

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II Project

Personal Experience

O.H. 919

PHYLLIS M. POTJUNAS

Interviewed

by

David P. Powell

on

November 23, 1986

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: PHYLLIS M. POTJUNAS

INTERVIEWER: David P. Powell

SUBJECT: World War II

DATE: November 23, 1986

DP: This is an interview with Phyllis Potjunas for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the home front during World War II, by David Powell, at 2095 Woodland Avenue NE, Warren, OH, on November 23, 1986, at 3:00 p.m.

Phyllis, could you start out by telling us what you remember about the beginning of the war, Pearl Harbor and things like that?

PP: At the very beginning, before Pearl Harbor, the boys that were in national guard left. They left right away from Saint Cloud, and everybody was there. Then I came home from church one day and had the radio on and heard they had attacked Pearl Harbor. I yelled at my mother, and one of the boarders that were in our house, and everybody came in there standing on Sunday.

DP: Saint Cloud, what state is that in?

PP: In Minnesota. Saint Cloud is in Minnesota, but I lived in Sartell, that is about five miles north of Saint Cloud.

DP: Okay, so you lived in Minnesota then. How old were when the war started?

PP: Eighteen.

DP: Were you in school still, or working, or what?

PP: No. Was I nineteen? I don't remember.

DP: What were you doing then, can you remember, at the beginning of the war?

PP: At the beginning of the war I was working in a paper mill sealing paper, making ornaments. Then after that I had. . . . Well, after Pearl Harbor, I know I had appendicitis and when I went into the hospital there weren't rooms. They made a room on the solarium. At the same time there was a group out at the airport in Saint Cloud. I don't know what type of group, but they were all in uniform. One of their boys was very, very ill. They all came to see him, and instead they came in my room, because they could only go in one or two at a time.

As soon as I was out of there we moved to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, which is very close to Farragut Field. There, of course, it was overrun with servicemen. Soon as the kids got out of boot camp they would come into town, no matter whether it was in Coeur d'Alene or whether they went to Spokane, and they would run right for a bakery and they would get cream puffs. They would sit on the curb, and they would have cream puff from one side of the face to the other. You felt so sorry for them.

I don't remember how we got food stamps but I know we had them even out there because you could only get so much meat. Even if you went to. . . . They closed all, I would say, nightclubs I imagine is what you would call them. You had to belong to a private club if you wanted to go in for dinner and everything, but still it was only one person out of four could eat meat. You had to belong to one of the individual clubs. Of course some of the servicemen did belong, they were mostly the officers. Also, I remember the only thing you could get was rum, because they drank so much rum and cola at that time. Was that song out?

DP: Yes.

PP: The rest of it, I guess, went to the servicemen. I don't know where it went but that is about it. There was only just so much that you could get.

Then what did I do? I came back to . . . I lived with my sister in Minneapolis for awhile, but on the way home. . . . If you were going by train, bus, or anything, you had stand up only. They were just filled

with servicemen. I got a seat on the way back, thank goodness. That was a long way from Idaho to Minneapolis.

DP: Yes, it would have been.

PP: That was on a train. I got to Minneapolis, and got a job in a drug store. There I sold mostly film, I can't remember what else was there. I can't figure out when they keep saying that all the Japs went into concentration camps here. Most of our business was done by Japs that were in uniform, our uniform. They came in and they had roll after roll. It was nothing to have \$300, \$400 worth of film developed. I switched over to a different counter after awhile and they sent me to school for cosmetics. Other than that there isn't . . . well, no matter where you went, of course, it was jammed. The poor kids, most of them were out of Fort Snelling, which is in Saint Paul really, taking training out there.

All I can remember is that we couldn't get gas. You had to stand in line for cigarettes, which I didn't have to do, because a friend of mine was providing the stores with them. Also in nylons, we had nylon. . . . Everybody, oh they would rush. At that time I was in Daytons, I was working just for Daytons. That is before I worked for a different company out of Daytons. They would stand in line and it was just like cattle. They would grab, grab, grab. They didn't care what size they had even, they just wanted them. We couldn't get them either. We could have one or two pair once a month, or something like that. So everybody was going around with runs in their stockings, or sewed up.

I worked for a concern out of Daytons. I went to Urbana, Illinois but I had to go back and forth to Champaign. So I got an apartment over in Champaign, I would stay there for two, three months I think it was. There in Rantoul is where they had a service group. In fact I think they are still there, Shanault Field. I think they still had one there. Of course it was all just loaded with servicemen. I got in with some of the people there and they used to have dances. You went to dances to dance with them and all. Then they had to be back, I think it was 11:30 or something, back at camp.

Then I went back and then I went to Fort Wayne. I lived on Church Street, and that is all I can remember of Fort Wayne except there was Bear Field out there. They did have a big auditorium and everyone went there to dance with the servicemen. They had very good music. It was all the leading bands, big bands. After

that I went back and worked in Dayton. Well, by that time the kids were coming home. That is about the skeleton of what I have done.

DP: Let's go back to the beginning then. In the beginning you said that they had already called up the national guard before Pearl Harbor?

PP: Yes, I don't why. They went someplace.

DP: What was that, the Minnesota national guard?

PP: Yes, Minnesota. It was the surrounding areas around Saint Cloud. I don't know why they called them up that soon. I guess they were just getting ready for something, I really don't know.

DP: In other words, maybe they thought that there would be trouble and they were getting ready for it.

PP: The national guard went first and then, of course, the kids got drafted after Pearl Harbor. Then they all left, my friends. These kids in the national guard were all those who had graduated with me. Well so were the other kids, the ones that were drafted.

DP: Did they have much training in the national guard if they took them so quickly?

