

GLADYS RITTERBUSCH

Today's date is November 4, 2008. This interview is being conducted at the Nodaway Country Historic Society Museum, located in Maryville, Missouri. The Interviewee is Gladys Ritterbusch, whose birthday is March 25, 1919. She lived during the 1940s and this interview is her story of life during this time period, which included WWII. The interview is conducted by Melissa Middleswart.

We start with biographical detail. So if you could tell me where and when you were born.

I was born in a farmhouse that belonged to my grandparents. My parents were living there as my grandparents had moved to Maryville at that time. This was southwest Maryville, this house was located and the date of birth of March 25, 1919.

What were your parents' occupations and how many brothers and sisters did you have?

My parents were farmers. I had one brother and one sister. I was the middle one.

Tell us something about your life before 1940, prior to WWII. For instance, your family, your occupation, your education, rather you lived at the farm or in town.

I lived between the farm and in town. I went to rural school. The first one was Union School, which was northeast of Maryville. I started first grade there. Then we moved that spring down into the Rockford Community, where we remained for many many years. I came to the Rockford School, there were also a Rockford Methodist Church, just up the hill from the schoolhouse. When it was time for me to go to high school, I was really thrilled to go but a little fearful of beginning in a class that had 88 members. That was Maryville High School. MY dad moved my grandmother and me into Maryville into an apartment. And I was spent the four years at Maryville High School and graduated in 1937. Enjoyed all my classes, all my teachers. I never found one I didn't like. I was interested in business. I took a lot of typing and short-hand, there was not too much bookkeeping offered at that time. I was proud of myself being a good typist and also taking short-hand.

You also worked during that time too, didn't you?

Yes, when I was in high school I decided I would like to find a job. Well, you had to be 16 before you could get a job. But when I was 16 that fall, Woolworth was asking for people to work, so I went to be interviewed and I got a job, working on Saturdays. It was on north Main Street. I can't think of what's there now, but it on the square. Townsend grocery store was on the corner. And I think there was a Gram Dry Good Store that was between Townsend and Woolworth. West side.

So you enjoyed working there?

I worked there. And did for 2 years of college. And then I went and taught a rural school , which was called the Nab School, which is northwest of Maryville. I taught a year and had a contact for

the second year, but a friend of mine called me and said that she was leaving her job and going back to college. And she thought that maybe I would like this work. So inquired into it and there was a little red tape to it because it was a government position. But I worked all those problems out and I was hired. And of course I had to get released from my contract with the school and they told me if I found a teacher then that would be fine. So I went to the superintendent of schools, who was Bill Berts, and I asked him if he could recommend a teacher and he said he sure can. So that took care of that. I started the work. I had too many names it was hard to remember when they changed it. It was the Farm Security Administration. It was the United States Department of Agricultural.

You graduated high school in 37, then two years of college, then worked a year. So was it 1940?

1940, when I began working this job.

And so that brings us to the era we want to bring. The other question on that section was did you have any other family members who participated in the war. Did your brother...?

No

Our second section is propaganda Where you aware of the propaganda in the US by foreign countries and of our own government?

I don't think I was paying too much attention to that at that time.

Do you remember how the US portrayed the war and the Japanese?

I'm not sure I know how to answer that. I do know we felt the Japanese were going to be after us.

What did you know about the war in Europe or in China?

Mostly just what I read. Now the war in China because wasn't my husband then but we were engaged and he was in service in India and China.

So maybe you knew a little more

I began to be a little more interested in things.

Do you remember how you learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor>

Yes I do.

What happened?

The night before, this group that worked in the office usually had a little party on Saturday night. The FFA had been asking for women to go to Hawaii to work. I was considering that and we

talked about that night. And then of course the next day was Pearl Harbor, so that thought went away. And I just remember that it was on a Sunday and thought how terrible that that had happened. Then of course you begin listening to the radio to hear what was being said.

Were you by yourself at that time? Were you alone?

I was living with some girls in an apartment.

So you were all kind of listening to the radio together that day?

Yes

Did you talk to your mother about it?

I don't recall that I did.

You were pretty independent by that time.

I think so.

How did you learn about the progress of the war?

Well, just by following the news. Listening to the radio and reading the newspaper and not knowing we were being told the truth or not. As it is today.

Was that something you thought about at the time and wondered?

Yes. And I feel it was very secretive.

So they would only let you know certain things.

