

Interviewer: What is your full name?

Castile: My full name is Henrietta Castile but I'm better known around town as just Henry.

Interviewer: When were you born? What year?

Castile: February 6, 1928.

Interviewer: Where were you born?

Castile: I was born in Mount Clemons, Michigan which is just outside of Detroit.

Interviewer: Is that your hometown?

Castile: Not really I was a baby when my parents move away from there and they took me along.

Interviewer: Where did you move to?

Castile: We moved to the Chicago area. My father was a landscape architect and he did a lot of work for wealthy people who had summer homes around the Chicago area.

Interviewer: So did you live in the suburban area of Chicago?

Castile: The part that I remember yeh it was North Chicago in Libertyville which is about 30 miles north of the downtown Loom area.

Interviewer: Were you close to the people you lived around? Did you have a close knit community?

Castile: I was a child not really we lived not as close as people do now. Our neighbors were about a quarter of a mile down the street. That type of thing so you really as children didn't get to go run down the street and play.

Interviewer: Did you have any brothers or sisters.

Castile: I had I still have a older sister and a younger brother.

Interviewer: What about your grandparents' did they live nearby?

Castile: No, my grandparents all four of them were in Holland and I never did get to see my grandparents. In fact my parents were both born in Holland and they came over here in 1926. Went to Winchester, Virginia not Decker, Virginia no not Virginia, Tennessee.

Interviewer: What was your school like in Chicago?

Castile: Well elementary school was a brick two story building and we had one class for each grade first through eighth grade and then high school was four years. We had to go to Weegee because at that time there was not a high school in North Chicago and we took the shuttle train and that was a pretty big school it had about 2500 students which was a big school at that time.

Interviewer: How long did you remain in school did you go all the way did you graduate?

Castile: Yeh, I graduated.

Interviewer: Did you go on to college?

Castile: Then I went to, well the war was coming up and they had special courses that you could take and in two years you have your teacher's degree. So I was certified to teach but I never continued the certification.

Interviewer: Do you remember the great depression? How was your family affected?

Castile: Not really because I was a small child back then. I do remember my mother, I had to walk through it was quite a ways and there was no sidewalks and my mother had me by the hand we had to go to the bank because the banks were closing and she wanted to get the money out. So on the way home she had this money in her hand I wanted to doodle along the way she kept pulling me on the hand, I remember doing that. Then the ironic part this was before computers my father had also gotten wind of this and he had also gone to the bank and gotten the money out so they ended up having to take money back to the bank because they had too much.

Interviewer: Did you know anybody who was long term unemployed during the great depression?

Castile: No, I really my husband my father was a landscape architect working for this nursery so he was the boss and he consistently had people coming wanting jobs but of course they didn't faze me. I do remember in Libertyville we lived on the nursery and we had people coming to the door asking for food you know we lived on US 41 and they would come they were hoboes they had no food they had nothings. They would sleep in the barn out back and all.

Interviewer: Before Pearl Harbor did you think that Nazi Germany and Japan were a threat to the United States?

Castile: I was concerned about Germany because my grandparents were over there in Holland and Japan I wasn't that concerned about really.

Interviewer: Did your grandparents were they ever effected when WWII started?

Castile: Yes, when they invaded Holland let me see my father's parents may have dies by that time my grandfather on my mother's side had died but Grandma was still living. And my mother did not hear from her for three years didn't know there was no communication of any kind and of course back them you didn't have a telephone and of course not email or anything like that. She didn't know whether her mother was dead or alive. So it was just before Thanksgiving that we got news that she was okay and that was just I remember how happy she was she was so happy she cried.

Interviewer: Did you ever think before Pearl Harbor that the war would ever come to the United States that it would be fought there?

Castile: I no, I guess I really didn't think we have been fortunate we haven't had war bombs landing here in this country like they had in Germany and Japan.

Interviewer: What did you think of Roosevelt? Did you think he was a good President?

Castile: Yeh I think he was a good President.

Interviewer: What did you like about him?

Castile: Well I remember my parents listening to his fireside chats all the time and I as a teenager I guess I was listened with half an ear you know, he seemed to be okay.

Interviewer: Do you remember the day that Roosevelt died?

Castile: I remembered when he died but it wasn't anything traumatic to my you know I knew he died and I felt bad about it but it wasn't like when they struck when the terrorist struck the towers or that type of thing.

Interviewer: Did you know anybody who was a part of the New Deal programs in 1930s or 1940s that were helped by those the WPA or CCC?

Castile: I don't know I don't think I did. My family was not on WPA.

Interviewer: Did any of your family members work in the war effort or relatives?

Castile: Well my husband was in the Pentagon and he also served over in sir lanka it was sir lanka it's Celon now it was sir lanka then he was at Mount Batons head quarters and he worked at the Pentagon and I worked at the Pentagon.

