



Winnie was born on January 6, 1918 and started her life in a tiny town in Missouri called Mayview. Her mother was a typical housewife and her father worked at various jobs mostly related to agriculture. Their home had no electricity or running water and was heated with a central stove all of which was typical for the period and geographical location. She remembers when they got their first light bulb! Winnie had a younger sister and they were lifelong friends. Winnie's father died prematurely and she and the others moved to Higginsville which was only a few miles away. Her mother went to work in a shoe factory while the girls finished high school. She mentions that the Great Depression didn't seem to have much of an effect on her life in Higginsville.

After high school Winnie began to show her need for adventure. At 18 years of age she moved to Kansas City and attended a school for business skills. This was pretty brave for a young woman who had grown up in a small town. She did well in school and soon went to work for various businesses as a secretary.. She met and married James before WW II but he soon left for the war and she decided to enlist as well. She tried to enlist in the Marines but they didn't need her so instead she joined the Coast Guard where she served as a yeoman. She has told the story of the time she had to work as a stenographer for a court marshal on a battleship. She says that she was the only woman on the ship

and that the sailors treated her like a queen! Also she and some other "girls" took a train to New York City from their base in North Carolina. As usual she made the most of her situation.

After the war she and James were reunited and continued their lives in Kansas City. Their son was born in 1946. He was to be Winnie's only child. When she was pregnant she had to keep it a secret as long as possible as she couldn't keep her job and be pregnant. Winnie's marriage fell apart and she made the hard decision to get a divorce which in those days was a little rare but she thought it would be best for her young son. . She continued to work and found a position at Skelly Oil where she worked until she retired. She also remarried to her new husband Bill and they remained married until his death at about age 94. During their marriage they had many great times and traveled to Europe several times and also Hawaii. After Bill passed away she made the big move to Osage City, Kansas to be closer to her son who lives there. She lived alone for the past 13 or 14 years and only recently moved into an assisted living. She is now 102 years young and still going strong. When asked what technological change was most important in her life there is no doubt it has been electricity. There are some memory issues now but she is quite content. The current pandemic has kept her isolated but she lived through the 1918 pandemic so she'll make it through this one. She will be 103 in January and by then maybe we can have an in person birthday party!