

YONGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
WORLD WAR II: THE HOME FRONT

Personal Experiences

O.H. 1458

Amber Jenkins

Interviewed

By

Rebecca Smith

On

November 9, 1991

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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Interviewee: AMBER LOUISE JENKINS

Interviewer: Rebecca Smith

Subject: World War II: The Home Front

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RS: This is an interview with Mrs. Amber Jenkins for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program. The Home Front during World War II by Rebecca Smith at 31 Marion St. in Buckhannon West Virginia on November 9th 1991 at 2 o'clock pm. Okay Mrs. Jenkins can you give me a little bit of background about your life?

AJ: Well, lets see I was born in Akron raised in Lakewood, Ohio. Spent all my summers in West Virginia except a couple I spent in Canada. So, West Virginia is home and I graduated from Florida High School and got married and I was nineteen when the war broke out.

RS: Where in Florida did you graduate from?

AJ: Fort Pierce.

RS: Fort Pierce, okay and what did your father do?

AJ: My father with a company he traveled premiering for magazines a company out of New York. As I said I was raised in Lakewood, he died when I was fifteen and we moved to West Virginia.

RS: Were you an only child?

AJ: Yes, only child.

RS: Did your mother work?

AJ: No.

RS: And you were raised during the depression?

AJ: Yes.

RS: All right, do you remember anything about that; is there anything about the depression that you can tell me?

AJ: Well, fortunately it didn't affect us, but it did people we knew a lot of friends, a lot of people lost their homes and a lot of people were out of work. I remember when I was a kid we would go to town in Cleveland selling little wooden toys of which I have a couple, and apples. People really had a hard time of it. I was a kid it doesn't really bother you. You don't really know what's going on, they always protect you I guess.

RS: Okay, You said that you were married at nineteen, were you in West Virginia at the time?

AJ: No. I was in Florida. Then my husband went to work for Silas Mason, Mason Hanger Company, which is the second oldest engineering and construction company in the United States. He was sent to Minden Louisiana, which is the ordinance plant was between Minden and Shreveport and we were there three and a half years. I worked at Louisiana Ordinance plant for approximately a year and a half to two years, I can't remember exactly. I expect there were between eight and ten thousand working there at the time of the war.

RS: Okay, now what was this ordinance plant?

AJ: Well, they made 75-millimeter shells and 80-millimeter mortar shells, land mines, hand grenades, and things of that sort I worked with, inspection department.

RS: What exactly did you do?

AJ: Well, I inspected.

RS: What were you looking for?

AJ: Well, I looked for rejects and part of my job was the fuses. Other departments it was to check the hand grenades before they were put in a carton and sent down a conveyer belt.

RS: So, you're checking for defective fuses?

AJ: Yes.

RS: What would make them defective?

AJ: Well, if they didn't fit under the gauge correctly, if they were too high or too low or if the handles weren't right on the hand grenades something didn't match too well. And

you kept a recording and at the end of the day you turned in how many were inspected and how many rejects you had. It was a mad house was what it was.

RS: Were did you get this job?

AJ: In August of '43. I do remember that.

RS: We went to war in 1941. Do you remember any conversations that people had either concerning Germany or Japan before the United States entered the war?

AJ: No not really, I didn't pay too much attention to what was going on at that time. I really didn't. I guess people thought we were going to be in war sooner or later. I was too busy having a lot of fun I really didn't worry.

RS: Okay, you were already married at the time, were you working then?

AJ: No.

RS: Okay, you were just staying at home. How about December 7th, 1941?

AJ: Oh yes, I remember that.

RS: Tell me about that day.

AJ: It was quiet a shock.

RS: Where were you?

AJ: I was in Florida and course it was on a Sunday and I think everybody was in shock.

RS: How did you hear the news?

AJ: On the radio.

RS: Do you remember what your reaction was?

AJ: No, just sort of disbelief.

RS: What was the general talk that day, you must have surely talked about this?

AJ: Well, yes I suppose that we did. People were talking about joining and volunteering for different things. Other than that I really don't remember.

RS: What about your husband?

AJ: Well, he was already going to be transferred to Louisiana through his company. So, we knew that we'd be going there, which we did in the spring.