PP: They were very well trained because they used to go to Fort Ripley all the time, twice a year. They were very, very well trained. In fact, most of the kids out of national guard came back. Where a lot of the others, that had just a small amount of training, didn't come back.

DP: So you think the training made the difference?

PP: Oh, definitely!

DP: So, then when they took the national guard it really wasn't a matter of just grabbing somebody fast and pushing them out there, they actually had training.

PP: Yes. In fact I think, if I'm not mistaken, I think they were on their way south. They went to Fort Ripley one time and they went someplace in the south the other time during training. I think they were going there but I'm not sure of that.

DP: When the war finally started and Pearl Harbor had been bombed, of course war was declared, when they started drafting the boys what kind of a system did they have?

They had a draft board but how did you get on it, and things like that? Do you remember anything about the draft board and drafting?

PP: Not a thing except that they were notified. Your number came up. That is all I can remember about it.

DP: Had a lottery type thing then?

PP: I really don't know, I don't even know who was on a draft board.

DP: Could you get a deferment for anything?

PP: Yes, I think you could but I don't know of anybody that did.

DP: I was wondering because a couple of the people I have talked with they did know people that had gotten deferred for different reasons. I was wondering, you know, if the reasons. . . .

PP: One guy went with a glass eye.

DP: Oh, did he?

PP: He sure did. He was in the national guard though and he came home, too.

DP: You would think without one eye they would. . . .

PP: He had a glass eye.

DP: That is something then, isn't it? You would think that he could have easily gotten out of it.

PP: I don't think he wanted to.

DP: Maybe he never even told them.

PP: Oh, you could see it.

DP: Surely they knew it, yes.

PP: You could see it at any glance.

DP: And he went overseas and everything with a glass eye?

PP: I really don't know. His brother did, and they were both together in the same national guard, same unit--Big Brownie and Little Brownie we would call them--and it was Big Brownie with the glass eye.

DP: This would be one reason why you had trouble getting gasoline then I suppose, because some other people said if they had a job that was considered essential they got more stamps.

PP: I didn't have trouble.

DP: Why didn't you have trouble then if you weren't in it?

PP: Not after I got to Minneapolis I didn't because I knew somebody who always enough.

DP: You could get stamps then if you needed it?

PP: Well, I didn't even have a car. I just went with people that could get what they wanted and they did. They were selling it, they were salespeople, and so they had no trouble.

DP: You could make a little extra money on the side then huh?

PP: I don't really think so. I think it was used up on their own.

DP: Getting back to the overtime, if you made overtime I assume then, like many people with overtime, you had extra money. What could you do with this extra money?

PP: I didn't have extra money.

DP: Oh, you could spend it all, huh?

PP: No, at the time my mother came back and my brother. I had to put my brother through school and help my mother. So, I just didn't have any.

DP: So, you had somewhere for this extra money to go?

PP: Every drop of it.

DP: What about some of the other people though, if they had extra money?

PP: They spent it. They spent it as fast as they made it. Then they yelled after the war when they couldn't get any. That is when they started. . . . The unions kept yelling, "They need more money, they need more money." It is only because they were spoiled these people. It is the same now, they are still spoiled. I don't believe in unions. Well, you have to have them but I don't believe in the way they are doing it.

DP: Let's get back to the drug store. You said that there were a bunch of Japanese, young guys. Naturally then, they were in uniform. Were they Army, Navy, or what?

PP: Army. They were all Army. I don't remember any Navy.

DP: Were they training nearby?

PP: Yes, they were training out by Fort Snelling. They had another place out there. I can't remember, it was one that was just made for them, or for servicemen. It wasn't just the Japanese.

DP: Were they kept segregated?

PP: No.

DP: They were just right in with the regular training group then?

PP: Yes.

DP: Would there be like a mixture in the groups or would it be all Japanese in one group?

PP: They were mixed but they always hung out together.

DP: I can understand why. You say they would come and take pictures?

PP: They took pictures of everything that you could possibly imagine. I wasn't allowed to but I did anyway--opened up their pictures and looked at them before they came and got them. As far as I can see, or could see--because I was quite curious--there was nothing there outside of beautiful, beautiful scenery, and things like that. They were not taking pictures of the Army, they didn't even have people in their pictures. There is an awful lot of lakes in Minneapolis and a lot of them were taking. . . .

DP: Just scenic pictures?

PP: Just scenic pictures. You very, very seldom saw one with even a person in it.

DP: I suppose you could be suspicious at. . . .

PP: I was and I told Mr. Schneider, who owned the drug-store, what I did. He just shrugged his shoulders so I guess it was alright. We are not supposed to, though.

DP: I can see why you probably wouldn't be but I would see why you would be suspicious, too. Especially in the war time.

PP: Oh, I was curious.

DP: So, there were young Japanese men that were in the Army?

PP: Oh, definitely. Sometimes it would be three and four, and sometimes I think there must of have been around 40, 50 that would come in at a time.

DP: Did they speak good English?

PP: Yes, very.

DP: Then they were probably Americanized Japanese I would assume, naturally.

PP: I don't know. It was in the drugstore that I ran into them. I never ran into them in any of the department stores that I would have to be working at, at the time, or anything. It was only the drugstore and only with pictures. I don't remember them even. . . . I know they didn't sit down at the counter to have a cup of coffee or something. They just came in, got their pictures, they would stand around showing each other, and left.

DP: Was there hard feelings towards them?

PP: No.

DP: I thought maybe they didn't go for that reason. Maybe they felt unwelcome.

PP: No. Everybody treated them the same as they would anybody.

DP: So then, there wasn't any feeling of hostility between the people, then?

