

**Kristin Leaman:** This is Kristin Leaman and today's date is May 24, 2017. To start, Betty, can you please tell me your full name and the year you graduated and your major?

**Betty Empson:** My name, Betty Lutes Empson. Now, my age?

**KL:** Your major.

**BE:** My major, vocational home economics at Indiana University.

**KL:** What year did you graduate?

**BE:** '44.

**KL:** '44. That's wonderful.

**BE:** And I have—my campus life at IU. This is an article that I wrote—my daughter wrote this book and interviewed all of us who had been in the service. So, I would like you to pay some attention to this one because she wrote it, and it's all about my stay at IU.

**KL:** What's the title of the book, so that people listening know the title?

**BE:** It was a Sunday morning, and she interviewed – it's for family members of World War II – and she compiled the book talking to each one of the relatives, and they all wrote an article. I thought she did an exceptionally good job.

**KL:** What's her name?

**BE:** Vivian Empson Burbank. The book is copyrighted in 2002. Vivian Burbank. [Shuffling] Oh, I'm sorry.

**KL:** No, you're fine.

**BE:** Then her daughter designed the front of the book. It's really interesting.

**KL:** That's wonderful. So your college life is in there?

**BE:** Yes. And . . . it is just as good right now as when I wrote it. We could just take this article complete. Then I found another thing in here, “My Accomplishments” by Betty Empson. It tells that I graduated in 1944 from college, and I have my college yearbook.

Now, I also have another yearbook that belonged to my husband’s aunt, Maddie Empson. This one is fabulous. It’s a hundred years old. If you have never seen it, I’m going to give it back to IU. I don’t know if they have one on hand, but the pages are pretty good condition, and I am going to give it back to IU. So when you do the 2020 book, oh my goodness, that is just full of it [laughs]. I hope that they can use it.

**KL:** Oh yes. They absolutely would be thrilled.

**BE:** All right, now, what was your other question about me?

**KL:** Well, some of the questions that we have on the list, you talked about your major and the year you graduated, but we usually start off with a little family background, like where you were born—

**BE:** —Great. I got it—

**KL:** —And about your family [laughs].

**BE:** I got it. This is a picture of my dad. And this is a picture of my mother. Now, I copied the little picture, and this is my baby sister, that’s me, that’s the baby sister, and my oldest sister. There were four girls and one boy in our family. Now, I’ll show you where I lived. My dad had this house built one year before I was born.

**KL:** That’s beautiful.

**BE:** Beautiful house. In some place, it tells how much it cost.

**KL:** Where was this home?

**BE:** Honeytown, Indiana. Honeytown is three miles north of Brownstown, Indiana. I live in Hamilton Township, Jackson County, Indiana. This house that we’re looking at cost \$5,500. It was built exactly a year before I was born, and I was born in this house.

**KL:** That’s amazing.

**BE:** This then is my grandparents' house. There's the great-grandparents' house.

**KL:** Now where did your grandparents live?

**BE:** All of these people lived at Houston, Indiana.

**KL:** Okay, in Indiana.

**BE:** This is a little project I did for somebody else. It is interesting to look at.

**KL:** It absolutely is. So, you are Indiana born and raised [laughs]. Many generations.

**BE:** Yes, yes. Indiana born and raised. Now here's another picture of my grandparents' house. That was one family reunion, this was another family group. This was my grandparents. This man was in the Civil War; he had to walk with two canes. My grandfather—my mother's dad and mother. That is my dad's mother. Here, the two grandmothers were holding a new baby in the family. Now, here are more family pictures. There's another picture of the house.

**KL:** That's beautiful.

**BE:** This is just some family pictures. Now, here we are. College days at IU for Betty.

**KL:** Oh my goodness, there's the Auditorium. Oh, those are wonderful, Betty.

**BE:** Yes, yes. Now, there's the Auditorium, and there is the Home Management House.

**KL:** Oh, yeah!

**BE:** You know about the Home Management House?

**KL:** I do. The profession of being in the archives, I know a little bit of the history. We have—oh my goodness, they would go crazy over this picture in archives. They would love that. Oh my goodness.

**BE:** Now the next few pictures are at IU, so you can just go ahead and look at a few of them if you—now, if I get too windy, you tell me.

**KL:** No, you go right ahead and tell us about those days.

**BE:** Well, I'm anxious to tell you about when the war started, because it's in that article there that I pointed out. I wanted you to be sure and have.

**KL:** Forest. So you lived in Forest? And Sycamore?

**BE:** I lived in Forest two years. I lived in Memorial one summer. I lived in . . . oh, what is it?

**KL:** Sycamore?

**BE:** Sycamore, one summer. And I graduated in three years.

**KL:** Oh wow.

**BE:** Now, the day after—thank you . . . the day after Pearl Harbor, they said, “Indiana University is going to go on an accelerated program.” Now, this was the very next day after the war—Pearl Harbor. “You are going on an extended program; you'll go three semesters a year. The year will be divided into thirds. We'll have three semesters a year, and we're doing this because the boys want to get out of school as quick as possible. Those who are drafted, they want to get as much college in as possible before they had to leave.”

Well, it wasn't possible to do two programs, a two-semester and a three-semester, so we all went on a yearly basis. So, I graduated in three years instead of four. When I graduated, I wasn't even old enough to vote yet [laughs]. I had one student in the class that was 18 and I was 20, and I got 21 just after the election [laughs].

**KL:** [Looking at pictures] These are wonderful. All your friends.

**BE:** These have been used. That book is a mess. It's still—

**KL:** —It's in great condition.

**BE:** It shows its age. It shows its age.

**KL:** It's in great condition. Let me tell you, from someone who's seen a lot of scrapbooks, it's in beautiful condition. Were you a first-generation college student?

**BE:** Pardon?

**KL:** A first-generation college student?

**BE:** Yes, yes. My brother went to business college for a year, and they had some short courses. But I was the first to go the full, you know. But back then, people just got out of school and just started working. They didn't have to have so much education.

**KL:** Sure. So what brought you to IU, then? Being a first-generation—

**BE:** —Oh, okay, that's an interesting one, too. I won a scholarship at Franklin, and it was a small school. I thought, "Oh great!" But when I started investigating, they did not offer the vocational home economics program. They were—they had a regular . . . I have two diplomas for that. I have a regular . . . home ec, and then I vocational home ec. And at that time, the demand was for vocational home ec. The only place I could get it was the four state universities. So I had to make a change, and I gave up the scholarship that I won, and I went to IU.