We didn't learn a whole lot about what was going on. And when the men went to service, you didn't know where they were going. And I'm certain that was the best thing to do, but it's just hard on the people left behind.

Well that brings us to life on the home front during the war. So can you tell us what you remember about the selective service? Service alternative, such as farming or teaching? And about women's roles in the war?

Of course my fiancée was drafted and left in August of 1942. He sent at first to Leavenworth, KS and then transferred to Jefferson Barracks, MO. And the officer who was interviewing him one day was looking through the forms he had filled out. He said I see here that you had been a supervising of an office, do you type? And his reply was a little bit. That was all this officer needed. He was never sent for basic training, he became a clerk in an office.

He was quite a bit older than a lot of the draftees.

Yes, yes he was.

So how old was he at the time?

Now you ask me that and I have to think. He was about 33.

So most of the men were probably college age.

Yes. They were young, most of them.

But because he was single, he was still in this list to be draft. And he left in August of 1942. And then was immediately shipped overseas and I didn't hear from him until October. And then it was letters that couldn't say very much. All censored. Some things were cut out of letters, so I did not know. That was 1942 still, in December I got this cable, which I thought was very interesting. It relieved me to know where he was and all this cable said was "Greetings from India. Thinking of you very much. Merry Christmas. Love, Louis Ritterbusch.

Was Western Union cables a common way of communicating?

Yes. And of course it came to the Western Union telegraph office here in Maryville. And I knew the lady in charge and she called, 'oh I have news for you. Do you want me to read it to you? You can come and it pick it up.' Then she read it to me.

Do you remember what women did during the war? Since they were left behind.

I had two girlfriends who decided to enlist in the WAX. I had another one who enlisted in the WAVES. The two that went in the WAX tried to convince me that that was what I should do and I thought about it a while but I gave it up. I thought no, maybe what I'm doing here is helpful. I hope that it is. Because I was working in an office where we were making loans to farmers, and at that time farming was very hard and a lot of people appreciated the fact that the government was extending these loans to them.

So at that point in time, they were loaning to farmers so that they could farm...

Yes, they loaned them money to buy cattle, hogs, and then of course some of them didn't have equipment. But it was just what that particular person needed that the loan covered. They had to give a mortgage on that. And there were a lot of mortgages recorded at the courthouse.

So you had the unique way of seeing the farming area of the war. The home war effort.

Yes. That's right.

This asks for your role in civil defense, rationing, price controls, scrape, paper and metal drives; and blood drives.

I gave blood drives, except they couldn't get much from me the first time I went. They told me, 'I don't think you need to come back.' They worked and worked trying to get blood.

Did they have scrap, paper, and metal drives around here?

If they did, I don't remember.

What bout price controls?

I really can't say that I remember much about that either. I do a little later about price support in 1945.

But during the actual war, did you do anything with civil defense? We had at least one woman who did walks that made sure everyone had black out.

We had black outs of course. I don't know if the women ever walked the streets. I know the men did.

People were out checking.

Yes, to see that we were blacked out.

And what about the rationing?

I remember the rationing. I didn't remember just when it started, but I remembered that you had to go and get a war ration book. I do have this folder that was given by the Nodaway Ballot Bank. It says United States Ration Books, so you had a folder to carry your ration books in. Here is a war ration book too. It was issued to my sister and there were coupons in this book, which are all gone. They were all used. Sugar was rations, gas was rationed, tires were rations, shoes were rationed. There were probably some other things but I don't recall.

Did you get new clothes or was that something else that was rationed?

I don't remember that the clothes were rationed.

SO that wasn't so bad but the shoes were.

They needed the leather for other things.

Do you remember what you did for entertained both before and during the war. For instance, listening to the radio, going to dances, or the skating rink, reading, card games, sports, pool halls, visiting neighbors and relatives, or movies. Or all of these above.

Probably most of the above. Did you mentioned bowling? That would be under the sports I guess. I love to bowl. WE had a bowling alley, not like the balls they use now. They were just

little round balls. They were not big like that, there were no holes in these. Just a ball that you roll down.

I thought they had been the same. That's very different.

Yes.

Do you think that was countrywide.

I don't know about that.

You're not sure?

It was in Maryville. And they had teams.

And you kind of had a bowling league.

Yes, it was a bowling league.

And where was the bowling alley in Maryville.

