

Lindquist, Jeanne (Mrs.)

Interview by
Miss Betty Turnell

for the
Decatur Public Library

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Interview of Mrs. Jeanne Lindquist

May 31, 1983

This is a recording of the experiences and reminiscences of Jeanne Lindquist. The interviewer is Betty Turnell, and the narrator is Mrs. Lindquist. The recording is being made at the request of the Decatur Public Library in Decatur, Illinois, at the Jeanne Lindquist Salon of Photography, 300 West Prairie Avenue in Decatur, Illinois, on May 31, 1983.

Mrs. T.: Mrs. Lindquist, can you tell us something of your life in Decatur - and other places too, for that matter?

Mrs. L.: Well, when I'm asked how I became involved in photography, my answer is that I married it because I came to Decatur to visit a friend and met John G. Lindquist, a very prominent photographer. At that time I was a legal secretary in Springfield. When I met him, he invited me and the friend into his studio and did portraits of me, which he subsequently sent me. It was a very fast romance, and in about three months, we were married.

I maintained my position in Springfield for a period, and then he felt that I should move to Decatur. I put in my resignation to the office, and they said, "We don't want a resignation from you. We want a leave of absence."

I think they felt, perhaps, that they wanted me to be protected in case my marriage didn't work out. But I didn't go into it with that in mind. At that time, may I say that marriages were more sincere than perhaps they are now.

In the course of time I did resign, and then I started to learn photography which is entirely a different field. In the meantime we took a belated honeymoon to Europe and spent five months visiting friends and relatives in France and in Sweden. When we returned in 1927

we formed a partnership because by that time I had learned the foundations of photography and also I had attended photographic school in Winona Lake, Indiana, and in the course of time I taught there, because things began to happen.

In 1939 my husband passed away. I was able to go on with the business because I had the background to carry on.

At that time I was facing the war era that was developing, and the closeness of families. They were desperate to be photographed in the family and then the boys in uniform. It was a heart-breaking process. I felt, "I must do a good job. This may be the only photograph there will be." So it was a great challenge. These men went out, and some never came back. I felt it was a duty I had. Unfortunately, we were restricted on materials, and we had to apportion what allocation we had for these families.

Against business sense, where you sell, we had to restrict because we felt the more families we could cover with the materials we had, the more service we were giving our Decatur people. So this became my duty during the war.

In the course of time - or rather preceding this in fact - we were doing the photography of high school seniors in Stephen Decatur High, which at one time was the main high school.

When it was divided, MacArthur High School seniors were also assigned to us. Those are the only two high schools where we photographed the seniors because we felt we could not adequately cover any other school so we did not bid. This gave us a great acquaintance with families in Decatur. We had a close touch. We just loved these

children. They came in to us and talked to us about their ambitions in life. We followed their ambitions when they went out in the world, and when they were successful, we said, "We know them." We remembered that they had the ambition to go ahead. So this is the reward you get for meeting people, photographing them, and touching and becoming a part of their lives. A photographer is a little like a physician. He has an intimate touch with families. At least, this was true in the past. The picture has changed now. Now there isn't the closeness between families and business that there was during that period. Everything has speeded up now in volume and numbers. There isn't the individual touch, which, of course, we regret because having trained into that individual service, we cannot adopt other methods. Our reward is that we have made all these wonderful contacts with Decatur people. We were part of Decatur. We have seen the changes which have come in Decatur. We regret some changes, but there is not much we can do. Life goes on and times change. We have in all those years become sort of a fixture, so to speak, in Decatur.

In 1947 right after the war, we had a studio down town. There was a great scramble for location of businesses. We had no lease. Our lease had run out. We were told that we would have to give up the space.

God was taking care of us because this mansion became available right at the time that we needed it. In fact, my mother asked, "What are you going to do? You have to get out by June 1, and you've done nothing." Then it was April. I said to her, "God is going to take care of me." I went out on the street and met a gentleman.

Later, in the course of time, I told him, "You didn't know you were God that morning because you told me about the house that was available."