Interviewer: When did you work there?

Castile: I was in the Department of the Army, Civil Affairs Division and then as the war ended it kind of turned over to be the war crimes area which was quit traumatic. You got not only these written reports but you had picture of things the atrocities that had happened in Germany and I don't even want to talk about it.

Interviewer: That's alright what was your job at the Pentagon?

Castile: When I started in Civil Affairs I was basically in the back with this was again before computers so anything that came in had to be cross referenced and you had rooms of file cabinets so if you wanted to look up something about any particular subject you would have to go to the files and cross reference to see what it was filed under.

Interviewer: Do you remember a typical day at the Pentagon what you did?

Castile: Typed a lot.

Interviewer: How long did you work at the Pentagon?

Castile: Two years.

Interviewer: How long did your husband work at the Pentagon?

Castile: Thirty something years he retired from there in 1972.

Interviewer: When you were going to school do you remember discussion World War II with students or teachers?

Castile: Yeh we did discuss it the first thing that comes to mind was when they formed the air core and I had to make a report and I said air corps and the whole class laughter at me. We were concerned about it but. What was the initial question I don't remember?

Interviewer: Just discussion you had about WWII.

Castile: Yeh we discussed it in class.

Interviewer: Did you discuss Hitler or what he was doing in Europe?

Castile: You know how he was overrunning Poland and everything like that and then went farther and farther we didn't think that was a very good idea.

Interviewer: Did they discuss much of Japan?

Castile: More of Germany and I think I was more interested in Germany we probably discussed Japan as much at school but I was more interested in Germany and especially when they did start corresponding with mother's family over there and they wrote things that happened. Deaths they causes the atrocities there was one I think was two of her school teachers the Germans had put in concentration camps and had put then had put real tight girdles around them with rats inside the girdles and the only way the rats could get out was to eat through them and they die and several things like that. She was always glad to get a letter and then again she didn't want to read it.

Interviewer: Did think any of your male family members or anybody you knew would go to war?

Castile: Did I think they would?

Interviewer: Yes

Castile: Well you didn't have too much choice then you were drafted and you went.

Interviewer: Do you recall where you were and how you heard the news of Pearl Harbor?

Castile: Where was I? Yeh, it was a shock, again even more of a shock than when Roosevelt died. You know you kind of felt like with the terrorism what is this world coming to.

Interviewer: Did you hear Roosevelt's speech the day after, A Day we Shall Remember?

Castile: If I did I don't remember.

Interviewer: You weren't affected by the rationing were you?

Castile: Yeh well I was still living at home then and I remember the red stamps for the milk and all and my mother did a lot of canning and we would go from one place to another trying to find like sugar for the peaches she canned and things like that she canned and we went down to this one store Mom and Pop store and she went in and got some sugar and then I went in and got some sugar and he said aw your mom was just in here. You're limited on how much you can buy but he gave it to us or sold it to us anyway.

Interviewer: Did you recall the black market for scarce items?

Castile: Yeh, though I never participated in that. I know when I worked at the Pentagon they would they had a big concourse, not as big as what it is now, with stores and drug stores and what have you and word would spread fast when they had nylons on sale or they had tissue Kleenex well not Kleenex but whatever the tissues on sale or soap or whatever so sometimes you'd just go down and you'd see a line and you'd just line up you figured whatever it was you needed it.

Interviewer: Did you not participate because you thought it was morally wrong?

Castile: Well the black market things well I probably morally wrong I just probably never thought of it.

Interviewer: Did you family have a car during the war?

Castile: Yes

Interviewer: Were you affected by the gas shortage during the war did you not get to go very many places?

Castile: Yeh, we did a lot of walking.

Interviewer: What kind of car did you have?

Castile: Let me think what kind of car did she have? My mother was the driver my father had the truck big flat bed. It was a Chevrolet maybe about a 36 or something like that.

Interviewer: So your main transportation was just walking?

Castile: Yeh, and I had roller skates too and I lived like a mile and you'd get there fast. We didn't all the back packs and stuff to carry then.

Interviewer: Did you have to carry many books to school?

Castile: No in elementary school this was elementary school. High School of course we did.

Interviewer: Did you like your teachers in elementary school?

Castile: Yeh

Interviewer: Do you remember any of them?

Castile: Yes, I had Mrs. Shank and Mrs. Singly and Mrs. Strong and Mrs. Young and.

Interviewer: And you still remember?

Castile: Yeh, don't ask me who the teacher was yesterday cause I couldn't tell you.

Interviewer: What ya'll usually do in school arithmetic reading?

Castile: The usual thing. Seventh and Eighth grade were divided up into advanced and regular classes you know and I knew I was going to get Mrs. Strong for advanced classes and I dreaded it she turned out to be the best teacher I ever had she was strict but she was good and she knew how to handle a class. She had a beautiful beautiful whistle like a bird and if you would get the work done before class was over she would whistle for you and it was really an incentive to get it done.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of your friends that you went to school with did you have a bunch of friends?

