together. And uh... she would bring her friends down to the boat house and the fishing parties with him... and then they would dance together. They had uh, a lot of (*) and I'm sure that she felt...uh...very bad about it and also because perhaps (sound of train whistle) she felt that he didn't approve of her marriage. So she did, I do recall that she was emotionally upset very much. Of course we all were. But it wasn't our family style to show emotion. We would not cry for one another. It was uh... it was sort of a private thing to show emotion or grief itself. She would bury her head in a pillow or something but you wouldn't... you didn't ... you didn't emote in the presence of others.

Claire: How could you tell that she was very upset?

Helene: Well, uh at the funeral I could see the way she reacted and so forth that she was upset. I mean... pretty much our family tried to keep from crying. If people wanted to discuss with me about my father, I wouldn't talk to them. I just wouldn't talk at all. I can remember going to bed after he died and I didn't want to wake up. I just slept and slept and slept until you got control of yourself. You just had to get control of your emotions instead of letting them out for people to see. So that was why it was difficult to tell just how anyone in our family felt because they didn't show their emotions. And I think that's sort of a German characteristic. I mean the Italian and the Irish people are very emotional and you know how they feel where some of the northern people are more... they just don't show their feelings.

Claire: It did set in motion a time, a kind of troublesome time for the family.

Helene: Very, yes. We had a very difficult time because my father being the sole support of the family... in fact my mother was destitute because we had no insurance. And the home was mortgaged for a business that we had entered that failed. I mean uh, insurance, fire insurance business which uh... at that time uh... people were taking advantage of. They were burning down their houses to collect insurance because they had no money to pay taxes. And... so it left us homeless. I mean we had to move out of our home and rent an apartment and uh, in Egg Harbor City.

Claire: And who all was still living together at that time?

Helene: Well we were all out on our complex really. I mean we had the two houses, my father's home and the auntie's home. But we mostly all lived together in my father's home most of the time. But there was a time when the auntie's moved out.

Claire: In Egg Harbor City, who all was... tell me about that apartment.

Helene: Well the first apartment, we were in several... but the first apartment uh, uh... Mildred

and Stanley had the front bedroom and uh, a sun parlor with many windows. And uh we lived in the back of the house, the rest of us. And she uh... she uh lived there until we moved into the next apartment. And they moved with us to the next apartment which was closer to our place of business where we worked... the winery. And there they had a front room too. Uh, so uh, they were with us through that time, both of them.

Claire: Were they getting along well then?

Helene: Well they had their arguments because, of course at that time Stanley was a truck driver. He had his trucking business. And he was away a lot and uh, they would argue about finances I think, no doubt. And uh... other things that they didn't see eye to eye on. So they ...uh you know they got along but like a lot of people they just had uh arguments.

Claire: Well they eventually separated.

Helene: Yes, they separated. But that was after they were in Philadelphia. And I can't tell you too much about their life up there because at that time I was involved in my own family life. I was married and raising children. And I really don't know exactly by date and so forth when they separated. But when Stanley was in Philadelphia he was inducted into the service. And she didn't want to go with him. Because she had been working with Quakers before working for peace and she was against war and she did not approve of his going to war.

Claire: So at that time during the separation, she came to live where?

Helene: Well that's I guess when she came to live, at that time, after she had moved to Philadelphia and I got married uh... the auntie's moved out to their little house because they had intended to move there uh...eventually but they were staying in town because we were both working there and we were helping to support and pay the rent. So they decided to stay there to make it more convenient for us. But then after we were gone they moved out to their little cottage and uh...then...uh Mildred came to live with them after... (*) I can't tell exactly the sequence or when and where it happened.

Claire: Well that might have been one of the times when she did a lot of deep thinking.

Helene: Right, that's when she had her little flower stand and all. And that's when she knew she wasn't going to be selling flowers the rest of her days. She was thinking about how she was going to spend the rest of her life. And she had been working with these people in Philadelphia for peace. She had been working with Scott Nearing and his paper, his publication. And she had also belonged to a hiking club over there. And so this all tied together. Uh...

Claire: Tell me about her hiking the Appalachian Trail. Did you know she was doing that?

