

Interviewer: Could you state your name and where you were born and when?

Pitzer: Well my name is Irene Pitzer. I was Irene Sutton Pitzer and I was born near Carthage Tennessee and my birthday was September the 7, 1924.

Interviewer: What did your family do?

Pitzer: My dad was a farmer when I was born we lived there we were there for a year and when I was a year old we moved to Old Hickory and my dad worked for DuPont.

Interviewer: And did you have brothers and sisters?

Pitzer: I had a brother and a sister. I had a brother that drowned when he was 14 years old and then my sister died in 29, 1929 with cancer. All of my family is gone all of them.

Interviewer: Do you remember how your family dealt with the great depression at all?

Pitzer: Well it was a very trying time in our lives. I was in Trevecca. So I came out of Trevecca I left Trevecca and came got a job at DuPont. They let you get a job when you was younger during that time. So I went and got a job to help because things were really hard. Everything was rationed gas was rationed sugar was rationed. Let's see I think I wrote some of the things down here that was rationed. Gas, hose I remember hose because when I was in Trevecca it was a Christian school you know. And our church at that time was so terrible strict that the women had to wear hose all the time.

Interviewer: What religion was this?

Pitzer: Nazarene so you wouldn't even know that was true they are like two different worlds now. But we would have to wear hose even if they were just full of runs there wasn't anything but runs. You'd have to get those things on your legs and wear them. And they were those kind of hose then that you just pulled them up right here they came right here. So that was one of the things I remember. I remember my dad having to walk to work because he didn't have any gas you know. When you ran out you got a little car it seems to me and when you got that filled up well then you were through and you couldn't get any more until another time. I don't know how long they had to wait before they could get it. But you went without a lot of things. I remember when I was working for DuPont we would have those what would you call it where they'd have trials of what we would do if something did strike at work where we were because there was that danger because of DuPont. And so we had to be alerted as to what to do in that case. And I can remember the fear that I would have you know. It was not a happy time then it was the worst war I think that had been. And he wrote on here and I didn't really know that many people died but he said 50 million people died in that war in six years in six years' time. So it was not a time that people looked forward to being alive really.

Interviewer: What did you do at DuPont?

Pitzer: I worked with the now who can I tell you this? Where we put things on like we would roll things on a little thing it was like it was cloth it would become they eventually would make cloth from it. And they would make these little things and you would what was it called it's been so long ago. Where you would put them on a machine and roll them and it would take that little thread and then the thread

would roll up there until it would get to a certain area then you'd finish it and that's what I did majorly that's mostly what I did.

Interviewer: What did your father do?

Pitzer: He was into now what was he into? I'm trying to think now what he did. Really you caught me I can't think right this minute what he did. I know it had to do with mechanics and that sort of thing. You know he was into something that was really it had to do with the mechanical things there. So that's majorly what he did I don't know really.

Interviewer: Did you go to work there just because he was there or was it just?

Pitzer: Well that was just a place where you could get a job.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Pitzer: It was in my area see in Old Hickory where I lived and so I did that. And then things began to let up a little bit well then they let me go back to school during the year and they would let me come back to work in the summer. So I worked back and forth so they were very very good you know. It was a good place to work because they were very thoughtful and good to me. They actually wanted me to come back and be an employee there and put me into leadership but that wasn't what I wanted to do after I met George. And when I met him well that was it.

Interviewer: What did you do at Trevecca what were you studying?

Pitzer: Well I went there when I was in high school and then I finished one year of college there because see I was running behind anyway. Because I was stopping and going to work and then another thing in those days I knew at that time I was going to marry a minister. And when you married a minister you did not take a job other than working with him. So we decided well hey let's just let me get the degree and then after I've gotten my degree then you can go back to school. Well you know what happened I got two kids and I didn't go back to school. So I didn't I really did not graduate.

Interviewer: Did you when did you meet him what year was it?

Pitzer: Nineteen forty six.

Interviewer: Was he in the service?

Pitzer: Uh huh he came home from the service and that's when I met him. He came to Trevecca to study for the ministry.

