

Interviewer: You can state your name if you want to that's no problem.

Lashley: Evelyn Lashley

Interviewer: Okay date of birth

Lashley: December 15, 1919

Interviewer: How did your family manage during the great depression?

Lashley: It was a difficult time very difficult. But probably people who lived on farms did better than people who lived in cities I always thought.

Interviewer: Where were you living at the time?

Lashley: In Iron County Missouri.

Interviewer: And you had a farm?

Lashley: We were on my grandmother's farm.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Lashley: I'm the oldest of ten I have four brothers and six sisters' two of which are deceased now.

Interviewer: Did everybody have to work on the farm?

Lashley: Everybody that was able to work on the farm did. If you were five or six years old you could go out and drop corn in the places where they had they the way they marked off the rows in crosses so that you dropped corn and beans in the same hill and the beans ran up the cornstalks and that's just the way they grew. So the cornstalks had support for the bean vines.

Interviewer: How was _____?

Lashley: Well it was old and traditional and it was things that they figured out how to do.

Interviewer: What was your father's occupation?

Lashley: My father was a farmer.

Interviewer: Was he ever long term unemployed or was anybody in the family?

Lashley: Yes then he went to St. Louis and got job in a glass factory to support us and sent money home to my mother. And I lived on my grandmother's farm and my mother and my brothers and sisters all of us lived with my grandmother. And in fact we they turned converted her smokehouse into quarters for us to live in for during that it was hard times. And people all came together in groups and lived together in groups to help each other out and to survive. And it was a matter of survival.

Interviewer: Do you have any idea at all of how much he made working in the glass factory or?

Lashley: No I don't I was probably five or so I wasn't very old and I don't have a clue about what the money was. But whatever he could he sent home he had expenses up there because he had to pay room and board. And there was a family that lived on Park Avenue in St. Louis that houses us all from time to time. We would go there and rent a room and it was a family that we all knew. And later on as my life went on I would work and I worked at a manufacturing place in St. Louis and I lived with this same family.

Interviewer: Okay were you aware in 1939 about the political developments in the world and the threat to the U.S. and the rise of the Nazi Germany and the Japanese?

Lashley: The first we knew was Pearl Harbor everyone was in shock.

Interviewer: So you didn't have like any radios or newspapers?

Lashley: Our neighbors had radios and whatever the news was they'd send out when World War II, I no it was World War II the neighbors sent out word they had heard that Pearl Harbor was bombed.

Interviewer: Is that how you found out about it being bombed?

Lashley: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you remember like where you were what you were doing when you found out?

Lashley: No I don't really remember I was what it was what year was it?

Interviewer: Nineteen forty-one

Lashley: Forty-one well I was grown I was working in St. Louis in 39 and 40 and 41. And in 41 I took my baby and went to California.

Interviewer: Did you ever think before Pearl Harbor was attacked that we would be drawn into that war that was going on?

Lashley: I don't believe that I thought so. I don't know if anybody else knew I think my father was more aware of world conditions than I was. I was involved in trying to support myself.

Interviewer: Did you and your family support FDRs domestic and foreign affairs and believe that he was leading the country in the right direction?

Lashley: Always he was a good president and we still think so. He was a good president and he was the man for the time.

Interviewer: Was any of your family helped by any of his new deal programs?

Lashley: Yes a number I had brothers that were in the CCC Camps before they went in to the navy and I don't remember that I was involved in any of those programs. But I saw them working in other people's

families. Everything was rock bottom depression right to the bottom. And the smallest amount of money was important food you know we were talking the other day about how much it costs to get a 25 pound sack of flour 50 cents. Things were a little bit of money went further than it does today of course because that's the way the economy goes you know up and down. There may come a time again when a few dollars will buy more than it does now see. My father was getting after World War I my father was getting \$12 a month from the government as some kind of I don't know what to call it.

Interviewer: Veteran's benefits or something?

Lashley: It wasn't a veteran's benefit it was for an injury that he had from the time that he was in the service. But he came back from World War I and him and my mother got married. And he had an injury that he had gotten while he was overseas or in the service. So they gave him a pension of \$12 a month and that was really helpful because there was a lot of us that helped buy food.

Interviewer: Did you ever have problems like getting shoes and getting material and clothes?

Lashley: Yes and the thing I remember the most is painting a line up the back of my leg because I couldn't get any hose that was serious deprivation. I was I needed hose and hose were unobtainable and sometimes somebody would have some black market hose and you'd pay \$5 for a pair of hose which was outrageous and sometimes when you went to put them on you couldn't use them they were form bad material and bad. The reason they had them some people were able to get a hold of they were not perfect and they were not correctly made and you would pay a large amount of money only to find that you couldn't get your foot into them. You had been really scammed.