**KL:** That's amazing.

**BE:** Those are just some more pictures on campus.

**KL:** These are amazing photos. So you lived, then, in Forest, Memorial, and Sycamore over those three years. Do you have—oh, go ahead.

**BE:** The last year I was there I lived in the Home Management House. The first part, in September, you had to live there a half a semester with the teacher. We kept house, and we canned, and we cleaned, and we scrubbed. Just like a family of nine and one adult lived there.

And you were assistant cook one week and the next week you were the head cook. One week you bought the groceries, and one week you scrubbed carpets. You were the cleaning lady—person. Just like a family would live. So we put to practice all the things we had learned in our home economics program, and we lived there a half of a semester.

That was half of my last semester on campus. When I got out, then I had half a semester to move someplace else. In the meantime, navy took over the boys dorms. In the

meantime, by the time I had my last year, the army was on . . . base. They took over Memorial, and Forest, and we had to find another place to live out in town.

They called us girls that had to move – about 300 of us, I think, had to move – and [laughs] it was a lot of fun because the first nine weeks I had to live in the Home Management House anyway, so I just traded rooms with the next girl that was going to come in to the Home Management House, I took her house out in town, she took my place in the Home Management House.

The next semester, I had two more roommates for the same reason. We just kept switching with these girls [laughs], and it made it easier than finding your own place out in town. But they called us the Townettes, all of us who didn't have—the Townettes.

The Union building at IU also has a hotel, several hotel rooms, they took all those hotel rooms for the girls. Some of the girls got to live in the Union building. Since I was going into Home Management House the first nine weeks, I was kind of bound to everybody else being situated, so I just traded spots with all these girls that was going in the Home Management House. I had a lot of experience the last year.

**KL:** Wow, that works nicely. Were there ever children in the home during the day that you would have to watch or babysit?

**BE:** No, no.

**KL:** Okay, that must have been later.

**BE:** It was strictly just the business management of the house.

**KL:** Do you have any other memories when you were living in Forest, or Sycamore, or Memorial Hall? Do you have favorite memories of those places?

**BE:** Oh yes. I went i to Forest because I knew I was going to have a job. I was considered a working girl. At that time, Forest Hall was designed for working girls. They did not have a cafeteria or serve any meals at Forest Hall at that time. Now the other three dorms did. I chose to keep my job, and I had a summer job just before I started there.

When I graduated from high school, we didn't have guidance counselors, and you just got out and you hunted up your information on your own. My dad said, "Well, I have a first cousin, lives in Bloomington." He said, "Why don't we write them and see if you could come over a few days and stay at their house? And then you go to the administration building and get signed up and get it all figured out, because it looks like we're going to have to figure out what you're going to do."

So I made arrangements to do that. Took my suitcase, and I was going to stay with them a week. Well, when we got there that day, she said, "Well, we're not going to take your suitcase in yet because you have a part-time job for this summer." I thought, "What?"

Well, there was a lady professor in med school who had had a very good babysitter but was also a student. She had anticipated that this student would be babysitting her daughter that year. Well, she got a . . . scholarship or something to a university in New York, where she would go to school all summer. So this lady lost her babysitter and didn't have one, and summer school started Monday, and this was Sunday.

The lady said – she was friends of my cousin – she said, "If you don't mind her staying with me a week instead of you," she said, "I live right on campus. Betty can go every day and see the ad building or whatever. My little daughter knows every building and every path here," and she said, "The two of you can just have a good time with my little girl teaching you Indiana's little shortcuts between classes and this kind of thing."

Well, it turned out to be great. This woman was a big help, and it got me used to being away from home, you know, adjusted. I said to her one day, "I'm a little concerned about my science background." We had to take physics in high school. We did not have a chemistry lab, so we had to take physics. I had to have 10 hours of chemistry the first year I was on campus. I said to her, "I am a little concerned about this."

She said, "Don't let it bother you." She said, "I know that teacher. I'll give him a call tomorrow. We'll find out what book he's going to use this semester." She said, "I'll show you how to study chemistry before schools starts" [laughs]. I mean you talk about medical doctor—she helped me out a lot. I couldn't believe how that woman helped me.

When school started, I was well adjusted to being away from home and I had all this help. The first—I started out taking care of the little girl sometimes after class or if she had a meeting or something. I went once a day and fixed her meals, and then I got to eat over there at her house. So it was a good thing that I went to—and stayed the summer before I was involved with studying and classes and everything. I really got acquainted.

**Third Person:** That was Dr. Strong.

**BE:** Yeah, that was Dr. Strong, a lady. She taught anatomy. At that time, we had the freshman class from Indianapolis now was back on our campus at that time. So, they . . . I got to go over to med school a lot. One of the professors from Indianapolis came down on a certain day of the week. They didn't have a very long lunch hour, so Dr. Strong had me make up two sack lunches, and I carried them over to the school for these two teachers to eat. Then I was in the med building all summer, every day. So you talk about getting an education before school started; I really did get an education before school started.

**KL:** You had your own version of the intensive freshman program before it existed [laughs].

**BE:** That is correct, that is correct. In the fall, then, we started with . . . we found out her other girl was going to come back to campus. She said, "Well, we'll try to make it work. If you could come in and fix the noon meal, and then she'd fix the evening meal, then you come back in evening and eat—just eat. But you fix the noon meal." Well, we tried it for a while until one day, we bought the groceries and there was sausage and hamburger. The other girl needed the sausage, and I accidentally used the sausage in what I was going to fix [laughs].

And this girl was a musician and a little bit high-tempered. She didn't like it because I got the two meats mixed up in the refrigerator and cooked the wrong meat. So I said to Dr. Strong, "I think it's time for me to find another job." She said, "If you're serious about that," she said, "I'll get you a job."

So she called a friend of hers over at the Union building and said, "I have a home ec major working for me, and she is just great. Do you have any spaces available in the



cafeteria now that you could use a really good worker?” He said, “Yes, we do have. Have her come over.” Did you ever know Helen Whitfield?

