OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Title: Oral history interviews of the Minnesota's Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I.
Date: 2001-2003.
Quantity: 62 sound cassettes (60 min. each); 2 sound cassettes (90 min. each); 30 transcripts in 30 folders
Location: See Detailed Description section for shelf locations.

HISTORY OF THE MINNESOTA’S GREATEST GENERATION PROJECT

Thousands of Minnesotans lived through the era of World War II. Many served their country through direct participation in the armed forces. Others contributed to the nation's war effort through work in war-related industries. And still others remember the reality of life during wartime, from the rationing of everything from sugar to gasoline, to the scarcity of items like home appliances and nylon stockings.

The memories of these people, veterans and civilians alike, are an important piece of American history. Their lives, whether marked by bravery on the front lines in war or simple endurance of daily life at home and work, shaped a generation and the nation for years after the war officially ended.

The Minnesota's Greatest Generation project ensures the preservation of those memories and provides compelling documentation of this transforming period in American history.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

The emphasis in these thirty interviews, Part I of a continuing project, is on the experiences of veterans, people not in the military, and ethnic minorities. Some of the
subjects discussed by the interviewees are the Great Depression years; economic conditions and life in the United States during the war, particularly bond drives, rationing, raising children during shortages, and the increase in women's employment; experiences of servicemen, including the draft, training camps, being wounded and rehabilitation, hospital care, captivity in European and Japanese prisoner of war camps, adjustment to life after the war, post-traumatic stress disorder, and GI Bill education opportunities; changes following the attack on Pearl Harbor; Japanese American internment camps; reaction to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death and the atomic bomb; Japanese language training at Fort Snelling and Camp Savage; minorities' experiences during the war, including segregation, discrimination, and racism, both in and out of the military; religion and chaplaincy service; military and Red Cross nurses; and life in Japan during the war.

The interviewers are Thomas Saylor, Daniel Borkenhagen, and Thomas Brandt.

INDEX TERMS

*This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics should search the catalog using these headings.*

**Topics:**
- African American air pilots -- Minnesota
- African American soldiers -- Minnesota
- Air pilots, Military -- Israel.
- Depressions -- 1929 -- Minnesota.
- Draft -- Minnesota.
- Families of military personnel -- Minnesota.
- Japanese American soldiers -- Minnesota
- Mexican American soldiers -- Minnesota
- Military chaplains -- Minnesota
- Military training camps -- United States.
- Minorities -- Minnesota.
- Nurses -- Minnesota
- Pearl Harbor (Hawaii), Attack on, 1941
- Post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Prisoners of war -- Germany.
- Prisoners of war -- Japan.
- Race discrimination -- United States.
- Rationing -- Minnesota.
- Veterans -- Services for -- Minnesota.
- Women -- Employment -- Minnesota.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Children -- Minnesota.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Economic aspects.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Health aspects -- Minnesota.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Japan.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Participation, Female.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Prisoners and prisons, German.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Prisoners and prisons, Japanese.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Public opinion -- Minnesota.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Religious aspects.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Veterans -- Minnesota.
World War, 1939-1945 -- War work -- Minnesota.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Women -- Minnesota.

**Persons:**
Abe, Toshio, interviewee.
Bartlett, Wilbert LeRoy, interviewee.
Borkenhagen, Daniel, interviewer.
Brandt, Thomas, interviewer.
Branham, Frederick, interviewee.
Brown, Harold, interviewee.
Brown, Lawrence, interviewee.
Brueggeman, Catherine Lemmer, interviewee.
Capiz, Henry T., interviewee.
Cavanagh, Marie, interviewee.
Esteros, Gertrude, interviewee.
Frankel, Leon, interviewee.
Glasner, Florence, interviewee.
Gomer, Joseph, interviewee.
Gondeck, Jacob, interviewee.
Jensvold, Kenneth, interviewee.
Kellgren, Beatrice, interviewee.
Kuehl, Delbert, interviewee.
Marinkovich, Donald, interviewee.
McMorrow, Vivian, interviewee.
Michelsen, Robert, interviewee.
Murakami, Anna Tanaka, interviewee.
Murray, Lavinia Stone, interviewee.
Nakasone, Edwin M., interviewee.
Nolte, Earl, interviewee.
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945.
Sovik, Edward Anders, 1918-, interviewee.
Saylor, Thomas, 1958-, interviewer.
Soboleski, Frank, interviewee.
Strand, Doris, interviewee.
Tomes, Arthur, interviewee.
Velasquez, Simon, interviewee.
Weddington, Martin O., interviewee.
Zobenica, Nicholas, interviewee.

