

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II Project

Personal Experience

O. H. 911

ELIZABETH J. MUIR

Interviewed

by

David P. Powell

on

November 1, 1986

ELIZABETH J. MUIR

Betty Muir offered to be interviewed after I asked our group at church if anyone would like to be in an oral history program about the homefront during World War II. She is a retired school teacher and keeps well informed on what is happening in the world.

Betty's interview was very informative because she had a number of interesting things happen to her during the war years. She had just been married when the war started. Naturally she went with her husband to a small town in Texas when he was sent there for training. She still has vivid memories of the train trip to there. She believes that the railroads helped cut their own throats for the passenger business after World War II. Anyone who had to use a train during the war was willing to switch to the airlines later.

They were short of money so she lived in a home with a very old lady who needed someone to help take care of her and the home. For this reason both Betty and her husband remember Texas as a place with many nice people.

Later he was sent to New York for additional training. Not only couldn't they find a decent place to live, but the people were very unfriendly. After he went overseas, she came home to live.

Betty told how people in the rural areas really had few scarcities. They grew and canned much of their own food and could get extra gasoline stamps to use to run the tractors (or go in a car). For this reason she remembers the war years as not "bad" unless you had someone overseas in danger.

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INTERVIEWEE: Elizabeth J. Muir

INTERVIEWER: David P. Powell

SUBJECT: rationing, victory gardens, blackouts,  
Camp Bowie, Texas

DATE: November 1, 1986

P: This is an interview with Betty Muir for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the home front during World War II, by David Powell, at 4044 Aleesa Drive SE, on November 1, 1986, at 2:10.

Could you just give me kind of a general rundown, how old were you during the Second World War, what are some of the things you remember?

M: Well, I graduated from Mount Union College in 1940 so I was around twenty, twenty-one at the beginning of the war. I graduated as a teacher but didn't get a job the first year out. So I worked for awhile in McKelvey's, and got enough money and went to Ohio State for two quarters to take some home economics. The Ohio State placement bureau said, "Now if you had home economics with what have got, you stand a better chance of getting a job." I went there in April and through the summer. I went to Ohio State and took two quarters and got a minor in home economics. Then I got a job in my own hometown, which was North Jackson. That was in 1941, which was at the time that war was declared. I can remember going on a Sunday afternoon drive with my dad, which we often did--we lived on a farm and we would go out on Sunday afternoon for a drive--we got home and turned the radio on and there they were talking about Pearl Harbor being attacked. I remember that very plain.

P: Now, did you even know where Pearl Harbor was?

M: Well, I guess I did know that it was in Hawaii because I had had some geography. I am sure that I never heard of Pearl Harbor before, but when they said it was in Hawaii I could place it in my mind.

P: You said that you had gone to college to be a teacher. Did you start teaching then?

M: I started teaching in 1941.

P: Could you tell us some of the things they did in school to help promote the war effort?

M: As a teacher, of course, we were required to stay evenings and sign up people, often. They used us Saturdays too, I think, for rationing. I remember sugar rationing, I remember canned goods rationing, and meat rationing. We made a board and it had little cardboard tabs that you could put in it. I wrote out the names of all the boys as they went into the service and it was kept on this board in the school there. It was done in Old English, black, India ink on gold cardboard pads. I can remember that I had a senior class one year, the class of 1944, as a sponsor for the senior class. During that year I believe we lost four, or five, of our seniors that didn't graduate because they were called into the service. They had to leave school to go to the service.

P: You mean they were drafted before they graduated?

M: Yes.

P: They didn't join up, they were drafted.

M: They were drafted. They were called in, yes.

P: See, I always had thought they would allow you to finish school.

