

ELSIE FAE RHOADES

Amthor: This is a portion of the *Oral Histories of Northwest Missouri of the 1940s* program. The Nodaway County Historical Society is sponsoring this program in partnership with the Missouri Humanities Council and with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Today's date is November 12, 2008, and this interview is being conducted at the Nodaway County Historical Society Museum, located in Maryville, Missouri. The interviewer is Joni Amthor and assisting is Margaret Kelley. The interviewee is Elsie Fae Rhoades and her birthday is March 10, 1921, she lived during the 1940s and this is her story of her life during the 1940s including World War II.

Amthor: We're going to talk some different parts of the War and during the 1940s. In the first part we're going to talk about is just some background information about your family, where and when you were born, and maybe just a little detail about your parents' occupations and whether you had any brothers and sisters.

Rhoades: Well, my family, we were a family of five, I had one brother and one sister, they're both older than I am. My sister is still living in Tarkio, she's 96 now, but the part that I begin to remember is during the Depression, and that was not a fun time, even though we had fun. But it was very hard. My Dad would go out every day, he was a carpenter, and he would go out every day and look for work. Lot of days he couldn't find any. My Mother almost every day waited until he got home to see if we were going to have anything for dinner that night. We did not take any help. I think my Dad thought he had to support his family, even if he starved us to death. You know, we were happy. I can't imagine why; my Mother, whom I had just talked about a couple of weeks ago. Mrs. Dr. Davis told me when I was growing up that my Mother was a born lady, and that was really true. She had – she was sort of an austere person. We never said I love you; I never heard that in my house. I think they thought we were smart enough to know it. It didn't bear repeating, but I know some other people my age that were raised that way too.

Rhoades: Mom took in washings and what she had to do deal with was two tubs with a ringer and a washboard. She took in – we had a roomer, she did his laundry, and she worked just like my Dad. I can remember on one occasion, when I started to school, there was a girl – actually my folks were more talented than this particular family; they had more things that they could do. Papa was pretty - he could branch out from carpenter work, too, but I went to school, and I came home and I said, "Do you know, Fay came to school in her brother's overalls." And my mother knew why; I didn't, but my mother knew why. And she got some cast-off dresses, cut them up, made two little dresses with bloomers to match, and had me take them up to Lindsay's and give them to her. Fay told me about five years ago, she said, "I will never forget that." I had forgotten it, but she just told me that story. Times were really hard. I had an aunt, they caught a guy taking five dollars out of her pocketbook, and she was at a dance. She asked him if he really needed it, and she cried, because he did it. I mean, she cried because she felt sorry that he was stealing, that it had been brought to that. The Depression was hard, but you know, we didn't; Edna and I were talking about this the other day, we never felt envious of anybody. We would like to have what they had, but we never resented the fact that they had it and we didn't. We just weren't brought up that way, and I think that's the way most people were brought up then. Then, as I grew up, there was a lot of difference between when I was growing up and now. Morality, for

