

**Jadyn Hess**  
**Mr. Mealy**  
**Honors: US History 2**  
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Mellinger, Parke. Personal interview with the author. Lancaster, PA. October 4, 2016.

**Overview by Jadyn Hess:**

Mr. Parke Mellinger was born on April 8 of 1919 to his parents, Harvey and Clara Mellinger. He experienced several historical events in his lifetime, but the one that he remembers most is the second World War's rationing system. He remembers the inconvenience that the ration cards posed and how hard it was to get certain items, mainly sugar. He also remembers how the manufacturing of certain household items had stopped on account of the war effort. Certain furniture items and basic appliances were difficult to find when he married and built and moved into his own house. However, the public was mainly supportive of the rationing, and certain aspects of living in the country helped to provide more food and resources for him and his family, such as their garden. Mr. Mellinger was able to avoid service in the army because of his part in the family business, but says that if he did not have his job, then he would have been a conscientious objector because of his beliefs.

**Question (Hess): When were you born?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** On 1919 on April the eighth.

**Question (Hess): All right. Where were you born?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Next door. That's Willow Street, or Baumgardner.

**Question (Hess): What were your parents' names?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Harvey and Clara Mellinger.

**Question (Hess): Did your parents work? What were their jobs?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** My mother was a... worked at home, and my father ran this business next door... the coal business, and lumber.

**Question (Hess): Did you have any siblings?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Yes, I had two older brothers, and one younger sister.

**Question (Hess): And, what did you do for fun? Did you have any hobbies?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Oh, yeah we played baseball, and card games. And, a lot of Flinch.

**Question (Hess): Okay, what do you remember the most about World War Two?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** World War Two? Well, I said about rationing uh that was real, uh, came home to me because we got married, just before the war started, and built a house up in there... other end here of the room -uh- road, and uh we couldn't get a refrigerator, and we couldn't get a stove, we couldn't get a radio, they were all rationed. So we finally got - found an ice box, and we found uh- I believe a kerosene stove for a while, and then we finally found a radio, I think made over from a car radio. They weren't making cars anymore, so somebody must've had radios left over, so they put them in a case, so we got started then, yeah.

**Comment (Beth Hess, my mother): So it wasn't just food they were rationing, they were- everything was being rationed.**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Well, i'm not sure they were rationing, it was just- weren't making...

**Comment (Beth Hess): It just wasn't around, okay, okay.**

**Question (Hess) How were you personally affected by World War II? How was your faith affected?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Well, as the gas rationing was before World War II, and my uh girlfriend lived in Millersville. I had a - what is a - a rationing card. I had some trouble getting over there very often. Guess that wasn't too bad, was it?

**Comment (Beth Hess):** He didn't have gas to visit his girlfriend.

**Question (Hess): How did you come to be a conscientious objector?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Actually, I never was. Uh, I got deferred for this business over here. Uh, we sold coal to a lot of different school districts, and churches, and a couple of people, and little defense plants around Conestoga that we sold at, so they thought that was necessary to the war effort, so, actually I got a business deferment, but if I couldn't have kept that I would've been a conscientious objector.

**Question (Hess): Um, did you know any other men who got out of the war because of, um, the business, like you said, or because they were conscientious objectors?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** I know one other person was deferred the same thing that I was, Elvin Kreider. He worked for a coal leader in Lancaster. And, course you know Weaver Reiz was. I knew, well Donny Harnish over here, I guess was down in Philadelphia- that was the metal institution, I think. Oh, I guess that's enough.

**Question (Hess): Um, how were you personally involved in the rationing system. What were your duties?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Pardon me?

**Question (Hess): How were you personally involved in the rationing system?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** The rationing...

**Comment (Hess): System**

**Answer (Mellinger):** System. Well, we had rationing books. They're in back of you there if you want to look at them. Then uh, um anything you wanted to buy you had to have a ticket. Could've went to the grocery store if you went short, and they took a sugar ration stamp out if you wanted to buy uh tea, whatever- there's a number of things. If you want a list of them you can get it on uh- on the computer. I'm not sure of all of them, but I wasn't along with buying that stuff, actually.

**Question (Hess): Um, what were the food rations like?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Well, it didn't affect people in the country here, we raised pigs down here, we had... we had chickens, and so we had meat and we had a garden, so people in the country are not affected by rationing too much, be mostly sugar, and things like that that you couldn't produce or sell, so it wasn't all that bad.

**Comment (Beth Hess): So what would've it been like for someone who didn't have a garden, or meat?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Yeah, people in the city, that was a- had to be real careful with their stamps. There was supposed to be enough stamps to keep you going. You got one for each member of the family, so...

**Comment (Beth Hess):** So they would have a stamp for everything, your meat and anything you wanted to get at the store, you would...

**Answer (Mellinger):** There was a number of things, I don't remember all they were because I didn't shop for it. Uh, but you can get them on the computer, I know they are on there... when and what was rationed.

**Question (Hess): Um, how did the government enforce the ration system?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** I really don't know. I didn't have trouble- didn't run into trouble, so I don't know what they did. Sorry.

**Question (Hess): No, that's okay. In general, how did the public feel about the rations?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Oh, they complained like everything, about everything else.

**Question (Hess): Is there anything else that you remember or want to talk about?**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Not really. But uh, the idea of us moving into a brand new house, and fixing it up and then couldn't get appliances, that was uh the worst thing that really bothered us.

**Question (Hess): So like nothing really major... was a major inconvenience, but just like not being able to get certain...**

**Answer (Mellinger):** Yeah that wasn't a major... we used to buy it, and it wasn't all that bad.