

Museum of History and Holocaust Education Legacy Series

June Chandler Interview

Conducted by Adina Langer

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Transcribed by Adina Langer

Born in 1935, June Chandler grew up outside London in the borough of Enfield. During the Second World War, her neighborhood sustained heavy German bombing, and Chandler had to evacuate to the north. After the war she married an American serviceman stationed in England, and they moved to Georgia where he took a job with the Lockheed corporation

Full Transcript

Interviewer: Today is Wednesday, October 25, 2017. My name is Adina Langer, and I am here at the Sturgis Library at Kennesaw State University with June Chandler. Do you agree to this interview?

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: Wonderful. Could you please state your full name?

Chandler: June Evelyn Chandler.

Interviewer: And what is your birthday?

Chandler: 12/2/35.

Interviewer: OK. And where were you born?

Chandler: Enfield, Middlesex, England.

Interviewer: OK. And can you describe where that is located?

Chandler: It's ten miles south of London.

Interviewer: And is it near the water?

Chandler: No. It's between the Channel and the River Thames. We were in the area where the Germans flew over. [Laughs]

Interviewer: OK. And so, what were your parents' names?

Chandler: Evelyn Sarah Knight, and my dad was William George.

Interviewer: And did you have a large family? How big was your—.

Chandler: One brother.

Interviewer: One brother. And what was your brother's name?

Chandler: Douglas William.

Interviewer: And he was older than you?

Chandler: Yes, He was— let's see— I'm 81. He was 84.

Interviewer: And can you tell me about your neighborhood? What was the neighborhood like?

Chandler: It was what we call row houses. It was almost like what they have as town houses now, but they were built in the late 18th century. So, we had neighbors stuck with us, and we had upstairs and downstairs. [Makes side-by-side motion with hands]

Interviewer: And did you have any kind of a courtyard or garden?

Chandler: We had a little garden in the backyard, and then we had a little side area that we could go down to go out the front or use the front door— my place where I used to slip out. [Laughs]

Interviewer: And was it a friendly neighborhood? Lots of kids?

Chandler: Very. We used to call all our neighbors Aunt or Uncle. It was never Mr. or Mrs. So that was just the way they did back in those days.

Interviewer: And what kinds of jobs did your parents have, and the other adults?

Chandler: My dad worked with a pharmacist, and my mom, she did— she was a telephone operator till she retired.

Interviewer: And what were some of your earliest memories of your childhood?

Chandler: Basically, we had a very nice area. We had a lot of parks. And it was safe then to let kids go out. And I can remember going— we had a river that ran through our backyard, and we would get out and catch fish. In the wintertime we would get out there and skate, because it was at the back of the yard, but it also went through the parks, so—.

Interviewer: That sounds lovely. So, you were born in 1935.

Chandler: Correct.

Interviewer: So, you were only four years old, then, when the war began?

Chandler: Right about there. I can't remember exactly. I know I was about five during evacuation.

Interviewer: What do you remember about the start of the war?

Chandler: At that age, you really don't think too much about it. It's just life. But I do remember we had to put up shelters. In our neighborhood, we all had a shelter in the backyard. It was corrugated iron, and then they put a lot of dirt over the top of it, and we had a little door, and there were four bunk-type beds in it, because there were four of us. And during air raids that's where we stayed.

Interviewer: And was that something issued by the government?

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: And do you remember when your father built the shelter—what that was like?

Chandler: I just remember—like I said, at that age you don't pay that much attention. I just remember my brother and I playing in the dirt, because we weren't allowed to do that very often. [Laughs]

Interviewer: And had you started school when the war began?

Chandler: Yes, because they start earlier over there than they do here.

Interviewer: And what was your school like? What was it like to go to school?

Chandler: We all had different classes, and it was boys and girls through the early ages of school, like the elementary, and after that we went to—the high school was all girls. Middle school was all girls.

Interviewer: And, did you walk to school?

Chandler: Yes. Sometimes my mom would give me a penny and I could get the bus, but most times we walked, because my brother walked with me.

Interviewer: And was it close to your home or far?

Chandler: It felt like a long way, but I'm sure it wasn't. It was close. Probably a mile.

Interviewer: And did you have to do anything to prepare for the possibility of being bombed? Did you have a gas mask?