one, has gone down the tubes, as far as I'm concerned. It has not helped the country, and there were things that were wrong, earlier on, like slavery was bad, but we tried to do something about that, eventually, but not soon enough, of course. As far as sex went, that was something that was very private, very private, and we just didn't have the sexual freedom that we have today. We danced. What we did, we danced every night at the Candy Kitchen in Tarkio, with a dance floor and a juke box, and we danced every night, unless on Thursday night, there was a dance in Rock Port, and we went to the dances over there. I'm out of the Jitter Bug era, but everybody loved to dance; that's what we did. Occasionally, if one of the guys - we had been in the booth with one person having a nickel for a Coke, and then four or five of us jammed into that booth, to spend that one nickel. That's where we were, and we danced there. I don't know. It was just so different, and fun; real fun. I feel sorry for the kids today. I honestly don't think they have as much fun as we did. Then, as I grew up, we listened to the Hit Parade every Saturday night; that was something that was a given - you listened to the Hit Parade on Saturday night, because we were very, very much into music. Now I can't even recognize the music today. I mean, I see no melody, nothing. Our music was always usually about love, or something, very nice music, you know. I didn't pay much attention at school. I was not a good student - I made decent grades, but I didn't care. Then I went to college, and I didn't care at college either. As a matter of fact, I left exam week of my sophomore year, and my folks were still poor, but Papa and Earl, my brother, worked at the college to pay my tuition of \$125 dollars a semester. I lived at home. I sold my books, one semester, and then - I really was not a very good person. Honest to goodness, I was just there to have fun. I've been kind of that way the rest of the time. Anyway, Dr. George came to me one time and told me I was suspended for three days because I had skipped French; I believe it was French, and chapel. I'd have to look at the paper now to know what it was. He said you're suspended for three days. Well, I went home, and I might not have been a top notch student, but I wasn't dumb, and I didn't want to tell the folks that I had been suspended, and so I got up and dressed for school the next morning and, what are you doing here? I said, well, I didn't have any place else to go. And he said, he let me stay, and I didn't have to skip the three days. I have managed to get through life not doing anything very exciting, and that's kind of what I did in the forties. Then I got married, I said, exam week, of my second semester of college, and lost all those credits, but you know what? I didn't regret it one day. Never have regretted it. I don't advise other kids to do it, but I - it worked out alright for me. So I got married, and we had very little time together, because the war broke out and Dusty had already left - he was a year ahead of me in school. He had left, and I do know this, the first seven years that we were married, counting a week here and a day there - nine months, less than nine months together. It was less than nine months in seven years. I have this written down, I have a little trouble. He went to Annapolis, he was in what they laughingly called - he wasn't a four year student, and they called it the wonder school. Then they said the blunder school. He got out of there early, and then he went into the - do you want me to say that? He couldn't wait to get in [exasperated] and wrote me and said most of the action, after a sub was sunk, I think most of the action will be here in the Atlantic, and he wanted to be stationed in the Atlantic; he was in the Navy. He wanted to go that way. He thought that would be the most dangerous, and he couldn't wait to get into the big, bad stuff, you know? He did grow up. He was put on convoy duty. That meant that he was an officer with eight men, and put aboard a merchant ship, and then, that merchant ship went with a convoy of Navy, other Navy vessels, but he was just on the merchant ship with these eight men. His first trip was to Australia, and I didn't hear from him for the time he was gone; I kind of forget the months, five months, six months. While he was gone, our son

was born. Which, by the way! I have said in one of my articles that, in spite of Dr. Rolland talking about biology, I never got the drift of it. He was – his ideas on that were so refined, that I never did catch on to how these babies were going . . . I knew the stork didn't bring the babies, I found that out. But he – I found myself pregnant and I didn't really know what was going on. Then I remember being really upset – then, I knew that the baby was in my stomach, but I had no idea about how it was going to get out. None; and I was second year in college. My mother really didn't approach this stuff with me either. I didn't want to hear her telling me either. So we didn't talk about that kind of thing. Then Dusty is the one that informed me, and you know, I was so mad at him when he told me that, I could have choked him, because I thought it was impossible. But it was possible. I think after that, down through the years, I do believe, that they had an old joke in the Navy, keep your wife barefoot and pregnant when you go to sea, and I think he did that, because we had three children then. But the first one was born while he was in Australia, and he didn't know what it was because I never heard a word from him, and he didn't hear from me. Then he came in and found out he had his son, I believe he was three months old, when he got back, and then he left again, and this time he had gone to Australia once, and this time he went to, well, he went around the Horn of Africa, and on up to Egypt that way, on his convoy duty. After that he came back, and he had a time of training; it didn't last long, but it was in Miami, and that was very interesting period of time because we had Jim down there with us and - but you know what? A lot of men trained in Miami, Navy and Army. Army would march in the streets, and they would sing all the popular songs of the day, and then when they met a girl who might be along, or a woman pushing a baby buggy, whichever way it went, the guy, the sergeant on the side, would call out – I bet I've told you all this before. Yes I have. You are just sitting there being bored. Anyway, they would sing out eyes right, or eyes left, which ever gave them the best view. It was interesting because they sang as they marched in the streets. You'd be in the house and here these people, would be people going by singing, all of them.

Then they had jitneys – we lived at Miami Beach and they had jitney's that ran through Miami proper. When you'd get in those jitneys, I think they held maybe seven people; I'm not sure about this. They would start across those causeways, and the people in the jitneys did not know each other, but they would start singing together. And they didn't even know each other, but they would all be singing these songs that we liked so well. Some of those songs, I believe I wrote them on that paper that I filled out. Not the one you gave me. Some of them were – the most famous ones probably, *Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition*; *Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else But Me*; *I'll be Home for Christmas If Only In My Dreams*; *White Christmas*; *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*; just a lot of really nice songs; melodious music I think. [Pause] I forgot where I was.