Interviewer: Where did you work in 19 where ever you started working until World War II?

Lashley: I worked in Utah in Salt Lake City Utah.

Interviewer: Well that was in World War II I mean before all of that.

Lashley: Before that I worked in shoe factories I worked in nursing homes I worked wherever I could get a job.

Interviewer: You were telling mom and me about that story of whenever you ran away from home whenever you were 14.

Lashley: Yes my father would not let me ride the school bus. School busses were new and I was yeah and we had a four mile we were four miles from the school. They had consolidated the school district and moved all of the children from a local school into town and that made it four miles from where we lived. And then my father would not let me ride the school bus so I packed my suitcase eventually.

Interviewer: And when you were at school you were working for the school and they were giving money to your

Lashley: Yeah they were giving my parent's \$8 a month for me sweeping up the floors I was a part of a work program in the school. So I couldn't ride the bus in the evening either because I was sweeping floors at school and they were giving my parents \$4 or \$8 I'm not sure which. But they would pay my parents.

Interviewer: During the great depression?

Lashley: Yeah

Interviewer: So you got tired of all of it and packed up your bag.

Lashley: Well the things that really hurt my feelings most was I was not allowed to share my friends ride to school and be on the school bus it was a new thing and I was not allowed to do that. I never rode a school bus as a pupil later years later I took drivers training and drove a small size for children who had problems. And drove a school bus during the years when all my friends were riding a school bus I couldn't I couldn't ride my dad wouldn't let me. I had to stay home and help mother which made me a half hour or maybe late and then I had to walk four miles and then I had to walk four miles home after I helped sweep the school floors in the room where I went to school in town. So oh wow things happen.

Interviewer: So how like talk about what you did after you left home what kind of jobs you did you know and tell what kind of stuff you did.

Lashley: What kind of stuff I did. Well whatever I could get a job doing. I worked in shoe factories I worked in nursing homes and then I worked in a Utah ordinance in Salt Lake City Utah I drove a electric truck I was an electric truck _____. My floor supervisor passed a whole line of girls and came to me and said would you like to be a truck operator? And I said yes ma'am I didn't hesitate instantly that was immediately to get out of the monotonous job of packing bandoleers. And it was monotonous you stood there and you folded and you put them in the pack and they went into metal cans small metal cans and there would be it seems to me like there was three or maybe four packed in a can. And a thing came open and those things are everywhere now I see them all the time they make good containers for fishing gear and all kinds of stuff and they're still around those bandoleer cans. But they fit on the men could carry the containers around and they had whatever amount I really have forgotten how many bandoleers went into that. But they flipped that thing over and get those things out of there and put one on one shoulder and one on the other shoulder and they were you know just but wherever they were. And they would be waterproof cans I don't know if that was very important or not but they were 30 and 50 caliber.

Interviewer: What did you do when you were operating the electric truck?

Lashley: I hauled I stacked and hauled containers of 50 or 30 caliber ammo ammunition. And sometimes when I'd be going down now she walked up to me and said would you like to be an electric truck operator and I said yes ma'am. So she said well follow me so they gave me some training put me on a truck they gave me a badge and when I'd be going down the hall and somebody would come and hop up on the back I would instantly stop. I followed the rules that I had been taught and no one was allowed to ride on my truck in back of me or anyway. And I would stop and I had the power and the authority to get rid of them to make them get off and I used it. I wouldn't move the truck and I would not I don't know how she knew that I was the one she wanted. That's what always puzzled me how could she pick me there was a line of us all of us doing the same thing. How did my floor lady she must have been watching what I was doing but how could she make a decision like that? She came to me and there was a whole line of girls doing this job that I was doing. She picked me out.

Interviewer: So you remember how much you made?

Lashley: I just cannot remember how much I made. I was satisfied with whatever I made I believe because it covered all my expenses. But I loved my job I loved that job.

Interviewer: You went and worked in another war plant.

Lashley: Yeah in California I took my baby and went to California. And I had a little house and I had a job at Lakewood California Douglas Aircraft. And I had a buddy who was we were both riveters so that old saying really applied to a lot of different girls. You had to have your hair covered with a net your hair had to be kept safely out of the way of the drill bits. And you had to know the sizes of different bolts that you used or the rivets you had to know the different sizes of rivets. You used a rivet gun either one of you could use the rivet gun and bar and the other one would be on the other side of whatever you were riveting to smash against. When you used the rivet gun there was somebody on the other side of that and spread that rivet out so that it would hold the metal together. And you sewed out that's what we called it sewed out airplane skins they were called.