M: Well, they didn't. Some of them they called right from school. They may have given them a diploma, I'm not certain about that, but I know we were forever having a going away party for this one, or those two. I believe there were four or five from that class and there were only about thirty in the class. So it took at least ten, fifteen percent of the class out. That class had only five girls. The majority of the class was boys, and that was unusual for any class to have so few girls. They did have a majority of boys. In Jackson Township itself we had many that went to the Pacific. The Ohio National Guard, nearly all of them went to the Pacific. There was one boy in Jackson Township that

was killed, and he was killed on a training flight. Something went wrong with the plane and he went into the Mississippi. That is the only boy from Jackson Township that was killed in the whole war. Now, Milton was combined with Jackson. So we had Jackson-Milton school district. There were several boys from Milton who didn't come back.

There were boys signing up to leave and there were boys coming back for a few days. You would see them for a little while and they would be gone again. It was coming and going and you saw a lot of boys in uniform at that time around. It is not like now when they can wear civilian clothes. If they were in the Army or the Navy they were required always to be in uniform.

P: At college now they have ROTC, did they have any program at school where they trained the boys or anything like that?

M: Not that I recall. No, not at Mount Union where I went. They may have had, I'm sure they do probably, at Ohio State.

P: Getting back to the high school, did they have any other programs they did? Did they do anything to help the people save things or anything to promote the war effort?

M: We had courses of first aid that was given by the Red Cross, I believe. A lot of civilians came in and took that. I took it myself. As far as bond selling or things like that, I was trying to think, it seems to me that we could sign up and have a bond taken out of our pay if we wanted to.

P: Did they encourage the students to help buy bonds?

M: I don't remember any of that. It may have been in some places, but I don't remember it being in Jackson.

P: Anyway, you said that you helped sign people up for rationing?

M: Yes.

P: Were you part of the rationing board or were you just helping?

M: We were told that we were to do it and we did it, and we didn't get paid, nothing, nothing. Because you are a teacher, this is what you do.

P: Community service then?

- M: Right. It was just assumed that you would do it.
- P: Generally, how well do you think the rationing program worked? What was your opinion of it?
- M: Well, I never tried to out do it or anything back then, as far as I could see. I don't know exactly the purpose of it to tell you the truth. Maybe just to make people aware that we were in a war. Maybe there was a shortage of these things, I don't know. Because they were gearing up maybe for arms and things like that. The factories couldn't make as much canned goods. I just never could figure it out. I know there was meat rationing too. There were some people who got rich on the meat rationing, some of the people who could go out and get meat in the farm districts. They butchered it and brought it in. It wasn't checked by the government. They could sell it under the counter, I don't know how they did that.
- P: Yes, I heard a few tales like that but I have never actually known anybody.
- M: I didn't ever try to do that myself. I don't know how it worked or anything, how anybody could do that. After I was married, and during the War, Bill was stationed in Texas. I lived with a lady, Mrs. Patton, who was an invalid. She had a heart condition. She gave me stamps out of her book so I could go and buy food. We ate together, I did the cooking. We shared that way, but there wasn't anything wrong, I don't think, with that. She was eating part of the food and I had some, I had my own.
- P: Did there seem to be a really genuine shortage of anything?
- M: There seemed to be a shortage of sugar. Now, I don't know the reason for that. Some people would hoard sugar and it would get hard and then they wouldn't like to use it. I never tried to do that either. I don't know whether they would get stamps from somebody that didn't use it. They would buy sugar up anyhow and store it away. We never used that much sugar anyhow, so I didn't think it necessary to do that. Of course, I was always a good girl anyhow. I tried to obey the law and do what I was supposed to do without much question. I wasn't a maverick like some people might be, so, I can't help you very much on that.

The people in general, where I was, seemed to take it in stride as though it were something that was needed. In that generation I don't remember questioning even. If somebody told you something, you believed it. It is not true nowadays, and I think we were a little gulli-

ble sometimes because we didn't question some of the things. It is just the generation in which we were raised, I think.

P: Getting back to the high school, what kind of entertainment did they have for the kids? Now, if you go to a high school today there is a lot of things they do. Did they have things for the children to do at school?