Amthor: You were in Florida.

Rhoades: Oh, in Florida. Okay, that's enough about that. Then he went to the Pacific and he was on a – he was assigned to a destroyer escort, that's a ship, and he spent two years in the Pacific. I didn't see him for two years, because he was gone that long. In the meantime, though, when he was attached to this ship, I went to San Francisco, I actually traveled a lot. While in Miami, at night, women wore florescent flowers because it was a lights out; the cars had their lights painted black over most of them, so they wore florescent flowers so that they could be seen at night if they were pedestrians. So, let me think. Okay, so then I went to San Francisco, and

really, everybody was, people were different. And when we drove, we picked up hitchhikers. One time we were coming back, and I went with Edna, and that was just before the rationing of gas, and we had gone to the East coast, and we got a special permit to get back home, because they rationed gas while we out there. We picked up hitch hikers, and on this particular trip we picked up two young men, soldiers, and we figured they were either going to the war or coming on leave or something, and we picked them up, and they said they were going to St. Louis, and we were in Washington, D. C. at the time, so we picked them up, and we drove a while, and then we got in the back seat and went to sleep, because we were driving straight through, and we both got in the back seat and went to sleep, and they drove. Well, Edna woke up and found herself in – we were in St. Louis. Well, we were going through St. Louis, and she began to wonder why we were going through St. Louis, when they had said they just wanted to go to St. Louis. So she said where are we going? Well, they said, we thought we'd just drive you to the other side of the city and make it easier for you. Now, in those days, if you had a flat a tire, and believe me, we drove old cars and we had flat tires, and the going price, to offer, was a dollar if somebody stopped and fixed your tire. I don't remember anyone taking a dollar from me, but they stopped and fixed our tires. I just can't tell you how different things were. So anyway, he was in the Pacific, and on the destroyer escort, and then he was moved from the Wentle to the Saunders as executive officer, and he went from the Saunders to the Blackwood, which I did bring a picture of that; He went to the Blackwood as skipper of the Blackwood, and that was another destroyer escort. It had a war time compliment of 200 men. He was the skipper and he lacked two months being 25 years old. He was the skipper, and a lot of men on the ship below him were older than he was, but he had the rank, and he never failed to say that the chiefs are the backbone of the service. I'm not speaking about the Army, I don't know anything about that, but the chiefs, he thought, were the backbone of the service, and how helpful they were to him, especially when he is 24 years old and trying to – you know. Why, I thought it was great, because when the ship came in, they ran up the absentee pennant, if you left the ship, I thought it was really great for them to raise the flag because he'd gone ashore! [laugh] I didn't have much common sense at all! And we drove back and forth by ourselves, I mean, I did, and went and met him in New York one time, and I don't know what else you want to know. Isn't that a lot?

Amthor: How was the travel? You mentioned that earlier.

Rhoades: Oh yes, I think some of my fondest memories were of those, traveling, alone, you know, because I enjoyed going – there for about a year I was going places to meet Dusty, so we never could afford for me to live, very often, you know we were poor you know. \$185 a month was his starting salary, and we thought it was great. But then, I hadn't paid much attention to what was going on at home, and we were in trouble, financially, almost all the time, and if it hadn't been for my sister and my brother, that bailed us out once in a while. We got to Cape May, New Jersey, and I know this is hard to believe, but we rented a house down there, and that was when Jim was a baby, and anyway, we rented this house, and they said, "You'll have to go down town and have the lights turned on." So we went down town and had the lights turned on, and then about a month, we were moved to Philadelphia, and during this second month, I got a bill from Cape May, and I was living in Philadelphia, but we could go back and forth, because there was a beach there, and I said we don't owe this, because we haven't lived in that house for a month; and they said but you have to turn off the electricity when you leave. We had to go down town and say that we were leaving. We didn't even know that! I mean, we didn't know

