

Johnson: I took my training in New York and we were there what six weeks I guess.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: And when I got there they marched us into the armory and guess who was talking?

Interviewer: Who's that?

Johnson: President Roosevelt

Interviewer: Really

Johnson: We didn't get to meet him or anything but at least I got to see him because they marched us all in there. And I didn't have my uniform or anything yet. So it was quite a you know it was really great.

Interviewer: Do you remember what he was speaking on?

Johnson: No I don't remember that's too many years ago.

Interviewer: I understand that.

Johnson: But he was a very great man.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: And while I was taking my what do you call it service. I was in the same platoon and I was fortunate enough to sing with Kate Smith. And it was really it was something because our uniform you know we had a couple of buttons. One of my buttons fell off and right in front of her foot. So after it was over with she picked it up and gave it to me and she introduced herself to me.

Interviewer: Wow

Johnson: And she was such a gracious lady of course she's gone now but was a really great person.

Interviewer: That's amazing. Alright and so when did you did you enlist?

Johnson: What

Interviewer: Did you enlist into the military?

Johnson: Yes I enlisted in the navy.

Interviewer: What year?

Johnson: 1944

Interviewer: Okay what was your goal when you enlisted?

Johnson: I don't know I really didn't have any goal. I just wanted to get in the service.

Interviewer: And help

Johnson: And help yeah I was kind of depressed.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: So that's why I wanted to get in the service.

Interviewer: How many siblings did you have?

Johnson: How many I was third class.

Interviewer: No how many brothers and sisters how many did you have?

Johnson: Oh in the service or at home?

Interviewer: At home

Johnson: I had one sister and three brothers.

Interviewer: Okay what did your parents do for a living?

Johnson: What did what?

Interviewer: What did your parents do for a living?

Johnson: My mother stayed at home.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: But my dad worked at Firestone. In fact he retired from Firestone.

Interviewer: Alright do you remember any of the great depression?

Johnson: Yeah 1939

Interviewer: How did that affect your family?

Johnson: Well we my mother made bread but and I needed a pair of shoes at that time and so my dad he was very he didn't want to go get anything free. But he finally did because I needed shoes and it was snowing and everything.

Interviewer: Yeah I'm sure

Johnson: So he went and got me a pair of shoes and also got flour for my mother to make bread.

Interviewer: Okay do you remember the rationing through the war years?

Johnson: Yep

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about how the rationing affected your family?

Johnson: Well not too much it's we got what we needed you know and that was it.

Interviewer: Now with your dad working at Firestone how did the great depression did that affect his job?

Johnson: No it didn't affect his job but he didn't get any raises or anything.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: And he retired from Firestone I don't remember how many years he had but it seemed like he was there forever.

Interviewer: I'm sure he would say the same thing.

Johnson: So and we got by my mother every year she would can stuff so we had lots of. And we had chickens and what we didn't give away we ate.

Interviewer: Did you have a small plot for crops?

Johnson: Oh yeah we raised our own garden we had our garden and he raised all of our vegetables and everything. And we had strawberries and

Interviewer: I bet you loved that having fresh strawberries.

Johnson: Yeah but we sold them we used to sell them I think it was 10 cents a quart.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: Something like that.

Interviewer: Did you have any a job before you enlisted?

Johnson: Before I enlisted in the navy yeah I worked at an employment office.

Interviewer: Do you remember what your wage was?

Johnson: Oh heck I don't remember no I can't remember what it was but anyway I worked at the employment well I worked for Penn Ohio Coach Line which was part of Greyhound at the time when I graduated from high school I went to work for them. And then after that I went into employment office so and then I went in the service.

Interviewer: Do you remember when Pearl Harbor occurred?

Johnson: Uh huh

Interviewer: Were you you were in high school then?

Johnson: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay how did that did it change the schooling scene at all like how teachers presented classroom subjects or anything?

Johnson: No not particularly.

Interviewer: Okay did your family have a radio or a neighbor have a radio where you guys could listen to broadcasts?

Johnson: We had a radio yes.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of Roosevelt's speeches or hearing the news about Pearl Harbor on the radio?

Johnson: I remember hearing it but I couldn't tell you what it was all about now.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: Gosh that's a long time ago.

Interviewer: I understand I understand. Let's see how did you said you were a singer in the navy.

Johnson: Yeah we had a singing platoon.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: And we used to go and I forget the name of the place that we went to. And we'd sing for different organizations.

Interviewer: Did you ever did they use to sing for war bonds or anything like that?

Johnson: No nothing like that.

Interviewer: How did they place you into singing? Was that an option or was that?