Interviewer: Do you remember how much you made doing that job?

Lashley: I believe I made about \$100 a month.

Interviewer: Was it hard work?

Lashley: Well you were standing on your feet I don't remember it being hard work. When I was young I was strong I had friends I loved the work I loved my friends I enjoyed my friends I enjoyed having my house. I had people coming and going through my house that made my life happy and good. All my brothers and sisters my relatives I was living in LA East Los Angeles South I don't know I forget now I've forgotten the house number. But maybe it was east I'm not sure.

Interviewer: So you weren't in school during the war at all?

Lashley: No I was working.

Interviewer: What do you recall about the rationing system about what you had to ration and collections and that kind of stuff?

Lashley: Yes several things gasoline a lot of walking going on because you couldn't get gasoline for our cars. Couldn't get hose that was the pinched me because I hated being without hose. So drawing a line up the back of your leg had to be done every skillfully so that it looked like the back of your stockings your hose that was weird. But we used pencils eyebrow pencils and just reach and go like that and pull it. And then you had to stand and look at the back of your legs to see if you got the seams straight. Doing without hose was a hardship. But there were a lot of hardships serious shortages of food and things but at that time I was at that stage of life where my appearance was important to me and I wanted my sock seams straight. Oh well

Interviewer: You were talking about secrets earlier.

Lashley: Yeah I stood in line my friends would come and say do you smoke and I would say no I don't smoke. They'd say well will you get in line and buy me a couple packs of cigarettes were rationed and get me and they'd give me the money and I'd stand in line and work my way up and get the cigarettes

for whoever got to me first. You know everybody was having trouble getting cigarettes but me I didn't need cigarettes.

Interviewer: Was there any kind of collection going on for like rubber tires and aluminum did you help with anything like that?

Lashley: Yes and we were short of tires we were short of several different items of food actually almost everything except basic stuff you could get. I don't remember being hungry in those years.

Interviewer: Made do

Lashley: What

Interviewer: Said we just have to make do.

Lashley: Yeah make do well see I was raised making do. We never had an overload of anything my father was not rich and there was always more brothers and sisters coming along. And there was never enough food to go around so the morning meal was biscuits and gravy the lunch meal was whatever you could find it might be an egg from a hen house because I remember my brother and I chopping sprouts and going to the hen house and taking them to the house and boil them or fry them. And that would be our lunch sometimes and then sometimes we picked greens wild greens my grandmother had taught us what was eatable among whatever was growing. And you made use of and ate whatever was available to eat but the wild greens just like spinach or something like that and you put it in a pot and boiled it and drained the water off and then you put it in a skillet with some fat and cooked it a little there and then you put it on your plate and put some vinegar on it. And it was a green vegetable wherever it came from that was the supplement you know crops and stuff. But you ate whatever was eatable that was available to you. And my brother and I would go out and hunt rabbits and we'd bring home two to six and wed clean them and put them in a pot and cook them. And my mother would often make a pot like chicken and dumplings rabbit and dumplings. And so we had food that some of it was wild and some of it was just wherever you could get something to eat when you are hungry.

Interviewer: Was there school lunches at all in the school like we have now a days?

Lashley: Yes and you didn't have to pay for it. There was ladies of the neighborhood of the area who cooked at the school and they had a kitchen eventually you know. And there was a long table and we went in and you set down and you took your plate and made the rounds and put food on your plate and yeah. And when that came him that was a big help to the families who were having a hard time feeding their children and you know feeding getting something to eat. It was really good when that came in but breakfast it was lunch it was not breakfast. But later on they started having kids come in early enough to have breakfast before they went because they found out that kids that have something to eat in the morning learn better. And yeah but

Interviewer: Was the food decent and plenty of it and stuff?

Lashley: Well you decent doesn't even enter into it, it was food.

Interviewer: Yeah something to eat.

Lashley: It was something to eat. And you were always hungry enough to eat anything that was no problem with anybody's appetite.

Interviewer: You just learned to make do.

Lashley: Yeah you made do and you took advantage of whatever was available you used everything that was available.

Interviewer: So when you were in California and you were living in Los Angeles you had to buy pretty much you couldn't grow much.

Lashley: Well half a block from my house was a great big market and I loved it it was wonderful. That's where I learned to enjoy black olives all kinds of food that I had never seen before it was wonderful in California.

Interviewer: So you had access?