PP: No, not that I know of.

DP: I was just curious because, you know, how people can be nasty at times.

PP: These were awfully nice kids that I worked with, though. They kind of felt sorry for them. They came from someplace else. They were not originally from Minnesota. I don't know where they were from but they were not from there. I thought they were from California but I'm not even sure of that.

DP: You would assume because I know there were quite a few Japanese out in California.

PP: When I was in Coeur d'Alene there weren't any in the Navy, though. Farragut Field is a big place overlooking Lake Ponoray. [It was a] beautiful, beautiful spot, but we couldn't even go there. It was just cut off from civilization. Those poor kids out there.

DP: Was that an Air Force where they were training them to fly, or what?

PP: No, no, these are Navy.

DP: Oh, Navy! Then they were using the lake for whatever they. . . .

PP: Well, they still have. . . . The Farragut Field is out there, you know. It is just like Pendleton down in Oregon, but that is Air Force in Pendleton. That is the Navy; Farragut, you know, the captain under some general, some big shot.

DP: Oh yes, Admiral Farragut in the Civil War.

PP: Yes, he was some big shot and that is what that was named after. It is a beautiful place to train, just beautiful.

DP: That's pretty rugged country out there.

PP: Oh, it's gorgeous. Everything was running full tilt when I was out there. We went up to Kellogg because I had a cousin working in the saw mill up there, and they also had mines and things. When we went up there it was just one trail and if you met a truck, or car, you backed up or they backed up to try to get off the road. Now on t.v. I see they have got four lane highways going up to Kellogg.

DP: Oh boy!

PP: Just gorgeous, but they must have cut all that beautiful timber out of there to do it.

DP: That is really scenic country then, huh?

PP: Oh, it's beautiful out there. It's very similar to that picture up there only it's mostly mountainous. We had Tubbs Mountain and we all called it Tubbs Hill, right in town; right on Lake Coeur d'Alene. That is a gorgeous place.

DP: Alright now, going back to entertainment, you said that they would have dances for the boys and so forth, the service boys.

PP: Always.

DP: Did they have a regular system for doing it?

PP: I don't remember, I don't think so because I never belonged or went into a USO, or anything. It was just that the city, or who ever it was. . . . Well, like Packard . . . when you have a big band come in and everybody went to the dance. Including all the servicemen that could, because some of them were grounded, some of them just couldn't get out all the time.

DP: As far as you know it wasn't an organized situation?

PP: There was in Minneapolis, but I never went to that. When I came to Champaign, Illinois and Fort Wayne, they had just this big hall. They had the leading bands in there. I saw most of the leading bands.

DP: Glen Miller and people like that?

PP: Yes.

DP: Getting back to the war effort, did they need to encourage people to be patriotic?

PP: They just did at home. I don't know about other places, but back in Sartell when they were supposed to go, they just went.

DP: There wasn't a feeling against the war like there was during the Vietnam War then?

PP: No, no, they just plain went. We always gave a big farewell party to them and they took off. So many of them didn't come back home.

DP: A lot of them, huh?

PP: Yes. My brother-in-law was over in Guam. I believe it was there. One of the fellows on Iwo Jima when they raised the flag, was in the Marines. He won't talk about it to this date, and neither will my brother-in-law.

DP: My two brothers were in the Navy that landed the guys and they don't talk either.

PP: [They] won't open their mouths, have terrible nightmares, and yet they have them. That is a long time to hold a nightmare in your head. Because I know both Lloyd and my brother-in-law Joe, do. I didn't know any of the others that did. I mean their relatives or their wives never spoke about it. Maybe they did too, I don't know.

DP: When the boys were overseas, did you know where they were?

PP: No. Once in a great while something would seep through that you could guess where they were, but really you did not know. I didn't even know when Frank was in--I was engaged to him at the time--that was when he was in England and he was a mechanic on the airplanes. He wasn't even allowed to tell me he was in England.

DP: Oh, so you had no idea he was even in England?

PP: No, I just knew he was overseas. It was an APO number.

DP: So, you didn't even have any idea whether he was in the Pacific?

PP: No, didn't have any idea whatsoever. I guessed by the various things that he said in those little airmail cards they could send. No, they didn't know.

DP: Did they ever censor anything he would say?

PP: No, he didn't say anything to be censored. I think some of the kids said a lot that was censored. In fact I know that one of my girlfriends, her husband--they got married just before he left--and half of her letters were all scratched out. He also didn't come back.

DP: Oh, so then if you did try to say something they would block it out. All you did was make the letter hard to read then, wasn't it?

PP: Well, it made some sense but not a lot. I wrote to everybody I think.

DP: Other people have told me that, too, that they were encouraged to write to people.

PP: Oh, anybody I knew and anyone I just met. So many of them--we might even be out on the dance floor--don't even know their name and they would give you their name and their APO number. So, you wrote because you felt sorry for them. Some of them I didn't even know what they looked like. It was just the idea of giving them encouragement, or giving them mail. I remember one time Frank said, I think it was three months, he never even got one letter and he was sure that I had broken our engagement or something. Which I didn't until after he got home. He got them all at one time.

DP: Oh, been held up somewhere then.

PP: They were held up someplace and why I don't know, there was nothing in them. Because we were told not to

write. . . . We didn't even ask questions in a letter, or you weren't supposed to. I doubt very much if a lot of them did. I am sure mothers did, though.

DP: Getting back to rationing, you said that gasoline, of course, as long as somebody hauled you around you had no trouble, but did they ration meat?

PP: They sure did.

DP: Did you say they rationed cigarettes, too?

PP: Cigarettes, sugar.

DP: What were the things that you were really short of then?