Johnson: Well you more or less went wherever you know.

Interviewer: Wherever they put you?

Johnson: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: Of course I was in a glee club when I was a senior or when I went to high school.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: So that's why I went into the singing platoon. Now I can't even carry a tune.

Interviewer: Did you ever go overseas with the singing platoon?

Johnson: No

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: But I lived overseas with my husband for let's see two years.

Interviewer: Was that during the war or after?

Johnson: It was in 1944.

Interviewer: Okay tell me a little bit about where you lived and your experience overseas.

Johnson: Well we lived in Saipan.

Interviewer: Alright

Johnson: And my youngest daughter was born over there.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: And I've got to tell you we always told her she was a Saipanese so we didn't think anything about it. So when she went to school in the first grade the teacher called me one day and she said Mrs. Johnson she said Judy said she's not an American because she was born in Saipan. And I said well that's her dad and I's fault because I said we always called her a Saipanese. You know not thinking.

Interviewer: Yeah I understand.

Johnson: So anyway when she came home I explained to her her dad and I explained to her that she was an American citizen.

Interviewer: Now was your husband stationed overseas for the war?

Johnson: Yeah he was in the navy 20 years and he did 17 years in Civil Service.

Interviewer: Okay did he ever see combat while he was stationed in the pacific?

Johnson: No not really.

Interviewer: Okay was your family ever direct beneficiaries of any of the new deal programs from FDR like the Civilian Conservation Core or anything like that?

Johnson: No both my mother and father were born in Croatia .

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: And they came over here when my dad was 17 and my mother was 16. And so

Interviewer: What year did they come over?

Johnson: Let's see I'm 88 I really can't tell you for sure because I was a such a kid then you know I was born. I don't really know because I'm 88 already.

Interviewer: I understand my grandfather's 87 and he was his parents came over from Italy.

Johnson: Yeah well mine see came from Croatia both of them.

Interviewer: Do you ever recall discussing the war while you were still in school?

Johnson: No

Interviewer: Okay did you participate in any item collections like collecting any scrap iron or aluminum?

Johnson: The boys did that.

Interviewer: The boys did all of that. What did the girls do then while the boys were out collecting? Did you guys do anything at home?

Johnson: I can't recall.

Interviewer: Maybe just helping with the canning and things like that?

Johnson: No my mother did canning all the time but I didn't do anything to recall.

Interviewer: Okay did you have telephone service?

Johnson: Yeah

Interviewer: Had electricity then too? Okay do you recall the blue star or gold star mothers?

Johnson: The what?

Interviewer: The blue star and gold star mothers.

Johnson: I remember the gold star mothers yes.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Johnson: Not particularly I didn't have anything to do with it but I remember them.

Interviewer: Okay did your brothers ever your brothers were older right? Did they ever and help out with the war effort like outside of collecting like did they go to a factory or anything?

Johnson: No not that I recall.

Interviewer: Okay do you remember if your dad's factory when he worked for Firestone if they ever switched from tires to military production?

Johnson: No as far as I can recall it was strictly tires.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: That's because it was Firestone Tire & Rubber.

Interviewer: Okay before we entered the war do you ever remember like a fear of Japan or Germany?

Johnson: Well I think all of us deep down had a fear of whether or not we were gonna get out of it but not anything drastic.

Interviewer: Okay was there well I forgot what I was there ever any suspicion of like spy activity or anything like that in your area?

Johnson: Not that I recall.

Interviewer: Was there a large German population or?

Johnson: No

Interviewer: Okay well Mrs. Johnson I appreciate your time.

Johnson: Was this being taped?

Interviewer: Yes ma'am

Johnson: I hope I've helped you I don't know.

Interviewer: It's always great to get different perspectives on service.

Johnson: I'll tell you one thing I learned while I was in there I learned how women live you know. It's so funny and I had I have to tell you this experience.

Interviewer: Okay

Johnson: Well maybe I better not since we're rolling.

Interviewer: Oh that's alright.

Johnson: Well anyway there was a lady that called Bonnie that was in service with me. Every night she'd go out on leave and I'd say Bonnie where do you go every night? And she'd say oh I go visit my mother. I says oh so about six weeks later she came in she was pregnant. I said I didn't know your mother could make you pregnant. I mean and these are things that went on all the time. It's just it was really something.

Interviewer: Oh I can imagine.

Johnson: But I was glad I married my boss.

Interviewer: That works out.

Johnson: I was in the supply department and my husband was chief at the time and I worked for him. And we got together and I ended up marrying him and I have two lovely daughters.

That's excellent.

Tape ended