We started negotiating for the house and then we had to go through the zoning process to have this designated as professional. It was an artist's clause that permitted us to come into this area.

Subsequently the doctors located all around here. This was to be a medical center - this area. Again, this has changed because the medical centers are not in this area, but near the hospitals.

While serving in the Chamber of Commerce, I was in touch with these areas that were so designated. As I said, pictures change. No one knows what the future will be. The top brains don't know it, so why should a little guy know it?

Of course, during this time I was quite involved in the Illinois and National photographic associations so I began to get offices. I received my degree of Master of Photography in 1947. This degree was awarded to me at the Conrad Hilton in Chicago at the big awards banquet. At that time, there were only a few Masters of Photography in the country so it was quite a feature when one of the women came up with this degree. Subsequently this opened up.

In 1940 I was featured in a book - Who's Who in Photography in the United States. This was a book put out by Charles Abel of Cleveland. Articles and photographs were featured.

I served as the director in the various offices in Illinois in the Illinois Professional Photographers' Association. Subsequently, in 1952-53 I became its president - the one and only woman who has served in that capacity in Illinois.

I received in 1960 a national award for Illinois in professional photography. I received a director's award from the Professional Photographers of America in 1964. I served on national committees for the Photographers' Association of America and conducted seminars in 15 states as well as Hawaii. I served as national hospitality chairman for many years until I decided I had had enough, and I resigned. It gave me contacts with people in every state in the union in the profession, and I made great friends. I knew them all. Of course, they knew me, too. I was able to have great liaison between the states with this national hospitality chairmanship.

I became a member of the American Society of Photographers by invitation in 1959. Then I served as its president in 1966. At its annual banquet at the Conrad Hilton in Chicago, I had the honor to present a citation to General George Goddard for his work in infra-red photography during the Vietnam war. It was quite an honor.

In 1966, as a member of the Photographers' Association of America Committee, I made a presentation of the Niepce-Daguerre Plaque to the French Ambassador at a ceremony at the Washington Hilton Hotel. That was another high-light.

I hold life memberships in the Photographers Association of America, the Associated Professional Photographers of Illinois, the Wisconsin Professional Photographer, and the Ohio Professional Photographers Association. I am a past member of the British Institute of Photography.

In 1969 I became an Elector to the Photographic Arts and Science Foundation.

I was elected to the Hall of Fame of Photographic Arts and Science Foundation in 1978. Three of my photographs were accepted for hanging at Santa Barbara, California.

I have been a member of the Zonta Club of Decatur since 1940 and served as its local president in 1945 and have served on its board and on various committees.

In 1977 I received the Bob John's Award for Meritorious Service to Photographers of the Associated Professional Photographers of Illinois.

I'm a member of the Chamber of Commerce and served on its board of directors from 1972-75, the first woman to serve in that capacity.

I served on the Board of Directors of the Macon County Chapter of the American Red Cross.

For my years of service to the Boy Scouts, I received the Lincoln Trail Council 121 plaque. This was quite a surprise to me, and I appreciated it.

I appeared in Personalities of the West and Midwest Edition in 1971 of the American Biographic Institute.

I was featured in the World Who's Who of Women in the 1978 edition, International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England.

Those are some of the highlights of the honors and, of course all these years it was my privilege in the national committees to make contacts with photographers from all over the world and very important personalities in other fields. So those are the rewards that you have for devoting service to your profession.

Mrs. T. : Well, that was really a thrilling story of your career - how it started, how you pursued it, and some of the experiences you had - especially the rewards. We really congratulate you on all the honors you received, and the service you gave to the city. From what you said, you certainly were a very important part of the life of Decatur. It makes a very interesting story of what a person can do for a city and in a city.

Now, I'd like to ask you, Mrs. Lindquist, a few questions - some you touched upon in what you told us, but maybe you could tell us a little more.

When you told us of your travels with your husband, you told us you went to France and Sweden. Now, I happen to know that those were both very special places to you.