It was on west Third Street. On the south side of west Third Street. I would say it was about where Kissinger's used to be.

So around that area?

Yes.

Was it very big?

To me at that time it seemed big.

Interesting, I never thought a bowling alley uptown in Maryville. Did you read very much at that time?

Well, most of the time I was very busy at the office.

Didn't have very much time off?

I didn't have very much time. And if you tried to contact and keep up with people, that was the main thing.

And how many hours did you work a week? Did you work every Saturday too?

Yes. Once the war started we did. Before we only worked Saturday to noon. And we didn't get any holidays during that time, except Christmas.

So you worked from 8

8 until 5, maybe 6. We were not paid on how many hours we worked. We were on a salary.

And so you were working to get the work done regardless?

That's right. If there were still work to be done, I stayed.

Then you had to work all day Saturday.

All day Saturday.

That doesn't sound very good.

If we just worked those 8 hours, then 8x6 would have been a 48 hour week. But I got some more hours in but you weren't paid for it. It was a job that had to be done. You were working for the government. They didn't know how many hours you were working.

Do you remember anything about how your salary was at that point?

Probably about 80 dollars a month.

And were other people in your office, were your superior so you made more money?

There was only one other girl who worked. The other people in the office, there was the supervisor and the assistant supervisor, and another lady was like an extension agent. She helped people who had the loans, helped the women with the canning, and pushed pressure cookers to no end.

That was her job. Making sure everyone canned their produce?

Yes. That's right.

Well, that's interesting. DO you remember what the effects were on your family, of course at this time you were off on your own and you were engaged but weren't married then, that was created by the gas and food rations, and the price controls and the shortages of luxury products and shoes and clothing?

I don't think. Of course everyone, my brother, was still living on the farm. My sister hadn't graduated from college yet.

We're supposed to cover all of the 1940s. I know that that had an effect on your after Louis came home from the war, you got married which was before 1950. What can you tell me about that shortages, so to speak?

In 1945 I thought it was great news when I got the letter that he was on the list to come home. And he was supposedly waiting for a ship. He had had some vacation over there, which I do not know where they were. He also had an appendectomy in China.

Army surgeons?

I think so. Anyway he survived. And so then I didn't hear anymore from him. I thought oh this is taking a long time to get this ship. The next thing I knew, he was calling from Florida. He got on a plane that had no seat, you sat on the floor. But anyway, he got to FL. He called and said I'm in FL and I'm going to Jefferson Barracks so you get on the train and get down to St. Louis. And he gave me the name of a hotel where I should go. I took the train, I went to the hotel. They had no rooms. I said well, my fiancée is at Jefferson Barracks and he thinks I'm going to be at this hotel. This man was very very kind and he said let me call another hotel and see if I can get you a room. And he did that. He got a room. And I said when my fiancée comes in and I'm not here. Are you telling him where I am? Yes ma'am we certainly will. And that's the way it worked. So I think we were only there two days and he decided that he would go home to see his father. And I was to get back to Maryville then he was going to borrow one of his brother's cars and come to Maryville.

A little thing that happened, he had a car when he went in service then probably, I think, in 1942 when cars were sacred. And there was man who wanted to buy his car and I said I don't know if he would want his car sold or not. I do have power of attorney but I'm not sure he would, so I'll have to communicate with him to see if he wants the car sold. So I sent a letter and told him about it. Of course it took time for the letter to and the reply to come. And he said, 1400 they want to pay it for a car, it only cost 900. So that's what I did. I sold the car. Well, of course there was thing if something went wrong with the tire then I wouldn't be able to get a tire because it's not my car and not used in my business. Therefore that's why he didn't have any car when he got home. But he had three brothers and they all had cars. SO they all took turns furnishing him a car.

After we were married, he was on the list to be sent to R&R in San Ann, CA. This was where they sent the single man and since he was now married, he decided there had to be way for me to go and be there. SO I think the second day after we were married, he got a typewriter from the hotel and dictated the letter and I typed it. It was sent to whoever it needed to go to, to see if he could be transferred to the married R&R and that worked out. And that was at San Monica, CA. And we sent at least 10 days there and each day he would go down to check the list of those who were getting transferred to another station and he would come back. Nope he's not on the list. So just kept staying. Then one morning he came back and he said we aren't going far. I said where are we going? We're going to Palm Springs, CA. So I called this friend that lived in Los Angeles that we were going to Palm Springs. She said you can't go to Palm Springs. There no place for you in Palm Springs. I'm coming to get you and you're going to stay with me until Louis gets down there and if he finds somewhere to live he can call and I'll take you to the depot and you can go by train. So that's what worked out. He found me a place to live, he also found me a job. As soon as he got there. And so I got on the train and when the train pulled into the stop, I looked and it was all desert. I thought my goodness, there is no city around here. So I said, how do I get into Palm Springs? Oh there'll be a taxi around before long to take you in. And that's what happened. I got the taxi and it took me in and took me to the place where I was told to go. That evening after Louis was off work, we went to see this place he had rented. I looked at it and