RS: Now the company he worked for was the Mason Hanger Engineering Company?

AJ: Yes.

RS: Exactly what did he do?

AJ: He had charge of tool and die in the plant. The plant had different areas like: A, B, C, and D, so on and so forth down the line, which maybe, I can't remember which is which, but for example area K was where they worked on the landmines and there were fuses and they had different types of shells. And everybody parked in the huge parking lot and then got on a bus and went to the different areas that you were assigned to. And we all wore coveralls little striped seersucker coveralls. I remember when I was transferred to H, area H I think it was. Inspectors got to wear cool lots, which we thought was great we didn't have to wear those overalls anymore, because Louisiana was very hot and nothing was air conditioned back then.

RS: How did the United States entering the war directly affect your family?

AJ: Well, I don't have any brothers or sisters, so, and my husband didn't have any brothers. So, it didn't affect us as much as somebody went to service. Well, of course everything was rationed and we had ration books and stamps to get various things. I know I used to trade sugar stamps for shoe stamps.

RS: For shoe stamps?

AJ: Yes and they were not worth it, because they fell apart. They were made out of, it didn't matter what you paid for them, and they were made out of real cheap leather or some kind of material. They fell apart very quickly.

RS: How did the Government issue these stamps?

AJ: I guess the ration board sent them out; I still have two ration books.

RS: Oh do you?

AJ: Yes.

RS: What about gasoline? Was that also rationed?

AJ: Well, we didn't have any trouble getting gasoline there wasn't that big of a shortage really and if you worked in an ordinance plant you got plenty of gas to go back and forth.

RS: Well, you said that you go your job at that plant in '43.

AJ: Yes

RS: Okay, did that have anything, with you getting a job, to do with the shortage of men in the United States?

AJ: Oh I suppose yes. Well, I never worked in a plant before and it was different. It was a different job!

RS: How's that?

AJ: There were lots of women; there was a man who was supervisor of each area, but other than that just about everybody else was a woman. A lot of them their husbands were overseas.

RS: Were you restricted in the things that you talk about in the plant or outside?

AJ: No, there wasn't anything secret where I worked.

RS: Okay.

AJ: There wasn't. I don't remember any of that, but we had a guard shack were you checked in through there, but I don't remember anything like that at all. I do remember in one area I was where I checked fuses through a gage actually you didn't have to think because you just pushed these through as fast as you could and if they weren't rejects they went right on through and if they were rejects they would either get caught on the side or the top. So, you didn't really have to look. And I do remember several times there would be, which you noticed of course because everyone had coveralls on, so if you saw somebody with street clothes come in you would notice that. Once in a while there would be two men come in and one on each side of somebody across from me and this person would get up and leave with them. And I didn't know until after the war, what four years later, apparently they were spies. I didn't know it.

RS: The people in the plant?

AJ: Oh yes,

RS: Really?

AJ: Sure! But I didn't know it at the time. Nobody said anything and I never thought to ask, I just supposed they went to the office for something. I didn't notice that they didn't come back. So, they were there whether you knew it or not. That was scary afterwards when I thought about it.

RS: I guess so. What dangers were there at this plant?

AJ: Well, for instance when I was in an area where they assembled hand grenades we were told, there was a big barricade on the other side of a long table where we worked and we all sat in a row we passed them on down and I was next to last, I inspected it and then the person on my left put it in the box and put it on the conveyor belt and that was the end of that, until it was taped after it got off the conveyor belt, I think it was taped after it got off, I can't remember if it was before or after it got off the conveyor belt. They told us if you pulled the pin you had five seconds before it went off, there are hand grenades that have different timing mechanisms, but the ones we worked on had five seconds, so if you thought they were going to go off you should throw it into the barricade. One day somebody did think it was going to go off, but fortunately it didn't, but I thought well I won't get up and run out of here, then when I saw the supervisor jump on the conveyor belt, but then I thought maybe I better go too. So, I think I was the last one coming back in. Fortunately nothing did happen, however, there were some accidents there I am sorry to say. In the crimping machine where these shells, they were 75-millimeter shells, and the crimping machine does just what it sounds like it crimps the shell together. They did have an explosion in there and several girls were killed. Then on the bombs they made, which they called the mortar shells, they hammered on those with a hammer once too often and they had a bad explosion because of that. So, it was, we did have rules to go by for your own safety and everybody else's and I think sometimes people just get careless they think nothing happens so nothing is going to happen. But it can and it could and it did.