Interviewer: What branch of the service was he in?

Pitzer: He was in the navy.

Interviewer: Uh huh do you know what he did do you remember what he did?

Pitzer: Oh he's told me and he's talked about it but right now I don't really know what he did. He wasn't I know he wasn't in any danger where he was. You know he always felt so blessed because where he was he was not in any danger at all so.

Interviewer: Do you remember when Pearl Harbor happened?

Pitzer: That was on Sunday night and I had gone to Trevecca that day. I had been home for the weekend and I just gotten back in school. And then I heard the news on the radio that we were in war. And I went home I went back home it frightened me. I am a home girl and I had wonderful parents and you felt protected around then. And so I went home you know and I went back afterwards you know. They had a way of making me feel good. And so worked at Trevecca I mean I worked actually I started in the cafeteria line. And that's the way I met George he would come through the line you know. I guess I flirted I don't know. He made the statement that if I was the only girl in Trevecca he would never date me because I was a flirt. And so then he didn't he married me. No I was just friendly with everybody I love to talk you know that. If you've been around me very long you know I love to talk. But I mean I just knew everybody and I knew all their names back then believe it or not. But anyway that's how I met him at Trevecca.

Interviewer: How was the being at school during this time how was the what was the mood like there?

Pitzer: Not good because there was no men very few all the guys nearly that could had been to the service. Then you went whether you want to or not. And so it was nothing volunteer so it was not a good time then people were depressed. The way I think about it now you know as I look back and know that we were afraid because you always were reminded that something could happen in America and so that was not good years at all. It was really a sad time and people were coming home sending back bodies you know I can remember all of that where all the time they were sending home boys that had died. Some of them I knew some of them you know well when you grew up in an area like Old Hickory everybody knew everybody. Everybody was friends then in those days it's not like it is now we don't really know each other very much. You know we just sort of stay to ourselves and we really don't know. This has been wonderful here I think I feel so safe because I feel like I have wonderful friends on this side of me and on this side of me who I can call anytime I want to and they would help me. And so I feel very safe. I tell my kids when they want me to move you know and thinking about it even I said I feel so safe here you know and I have no idea I will never move. I know it is not a good thing to be here with all it keeps me busy two acres of land and a big ole house and the boss here he is the boss. Lady is going to come after while and trim his face for me.

Interviewer: Do you remember scrap drives did you ever participate in anything like that?

Pitzer: Help me I think I do if you can you help me.

Interviewer: They collected iron and aluminum and things like that.

Pitzer: Yeah everything you didn't waste anything yes everything yeah. I can remember that we did that even in Old Hickory and especially in Old Hickory because of DuPont plant. Yeah you had to be careful of everything. I mean there were a lot of the foods you couldn't get you know I can remember that we had to learn to do without. There were just things we had to learn to give up because nobody had them even if you had a lot of money you didn't have them. So but we didn't have a lot of money DuPont didn't pay

big salaries. But I had a wonderful life I have no regrets of anything. I feel like I've really been a blessed person you know.

Interviewer: Did you buy war bonds do you remember that?

Pitzer: My family my family did. We they participated in everything well I think actually it almost was demanded of you the ones that were at DuPont whether you wanted to or not. They took a portion of your salary.

Interviewer: Really

Pitzer: Uh you I mean that was just a given things. And I'm sure they wanted to you know but if you didn't want to you did anyway if you wanted to work. So that was the way that was.

Interviewer: So did you work at DuPont until you met Mr. Pitzer?

Pitzer: No I had already gone back to Trevecca what I was doing then was working I mean going to school and then working in the summer. That is what I was doing then at DuPont.

Interviewer: Did you ever work again after or did you

Pitzer: I had a job I worked at I was a secretary well the place is not even there anymore what was it called I worked there while he was in school until I got pregnant and was sick as could be. I couldn't stay on the job I was one of those people who stayed sick the whole time just couldn't come in. So I couldn't do anything but run to the bathroom so I wasn't very helpful to them. So I just finally I can't I just can't do this so I had to quit. And that's one of the things you have to give up when you get pregnant you get pretty sick.