PP: I wasn't short on anything.

DP: It didn't bother you that much?

PP: It didn't bother me that much. In Coeur d'Alene we could only get just so much, but we belonged to a club where, you know, you could go and eat. In Sartell, I didn't stay there very long, the gas was quite a problem there, though. Mom sold her car then. Sugar she could get, she was working in a grocery store. So, if they ran out of sugar for somebody else, who had stamps, she always got hers first because she was working there.

DP: Yes, I could see you would do that.

PP: Also, she worked for awhile in another grocery store in Minneapolis--not very long--but they still saved the sugar for her. What else was there that was . . . nylon stockings, sugar, cigarettes.

DP: I have been told meat was, too.

PP: Yes, meat. Well, any restaurant you went in you could only get one portion of meat to four people, that is all. So the rest of you had to eat eggs, or chicken, or fish, but you didn't even get good fish then.

DP: That is because they didn't have the refrigeration that we have now.

PP: No. No, and they didn't have the transportation either.

DP: That is right, too.

PP: It was transportation that held up an awful lot of stuff.

DP: I could see. I wasn't thinking about that because when you move fish you had better move it fast.

PP: Well, chicken, too. Somehow or other, of course, chicken was right around there. I imagine that is how they got it but fish, no way.

DP: So then, in spite of rationing you don't really remember being terribly short of anything.

PP: Oh, I know a lot of people that were, an awful lot that were. I wasn't, but I just happened to be fortunate with the people that I was around.

DP: Alright now, when I talked with my dad--he was the first person I talked with--he was telling me about how they used to have air raid drills. Did they?

PP: They didn't at home.

DP: They didn't?

PP: They didn't even in Minneapolis.

RP: Well, apparently they felt they were too far along because here in Warren, they did. My dad said they did quite a deal about it. If they even had people walking around and if they could see lights they would yell at you, and report you, and so forth.

PP: Well, I heard that in different places that I went through, but I never saw it. No matter where I was, I never was in one.

DP: Of course, you were more towards the center of the country, too.

PP: Yes, I was in the middle of the country except in Coeur d'Alene. They used to have some stupid whistle blow in Coeur d'Alene which must have been that, but we did not have to turn our lights off or anything.

DP: So, if there was. . . ?

PP: I didn't happen to be there.

DP: What can you tell me about the stars that used to hang in the windows?

PP: Oh, for anyone that was in service you had your stars; how many you had in. Those that were killed you also put the gold, I think it was, for the ones that were killed. They hung them in the windows.

DP: Did they have a club of the women that would meet?

PP: I think they did in some places but they didn't where I was. Minneapolis is too big for junk like that, and that is where I spent most my time. We had no one close to us outside of the fellow I was engaged too, and of course, all the people at home, which was a very small town at that time--not anymore, though. They were just almost like family but other than that we didn't have anyone in. My brother didn't have to go in until the mop up part. He wasn't of age to go in until they mopped up. Then he went to Japan, up in a mountain someplace.

DP: Getting back to the home then, during most of the war, with rationing and so forth, it really wasn't terrible for you. Even though other people. . . ?

PP: Oh, I know a lot of people it was though, very bad. My mother would have had a very hard time if it hadn't been for me. She just didn't have any connections whatsoever, but I did and I lived with her.

DP: So, if she knew people they would save things for her?

PP: Yes, definitely. Then, where I worked they also had like cigarettes and things like that; on sale stockings. I sold stockings for awhile, too, and things like that. I could get what I wanted.

DP: I could see if you were selling it you would think of yourself first.

PP: And my family, which was just my sister, and my mother. You couldn't get it for anybody else though, you definitely could not, because they would come right out and ask you, "how many in your family," when you go to work.

DP: Oh, so they did keep a lid on it?

PP: Yes, definitely.

DP: Alright now, when you were working, from what I have read in books and so forth, most women didn't work then.

PP: No, but an awful lot of them went to work. They just cried for help, no matter what kind of help, because they didn't have enough people to do the work. They still didn't pay much though, they sure didn't. I started at . . . well, one place it was \$11 a week, but I didn't live on that and pay rent in an apartment.

DP: Yes, for a whole week.

PP: \$11 a week.

DP: Doesn't sound like very much money now.

PP: That is what I started at. The time that I started at \$23 or \$24 a week I thought I was rich. Then, of course, I worked on commission basis after that, and there you can make what you want.

DP: Yes, if you work harder and you know what you are doing. So then during the Second World War a lot of the women got a chance to go to work for the first time then?

PP: A lot of parents still. . . . I mean, well a lot of them did, but a lot of them didn't go to work either. When you have children at home what are you going to do?

DP: Yes, you have to take care of the children at home.

PP: People in business put up with an awful lot of stuff from the employees until the war was over and they could get help, good help. Boy, they weeded them out in a hurry, too, which they should have.

DP: So, if you had taken advantage of the fact that they can't get anybody else, when they could they did.

PP: They sure did. I was in retail, some of them working for me were not very good.

DP: Yes. I am supposed to ask about OPA too and rent control, did you ever run into that?

PP: Yes. When I came back to Coeur d'Alene, I lived with my sister. My mother and brother wanted to come back so bad. Well, they finally did but you could not find a place to live. They finally found a place in one of the rottenest places in Minneapolis. Well, we still had to have a place to live so I moved in with them anyway. They had a ceiling on any. . . . Oh, and they would have charged high prices for rent but the government had put a ceiling on it. You couldn't find a decent place to live to save your soul, not anyplace in a city. Out in Coeur d'Alene we were living in a motel type of thing. Where it still had . . . they put in something so we could cook a little bit.