RS: Were there any restrictions on what you were allowed to wear?

AJ: Yes, you had to wear those coveralls and I can't remember about the shoes. I had some kind of moccasins; I just can't remember what we wore. And then we had a scarf in one area, where your fingers turned yellow from the powder, so we had a scarf we put on our hair it had an ordinance symbol on it. I still have one some place. And your hands and fingers did turn yellow and your hair turned yellow too, it was a terrible yellow.

RS: Well, were you allowed to wear something like hairspray?

AJ: I don't think we had much hairspray then, only when you went to a shop.

RS: Okay.

AJ: No, I missed that. I think we didn't have very much hairspray, I can't remember and if we did it had to be a lacquer. So, I supposed I used it.

RS: What was the reason for it being lacquer?

AJ: I don't know I think that's all you could get then.

RS: Oh okay.

AJ: We didn't have the selection then that you do now. Its terrible a matter of fact. I think there were between about 8 and 10 or 11 thousand that worked there at the time. The plant is still going I don't know what it does now really I haven't been to Louisiana since '45.

RS: What did you talk about? Did you talk about the war?

AJ: Oh yes, you talked about how everything would be just be wonderful as long as the war was over. That was the main thing. Get the war over with and everybody would come home. That was on everybody's mind we didn't think we had any other problems.

RS: What were your greatest fears at this time?

AJ: Well, I didn't think about being bombed or anything like that, I didn't think about anybody coming over here. Of course there was quite a feeling against anybody with a German name there was this hotel in Chicago and I can't remember if I've stayed there and I can't remember the name of it, but during the war they changed it because it had a German name. It all seems crazy now. Then there were Japanese Americans interned, which they in most cases shouldn't have been, I feel at all. Their lands were taken away from them and they never got them back. There were a lot of Japanese that fought for this country, Japanese Americans that fought for this country and were decorated in spite of all this. So, they really were unjustly gathered up.

RS: At the time how did you feel about the Japanese?

AJ: Naturally I wasn't fond of them at the time, because we were all lead to believe it was all their fault, but I've often wondered since why were all those ships in one spot? Instead of, well, it was an awful easy target. It was a terrible, terrible tragedy the men that died there. See they were all lined up in one spot, that's kind of like putting all your eggs in one basket. I think this country was absolutely right in dropping the atomic bomb.

RS: Really?

AJ: I absolutely do.

RS: Why is that?

AJ: Well, for one thing it saved hundreds of thousands of American's lives and there were hundreds of thousands of them killed just on one island, let alone multiplying that by all those islands in the South Pacific. It did end the war as far as Japan was concerned and I thought President Truman was absolutely right in what he did, under those circumstances. We all felt that way.

RS: Okay, very interesting. With the rations do you remember anything about black outs or area drills? Did you have anything like that?

AJ: Well, before we left Florida, yes they had black outs down there because it was right on the coast and you had black out curtains and you painted half of your headlights black and we would hear the supply ships being shelled, because the Germans, there was never anything in the paper about it of course, the Germans would silhouette the tankers against the sky you know it was bright moon light and they would fire on the ships and the hospital would be full of men they rescued, I know because I had a friend there. With burn victims and what not that they rescued, but you never read anything about it. It was terrible, they just didn't publicize it.

RS: So you're saying that German planes actually...

AJ: No their submarines

RS: Submarines?

AJ: Absolutely

RS: German submarines attacked our...?

AJ: Yes, yes right off the coast of Florida.

RS: That is very interesting.

AJ: Yes, that's right you didn't read it in the paper. I lived there and we all heard it and we all knew what it was. So, that was scary. That was as close as you would want to be.

RS: I guess so.

AJ: And then some. But where I was in Louisiana they didn't have any black outs or anything, we were too far inland. I am sure they did in New Orleans and places along the coast.

RS: Did they ever think there was danger that since you worked on a defense plant that you might get bombed?