M: We had movies imported for part of the lunch hour that were shown. The schoolchildren themselves put on plays; like an operetta and things like that. There were community programs sometimes. Like I remember a Halloween program. The whole community was invited to this and there was a prize for the best dressed. I remember we sat in a big circle and they passed paper plates of things, like grapes that were squeezed back and those were eyes. You felt them in the dark and passed them on. They would tell you what was in that. We used to have a cake walk, I can remember those. We had minstrel shows where the local people would put them on.

P: So, it is a lot of local entertainment?

M: Oh, yes! Almost all local I would say.

P: I know when my older brothers were growing up they went roller skating a lot, because they all became rather good at it. We moved into the city so I never did really become good at it. Now, did North Jackson have roller skating rinks?

M: They did not have roller skating rinks, no. There was one at Milton and, of course, the students that went to Milton often went to the roller skating rink. As a class sponsor we could have a roller skating party, and invite people, and sell tickets. I remember going out because I was a sponsor. I kept telling them that I didn't roller skate, I didn't know how, so they put roller skates on me. They said, "Come on," and they pulled me up and out, and I just went right on and down, like that. They didn't believe me that I didn't know how to roller skate. I went a few rounds but that was about the extent of my roller skating ability.

So, we did have roller skating parties once in awhile, now that you brought that up. I know the students in school had that rink. Now, when I was going through that same school we didn't have . . . The rink wasn't open or else my parents didn't want me leaving Jackson Township to go to the dances, or roller skating parties. I am not even sure about that. They had that, I can't think of any other . . . The church there had a young peoples group and they had some parties, I guess,

there too. There was a Catholic church across the street from school. The Federated church was right next door to the school. Those were the only two churches in town for a long time. There has since been some splinter groups. So there are some others now but there weren't then.

P: Now, my dad was talking about they had victory gardens. Did they do anything like that because you said there was rationing? Did they attempt to have victory gardens or anything like that?

M: Well, this is a rural community that we lived in and everybody had a big garden always. I remember hearing a lot about victory gardens and possibly the people that lived in town made a special effort to do that. Where I lived on the farm there, we had canned for years and years. We never bought much from the store. We made our own bread and canned our own meat. We butchered beef and pork, and canned. We had a smokehouse and we smoked hams and bacon. We didn't need a whole lot, maybe some sugar. We had grain that we took to the mill and had it ground. We raised all kinds of vegetables and canned them.

P: So, really there wouldn't have been much of a food shortage?

M: Not there! The victory gardens were talked about a great deal. As far as this rural community that we lived in everybody had always had their own garden. It was a thing that was done by every family.

P: Then there really wasn't very much shortage as far the people were concerned?

M: No, no, I would say not where I lived.

P: Now my dad was telling me that they rationed gasoline, and tires, and a few things like that. How would that effect the people that lived in the country, because he lived in the city?

M: Well, we couldn't take long trips, but then when you lived on a farm where you had cows that had to milk twice a day you didn't take very many long trips anyway. For anybody who took a yearly vacation it was a problem I'm sure. I can't remember that dad had to . . . He used gasoline for his farming, he had a tractor, and then he did treshing for people in the township--southern part of the township--and silo filling and things like that. I can't remember how . . . I think there was a special category for farm use. I don't know whether it was rationed. I don't remember that he was ever out of gasoline, so maybe



that was a special category that you could use as much gas as you needed, I don't know for that purpose, for tractors.

R: I suppose growing food you would kind of have to have food.

M: Yes, in fact if you worked on a farm, a young man, if he was actually farming he could get deferred from the service.

R: Oh, could he?

M: Yes.

R: Now see, I didn't realize that.

M: Oh, yes. We had several in Jackson Township who were maybe . . . They lived on a farm. I remember one man who had worked as a mechanic somewhere in a garage, but he had a son who was of age that he could be drafted. He took to farming, he got equipment, and he was a farmer. So he was deferred. If you were raising food for the country, you didn't have to go to the service.

