

Students Sound Off

Newspaper in Education 2026 • Spencer County Leader • Section C

Unforgettable moments from my grandmother's childhood

Interview date: 09/04/2026
Author: Suy Lissbett Calderón
Eighth grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

I interviewed my grandmother about her early life and upbringing. She is 65 years old. Years and, obviously, I've known her all my life. Our interview focused on her home life, her dreams school years and the changes she remembers from her childhood. Her stories are valuable because they show how family traditions and education have changed over time, offering a perspective full of nostalgia and learning about effort and family unity.

Q: What was a typical day like for you when you were my age?

A: Oh, it was very different. MeI used to get up very early because back then we didn't have as many digital distractions as we do now. I would help my mom prepare breakfast and then walk to school with my friends from the neighborhood. There weren't any phones

back then, so we mostly all got together at someone's house or in the fields. And when I got home, the first thing was to organize and help with the housework, and then homework. If we had time, we would go out and play until it got dark.

Q: What was your favorite subject?

A: My favorite class was Literature. I loved learning because it gave me such excitement that I could laugh or jump for joy. I remember there was a teacher named Miss Martha. She read with such passion that it was beautiful to listen to her stories. Thanks to her, I fell in love with reading and understanding stories.

Q: What were your responsibilities in the house?

A: At home, we all had to help. There were seven of us siblings: four boys and three girls. My main tasks, being the oldest, were to make sure my siblings were okay, that they ate, ironing and washing their clothes, taking care of them, keeping my room and

things tidy, and not leaving my homework unfinished. My mom wasn't home much because she was taking care of my younger brother, who was sick. He died at nine years old, so I was in charge of my siblings.

Q: Is there a memory from your childhood that you would like to relive?

A: I remember the afternoons at my grandmother's house, since on Sundays all my uncles, cousins, and other relatives would gather there. There was no internet or video games, so we invented games with anything we could find. Sometimes we played ball, or simply hide-and-seek. In the late afternoon, as the sun was setting, our parents would yell at us or whistle when they heard us, and we'd run back to my grandmother's house. We hadn't even arrived yet, and we'd smell the food, which smelled like embers and spices. That feeling of security and belonging to something big, like her love, is what I miss most about those times.

Q: What do you think is the biggest change of my generation?

A: I think it's the speed of life. You have access to everything instantly thanks to technology. In my day, we had to be more patient. If we wanted to know something, we asked our elders because where I lived, we didn't have a library nearby, and we didn't have much money to travel to one. If you wanted to talk to someone, we sent little notes like letters. That made us value things more than money.

Q: What advice would you give to today's youth?

A: I would tell them not to forget to look up. It's okay to use technology, but don't let it steal real moments from them. Talk to people, look your parents in the eye, enjoy a walk without needing to post it online, and cherish your families because at the end of the day, only memories remain, not "Likes, Messages, or Shares." That's what I would tell them.

An Interview with Allen Fischer

Interview Date: 4/4/26
by Abner Fischer
8th grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

I interviewed my grandpa on my dad's side of the family, Allen Fischer, who grew up in New Boston, Indiana, during the 1950s and 60s. He is now 70 years young. Our interview focused on his family, his childhood adventures, and some of the major events that he lived through. His point of view comes from a small-town country kid from southern Indiana.

Q: What was the place like where you grew up?

A: It was simple, a little town that looked like Mayberry, but even smaller. We had one tavern, one fire station, and five streetlights.

Q: What did you do for fun growing up?

A: We played pitch and catch, went fishing, and sat out on the front porch watching cars go by. Sometimes we'd use worms or crickets for bait, and sometimes even plastic worms.

Q: Did you ever get in trouble together?

A: Once, I was riding bikes with one of my friends named Mark. And he liked to squeal his tires on the black patches in the road. He thought I was turning into his place, but he turned right in front of me,

and I hit him broadside. I flipped over and broke my collarbone.

Q: Do you remember a major event everyone was talking about?

A: When John F. Kennedy died. I was in fourth grade. The priest came down and told the nuns the President had just been shot. Everyone was sad because everybody liked John F. Kennedy.

Q: What has changed the most since you were my age?

A: Electronics. And the thing that has stayed the same is probably gardening, and work is about the same, but many people don't have a work ethic anymore.

Q: When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I wanted to be a construction worker, but you couldn't just get on a construction site at 18. So I worked in a factory until I got my shot at a construction job. And I mined all over for a job. And then, eventually, retired from Toyota as a Kaizen team leader in the paint shop. It was a fun job.

This shows the best parts of my interview with my interviewed Allen Fischer's childhood life that included experiences with his friends, and some of the things he did growing up in his small town of New Boston, Indiana.

Janice Lytle Remembers Life In Indiana

Interview Date: 4/1/26
by Piper Marie Lytle
8th grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

I interviewed Janice Lytle about her early life growing up in Southern Indiana. She is 68 years old, and I know her because she is my Grandma. This interview mostly focuses on her home life, the role her parents played, and school. Her stories show generations now are different than the ones she grew up with.

Q: Where were you born and what day?

A: Huntingburg, Indiana, born on October 18, 1957.

Q: What was Huntingburg like when you were young?

A: I was born there, but I lived in Ferdinand State Forest when I came home from the hospital.

Q: What were your parents' names?

A: Kathleen and Frank Huff.

Q: What kind of work did your parents do?

A: My dad was a Forest Ranger at first when I was born, but then he was a parts man for Armstrong's John Deere.

Q: What were your parents like as people?

A: My dad was stern, but loving, Mom was loving and not so stern. Mom was the one that took care of the children and raised six children in the home, while dad worked outside the house.

Q: Were there any relatives you especially loved spending time with?