Chandler: We had the gas masks that we took over. They didn't issue those until probably the second year. And for children my age, we called it a Mickey Mouse gas mask, because it was red, and it had a flap on it. And it had royal blue trim. And when you talked or breathed in it, the flap would go, supposedly to entertain the kids, I guess. [Makes flapping motion with hand] But it was in a little square cardboard box with string, and

we just carried it over our shoulders, and took it to school— wherever we went, the gas mask went.

Interviewer: And the air raids were they usually at night?

Chandler: Night. More at night. Once in a blue moon during the day, but mainly at night.

Interviewer: What do you remember about what that was like?

Chandler: The biggest memory I have— we had an American— it wasn't a base. It was a huge tent in the green area near my house, and there was a bunch of Americans lived there. And they had tanks, and the ack-ack guns¹, and they had search lights, so when the planes came over, they would get their search lights on and shoot at the planes, so we had a lot of shrapnel everywhere come morning. And my biggest thing was the doodlebugs, the V-2 rocket. And we called it “doodlebug” because when they would come out— you know they had no pilot or anything— and they would “doodle-oodle-oodle” and when they would cut off, they would just drift, and they would land. And wherever they would land, that's where they would blow up. And so the Americans had the big ack-ack guns, and they would try and shoot it before it hit the ground. So that was a big memory for me, because we would sometimes stand outside the shelter and watch it, and when we saw they were really getting it, then we'd get back in our shelter.

Interviewer: Was it easy, then, to get in and out of the shelter?

Chandler: Yes. We just walked in and stepped down. It was like a couple of steps going down into it.

Interviewer: And was there a metal door that shut?

Chandler: It was a metal— I don't know how thick it would be— but it was a metal door, and we locked it from the inside.

Interviewer: And did you have to have everything pitch black at night?

Chandler: Yes. We had black-out curtains. And my dad was what they called an air raid warden. He, and another neighbor, they would walk the streets at night to make sure no lights were showing through the windows, and they would take it turns with different neighbors, so maybe one day a week he was the warden. And they wore their helmets and just walked the streets. If anyone had a light shining they would, you know, go let them know, because when the German planes, if they were running out of fuel or getting close to running out of fuel, they would drop their bombs wherever. And we were in a good area for them to drop them.

¹ See British Periscope documentary about ack-ack guns during WWII:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=_M10k-t73-s

Interviewer: So, do you remember a lot of destruction in your neighborhood?

Chandler: Yeah. We had our windows blown in a couple of times. And then they got to the point where we didn't replace the glass. We would replace it with a black—like tar paper—so your house was dark all the time. Needless to say, I keep my house dark now. [Laughs]

Interviewer: That's interesting you didn't go the other way, where you want lots of light.

Chandler: No, I like my house dark.

Interviewer: And did you ever have an experience where you got close to being in danger yourself?

Chandler: Just the street over from us got—we called them bread baskets. They were incendiary bombs. And they dropped those, and it hit a street behind us. And the whole street burned down. And that—I mean that's as close—we did have windows blown in because of the blast, and everything. But as far as—I remember one time when I was a kid, our shelter had got water in it because of the river, and we went to our next-door neighbor's house. My dad was air raid warden that night. We had the bombing, and the sirens were going, and my mom grabbed my brother and I, and we ran into the house next door. And all our houses had a cupboard under the stair well. We went in the cupboard with my next-door neighbor, and my brother and I were barefoot, because my mom had woke us up, and the glass from the front door had blown in, and we ran over that barefoot, and neither one of us got a cut. It's weird to this day I think about how we ran on glass and didn't get cut.

Interviewer: Well, that was quite lucky. And when we spoke a couple months ago, you mentioned that there was one time that there actually was an air raid during the day, and you had to—.

Chandler: When—yeah, we had laid down. We had a German plane come over when I was actually coming home from school, and the air raid warden from the daytime, he threw me basically in the gutter and laid over me, because if they saw movement, they would machine gun. So, I don't know if it happened anywhere near me, but that was a possibility, so whoever was, you know, watching for kids and everything at that particular time would take care of whoever was walking.

Interviewer: And you were very young. Did you feel frightened, or did you feel safe?

Chandler: No. I never thought about being frightened, because it was—like I said, I was so young when it started, and after that, it was just a way of life. So, if it happened, it happened. If it didn't, it didn't.

Interviewer: What do you remember about rationing (10:58) during the war?