**KL:** No.

**BE:** She was in charge of the cafeteria at that time, and the cafeteria was a true cafeteria. The food was prepared in the kitchen and brought in and put in . . . it was a U-shape that the guests went around and you stood on the other counter and carved the meat and filled their plate. I worked on the vegetable counter [laughs]. And I got paid \$0.30 an hour [laughs]. Big prize! \$0.30 an hour [laughs]. You wanted changes for what it was like during the war. Well, that’s what I got paid, \$0.30 an hour for working. Well, then after I’d finished get off work, I had to buy my lunch. But it only cost me \$0.20.

**Third Person:** Show them that one.

**BE:** Okay. It only cost me \$0.20. It was \$0.10 for a grilled cheese sandwich and \$0.10 for a chocolate milkshake. What are they today?

**KL:** Oh my goodness. Oh, chocolate milkshakes – I know them well – so they’re probably \$4 now when you get one.

**BE:** Yeah. Can you imagine eating lunch for \$0.20?

**KL:** No, I can’t.

**BE:** And I had a dime left over because I worked an hour [laughs].

**KL:** That’s amazing [laughs].

**BE:** I saved all of my expenses for my eight—[laughs] and this is my Betty’s college expense envelope.

**KL:** Oh my gosh.

**BE:** My dad helped finance my semesters, like buying the tuition, and the books, and that sort of thing. Got me started. But then I paid for my daily expenses and my food by working and getting \$0.30 an hour. Now, am I talking too long on this?

**KL:** No, not at all.

**BE:** All right. For my college expenses, it cost me—it cost my dad just for the eight semesters, all eight semesters, 11—\$1,184.83. \$1,084.83 for eight semesters.

**KL:** Oh my gosh. That won't even cover one semester out of state.

**BE:** One semester. Now I did this . . . and then after I graduated I paid Dad back \$200. He was . . . he had borrowed some money against his insurance, and he wanted to get that paid off. I bet he borrowed it for my tuition sometime, one semester or something. Anyway, I gave him back \$200.

**Third Person:** There's the check.

**BE:** There's the check that I wrote him. I only paid him back \$200 on all the money he had spent for me.

**KL:** Wow, look at this. All of it typed up. That's amazing.

**BE:** Now I'll get down to the total one. The total amount spent for my eight semesters: Dad's help was \$1,184.83. My work at the Union, I brought \$469.45. My work at Dr. Strong's house – and she didn't pay me, but I estimated – I estimated \$168. The total for my work was \$637 and my dad had helped me to \$1,184. The total amount spent for the whole time I was there was \$1,822.28. You can't go a month or two over there now for that, I don't think.

**KL:** No [laughs].

**BE:** And I went four years in three. So that's kind of interesting on the money.

**KL:** I'm blown away that you kept those records. That's amazing. That is so amazing. You know, Betty, you talked about Dr. Strong as being somebody who really positively influenced you at school. Do you have any other people you remember, professors or friends, who really impacted your experience at IU?

**BE:** Mm. Yes, I also took biology for a second . . . teaching subject. So when I got in high school I could teach home ec and biology, both. And that doctor, Dr. Weatherwax was his name, was so kind to all of us.

One of the highlights that I remember about my college days is I was in a summertime course and we were identifying plants. He said, “One weekend we’re going to go up to Lake Michigan and stay—we’re going to camp out on the sand, and we’re going to gather these,” I call them weeds, that grow along the highway, but, “flowers, and I want you to have a gallon bucket to put your specimen in. When I make a stop, we’re going to pull up a specimen for each one of you and put it in your gallon bucket. Then when you get back we’ll go to the lab, and we’re going to run all of those through the key and figure out what it is you picked up.”

It was the most fun to get to go on a trip with—and he had a little old truck, screened in on the back so we couldn’t reach out. It wasn’t a van. It was not fancy [laughs]. But we had more fun sleeping in tents and going into the lake, and then when we got back we . . . looked up all the plant names. He was a wonderful professor. And, let’s see, some others who’ve made a point.

**Third Person:** Dr. Kinsey? Dr. Kinsey?

**BE:** Yeah, Dr. Kinsey, I had him.

**KL:** Oh, you did? Oh my goodness.

**BE:** Uh-huh. Yes, oh yes. Yes, and that was back when he was first, oh, just criticized to no end for his work. But I was in the birds and the bees class [laughs].

**KL:** Oh my goodness, you were? That’s amazing.

**BE:** He would take us on early morning tours. We’d get up early, and class would be like 6 or 7 o’clock in the morning, because that’s when the birds were just getting breakfast on the nest and flying and . . . oh yep, I had Dr. Kinsey. At that time, you didn’t talk sex or anything like that. He was way out ahead of that time [laughs].

**KL:** Wow, that’s amazing.

**BE:** Yeah, I'd forgot about that one, Bev [laughs]. Let's see, did you think of any of the others, Bev, that I've mentioned?

**Third Person:** That's the one that I thought would be the most interesting.

**KL:** That's amazing, yeah.

**BE:** Oh, and when—back to Dr. Strong. She said she thought she could get me a job at the Union building. There was somebody, I think his name was Mr. Jordan, that was in charge of the whole Union building. She called him and asked, "Do you have any vacancies in the cafeteria?" And he said, "Yes, we do." And she said, "Well, I have a girl here that – she's a home ec major – and I think she'd make you a real good employee and she needs a job." He said, "Have her come over." So I went over to the Union building and, shoot, I had that job just like that. Just on her recommendation.

**KL:** That's wonderful.

**BE:** After I graduated from IU and started my teaching – I taught in Aurora my first year – I was in class one day and the office lady came to the door and said, "Indiana University wants to talk to you." I said, "What?" She said, "Well, I'll get someone to cover your class because since it's a university calling," she said, "I know it's a business call. Let me get a sub in here for you for a few minutes, and you go take this call."

Well I went to the phone, and it was Helen Whitfield who managed the cafeteria. She said, "Betty, how are you liking your teaching?" I said, "Oh, just fine." She said, "We are hard up for some help," and she said, "I know you are a good one, and I just thought if you was a little discouraged with teaching, maybe you'd like to have this job." IU calls me and offers me a job.

**KL:** Oh my gosh, that's amazing.

**BE:** I mean, small town. Either that, or I knew the right people. I think I got acquainted with just the right people at IU. I was amazed.

**KL:** Wow, so did you take the job?

**BE:** No, I did not take the job. I said, “Well, I really went to college to be a teacher. It’s in my first year, and if I’d been teaching 15 or so years, I might have liked a change.” But I said, “It’s so nice of you to call, but no thanks. I’ll have to pass on this one.”