DP: It had been like a motel then, though?

PP: It was a regular motel and a very nice motel. They put in just this, oh, it was like a little hot plate. They did have some kind of an oven which I can't remember what it was. Then finally I got disgusted with living

there and I went out and found a house up on Forest Street. I can still remember that. In Minneapolis you just couldn't find a place to live.

DP: Getting back to the rent control then, even though they had rent control that held the prices down it was really hard to find a place to rent?

PP: It was about, I think, two, three years after the war that we could find a decent apartment to live in. Then I went out and bought a house afterwards and mom stayed there. But no you couldn't get one even right away. They couldn't get them fixed up either, you know.

DP: Yes, the first place I suppose. . . .

PP: They were run down, every place was run down.

DP: And, of course, there would be no building, or very little.

PP: No, not during the war there wasn't. Everyone was asking everybody else, "Do you know even where there is a room for rent?" They wanted even a sleeping room, they would eat out. You couldn't even find a room for rent; in the cities.

DP: Even like, private homes, you couldn't even find places.

PP: No, that was anyplace. Now, this is in the cities; Minneapolis, Saint Paul. I didn't have too much trouble finding places in, of all places, right by the fields. I imagine as they were shipped out the wives would go home or something. I just happened to hit it right. I would imagine that was the reason but I did get them. You never looked in the paper because you wouldn't find anything anyway. If you did it was someplace that you would never ever want to be in, because a lot of them were run down like mad.

DP: You mainly talked to friends and found out that way then?

PP: Friends and strangers, even in a restaurant. Talk to the people in the next table or next booth and you get a lead. That was the only way you could do it.

DP: What were the motion picture theaters like and the films, and so forth, of that time?

PP: There was an awful lot of musicals and they were beautiful. They really gave you a good feeling when you got out. I think they did it more or less. . . . I think they should put more on because it gave a lift to

the soldiers and all. There were a few that were, well, almost all of them had a soldier in it someplace. The musicals were the best ones to go to because you didn't feel so despondent when you got out of there.

DP: Now, I have heard that they had news reels on. What were they like?

PP: Oh, they showed you. They had, I don't know if it is still there or not, but when I left Minneapolis--which is what, 32 years ago--they just had a news reel theater, just news reels. It showed all about the fighting in the war but only where they weren't right at the time.

DP: In other words, by the time you saw the films it was. . . .

PP: It was over.

DP: It was over?

PP: Yes.

RP: It had been decided.

PP: That they could show.

DP: Yes.

PP: I mean, they must have come through, somebody or other, that would censor what you weren't supposed to see.

DP: It is not like the t.v. news week, where you can actually see it happening all the time?

PP: No, no way. They had news reels in every theater, I mean before and after a show as well.

DP: I remember when I was a real little kid--and of course that was during the war--they used to have bank night downtown.

PP: Yes, always bank night or they gave away sets of dishes and something like that. It was kind of fun. You never won anything.

DP: Even here in Warren we had five theaters, I can remember even this little town.

PP: You had two when I came here, and I can remember them.

RP: See, when I was a kid there were five. So it had already started downhill. Anyway I know that people got a lot of their enjoyment from the movies.

PP: Well, you had to go to a movie if you wanted to see anything. I remember when the first t.v. came out. My sister and brother-in-law got the first one in our family and I got one just very shortly afterwards. Everybody congregated where there was a t.v. That is what is wrong with the world today, you get your news too quick. They don't have a chance to censor it in anyway, and I think they should as far as the government is concerned.

DP: Sometimes they show things that they really. . . .

PP: Shouldn't do.

DP: I know in the Vietnam War that caused a lot of negative feelings.

PP: I think these people in Washington, all of them should be kicked out at a certain age. I don't think they should make a career of it. Not that Tip O'Neil isn't good, but he has been in there for how many years? He should have had two terms and kicked out, let somebody else do it. They have too much say in what is going on then. I don't think they should have a career.

DP: Not career people then, have amateurs and revolving.

PP: Yes, revolving is true. Besides, they need some new and young blood down there because everything has changed some. They are getting to start in a war right now. Every time you get a Republican president he gets it all worked up towards a war, and then look at history, the Democratic president has to declare it because he has got it all. . . . Then they blame the Democrats. I'm not either one. Just look at history and that is the way it is. Which I don't think is right. Just kick some of those people out; they are too old. I know I am old, but their ideas don't keep up with the world.

DP: They get behind. I know they always say that, "Every war is fought at first by generals who think like the last war." That is why you always get a few geniuses, and it isn't that they are geniuses, it is just that they are keeping up.

PP: Yes, some of these old ones, they don't belong in there. They don't belong in politics.

DP: Getting back to the war effort then. When the people would move from job to job, was there any problems with moving different places to get another job?

PP: No, but they didn't move very far. There was no transportation. If you went. . . . Many times I would go over to Wisconsin . . . I was in Minnesota. You had to stand up all the way on a bus. Or if you took a train anyplace you had to stand up all the way. Most of the time they just shut the door and you would be left outside. It was jammed full. No way, there was just no transportation.

DP: What about like inner city, did they have bus routes and things like that?

PP: Streetcars.

DP: Streetcars?

PP: Yes.

DP: How good were they?

PP: Got a blizzard and they were about two, three hours behind times. I had to get to work, so I just had to walk many a time, five miles.

DP: I am not that familiar with streetcars because I have never lived where they really had them. I realize when the weather was nice they would go. When the weather was bad it would really effect their. . . .

PP: In the snow and that half of the cars that were moving, they would slide over the tracks. Otherwise the snow sometimes would blow and make the drifts over the tracks. Tracks were usually right down the middle of the road. There would be a drift there and the plows would have to come and clean it out first. They always cleaned the streetcar tracks before they did the roads.