thought oh my goodness, I can't live here. I had never seen such dirty floors in a place. This is just terrible. He said well this lady was so nice and rented it to. It was a two bedroom house, but just filthy. Then we would have to walk ½ a mile to catch the bus to go out to the base. So I didn't really take this job that he had found for me. I said that I'm going into town and see if I can't find someplace that is better. And I did. We moved there. Then I went out of the base to be interviewed and I got the job of working with post engineer base.

So your typing skills served you well.

They did. Not only that, his office was getting a big rating when they were inspected because they did not have the regulations up to date. And he was concerned about that. But the fellow that was doing them was not doing his job. I said to him, if you want me to I can do that. You can do that? Yes, I've been working for the government, I'm used to regulations. If you can do that then I'm gonna get rid of that fellow. And in a few days he got rid of him. And I was given the regulations to do. And I got an increase in salary and it took me a couple of weeks before I finally got everything straightened out but the next time it came for an inspection he was alright. The office was okay. He was a very interested man. His name was Major Carson and he was from the east. And when Louis was getting his discharge and he told him that I was leaving. And he said I wanna tell you something. Now Mrs. Ritterbusch if you ever need a job then you call me because I'm getting out of this as soon as I can. SO I always felt good about that, that I helped some in the war.

The next question is to explain, how you got news of the progress of the war, which we kind of covered.

Yes.

Did you ever hear anything from Louis about the war? Of was that all censored.

Sometimes he wrote and tried to tell me things, which got cut out.

So you never really knew...

Now, there is something I did learn about them. There were two women whose husbands were in the same group that Louis was. And this one woman and her husband had made some kind of a code before he went into service, so she wrote this other lady who wrote me and told me where they were and everything. Which was interesting to know at that time. I knew nothing about – this was when they were India – I knew nothing about the geography of India. But she knew they first landed in Karachi which shows on the map is located on the Arabian Sea. And then this would have been in November 1942 when this was happening. Then from Karachi they were transferred to Cocklai then to Kurtatola. Which is there present position from what I know that. And it just things she found out. That was information and that was nice of her to pass it on to me.

And you probably really appreciated hearing.

Yes. And of course Louis and these other two fellows who were very good friends. I should have looked for this picture, I know I have it. And then v-mail was popular.

What's that?

That was this little – if I can get it out of here – little piece of paper that you sent. This was a v-mail.

Was it a larger one that had been condensed down?

Yes. So, these were letters I wrote to Louis and he kept it.

Oh so that was v-mail.

It looks like the first one I started was December 1942.

It looks like you typed the letter. And somehow they..

And somehow they condensed it.

And you took it to the post office? And they did it at the post office?

As far as I remember. Instead of e-mail as v-mail. It says v-mail.

So that would have been where the address? So there's no stamp?

It went free, if I recall, if it was going to military.

Well, that's really interesting.

I could be wrong about that, but I don't think we put any postage on it.

What songs or movies do you remember from during the war or anytime during the 40s?

Well, I got on the internet and looked to see songs from the 40s. Well, one was Glenn Miller 'In the Mood.' And I remember 'In the Mood.' Then Harry James 'Sentimental Journey,' and Bing Crosby had 'Don't Fence Me' and 'Moonlight Becomes You.' Frank Sinatra had 'Fools Rush In' and 'I'll be Seeing You' The Ink Spots had 'Don't get around much anymore' and 'Too each its own' The Andrew Sisters 'Don't sit under the apple tree' and 'Boogie boogie bungle boy.' And then the Ann Derben 'Always' and Joe Standfor 'Some Enchanted Evening.' And then Jonnie Mercher 'Zippie-Do-Dah.' There were others. And I can tell you some more songs.

Did you listen to him on the radio or did you have records?