AJ: No, I never thought of it really. There were too many other things that would have been better targets than that, I think.

RS: Oh

AJ: Probably.

RS: Like what?

AJ: Something on the coast so they didn't have to come in so far inland. I just never thought of it happening.

RS: What did you do for entertainment during the war?

AJ: Oh well, we still had Big Bands then, which was lovely. That part was a lovely era, all the Big Bands to go and listen to and dance. This was a little bitty town about 8,000 people I guess and they had three theaters. So, by the time you went to the third theater the movies at the first one had changed so you could go as much as you wanted to. There was always something to do.

RS: Okay

AJ: And Shreveport was a great town, beautiful town, a wonderful town to shop in, and lots of good places to eat. We had friends in the service that were stationed in Oklahoma that would come and visit. So, of course when you worked that kept you pretty busy.

RS: So, your husband was never called up into the Service?

AJ: No.

RS: Was that because of his job?

AJ: Yes.

RS: Do you remember how the town of Shreveport showed support for the war?

AJ: Well, I wasn't in Shreveport all that much, I was in Minden, its just a little bitty town 30 miles from Shreveport. 30 miles East actually, but Barksdale Field was in Shreveport and it was a big place and there were an awful lot of service people there and families stationed there. There wasn't anything like that in Minden, but Barksdale Field was pretty well known.

RS: Barksdale?

AJ: Yes.

RS: What I am thinking of is when we were in the Gulf War we had yellow ribbon out showing support to our service men we had rallies. Was there anything like that that went on during World War II?

AJ: Oh they had War Bond Rallies and that sort of thing.

RS: What would they sell?

AJ: To sell war bonds and stamps. Everybody bought them and you bought them where you worked and everybody I knew bought them.

RS: What did they cost?

AJ: Twenty-five dollars.

RS: What was the sales pitch I guess?

AJ: Well, let me see, I don't know. Unless we just helped the war effort. I can't remember.

RS: When would you cash it in?

AJ: Oh years later.

RS: Is there anything else that went on in that plant that you can remember?

AJ: Well, let me see. Well, I did have a sort of interesting experience. I had a whole tray of rejects disappear and when you had rejects they were supposed to go to, I can't remember where they were supposed to go, but it was a little department where they worked on them to see if they could be salvaged and if not they were supposed to be discarded. So, in this one area I worked it would seem that every time I left for any reason every time I would come back the rejects that I had there were gone and I couldn't find out where they were. That did upset me.

RS: Weren't you responsible for those?

AJ: Yes. So, I reported every place I knew to report it to. And I reported to my boss and I found out that, I found this out after the war, I met a friend that worked for ordinance and she was inspector for ordinance and I was an inspector for the company. So, then she told me that it took the Government to come down to the line in the middle of the night and make them unpack the boxcars and go through them all and check for any rejects they had, that some how had gotten out of there.

RS: So, they were packing them anyway? My goodness!

AJ: So, they unloaded them and discarded what didn't work. It really did upset me.

RS: What could have happened with those rejects?

AJ: Well, get a reject a shell that doesn't work and somebody's life is depending on that shell. They have a dud because the shell doesn't work.

RS: Why would they do that?

AJ: So, they would get a certain quota out.

RS: Okay

AJ: I never got over that, it isn't right.

RS: Money depends on quota?

AJ: Yes, well, they say it's the root of all-evil. It must be something to it.

RS: So, did they ever find out exactly who was doing that?

AJ: I never heard. Never heard, but I was happy to know that they made them unload the boxcars.

RS: Okay

AJ: So, I like to think that they found all of them that didn't work.

RS: Okay, that's very interesting. You've talked a little about the attitude of the people towards Japanese and German Americans. Did you know any?

AJ: No, no I didn't. I didn't know any Japanese at all, well; I didn't know any German that I think of. I remember a nice German lady that I knew that held me down so I could take Castor Oil, that's the only German I knew. It's amazing how things have turned out, isn't it?

RS: I am going to read some names here and I'd like to know what your impression of these people were, okay. Franklin Roosevelt?