Mrs. L.: Yes, they were, because my husband was very anxious to meet my relatives in France. And I was anxious to meet his relatives in Sweden - so we did take five months to visit both France and Sweden and other countries - but mostly France and Sweden. And, of course, my people in France - the Paris cousins - all gathered and we were photographed in the Tuileries and we have wonderful photographs of this group. When I think today of getting that many people together at one time, it would not be possible, but in those days you could.

Then we visited in northern France - in Lens, France, where I was born and there they gave us a banquet that lasted from two o'clock in the afternoon until eleven o'clock at night. There were dishes stacked all over the place, plus the wines that were served. The

reason it lasted so long - the courses weren't that many - but in between courses, everybody had to do a skit, which was funny. My husband didn't even know French, but he fitted in. In fact, my cousins in Paris loved him so that when he subsequently visited France (I didn't go with him on that trip), they picked out a studio, where we were going to move - near the Opera. They thought we belonged over there, and his people in Sweden thought it would be so much nicer in Paris, so they could run to Paris to see us instead of going to the United States. So of course, when he picked out this location, and came back to the United States and propositioned me with it, I said, "John! We have built a business in the United States. We would have to build a business in France. You just don't do it over night." This was when the war rumblings were going on in Europe. Things were still quiet, but I had the vision that if something happened to him (his health had been precarious), what would I do? Here, I felt I was capable of going back to my former career or continuing in this business.

Well, whatever Jeanne said was all right with John. I made the decision, and we did not move to Paris into a new studio.

Of course, when we visited in Sweden, it was charming, it was wonderful. His people had a good Swedish background. They couldn't see why John lived in the United States. There was room, surely, for one more Swede in Sweden - which, of course was very funny. We visited in their homes, and some of his friends, when we came to town, even had the American flag up for us in city hall - which gave us a good feeling. Each household had a flag, and they flew the American flag when we visited. It gave you a feeling that you might be someone of

importance, and I thought that was a very nice thing. Also, wherever I would visit, I would find under my pillow these little miniature - they called them "toomy tot". They are little dwarfs - good luck pieces. And that was a charming thing. Another thing that was charming - when you left - (in those days you traveled by train to your ship) to go to your station, everybody brought you flowers. You didn't know what to do with them when you started on your trip, but it was a nice sort of gesture. So these are fond memories I have of those trips.

Of course, we went down to Switzerland, and my husband was photographing the sun-glow on all those mountains. We would run out of film and I would run and chase and buy more film so we could photograph that sun-glow plus all the architecture. We did some beautiful things of the Castle of Chillon - gorgeous.

When we came back to the United States, they asked us to do a national production of these, but we didn't want to go into a mass production, but they were beautiful. Our friends received these studies.

We did a lot of traveling in the United States, and my husband went back to Sweden just before he died in 1939. In 1938 he spent five months in Sweden. It was a great satisfaction to me when he died that he had had this wonderful trip. His niece was married to a very prominent doctor who was in the royal house. She was a brilliant Swedish woman. She held the first chair at Upsala University in dentistry. She wrote books on dentistry. She was a very brilliant woman. They entertained my husband all over Sweden. They would go to castles and visit for a week with great friends way up north. Of course all of this is recorded. I have photographs of all these things.

Mrs. T.: You mentioned that you were born in France, but I don't believe you gave us your maiden name.

Mrs. L: My name was Allard - Jeanne Allard.

Mrs. T.: When did you come to the United States?

Mrs. L: I came as a child in 1909. I started to school when I was two years old. When we visited France, I visited this little village where I had been in the convent. The Mother Superior said to my husband, "I want you to come. I want to show you something." By her desk was this little chair, and she said, "There she sat."

I was too young to be in school, but I lived not too far from this kindergarten. Of course, they go to school earlier in France. I ran away all the time, and I was over there all the time. So the Mother Superior said, "You might as well let her come. She wants to be here." So really I think I wanted to learn very early in life.