**KL:** Wow, that’s amazing.

**BE:** But I thought it was a compliment that she would call me.

**Third Person:** Mother, go back to the dorms and when you had the blackout warnings.

**BE:** Oh, because we lived on military property, to speak, all of their drills and things at night, when they had blackouts we, as a university group, had to have blackouts also. The whole campus.

**Third Person:** They don’t know what that is. Explain that. What is a blackout?

**BE:** Well, if you thought enemy planes were coming, you would want the town blacked out, the whole town, because they wouldn’t know where to drop the bombs. If they had the lights on, they could tell by the number of lights on where the central of civilization is and so on, so we had to go through blackouts just like military. It was interesting. You’ll see some pictures here of when they were—the army and the navy both were on campus.

**KL:** Wow, that’s amazing.

**BE:** Yeah, this—turn the page or give me another—

**KL:** —There’s you [laughs].

**Third Person:** Tell the story about you combing your hair during the blackout.

**BE:** Oh, yes, in the blackout . . . when we had to turn—now, are they into Aurora and the big flood that I went through?

**Third Person:** That’s where she went to teach after that.

**KL:** Wow, oh my goodness.

**Third Person:** In the blackout . . .

**BE:** Yeah, in the blackout you didn't have anything else to do, so we'd brush our hair. Couldn't have the lights on, but we didn't know that there was static electricity in our hair and that they could see the sparks. And through the windows, the police and the military police saw that. Then they complained and said, "What are you doing in there?" So we quit brushing our hair real quick.

**KL:** Oh my goodness.

**BE:** That was disobeying military rules. I mean, it was to be a blackout.

**KL:** Well, and it must have been very dark if they were picking up static electricity shocks. I mean, it had to have been pitch black.

**BE:** Yes. And they could see through the windows, and they didn't know what it was.

**KL:** [Laughs] So you learned quickly. Brushing your hair during a blackout is no more.

**BE:** Brushing your hair during a blackout.

**KL:** That's an amazing story. Wow, there's pictures of you. It says, "Betty in a suit she made. Fall 1944." So, you a seamstress?

**BE:** Uh-huh. See, I took clothing in home ec. I made dresses and I made . . . one little niece I have, I made—had to make a baby dress and put smocking across here. In one of my classes, it was a weaving class, and these are some of the things that I made. Just little doily-like things. Now, I had to make one big rug and then these are little—

**KL:** —You made these?

**BE:** Yes, I made them.

**KL:** Oh my goodness. They're beautiful.

**BE:** And I've used them, some of them, for years. This one is linen. Both threads cross and length-wise is linen.

**KL:** Oh my goodness.

**BE:** I always thought this one was pretty.

**KL:** Oh, that's beautiful.

**BE:** I really enjoyed the weaving class. Home ec there was very interesting.

**KL:** Oh my goodness. It's beautiful. You made all of those?

**BE:** Yeah, I made all of them. And I thought, "Well, it doesn't have very much to do with my education." It was just another class and what we did.

**KL:** That's impressive. Those are beautiful.

**BE:** The big rug has been wore out for years. I used it. And these, I use some of them under a flowerpot or something.

**KL:** This is great. Oh, this is a great picture of you.

**BE:** Now that's the beginning of a boyfriend.

**KL:** [Laughs] Oh these are wonderful. Pictures, wow. So did you have favorite student hangouts when you were on campus?

**BE:** I don't think I had time.

**KL:** You sounded pretty busy. I know there were things like: I think the Book Nook was around at that time.

**BE:** Yes, uh-huh. Now this is my Arbutus in 1944.

**KL:** It's in great condition.

**BE:** Well, it's not so good, but see, it shows its wear. And then when I was graduated 50 years I went back, and that was the list of the 50-year people that came back.

**KL:** That's amazing.

**BE:** This is me.

**KL:** Oh, that's a beautiful picture.

**BE:** This is the *Daily Student*. The *Daily Student* was a newspaper put out by the students. I underlined this because it lists the navy. It said, “Every two weeks the key is published and distributed with the student for the naval training school. The news and editorial content is received from contributors, members of the school. The *Service Student* is published voluntarily by the trainees of the 1551<sup>st</sup> service unit of the United States Army as a weekly page in the *Student*.”

So the military even put in a page in the *Daily Student* . . . of what they were doing. And the *Daily Student* put in an editor about once or twice a year. It listed here the editors, and I wrote down here one of these editors, “Marilyn Vice, was Betty Lute’s roommate for one semester.” So I got all the news on the *Daily Student* from my roommate.

**KL:** From the editors, herself, wow. So were you involved in any clubs or organizations?

**BE:** I belonged to the home ec club that we had in the department. I didn’t have time for much social life.

**Third Person:** Talk about the movie, *Indiana Goes to War*.

**BE:** Oh, yeah . . . they had a—oh, a few weeks after the war started, they had a movie on campus. What’d I say the name of it was?

**Third Person:** *Indiana Goes to War*. *Indiana University Goes to War*.

**BE:** Yeah, and so . . . I can’t think what I was going to say. Well, we got put out of the dorms, and this one is a picture of the Townettes. They took the Union building and then there was three other buildings that they had. And here I am, sitting down on the step. But we had to give up our dorm. What was the story I was going to tell?

**Third Person:** They sent you home to change your dress to be in the movie.

**BE:** Oh, yes. They were going to make this movie, so they came to each department, and you had a few minutes to show how your department is changing and blending in with the war movement, and so on. Well, I was in Home Nursing class and we were, each one, responsible for a little demonstration.



Well, I went to class early that day for some reason, and the teacher was just a 'hurryin' around so much, and I said, "What's going on?" She said, "Oh, the cameraman's coming this afternoon," and I didn't know he was coming. She said, "Do you have—" looked at me, what I had on, and I had on more like college clothes.

She said, "Do you have time to go home and put on a dress? Like you were taking care of a patient in your bed? Then you can do your demonstration for this movie." I said, "I'll run home and change my dress."

So I went home to the dorm or wherever it was I was living right then and changed. Got back and what the little demonstration I gave . . . was if you were living out in the country and you had children sick, and back then they didn't have hospital beds that you could even move up and down or raise the patient or anything, so my demonstration was—[to third person] she's going to show me.