Helene: Yes, we knew she was doing it but uh, uh just exactly how and when it happened I don't know. All I know is that she did... she started in Georgia. I think somebody mentioned something about her starting in the north. But I think she really started in Georgia and wound up in the north, in the (*). And after her hike we heard her on the radio. They presented her on some

radio station in Philadelphia. They presented her with a, a uh... with a ... they thought that she was lighting a camp fire, but she never did, so they gave her a cigarette lighter which she gave to Eugene.

Claire: Getting back to Stanley, they finally divorced. Did you think that was a good thing?

Helene: Well yes, I mean I really did yes, because I could see that they weren't compatible and I... that she uh, that she uh... he wanted a family and she didn't. And uh... what was the point in their marriage? And she, I felt, I really felt she had this capability to do something with her life. I mean I looked up to her because I... I mean I really felt that she was capable of, of doing something like that. In fact we discussed it at one point. She, at one time she mentioned something about doing something like that. And I thought it was an excellent idea because it was a way to draw people's attention to this cause. And I really approved of what she did.

Claire: Were you aware that after the divorce with Stanley that she was, you know, searching for what to do?

Helene: Well uh... she didn't uh... we really didn't discuss it exactly on that basis. But I know that she must have been. I mean uh...uh

Claire: Eugene remembered that she did a lot of traveling during those years and sometimes she even went to Mexico. She went to California.

Helene: Well this was during her years as Peace Pilgrim that she went to Mexico.

Claire: No, this was like the grape fast.

Helene: Oh yes, yes, you're right, you're right. I mean that's when she went to where they were giving the grape cure.

Claire: Tell me about that.

Helene: Yes, oh yes and that's when she did the fast and all. Uh, she was doing that, right, before she, I suppose... I'm not clear about dates. And as I say I was so involved in my own family life. Children and family were all important to me. And I was working a full time job. So I really wasn't paying that much attention to uh... what she was doing. But I do know, of course she was always a (*). She always was and uh... she was get where the (*). And I was aware that she was on a fast. And I was aware that she was where they were giving the grape cure. But just the time sequence, I can't really put it in. I mean....

Claire: The time sequence...

Helene: she must have done it. She must have done this before the Appalachian Trail, I imagine. I don't know. I don't know which came first.

Claire: Yeah, that's not so much important as what you... I mean, do you remember when Aunt

Mildred during this time when she would come and visit, oftentimes she would have these really strange people with her. Like maybe she was trying to help them out or something.

Helene: Oh, she had... there were people that she helped in these health... in these health... she went to some... the way I understood it... where people went for their health. And some of them maybe needed help handling you know, so she... she was active in that sort of thing for a while. And she did have a few followers. I mean there was one man in particular I remember, Eddie Ard his name was... in Philadelphia when she was living in Philadelphia who she helped. And I can remember... there I can give you some time sequence because when our son Dale was born in 1949, Peace gave me a gift, a little set of booties and sweater and so forth. Peace sent down with her as a gift. So because he had been at our house I guess she was... he had visited and I guess that's how I remember his coming. But I just don't remember if he stayed with us or not. I don't remember that. But Jeanne was then nine years old and she has a better memory than I have. She maybe remembers more about it. But I know he was born that came because I remember him giving this gift at this particular time. That's how I can tie it in.

Claire: Well she just remembered that Aunt Mildred was sort of the strange one, you know she was?

Helene: Well, she wore a tunic when she was the Peace Pilgrim.

Claire: Before Peace Pilgrim when she would be like joining a nudist colony.

Helene: Oh yes, that's right. You jogged my memory. She did. She didn't join the nudist colony. But she appeared at one. And I think she was clothed there (laughter). But she did, she did go to a nudist colony. Yes I remember her telling me that and I think it was published in a magazine. Good thing she didn't run for a public office because they would have blown that I'm sure. (laughter)

Claire: Well how about her trying to get the ultimate sun bathe nude on your lawn?

Helene: Oh, I don't know about that. She wouldn't have gotten very far with that because people in our vicinity weren't into nudism. Although they did have a nudist colony in Mays Landing. There was a nudist colony there. But I don't know where she went. I don't think it was Mays Landing. It was somewhere else.

Claire: Well did you think that she was strange? You know did you see a change occur in her?

Helene: Well you know we just accepted her the way she was, you know. So maybe she was a little strange. But our family was considered strange anyway in a lot of ways because we had a lot of radical beliefs and things and we weren't members of the local church and all. So we were used to being that way. And we were taught that it wasn't a crime to be strange. I mean you should be your own person and speak your own thoughts and not be one of the sheep. And so we didn't think anything of being strange. Uh, you know different. (Laughter)

Claire: So how did you hear about the pilgrimage? Are you looking at me?