Chandler: I had a green ration book because of my age. My brother had the blue, and my mom and dad had white ones. And I was able to get orange juice on mine, and we could get an egg

once a week, and meat was almost inaccessible. My dad would buy some black market once in a while, but everything was rationed. Milk— well milk was not. I'll tell you that. We had a milkman milk the cows around, but everything else was rationed. Tea, what juice they didn't get, vegetables that we didn't grow we had to use ration books for, but my dad had a garden, so we grew a lot. My mom did a lot of pickles, and stuff to keep us going. But yeah— everything was rationed. In fact, when I left England in '54, meat was still hard to get. It wasn't rationed, but it was hard to come by. So yeah, but everything we had was rationed.

Interviewer: And what do you remember about the garden? Was that something you helped with ever, or—.

Chandler: Not really! [Laughs] Just weeds. Just picking out the weeds. My dad, he would grow potatoes, and green beans and— we call them green peas— the little English peas, and that kind of stuff. And then my mom would pickle a lot of stuff, so we did all right vegetable-wise.

Interviewer: So, you mentioned you didn't have meat. Did you ever have canned meat, like Spam or anything?

Chandler: We had Spam. [Rolls eyes] And it was kind of— it was called “snook,” and— but it was just like Spam over here, and which I will not eat. [Laughs] And we had canned salmon once in a while. We had a lot of fish. Being an island, there was plenty of fish, so that's what I basically was raised on— was fish.

Interviewer: And you mentioned that there were different colored ration books for different members of the family.

Chandler: Right.

Interviewer: Did they give you access to different things?

Chandler: Well, with the children— with the green ration book, you had more access. You got an egg a week, sometimes two if they had it, and you would get the orange juice. And I'm trying to think— the government gave us cod liver oil which we had to take every day, and it was liquid, and “Parrish's food”² I think is what it was called – it was like a liquid vitamin. That all was given to younger kids, but what my brother and my mom and dad had access to— I don't know. She did the cooking, so I really didn't pay that much

2 Parrish's Chemical Food was a nutritional supplement originally developed in the 1880s by a Philadelphia medical doctor. It contained a large dose of iron suspended in a sweet liquid formula.

https://books.google.com/books?id=_1QCAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA698&lpg=PA698&dq=Parrish%27s+Chemical+Food+philadelphia&source=bl&ots=GMN5jZ9bYB&sig=4PdZlErGlLuU-hlnqSCQZwhMTgo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjqwNnwqr3bAhXQoFMKHZIfApMQ6AEIUDAE#v=onepage&q=Parrish's%20&f=false

attention. I just knew that, you know, sometimes we were hungry, but most times we were not. My mom was very good with what she did.

Interviewer: Had the rationing started before the war?

Chandler: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember—I mean you were born in '35, and it was during the Depression, was there a sense that things were harder than usual?

Chandler: Not that I know of. Not that I remember.

Interviewer: So, what did you do for fun? (14:21) Was there a sense that you could do anything for fun?

Chandler: Well, we would jig—we loved jigsaw puzzles. We played Snakes and Ladders—they call it Chutes and Ladders now. We played Snakes and Ladders. We just played a lot of board games. And we played Cribbage, and we played cards. And I had—my little friends would come over, and of course we played house, and a lot of our stuff we would do a little bit in the dirt, when my mom let us get dirty, and we'd make little houses in the dirt, and pretend “this is my room, and this is your room,” just—you had to use your head back then to think up something to do. But yeah, we had a doll's pram and dolls, and stuff like that for Christmas, but so—I feel like I had a very good childhood. I had a good mom and dad, so, which makes it better.

Interviewer: Did you ever in your games act out the war—you know, was there a sense—

Chandler: No. Well, once in a while we'd play, like cowboys and Indians, because we had seen that in the movies, and sometimes we would play Germans against the English. And there was one little boy in our neighborhood whose name was Schuler, which his dad was German, and we made him German, and he used to cry, because he said that wasn't fair. And I can remember this child very well. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Aww. So, you mentioned the movies. Did you go to see movies?

Chandler: Yes, my mom worked at the theater for a while. It was called the Rialto, and if it was, you know, a quiet day, like after we got back from being evacuated, we would sometimes go there, and they always had the news of the week on, and it would show a reel of what had happened overseas during the war, keeping you up to date. Instead of having to read the paper, you could go and see the news reel.

Interviewer: Did you have a radio?

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: And did you ever hear news stories on the radio?