**Third Person:** This little chair.

**BE:** Put a chair in a bed like that, and put two bed pillows here, and then they could lean up against this. That was my demonstration. If you can find that movie on campus, I wish you would, because it was *Indiana University Goes to War*.

**KL:** In fact, I think the Moving Image Archive has that, so I'll double-check on that, because you'll be in it.

**BE:** They would go to every department telling you how something that had changed in their department. It's a good movie. They put it out and then loaned it to high schools. They were drumming up students. See, we lost so many boys that they were having to get more girls coming because they just needed the student body.

**KL:** Wow. I will check on that for sure.

**BE:** Yeah, okay. This is the Townettes. Now here's the military on campus. See all of these things? Do you want to turn it around and let you see? It truly was a military feel to it.

**KL:** Wow, they're all so young looking. Wow. Arches Memorial. These are wonderful. Oh, one in the snow. On cold days even, you have to march.

**BE:** Now I think that's all I had marked in the book, in this book. Now, this is my diploma.

**KL:** When he was still signing, Herman B Wells!

**BE:** There's 150<sup>th</sup> . . . that's mostly in pretty good condition.

**KL:** It is in very good condition. So you have one of the degrees that was signed by Herman. There became so many students at some point, he had to stop signing, I believe so you—wow. That's beautiful. [Reading diploma] "In Home Economics." Look at this. These are in perfect—

**BE:** —I graduated the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, 1944. And that's the little cards that we sent out.

**KL:** Oh my goodness, with your picture. You've kept everything in great condition, and you've kept it. It's—I'm—

**BE:** —Yeah, you picked on a good one when you said you wanted to know something about the changes at IU.

**KL:** Oh my goodness. I mean, they're just amazing to see.

**BE:** And I'm not through yet.

**KL:** Good [laughs].

**BE:** Okay. Yeah, here's Betty's expenses. College days at IU. I'll put it all back together later. Now, I wanted to show you this book [pages turning]. Now, this is not an antique. [To third person] You gave it to me just recently. It's to set a hot drink on or something, but they used all of—there's the IU sign and different things about the campus.

**KL:** Oh that's neat. Maxwell Hall, *Hoosiers*, Marching Hundred.

**BE:** Now, this is the Arbutus that my husband's aunt bought. Maddie Empson, 1916 Arbutus and IU yearbook. If they don't have one of these at IU, I want you to take it with

you. I want to give it to IU, and you decide whether it should go in the library or in the department that you're working for; I don't care what. The book is in good condition, but the binder is a mess. It's kind of a suede—

**KL:** It's got red rot. Okay.

**BE:** See, I just put paper towel around it and don't worry about it. 1916 *Arbutus*. And her name was Maddie Empson.

**KL:** That's neat.

**BE:** What the university has been doing—it says “25 years ago, Indiana University was hardly on the map. With 321 students, it was only a small western college. Last year, with 26—2,644 men and women enrolled on its records, Indiana began to assume her rightful place as one of the great universities. In 1890, there were 65 degrees conferred,” that means diplomas, 65 in 1890.

“Last year, there was 382. The instructional staff at that time was only 65 people. Now the faculty numbers 195. The number of volumes in the library in 1890 was about 12,000 books. Now it's over 102,000.” And hard telling what it is in today's world. “The campus in 1890 consisted of only 20 acres. While the only buildings were Owen, Wiley, and Mitchell Halls.” Now Wiley, I had a lot of classes in that building.

“In 1916, the campus contains 118 acres, and there have been called—there have been added 6 buildings: the library building; the Student Building; Maxwell Hall; the men's gymnasium; Kirkwood Observatory; a building used for the printing plant, journalism department, an electro-chemical laboratory, and a central power plant. A new men's gymnasium, to cost \$200,000, is now being built. The Medical School and Robert W. Long Hospital at Indianapolis are parts of the university. An additional area of more than 250 acres is owned by the university.

In 1890, the university consisted of a College of Liberal Arts and the School of Law alone. In 1916, it includes, in addition, the School of Education, Graduate School, School of Medicine, and Robert W. Long Hospital. An extension division, this summer the

College of Liberal Arts has major subject department in 1890 to 25 at present.” I’m surprised to see that many figures about the early, early college.

This one is a Homecoming picture. They had to come by—there’s the old cars, there’s the train that brought in people for Homecoming, and then the article about Homecoming. This is the lady, right here, Maddie Empson, she is the person who owned this book. It was my husband’s aunt. She went there two years.

I guess just because I was—Francis went to Purdue. My husband went to Purdue, but she gave it to him maybe thinking, “Well, Betty’s the one that went to IU, and she’ll be happy to see this.” So she’s the one that we’ll have to give credit to for this book going back to IU. But this has tons of information in it that what you’re talking about. This is the 1916 Arbutus. I just marked a few things in it. Do you see anymore little papers sticking out back there?

**KL:** I see one more, right here.

**BE:** Okay, Indiana University, Arbutus 1916, page 352. Oh, they had 6,000 alumni, 2,644 students, and 10 buildings 100 years ago.

**Third Person:** It’s like four times more.

**KL:** I know, we’re in the millions now for, I believe, alum [laughs]. It’s a different number.

**BE:** Oh yeah. So it’s interesting, isn’t it?

**KL:** It is. The growth is just remarkable.

**BE:** Well, I was so pleased when you said this is what the information you needed and wanted to hear. I kind of marked it here so that you can . . . and this book, you can take back with you.

**KL:** Thank you, that’s wonderful.

**BE:** Now, I do want it written in here “Donated by Maddie Empson.”

**KL:** Yeah, definitely.

**Third Person:** Going back to 1944, here's the home ec—does this bring back any memories or conversations?

**BE:** Oh yes. Yes. She was the head of the department, that lady.

**Third Person:** But what was her name?

**BE:** Geiger.

**KL:** Beatrice Geiger?

**BE:** Uh-huh. Beatrice Geiger.

**KL:** Wow.

**BE:** This is a picture in Home Management House. They call it here the “practice house.” Oh, there's somebody propped up in bed.

**KL:** I see. That's so neat . . . I saw that Herman B Wells had signed your diploma. Do you have memories of a chancellor or any other administrators at IU while you were there?