Mrs. T.: You told us that you helped your husband in his photography work, and I'm sure you learned a great deal that way, but after his death, did you have any assistants to help you?

Mrs. L.: Yes. Of course, my sister, Germaine Allard West, who had lost her husband, was associated with us even when my husband was alive. She became my chief assistant. She was our colorist and artist. And then we had a young lady who was very good at touching negatives. She was a very good artist. Then I kept my studio small because I didn't like expansion. I had many chances to expand and hire many people. But I had a great feeling of responsibility. What will happen if I do not have this volume? I couldn't stand to dismiss them. So I kept the studio small.

- Mrs. T.: One might wonder if it would be hard for a woman to have a career such as yours. You didn't seem to find it hard, did you?
- Mrs. L.: No, I was accepted all over, and to prove it, when I became president of the Photographers of Illinois, they came to me, you see, and I was elected to this position. Why another woman hasn't come up since, I can't tell you, but there were no obstacles. In fact, any place I went, anywhere, I never found an obstacle against a woman.
- Mrs. T.: Very good! ... Well, what philosophy or approach to photography do you follow?
- Mrs. L.: My philosophy, I think, is that I like people. I like to say "psycho" them. This is it. Most photographers who work many years become pretty good psychologists. You cannot photograph people without having communication with them. And only through this communication can you bring out this person. You don't want an inanimate object. You have to have expression, so you have to touch on the things that interest them to bring out their expressions.
- Mrs. T.: Do you do this by talking to them?
- Mrs. L.: Yes - talking. I guess sometimes I talk too much, yet some people give freely. Their personalities just come out. Others are a little bit reticent, but I have a way. I get it out!
- Mrs. T.: I'm sure you have found many technical changes in photography. What are some of the most interesting you've found?
- Mrs. L.: Of course, there has been a great change. Photography really was on a plateau, more or less, for a great many years. The development of black-and-white photography lasted through a long span. Then came a revolution with color photography, which has changed the complexion of

photography. If you have trained in black-and-white, with all its angles, it is difficult to adopt this other method, of which a great part is lab photography. You become a broker rather than a craftsman. In black-and-white photography, I did all the processing. I followed that from the camera room to the final product. In color photography, you don't do that. You photograph and then the labs do the rest. So I do not have the affinity because I feel it's out of my control, whereas black-and-white is definitely under my control.

Mrs. T.: Do you notice a lot of difference in cameras?

Mrs. L.: Yes. Of course, you see, I've worked in large formats in photography. I trained in that, and that is my forte. The development of miniature cameras has revolutionized this altogether so that a great production now is on miniature film. I still use the large format. The only time I use miniature film is where we take a trip and record it.

Mrs. T.: What are some of your favorite photographs?

Mrs. L.: Well, possibly some of my favorites are the executive portraits I've made of personalities of Decatur and then my bridal studies, beautiful portraits of brides, which used to be "the" thing. It has been my privilege to record the beautiful brides of Decatur of the past. We have albums of these, and they are choice studies of the gowns, the occasions in the lives of these prominent people of Decatur. We cherish those always.

Mrs. T.: Good! Do you have any secrets in dealing with people? You told us about talking to them. Do you have any other ways of dealing with them?

Mrs. L.: Perhaps the most important thing is my interest in them. There is this close rapport between us. If you're interested in people, they are going to be interested in you.

Mrs. T.: Your studio is in such a beautiful old home and you told us how you happened to get this home. Do you know if the house has a history?

Mrs. L.: Yes. This house will be 100 years old in 1987. It was built by a man named Peter Loeb, who had come to this country from Hamburg, Germany. He had a foundry, and this was his dream house. He selected, as I understand it, every piece of wood that went in the house. Three car loads of lumber were brought in for his selection. He selected the bricks and stones that went on the exterior. There are choice woods - quarter-sawed oak, wild cherry, and chestnut throughout. It is hand-carved. The art glass is very choice in the windows. Every window in the house is plate glass and, of course, the downstairs windows have the art glass. The art glass is San Jose glass. The architect was from that part of the country and hence the San Jose art glass. I think originally it came from Europe when it was introduced.