Chandler: No. My mom wouldn't listen, or she wouldn't let us listen to them. A little bit of music came from BBC, so what little bit of music was on, she would let us have that, and there was kind of a soap opera on that she would listen to called "Mrs. Dale's Diary,"³ and she didn't miss that when she was home. [Laughs] But yeah, we called it a radiogram, because it had a gramophone on the top of it, but it sat this high [raises hand to shoulder level] It was huge.

Interviewer: And, so you mentioned that you were evacuated. (17:01)

Chandler: Right.

Interviewer: Do you remember how old you were when that happened?

Chandler: I was probably around five. Five or six. And I remember my mom and dad putting my brother and I on the train, and I remember us having our gas masks, but I don't remember having any luggage. I'm sure we did. And they put us on the train, and we went out to a place called Altrincham in Cheshire, it's near Manchester, and my brother got to go stay with an aunt of mine, because she had all boys, and I stayed with a schoolteacher which was my aunt's friend. She had two daughters, and so I was very well looked after over there too.

Interviewer: How long were you there?

Chandler: A year.

Interviewer: And what do you remember about that place?

Chandler: It just being very nice. It was out in the country, and I know the lady that kept me, she had—it was a one-school classroom, I mean a one classroom school, and there were several different ages in there, but it was way out in the country, and I remember she had the geese, and she had rabbits, and all the stuff I'd never seen. Being close to London, we didn't have all of that. So, but they were very nice to me. They got me a bike so I could ride over and see my brother, and it was good. In fact, I think I enjoyed it so much, especially with having like two older sisters—which they were not—but they were very good with me. And when my mom and dad came to pick me up, I didn't want to go home, because I hadn't seen them in a year. So—And now I understand it, but I think how mad and upset my mom must have been to think I wanted to stay where I was instead of wanting to go home with her. [Laughs]

Interviewer: So, they were not able to come out and visit you.

Chandler: No. She had to do what they call piece-work, and of course my dad had to stay. Anyone

³ "Mrs. Dale's Diary" was a British radio serial that began on January 5, 1948, and ran for 21 years and 5431 episodes.
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/radio/what-to-listen-to/mrs-dales-diary-the-radio-show-that-captivated-britain/>

that had a baby, the mother could go with them, but because of my age, you know basically they'd say you didn't need your mom. So that's the reason she wasn't able to go.

Interviewer: And her work was essential to the war effort— both your mom and your dad?

Chandler: The piece-work. She made safari helmets. Everybody that didn't have small children, they had to work.

Interviewer: Did she do that at home?

Chandler: No. She was— she went out. I don't know where she went to do it, but yeah, she started that actually before I was evacuated.

Interviewer: And your father, you said he worked in a pharmacy?

Chandler: He worked with a pharmacist. He would check in everything the pharmacist needed, make sure they were the right amount of drugs, or whatever. So, he was like a helper, I guess.

Interviewer: And did his work ever end up involving the soldiers or anything like that?

Chandler: No.

Interviewer: So, when you came back, the war was still happening— still going on, and you moved on to elementary school then I guess eventually middle school?

Chandler: Junior school.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Chandler: Which was all girls. And then from there we went to high school.

Interviewer: And did you— you mentioned that there was some American soldiers nearby?

Chandler: Correct.

Interviewer: When you were a little kid, did you interact with them?

Chandler: Oh yes. We used to go up there and say, "Got any gum, chum?" Because we couldn't get candies or gum or anything like that. They let us sit in the tanks and showed us all kinds of things. They were very good to us. I guess they missed their own kids, so they interacted with us.

Interviewer: And did they every give you things from their rations?

Chandler: They gave us some chocolate, and, like I said, the gum. And to us, they were all Yanks.

They weren't "Rebels and Yanks." They were all Yanks. Every American was a Yank.

Interviewer: Did any of them stand out to you in particular? Do you remember any particular soldier?

Chandler: No. They were all just very nice. They'd see us coming, because we lived right down the street where their tent was, so they would see us coming, and they would always give us a little something.

Interviewer: And when did you start having the ability to have lights on again?

Chandler: It was after the war ended, and the first thing I remember about that is the first Guy Fawkes Night, which is the 5th of November. We were able to have a big bonfire. And that was the first time we had really seen anything, and then they started getting the lamp lights and everything going. And the first Christmas after the end of the war, my mom and dad took us into London—which I mean it was a lot of it on the ground, because it was so bombed there—but what little area they could decorate, they had Christmas lights out, and it was just something else, because I had never seen Christmas lights before—not that I could remember.