Helene: "Stop looking at David. Start looking at me."

Claire: So how did you hear about the pilgrimage? How did she tell you that she was doing it?

Helene: Well she would discuss it with me. I can remember one time. And as I said before, she was discussing uh, doing this. So she must have come to our house at some time when she visited and uh... and spoke of it then. But I can remember that we spoke about it. We were walking out in the woods too.

Claire: Tell me about that.

Helene: It was uh, in the woods back of the house where we are living now.

Claire: And did she say, "Come for a walk, I want to tell you something?"

Helene: Well we were just out walking and we just started talking. She didn't make a particular issue of it. We were discussing it and uh... I just recall that I approved, I approved of what she was planning to do. I told her it was an excellent idea.

Claire: Do you remember how she described it to you? What did she say she was going to do?

Helene: Well, she was going to walk, to do this walk. She had already done the Appalachian Trail and she thought that she could, she would walk (*). And as to how she was going to accomplish it, she evidently hadn't formulated the plan yet, you know. I mean it just sort of developed like I guess and grew.

Claire: And then did she like, do you know how she got to California?

Helene: I don't really know how she got to California. Did she hitchhike? (Pause) That's a possibility.

Claire: And then did you know that she was going to begin in January of 1953?

Helene: Well she was in touch with us possibly. I mean we knew, we knew where she would be and all... because right from the very beginning I was forwarding her mail. I mean not as Peace Pilgrim but you know... it wasn't on a regular basis or she didn't have a program established or anything... but periodically she would want her mail and uh, uhso you know it just gradually developed.

Claire: You also got some calls from reporters in the beginning.

Helene: Well in the very beginning I did, yes. I can remember that at the office, uh... I got a call from the Newark Star Herald, I think it was. It was some paper up in north Jersey. And uh, of course they wanted to know about her private life. And uh so I got in touch with her. And I asked her what I should do about these people calling. She said, "Leave it to me. Tell them to" and she would take care of it and she did.

Claire: And then just a few weeks into her first pilgrimage she made a decision to drop her given name altogether and just become Peace Pilgrim. Do you remember that, getting that letter?

Helene: We have it in the scrap book. I don't remember exactly when we got it. But I remember, yes. I don't remember just when it was, how far into her pilgrimage I'm not sure.

Claire: And now she's Peace Pilgrim.

Helene: Right and I still as you notice will call her Peace because she became Peace Pilgrim later. I never... I never called her Mildred too much as a child anyway because we would always use some slang expression like kid or you know do and uh, I never was accustomed to calling her Mildred too much. And uh when she became Peace Pilgrim so I adopted that later.

Claire: Was it a burden to keep up with the correspondence?

Helene: I never thought it was because I just thought that I was doing her a service. And I believed in her cause. And I believed in her. I wanted to help her so it just wasn't a burden. I am the type of person that will become dedicated as I am now with the March of Dimes. I become dedicated to something and it's not a burden. And that's the way she was. She devoted her whole life and didn't consider it a burden.

Claire: In the beginning she didn't have her, you know the temperature thing worked out so she did ask for, you did send her....

Helene: Yes we had to uh, uh... a problem with clothing for a while because she needed gloves sometimes and she would need a scarf or a hat or a sweater or something because of the temperature. But later on she uh, developed uh, I mean she had her good mind working there again. She uh... she developed this plan of going south in the winter and north in the summer. And uh, she also adjusted herself, mind over matter again, to temperatures because in the very hot weather she was still wearing that tunic. And there probably were times when there were cold spells unexpectedly, even in warm climates. But she didn't seem to find it a problem. She was able to cope with it.

Claire: Did you ever worry about her out there?

Helene: Yes I did. If I read somewhere that there was somebody, a body found in a trunk somewhere and they didn't, couldn't identify it and all... if it was anywhere near where she was, I did worry. And she laughed at me for worrying.

Claire: (Laughter)

Helene: And my mother of course was always worrying about where she was. But she would write and reassure her, you know. She always wrote us very cheerful letters and all about all the things that she was doing which you know from looking through her correspondence. And my mother, you know, accepted it. She accepted everything. My mother was a very accepting person. And of course she would wonder where she was. And we would always reassure her that

she was well taken care of.