Lashley: Uh huh well I had a job when I lived in LA I had a job and I could buy any kind of food I wanted. And I could afford I think I made about \$100 a month but my house was \$25 a month and it was a life that was good because I had friends I rode to work with five guys who always treated me decently and supported me. And at one time there people in my house who were taking advantage of my trying to take my house away from me and my landlady and the guys that I rode with to work backed me up and I didn't have any trouble at all putting them out of my house because I had told them that they had to move and they were not going to move. So I went and talked to my landlady and she told them or they went over and tried to pay her the rent so they could get a rent receipt and kick me out of my house that was their plan and she told them no. She said that house belongs to her I had been there quite a while before I allowed them to come in I had no idea that they would do what they did. But life is learning constant learning and I thought that having a young couple who was about my age and had a child about the same age as my child would give us all a little more you know support and everything. And so I cut the living room I asked my landlady if I could put up a patrician because the living room was a long room it went all the way across the front of the house and I asked her if I could make myself a bedroom and I did and she said yes you can do anything to that house you want to she was so wonderful her name was Mrs. Sours. And she was always really good she was an older woman and she was so good to me. And so I had a bedroom of my own in the front that I had built I built the patrician and put up paper wallpaper and that and finished it and put my bed in there and then I allowed the young couple with a little girl the same age as mine to move in the back bedroom. And I thought that they would be a help and that my child would not be alone while I was away but the time came when she began to hang on me and cry and I began to find bruises on her and my next door lady neighbor lady motioned for me one day when I got out of the car. I came home I worked the what do they call that swing shift when you go to work about three o'clock and come home about midnight you know. So I imagine I left home probably about two anyway she my next door neighbor was standing on the porch one day when I came home at midnight well one day when I was out on the street in front of my house. She motioned for me and she had something she wanted to tell me and what she told me supported my beginning suspicion that my child was being abused. And she said bring her and her crib over here and I will take care of her until you get that situation taken care of. So I did that I took her bed over there and I put her over there and my neighbor lady had a little girl the same age as my daughter so my child stopped having bruises and then I called my mother. And I was in California my mother was in the country in Missouri and I called the general store and told them that I wanted to talk to my mother on the phone as soon as

possible. So in a day or two they called me back and my mother was in town but somebody made a trip I don't know who but they got word to my mother that I had that there was a phone call in town. So right away she was on the phone and I told her I said sent my sister out here to me because I have to have somebody to stay with my child while I'm gone to work. So my sister who is my next oldest sister between me and three brothers and she was 17 I sent them the money to buy her a ticket and she was on a train that was a troop train and young men were very decent and courteous and she got she could talk to anyone safely. And my mother I've thought about it so many times my mother allowed my 17 year old sister to cross the country and come to California to stay with me and my baby and that was remarkable in itself that mother would permit it. It was just a remarkable time but I sent the money they put her on the train she came across the country and I got her from the train station and you could always ask someone for a ride you know. I didn't have a car but I didn't have any trouble getting things done because you could trust people and your next door neighbor if he had a car a truck or any kind of vehicle he would run and help you do or she as the case may be. And things people helped each other and I had all kinds of people that stood by me watched over me I _____. I look back and I see how my father wanted people all my life he watch over me there was always someone. And when I had to get people out of my house people came. The guys that I rode with to work walked in and they said you tell those people to get out of your house. And when I walked into my house and they were in the bedroom and they were a sleep I flipped the switch the light came on and they were startling awake and I told them I said you be out of my house in the morning by 9 o'clock. But those guys you could hear them talk to each other they knew immediately that I was not in the house by myself that there was other people. They said you tell them and I did but people helped me and stood by me.

Interviewer: So when your sister got out there.

Lashley: When my sister got out there I never knew until a few years later that whenever I left the house to go to work she was afraid. She told me years later that she was afraid but she was there she took over my house and my baby and got acquainted with my neighbor lady who was so good about helping me. And everybody helped me I had all kinds of help and I know that my mother worried about me and she was always trying to get me to come back to Missouri but I wanted to make my own way you know and I wanted to make my own life. And all kinds of people my landlady everybody I didn't realize at that time how blessed I was but there was always someone there when I needed them.

Interviewer: You were talking about earlier too about entertainment they had entertainments that were planned.

Lashley: Entertainment?

Interviewer: Yeah some kind of like war programs or something.

Lashley: I don't know anything about entertainment.

Interviewer: Okay

Lashley: I don't know exactly what kind.

Interviewer: Well entertainment at bond rallies.