DP: Oh, did they?

PP: They did in Minneapolis, especially when I lived out on Park Place they did. That is the one place that I lived so far out I had to take a streetcar whether I wanted to or not.

DP: Then if the weather was too snowy and too piled up they just wouldn't go?

PP: No. I would always take the one from Saint Paul and it came down Lyke Street to go downtown. Sometimes you

would be waiting there for an hour or two and then you might as well give up because they haven't got them cleaned yet.

DP: Yes, I could see where. . . . Of course you always think about west being snowier than here.

PP: Yes, but you could get into a car--somebody would say, "Are you going downtown? Do you work downtown?"--you could get into a stranger's car and ride with them downtown because he was going to work downtown, too. But here, nowadays, you wouldn't dare do anything like that.

DP: So people were more willing if they had a car, and they were going anyway. . . .

PP: Yes, even if you didn't know them and you didn't have to worry about being attacked or anything like that. They were very helpful.

DP: See, today you wouldn't think of doing something.

PP: You couldn't get with a stranger; you don't even talk to them.

DP: Yes.

PP: But you talked to everybody then.

DP: Yes, and people were much more helpful then.

PP: Oh, by far! Everybody helped everybody else, even if it was taking care of a child for a few hours or anything you did.

DP: Well, then you knew your neighbors better, too.

PP: Yes, to a certain extent.

DP: But even if you didn't know people. . . .

PP: But even if you didn't know them you still helped, always.

DP: Do you think this is because of the war effort or because of the time?

PP: No, I think it is the times. I don't think the war effort had anything to do with that.

DP: I know at school today we are teaching the little kids to be afraid of everybody is what we are teaching them.

PP: Yes.

DP: So, it is the times, it wasn't just. . . .

PP: It had nothing to do with the war. You didn't have any trouble, even with soldiers and there were all types of people in service. Even with soldiers, no one would think anything of it--to pick them up, or anybody else in a car.

DP: You mean as far as you can remember then, in different areas you were, the townspeople didn't dislike the soldiers.

PP: Oh, no! Everybody was so good, they would invite them into their house for dinner, they would take them out, they would do anything for them, no matter where they came from.

DP: Feeling being that they were lonely and away from home.

PP: That's right. A friend of mine used to hitchhike all the way from Idaho to Minneapolis to see me. He never ever took a plane, bus, or train. He hitchhiked. He got there just as fast as any other way, and he hitchhiked back. I think he did that about four different times. He was a very close friend of the family, too.

DP: So, you could do things like that and you could depend on people picking you up?

PP: Oh definitely, always!

DP: See, now ever since I can remember. . . .

PP: You weren't allowed to.

DP: Yes.

PP: Not during the war. We didn't before that, though. I don't remember anyone ever picking up strangers too much. During the war they did, anyone in uniform.

DP: So then, there was a different feeling about the soldiers then there would have been if they hadn't been dressed as soldiers.

PP: Yes, they had to be dressed as soldiers to be picked up.

DP: It did make a difference in the way they acted towards the people to a certain extent then. What kind of money did the soldiers make, I know they had to pay them something?

PP: You know, I don't remember how much they made, but it wasn't very much. Then they took war bonds out besides.

DP: So that would be even less then?

PP: Yes, I don't remember what they made but it was so much a month and it sure wasn't very much. Whatever they took out for war bonds it took, I think it was, four or five months taking out to get an \$18.50 bond.

DP: Well, they weren't taking very much out then were they?

PP: They weren't paid very much. They took a certain percentage. They weren't because the bonds were sent back to me from Frank. We didn't have very many of them.

DP: Then when the war was over you really didn't even have very much money from it.

PP: Oh, no. It seems to me like it was only \$21 a month, something like that, and room and board.

DP: Well, maybe you are remembering right, I don't know myself.

PP: It seems like that and, of course, all their uniforms and everything were given to them. Except the officers and they wanted to look so spiffy they would go get theirs made for them.

DP: They had them tailor made?

PP: Tailor made.

DP: During the war then, there really wasn't much hard feelings between the people and the soldiers.

PP: I don't remember ever.

DP: Okay, because I know the one person said they had been in a situation where there was a lot of soldiers in this little small town. He said the people had kind of gotten. . . . Maybe just because there were so many.

PP: Well, take a look at Shanault Field. That is all it was, and Rantoul I don't think had more than maybe 300 people in it. I couldn't get an apartment that time. I was living with some people called Ellie and Ray Anderson. He was an officer in the service. Ellie didn't drive so I would drive to the field and take Ray to work. Well, he just called it, "To work." Then we would have to go back to Champaign and he always told us, "Don't pick up any of those soldiers now," but we

did anyway. Of course, being an officer he knew the difference between some of them and the other, but we didn't have any trouble.

DP: I was just wondering because, like I said, the one person particularly told me that, "They were not welcome," was how he put it. He said, "They were not welcome."

PP: That depends upon. . . . Did you ever read the one thing where somebody moved and they asked, "What kind of people are here?" This elderly man says, "What kind of people are you moving away from?" They said, "Cross, and all kinds of negative attitudes and all." And he says, "Well, that is the kind you will find here." This other person comes and asks, "What kind of people are here?" He says, "What kind are you moving away from?" They would say, "Oh, the nicest, and the best friends, and so helpful." "That is the kind you will find here." That is the same way in Warren.

DP: So, you think then it was more the way the different people reacted.

PP: It depends upon the people entirely.

DP: You were out of school then and you hadn't gone back to college yet.

PP: No, I didn't go back to college until quite awhile after the war.