Claire: You ended up with that great collection of post cards.

Helene: Yes.

Claire: How did that come about?

Helene: Well, she sent me one when she was doing a hundred miles in each state. She sent me one from each state. And she would always give me a little write up on what she was doing there and what she saw there. And uh, I finally got all 48 at that time. But of course she wasn't, hadn't gone to Alaska and Hawaii. So uh, I had Mexico and Canada. So when she went to Hawaii she wasn't able to get a card the first time. But I said, "Oh when she came back I was going to complete my collection." So the next time that she went she saw that I got the card. I got from Alaska.

Claire: Now you must have noticed as the years went by that the correspondence coming in got more and more.

Helene: Yes I did and uh, lot of names were becoming familiar you know, the people that wrote to her frequently. But uh, I never really knew exactly... uh what she was doing, what her connection was with these people, whether they were providing hospitality or speaking engagements or what. I mean what other people were doing for her I wasn't aware of. And I learned later that she did have people performing other functions. And uh, she seemed to have the ability to know people well enough to know what they were capable of doing. And she knew that's where I fit in. She knew that she could count on me for something routine. Somebody else might have been bored with scratching out addresses. But uh, it didn't bother me as long as I knew I was accomplishing something important to me. And I didn't care how many hours I worked at it.

Claire: And your little post office cooperated.

Helene: The Post Office was great. I mean by having a small post office, it was really a big plus for the Peace Pilgrim movement... because they were always cooperative. They always saw that her mail was forwarded and uh, we never had any problems. And later on after she was gone, they kept on forwarding the mail. So I have the local Post Office personnel to thank for a lot of the uh, Peace Pilgrim program.

Claire: Now how often did she visit?

Helene: Whenever her pilgrimage brought her here.. which was about as many years as it took. It varied, whatever it took for her to reach the East Coast. So whenever she was in this area of course she would come home.

Claire: And what would that be like?

Helene: Well it, it was to me in a way sometimes a little disappointing because I never really got

to talk to her too much. She was always busy with her mail. And the first thing she would ask for was the typewriter. And she would uh, either work in our sun room or she would be outside. And uh... you know she was so busy that even on holidays... if she happened to be there on a holiday, we could be celebrating a holiday and she would come have dinner with us. But she would go immediately back to work. And we just didn't ever get a chance to discuss her pilgrimage too much.

Claire: Dale referred to her as Aunt Vegetarian.

Helene: Oh really, I wasn't aware of that. (laughter)

Claire: But what would you feed her?

Helene: Vegetarian food of course. We saw that she had a vegetarian diet. If we had meat she just wouldn't eat it.

Claire: Would she wear her tunic around the house?

Helene: Well in the very beginning she didn't wear the tunic... because in the early years when Jeanne was small she was a little sensitive to her being different... 'til she got old enough to realize that she was... to be one of our clan she had to be herself and not to be concerned about being different. And uh, my mother living with her sister and brother created a problem there because my uncle, my mother's brother, really didn't approve of her pilgrimage. He thought that she should be looking after her mother and uh, taking a job and providing for her mother's support.

Claire: This was Uncle Louie?

Helene: Uncle Louie.

Claire: Tell me about the trip to Florida.

Helene: Well she and Uncle Louie went on a trip to Florida. Oh, yes, they got along fine then you know. It was uh, only when she became Peace Pilgrim that he disapproved. Uh, when they went to Florida... of course Uncle Louie wasn't a skeptic but Aunt Lizzie was a little bit on the superstitious side. She had gone to a fortuneteller because they were having floods in the south at that time and people were having difficulties getting through to Florida. So she went to the fortuneteller and the fortuneteller said that they were not going to be able to reach their destination. So she was convinced that they were not going to be able to get to Florida. But they left anyway. Uncle Louie would not believe that story. Uh, he was not superstitious. So... they went and when they got to... I believe it was Georgia, somewhere uh, wherever the flooding occurred they were told the roads were all closed and there was no way to get through. And so of course Aunt Lizzie was ready to turn back. The fortuneteller said that was the way it would be. But Mildred was not going to accept that. She wanted to prove the fortuneteller wrong more than anything. And she was determined they were going to get to Florida by hook or by crook. So she booked passage on a plane, uh on a boat from Savanna, Georgia... that's right, it was Georgia.