A: My Uncle Mike because he lived with us. Also my cousin Sandy because she was close in age with me. We went to each other's houses a lot as teenagers.

Q: Did you ever get in trouble?

A: Yeah, there were several times if you didn't listen to mom, she believed in being respectful, if you talked back to her or didn't do what she told you, you would be in trouble. Also if I stayed out past my 12AM curfew I was in trouble.

Q: What was your worst and best school memory?

A: The worst is a lot of times getting up and riding the bus. The good part was hanging out with my friends.

Q: How would your classmates describe you?

A: My classmates would describe me as friendly, a good sense of humor, and shy.

Q: Do you remember any major events that everyone around you was talking about?

A: Well we did a lot of talking about the Vietnam War. They were getting ready to end the war. I had a brother that was in Vietnam. I remember they had bracelets that had a soldier name on it and you were supposed to wear it until the soldier came home.

Q: What do you wish newer generations understood?

A: That if you get out and work hard, you can achieve anything.

Q: What kinds of games did you play?

A: When I was younger it was like jump rope,

dodge ball, and we would play baseball. We played with the neighbor kids a lot. When we got older we went to dances, everyone loved to dance. When I was a teen, dancing was how you made frineds.

Q: What did you do after school?

A: I didn't have a TV in my room back then so I would read, listen to music, take a bath, then go to bed.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher?

A: Mr. Peacock, he was an english teacher. I learned a lot from him. He was a stricter teacher which helped me to learn.

Q: How would you describe yourself as a child?

A: Shy, they always believed adults had the conversation with each other when they were at the table and company came, kids were to be quiet. If you wanted to get up from the table you had to ask. Also you were supposed to eat whatever they gave you and if you didn't you didn't get snacks or dessert afterwards.

Magdalena Gonzales Fernandez Morales

Interview Date: April 4 2026
Writer: Sofia Perez
8th grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

I interviewed my grandma, Magdalena Gonzalez Fernandez Morales. She is around 80ish years old, and she is from my mom's side of the family. When I interviewed her, it mainly focused on what she did as a child and what she did throughout her childhood. She grew up around La Cienega de San José, Durango. My grandma's story is about how she worked a lot when she was a kid

Q: Were you shy, loud, serious, funny, stubborn, or something else?

A: I was always mischievous because I would always play pranks on my siblings, and I would tease them a lot to make them mad, so then it led to me getting in trouble

with my grandparents

Q: What did you like to do for fun?

A: What I liked to do for fun was to go to school while I could, and that was also the only way of getting out of the house besides doing chores and farm work at home

Q: What were your grandparents like?

A: What I liked to do for fun is to go to school while I could, because they were going to take me out because I had to help my grandmother with the farm, so I didn't have that fun in my childhood

Q: What was a sad memory or hard time from your childhood

A: I would probably say my mom passing away, and I would always see girls my age walk to the store or places with their moms, and I would get upset

Q: Did you enjoy school? Why or why not?

A: Yes, I loved school very much. I would always beg to go, but my grandma told me that I didn't have the time to go to school because I had to help her with the farm and other chores

Q: What was the first car you rode in

A: The first car that I rode in was an old Ford truck, and I would use it for my farm work

Q: What everyday things is very different now from when you were young?

A: Everything has changed over time. Back then, I had to do a lot of farm work, and after all that, I would be extremely tired. But now I don't do that much farm work, and I have my husband here to help me with the farm work, and I don't have to get up that early anymore

Q: At what age did you get married

A: I was 18 years old when I married your grandpa, but then I started to feel unhappy during the marriage. In Mexico, if you got married and if you wanted to leave, you couldn't leave your husband or else they would think that was a very bad sin

Q: What was the lifestyle as a kid?

A: Never really had fun as a kid cause I would have to help grandma around the house and help her with the groceries and I really didn't get that much education

Q: Was there a big life event that changed your family's life?

A: When my mother passed, it affected my whole family

Q: How did your mom pass?

A: She passed by giving birth to my younger brother.

Don Berg's life story

A: They didn't have a TV and had to help work on the farm.

Q: Did your family have any traditions that mattered a lot?

A: On holidays, we went to our grandparents' house, and we got to see our aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Q: What was a normal day like in your home?

A: We would get up, eat breakfast, go to school, come home, then I would play with my four brothers and four sisters.

Q: What kind of food did your family eat most often?

A: What I remember most is fried chicken, steak, and gravy.

Q: What did you do for fun?

A: We would play different sports, usually softball or football, in the front yard with the neighbor kids.

Q: What is one of your best memories of

your childhood?

A: Saturday morning cartoons and Sundays going to Ferdinand State Fire for a picnic and swinging in the lake.

Q: What was school like when you were my age?

A: I went to Fulda grade school, where there were two grades in each room, and the two grades only had one teacher. Most of the teachers were nuns, and when we went to eat lunch, we went to the basement where the cafeteria was.

Q: What subjects did you like the best?

A: Reading and Math were my favorite subjects in school

Q: What are your best school memories?

A: Meeting new friends and going to ball games.

Q: What was your first job?

A: I was 16 years old, and I worked at Santa Claus Land, which is now Holiday World. I

mowed, raked leaves, ran rides, and helped take care of the animals. I was paid \$1.65 per hour.

Q: What kinds of tools, machines, or technology do you remember from childhood?

A: Technology was scarce; we had combines that were pull-type and mini bikes.

Q: What has changed most since you were my age?

A: Telephones have changed a lot. Telephones were rotary dial, and you were on a party line with other neighbors, so if somebody was using their phone, then you couldn't use yours until they were done.

Q: When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I didn't really want to do anything when I grew up. I just wanted to get out of school.

Q: What advice would you give to your younger self?

A: I would say to do better in school and pursue a career to better myself.