Lashley: War bond rallies when I was working in a war plant and it was I think it's called McDonald Douglas now but it seems to me like it was called Douglas Aircraft then. And there would be people like stars movie stars would come and at lunchtime they'd come in and they'd put on shows for us and there would be war bond drives. And yeah a lot was going on on that score yeah.

Interviewer: Did you participate in any of the scrap drives?

Lashley: Well everyone was collecting something yeah.

Interviewer: Did they pay you?

Lashley: No it wasn't it was a volunteer effort and you did what you could. You helped with anything you could that they were collecting and they were collecting metal. And what else mostly what I remember was metal things and stuff it took to melt down for bullets is what we thought you know.

Interviewer: Was there any like labor unions or anything at the war plant you worked at?

Lashley: I don't believe so I cannot remember anything that indicates that. I don't think so.

Interviewer: Did you work like a 40 hour week or were you expected to work overtime?

Lashley: We worked when we were told to. I can recall that I sometimes worked on Sundays whatever if we had any urgent need for whatever it was you worked when they said when your bosses told you. If you were going to work on Sunday you were going to work on Sunday. Yeah

Interviewer: Do you recall anything about the blue star or the gold star mothers?

Lashley: Yes absolutely you pass a house and see a gold star in it you knew that someone had died in the windows. The gold star mothers and the blue star mothers I believe blue star was for injuries or something war injuries you know. But a gold star was a mother who had lost a son because in those in that area in that time very few women were in service. So you just knew that it was a son. I had two brothers that were in the active part and another brother went in along toward the end of the war. I had my mother sent three sons. But they all came home I had two brothers on the same ship who were in the navy and they were in serious storms their ship was damaged. My older brother ordered his men to bring their mattresses and stuff it in the hole a hole that had been made in the upper part of the ship that they were on. And then they were in a really serious storm and crippled into a place to repair it and those were things we were told later. They didn't write home you didn't know about that at the time. You spent a lot of time praying for their safety and my mother of course. But it was the happy day when my brothers came home and we didn't know about all the things that had happened until later. They didn't write you and tell you.

Interviewer: You didn't hear about things on the radio?

Lashley: No you didn't no. Now all you heard about on the radio was the major big news about the progress of the war and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Did you listen to the radio a lot?

Lashley: I don't remember that there was that much time spent. There were not a lot of radios there was not and the neighbors that had a radio if the news was pretty important pretty soon it was spread word of mouth. I think one of the biggest news that happened in my life was they had bombed Pearl Harbor. That was big news the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and that was horrible news.

Interviewer: How did you feel about the Japanese?

Lashley: I hated them naturally. All Americans hated the Japanese for starting the war for bombing it was a sneak attack. And it was Hawaii and you know Hawaii is the land you go to for a vacation or something like that or rich people went to Hawaii for a vacation we didn't. We were not in that traveling class I managed somehow or another I got from the middle of the United States to California. And I don't even remember I guess I must have gone on a train or something I don't remember I never flew when I traveled. But later on I had a car and I traveled where I wanted to. But to this day traveling is an important part of my life. Getting in my car and going where I want to go is a very important personal freedom to me. Because I never saw a city until I was 15 years old I finally got a chance to go to St. Louis when I was 15 years old. And woo we the city.

Interviewer: A little girl from the Ozarks.

Lashley: The little girl from the back woods boy the sticks. Little girl from the sticks.

Interviewer: While you were in California did you hear anything about the Japanese internment camps or anything like that?

Lashley: We had some threats that said that they were going to attack California. And a U-boat was spotted not far out in the ocean not too far from California. And that was scary but apparently it was dealt with but that was scary news when we thought that we may be under attack. The war plant that I worked in was camouflaged with chicken wire and something that looked like grass and little old shacks here and there. And they said that a plane flying over would not be able to pick that war plant out you know it was part of the camouflaged to keep that from being bombed. And I don't know when I can't remember when exactly that it was explained to us how it looked from the air. But they said it just looked like countryside. And I remember walking in and out in and when I was walking in the place where I worked when I drove in the parking lot the guys that I rode with you got out of your car and I don't know I can't remember how it all but we all just walked in. And there was an area you walked under it was like a shade but above you could see through and there would be some sunlight coming through there. And on top of that they apparently had sprayed or applied something that looked like grass that's what we were told to camouflage that war plant.

Interviewer: But you didn't hear anything like where they were moving the Japanese and stuff and putting them in camps?

Lashley: No there was very little discussion about prisoners of war at that time. I heard that there were camps there but not then. I didn't know that Japanese were being brought as prisoners to our country and put in camps or whatever containments.

Interviewers: I was talking about Japanese that already lived in the United States.