AJ: Well, I think we needed him at the time he was President. This country was in terrible shape and there were many people out of work. If it hadn't been for the war, I suppose they would still be out of work or they would for a long time. I think he did a lot of good. Course I remember he did say that your boys wouldn't go to war, and the boys did go to war.

RS: Know had you talked with anybody about whether or not...

AJ: And I voted for him that was the first time I ever voted.

RS: Oh really

AJ: Yep.

RS: Did you and your friend feel at the time that he was aware that Pearl Harbor was going to be attacked?

AJ: Not at the time, but since then yes.

RS: Okay

AJ: Not at the time.

RS: Dwight Eisenhower.

AJ: Well, not one of my favorite presidents really. One of the things I didn't like about him, he walked through the White House in his golf shoes. I think that he should have more respect for the White House.

RS: What about as a general during the war?

AJ: I think he took orders just like everybody else. I think George Patton was ten times smarter.

RS: Oh really?

AJ: Yes I do.

RS: Well, tell me your impression of Patton.

AJ: Well, if you ever talk to any men that served under him they'll tell you the same thing. I don't think it was an accident when he was killed, I don't think that was an accident. I think the war would have been over soon with Germany if Patton had been allowed to go on to Russia. I just think that he was a smart man.

RS: What about Douglas MacArthur?

AJ: No, I didn't care for MacArthur either. I thought he was, you know why I didn't care for MacArthur I'll tell you, because I thought it was terrible when all those men were left behind and the nurses were left behind, but I think he should have had to leave his furniture and personal belongings behind. I didn't think that was right to be able to get all your furniture and everything like that and here these people were left behind at the mercy of the Japanese.

RS: Are you talking about the Philippines?

AJ: Yeah, I didn't like that. Probably, well, I think he was a good military man as far as that goes. Egotistical a little like George Custer. I didn't think that he should have gathered up all his possessions while these people had to stay back there with nothing.

RS: Winston Churchill?

AJ: Oh yes I admired him. I thought he was a good man; probably one of the best England's had.

RS: Okay. Adolph Hitler?

AJ: Well, of course I think he was a mad man, and absolute mad man, but I really feel that Germany would do the same thing again if anybody came along that mesmerized people like he did. Scary, very terrible things that he did.

RS: Were there any Nazi supporters here in the United States?

AJ: Any what?

RS: Any Nazis or supporters?

AJ: Oh I suppose yes. I am sure there were. You know that girl I told you about, they went back just about when Hitler came to power. They left this country, I've always wondered if she was in that youth group?

RS: The German girl.

AJ: Yes

RS: Oh, okay

AJ: She was certainly strong enough to be, but yes they used to have meetings I remember in the newsreels at Madison Square Garden, people would object to it they were arrested, the police arrested them.

RS: What happened to them after the war?

AJ: I don't know, I always wondered what happened to those girls leaving all of a sudden and I didn't know why at the time. That's just something that nobody thought about, or nobody I worked with thought about. Some how a spy you thought of that as something overseas. You just didn't think about them being around where you were working and yet now why wouldn't have they been. But at the time you didn't think that. Never occurred to you. It never occurred to me that that's why that girl was leaving with these two men in suits.

RS: Was there any ever case where some one was unjustly accused of being a spy?

AJ: Not to my knowledge, No, not that I ever heard of.

RS: Where you aware of any time during the war the persecution of the Jews in Germany and Europe?

AJ: Oh yes. We had real good friend, their name was Nafsiger and they were friends with my mother and dad and they had a boy my age and he was from Austria and she was from Belgium and they lived in Austria. They were refugees and they walked clear across to Holland and escaped that way. When they came to the United States they just didn't

have anything and they came from a wealthy family. He was an engineer and he didn't have any trouble going into the field again. Yes, they had a terrible time during the war.

RS: Were they Jewish refugees?

AJ: Yes. They came over here; I think it was about 1932 or '33 when they came to the United States.

RS: Had you seen anything on the newsreels about the persecution of the Jews?

AJ: Yes, I am sure that I did. I am sure I did. We had newsreels all the time, I am sure I did.

RS: What do you remember about VE Day?