Listened to the radio. Then of course, I found a list of the best songs of the 40s. In 1940 the best song was from Pinocchio "When you wish upon a star" and Cliff Edwards was the vocalist. Then 1941, the best song was from Lady Be Good and the Last Time I saw Paris and Southern. Then 42, the best song was from Holiday Inn and you might guess what that song would be "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby. In 43 the best song was from Hello Frisco Hello which I don't recall at all. The song was "You'll Never know" Alice Faye. 44 the best song was from Going My Way, "Swinging on the Star" and you probably know that was Bing Crosby. In 45, the best song was State Fair. "Might as well be spring" by Jean Crane. IN 46 the best song was from the Harvey Girls, I remember that, "On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe" Judy Garland. In 47 the best song was soft the month and here we're back to "Zippie-do-dah" And James Basken. Then in 48, the best song was from The Pale Face "Buttons and Bows" by Donna Shore. Then 49 the best song was from Neptune's Daughter and "Baby it's cold outside" by Johnnie Mercher and Margret Whity.

So they kept singing it?

Yes. These were all popular songs that we heard.

And what about the movies?

And the movies.

Tell what you told me about how often you went to the movies and what?

I went to the movies when I knew there was always a news release before the movie started. Don't ask me what movies I really went to but the main reason was to go and hear what the news was at the theater. I know that the girls and I went to the movies. And the one that I do remember was the "Philadelphia Story" with Jim Stewart. And then I remember the one I went it and cried, Gary Cooper and Sgt. York. And "Yankee Doodle Dandy" with James Cagney. Then this is one that I did not know "watch on the Rhine" with Paul Lukas was the actor. Then of course, when we got down to 1944, Bing Crosby in "Going my Way." Knew that one. Then of course "The Lost Weekend" in 45. And this what I got off this internet. In 46, Frederick Marsh in "Best Years of Our Lives" I don't know many times I've seen that movie. Lots. And then Ronald Colman in "A Double Life" which I do not remember. And Lois Olivier with "Hamlet in 48. Then in 49, it was "All the King's Men" and the best actor was Broderick Crawford, who I did not recognize.

So you went to movies but not a lot.

Well, we probably went once a week. On Saturday nights.

Do you remember how much it cost to go to the movies?

No, I don't.

I think they said a dime. But then someone else said that you had to pay tax. There was some sort of mill thing that made it 12 cents.

I forgot about those mills. Yes we did have mills. They were awful things.

So our next section is the end of the war and coming home. First of all how did you learn about D-Day?

D-Day that was the one in Germany?

Okay, it was at the end of, in June of 1944. We got about five minutes, so why don't we wrap this part of this up and we'll do a little more about what you remember when Louis came home from the war.

Alright, we're going to do a little more with Gladys here. We have our last section, which is how did you learn about D-Day. June 4, 1944, sort here almost another year of the war in Europe. So do you remember hearing about D-Day?

Yes I do. At that time, I was living with Dan and Mary Alice Cakneelson and Dan had gone to service. And I believe we heard it on – Mary Alice heard it on the radio.

SO you were renting a room?

Yes.

So she told you about it.

Yes.

Was he in the war in Europe?

Yes. As I can recall he was.

And then what do you remember the next year about the dropping of the atomic bomb?

That was when Louis and I were in Palm Springs and he was still in the service. I was working there. And it announced at the base. And we were given a holiday. And we had some friends who he had a car and so we packed a picnic lunch and went traveling on our holiday. We just kind of drove around and everything. It was always very dry in Palm Springs, except for one time there was a downpour. And it was level and the water when we got off the bus, we stepped in water that was halfway up to our knees. And when we got home and opened the door, everything, bugs everywhere. Going up the walls and everyplace. Crickets. Well, we sent quite a time but we finally got rid of the crickets then found out there was some powder, if you sprinkled over the doorway then the crickets wouldn't come in. But it was the rain that had forced the crickets to come in. And you could do downtown and just see the walls of the building, plastered with these crickets.

Different climates.

Yes very different.

Now the Japanese surrender came a little while after the second atomic bomb.

I think so.

Was there a holiday when the Japanese actually when they surrendered for when they dropped the first bomb?

When they surrendered.

So that's when you knew the end of the war was finally there. Do you remember how veterans in general, Louis in particular, were treated when they came home?

As far as I know, they were welcomed with open arms.