Interviewer: What do you remember about the end of the war? (22:17) Was there a sense that things were different?

Chandler: We—No, not really, because stuff was still rationed, and little by little there was more to buy, and we got a lot more clothes, because all our clothes were rationed also, and we were able to buy—like I had one pair of shoes for school, and one for Sundays. And then after the war, I remember my mom took me to a place called Selfridge's in London—this big department store—and she bought me an extra pair of shoes, and I thought I was very well off!

Interviewer: Did you have any family members who were in the Service?

Chandler: I had an uncle, my dad's youngest brother. He was in the Service. He was captured in Germany, and he stayed in a prison camp there for about a year. And actually, I think the Americans, when they got over there, they released them. And he came home, and I remember I didn't know who he was because he had not eaten, and he was so frail. And I mean it took, I'm sure, over a year or better to start building him back up. I just remember I didn't know who he was when I saw him.

Interviewer: And you had met—you had known him before.

Chandler: Yes. He and my dad were close. My dad was the oldest of four, and he was the baby, so they were very close.

Interviewer: And was your dad just too old to be drafted in the Armed Service?

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: And did you count the end of the war from May of '45, kind of when Germany was conquered, or did you wait till the end with Japan too?

Chandler: It was when it was totally over. That was the end of the war for us, because that's when things started to get a little bit better, but I will tell you one thing. When they started the war, they took— We had rails in our yard, separating us from the front door, you know at the front, from the neighbors, and we had really pretty iron rails in front of our house going all around the park. Everybody did. And they took all of those out for ammunition. And the last time I went home we went there, and they still hadn't replaced them. And I actually tried going in the house and see if I could look around and see my old room and everything, but the people that owned the house, they didn't— excuse me— they were not home. They were not home at that point. But that was an exciting day for me. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Had you not been back in a long time?

Chandler: No. I was over here 23 years before I went home. And I had four children and really couldn't afford it. So, after my dad passed away, we made a point so I could go home.

Interviewer: So, when did you start high school? (25:34)

Chandler: Year-wise I don't know. I was probably— maybe 13. They do— they did do it differently over there than what they do— because I got out of high school at 16. But that was how they did back then.

Interviewer: So, you graduated when you were 16?

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: And did you have friends that you would go around with, and travel to London, and do things with?

Chandler: Yes, I did. I went to London a lot. I loved London. We would just mainly— well, not during the war— when I got older, we were able to catch a bus, or train, and go into London— go to some of the newer movies. And then we'd have to take the last bus home, or else you'd be walking. Because they would quit at 10:00, so we knew whatever we did in London, we had to be at the bus stop by 10:00.

Interviewer: Did you ever get stuck?

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: What happened when you got stuck?

Chandler: The police picked us up! [Laughs] Actually, my girlfriend and I, we'd miss the last train,

and there was no bus at that point, and we got out and we were thumbing. And I mean back then we felt like—we didn't know anything could happen to you—and I think we were about 15 or 16. And the policemen—they were in a car—so they stopped and asked what we were doing. And we said we'd missed the last train. He wanted to know where we lived. I told him we were on Gentleman's Row, and he said, "Get in the back of the car." And we got a lecture all the way home, and I'd tell him, I said, "Please don't stop in front of my house." My mom never did know to this day that we had a police car take us home. He dropped us off around the corner, so we could walk to the house. Telling tales now!

Interviewer: So, can you describe how you met your future husband? (27:41)

Chandler: I was in London, and we had—my girlfriend and I had—we were going to a movie—and my husband was there. I did not like him. When the lights change in London, traffic goes. And they don't care who's in the road. And I had run with the girl I was with to get up on the curb away from the taxis, because they traveled very fast, and he was standing there, and he wouldn't let me up on the curb. And I mean—I was so mad, I just slugged him. I had a brother, so I knew how to take care of myself. And we went and sat in a milk bar—my girlfriend and I, and then he and his friend—we were pick-ups, I guess, and they kind of followed us around. So—and then my girlfriend told him where I lived, and out of the blue I got a letter from him, and finally after I met him a couple of times in London, and I invited him to come to my house, and I met him at the train and took him, and my parents just fell in love with him. So, the only thing was he called you—it was "ma'am this," and "ma'am that," and my mom, she'd say, "Jeff, don't call me ma'am; I sound like an old school marm." And we used to laugh about that. But yeah—.

Interviewer: And what was his name.