**Places:**
Camp Savage (Minn.) -- History.
Fort Snelling (Minn.) -- History.
Hibbing (Minn.)

Organizations:
Canada. Royal Canadian Air Force.
Military Intelligence Service Language School (U.S.)
Minneapolis-Moline Company.
Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (U.S.)
United States. Army Air Forces. Fighter Group, 332nd.
United States. Marine Corps.
United States. Navy.
United States. Selective Service System.
United States Steel Corporation.

Document Types:
Interviews.
Oral histories.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:
Accession number: AV2006.1

Processing Information:
Processed by: Oral History Office
Catalog ID number: 6584668

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note the format (sound recording or transcript) and location shown below.

Sound recordings. 64 cassettes.

Location
OH112.1  Abe, Toshio, March 1, 2002. 2 cassettes.
OH112.3  Branham, Frederick William, September 14, 2001. 1 cassette.
OH112.4  Brown, Harold, July 12, 2003. 3 cassettes.
OH112.5  Brown, Lawrence, May 29, 2003. 2 cassettes.
OH112.6  Brueggeman, Catherine Lemmer, November 9, 2001. 2 cassettes.
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**Transcripts. 30 folders.**

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Toshio Abe was born in 1919 in California, the son of Japanese immigrants. He attended college in California but in 1941, before he completed his studies, he was drafted into the U. S. Army. He was sent to military intelligence school in Minnesota and was trained in various intelligence capacities in an Army program for Japanese Americans. In late 1943, he was stationed in New Delhi, India, before being transferred to Burma, where he did translation work and interrogated Japanese prisoners of war. When the war ended, he was rotated back to the United States and discharged. He returned to Minnesota, got married and quickly completed his engineering degree at a Minnesota university. He died in 2004.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Being drafted into the Army and the positions available for minorities; change in the family’s situation after the attack on Pearl Harbor; holding of Japanese Americans in internment camps and benefits of the forced relocation process of Japanese Americans; training at Camp Savage, Minnesota; working as an interrogator of Japanese prisoners in Burma; and life after discharge.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 1 90-minute cassette
(Recorded on Side A Only)
1 60-minute cassette

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 100 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 34 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.1
Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

INTERVIEW: Bartlett, Wilbert LeRoy
YEAR: 2002

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Wilbert LeRoy Bartlett
DATE: October 28, 2002
PLACE: Bartlett residence, St. Paul, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Wilbert LeRoy Bartlett was born in 1921 in Missouri. In 1943, he was drafted into the U. S. Army. His duty was training new recruits for military service. He was transferred to an engineer aviation battalion and sent to Istres, France. In 1946, Bartlett returned to the states and was discharged with the rank of sergeant. He married in 1947.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Being drafted into the Army from college; experience of being stationed in a segregated unit; serving as a training instructor for new recruits; difference in segregation in the south; serving abroad but never in combat; interacting with German prisoners of war in France; traveling experiences; crossing the Atlantic on a Liberty ship; and looking back at how the Army has impacted his life.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 46 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.2
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Frederick William Branham
DATE: September 14, 2001
PLACE: Branham residence in Twin Lakes Township, Carlton County, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Frederick William Branham was born in 1926 in Minnesota. He was drafted into the U. S. Army in 1944. After basic training, he joined an infantry division and was shipped to England. He married in 1945 and raised two children.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Being drafted into the Army; training experiences and traveling in the United States to various bases; engagement in heavy fighting near the French-German border; importance of writing and receiving letters during the war; interaction with other servicemen; witnessing reactions of servicemen to war while in combat; falling ill in 1945 and being hospitalized; hospital care for servicemen; returning home and to work; and his opinion of war in general.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 1 90-minute cassette