R: I didn't realize that. I knew there were some people who had been exempted but I thought like doctors, and things like that. I didn't realize that farmers would be too.

M: Yes, farmers too. Several of the boys in Jackson Township that I knew didn't go because they were farming. Later they gave it up and went to something else but during that time they were farming.

R: Do you think they maybe farmed just to be farmers?

M: Just to be deferred, I have that feeling that that happened some of the time.

R: You didn't have to run to Canada then.

M: No, you didn't have to run to Canada then.

R: I could see how you could do that then, and I could see if you had farm land you might want to do that for your boy. So that they wouldn't go.

M: That is right.

R: My dad was telling me that they had blackout practices and they actually had people that went around. Was there anything like that in a rural area? Now this, of course, was in Warren.

M: Yes, blackouts. I'm trying to think if I ever took part in it. It seems to be a part of my training somewhere and now that you mention blackouts. I don't remember doing it where we lived. I'm sure there must have been some time, there must have been sometime when they were having a drill where we had to put out all the lights. There must have been!

R: My dad even mentioned they had big sirens in Warren they would sound for practices and so on.

M: Yes, I can remember hearing about those. They would tell you when all clear was, when it started. Civil defense, that was why we took the training for first aid. We had at school, we got some equipment, civil defense equipment. Then I guess that was in the next war. Sometime when I was teaching but I guess it was before the next one.

R: The Korean War or something like that.

M: Something. We had radiation equipment that was sent in by the government.

R: Yes, that probably would have been the Korean War or something then wouldn't it, because of the atomic bomb.

M: They were little yellow things, and they would check radiation. We had to learn how to use them. It is difficult for me. I went through that school, Jackson-Milton, I went through Jackson from the first grade to twelfth and then I went back and taught there. Then after my children were born I went back and taught again. So I have had two or three times that I have been in that building and I can't just pinpoint when that equipment came in. I will have to think about that.

R: You said something about they could have movies at noon. Were the entertainment movies or were they patriotic?

M: No, entertainment movies, just what was showing. They were older movies that had been shown in Youngstown or Warren. They had some kind of distribution that they could get these. We would show--like one week--we would show part of it on Monday, part of it Tuesday, part of it Wednesday, part of it Thursday. No, they were strictly entertainment movies.

R: I assume during wintertime, maybe.

M: Yes, in the wintertime when they couldn't get out. They put them in the gym, in the old gym.

R: You said that you went back to Ohio State because jobs were hard to find. How was the employment situation during the war?

M: During the war was when the women started working in the plants for the very first time. My sister did, came in to Warren and worked at Packard one summer. This was just at the end of the Depression you understand, then war came on, and then suddenly everybody was working. My dad even went to Salem and worked for the very first time in his life in a factory.

R: He had been farming before then?

M: Right, he had always farmed all his life. Suddenly he went in and worked in a factory of some kind in Salem.

R: Was it required or did they just encourage people?

M: They just encouraged people. They needed workers. Mostly it wasn't required, but encouraged I would say. When Lordstown opened up they were packaging shells of something at Lordstown.

R: See, I never knew what they did at Lordstown either. I just knew they had done something there.

M: I had students of mine who were taking biology--they were sophomores in high school--and they would go up and work from 4:00 to 6:30. By law they couldn't work any later than 6:30, or something like that. They worked for those two hours and they got more money than I got teaching school.

R: Two hours a day?

M: Two hours a day.

R: Well, that must have been discouraging.

M: It was! Two hours a day these boys would work and they were making more money than I was making. I was only making \$44 every two weeks. I might say that at that time. . . And Bill and I were married in 1944. I had to get permission from the school board to get married. Because before that married teachers were thought to be . . . They couldn't hold down a job at school and also be married and have a home that they took care of. That was an impossibility. I guess it was only because it was during the war and Bill was in the service that they gave me permission. I still kept my job. If you were married you had to have a pretty good reason for proving to them that you could . . . That your home life would not interfere with the job that you had teaching school.