So the boat left from Savanna ,Georgia. So they took the boat from Savanna and they went to Florida.

Claire: Now who all was on this trip?

Helene: Well it was Uncle Louie and Aunt Lizzie, my mother's brother and sister, and Uncle Louie's friend Bertha (*) was her name, and Mildred.

Claire: And I also forgot to ask you if after your father died, your mother had some difficulties and then she moved to Atlantic City. Can you tell me about that?

Helene: Well my mother had, of course, it was a severe shock to her. And uh, she was completely devastated because it was... naturally it wasn't anything that she expected. You know. It was an accident. And uh she was a basket case. So she was vulnerable to everything. She got uh, she got the, she got mumps, a childhood disease. She got the mumps. She was living with us. And of course there was a lot of pro and con arguments about how they were going to get along you know. And uh... there was a small, in those days a thousand dollars was a lot of money. And this was what the employment compensation or something paid. Uh, and there was a little controversy about who was going to get that. So my mother was... she was really, I guess this was maybe how she died because she developed a brain tumor. And uh, so uh... the local doctors couldn't diagnose it. They thought that she had stomach trouble. And uh... so she went down to Atlantic City to stay with her sister. And uh, she took her to her doctor. And he immediately had her looked at by various other doctors. And they determined that she had a brain tumor. And so, of course, that was a (*) thing but she came out of it.

Claire: And then she went to live with....

Helene: She lived with them. She stayed with her sister.

Claire: Which one?

Helene: Lizzie. Aunt Lizzie.

Claire: But there was another sister.

Helene: Oh well the other sister was in Philadelphia.

Claire: Aunt Lisa.

Helene: Yes she was in Philadelphia. She just visited occasionally.

Claire: All right now, but your mother went on and lived till?

Helene: 97

Claire: Tell me about your mother.

Helene: My mother had a very strong constitution. And she was the type of person who took life easy. I mean she didn't... she would say she worried about things and all but she didn't really get that uptight about things. She wasn't an "A" personality.

Claire: Tell me about her 97th birthday. Who all was there?

Helene: Well the 97th birthday fortunately, Peace Pilgrim was near and came for her 97th birthday and also Alfred who was living in Florida happened to be visiting. So that we had our family, what was left of it together. We had our pictures taken then and I was very happy because it was her last birthday and the last time we saw Peace Pilgrim.

Claire: Tell me how you heard that Peace Pilgrim had died?

Helene: Well I got a phone call from my husband. Uh, at work and he came to pick me up. And of course it was a shock. I just always felt that she was going to outlive me. I really never thought that I would ever survive her. Because to me I didn't think that anything would ever happen to her at that point. I'd worried so much about her through the years and she always seemed to be able to take care of herself so well that I just felt that she was indestructible I guess you know. I mean a lot of people felt that way. A lot of people just couldn't accept that she was mortal you know. (Laughter)

Claire: Uh, how did you uh, ...decide to have her cremated?

Helene: Well we got a phone call from the funeral parlor. And they recommended it. And we were under the impression that she was so badly hurt that it wouldn't be... that she wouldn't be a good subject for uh, uh for having a viewing. And then there was the problem of transportation. And they said that cremation would be the best solution. And they would send the ashes, because otherwise we would have the expense of bringing the body home and all. And they didn't, she had no insurance or anything, you know...there was no.... And I knew she wouldn't object to cremation because uh, because we had thought about having my father cremated. But my mother didn't want it but everybody in the family thought that would be the way to go.

Claire: Hold on just a second. (Cough) (*) All right. We're on the home stretch here.

Helene: It's getting very dark.

David: Yeah, very dark. We're losing it.

Claire: I've just got a few more questions. Tell me when it's okay.

David: It's okay now.

Claire: So you made a decision to have a very simple....

Helene: We just had a very simple ceremony here with just our family and the cousin of

Eugene's who I knew would be interested in coming. And (*) minister as a matter of fact. And uh, here at the local cemetery we just got permission to put the ashes over where Aunt Lissette, (*) for whom her middle name, after whom she was named and that's where her ashes are today.

Claire: Now the Rushes were a big help.