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 90 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 38 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.3
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Harold H. Brown
DATE: July 12, 2003
PLACE: Lawrence Brown residence, Minneapolis, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Harold H. Brown was born in 1924 in Minnesota. He volunteered for the Army Air Corps in 1943 and passed air cadet qualifying tests. Brown was shipped overseas to be part of a segregated fighter group, the Red Tailed Angels, stationed in Italy. In 1945, Brown’s plane was shot down in Austria. He was captured by the Germans and later liberated by advancing Allied forces. Brown remained in the Air Corps (after 1947, the Air Force) following the war, served in Korea, and retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to join the Army Air Corps; serving in a segregated unit; flying bomber escort missions in Europe; being shot down in a mission near Linz, Austria; experience of being taken a prisoner of war in Germany; interactions with German civilians and soldiers; interrogation procedures he went through in prison camps; surviving in POW camp Stalag VII-A for two months; conditions in which the Allied POWs lived; first experience of integration in a POW camp; becoming free after American forces came; repatriation for POWs after being freed; and returning home after the end of the war.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
                      Original: 3 60-minute tapes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 180 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 56 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.4
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Lawrence Brown
DATE: May 29, 2003
PLACE: Brown residence, Golden Valley, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Lawrence Brown was born in 1919 in Minnesota. He was working in the Twin Cities when drafted into the Army in 1942. He was assigned to a segregated ordnance ammunition company and served with his unit in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. A nearly fatal truck crash ended his time on base. He was hospitalized for more than a year for broken bones and nerve damage and was discharged in 1946 with the rank of a staff sergeant. Lawrence returned to Minnesota and used his GI Bill benefits to attend a Minnesota university. He married in 1956, raised three children, and worked as a tax agent. He later lived in Uganda for two years with his family and worked again in private industry upon his return to the United States.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Dealing with segregation in the Army; serving in the 604th Ordinance Company with all blacks; experience in the North Africa invasion; serving as service troops delivering supplies in Italy; prostitution and alcoholism in the Army; going through a fatal injury and how he coped with his situation; and importance of education for him.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 38 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.5
INTERVIEW: Brueggeman, Catherine Lemmer
YEAR: 2006

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Catherine Lemmer Brueggeman
DATE: November 9, 2001
PLACE: Brueggeman residence, St. Paul, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Catherine Lemmer Brueggeman was born in 1921 in Minnesota. She attended nursing school in St. Paul and graduated in 1943. In January 1944, Catherine enlisted in the U. S. Army and was sent to Camp Carson, Colorado, for her basic training. She was then posted to the 240th General Hospital Unit and shipped to France. She was rotated back to the United States in June 1945 and discharged in September 1945. She later married and raised three children.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Learning of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the decision to enlist in the U. S. Army; training to be a U. S. Army nurse; posting to the 240th General Hospital Unit; experience serving in different facilities in France; caring for injured servicemen as well as prisoners of war; basic difference in Japanese and German prisoners of war; witnessing conditions of Jewish concentration camp prisoners and caring for them; and opinion then and now on the use of atomic weapons.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
                      Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 45 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.6
INTERVIEW: Capiz, Henry T.
YEAR: 2002

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Henry T. Capiz
DATE: November 10, 2002
PLACE: Capiz residence, Maplewood, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Henry T. Capiz was born in 1926 in Minnesota, the oldest of six children of Mexican immigrant parents. He was drafted into the U. S. Army in 1944. He was posted to a parachute infantry regiment and shipped out to the Pacific. He was discharged from active service in 1946 but served in the reserves until officially retiring in 1986 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He used his GI Bill benefits to attend a Minnesota university, graduating in 1957 with a degree in pharmacology.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Being drafted into the U. S. Army; growing up Mexican-American in an integrated community; witnessing segregation in the south and in the military; volunteering for the Airborne and serving in the Pacific; interaction with civilians in the Philippines and Japan; experience handling Japanese prisoners of war; returning to civilian life; how the war experience changed him; and continuing education for better opportunities.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 42 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.7
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME:        Marie Schufman Cavanagh
DATE:        November 4, 2002
PLACE:       Cavanagh residence, St. Paul, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Marie Schufman Cavanagh was born in 1921 in Minnesota. She married in 1939 and had two children. Her husband was drafted in 1944. With reduced income, she took in a boarder, another serviceman’s wife and her child. Her boarder worked full time while Cavanagh took care of the children. After her husband’s return, two more children were added to the family. She died in 2003.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Unexpected occurrence of the war and the draft; raising two children as a single mother; living with a boarder and her child; family economic conditions during the war without her husband; her husband’s return from the war and adjusting to family life after his return; and opinion on President Roosevelt’s death and the use of atomic bombs.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 37 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.8
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Gertrude Esteros
DATE: February 27, 2003
PLACE: Esteros residence, Falcon Heights, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Gertrude Esteros was born in 1914 in Minnesota. In 1941, she joined the American Red Cross and was assigned to the 37th Field Hospital Unit. In late 1942, she was sent to the South Pacific and had duty stations in New Guinea and The Philippines. Following V-J [Victory in Japan] Day, Gertrude returned to the United States and resigned from the Red Cross. She then took a teaching position at a Minnesota university, retiring in 1980.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to join the American Red Cross; assignment to the 37th Field Hospital Unit and later to the South Pacific; experience of hospital field work; setting up recreation centers for servicemen; being in a male populated setting; decision to resign from the Red Cross after the end of war; returning to civilian life and getting back to teaching; and exploring Guatemala.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 35 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.9
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Leon Frankel
DATE: October 8, 2002
PLACE: Frankel residence, St. Louis Park, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Leon Frankel was born in 1923 in Minnesota. He enlisted in the U. S. Navy in 1942 and went through several levels of pilot training. He also volunteered for advanced training in TBF torpedo bombers and flew 25 combat missions in the Pacific. He was rotated back to the United States and discharged from active duty in 1945. He remained in the reserves until 1959. He was a volunteer pilot in the new Israeli Air Force during the War for Independence in 1948. Upon returning, he married and raised a family.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to enlist in the Navy Air Force; experience in the training programs; volunteering to fly the aircraft TBF torpedo bombers; experience serving in the Pacific and experience flying combat missions; return home and living as a civilian again; working in the used car sales business; post-traumatic stress from the war; and serving in the volunteer Israeli Air Force.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 3 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 180 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 53 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.10
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Florence Anderson Glasner
DATE: August 16, 2002
PLACE: Senior Citizens Center, Hibbing, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Florence Anderson Glasner was born in 1922 in Minnesota. She worked at U. S. Steel in Hibbing from 1942 and advanced to the position of electrician apprentice in 1945. She relocated to her husband’s hometown in Chicago after his return from Army service. She was a homemaker there for many years.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Working for U. S. Steel in Hibbing; socializing with woman whose husbands were fighting in the war; writing letters to men at war; working as the only woman electrician in U. S. Steel’s Oliver Mining Company Shop; impact of the death of President Roosevelt on her life; and reaction to the atomic bombings in 1945.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 1 60-minute cassette

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 60 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 28 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.11
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Joseph Gomer
DATE: November 6, 2001
PLACE: Holiday Inn, Duluth, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Joseph Gomer was born in 1920 in Iowa. He enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1942, then joined the Aviation Cadet Training Program and was sent to an all-black fighter squadron. Joseph was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1943 and shipped overseas to the Red Tailed Angels, a segregated fighter group stationed in Italy. He flew 68 combat missions before rotating back to the United States. He remained in the service after World War II and served during the Korean War. In 1964, he retired from the Air Force with the rank of major.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Experience as an African American serviceman; difference in growing up in an integrated community and serving in a segregated camp in Italy; reason their crew came to be known as the Red Tailed Angels; flying different fighter planes and protecting bombers in the air from German airplanes; desegregation of the military in 1948; and reaction to the use of atomic bombs and World War II.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 42 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.12
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Jacob Gondeck
DATE: February 13, 2003
PLACE: Gondeck residence, Princeton, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Jacob Gondeck was born in 1924 in Minnesota. He enlisted in the U. S. Navy in 1942. He had basic training and corpsman training and spent a year in administrative work at the Naval Receiving Station in Pleasanton, California. In 1945, Gondeck was posted to Air Evacuation Group 1, on the island of Guam. He was a corpsman on air evacuation flights during the battle for Okinawa and evacuated wounded combat troops from the front line to hospital facilities in Guam. After returning home from the Navy in 1948, he used his GI Bill benefits to attend college. He married in 1951.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Growing up in a small town in the 1930s; enlisting for service; training programs he went through; experience as a Navy corpsman; his post on Air Evacuation Group 1; experience in Guam; and life after the war.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 3 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 180 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 57 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.13
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Kenneth Jensvold
DATE: February 9, 2003
PLACE: Jensvold residence, Faribault, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Kenneth Jensvold was born in 1914 in Minnesota. He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force [RCAF] in 1940 and was later a flight instructor. He transferred to the U. S. Army Air Force [USAAF] in 1943. He returned to the United States for training in the American B-26 Marauder aircraft. He flew 27 combat missions until he was rotated back to the United States and discharged with the rank of first lieutenant. He re-enlisted in the USAAF and served until 1948. He then returned to Minnesota and used his GI Bill benefits to gain technical training.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Life in western Minnesota in the 1930s; living on his own in Minneapolis; decision to join the RCAF and working as a training instructor; experience serving in England in the RCAF as an American; transfer to the USAAF; experience flying B-26 airplanes and training with American crewman; flying from Europe as an American Air Force service man; going on pathfinder missions; and traveling in Germany after the war in 1945.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 3 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 180 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 52 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.14
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Beatrice “Bea” Kellgren
DATE: April 1, 2001
PLACE: Kellgren residence, White Bear Lake, MN
INTERVIEWER: Daniel Borkenhagen and Thomas Brandt

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Beatrice “Bea” Kellgren was born in Minnesota in 1915. She attended one year of college in Illinois and returned to Minnesota to work several different jobs. She married in 1937. With the onset of war in 1941, her husband found work as an aeronautical engineer with Boeing in Seattle. They returned to Minnesota following the war in 1947.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Changes that took place after the attack on Pearl Harbor; rationing during the war, sale of war bonds, and blackouts; experience of moving to Seattle during the war; husband working for Boeing; having two children during times of shortages; the helpful community of women in Seattle whose men were serving abroad; and return to Minnesota after the war.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 1 60-minute cassette

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 60 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 25 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.15
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Reverend Delbert Kuehl
DATE: April 5, 2003
PLACE: Kuehl residence, Alexandria, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Delbert Kuehl was born in 1917 in Minnesota. He was ordained a minister in 1942 and later enlisted in the U. S. Army as a chaplain. He volunteered for the Airborne. From then until the end of the European war he participated in many different campaigns. At war’s end he had attained the rank of major and remained in the Army until 1947. After the Army, he worked for a small church in Minnesota, as a missionary in Japan, and other posts.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to join the U. S. Army; training for Army chaplain service; volunteering for the Airborne; perspective as a chaplain in the Army; experience giving religious and medical services to paratroopers in combat; crossing the Waal River in the Netherlands with the paratroopers; the impact his religious role had on others and himself during the war; and work as a missionary.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 45 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.16
INTERVIEW: Marinkovich, Donald
YEAR: 2002

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Donald Marinkovich
DATE: August 16, 2002
PLACE: Marinkovich residence, Chisholm, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Donald Marinkovich was born in 1924 in Minnesota. He is one of eight children of Croatian immigrant parents. He received a draft notice in 1943 but was classified as medically deferred which prevented his admission into military service. He worked for the Oliver Mining Company first as a brakeman and then as a motorman.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Being drafted for the Army; the physical training in Minneapolis; medically deferred status that prevented him from being admitted into the Army; working for the Oliver Mining Company and getting more overtime after the war; his reaction to the war; and the pressure he put on himself for not being able to participate in the war.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
               Original: 1 60-minute cassette

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 60 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 32 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.17
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME:  Vivian Linn McMorrow
DATE:  October 14, 2002
PLACE:  McMorrow residence, Apple Valley, MN
INTERVIEWER:  Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES:  Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:  Vivian Linn McMorrow was born in 1920 in Minnesota. One of four girls, McMorrow completed a one-year teacher’s training course in 1939. She worked at country schools for the next four years. McMorrow married in 1942 and moved to Minneapolis in the summer of 1943. Her husband was sent to Europe and participated in the D-Day landings. He was wounded and later died. McMorrow remarried in 1944 and relocated to San Diego where her husband was in the Navy. She didn’t adjust well, returned alone to Minneapolis, lived with her parents, and gave birth to a baby in 1945. McMorrow and her husband divorced in 1946. She spent the postwar years a single mother working part-time jobs. The couple remarried in 1950 and raised six children.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:  Growing up in a small town in Minnesota in the 1930s; impact of the Great Depression on her family; experience working as a teacher; the draft’s impact on her family life; loss of her first husband in World War II; remarrying and moving on with life with her second husband; being a single mother and living with her parents during the war; and being wife to a serviceman.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS:  User copy:  None
                      Original:  2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:  120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE:  none

TRANSCRIPT:  41 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER:  AV 2006.1.18
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Robert Michelsen
DATE: November 3, 2001
PLACE: Michelsen residence, Apple Valley, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Robert Michelsen was born in 1925 in Minnesota. He volunteered for the U. S. Army Air Force and served on a B-29 Superfortress bomber. In 1945, his aircraft was hit by Japanese ground fire and the crew was forced to bail out over Tokyo. Michelsen was captured as soon as he hit the ground. After the war he married and raised a family.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to enlist in the U. S. Air Force; basic and bomber training; being stationed in Guam; missions; honor; flying over Japan; being shot down and taken prisoner; experiences being interrogated during captivity in a POW camp; being liberated and discharged; reactions to becoming a civilian and adjusting to civilian life; use of GI bill benefits; and questioning purpose.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 3 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 180 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 50 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.19
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Anna Tanaka Murakami
DATE: January 23, 2003
PLACE: Murakami residence, St. Louis Park, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Anna Tanaka Murakami was born in 1929 in Minnesota. She was one of two girls of an immigrant Japanese father and German mother. Her father struggled to make a living in the Depression economy and he sent Anna and her sister to Japan to live with their aunt and uncle. They lived in Japan for 19 years in a coastal city ten miles east of Hiroshima. Anna returned to the United States in 1951. She married in 1952 and raised three children.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Being born in the United States but raised in Japan; life in Japan during the war after 1941; having been raised by their aunt and uncle; witnessing the Hiroshima bombing and the impact it had in the area; general reaction to the war; and returning to the United States as a grown woman and settling here.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
                         Original: 1 60-minute cassette

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 60 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 27 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.20
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Lavinia Stone Murray  
DATE: November 18, 2002  
PLACE: Murray residence, St. Paul, MN  
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Lavinia Stone Murray was born in 1917 in Kentucky. She moved to Minnesota in 1940 and married in 1941. Her husband was drafted into the U. S. Army, where he spent the next three years. While adjusting to being a single mother and living with her in laws, on a daily basis she dealt with rationing, shortages, childcare, and worrying about her husband in the war zone.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: The news of the attack on Pearl Harbor; the draft and the adjustment to war time; living with her in laws; being a single mother with her husband serving in the Army; segregation in Kentucky compared to St. Paul; moving to Sioux City, Iowa to be near her husband’s base; work environment in a department store and as an elevator operator; and her husband’s return home and search to buy a home.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None  
Original: 1 60-minute cassette

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 60 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 42 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.21
INTERVIEW: Nakasone, Edwin
YEAR: 2003

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Edwin Nakasone
DATE: May 1, 2003
PLACE: Thomas Saylor’s office, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Edwin Nakasone was born in 1927 on Oahu, Hawaii; one of ten children of immigrant Japanese parents. He was drafted into the U. S. Army in 1945, several weeks before the Japanese surrender. He was trained as a Japanese linguist at Fort Snelling, Minnesota and was sent to Japan, where he spent fifteen months with one of the Army’s language detachments. His duties included translating and interpreting and he frequently interacted with local civilian authorities. At the conclusion of this duty he was rotated back to the United States and, several months later, separated from active duty with the rank of tech sergeant. He used his GI Bill benefits to complete a bachelor’s degree; he later completed his master’s degree at a Minnesota university. He was married in 1954 and raised two children.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Witnessing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Oahu; emotions of the Japanese community in Oahu after the attack; change in status of draft cards for Japanese immigrant sons and martial law; working while in high school during war time; being drafted after high school; experience serving as a translator and interpreter; difference in people’s reaction to Japanese Americans on the mainland and Hawaii; witnessing conditions in Japan in 1945; and getting college education after separation from active duty.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 41 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.22
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Earl Nolte
DATE: October 10, 2002
PLACE: Nolte residence, Burnsville, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Earl Nolte was born in 1924 in Minnesota. He enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1943. During the invasion of Leyte, Philippines, he was badly wounded but risked his life to save the lives of others in his company. He was awarded the Silver Star in 1944 and was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was discharged in 1946.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to join the Army after the attack on Pearl Harbor; experience as a soldier in training camps and during the war in The Philippines; role of religion in his life during and after the war; being wounded in war; physical rehabilitation and psychological help for wounded soldiers; and working for the Fairmount Telephone Company.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 41 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.23
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Frank Soboleski
DATE: October 6, 2001
PLACE: Soboleski residence, International Falls, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Frank Soboleski was born in 1925 in Minnesota. One of fourteen children of immigrant parents, Frank enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1943. His unit was sent to England in 1944. Frank spent time in Germany, Austria, and France until the end of 1945, when he was transferred back to the states. He was discharged in January 1946 with the rank of staff sergeant.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Enlisting in the Army and being away from home; training for paratroopers; combat experiences while serving in the 101st Airborne; time in Germany, Austria, and France before discharge; killing of opposition soldiers who had already surrendered; life after the war and discharge; and settling in International Falls.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes
LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes
RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none
TRANSCRIPT: 51 pages
ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.24
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Edward Sovik
DATE: May 8, 2003
PLACE: Sovik residence, Northfield, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Edward Sovik was born in 1918 in Zhongxiang, China. The son of Lutheran missionary parents, he spent the first seventeen years of his life in China, completing high school in a nearby boarding school. In 1935, Sovik’s parents returned to Minnesota. He completed Lutheran seminary in 1941 before enlisting in the U. S. Marine Corps. He joined a night fighter squadron and was shipped out to the Pacific where he flew F4U Corsairs. He ended active duty with the rank of captain in 1945 and later worked as an architect.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to join the U. S. Marines; serving in the Pacific; experience of air combat in the Pacific; change in career paths from the seminary to Yale; experience as a night fighter training officer; meeting President Franklin D. Roosevelt at a military hospital in Hawaii; flying F4U Corsairs and experience of crash landing in Saipan; and attitudes held during the war about Japanese fighters.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
               Original: 3 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 180 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 46 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.25
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME:        Doris Shea Strand
DATE:        March 11, 2002
PLACE:       Strand residence, Minnetonka, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES:  Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Doris Shea Strand was born in 1922 in Minnesota. After graduating from high school in 1940, she worked in the main offices of Minneapolis Moline, a farm equipment manufacturer. During the war years, the company retooled and produced for the war effort. In 1944, she married and relocated to California. In June 1945, she returned to Minnesota.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Working at Minneapolis Moline; increase in employment of women during the war; brownouts, bond drives, and rationing; writing letters to servicemen; getting married to a Marine during the war; celebration of V-J Day; and moving to San Diego and then back to Minneapolis during the war.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS:    User copy:  None
                       Original:  2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:  120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE:  none

TRANSCRIPT:           32 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER:     AV 2006.1.26
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Arthur Tomes
DATE: October 26, 2002
PLACE: Tomes residence, Burnsville, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Arthur Tomes was born in 1920 in Minnesota. He was inducted into the Army Air Corps in 1941. After earning his wings, Tomes spent the next two years as a flight instructor, training bombardiers and pilots for duty in bomber aircraft. In 1944, he volunteered for the B-29 Superfortress program and had training stateside before being posted to the Pacific. He flew 35 combat missions before the end of the war. After V-J Day, he was rotated back to the United States and discharged with the rank of captain. He later married and raised a family. In 1995, Tomes returned to Japan to visit Himeji, a city firebombed by B-29s in a July 1945 mission. He helped organize a meeting to bring together Japanese citizens and American veterans.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Going into the Army Air Corps and getting pilot training; working as a flight instructor training bombardiers and pilots for duty; volunteering for the B-29 Superfortress program; serving in the Pacific on the island of Tinian as an airplane commander; experience flying 35 combat missions; returning to civilian life and marriage; how serving in the Army Air Corps changed his life; beginning of his love affair with airplanes in the Army; returning to Japan in the mid-1990s to previous camp sites; and importance of attending reunions for him.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 3 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 180 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 52 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.27
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Simon C. Velasquez
DATE: May 19 and 28, 2003
PLACE: Velasquez residence, West St. Paul, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Simon Velasquez was born in 1920 in Texas, one of fourteen children of immigrant Mexican parents. He was drafted into the U.S. Army Air Corps in January 1942. He was made a ball turret gunner on B-17 Flying Fortress bombers, then posted to England in 1943. His B-17 was shot down over Germany; he was one of two crewmembers to survive. Velasquez was sent to Stalag XVII, a POW camp, in Austria, where he remained until the war’s final weeks. He was discharged in 1945 with the rank of staff sergeant. Velasquez married in 1947 and raised a family.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to enlist; being Mexican-American; Air Force training; being assigned a crew and experiences as a ball turret gunner; time stationed in England and London and the blitz; experiences as an armorer and defusing bombs; missions and flying over enemy territory; flak; fear; being shot down, parachuting, getting captured, and experiences in Stalag XVII, including food, hunger, companions, day-to-day activity, coping, and interrogation; Red Cross; spies; experiences of forced marching; liberation and rehabilitation; return to the United States and adjustment to life and work in the states; and post traumatic stress syndrome.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 5 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 250 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 129 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.28
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Martin O. Weddington
DATE: April 29, 2003
PLACE: Weddington residence, Roseville, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Martin O. Weddington was born in 1917 in Kansas City and moved to Minnesota with his parents at the age of seven. He received deferments from military service until his final deferment expired in 1945 and he was ordered to report for military service. He was inducted into the Navy and sent to basic training. Weddington was in San Diego, being schooled as a naval corpsman, when the Pacific war ended. He was discharged from active duty in 1946.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Experience of discrimination while growing up in St. Paul; working for the Twin Cities Arsenal and War Ordinance Department; being drafted into the Navy; receiving deferments but also mentally preparing to go to war; importance of his work as an inspector; working as a clerk and a corpsman while in the service; training at an all-black base; being away from family; changes in St. Paul due to the war; and decision to work for the U. S. Postal Service in St. Paul.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 39 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.29
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NAME: Nicholas “Nick” Zobenica
DATE: September 26, 2002
PLACE: Zobenica residence, Chisholm, MN
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Saylor

PROJECT SERIES: Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Part I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Nick Zobenica was born in 1924 in Minnesota. He enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps in November 1942. Nick went through basic training in San Diego and then volunteered for the elite Marine Raiders. He was shipped out to the Pacific in 1944. He married in 1956 and raised a family.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: Decision to enlist in the U. S. Marine Corps; volunteering for the elite Marine Raiders; experience of serious action on Guam and Okinawa; experience of combat and its effect on soldiers in active duty; conditions of taking Japanese prisoners of war; being wounded in war and returning home to civilian life; finishing high school and adjusting to normal life; opinion on the current war with the Taliban; and attending reunions and their importance to him.

COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:

SOUND RECORDINGS: User copy: None
Original: 2 60-minute cassettes

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 120 minutes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: none

TRANSCRIPT: 43 pages

ACCESSION NUMBER: AV 2006.1.30