R: Then, if you had a lady teacher she would be a Miss?

M: That is right.

R: I didn't realize that either. So, that is when that started changing.

M: That is right, but I had to go to a school board meeting. Bill and I were going to get married January 19, and I had to go to a school board meeting. I didn't find out until December 28 that he was going to be able to come home. We were going to get married during his furlough and we wanted a church wedding and everything. I had to go to the school board and ask them if I could get married and still teach school.

R: Then I imagine they even put it in the minutes like they do.

M: I'm sure they must have.

R: I didn't realize that. I knew that there hadn't been married teachers, but by the time I got old enough there were married teachers. I remember quite a few married teachers. I didn't realize that that is when it had changed.

M: Yes. Before that there was only about three professions that a woman could have; be a secretary, or a nurse, or a school teacher. That was it, that was about it.

R: Really limited then.

M: Really limited. But then during the war we had the song, "Rosie the Riveter," where the girls went into the ship building and they found that they could do the job. That is when women first went into the factory work because the men were all gone to the service, they were all fighting in the war.

R: That must have been when Packard and places like that started hiring so many women.

M: Yes, because up until that time women stayed at home. If they were married they kept house, looked after the children. That was a big change that war brought on.

R: Yes, it would have really been a big change then wouldn't it?

M: Yes.

R: If a teacher was married and still wanted to keep her job, then she either had to have an awfully good reason

or just lie about it.

M: Yes, I know of one couple who . . . The woman was a school teacher and the man worked, but this was even like before the war, and they couldn't have enough money to start housekeeping. So, there were some secret marriages so she could keep teaching. We suspected--we who lived in the community and were close to the families--suspected that they had been married for quite some time. Due to the fact that she would have lost her job if they had known.

R: Sounds kind of silly now, doesn't it?

M: Yes, it does. It is really different.

R: All right then, the draft board, do you have any idea how they worked? They must of had someone run it or something. How would a person get on the draft board?

M: I have no idea in World War II how they did that. I am sure they must have had a draft board but I don't know whether it was in the township or not, whether it was out of Youngstown. We lived in Mahoning County and everything was sort of centered in Youngstown. I don't know whether they decided for the whole county who would go and who wouldn't, I don't remember. Some of the boys signed up, I think, to go. It was a more popular thing to sign up then.

R: I know my brothers signed up so they would get in the Navy.

M: Yes, to get in the service that you wanted, if you wanted one particular one, you had to sign up to get into that.

R: I don't know why they thought the Navy would be better.

M: Well, parents told them it was a cleaner life in the Navy, and it was dirty and mean in the Army.

R: I suppose it would be, I never really thought about it.

M: People in the Army had to be out on the land, and they would sleep out. Of course, if you were in the Navy you had a hammock to sleep in. If you were on board ship you had a dry, warm place to sleep. That is the thing that I heard anyhow, that it was a cleaner life, whatever that meant.

R: My mother had a little banner that had blue stars on it, and I talked with my dad so I know what it means, but would you tell us again what was it for?

M: Blue star mothers, these were the mother's banners. If you were a mother, you got one of these every time you had one son in the service and it was hung in the window in a very prominent place so that everyone could see. If you had a son who was killed in the war you became a gold star mother. So you would change your banner from a blue star to a gold star and everyone would know that you had lost a son in the war. If you had four sons in the war you had four banners there, hanging in the window. So, it was a badge of honor for a mother to have these in the window during the war.

R: My dad was telling me that when my brothers would send mail home sometimes it would be marked out and so forth. Did you have any experience with censored mail?

M: Yes, yes, yes! When Bill was overseas, he was in Europe, and there would be censored some things--although they were told what they were allowed to say and what they weren't allowed to say--so, much of what was in Bill's letters was not censored. Every once in awhile there would be something that was completely blacked out.