anything, really. But when Dusty was out of the country, there were some funny things that happened. He was getting ready to go to sea from San Francisco, and this is the one you were talking about, remembered. I wanted to go home from San Francisco, because he was going to sea, so he took me down, and there was a lady there named Mrs. Street, who would help people who were in the service get rides somewhere. She got this ticket for me somewhere to go on this particular train. So he took me to the train, it was about ten o'clock at night when I got on, and I just got right in the berth, and didn't know who was on the train, you know, everybody was in bed. So, the next morning, the car began to fill up and I was waiting to see who was getting on. I didn't go down to the dining room, because they didn't feed civilians then. Anyway, the car filled up and it was all men; soldiers. They were back from the Pacific, they had been out to Johnson Island, Magua, and they had been out there for a couple of years, and they were just back, coming home, from that. Because then, we weren't transferred back and forth like they are now. When he left for the Pacific, he went to the Pacific for two years. My brother-in-law, and Merle, too, were both gone for three years, before we saw them again. It was different in that respect. But anyway, I got on the train, and here it filled up with all these soldiers, and I didn't say a thing, but every time I would even shift my position, everybody would turn and look. They were all wondering what I was doing on this troop train. It was a troop train, I found out. Finally, somebody got up nerve enough to come over and speak to me, and I said something, and he started this conversation, about sixteen of them came over, and started talking to me, and when we got to Denver, they got off, I went in and got a Coke, they got off and went in and got Cokes too, followed me back to the train, and you know, I never heard one obscene word, I never, no one ever made any inappropriate moves toward me. There'd be a Pullman. What do you call those guys on trains, the porter when he would put me to bed at night, I was on there two nights and three days, or three nights and two days, and when he would put me to bed at night, he'd come in and he'd say "Okay, gentlemen, bow your heads," But nobody, nobody said anything, out of the way. They didn't swear. I wasn't good looking, but I wasn't ugly. You know, for somebody who's been on the island for two years – they tell me the natives they begin to take a high yellow, don't put that in there; the hue. I shouldn't have said that. Can you block any of this out?

Amthor: We can edit it.

Rhoades: Okay, thank God. Oh, good. I'm glad to know you can edit. So, anyway, the travel thing. Then I was on a bus, this was at practically the end of the war, I think, and I was coming from the East coast back to the Midwest, and I was on a bus that time. This soldier came up and sat down in the seat by me, and he began to talk about, he had just witnessed – he had been to one of those concentration camps in Germany, and talked about them being gassed to death, and I actually, I actually thought, that he was trying to flirt with me, because I knew civilized people did not put people in ovens. I already knew that. And I thought he was just, you know, I didn't tell him that's what I thought, but that was what I thought. Then I found out that it was really true. Then, let's see. I told you about the car, the train, the bus, planes? Do you want to know something funny about a plane? I got a ticket, the ship was coming in – this was in 1945, the ship was coming in to San Francisco, Dusty cabled me to meet him there, and I could only get a plane ticket as far as Denver, so I took that, and then I got to Denver early in the morning, and sat there all day waiting for a chance to get on a plane to go out. But there were so many – they moved so many military people, too, you couldn't get on. So every time a plane would be

leaving, I would go up and see if there was going to be a seat for me, or any room for me, and no, no, and I stayed there all day, and of course, they knew my life story. You understand that, I told them that my husband was coming in, I hadn't seen him for two years, and blah, blah, blah. So anyway, you know, I had these moments when my mind goes blank., but . . . Oh, so that evening, late, he came the guy at the desk came over to me and it wasn't late, it was about six o'clock, and he came over to me, and he said "I've talked to the pilot, and the pilot said he doesn't need much gas to get the rest of the way, I can go, they will put me on. So they let me go. And I felt that was very different that he had talked to the pilot and pilot said I could go. That just doesn't happen much now you know. I thought those things were really kind of different.

Amthor: Tell us about your service at home. What did you do at home to help the war effort? When you were at home, and he was overseas.