Chandler: Well, his actual name was Laverne, but we called him Jeff, because that was his nickname on the base, because of Jeff Chandler the movie star, so when he introduced himself, he introduced himself as Jeff. And Laverne never [shakes head] worked for me. He always stayed Jeff.

Interviewer: So, he was a soldier.

Chandler: He was Air Force.

Interviewer: And he was from the United States.

Chandler: He was from South Carolina.

Interviewer: So, he had been stationed in London?

Chandler: He moved up there, I guess, in '51. He was stationed there. I met him in '52. And we married in '54.

Interviewer: And can you describe what your wedding was like?

Chandler: It was just a justice of the peace. We just went to a place called Edmonton, and my brother's girlfriend, and him, and a couple, three, of my friends, and my mom and dad, we were there. That was it. Very small, and we went out to tea for our—they didn't do things back there then like they do over here. It's not—it wasn't that lavish.

Interviewer: And was there a sense for you that getting married and moving to the United States would be a better thing than staying back in England, or was it just that you had fallen in love?

Chandler: I just fell in love, and I couldn't have asked for a better person than the one I married. And so, you know, at that age, there again, I was 18. And you don't think—he was from a tobacco farm, so I thought that would be like a regular English farm which is very green, and very pretty, with horses and the whole bit, and I saw my first mule at his house. I'd never seen a mule in my life. It was just so different. But it was a big shock going into that. We lived there for a year and then moved up here. My husband got a job with Lockheed.

Interviewer: So, what was it like moving to the United States initially? (31:16) What were your first impressions?

Chandler: Well, I had a lot of friends when we first got to New York. We went to the New York Port of Entry. We were up there nearly a month for my husband to get out of the Service. And then the town—we had to get a taxi—we got a train to Florence, South Carolina, and then we got a taxi from there to where he lived, and I had dozed off, because it's 3:00 in the morning, and then he thumped me. He said, "Wake up! This is our town." And I kind of came up like this, and I'm like, "Where?" He said, "We're through it now." [Laughs] I was used to London, and it was like a crossroads with a couple little shops, or stores then, so that was—that was kind of different to me. But I had—I mean I didn't like South Carolina, and I didn't like having to live with in-laws, but after I got up here, things got a lot better. I made friends and everything, because I was close in with people.

Interviewer: So, he got a job at Lockheed. What did he do at Lockheed?

Chandler: Yes. He was a flight line mechanic.

Interviewer: And what was Marietta like when you first moved here?

Chandler: Beautiful. It was quiet. No traffic hardly. The Big Chicken was there, and it was a Chick, Chuck, and Shake back then. And Marietta, I lived in East Marietta, off of Powers Ferry, and it was just very pretty. Powers Ferry was a two-lane road, and it had woods. It was just beautiful out there. The Chattahoochee River, when you went from Powers Ferry to cross the Chattahoochee River, it was a swinging bridge—one lane—and people took

turns going across, which wouldn't happen in this day and time. But it was very, very pretty around here.

Interviewer: What was your first home like?

Chandler: Are you talking about apartment or house?

Interviewer: Well, the first place you lived—.

Chandler: The first place we lived was a duplex. Actually, the girl that I was with when I met my husband married the guy that he was with, and they ran into each other at Lockheed. And I was living in Carolina then, because we couldn't find a place to live up here, and they had a duplex— told us it was empty— so we moved up here and lived in the duplex with them, basically. And then we moved off of the square in Marietta on Fraser Street, and then we bought our house off of Powers Ferry in '57. So that was our first home, and I'm still there!

Interviewer: Were the homes new then?

Chandler: Yes, they were in the process of building ours when we bought it. And actually, they let us live there from February of '55, I guess it was, no '56. '57— I'll take it back. I'm sorry. In '57, we moved in in February, and we didn't have to start payments on it until June. The builder let us just stay there until we closed the house out. So, which was very nice.

Interviewer: And what were your neighbors like?

Chandler: We've had good neighbors. Most of them since the '60s. Of course, a lot of them have passed away since. And now we have younger neighbors than we used to have, but for the most part we had very good neighbors back then. Everybody was from somewhere else. Nobody was from Georgia, because of Lockheed. And then my husband got laid off from Lockheed so many times, and he was in the Air National Guard, so they had an opening there, so he joined the Air National Guard, and then he retired from there.

Interviewer: And that was right nearby. That was Dobbins.