One of the things I remember you telling me about was after he came home he had his job had been saved for him. Was that right?

Yes.

He got his job back, after all those times.

Yes, it was one of the things when you went to service. When, if you came back you got your old job back.

So who had been doing that job while he was gone?

William Diesser.

Who Gladys later married after Louis died? So he had had the job, was he the second in command?

He was the supervisor there. And he would change the system so often that I can't even remember who they were. I didn't always work in that office. They had what they called a district and I was the secretary there. I got a promotion from the county office to the district office. I can't remember just when that was. But I was offered several jobs when I worked.

After Louis came home though...

I had retired when I found out that he was coming home. I sent my resignation in. I'm through. But then we got out to CA and took another government job.

He got you working again? Now another thing that happened, when he came home also had to do with the price controls. Tell me about the car.

He got his job back and of course he needed a car on his job and he didn't have one. So he was still borrowing from my brother and his brothers, so he had a car. But then of course, his top official thought he should be getting a car of his own. And so Cutno Motor received four Chevrolet cars and Mr. Cutnot was a good friend of Louis'. And he decided that these four cars, he would sell on to a businessman, a doctor, a doctor, and a veteran. And lucky for Louis, he was the veteran. Because he had known him. He knew he needed a car and he had always brought cars from him. So this was in November of '45 and we could go by and look at our car but he couldn't release the cars until OPA (Office of Price Administration) decided on the price of the cars. We waited until April of 1946 when they finally decided what the price was. I do not remember what it was. But we got that car, we got it on a Saturday morning and he said we got to put some miles on this car. So he thought he should go see his father, who lived down at Slater, Missouri. At that time, you had to break a car in, you drove it so many miles at a certain speed then you could increase it. I don't recall what all it was. Anyway, we got that car broken in in that Saturday and Sunday. In one trip.

That would definitely stick in anyone's mind regarding price controls.

There were just lots of things you couldn't buy until they said that this was the price. I suppose it was alright, we had to accept it.

Do you remember anything with appliances?

You got onto a list if you wanted to buy appliances. Another thing that happened to us was that we couldn't find any place to live. We looked and looked but there was nothing that you could rent or buy. I guess we didn't try to buy really because that would have taken more money. I decided I would put an ad in the paper would like to rent and sign our name and I got a call from a woman, I will rent you our upstairs. It will be three rooms and a bath; it will have to be a make-shift kitchen because I could put a kitchen cabinet in there. And the table and chairs, but you will have to carry your water from the bathroom into the kitchen and into the kitchen back to the bathroom. We took it.

What did you do until you found something stable? Your mother?

Yes. And then we lived there until in '46 and I found a real apartment that had a kitchen. But then the problem was it didn't have a stove, didn't have a refrigerator, didn't have a washing machine.

What did you do?

I went to my company because they sold appliances. And all they could do was put me on the list so I was put on the list for a stove and a refrigerator. Then there was a sale up in Hopkins and they advertised a refrigerator and I decided I would go up to buy that refrigerator. Well the price started at more than I wanted thought I went in to buy, so I just walked across the yard and here was this man from the light company and he said what are you doing up here? I said I came up here to buy that refrigerator but it started at the price I was willing to pay for it. He said I'm

going to do something for you. We had a refrigerator come in and I called several people on the list and a lot of people just put themselves on the list in case something happened to their refrigerator. I called several people and they didn't want it, so the refrigerator is yours. So I got the refrigerator. They also sold an electric stove at this sale. It brought nothing. But I was afraid to buy it because I had not checked in the apartment, rather I could use an electric sold. Then I found that I could and I knew that Paul Ward that brought that stove and he ran a store. I went to his stove and said do you have that stove that you bought up at Hopkins. He said yes I do, do you want it? I said yes, whatever the price it doesn't matter. And I got that stove. And then he was the one who started selling the Burdick's Washing Machines and it was the one that you opened it from the front and it went round and round. So he had plenty of those so I got a Burdick's washing machine.

So what did you do in the meantime? Like if you didn't have a refrigerator, how did you keep your food cold?

You mean in this apartment? Well we didn't move there until, I was looking for things so we had not moved yet.

So your own apartment...

Yes, she had the refrigerator and stove.

I was just wondering what people would do if they didn't have a refrigerator. Did you have at that time period, which would have been right after, did you have any concerns about the economy and inflation, the spread of polio, tuberculosis, and/or cancer?