Rhoades: Well, when I was home, my father, who was far too old to go into the service, and by that time we were stabilized from the Depression, he went to Kansas City and worked at a war plant. My mother and my grandmother and my sister and my sister-in-law, and I all lived together in the same house, in mom's house, we all lived in her house together, and as far as the war effort goes, I don't think I helped much. I tried. Florence McMillan was heading up some knitting – we were knitting for the soldiers, and I did packed some boxes, like Dad's cigarettes, and candy, and whatever we thought they would want. We did do that. I knitted a sweater, and it was the first thing I ever knitted, and I often wondered what poor soul got that, but Florence was teaching people to knit, so I did that. I don't think I did much for the war effort. Theatres didn't charge – they either didn't charge for the people, or they charged a lot less, the soldiers, I am talking about. We met trains and served coffee to the soldiers. I can't think of anything else that Tarkio did. Nobody complained about rationing. I'm telling you, the speed limit was 35 miles an hour, and there may have been somebody that exceeded it, but I never heard tell of it. I never heard tell of anyone exceeding it, because the entire town was behind the war. Not just the town, the whole country was behind the war, and you didn't hear – of course, I feel strongly that one reason we can't do anything in Iraq is because of the attitude of the people here. Because, it's like a coach, if you never hear a coach say you can't win this; if we try hard enough, you know, he builds them up; he doesn't say well, you're not going to win. So if they're just over there – you know, trying for nothing, and I think it wasn't that way in WW2. Tokyo Rose was the propaganda I thought of when you said that, there may have been others, but Hollywood was different. A lot of the stars went to war. They really did. They joined up and went, willingly, and people who were not drafted; the draft was on. I know my brother-in-law, my brother they got their draft orders and they laughed; I don't think they wanted to go, but they never said they didn't want to go, they just were kind of wondering, you know about it, but they never said they didn't want to go, they never fussed about having to go, and I can remember my mother saying, Well, I just hate to see you leave so bad, and that was it. Nobody said, if we had a different president or something, this wouldn't have happened. I never heard tell of, and I traveled this country over, and I swear I never heard anybody, now there might have been somebody someplace, but I didn't know where they were or who they were, because I was in New York and Miami, and on the west coast from San Francisco to San Diego, and all through the middle, and I never heard it.

Amthor: Can you tell us any more about civil defense, and rationing, price controls, scrap paper, the metal drives, or any of that while you were in Tarkio?

Rhoades: I bought bonds, and Dusty bought bonds, as a matter of fact, he was the bond officer for a time on his ship, so the guys who were fighting the war were buying bonds, too, and I bought a bond whenever I could afford one, I bought one, and he sent one home every once in a while. So I bought bonds, and they had people going around, Hollywood people would be going around singing about buying a bond or something, and the rationing, everybody - it was something that happened. Nobody complained; maybe somebody complained somewhere, I never heard complaints. I really didn't. It's hard to complain about that when you - for instance, at the end of - I believe it was the war in Germany, in the Atlantic, England and Germany. When that ended, and then the next ended in the Pacific, later, the day it ended, in the Pacific that ended THE war. We had planned to go to Kansas City because Dusty had come in, it was 1945, he had come in, got a leave to come home, and we had planned with Edna & Duff - Edna, I don't think Duff was there - to go with Kansas City - it wouldn't have been, Duff wasn't home yet. We were going to go to Kansas City and celebrate. Well, just as we had planned to do that, it was about noon, the girl who lived next door to me, Loretta Turnbull, she was Loretta Brunk at the time, and I saw her running across the yard, she was crying, and we knew exactly what had happened, and those, the Brunks lost both boys, they had two sons, and no other children, and they lost one just before V-E day, and one just before V-J day, they lost both their sons. Loretta was married to Bill. And so we didn't go, you know, you think you're going to celebrate, suddenly, you know, you're not. And so that's what happened there. I can't say that I did very much; I took care of Jim, and I took care of Jim the way my mother thought he should be taken care of. I had to iron his diapers, and [laugh] I'm telling you, I don't know whether she wanted them ironed, or just wanted to be darn sure that I had something to do. Anyway . . . it was. . . Then Virginia had a little baby - Merle's, my brother's wife, and she was living there with us, so we had the two boys and all the women; five women living there together.

Amthor: What did you do for entertainment?

Rhoades: Movies. Absolutely, movies and you wanted to know on that other thing, you wanted to know where I got my information, news reels and radio. Almost always went to the movies.

Amthor: Do you remember any of the names of the movies that you went to?

Rhoades: The names of the movies. Well, I remember, but that was before, that was during the Depression, *Gone with the Wind*, which none of the kids seem to enjoy today, and you can't find anybody my age that didn't think that was a super-doooper movie. And I said in one of my articles in there, that everybody wanted to be carried upstairs, especially by Clark Gable. No, I can't - *Waterloo Bridge*, that was Vivien Leigh and Robert Taylor; I will tell you I have quit watching movies because they're all either blowing up the earth, or cars jumping over buildings, or something, they make no sense to me at all. The last movie that I saw that was fairly new was I can't say it now, it was a prison picture, and it was good - the some-- *Redemption*, - oh, shoot, I don't know, but most of the movies were about the war, and most of them portrayed the Japanese as the bad guys, and most of them - and actually, I think they were the bad guys, because I can't; see - other than the fact that we didn't have - well we didn't have slavery then,