Helene: I don't know what I would have done without Ann and John Rush. They called when they heard about it. They happened to be in Bloomington visiting their children up in New Hampshire. And they said they would come down. And I really... I was a basket case there because I was so inundated with mail and calls and people coming out of the woodwork that I had no idea uh... that I didn't know and didn't know that she was connected with. You know it was just that I was such at a loss. I didn't know what to do. And uh, Eugene decided to help me. But he didn't have really too much knowledge of it all. And so if Ann and John hadn't taken over, I don't know what would have happened to the Peace Pilgrim program. They have really, they have just taken over where she left off. I just feel like Ann has stepped right into her shoes.

Claire: Have you read the book?

Helene: I have read in the book, yes. Every once in a while I pick it up. It's right on my library shelf. Every once in a while I pick it up. I'll read some here. I'll read some there. But I've never really... because I am not someone who will sit down and read a book from cover to cover. Uh, and my eyes give out and I fall asleep over it... I just can't read too long. I uh, I have read, probably have read most of it, but not in (*).

Claire: Did you ever hear her speak?

Helene: Just once. Just once I heard her speak because it happened... we never at the time that she was Peace Pilgrim... we never would speak to other people about her because she wanted to be anonymous. She never appeared in this area too much. But we did mention to friends who knew her before, who went to school with her and all. And a friend of Eugene's was visiting us. And we were talking about the peace issue. And we got on the subject. And we mentioned what she was doing. And she mentioned it to her minister at the (*) church who was very interested in the peace movement. And so he requested that she come to speak.

Claire: What did you think of her?

Helene: Well I had, I, I had heard her speak over television before... whenever she was on the news before. And I wasn't, I knew what uh, her speaking side was. But the only thing that I did feel badly about was then they asked her to speak to the Sunday School... a very small church. And there just was no way that she could not relate to them. How was she going to speak about peace to children who don't even know what peace is all about? And uh, she uh, I mean if she had been a child oriented person she would have spoken to them about living together peacefully or so forth. But she wasn't in to that. She didn't know how to relate to or speak to small children. So she spoke on a more adult level which of course went over their heads.

Claire: Just because we are losing light I just need to jump into the last question. We do have that

from your story from before. What does it feel like to be related to someone who compares to Gandhi?

Helene: Well I tell you that it is a good feeling. I mean I'm very happy to know that uh, that she had accomplished what she had. And of course I am very proud to be her sister.

Claire: It's amazing what the impact after her death.

Helene: That's right. I mean it amazes me more and more as time goes on. It really does. I mean at first it left me you know, speechless. But now (cricket noises drown out words here)

Claire: If you could see Peace Pilgrim and you could say one thing to her, what would you like to say to her?

Helene: What would I like to say to her? Well I really don't know what I would say to her. It would depend on the circumstance under which we met.

Claire: Would you say "Kid" or would you call her "Peace"?

Helene: Oh I would call her Peace now because that's the name that I... that she adopted and the name that I referred to her as later. If you'll notice in our discourse here every once in a while I'll say Peace instead of Mildred because this is what I had become used to calling her.

Claire: Well just imagine that her spirit is right here with us now. Is there anything you would like to say to her?

Helene: You sort of putting me on the spot.

Claire: Yes I am (laughter)

Helene: Because I just don't know what I would say to her.

Claire: I think I'm done. Oh, I have one more question. One more question. Are we on? I'm sorry. Who in your family is the most...takes the most after Mildred?

Helene: Well in my immediate family, Jeanne is the most like her.

Claire: How so?

Helene: Well she has a very exuberant personality. And she has a good mind and uh, she... uh social... very much involved with people and uh, she uh... is uh I mean she is just uh... I feel she even looked a little like her when she was a baby. I just feel that she is intellectually more on her level, you know.

Claire: Well I can't think of anything more, Gig. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask?

Gigi: How much light do we have?

Man's voice: Zip.

Helene: I hope Dale doesn't hear me say that. I mean because...

Claire: Except we know we need to allow him to bridge into the interview.

Helene: Because I wouldn't want to hurt my little boy's feelings.

Claire: Well we will make sure that we don't hurt his feelings.

Helene: Because he's my baby you know and being a baby and being a boy... I relate to boys. I (laughter) I just wouldn't want to hurt him in any way.

Man's voice: Did you ever think that she would have the impact that she had? Did you ever conceive of this, her message going worldwide?

Helene: I would never have thought that, no. I mean I knew she was capable of doing what she did. But I didn't realize that she would have that much impact. No.