Lashley: Yeah I didn't personally know about people but I had heard that they took the Japanese who were members of Americans and put them in centers where they could keep control. Because the reason being that you couldn't pick out the ones who were intending to be harmful and you couldn't separate the ones from the good ones. So they just put them all just I think that kind of thing will never happen again because an American citizen is an American citizen until proven guilty now I suppose. But at that time there was a lot of fear of some kind of underhanded destructive activity.

Interviewer: Like terrorism we deal with now a days.

Lashley: Terrorism yeah and there was if you were a citizen you know that's a whole nother area of concern. To have people come into the country with the intention of growing up to be terrorist or coming to this country to be raised as someone who will help to destroy the country from the inside. That is a very serious concern for American authorities and they should pay attention to who they're turning into citizens. That background should be thoroughly checked but those people have been practicing who are going to do stuff like that have come from families that had this mentality. And so there are kids who have been brought I know there are families who have come moved into this country with the intention of creating trouble. That's what I believe I think it still goes on.

Interviewer: They call them sleeping cells.

Lashley: Sleeper cells.

Interviewer: Yeah they wait until their told given orders to do anything.

Lashley: They plan do far ahead that young people are being raised in this country with the intention of destroying that government. Now that is and go our government needs to be on its toes. It needs to pay attention to new citizens and their backgrounds and their families their family history and stuff.

Interviewer: While the war was going on did you hear about the atrocities and the stuff that was happening to the Jews or did you know about any of the stuff that was going on in Europe?

Lashley: No there was nothing like that there was not that kind of news that I recall.

Interviewer: Did you ever see like any refugees coming from I don't know probably either the Pacific or Europe?

Lashley: No we didn't know anything about that.

Interviewer: Did you have any idea about the atomic bomb or anything?

Lashley: Yes scared to death petrified and scared.

Interviewer: Did you know about it before they dropped it?

Lashley: No

Interviewer: What did you think when they dropped it?

Lashley: Well I guess like a lot of people I was just absolutely astounded because nobody knew that they were developing that thing. And it was probably the biggest news it was mind boggling it was astounding. Nobody knew anyone was working on that ___ that was going on. They kept that pretty undercover ordinary citizens didn't have a clue but it ended the war. And it killed thousands and thousands lots and lots of people it harmed and destroyed people a lot of people. But it certainly put an end to the war if it hadn't been for that there would have been more Americans who would have died more people would have died on both sides if it had not have been for that. But it was a horrible was and it was a terrible thing for a president to have to decide to do. So that was Harry Truman.

Interviewer: What did you think when you heard FDR had died? Or did you hear about it on the news?

Lashley: Yes I was on vacation I was at home visiting my parents and astounded we I guess no one knew that the possible exist that that might happen. Everybody thought of him as a strong healthy person that was the public image that had been put out.

Interviewer: You didn't know at the time that he had had polio that he was crippled?

Lashley: No when he showed there were pictures of him standing up and I believe with a cane in his hand but he looked like a normal healthy person and his handicap was absolutely pretty well covered up you know. We thought that the president was a normal healthy person there was a lot about him that was going on then that we didn't know. But he was a good president and I think all of my I never met anyone that thought he was a bad president until years later. I heard criticisms of him and I never I don't feel I still feel that he was the man for the time.

Interviewer: Did you ever listen to any of his fireside chats?

Lashley: Yes yes yes

Interviewer: What did you think about them?

Lashley: He was an impressive speaker yeah.

Interviewer: Do you remember any one incident he was talking about or anything?

Lashley: I just remember the gesture sort of you know he would be sitting.

Interviewer: You said you saw it on TV?

Lashley: No I don't think so. I just you know I don't even remember the year TV came in. It's something you yes I do now I was in California which one of my children was a baby? I was in Thousand Oaks my brother had a screen had a TV that was great big box and a little tiny screen. It was probably six inches square or so it wasn't very big. And that was the first TV we ever saw. And I'm trying to remember the year I don't I let my kids go up the hill to the neighbor's house to watch TV on Saturday. I can't really remember the year that must have been 50 I don't know.

Interviewer: So you listened to those fireside chats on the radio.

Lashley: About 1950 I guess. Fireside chats?

Interviewer: Yeah you listened to them on the radio?

Lashley: Yeah you heard them on the radio.

Interviewer: So it was probably more you were imagining what you thought he was doing when he was talking?

Lashley: Yeah

Interviewer: Because I heard about some of the green hornet tapes and stuff I have some of them on tape. When you are listening to them you can sort of imagine that you're watching him actually do it.