but we still had – let me tell you something else, when I went south for the first time, I discovered that I already knew that the blacks had their own drinking fountains, and their own this and that, you know, but what I didn't know was that so many places that I went where you would want to go in Miami and around, and New Orleans, there were signs, Restricted – that was the word – Restricted, and guess who that kept out – Jewish people. Jewish people! I didn't know that until I went down there to see it. We had – our next door neighbor was Mrs. Kohen, and she was kind of like mother about Jim, and whether I was taking good care of him, and we liked the Kohens, they were really nice people, and I wrote for Mrs. Kohen, she wanted me to write letters for her to friends she had back in New York, and so I did, I went down there and she paid me a quarter a letter, and I wrote these letters. She would tell me what to say, and I would write it for her. One time I was in Miami, and this woman came up to me, I was with my friend Florence, and the woman came up and we were in a hurry to go somewhere, and she asked Florence if she would write a letter for her, and I thought, huh! I was in a hurry, but Florence, who was sweeter and nicer than I was, said yes, she would. The woman told me her name, and when she told me her name, I said, Oh, I know who you are, because I've been writing letters to you. You know what, it scared to death. It scared her to death. I told her – from Mrs. Kohen, I told her who I was writing but it scared her, and she didn't want her to write her a letter then. Now isn't that strange? Jewish people were not treated very well. They really weren't. We had that problem.

Amthor: How did you guys get your communication back and forth while he was in service?

Rhoades: On his first convoy, I didn't hear from him for five or six months. On his second convoy, I think I had five letters, very brief, one of them was so cut up I couldn't read it, and I think the others were probably from Egypt where there was a college over there at the time, and some of our Tarkio people had been there, and I got that letter all right. It wasn't censored, but I did have – the only one that I have left; I mean that I have four that are all right, and this one that is censored, they just cut it out, because he was trying to say something about where and maybe this was it-- where Gungadin used to be, and who ever this censor was had been to school there too, and he wouldn't – he knew that was India, so he censored that out. But then, after that, as soon as he got off that convoy duty, the military had set up a postal system where you could really get your letters back and forth, sometimes I would get a letter in three days, sometimes mine took longer to get to him, than his did to get to me. I guess I was easier to find.

Amthor: Now we'll talk a little bit about the end of the war. How did you learn about the end of the war and the bombing in Japan; the atomic bomb?

Rhoades: Over the radio and the news reels, I think that's about the only way we had to know.

Amthor: How did you feel about this?

Rhoades: About the end of the war? Exalted.

Amthor: Did you agree with President Truman dropping the bomb?

Rhoades: Well, you know, this is how I felt about that, and several years later when I was at a meeting at the college some people – it was a religious, or peaceful – I don't know who they were, it was a meeting, and they felt very strongly about that atomic bomb, and that Truman was really out – I'll tell you how I felt. If he did it, I thought, he's the one that had to do it, and I will say, that I think that would weigh very heavily on his mind, and furthermore, the idea was to save lives, and what makes the difference whether you're dying from the atomic bomb, or dying from a shot in the heart? I'm not saying that I'm for dropping the atomic bomb, I'm not saying that, but I didn't think that 911 was anything – I thought that was pretty gross too. Killing is killing. But he actually thought he was going to save lives. I want to tell you we were not prepared for this war, and it took a long time, and we had to – I mean, you can't imagine how quick they tried to get ready for this war, because we were not ready. That cost a lot of lives, and then the other thing was, we didn't hear anything good about the Japanese; they were very mean to their – the Bridge over the River Quay, that was another movies; but I don't know if that came out before or after the war; probably after the war, but anyway, I just I think those people who have to make those decisions need everybody's prayers. How would like to have that decision to make – okay this would end the war today and we could bomb the enemy, and save all these American lives, or we could drag on and kill these Americans and those too. Kill a lot more people. I think it's not a thing that you come to easily, and I feel kind of sorry for the people who have to do that; I really do. I don't know whether I'm right or wrong, but that's how I feel.

Amthor: How were the veterans treated upon their return?

Rhoades: Like heroes. Absolutely like heroes. I don't know if you get the same story from other people or not, but that's how I saw everything. I saw everything as being a hero. I mean, the home towns were glad to see them, the country was glad to see them; they didn't know who they were when they came ashore, they were just going all over the states, but you know, people were out to greet them, and it was something! It really was.

Amthor: After the war, were you afraid of the threat of communism?