Polio was the main thing because our first child was born in December 1946 and that was on my mind was the polio. I guess that's what I worried the most about.

Do you remember getting a vaccine?

Yes, I can't remember how old he was before got vaccine. But when it was available, he got one. It seems like we took one shot then there was a time space then we got another shot. I believe there were three altogether. I could be wrong.

And describe listening to your radio. For instance, after you were home, did you listen to homemaking shows, soap opera, adventure series, farm markets, quiz shows, mystery show, history show, variety and music shows on the radio?

I don't remember anything that was specially my favorite. I spent more of my time running after a little boy. He was my pride and joy, I guess you'd say.

Well, now when he got a little older because he was born in December of '46. Did you listen to those children's radio shows? Did you ever listen?

I don't recall that we ever did.

Wasn't a bit thing in your house?

I read to him. I read and read and read and read. And one time he wanted a book, *Little Black Sand Bow*. Do you think I could find *Little Black Sand Bow*? I went to St. Joe; I went to all the stores I could think of to go to. I don't remember the name of the store now but I finally found *Little Black Sand Bow*.

Did you always buy your books?

I usually bought most of them. There was a library of course.

But you liked to buy your own?

Yes. So we could read them any length of time that way.

Okay, I think that covers all the questions. And now, you have some thing that would be of a special interest that you knew about during the war that you could share.

This was before the war started, but in 1941. Harold Costagain was the assistant supervisor in our office. He belonged to the reserves and probably along about July of '41. He said, well I don't get promoted from his job I believe I'll just go enter the reserve and get on full time. So that is what he did. He went to Fort Louis, WA. And in August of '41, he called his fiancée and said if you want to get married, get yourself out here. So she went out, they were married in Fort Louis, WA. And I think they had ten days together before he was shipped out. As I recalled he went to the Philippines. I'm not certain about that, but anyway. After Pearl Harbor, I think I'm pretty sure he was in the Philippines. Anyway, it ended up that he was in the Baton Death March. He was a prisoner for 34 months. He writes his memories in a book that I have, which he gave to us on their 40th anniversary. He wrote these memories, there are several in here, there are several pages. But this my story by Harold Costagne. So if you would like to listen I'd like to tell you the story of the devil and of living hell. The devil is the heath of the race and the hell is the death he made us face. So he could not, he had no paper or pencils to ever write this story. But at the end of the story, he says it was composed while a Japanese prisoner of war. He memorized this and then recorded it after his return from 34 months of imprisonment. He was in prison from April 9, 1942 to February 4, 1945. During this time, of course, he tells all about what they had to eat and what they did to him and everything. But how he could remember all this and then record it when he got back, it just makes you think what a wonderful wonderful man. And of course he had to go to rehabilitation and I think you're holding the article there that was printed in the Maryville Daily Forum on October 30, 1946, and it was a conscientious that this men were all at the same place in Washington and they had then. It is was quite an article then about that. Then after he was discharged, well he wasn't really discharged for quite some time, but he was in Springfield at a veteran's hospital there. Yes, Springfield, MO. So he wanted to buy a farm and he named the farm he would like to buy, so Louis told him that farm is for sell. And he said well buy it for me. So this will tell you the width he had and everything. And he said, alright I want that farm. Now Gladys I will call you and if you have anything to tell me about the farm then you do so. You will accept my collect call if you don't have anything to tell me, then you just say

I will not accept that collect call. The first time that happened I said I will not accept the collect call. But it's Capt. Costgane calling you. I said I don't want to talk to him. She said but he's a captain. I said yes but I don't want to speak to him now, thank you. And hung up. Now that isn't that a strange way that we got by with the telephone calls. But we bought that farm for him. They moved in and had a terrible old house on it. They moved in. They named their farm 'Make It Do.' And I'm not certain just how many years they lived there. But then they had their family, they had two girls. Then they decided, we went every week to see and help in any way they could, he was disabled by being classified as blind. He could see enough to get around and if he got up close to him he could know who you were. He knew voices but they worked on this farm. Then they decided that after they had the girls that perhaps it would be better if they went back to Oak Grove, MO, where both of their families lived. So they sold that farm and bought another farm down in Oak Grove that had a beautiful house on it. I was so happy for them. And of course we visited them a lot then too.

So he was never able to work because of his...