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: So, it probably— did it feel good that you didn't have to worry about moving?

Chandler: Yes. He traveled a lot when he was at Dobbins, because, you know, they would have to go— especially when there was bad weather, they needed to go somewhere, but it was nice knowing that he wasn't going to get laid off. He had a permanent position there. So— And he went in as a Staff Sergeant and came out as a Senior Master Sergeant. So he worked very well.

Interviewer: Did he ever have to serve in any of the conflicts?

Chandler: No. No. We were lucky.

Interviewer: So, what was/is your house like?

Chandler: It's just a small two-bedroom house with a pine-panel den, and we have a basement that, when my daughter came, we didn't have anywhere to put her, so we built the basement in, because I had three boys, and we were able to keep them all together, but when she came along we didn't have anywhere to put her, so we built the basement in. Which I stay down there all the time now because it's dark. [Laughs]

Interviewer: When was your first child born?

Chandler: 1955. August of '55. A boy, of course,

Interviewer: And what are your children's names?

Chandler: Glen, Jay, Doug, and Karen.

Interviewer: What was it like to be a new mother?

Chandler: It was hard, because I didn't have anybody to help me, and at that point I didn't know anybody, because we were still living—well I lived in Carolina, which I didn't have any friends there, because there's no houses close. And, but when I moved up here, Glen was about three months old, and after I started meeting people, it got a lot easier, but I wish I'd had my mom closer to help me out, or some friends or something. It was kind of hard, but you learn. And he was on swing shift—my husband was on swing shift then, so—and my son had colic, so it always started at 3:00 in the afternoon, and he was gone. [Laughs]

Interviewer: That must have been tough. So, what did you find to be a support network? You met other people—what did you do?

Chandler: After I moved out to where I'm living now, like I said, everybody was in the same boat. They were all from different states, and they had come in basically for Lockheed. So, we were all kind of about the same age back then, and we'd just visit each other, and I got everybody drinking tea. So, when I'd go to any of the neighbors, the first thing they'd do was put on the kettle, and we would have a cup of tea, so it was very nice.

Interviewer: And so did your family from England—were they ever able to come out and visit you?

Chandler: My mom came out once, and my brother came out several times. She had a blast over here, but she was in her late sixties when she came, and she loved it.

Interviewer: But that was the only time she could come out?

Chandler: Yes.

Interviewer: And did you ever work outside the home, or did you stay—?

Chandler: I worked at Linens 'n' Things for 20 years, but I didn't do that until after my daughter got out of high school. I was one of those stay-at-home moms, so when they got in from school, they knew I was going to be there, and they'd better be in on time. [Laughs]

Interviewer: And what was it like raising your kids here?

Chandler: It was fun. It was fun. I feel like they had good schooling, and—I'm trying to think—three of them came here [Kennesaw State University] to school. And the oldest one did a year here and then went to the University of Georgia. The middle one graduated from here, and the youngest boy graduated from Southern Tech, and my daughter graduated from here. So, it's kind of all in the family here.

Interviewer: Wow, and where are they all located now?

Chandler: My oldest boy lives in Covington, on Lake Jackson, my middle son lives in Charleston, South Carolina, my youngest son lives in Clearwater, Florida, and my daughter lives in Smyrna. And my daughter—her first husband passed away, but he was a basketball coach up here at Kennesaw State, and he passed away. I think they'd been married about 13 months, and he had brain cancer.

Interviewer: How sad.

Chandler: So, it was Ron Walker. I don't know if they still have—they used to have something—a picture of him in the gym. I don't know, since they've redid the gym, whether he's back there or not.

Interviewer: And do you have any grandchildren?

Chandler: I have six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and two on the way. So, I stay pretty busy. We text. My granddaughter's very good texting back and forth, so I keep up. They send me pictures. But Thanksgiving we always go to my oldest boy's house, because it sits right on the lake, and it's very pretty there, and they've got a lot more room than anybody else, so the whole family—grandkids, everything—all go there. So, we have a blast at Thanksgiving. And I don't have to cook. [Laughs]

Interviewer: You don't cook anything?

Chandler: No.

Interviewer: Do you like to cook?

Chandler: No. I had to with four children, but when I got where I didn't have to cook, I don't cook.

Interviewer: And do you go around and visit them in their homes, or do they come visit you?

Chandler: I don't drive that far anymore. They come and visit me. My sons call me every day or almost every day, and my daughter calls me two or three times a day. I don't know if they're bored or they just want to make sure I'm still breathing. [Laughs]

Interviewer: And your husband, is he still alive?