Mrs. T.: You told us, Mrs. Lindquist, of the many honors you have received. You must need a separate room in your house for all the citations and plaques. It's very fine that you have been recognized for your work. One of the points you mentioned earlier was an M.A. degree in photography. Can you tell us how this is awarded? Who gives it - and so on?

Mrs. L.: This is awarded by the Professional Photographers of America with the accumulation of 25 merits. The merits are accumulated from prints hung in national professional convention meetings. You receive two merits when a print is accepted. These go through some very

rigid judging. Many prints are thrown out for some little technicality. After the accumulation of 25 merits mostly from prints hung and also from credit for service to the association. You may receive one or two merits for outstanding work in service to the association. So I accumulated in the course of time 175 merits which were from prints hung and for service in the various states in the country. It was there again, that you shared your knowledge with people, and people were always anxious to learn because anything you can learn improves your status in the profession. I had some very, very good contacts with this. I liked lecturing to these groups, and they received me everywhere. Canada invited me, but I was forced to turn down that invitation because having a business and traveling and lecturing is not always feasible. Because I could speak French, Montreal and Quebec wanted me on programs. I always regretted that I had to turn them down. Again, that was a wider scope for my profession, but I could not do both.

Mrs. T.: Did you ever have time for any personal life?

Mrs. L.: The only personal life I had was in travel with our photographers in various parts of Europe, the Orient, Mexico, where we met other photographers and also became better acquainted with our own group. We made trips to the Hawaiian Islands. The Oriental trip was very good. We were received by top photographers in Japan. They entertained us royally. Of course, we visited some of their camera works, and we were given binoculars. We were presented with gifts everywhere. It was very choice. When we went to Hong Kong, we were entertained by Chinese photographers. This gave us a different viewpoint and recognition.

Mrs. T.: So you were able to mix business with pleasure.

Mrs. L.: Yes - my business was my pleasure. Some people have other hobbies, but really, photography became my hobby as well as my profession.

Mrs. T.: Do you think you will ever retire?

Mrs. L.: Well, I keep thinking, maybe next year I'll do that. Then next year comes, and I'm not ready. You have a feeling, once you retire, what's going to happen? My whole life has been so devoted to this profession that it's difficult to say, I'm not going to do it.

Mrs. T.: Well, I'm sure the public doesn't want you to, either.

Mrs. L.: I still have a few contacts with people who know I'm here at 300 West Prairie.

Mrs. T.: Well, thank you very much, Mrs. Lindquist, for this really fascinating glimpse into your life and the world of photography. We do appreciate your reminiscences that you have given us today.

Mrs. L.: It has been a pleasure to meet you and to give you my little history of life in photography.

Mrs. T.: Good! You have been listening to the reminiscences of Jeanne Allard Lindquist, who has a Salon of Photography in Decatur. This is Betty Turnell speaking for the Decatur Public Library.

My mother Mrs. August Allard (Sophie) came to work in our studio after our father's death in 1937. She became a valuable laboratory assistant until her retirement in 1970 at the age of 90.

She was devoted to the profession and met many photographers throughout the United States while attending national conventions of the Professional Photographers of America.

In 1955 she was runner-up Queen for the Diamond Jubilee of the Professional Photographers of America, a contest of women age 75. It was stated to me off record that she actually came in queen but due to my position with the national association it was thought prudent to give her the second position. She travelled extensively in the United States, Europe and the Orient with professional photographers.

She died Sept.15,1982, at the age of 102 $\frac{1}{2}$ after a long life, one of devotion and grace.

Added note: My brother August Allard, a Decatur resident, served with Patton's Army in World War II- was in invasion at Utah Beach- seriously wounded at Battle of the Bulge - hospitalized for two years in war hospitals- 6 months in England and balance in U.S. Returned to civilian life in Decatur - served as township assessor - assistant treasurer before his retirement.