Oh he did lots of things. He went back to college and took some courses that he hadn't had. And his wife did the same. They ended up in Minnesota, I think. He even took a real estate test and got a retailers license. Just something to keep him busy. He started writing a book. Now I have not checked to see if that book was ever finished. I still know where his daughters are but I have not checked to see if they have it.

He and his wife have both died?

Yes. He died in 2004, on Christmas day. And she died about two years later.

Well, you did the best he could with the life he had after all that.

Well, he enjoyed life. He enjoyed life. And he always had stories to tell, lots and lots of stories. And he always called me Happy. I'm not going to tell you why.

It's really inspiring to know that someone went through that..

And such a good friend. Such a wonderful friend. We were friends all the time.

Well, we sure appreciate you sharing that with us. Is there anything else you remember from the war years that you remember? Or the years after the war that you remember?

Well, I remember that my husband said that the best investment to make was to buy land. In 1946, the first farm land from his father which is in Celine County, MO. Which I still own. And then we got that one about paid for and he decided to buy another farm. And it was over in Worth County. I never saw it until after we had the closing. And he said, I guess I should take you over to see this farm. Well, we went to see it. The road kept getting narrower and narrower and narrower. And he turned a corner and he said this is where it starts. And this road was still very very narrow. And we got up to where the buildings were. And I said, don't tell me that this what we bought. Oh this is a good farm. And I was most unhappy, I said this terrible road. He

said it's alright there's going to be a farm to market road by here. Well he had done his investigating to what was going to happen. He was right, there was a farm to market road that went by there that greatly improved that place. It was full of brush, it was just terrible. And in the yard and the barnyard were tin cans, broken glass, it was just a mess. I spent many days over there picking it up. And crying half the time I was doing it. I just thought it was awful. But it turned out that it was a very good farm.

But you never actually lived there.

No. When you had good crops on it, but that's the way he accumulated land. That was his investment when he would get one about paid for, we'd be looking for another farm. That happens later on in the '40s.

That stretched through your life?

Yes. And of course, well this wasn't in the '40s when I began working again. But I did work.

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Can't think of anything more in the '40s. It was a time of getting your life I would say, in charge.

Well, one thing I just thought of. When Louis came home from the war, you wanted to get married right away and wanted to have a family pretty quickly and you did. Was that typical of a lot of people during that time period?

When Robert was born in the hospital, there was ten babies born very quickly. And they had them in dresser drawers. Of course they kept the mother in bed but Doctor Bynnn came in the fourth day, and said I'm sending you home since you're mother is with you but you have to go in the ambulance and you have to stay in bed until the week is up. Well there was nothing to do because there were these women coming in and they needed space. And that's what he was doing, he was sending them home if they could, if there was someone that could take care of them. That was how that happened. Lots of babies born.

What was the hospital like at that point?

Well, that was the old hospital on east First Street, St. Francis. I think there were four floors in that hospital.

So there were a few doctors?

Yes, we had a few doctors and I had little problem with the doctors on Robert because I went to Doctor Jackson and Doctor Jackson then decided about the time that I was going to have the baby that he was going on vacation. And so I said who is going to take care of me. And it – now I can't remember this doctor's name in Hopkins – that he said would take care of me. He said, well I tell you what, I think you're about ready to have this baby so if you want to we can induce labor. I went to the hospital, drank Castrol and it had no affect on me. So that's when I left the

hospital, my sister was taking me down on the elevator. And she said will you be back in a few days? And I said yes but I won't have Doctor Jackson. And she said no but you'll have – I just can't recall the doctor's name from Hopkins. Louis of course was listening to his and when we got back in the car, and he said you know Doctor Bylinn just got back from serve and I think I'll go talk to him. And he did the next day, and asked if he would take me. He said yes if you bring her down here right now. He came home and got me and took me right then. So I ended up having Doctor Bylinn deliver Robert.

So you were happier?

Yes, I stayed with Doctor Bylinn.

Was he someone you had known before?

Yes. Louis had known him.

Delivered your second baby?

Yes he did. That was in 1950.

So that was the baby boom years.

That's right. There were lots of babies born everywhere. All these men came home and were anxious for babies.

Well, that is a very interesting interview. We really enjoyed it. Thank you so much for sharing with us. And I know it will be interesting to future generations too.

They will probably get a good laugh.

Well, they'll learn some things. Thank you, Gladys.

You're welcome.