R: Then you had no way of knowing where he was?

M: No, I didn't know where he was, no. Well, he did tell me he was somewhere in France. He told me that he had come into Le Havre, I knew that, and he was somewhere in France, that is all. I never knew where he was and I never knew when he left. I got letters almost daily but when there would be longer stretches between the letters, then I would know he was probably busy somewhere not being able to write.

R: Mail service was pretty good then?

M: Seemed to be.

R: My dad said the same thing, mail service came very regularly.

M: Regular, yes. Our first son was born when Bill was over seas. His dad sent a telegram, which he got after the war was over. So the baby was born March 4th and he got the telegram after the war was over. I wrote a letter to him right after our son was born and he got that. So, he knew that he had a son. I got a letter that was dated that day, March 4th, and he said right at the beginning, "Somehow I feel that today is the day." He was quite nervous over there apparently, as it kind of approached when he was supposed to be born. Everything went well, so, and I did send pictures. The first pictures I sent, he was in a transport. They just got the mail and they were being transported, and

suddenly they got under attack and they had to dive for the ditches. They blew the truck up and all his stuff was gone, all of it. The mail was very good, I think.

R: I know that is what my dad was saying. I kind of thought there would be trouble getting mail on through them. He said, "No," between my mother and he when they wrote my brothers it was good service.

M: I would say so.

R: Did you try to travel or any during the war, like to visit Bill or anything?

M: Yes. We were married in January and when school was out in the end of May I went to New York City. He was taking electrical training. I went to visit him after school was out. Stopped the train in Salem, went into New York City to Pennsylvania station. I had to sit in between the cars on my suitcase. The trains were packed, all the seats were taken.

R: With soldiers, or what?

M: Soldiers and people. The soldiers got the priority. Mothers with children got next priority. The wives of service men. I didn't have any children at that time. What they did was on the train stations, if there were a lot of people, they would say, "Service men," and they could go and their wives and children could go and find seats. Then the rest of the people could go and get on the train. Going from Salem to New York, I just got on Salem which is a small place, and I sat on my suitcase in between the cars. There were three or four other people in there too. It was the noisiest ride, clickety-clacking all the way to New York City.

R: Doesn't sound too comfortable.

M: No. Then when he was finished with his training he went back to Camp Bowie in Texas. By that time I was pregnant, so I didn't teach that year, I went down with him. We went on a train from Chicago to Fort Worth. It took two days and two nights I believe. It was a steam locomotive that burned coal. There was no air conditioning in the trains, put the windows up and you got the smoke in from the locomotive. We were black, all around our nostrils and our face would just be black and it was so hot, it was in August. That was a terrible ride.

We got to Texas, got to Camp Bowie, in Brownwood Texas, stayed in the hotel there and it was 107 degrees down there. Bill had been in New York and taken the training. He went out a day early and they sent him right

out in the field. He was out there out there all day in that hot sun, he was sunburned, it was terrible. Three months later I had to come home once he thought that they might go from the training right directly overseas. Sometimes they did that, they would go out for training out in the field and then they would take over from there and be sent overseas. They never knew when they would be sent overseas. So, one time they went out and there was a rumor around that they were going from there overseas. He insisted that I go home, which I did, and I had to go by myself. The same thing, the trains were just very crowded. Then I had to go back because they didn't go overseas, so then he insisted I come back.

I had several train trips and the last one when I came home I had . . . My hip was out of joint, it was out of place. Down in Texas the doctor said, "It is 'milk leg' you have got. Just stay in bed all the time." Well, I had to come home and I got my hip fixed. I had to sit with my leg propped up on my suitcases all the way home. That time, since this was a serviceman and his wife was pregnant, we got priority and we had a seat on the train. We could get a priority that way.

R: While you lived down in Texas what were the conditions like by an Army base?