Lashley: Yeah it was all going on in your head the TV screen was in your head. Yeah well radio is you know getting bigger and bigger when I first heard radio I can't remember when that was. But I guess we must have heard about JFKs dying and Elaine was two or three years old I think.

Interviewer: FDR

Lashley: FDR yeah what did I say?

Interviewer: You said JFK.

Lashley: FDR

Interviewer: That was something else that got to you right?

Lashley: Yeah

Interviewer: When JFK died. When the war was over what did you think you know concerned because of your brothers and stuff?

Lashley: Well that was the main thing was to find out that my brothers were okay. That was the most important thing I guess. Well there was a feeling a letdown feeling because war plants and all that kind of work came to a screeching halt. And people were out of jobs and it became right after World War II well see the whole country was repositioning. And I think we kind of went into a depression.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do after the war plant?

Lashley: Well I came home I brought my daughter and came home to see my parents. I visited with friends that I hadn't seen for a long time and what kind of work did I do? That's hard to remember I think I started working for the shoe factory it's kind of hard to remember what happened right away.

Interviewer: So you went back to Missouri?

Lashley: Yeah

Interviewer: To stay or did you just go back temporary?

Lashley: No I went to Kansas I went to Leavenworth Kansas and I had an aunt that lived there. And I took my daughter and went there and I got a job in a telephone office and things happened there at Leavenworth. And my sister came my sister got married in April and so I didn't no my sister had lived with me in Leavenworth briefly. And then she took my daughter and went back to Missouri and got married and married a person that I thought I better not say that. I just didn't think he was but she was very young she was like 17 and I didn't want her to get married so early so soon. I thought it was not a good move but she's still married to the same man so I guess her decision was the right one. She's got five kids and they are all grown and she's a grandmother and she's still an important part of my life yeah. She lives near me in Colorado.

Interviewer: What did you think of Harry Truman as a president?

Lashley: I thought that Harry Truman was a good president and he had a dirty job to do. He's the one that had to pull the trigger he was the one that said use the bombs. And as far as I know I never heard anyone criticize him for that decision was a monumental decision. But it put a stop to the killing that was going on because they only dropped either two or three but no more. If they dropped two they had another one ready to go and held on to it. But they were making those things is _____ and nobody knew it. Nobody knew what was going on that was a big secret.

Interviewer: After that happened what did you think about was there a lot of talk about what could be done like you know nuclear war and stuff like that?

Lashley: Wait a minute now.

Interviewer: After they dropped the bombs there was a lot of fear about nuclear war?

Lashley: There was a lot of fear of nuclear war. Those bombs we thought were just the opening wedge. We thought that everyone had those but I guess no one else had them I don't know. But we thought that if we were making them other people in the world were making them too. I did and I heard a lot of different discussion about what was going to happen if an atomic war developed. So there was a lot of fear of that and people were really worried and afraid and worried about that for quite a long while after that happened because it had been demonstrated that it was possible. And naturally we thought that other countries you know and of course there are other countries who have them now that didn't have them then. I mean what there are 17 different little countries that have got atomic weapons and that was for because maybe the way it was managed or something. It was demonstrated what damage it would be so maybe that's the reason it has not happened but I think there is still a possibility that someday. And you know the hot spot of the world now is of course right where it always has been Jerusalem you know that part of the world where Christ was born is the hot spot and is still being fought over and is the center. It's where it's the center of what's going on to this day that's an important thing.

Interviewer: Do you remember like any of the duck and cover that they were doing?

Lashley: Duck and cover?

Interviewer: Yeah having the kids get under the desk thinking that would actually save them from the atomic bomb.

Lashley: No they didn't do that.

Interviewer: No they did the little commercials and stuff they did it in the 60s I think in the school systems.

Lashley: Duck and cover?

Interviewer: Yeah when they had the little cartoon

Lashley: Well yeah in case there would be an atomic attack. Everyone thought there would be something that would come at us. And maybe eventually it will but we have better protection now maybe we have plenty I think you know to reply with.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experience during World War II or the depression?

Lashley: Well depressions are terrible things to have to go through. Not to have any food to have to see other people starving but to go back to the basics of life is possible for me but there are lots and lots of people who wouldn't know where to start you know.

Interviewer: Yeah especially now a days with all our TVs and stuff.

Lashley: I can always go back to the woods I can always find something to eat in the woods. I can always find rabbits to make rabbit stew. I can use a rabbit as well as a chicken you know. Also I learned how to raise some different things that people can survive on. You know if it come to the place where the economy is so bad you couldn't afford or you didn't have the money I'd probably get a ___ or so I'd make some rabbit hutches. Because meat is meat and rabbit meat is good for human consumption as well as chicken meat. You can raise chickens you can raise rabbits you can raise a small garden you can survive you know. And you can can food or freeze food if you can't afford the electricity for a freezer you can put food in glass containers there are ways to survive.