Interviewer: Do you remember when the war ended? Do you remember where you were or what you were doing?

Pitzer: No I really don't. You would think I would remember that of all things but I really don't. I mean I guess you had been through so much you know you really don't remember everything. I mean I don't you know I'm sure I probably would recall a lot of things because you will get me thinking. And then I want to see that book that my friend has too see really what all was there in World War II. It was not a time I want to go through again either.

Interviewer: Right

Pitzer: So many people were killed then. It was the worst war that's ever been did you know that? It was the worst war and more people were killed it was terrible.

Interviewer: Was a lot of people in your neighborhood?

Pitzer: Oh yeah a lot of the guys the kids that I well I call them kids they were well they were young they were just young enough to go. I mean they were just young enough to go and they had to go. And some of them came home they said just send them home I can remember coming home it was a sad time bad time.

Interviewer: And Mr. Pitzer was a minister.

Pitzer: Uh huh

Interviewer: Which religion?

Pitzer: Nazarene.

Interviewer: Nazarene?

Pitzer: Uh huh

Interviewer: How many years?

Pitzer: Fifty seven years. We were we both did it I didn't ever work anywhere else after that you know. I always worked with him I worked with the church and most and a good bit of the time they paid me for what I did you know. And they were always very very liberal with me that I could they let me do a lot of things. I didn't have to be right in the office all the time just so long as I see I always had a phone from the office in the home where we were so that if I they needed to get in touch with me at the office I could be there. And so I always worked as his secretary that's what my job was. And of courses then I did a lot of counseling with the ladies because they are more free with a lady against a lady you know. So I did mostly all the women he did men sometimes I did some men.

Interviewer: Did you always stay in this area were you always in this area?

Pitzer: We were in West Virginia for 15 years we were in West Virginia. That's where he was from he was a West Virginia boy. And our first church took us back to West Virginia and so we were there for 15 years and then we came back to Nashville to Madison really. A little church over there it was a little church but it really grew and I don't know what happened to if after left. They started a school there they have a school there now so there is more emphasis put on the school than there is on the church. And that's not really good I don't think but they don't ask me.

Interviewer: How many children did you have?

Pitzer: Four

Interviewer: Four wow

Pitzer: Three boys and a girl.

Interviewer: How many grandchildren do you have?

Pitzer: Let's see how many do I have? I've got one more now. I think it's six I'd have to stop and count them. Isn't that awful I've got a lot of great grandchildren too.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Pitzer: Oh yeah?

Interviewer: Do you know how many of those?

Pitzer: No not really they keep on coming I've got two more on the way.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Pitzer: Uh huh

Interviewer: Wow

Pitzer: I sure do. Oh they are a joy they are the sweetest things and God's been so good that all of them have been so healthy and strong and just turned out to be really great kids. I mean we don't have any problems at all as far as kids go. The ones that are old enough to get into trouble don't thank goodness. So we're blessed that way.

Interviewer: Let's see well anything else?

Pitzer: I was trying to look here to see what John had to say. But I can't read his writing oh dear. It says something about Germany and Italy and let's see what does he say and then Europe. I don't know if you could read that or not but coffee was rationed sugar and coffee and nearly everything was rationed. You know at this point you weren't free to go buy anything much. You can look at it you can have it if you want it if you can figure it out.

Interviewer: Alright

Pitzer: What he wrote in there and then he's gonna bring that book tomorrow he wants you to see it.

Interviewer: Okay

Pitzer: And I said well I don't know if that's what she had in mind or not and he said well I think if she's interested in it she'd like to see it. So he said she's a nice girl and I said oh yeah she's tops. And I said you won't have to worry about your book. But he did want you to see it so much so that he told me I'm bringing it tomorrow to church.

Interviewer: Okay well I think that might cover it.

Pitzer: Well I hope that I've helped you some.

Interviewer: Oh you definitely have.