M: Well, I never got into the Army base, Bill wouldn't allow me to go in. We lived with Mrs. Patton and I got my room free for taking care of her. I did the cooking, and the shopping, and the cleaning, and so on, and we got a room. Bill could come in and stay. He had to leave early to get out to the base, but we spent a lot of time that way. This was in a small town, Brownwood, Texas.

Do you know there was one vacuum cleaner in town. The people in the big house had a vacuum cleaner and since Mrs. Patton was the widow of the only physician deceased, she knew the people in the big house. We borrowed the sweeper one time to do some spring cleaning of the rugs. She had curtains up to the window, lace curtains, and she said that they had been up so many years and they had never been washed. Things didn't get dirty there like they did around where we came from with the steel mills and so on. It was just like sand and you shook it out and that was all there was to it. Rugs the same way, the only dirt that was there was sand, it was a sandy soil.

It wasn't too bad but Mrs. Patton had no washing machine. There was a roof over some washing machines. It was the first time I had ever seen people could go in and wash clothes in a house, or a place, just for



washing clothes; a laundromat, the first laundromat. There were a lot of women whose men were in the service and kept moving. So they would use these washing machines, there were no dryers, but wringer washers. The weather was very mild, so it didn't have any sides to it, just had a roof over it, could go in there and wash. I washed in a tub about two feet in diameter and one foot by two foot washboard, and hung them out on the line. Even my mother had a washing machine at home and a sweeper. I couldn't get over these inconveniences.

R: Did they have electricity and everything down in Texas?

M: Yes, they had electricity. There were gas heaters in every room, you had to light them. The one time that I reached out to light one of these gas heaters for Mrs. Patton, one morning it was kind of chilly, and that is when my hip went out of place. I was about six months pregnant. They didn't have basements, you know like we had a basement at home. They were just built on stilts off the ground and there was just these gas heaters in each room, little gas places. She had a gas stove, so gas was apparently the fuel of the town. They did have electricity, electric lights too.

R: With that many servicemen coming in, was there any problems between local people and the service people?

M: I think they were glad for the extra money that they could get by renting a room out to the women. I think that was a boom to that town and I think they were happy to have them there. There were no problems that I heard of, clashes of any kind. I am sure there might have been some disagreement somewhere but I got the impression that the townspeople welcomed the extra money that they were getting renting. Mrs. Patton rented one bedroom out to another girl from Pennsylvania, and her husband. Then I got mine free for taking care of her and doing the shopping.

A lot of people down there, you know, had just linoleum on the floors. Mrs. Patton had linoleum and then she had a rug over the linoleum in the living room. That was my first trip into the South, to see the people in the South.

R: Of course it was still segregated then. Were there black soldiers?

M: Yes, there were but they were put in regiments of their own I think then. They weren't as well accepted as they are now in the service, it wasn't as integrated. There were Mexican people who lived in that town who did . . . They were the second class citizens, is what

I want to say I guess, or they were considered second-class citizens.

R: Where were the blacks then, they were third class?

M: Blacks, I don't think I even saw any in Brownwood. I just don't remember seeing any. I know, since then I have been in the South more, I find that the blacks are more in rural places in the South, very poor. Now north here they are mostly in the cities, but down there I think they live more out in the country.

R: I was just wondering, as far as you were concerned, while the United States was at war was it a terrible time for our country, what was your recollection of how the war seemed from the homefront?

M: Well, of course there was a lot of anxiety, I think, of people who had husbands, or relatives, or fathers, but there was a lot of hopefulness. That was when we thought America was tops, undefeatable, the best in everything. We thought a great deal of our country as being the best in the world. There was a lot of patriotism during that war. It just surged, all of a sudden it just surged, but a lot of hopefulness too. I remember during the Battle of the Bulge there was some negative, negative kind of reports coming out. That they were surrounded and it was pretty bad I guess. We just couldn't realize that this could happen to our great country, that they would be defeated. Which they weren't in the end but then that was one time when it was . . . I was just hoping that Bill wasn't there, you know, because we didn't know where he was. He was with Patton. I think he might . . . I don't know whether I knew then if he was with Patton, maybe at the end of the war. So that anytime there was bad news coming from the war front you just hoped that your person wasn't there in that. I think there was a lot of hopefulness and there was a lot of patriotism. Everybody was trying to do their bit for the war.