Rhoades: I don't think I had sense enough to be afraid then, actually since then I have studied quite a bit more, but I was an idiot as a young person, really, and enjoyed it. I did! Isn't that awful?

Amthor: Were there any concerns about the economy, inflation, the spread of polio, or TB?

Rhoades: The spread of polio. I will say this, when Dusty came home, he said, and I'm sure it was the way the guys talked about it, we really should go right on and do away with the Russians now, and get it over. I didn't pay - as far as I was concerned, the war was over, and that was that. It wasn't something that all the people in the coffee shops were saying we should get rid of Russia. Actually they helped in Germany a lot, so. . . .

Amthor: Describe your listening to the radio habits. Did you listen to the home making shows, soap operas, what did you listen to?

Rhoades: News, News, News, and music. Music all day long, music and news. That's it. I haven't watched any of those shows yet. I'm still watching news – no more music, but news.

Amthor: Is there any other special story or anything that you would like to tell us about that time, or any of your family memories, or Dusty's, that you haven't shared with us yet?

Rhoades: Oh, he complained all the time about me now writing enough, but he liked to write, and looking back I feel bad about that, because he not only liked to write, but he, and I'll tell you something else, that book that I brought over there, some of the kids at school, the teacher's at school, Mary Beth had it up to school, her copy one day, and they were looking through that, and they said I don't understand, he just uses this world shall, shall, shall, all the way through, and they said, why does he do that? I shall do this and that and the other. It was because – and I hadn't thought of it, but people don't use shall any more, and shall is more emphatic than will, and he could say, well, I'll do it; but he said I shall do that, and that meant that he intended to it; he wrote all the time about his – how proud he was of his son, and he was, and he was proud of the girls when they came; he was a wonderful family man, and I'll say this, he was a gentleman, and I don't, I expect that a lot of it had to do with his training, but not all of it, because my dad was a gentleman too. A lot of people did differently in those days, and I never saw bare legs between his pants and his –shirt- because his stockings were up and fastened with supporters, and one day at the college, Marty Shum said to me, could you tell – this was the president of the college – because sitting on his stage you could see his bare leg between the stocking and the pant, she said, Elsie Fae, you do something about this; So I just plain said, You know, Dr. Schecter, you shouldn't be showing your leg; you're the president of the college, don't be showing your bare leg between your stocking and your pant leg, you know. But he was a gentleman, I will say that, and he believed in this country, he believed in the people, pretty nice guy.

Amthor: Tell us about your wedding.

Rhoades: My wedding?

Amthor: Apparently you got married twice.

Rhoades: Well, we got married twice, because we lied about our age the first time, both of us. I said I lied because I didn't want him to lie alone. But anyway, the second time, I already told you, didn't I, about, a while ago, about we didn't tell our folks for seven years, and then at the end of seven years, I said to Dusty's mother, we were making the bed, and I was on one side and she was on the other, and I said, what's the longest you've kept a secret? And she said ten years. And I said I've kept one for seven years; you want to know what it is? And then I told her we had actually been married twice, but we went back home and lived with our parents, and didn't, and he dated me, you know. So I said what's your secret? And she said, well I think I'll keep it another ten years, or something like that. But the family were surprised, but not really surprised at anything, I think. I just wasn't too serious about a lot of stuff.

Amthor: Do you have a question for her? No.

Rhoades: Oh, Margaret. I told you my voice was bad, and it's even worse today. I told Mary Beth on the way over here, my voice is just gone; I've got an old person's voice now, and so you know, I quit speaking and I used to, well, among other places, I used to speak at the hospital benefit down there at Fairfax you know, and that was fun, and I quit that, I said you've got to quit while you're ahead, and I was ahead at that point, and I quit that, and then I thought well, this paper's been going on for ten and a half years, and I can't get my own book finished, because I mean, I gosh – where am I? I haven't even got him in the Pacific yet, you know, I have got him – it's not in this book, but I do have him on those two convoys which – just like that, but you know, I had to quit that – quit while I'm still ahead, and nobody's shot me yet, and that helps you decide. You could be any day.

Amthor: We sure appreciate your coming over today. You have some interesting stories that we'd like to share.

Rhoades: Now I've got that stuff, and you're willing to look at it, and see if there's anything that you can use or copy, you can have it for a while, and then I'll take it back home. I didn't change it, I told Margaret I didn't change it because it's in, it's the way I took it out of the book, and it takes a long time to put that back, and frankly I don't have that much time left, ...