AJ: Well, everybody of course celebrated and were tickled to death and expected everybody to come home right now. Hopefully, that everybody would be home. Really that was on everybody's mind, because the war was just over and everything would be, there would be no problems of any sort, just let the war get over that was all you could think of.

RS: Do you remember how you heard the news that German had surrendered?

AJ: I was at work. They called a big meeting and everybody clapped and cheered and they said one down and one to go. Just Japan left. Wasn't that right, was Japan first or was Germany first now I forget myself.

RS: What about VJ Day, when you had heard that Japan had surrendered?

AJ: Well, the same thing, but I was working then. I can't remember whether Germany was first. I can't remember.

RS: Well, Germany surrendered...

AJ: Yeah, it was Germany first

RS: Yeah, Germany surrendered in May.

AJ: I was at work then, but I wasn't working when Japan surrendered.

RS: Why did you quit?

AJ: Let's see. Oh I know now, my mother was sick and I came home. I was here six weeks and I couldn't get a leave of absence that long so I just didn't go back.

RS: Okay

AJ: I didn't go back to work I mean, I went back to Louisiana.

RS: You say that you did support Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb?

AJ: Yes, I still do absolutely. He saved hundreds of thousands of American boys lives, I sure do.

RS: Is there anything else that stands out in your memory concerning the war?

AJ: I can't think of any. Well, you knew there were so many people worse off then you were, we really didn't have any big problems I think cause you knew there were a lot of people that did have that were over there. That's mainly what you thought of and if the war would just be over, that was the main thing. Course I think now any time you can use sanctions to avoid war you should. I think you can force countries to do many things with sanctions and save a lot of lives in the meantime and then there's always the refugees, which I think is tragic.

RS: Did you know anybody that was outspoken against the war?

AJ: Not that war, no. Not that war.

RS: Okay.

AJ: I didn't hear anybody think it was anything, but right that we should be in it.

RS: Do you remember any comments concerning the invasion of Normandy?

AJ: Since the war, but not at the time that I remember of. There were an awful lot of men killed during that invasion. Terrible, there really were, I don't know how there could have been something done differently. I wasn't against in the invasion, it just seemed like there was so many, a terrible expression gun powdered...

RS: What did that mean?

AJ: They were just mowed down. They didn't have enough air power, I guess or before hand or the ships, the same thing happened in some of those islands in the Pacific. They didn't have what you called back up. They should have had before they sent the men in, because it was terrible. We had friends that were in the Pacific and it was just unbelievable what they went through. So, I think if there is anyway possible that war can be avoided really in the sense there are no winners.

RS: Can you think of anything else that the United States did or the people did to try to show support to the boys that were overseas?

AJ: Well, we didn't have any yellow ribbons that went up, but I think that everybody, people volunteered to roll bandages and knit sweaters, and send boxes to service men, and everybody I knew backed them up 100 percent. Oh, I think you always backed the men up that had to go. You may not agree with governments and decisions made, but once the men have to go you certainly back them up.

RS: There is supposed to be Victory Gardens during WWI was there anything like that in WWII?

AJ: Yes, I didn't happen to live where I had enough ground for a victory garden, but I know a lot of people did have.

RS: Can you tell me exactly what a victory garden was?

AJ: Well, they just grew all, it was just like a nice garden you grow all the vegetables and things that you can. I love to garden anyway if you have the space to do it.

RS: Now, is the Garden for you or somebody else? I don't understand it why they called it a victory garden.

AJ: Well, let me think. I don't know exactly why they called it a victory garden either. Why did they call it a victory garden? (Asking her husband)

AJ's Husband: Because the people grew their own vegetables that helped the war effort, that helped supply food, they'd have more food for the service men.

AJ: I guess that would be it. I suppose there would be more food for the service men if you grew your own, they had more for them.

RS: So, if you ate your own vegetables then the government would produce would go to the service men.

AJ: Yeah and they wouldn't have to can as many of course you know they needed that metal and they needed the tin, so, they wouldn't have to produce as many for civilians and more for the service men.

RS: Was there any recycling going on?

AJ: Yes, people saved tin foil and they turned their tires in. I don't know what they did with them after they turned them in, but you turned them in anyway. You thought you were doing something, you wanted to do what you could to help whatever it was. As much as you could to feel like you were contributing something.