**BE:** Well, I got acquainted with a lot of people through my job. Since I worked in the kitchen, the cafeteria, when the trustees were on campus, they ate there. If they had an evening meeting, then they also had an evening meal. They would have me come in extra.

One of these men that was on the board at that time was in South Bend, and he was superintendent of schools in South Bend. He offered me a job. He had watched me work, and he asked my supervisor, “Hey, would she make me a good teacher?” He interviewed me right there in the Union building for a job in South Bend.

Well, I didn't take the job because that's clear on the other end of the state. This is during the war; I didn't have a car. You had to go by train or bus. It was—be expensive going back and forth to come visit my parents. I said, “No, I'll have to turn it down.” But think of how, accidentally, I was offered a job. How many more—have I covered [unintelligible]'s book?

**Third Person:** Yes, you've been through everything you had laid out, but she may have more questions.

**KL:** I do, actually. I know that you said you were a Townette, and at some point you had to go into Bloomington to live because of the army and the navy on campus. Do you remember things about Bloomington, and the city, and how it looked? Were there things you liked to do in the city that you remember?

**BE:** I didn't do very much except just my work. I had to have a—did I tell you about my four-hour lab that I had to have? I took . . . when you're cooking for a hotel or a big restaurant, I had a class in that. I had to have a four-hour lab each week, and I just couldn't get it – with my work schedule and my other schedule – I couldn't get that four hours. They finally said, "Well, would you object going to a military kitchen for that lab?" I said, "No!" So I have four hours of being with the military to get that requirement fulfilled. It was from 2 o'clock in the morning to 6.

**Third Person:** [Gasp].

**KL:** Oh my goodness. How many days a week? Just one?

**BE:** One. Just one night. One night a week. I didn't have a car. You don't walk across the campus at two o'clock in the morning to go—and it was clear across. I lived on the south end of campus. The boys' dorms was on the north end where they were, where they wanted me to work. I had to call a cab at 2 o'clock in the morning [laughs], and then get back to class at 6 and get my breakfast, and then go to class, one night a week.

**KL:** Oh my goodness.

**BE:** But you talk about quantity. It was a quantity course that I was preparing for. It was a really good place to work.

**KL:** That's very neat. Wow.

**BE:** So that's just another one of my stories.

**KL:** Yeah, and I can see why you didn't have a lot of time for other things.

**BE:** No, no. I was busy.

**KL:** You were too busy working and going to school.

**BE:** To get through school in three years, and constant, year-round, it was hard. But the thing was, I graduated so young.

**KL:** You said that you had a job at the Union. And then, did you have any other jobs on campus, or was that the one that you stayed through in the cafeteria where you worked?

**BE:** Yeah. Yeah, that was all one.

**KL:** That was all one job? That's wonderful.

**BE:** I was back on campus a year or so ago and we went to the Union building. The cafeteria is not there that was there when I was there. It's made into another room. They've changed the inside of the Union building so much I hardly knew where I was.

**KL:** I bet [laughs]. That was actually a question I was going to ask you, if you've been back recently and if the campus has changed, probably significantly, from the forties. Can you pinpoint some of those changes?

**BE:** Well . . . not offhand. I can't think of what . . .

**Third Person:** If she was walking down the street, she could probably say, "This was there. This wasn't there."

**KL:** Probably campus is much larger than what you remember.

**BE:** I didn't realize how much these other people helped me. I don't know if it's just accidental or how I got so much help from people, because I was paying my way. My dad bought my books and paid the tuition and getting me started, but then I took care of all my expenses with my \$0.30 job.

**Third Person:** Tell them about how you had to have your P.E. class to get in, back when you were at Cortland High School.

**BE:** Oh, when I was at Cortland High School, the P.E. teacher, ladies' P.E. teacher, died. Rather than fill her job, they just—the girls just didn't take P.E. Well, the principal when he got to looking over my transcript of credits he said, "Hey, you're going to college. You've got to have a degree—you've got to have a class in P.E." And he said, "If you don't, they're going to put you in a beginning athletic class, and you're going to have to pay money for it when we give it to you free at Cortland." So he said, "Here's what I'm going to do: you already cook for us in the cafeteria—"

**Third Person:** This is in high school.

**BE:** He said, "You go ahead and eat your lunch while you're cooking that, just before noon. When noon hour comes, we're going out and we're going to have volleyball, or handy-over-the-roof with the ball, or some sport. And you're going to get your degree—your points that you need for this."

**Third Person:** So she could go—have her classes to go to IU. How many were in your graduating class at Cortland?

**BE:** 20 [laughs].

**KL:** Oh my goodness. Wow.

**BE:** Quite a change.

**Third Person:** Talk a little bit about your neck and your polio and having to take the swim classes at IU.

**BE:** When we enrolled in IU, they gave us a physical. You stood in line and one person checked your eyes, and one person checked your ears, and your next person checks your heart. The next doctor checks this, and the next doctor checks this. I don't think they do that anymore. Well, but that's the way they did it then.

Well, they found that I hold my head funny, and a little stiff. They said, "Well, I think the first class you need is exercises." So the first semester, they put me in a class of just different exercises and turning my head, and then that didn't do any good. So the next two semesters, they said, "Let's try swimming and see if we can limber up that neck."



**Third Person:** She had polio as a child, and that's what caused this.

**KL:** Oh, okay.

**BE:** The little neighbor girl wasn't announced polio, and what I had they never did give it that name. But it was just—oh, within a month after this other little girl had polio, we're pretty sure that's what it was. And I still have the stiff neck and . . . hold my head funny.

**Third Person:** But IU was going to fix it with swimming.

**KL:** With swimming.

**BE:** They were going to fix it [laughs].

**KL:** Limber your neck up with some water.

**BE:** Then they changed, and every student had to take a class in athletics. Everybody had to have—sign up for one class. They found that our boys and girls just . . . well, when they went into the army, they were slow. You know, not enough exercise. So real quick they changed that; everybody had to have a P.E. class. Have they gone back the other way now?

**KL:** I think it really depends on your major and what your core curriculum is compared to your major classes as well. I bet—I don't think that they require any kind of physical education like they used to. But you can take them as electives, so you can take swimming, and you can take other classes like that.

**BE:** I thought it was interesting that every man and boy had to register, regardless of where they lived or how many kids they had.