Interviewer: Make jelly

Lashley: You can make jelly yeah. But during the war sugar was scarce. So many things were rationed during the war.

Interviewer: Did you ever have electricity or running water when you were little and when like you were growing up and stuff?

Lashley: Only briefly most of the time we didn't my father took us when I was about four or five years old to St. Louis to live and we lived in a cold-water flat and if I'm not mistaken on the fourth floor. And we had running water but it was cold we didn't have hot water like I said a cold water flat. But that was like I said my father was working in a glass factory and my mother was taking care of us and eventually mother put us on the train and took us back to the country to grandma's house. Because we didn't have the freedom and she was afraid that wonders like me my uncle came one day to visit his sister he was my mother's brother and she couldn't hadn't seen me and I was out in the street playing somewhere and I had my little brother with me and my uncle found me piling up sand on street car tracks. And he turned me up and smacked me pretty good and took me to the house but I hated living in the city I did not like it from the time I was very small and I still don't like it. I'm a country person I will always be a

country person. And I like animals you know I want my horses and my dogs and my stuff around me you know. So

Interviewer: There was no electricity or running water on the farm?

Lashley: There was no electricity there was cold water cold running water in a cold water flat.

Interviewer: Well I'm talking about the farm grandma's house.

Lashley: There was no running water at my grandma's house. There was running water if you grabbed a bucket and ran to the well and pumped it out of the well. My grandmother had an excellent well and she had a pump that was taller than me and probably still is. And you pumped on that thing and it dropped water out of the well and it was good water and you carried it in a bucket back to the house. And so and she I remember her having a wash tub on the cook stove and heating water and Saturday night baths. And whoever got there first was the first to get the bath after that.

Interviewer: Pretty bad for you.

Lashley: No you didn't even think anything about it. When it come your turn you just hopped in and hopped out as soon as possible. Everybody got a wash off in grandma's bathtub. Yeah

Interviewer: But when you got to California did you have hot water and cold water and electricity?

Lashley: Absolutely and I have appreciated hot water running hot water and electricity all my life they have been blessing that I was taught early to appreciate. And they still are blessings yes electricity is important hot water is very important. And a shower nothing to beat it it's a therapeutic treatment it's medicine and it's a medical treatment hot water is a medical treatment. But really hot water refreshes you cold water refreshes you showers refresh you they make you feel like a new person. And I never get over the feeling that a both bathrooms was as step in the right direction.

Interviewer: Indoor plumbing.

Lashley: Indoor plumbing exactly there are people who have never known what it is to be deprived of indoor bathrooms cold in the winter time.

Interviewer: Yeah walk in the snow to go to the outhouse.

Lashley: Walk in yeah that's right walk out there and freeze your rear end in the outhouse.

Interviewer: Hope it doesn't stick.

Lashley: That is a terrible but that was one that was probably one of the most important improvements in my life was indoor plumbing. And after I left home I always wanted my mother to have an indoor and eventually she did have indoor plumbing bathroom. But you know people lived for thousands of years without indoor plumbing and somehow or other most of them are healthy. But that's hardship to me that's horrible but camping out is not horrible is it?

Interviewer: That's fun

Lashley: Go running down the path to the outhouse and don't think much about it. But it's warm weather.

Interviewer: Yeah and then you come home and you're thankful that there's one so close.

Lashley: Right

Interviewer: That's the whole point to camping.

Lashley: Yeah I guess so

Interviewer: To remind you of what you do have.

Lashley: What you do have I think that's right I think that's right.

Interviewer: That's how I always feel like camping is fun and everything but when I come home.

Lashley: Yeah dirty and it takes you two days to get clean you have to take a few showers to get clean.

Interviewer: Scrub scrub scrub

Lashley: Right yeah you make a fire and you get the black stuff all over you and it's hard to get it off.

Interviewer: And you smell like it.

Lashley: Yeah and you're hair smells like it. . Your hair smells of wood smoke and stuff but I love wood fires.

Interviewer: Yeah you taught me how to build fires when I was little.

Lashley: Yeah

Interviewer: Well is there anything else you would like to add?

Lashley: Not that I can think of right now.

Interviewer: Okay thank you very much for your interview.

Lashley: You're welcome I hope it's sufficient for you. I hope it's everything you wanted it to be.

Interviewer: Yeah we did good.

Tape ended