RS: Other than the men being at war what changed the most in your lifestyle?

AJ: After the war you mean?

RS: During the war, other than the fact that the soldiers were off at war, I guess what I am saying is what was taken away or what did you miss the most in the war? I mean your everyday life had to change.

AJ: Well, this sounds frivolous but I couldn't buy as many stockings as I wanted. Yeah, I didn't know the right people that's the reason, that's true. I hated not having enough stockings, but I kept them in a glass jar. If you had a run in one pair then you would use the other one and you dyed it with tea to make them match.

RS: With tea?

AJ: Yeah, they matched that way. That was really a small thing, but that was a big thing to me then. The stockings you bought were atrocious they just hung like a sac, especially around the ankles and if you had low pumps that helped keep that in otherwise they looked dreadful.

RS: Okay, you were telling me about the shortage of stockings and the shortage of clothes, the clothes were...

AJ: The clothes were skimpy and the dyes were terrible, they faded out if you had gas heat the colors went funny, especially if you liked blue, which I did, you ended up with something a cross between lavender and a sick pink, I think. The gas heat had some sort of effect on it. Yes, you could get anything if you knew the right people, that's true. Like today, you can get anything. You could get gasoline, get tires, senators did. There was a place in Maryland they came to get their gasoline and they sent a truck and a gallon drum. And they got tires; they didn't do without anything and they're still not doing without anything. That's the reason people don't have much respect for the senate or congress.

RS: Do you know where that was?

AJ: No not really, I would tell you if I did, but I don't. I didn't know that until after the war, because I was just like a lot of sheep, because I thought there really was a shortage of those things that was what you were lead to believe. We had C ration, because we worked at an ordinance plant so you had plenty of gas to go back and forth, but you couldn't take a long trip. I know people that did and like I said it's not what you know it's who you know and that hasn't changed in 1991.

RS: Okay any other events or things that you might remember?

AJ: No not really. I loved the people there in Louisiana the hottest place I have ever lived, but the people were great. I liked the people everyplace I've ever lived, I've lived in about a half a dozen different states and other than Utah, I liked the people everywhere. Maybe I didn't like the climate...

RS: What about when the boys came home?

AJ: Well, lets see where was I. Well, I left there in November of '45 and we had friends in Florida and mainly in Florida, but come home some serviced over seas some didn't. Oh I'll tell you a little piece of news you might not know. When Macarthur and the newsreel when he came through the water and said, "I will return". Do you remember that?

RS: Yes

AJ: Well, they had to get him; lets see how many uniforms he wore to make that film three or four until he got it just the way he wanted. We didn't know any of that we thought that was spontaneous and it wasn't. Raising the flag over there wasn't spontaneous that wasn't the way it was raised. That was all for the newsreel, which looks great doesn't it?

RS: Yeah

AJ: But I mean we didn't know that you see. We thought it was all done just like that, I found that out from a service man, two service men, one in each theater and they were both there at the time and they could tell you a lot. Like I said those that served under Patton had a lot of respect for him, yes they did.

RS: Well, I can't think of anything else.

AJ: I can't either. I've often wondered all those boys that died especially in the Pacific what they would think if they could come back now and see that this country is over run with Japanese ownership. The Japanese have bought up hundreds of thousands of acres of land in this country all kinds of buildings, and make better cars than the U.S. I wonder if they would think all this was in vain. They do make better cars there isn't any doubt of that. You ever read any of Vance Packard's books?

RS: No.

AJ: They're worth reading. I first got them in the fifties, that is when the first ones I got of his. The ones called "Waste Makers" and it's true, things are only made to last so long, its true. I bet you don't believe that.

RS: Well, sometimes.

AJ: Well, years ago when they made *Maytag* they use to last twenty-five years from one generation to another and people had carpeting in their homes and it was passed on from one generation to another. Now they're guaranteed for about ten years and that's about it, but you see if you don't make things to wear out then nobody ever buys anything new, it's a cycle.

RS: Well, if you don't have anything else to add, I am going to close this interview.

AJ: Well, Thank you.

RS: I thank you very much and I appreciate it and this concludes my interview with Amber Jenkins on World War II: The Home Front.