**Third Person:** Register for the draft.

**KL:** The draft, yeah.

**BE:** Then they had to prove to them why they couldn't go, but every man and boy had to have—had to—

**KL:** —Mandatory. My dad remembers that well.

**BE:** Well, can you think of anything else I haven't told them?

**Third Person:** I don't know. Keep asking.

**KL:** Well, I know that you had talked about your work life and your school life and balancing those two things quite a bit. Did you have to worry about work and family and school life at all?

**BE:** No, not family.

**KL:** Still you were too young for that. Okay. One of the questions we like to ask, too, is: have you participated in any IU continuing ed courses, like Mini University? Have you stayed in touch with the university in that way? I know you've mentioned that you've gone to your 50<sup>th</sup> reunion.

**BE:** Yes, I've gone to some of the reunions. Not really, because I've been busy with my own life now [laughs].

**KL:** Was the reunion held at IU Bloomington?

**BE:** Yes.

**KL:** Okay, so you got to go down there and see all of your classmates. What kind of things do they do at those reunions? Do they walk you around some of the buildings that used—

**BE:** —Yes, they opened up some of the buildings for you to take tours. It's really interesting to go back. When I was there . . . was it last year? This man was so—it was a day when parents were bringing their kids to college, to campus. This man was kind of on duty to greet people and talk.

**Third Person:** He was on the alumni board.

**KL:** Okay.

**BE:** He was just really interesting and asked me so many questions about the price of food and, you know, that \$0.30 an hour and \$0.10 for a milkshake and \$0.10 for a sandwich. He just couldn't get over it. Then he kind of showed me where it was I used to work because it's made into a different kind of a room now. I didn't even recognize it.

**KL:** That's really neat.

**BE:** My . . . I never regretted going through in three years, but it kept me hopping.

**KL:** Yeah, I bet. I bet you were very busy.

**BE:** But like my dad said, "If you come home for the summer, what are you going to do?" I'd worked for \$0.50 a day for a woman, cleaning her house or taking care of her kids, so there was no big money back there to be made either.

**KL:** Right [laughs]. Betty, can you tell me about your career and life after IU, and how your degree impacted your career later?

**Third Person:** I know where that piece of paper is.

**BE:** I don't know when I wrote this or why I wrote it, but it's "My Accomplishments" by Betty Empson. "My greatest accomplishment since high school was my family: two daughters, four grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren. In 1944, I graduated from college during World War II.

Indiana University went on an accelerated program. I was able to complete a four-year course in vocational home economics and earn my B.S. degree in three calendar years. That was a big accomplishment.

I was fortunate to be able to complete five years of teaching and earn my lifetime teaching license before staying home to raise my family, another big accomplishment. When the youngest daughter was in the seventh grade and the oldest was a freshman, I returned to teaching. My accomplishment this time was 27 years of teaching. All of these were in Decatur County, Indiana. After my retirement in 1993, I have had time to travel and enjoy my great grandchildren. Betty Empson."

**KL:** Wow. That's amazing: 27 years of teaching after your girls were in school.

**BE:** So you can have that if it is any importance to you.

**KL:** That's amazing. Then you taught in Decatur County for all of those years. You lived in Decatur County as well, that whole time?

**BE:** Mmhmm.

**Third Person:** The first five were somewhere else.

**KL:** Oh, okay.

**BE:** I taught three years in Aurora, one year in Alexandria, and one year in Monon. That's when my husband was a senior in college. We moved up there so he could go continue his degree.

**Third Person:** At Purdue.

**KL:** That's wonderful. Then came back to here to teach?

**BE:** Yeah. Then I didn't teach until, like I said, until seventh grade and freshman in high school, and then I went back to work. That was another one when they called me, they were desperate. It was about two weeks before school started and the home ec teacher couldn't fill her job or something. I don't remember why she couldn't fill the job.

Anyway, they were left without a home ec teacher just right time school start. The superintendent called all four state universities for vocational teachers, and he turned his chair around to the office girl and said, "What am I going to do? None of the four colleges can give me—recommend a home ec teacher." She said, "You got one living within two blocks of this office" [laughs]. He said, "Give me her name. I'm going to put her to work" [laughs].

So he called—the office called and said there was a vacancy and he would like for me to come in to interview. I said, "Well, I'm not sure that I want to go back yet, but when I get the girls ready for college, I do want to come back." He said, "Let me tell you something. You come back now, and you put your check in the bank, and when you get those girls through high school, you'll have your money to put them through." I mean, he was a good talker.

**KL:** Boy, yeah [laughs].

**BE:** I said, “Well, okay.” He said, “We’ll take you on a tour, show you what we’re trying to sell you on here.” Then I stayed 27 years. I stayed in that building two years, then they built new buildings, and I got on the list for the new building because I had helped them out, so to speak. I went into the new building and stayed 25 years.

**KL:** Wow. You taught home economics. Did you teach any other classes?

**BE:** Yes, I taught biology for junior high. I had them making a scrapbook, and we picked up leaves and they had to identify them, and that kind of stuff.

**KL:** Oh, I did that in my biology class.

**BE:** Over in the new building, I never taught anything except home ec.

**KL:** That’s amazing. Busy, busy teacher. Busy life.

**Third Person:** And we’re going to treat you today to her spice coffee cake. All of her kids.

**BE:** I have taught all of my little—

**KL:** —Really? That’s wonder—that’s so sweet. Thank you. Those recipes are important.

**BE:** My grandkids stand on two chairs over there, and we make spice cake.

**Third Person:** Everybody makes Grandma Betty’s spice cake.

**KL:** Oh, that’s wonderful. My grandparents had recipes like that. They were candy makers, and we did the same thing. We would help.

**Third Person:** The key to this recipe is you learn to measure. All the liquid measures and all the dry measures. That’s why she used it in class. So you make it totally from scratch.

**BE:** It’s totally from scratch.

**KL:** That's amazing. That's really sweet. My mom got me to learn measuring by cookies. She knew that was the secret for me [laughs]. That's wonderful. Well Betty, one thing that we ask everybody and we kind of close with, with the interview is: what does IU mean to you?

**BE:** Well, it sure made a whale of a difference in my life [laughs]. All the way through.

**KL:** That's wonderful.

**BE:** Yeah. I really enjoyed college, and I guess it didn't bother me for being away from home because I had that first summer away from home without any studying. So that was a godsend: find a summer time job.

