

Interview with Bernadine (Dusseau) Limpf – Class of 1938

By Amy Hansen

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We are excited to share our visit with Bernadine (Dusseau) Limpf from the Class of 1938. Bernie is 101 ½ years old and has an infectious laugh and sharp memory. Her stories of growing up in the '20s on "Big Ditch Road" aka Stadium Road, were fascinating, and probably unbelievable for most high school kids today. We were able to visit for just about an hour. Here is a portion of our conversation:

When asked what her secret was to reach the age of 101 ½, Bernadine giggled and stated "the good Lord I guess is the main thing".

Bernadine's principal at Clay was Mr. Black and Ms. Fassett was the Superintendent. "She was a nice lady, she came around to all the schools and talked to us".

Bernie was in Jr. High when the football team was started. They let girls play basketball, but then stopped that because "it was deemed too strenuous" for girls.

History and home economics were Bernie's favorite subjects while she was at Clay.

She really enjoyed her French teacher Miss Margaret Barres. She was nice and genuine.

Bernie wasn't really fond of her senior class photo above. She mentioned that they didn't really fuss over hair and such back then, so she didn't like her photo because it made her "stupid looking". (Her family and I all laughed out loud when she said that).

When asked about if they held 'sock hops', Bernie stated, "That would have been scandalous for sure. Boys and girls in the gym dancing together was not allowed".

She was not allowed to wear anything but long skirts, tall socks and dress shirt.

She remembers fondly going to her prom at the Toledo Yacht Club by herself.

Bernie attended St. Ignatius School on Stadium Rd for grades 1-8.

Graduation was held in the Clay High School Auditorium (old school, the old 'annex'). The football stadium was not built yet. They used to play football on a field in the back acreage, and drag chairs to the game. Her husband Floyd used to say that they used leather helmets "back in his day".

There were 63 graduates in the Class of 1938.

When asked about jobs she has held? After high school, she worked at Libbey Glass and Autolite during the war, they made parts for airplanes. Decided to get a beautician license after that. Worked as a beautician before getting married and having a family.

Bernie married Floyd Limpf, CHS '43 in 1950. They had 5 children; Mary, Karen, Gary, John and David. All are Clay Alumni.

How did you meet your late husband Floyd? "Dances were held at Dunberger Post on Saturday nights, and my brothers were friends with a lot of guys, I met Floyd through them. He was 3 years younger, from the Class of 1943."

Growing up, the Dusseau family were farmers, kids played in corn fields, they had pigs, cows, horses, chickens and ducks. Mom and Dad were Cletus and Agnes Dusseau. They grew up on Big Ditch Road (current Stadium Road) with 4 siblings. Donald, Ceril (Barney), Joseph and Margaret (died at 2).

Bernie's family had no electricity until she was about 12 years old. She saw Old Ditch Road being built out of 'cinder' like tar. All the kids always had black tar on their feet. They had an outhouse, "with a little seat and big seat". Bernie never had indoor plumbing until she got married and had a house in 1950ish. Floyd, his brothers and father built the house on Grange that they raised their family in. The Limpf's were in the construction business. The house Bernie grew up in on Stadium was destroyed in a tornado in the 60's.

Her family didn't own their first car (Model T Ford) until she was in her teen years. She remembered a time that they went to grandmother's house on Corduroy for a birthday, dad couldn't start the old Model T Ford by cranking it, so he went and hooked up the horse and buggy, arrived by buggy instead, and was the talk of the party.

Corduroy Road was named so because it was a road of logs and was bumpy.

Bernie spends a lot of her time reading and enjoying coloring with her care takers at Elizabeth Scott House.

In closing, Bernie said that she is so proud to have attended Clay High School all those years ago.