DP: So then, you really couldn't tell me very much about if the schools had a war effort, or what they did, or anything like that.

PP: No.

DP: Okay, I was curious about this because I was just a little kid in school then. I really didn't remember very much about school. I know we did some things but it is more because people have told me, than I can remember it.

PP: I wouldn't have any idea. I do remember when the war started and I was a senior in high school. Then I graduated and the first thing that came out was Mr. Zaire was picked up for being a spy. He was our German teacher and also typing teacher. He had the American Club. He was the one that was the head of the American Club that I belonged to. We had to do everything that was American. He was picked up for being a German spy.

DP: Was he convicted?

PP: He sure was.

DP: He was really a spy.

PP: He was really a spy. That was in our high school in Saint Cloud.

DP: Then he was using that as a cover.

PP: That is right.

DP: Good cover.

PP: He had been there for quite awhile, quite a few years; I would imagine five, maybe even 10 for all I know. I know that he was there all the time that I was in high school, that was four [years].

DP: If I remember right, doesn't Minnesota have a lot of Germans?

PP: Yes.

DP: That would be a perfect place to put a spy, wouldn't it?

PP: Germans, and Swedes, and Polish, a lot of them.

DP: So, you actually knew a spy?

PP: Didn't know it until it came out in the paper. I will never forget everybody came rushing up to me and said, "Did you have him?" "Didn't you have him?" The other kids didn't have him, I did. Yes, but I hadn't paid any attention to him. He was just a teacher.

DP: What was there up in that area even worth spying on?

PP: Don't ask me. I wouldn't have any idea. Well, they had the base at the airport but that was after I graduated. That is when I told you about my appendicitis; all the kids came in to my room, painted my nails, put my hair up, everything else. They had to have something to do because they didn't know what to do with themselves. I don't know what he was spying on. I don't know a thing around there that would do anything. Of course, there was a big armature works there, that would only be parts, and this, and that. He wouldn't even have anything to do with that, I wouldn't think.

DP: Not as a teacher. You would think it would be hard for him. . . .

PP: That was outside of town.

DP: Because as a teacher you start going around, people would start asking questions I would think. If you worked there they wouldn't ask questions.

PP: I have no idea what he did, or why. All I know is it came out in the paper that Mr. Zaire was a spy. He was sent to prison. It was a shock to everybody. Mr. Luben was German but he worked for the Air Force in Minneapolis during that time. He left school and went down there. Now, he was a German and he wasn't doing anything. He was a nice guy, too.

DP: Makes you wonder, doesn't it then?

PP: Yes. The other one he was so prissified. I guess that's what I could say. You would never think of him being a spy. I guess they uncovered a bunch of them. I don't think there were very many, maybe seven, or something like that got together and he was a leader, or something. I can't remember, really. I am sure if you went back to one of the papers at home they would tell you. . . .

DP: Tell you stories about it.

PP: They only had two stories. Once they said he was picked up and once they said he was convicted. That I remember because we all looked for it.

DP: Yes, I would assume you would look.

PP: Yes, we were all looking for it.

DP: That is really something, actually have known a German spy.

PP: He was for the American Club. Can't you just picture that? A German spy in the. . . .

DP: Would'be a good cover, wouldn't it?

PP: I had forgotten all about that.

DP: You say transportation then was always crowded?

PP: Transportation was one of the worst things I think that I ever came in contact with. You couldn't find a seat on the bus, you couldn't find a seat on a train, and I had to do an awful lot of traveling.

DP: I assume, of course, if they were moving soldiers they had. . . .

PP: They moved soldiers not anybody else, no matter. There was no way. You think of the bus where they got . . . all the seats are taken. This meant the whole aisle down the middle, and some of them sitting on somebodies lap, and standing down where they shut the door. . . . No matter how far you were going that is the way you traveled.

DP: Apparently then the companies weren't thinking about lawsuits.

PP: No way, all anybody wanted to do was to get there.

DP: You couldn't even do that today, the safety laws and stuff they wouldn't allow it.

PP: No, and some people had to ride back and forth to work that way because they didn't have gas.

DP: You said that you did driving so I assume you knew how to drive. Did many of the women know how to drive? I know my mother never learned until later in life.

PP: My mother was the first woman in Sartell to drive. All of the kids that I went to school with did. Everyone of the girls, I don't remember any girl. . . . Of course the boys all did, but I don't remember any girl that didn't know how to drive.

DP: Is that a small community?

PP: It was at that time, we had 11,000 people. [Have you] read that story about the Woebegone? That is where my father went to college, out at Saint Jed's College, that is not very far from our house. Now it is a big, big place. My uncle was mayor there for almost 50 years.

DP: Then, most of the girls that you went to school with did drive.

PP: There were some that were later in life in driving because they didn't have cars. As soon as they got married their husbands had a car and they learned to drive.

DP: Of course remembering back I just remember my mother and her group of friends, and very few of them drove. So, I just always assumed women of that time just didn't drive. Apparently I am remembering wrong.

PP: My mother drove all over, always. I won't say all the women her age did.

DP: I thought almost none of them did.

PP: My dad always said, "Everybody has to learn to drive and everybody has to learn to swim, because you never know when you are going to need it." It is a good thing I did. I saved two people from drowning and I don't know how many times I have had to go in a car.

DP: Of course my experience was just the reverse because my mother never drove anywhere. Then when she finally did learn how to drive she really wasn't very much of a driver, it was safer to walk.

PP: Marilyn never did.

DP: I know.

PP: She has taken lessons, and then when she gets to a stop sign, or sees a car, she puts her hands off the wheel and covers her eyes. She never could pass a test. She took drivers training, too.