Dr. Strong taught anatomy, and she took me through the little museum they have in the med building one day. Certain spots of it were off limits, like cadavers; I didn't get to see any cadavers [laughs]. But they had one exhibit, it was things about this big around and about this deep [gestures], and they took a body and they sliced it, so to speak, and put a slice in each of these bit containers, in alcohol.

So if you wanted to see the heart region, she could point out what your heart looks like on the inside. Then each section of your body, what it looks like. I don't know if she was supposed to show outsiders that or not. Because . . . she said she can't show me a cadaver – the whole body – but she could show me the—what had been fixed up as a museum piece. They probably used it as something about studying. But that's—

**Third Person:** —Do they still have those? Those slices?

**KL:** I have no idea if they're still at IU.

**BE:** Oh I doubt it. They probably come—

**KL:** —But I've seen those in museums before.

**Third Person:** That's why I wondered if they would have some kind of a little medical museum at IU, that they'd still have that.

**BE:** Well, and then they did away with having the freshman class there on campus. It went back to Indianapolis. They still have med school down there, but it's not like it was when I was there. Those new limestone buildings – I call them new –

**Third Person:** You know, the ones built in the thirties? The twenties and thirties? The new ones [laughs]?

**BE:** Well, like the dorms, the girls' dorms, they had three new ones there. Well, up until then, they had to put the girls out in town, they had Townettes years before because there was no place—campus didn't provide a big dormitory. They had to build them.

**KL:** Wow, that's amazing.

**BE:** The first time I saw IU, I was in high school and we had gone to Mitchell to a sunshine meeting of some kind on a Saturday. Velma McCain was a home ec teacher. On the way back, we got out of the meeting at Mitchell so early, she said, "I haven't been in Bloomington for a long time. Would you girls like to—" we were in her car, "Would you girls like to ride up and see what Bloomington looks like?"

I said, "Yes, I would." That's the first time I'd ever been on a campus. She took us past Forest Hall—not Forest, what's the one out on the highway? Memorial? Is it Mem—what is the one out on the highway? Well anyway, the first one that they built.

**Third Person:** Which highway was it?

**KL:** That's what I'm trying to think: what would have been the highway back then? I bet it was Memorial.

**BE:** Yeah, I think so. We had a local girl that was there in summer, and so Velma, my teacher, went in to see if she was there and we could get a tour of the dormitory, but she'd gone home for the weekend. So we didn't get—but that was my first time to see IU, was that high school teacher who took me there.

**Third Person:** So that would have been the thirties.

**BE:** Mmhmm.

**KL:** How old were you? Probably teens?

**BE:** I graduated from high school . . . about 17, wasn't I? Three years and I was 20. I wasn't 21 yet, because I couldn't vote.

**KL:** Wow, that's amazing.

**BE:** Those kids at Aurora said, "Ms. Empson, you—" I wasn't Empson then.

**Third Person:** Miss Lutes.

**BE:** "Ms. Lutes, have you voted today?" I didn't want to tell them I wasn't old enough. I said, "Well, I voted in my hometown. Absent ballot."

**KL:** [Laughs] That's funny. Don't want to let them know how young—

**BE:** —Wasn't old enough to vote.

**Third Person:** That would have been for Franklin Roosevelt.

**BE:** Mmhmm.

**KL:** Oh wow. That's right. That would have been right around that time.

**BE:** I enjoyed Aurora. I loved that river, and I only lived a block from the water.

**KL:** Oh my. How nice.

**BE:** It was—that was interesting.

**KL:** That's wonderful.

**BE:** Well, do you think you have a need for that book?

**KL:** You know, we do have yearbooks, but we certainly can put this as part of our collection and make a really nice box for it so that it stays nice. What we do is we'll create a record for it. In that record, it will say that you donated it on behalf of your aunt, Maddie.



Then we'll put all that information in there, and then we can have something inserted as well to let them know that this was her yearbook as well. We can make sure that it stays nice and preserved so that way, you know, with the red rot, it will stop when we're able to box it.

**BE:** Did you notice in the center that both those pages are just this white?

**KL:** Yeah, these are really—I mean, this was nice quality paper on the inside. Unfortunately, we see this a lot in any kind of suede or leather ledger books. It just gets—it's called red rot, and it'll just get all over you and fall apart. People say, "What do you do for that?" And we say, "We make a box." And you wear gloves.

**BE:** It's just a nuisance. It's messy.

**KL:** It is.

**BE:** That's why I have the paper around it. This worked fine.

**KL:** Mmhhh. And we have a conservator who will be able to make sure this is, you know, properly sealed and boxed, so that way it will stay and keep really well. Yeah, we can certainly do that. That works.

**BE:** Well, she never married and didn't have any children. She was a principal at Vallonia. Do you know where Vallonia is? It's close to Brownstown and Seymour.

**KL:** Okay, I know where Brownstown and Seymour is.

**BE:** She was a principal there, but she was the kind that was wanting to go back to school all the time.

**Third Person:** She went to Columbia past that.

**BE:** Yeah, went to Columbia.

**KL:** Wow. Wow.

**Third Person:** And Butler.

**BE:** So she was kind of a transit kind of a person. She left this book and some of her books and things at the home place. Well, they stayed in an attic for years, and then the family decided to do some remodeling and they had to move everything out of upstairs. They had an empty corner for the summer, so all the books went to the corner for the summer [laughs] in boxes until they got the house straightened up. But I wonder how many people ever looked at it. It still looks new inside, for 100 years old.

**KL:** Yeah, the paper was good quality, so it stays well in the book. But like I said, that suede just—

**BE:** —And did you notice in the front there's about 10 pages that's a yellow color?

**KL:** [Flips pages] Right here?

**BE:** Yeah, a little more [pages flipping] . . . little more . . . a little more . . . there. See? Those are the first buildings.

**KL:** It looks like they used some kind of different paper for these kind of photos, and it was more acidic. So it's starting to deteriorate a little bit. But it's still—yeah, it's from the photos. It's acidic.

**BE:** Yeah, so you got a little bit of stuff there about when the university started.

**KL:** It's beautiful. That is really neat. That's wonderful.

**BE:** Thank you.

**KL:** Well, before I turn the recorders off, is there anything that you want to add before I turn them off, or do you think that we've covered everything?

**BE:** I think we've covered it. I had it laid out and marked [laughs].

**KL:** You did a wonderful job. We've covered all the questions and more.