Chandler: No, he died in '98.

Interviewer: So that's a while ago now.

Chandler: Mm-hmm. August of '98. We'd been married exactly 44 ½ years.

Interviewer: And did he have a prolonged illness or anything?

Chandler: He had bone cancer, so about a year, year and a half. So, but I kept him at home. We had hospice.

Interviewer: So, after he died, did you find that you still had a good support network?

Chandler: Yeah, my kids were very good. And all of them lived around here at that point, but two of them have moved out since, but my neighbors were very good, and they checked on me. Like I said, we'd all been there so many years, and of course some of them have passed on, but I've had a very good—fortunate being with the neighbors that I've had.

Interviewer: So, thinking about the war, and kind of its history, what do you think is most important for young people to know about World War II and right afterward?

Chandler: Just the closeness that we had with family and neighbors. Everybody helped each other. And it was just like—it was just like one big family, and the neighbors were very good where I grew up, and they just helped each other. If somebody was having a hard time, the rest of the neighbors were there for them. It's just the—I guess the unity maybe. It's just the—I don't know. You never felt like people didn't care. It was just—we all grew up there—you know the kids and everything, and it was life, but, like I said, we called everybody aunt and uncle, and it was just like they were. People didn't move over there like they do over here. Like you can tell—I've been in my house since '57. [Laughs]

Interviewer: And you mentioned that you got to go back to your hometown recently—or not that recently?

Chandler: No, I haven't been since 9-11. I'm not getting on a plane. But I went back three or four times. Like I said, I've been here for 23 years before I got to go home the first time. And my neighbors had a party for me. And we had some good eating and everything, because they knew that was my first time back. And we had a little party. It was very nice.

Interviewer: And how had things changed?

Chandler: Over there? A lot more people. My brother— actually I stayed with him a lot, and he lived in – right out of Southampton in the country— not like country here. There's houses around, but it was out in the country. And my mom had moved into London and we— she lived near Harrods. I don't know if you're familiar with that area, but she lived there, so we were within walking distance with everything, as far as history and everything, which I went back. I like the museums and stuff like that, so. The first time I went, I took my daughter. She was ten at that time. And my younger son went. He was sixteen. So, we got to see a lot of things over there that I wanted them to see.

Interviewer: What do you think is most important about your British culture?

Chandler: You know, I haven't even thought about that? I just blended in with everything that goes on over here. I lost my accent. People have told me if I stayed up north I would have kept an accent, because they speak faster up there, but I do miss that. And going home— when I left England, there were just basically British people living there— and going home, and there were so many from different countries living there— that was different to what I'd remembered, you know. But I thoroughly enjoyed it. I did all my history stuff, like I said. I went around.

Interviewer: Well, that's great. Is there anything that— oh, you know, I just wanted to ask you a little bit more about your brother. Did he end up serving during any of the—

Chandler: He was in the Royal Navy, so he was stationed different areas, but not during the war. He joined the Navy when he got out of high school. And his favorite place to go was Australia and New Zealand. That's where he had a lot— he did do oil tankers for a while, because he wanted to make more money, and then he went back in the Royal Navy, and then he started his own business, making the blinds, mini-blinds, and shades to go— awnings— that go outside shops. He did that. That was his business. He had a little shop with Doug Knight on it.

Interviewer: That's great. And you said he came to visit you a few times.

Chandler: Yes, several times.

Interviewer: And are your kids in touch with his kids at all? Do they connect?

Chandler: No. Unfortunately, being that far away you just don't stay— I did with him but I met— I am in touch with one of his daughters. And one of his sons— we're Facebook Friends, so I stay in touch with them Facebook-wise, but as far as talking, no.

Interviewer: So, is there anything that you wanted to talk about that I haven't asked you about?

Chandler: No, I think you've covered it all pretty much. Like I said, if you ask me I can remember,

but a lot of stuff I think you prefer to forget but yeah, it—I just feel sorry for children in war in this day and time, because it's something you never forget. And something will jog my memory, if I see something on television, it clicks. I remember that. So, but I don't think it's anything you ever forget.

Interviewer: Well, thank you for your time and—.

Chandler: You're welcome. I appreciate it.

Interviewer: And we really appreciate it. So, thank you very much!

Chandler: I hope it will do good! Thank you.

Interviewer: I'm sure it will.