DP: You know Susie just passed her test. The tests are hard compared to what they were when I took my test.

PP: Oh, really?

DP: Oh, yes! They are a lot harder. I hope I never have to take the test.

PP: Are you talking about the written test?

DP: No, the written test would be easy.

PP: It is the. . . .

DP: Yes, they really make the kids learn how to drive now.

PP: It is about time because they never taught me how to change a tire even. I thought that was awful. Now the other two did, and he had the same teacher as the other two, but he didn't do the same with him.

DP: That is a quick way to get killed if you don't know what you are doing.

PP: It sure is. I have been driving since I was 15. Mom had a drivers license and she paid \$1 and I went down. Drove down myself and got mine for 15 cents, I think it was, because she had one. I don't remember, 15 cents or something, of course money was hard to come by, too. I had that until I came here. My husband asked me why I didn't get in the car and try to drive it. I said, "If I didn't know how to drive by then, after all these years, then I don't belong behind the wheel." So, I went off and took a test here and I passed.

DP: I know you have had stick shift because that is all they had then.

PP: I started on a Model-T Ford.

DP: I had a Model-T, 1929. That was my first car.

PP: I had a 1922, my dad had.

DP: Probably looked the same as my 1929.

PP: The back window was different. Ours was oval and yours was square.

DP: Yes, it was. It had the little gauge up in front of the gas tank and it floated up and down.

PP: Oh, we didn't have any of those.

DP: It had a cap, it had a little float gauge so you could tell how much gas. Then every time you went up and down a bump the gauge went up and down.

PP: Put the gas in underneath the seat from where the driver. . . .

DP: You were sitting on the gas tank?

PP: Yes.

DP: Now see, in mine, it was right out in front of you. It was the dashboard.

PP: I know but I am talking about the 1922. You took the seat off, and then you unscrewed the cap, and put the gas in.

DP: Oh, I bet they smelled.

PP: Not bad, no.

DP: You would think they would have gas smell all through the whole car the whole time.

PP: That gas was different those days than it is now. We used to put 25 cents worth of gas in and we could go forever on it. All the kids would chip in 5 cents that were going with you. Even when I had the Model-A we did the same thing. My mother had it. I didn't have a car until I got a Chevy in Minneapolis--and a Buick. I don't know what, odd things. Never a brand new one until I came here.

DP: Can you just think for a few minutes, or a few seconds, and tell me generally how you think the country felt, and how it was during the war? Just give me a thought or two about what you thought about the war while it was going on; how it effected people, and people you knew, and things like that.

PP: Well, I went back visiting at home all the time and some of those people I felt so sorry for, because they would wipe out their whole family. They had nothing but boys. Then others, of course, they came home pretty crippled up. Some of them came home fine but to this day won't speak about it. The mothers, the dads always kept everything in then, but the mothers were the ones that they would cry and cry whenever you got to a social where everybody--like a church social or something. They would start talking about it. I didn't know that many people in Minneapolis in that category. It was only when I went back home to visit, which wasn't that far. It was only 76 miles. I don't think I could tell you much more than that. My life was entirely different, during that time, entirely different then it was before, or after.

DP: You mean you feel the war really changed the way people did things and the way they lived?

PP: Yes, it was too fast paced. That is where your fast pace started.

DP: You mean it was kind of laid back and easy before then.

PP: Yes. Everybody was. . . . I don't know, I guess they believed in the Bible then, and after that it is, "Who cares? You may be shot, maybe killed." It was a beginning of a fast pace, a fast era. It has never stopped since.

DP: In other words the kids of the 1960s that were supposed to be so wild and stuff, you think they were really just an outgrowth of this.

PP: Oh, definitely. I didn't see anything wrong with those kids. I know what they were trying to do. The only thing is they were kids and didn't know how to do it, because they were strictly kids. I will tell you to this day they have grown up now and they will tell you the same thing. They are respectable people now, and they are trying to get their kids to lead a life like they should have led. But they aren't going to do it.

DP: Things have gotten a little different, just in the way I can remember it.

PP: Way, way, out of line.

DP: When the war was over how long did it take the country to get back to some kind of normal conditions?

PP: Oh golly, I think as far as I was concerned, in my bunch of people, it must have taken at least four years, or five.

DP: Took a long time then to switch back from war production, the war type of thinking.

PP: Well, not as far as production, I mean actual working at a plant or something. For what they were even feeling in the way they were reacting to each other, I think it must have taken at least that long. It is a very bad situation but we are going to get in it again. Only they aren't going to do it over there, they are going to do it over here this time.

DP: As far as the war was concerned in the Second World War, we really didn't get hurt very badly unless you had a child or a husband.

PP: Yes, a child that was killed. It upsets a whole household. It upsets a whole country. It upsets you where you work. Your conversations are different than they are now. In fact, the dumb t.v., you get too much of it as it is, and there is no conversation when somebody comes in a room to come visit even, unless you turn it off.

DP: Most people don't.

PP: But most people don't and even your friends don't want it off. They want to watch something.

DP: I know when I was a kid we played a lot of games.

PP: Oh, we did too! We had cards--one of the big things--all kinds of card games. We had card games and card parties. Pop corn was a great, great thing to have. You enjoyed each others company, now you don't because you just sit like a bump on a log and look at a boob tube. Stupid! Nobody plays games like they used to. My kids did when they were growing up though because I turned it off here.

DP: Yes, times have changed haven't they?

PP: Oh, they have changed, and not for the better. I think it was much, much better even back in my mother and my grandmother's age. You thought more of people instead of self at that time. Now, it is all self.

DP: Thank you for your time.

PP: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW