

Louise Bell (125 Amory Street)
Interviewed by Nidia Flores (2005)

My name is Louise Bell. I was born and grew up in Philadelphia, PA. I was born on the tenth day of the tenth month in 1923. October 10th! I had a beautiful life when I was a child! I lived with my mother and father and brothers and sisters. My mother's name was Mary Lou Robinson. My father was Emery Robinson. I never was able to meet my grandparents. My brother was the oldest, then I was next. My brother was a very good artist. He use to love to draw. We all got along very well and never had any problems with each other. We had a beautiful family.

I wasn't very much of a game player when I was a child. I use to play with the kids I went to school with, and I loved to roller skate!

Did I like school? No, not exactly. My school was very nice. I enjoyed being there (out of no choice of my own!) I came from a nice city and a nice street. We were smart enough not to fight with other children. We tried to get along with everyone.

My mother and father were very strict, and we had certain times we had to come in, so we weren't allowed to stay out late. No, I wasn't allowed to go out with my friends on my own. One time I got caught sneaking out where I wasn't suppose to go. My father wasn't the type to give you a beating, but he would give you a warning. His way with us was very strict. We would get punished, but not beaten.

When I was young we went to Atlantic City. We went to Hershey, PA where they make Hershey's chocolate. We went to Lancaster, PA where the Mennonites live. That's the kind of things we would do as a family. I would go to the movies with my friends. I didn't play any sports. Mostly, we hung around with our sisters and brothers, and we would go places with our parents. We were a very close family. I miss them very much now. We lived poor, but we lived good. We were happy.

Yes, I was sick when I was young. I had rheumatic fever and a heart condition. I was in the hospital, and I didn't like it, but I had no choice! And now I'm still in and out of the hospital all the time with cancer. I have cancer of the bones.

Oh yes, we had chores. The girls had to clean and do the washing. The boys had to chop wood to keep the fire going. And we would learn how to cook. No I didn't work until I was grown and got married. My husband's name was Frank Reginald Bell, but I don't know where he is now. We never had any children, and that's a good thing. My best friend's name is Ann. She lives in Cleveland, OH.

The best adventure I've had? Probably going to some beautiful weddings ... right here in Boston. I love weddings. No I don't drive. I do take buses and trains and airplanes, but I don't drive. The farthest place I've traveled from my original home would probably be Bermuda or Canada. I've also been to Cleveland, Ohio and to Atlantic City, New

Jersey.

My best accomplishment? Well, I became a nurse, and I was baptized. Those were two things that were very important to me. Taking care of patients was hard work, but I liked it. What do I look forward to in the morning? Well, I like listening to the radio, watching Perry Mason on TV, and going to church. That's about it. And I love to go home (to Pennsylvania) every now and then.

I just wanted to grow up to be a well respected person like my mother and father taught us to be. I wouldn't have it any other way. My advice to you would be to grow up to be a nice young lady. What's out there in the streets these days is not good, it's not worth it. It's a life I wouldn't want to live even if I was young. Because if my mother and father were alive, I wouldn't want to hurt them. I want respect. If I saw you on the bus and I stepped on your foot, I would say to you 'I'm sorry dear'. I don't expect you to jump up and want a fight! The best thing in life is to let God lead you, and you'll find out that what's out there is not for you. Because you're a beautiful girl and you can make it. I would tell you to be careful in the street though, because it's a hard world.

At the age of 13, 14, 15, I had a great life. Now I'm 81, and I'm mighty proud of my life and of my parents taught me to live and learn and be respectful.