R: You said that there was a lot more jobs and so on that had come out of the Depression, and if you wanted to work there was work. Seemed like there seemed to be quite a bit of work in fact. What did the people do with all the extra money?

M: Well, some of them got married, some of them did. I guess that there was a long time, like since 1930, that there hadn't been money, so there was replacement of things that had worn out that you couldn't afford. After the war it took a long time for the factories to get moving, to get enough washers and dryers and electrical equipment, small. . . Like toasters and things. It just seemed that there was so much need for these

things, because new families I guess starting, that it took the factories a long time to catch up. So, I think they put their money into equipment, material things, I think so. Now, during the war you couldn't buy these things. So, I guess they put them into war bonds.

R: You mean if you had an old car and it broke down what did you do?

M: Well, in our town there was a good mechanic. We took our cars out and had Von Houser work on it. There were good mechanics. You just thought, "This can't last forever," and you just put it off if you could and did what you could, did without if you couldn't buy anything. I don't think there were new cars built. Everything was going to tanks and ships. They must have geared overnight for that almost. Every factory was doing something for the war effort.

I had an uncle who was an inventor and he made circuit breakers first and then thermostats on refrigerators. During the war he made binoculars in his factory and he also made altimeters for airplanes. Up until that time the altimeters on the airplanes were not very accurate to within 200 feet or something, which wasn't very good. He used the same idea that he did in his refrigerators, a diaphragm of a container that contained some kind of a gas so that it was sensitive to heat and cold is what it was in the refrigerators. He used the same thing on the altimeters so that it was a differentiation between the table and the floor showed up on this new gadget. So, he put altimeters on all the airplanes during World War II.

R: So, generally speaking then, people had money, but there wasn't anything to buy with it.

M: Yes, right. I didn't make much more money I'll tell you that. I spent mine making trips, that is what I did I guess.

R: There was a little baby, I imagine you didn't have very much time to get back to work.

M: During this war, I guess maybe it is since then too, since I got married they took some money out of Bill's check and they sent me money each month. He signed up for his mother because he was responsible for his mother too. So she had \$50 coming out, and I had \$50 coming out, and Bill had \$7 a month.

R: Left over, huh?

M: Left over. Which wasn't hardly enough for dry clean-

ing, it wasn't very much.

R: I know when I talked with my dad he said really when he looked back at the war years, except for worrying about the boys, it really was a pretty good time.

M: Yes it was. That was the only thing, was just if you had somebody that you knew that was in the service and you worried about them, that was that. Since the mail came in, and you were getting letters, and you knew they were still alive, it was a very hopeful time.

R: You think of war time as terrible time, but it isn't sometimes.

M: Well, it wasn't quite on our ground, on our soil. If it had been there would have been a different feeling I'm sure. It was overseas.

R: Yes, that makes it . . .

M: When the war was over in Europe Bill was on a cadre that came back thirty days earlier than the rest. He stopped to see me and then went to the west coast and he had to get his Army's equipment packed in cosmoline, getting it ready to ship overseas. They were due to go into Tokyo. That was very frightening.

R: Yes, because the Pacific war had been getting nastier.

M: Right, yes. It just seemed like there was no end to that one. When he was on his way back and he was in Albuquerque, New Mexico, when they dropped the bombs and the war was over and they announced it. He was due to be shipped over to Tokyo.

R: By then the war was over four years old, wasn't it?

M: Yes.

R: Would seem like a long time.

M: Four, or five years old, 1941 to 1945. Four years. It just seemed like things were going from bad to worse in the Pacific. It really was not very good things coming out from there.

R: Let's end the interview then.

END OF INTERVIEW