Castile: I had quite a few friends.

Interviewer: What did you like to do for fun?

Castile: We generally came home and we had a big garden and my mother would say go out an hoe the peas you know we didn't really have friends come over we didn't live that close together. Everybody went to their own home.

Interviewer: Did you have a very big garden?

Castile: A big garden it wasn't a very big garden.

Interviewer: Did you grow your own vegetables?

Castile: Yeh

Interviewer: So you didn't go to the store as much for those?

Castile: Very seldom bought anything canned you know green beans or anything like that she canned that was her pride she canned 350 cans every year. It was really nice to go down to the basement and look at all of the cans now that's not counting all of the jellies and stuff she made too and the relish.

Interviewer: Did your mom ever work outside of the home during the war?

Castile: Not during the war. She did knit socks she knitted socks when she was a little girl. Knitted one pair a week for a quarter she was quite a knitter and she did it for the Red Cross for a long time until the Red Cross said she was not knitting the socks the way they wanted them so she said well I'll quite because I'm not going to learn another way.

Interviewer: Do you remember the blue stars or the gold mother stickers in the windows.

Castile: Just vaguely but I don't really pay much attention to it.

Interviewer: Were any of your relatives did they go to war even distant relatives?

Castile: Well let me think well my cousin in Murfreesboro he had 700 acres well they still have 700 down there and he had lost his thumb in a some kind of a machine thing and when it came time for the war he went to sign up and they wouldn't take him because it was his left thumb and he would not take him because he didn't have his left thumb. And he was quit back then if you were 4F that was kind of a down thing you know he was kind of embarrassed about that. Let's see I told you my husband was in. Well a number of his brothers he was one of nine children and I think there were probably about five boys in there at one time.

Interviewer: When did you meet your husband?

Castile: At the Pentagon. He came back from sir lanka and that's when I met him he was getting ready to get out of the military. He was not a career military.

Interviewer: Did you know any servicemen who were injured or killed?

Castile: Well the first one that comes to mind is Roy Rogers who I went to high school with and he was in the Battle of the Bulge and was killed.

Interviewer: Did you ever correspond with other than your relatives in Holland anybody overseas who was US Army?

Castile: Yeh I had it was kind of a lot of fellows over there it was just a friendly thing to write to them there were never any close connections to them.

Castile: Oh yeh, that was the general ideal.

Interviewer: Did you have telephone service?

Castile: I suppose we did I don't remember. Yeh

Interviewer: And since ya'll had a radio what were your favorite programs?

Castile: Let me think, seemed like Walter Wincher was on my favorite program was the Green Hornet and that type of thing you know Roy Reichmann first five minutes and I was through with him.

Interviewer: Did you ever send off for toys that they would advertise?

Castile: I don't believe I did. I could tell you a funny story; no I won't tell you about that. This is my son, this is far latter I'll quickly tell you he collected the popsicle man came through and you collected so many wrappers any you could send them off he was picking up wrappers from out on the ground and in

the trash can cause he had to have a certain number and all of a sudden he came flying in the apartment and he said mom I got ants in my pants. There were ants all over the wrappers so.

Interviewer: How did you keep up with the war did you listen to the radio or read newspapers?

Castile: Yes although a radio was hard when I first went Washington I had no radio because everything was hard to get so a friend of mine finally got me I paid too much for that radio you talk about blackmail I paid way too much for that radio but I had a radio so. But that's the only way we could keep up.

Interviewer: Do you remember any newspaper articles from that time?

Castile: No I don't think I subscribed to the newspaper then.

Interviewer: Do you remember when WWII was declared over?

Castile: Yeh that was a happy time. I was in Washington D.C. at the time and everybody was elated.

Interviewer: Do you remember what you were doing?

Castile: Well I remember one thing I had an evening job at this diner kind of like a minute mart you had a counter on one side and they serve food on the other side and they had groceries and all. And as I was walking down there everybody was celebrating and this one fellow came up to me and said I'll split \$10 with you if you'll give me a kiss. Somebody had made him a bet and so I said keep the \$10 and gave him a kiss and went on. Everybody was just happy as can be.

Interviewer: Were you proud to be patriotic?

Castile: Oh yeh I'm sure I was.

Interviewer: Some people view the war years as the best years of their life do you agree?

Castile: Not really things were not plentiful like they are now. In a way times were easier and you didn't have the troubles I mean that you have now. We didn't have any air conditioning so at night so in Washington D.C. we would walk and take a blanket to the park and lie there until it cool and then go back to the apartment. I would never go lie in the park anymore now or walk alone at night. Different time.

Interviewer: In your free time did you ever go to movies?

Castile: Oh sure.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of them?

Castile: Not really.

Interviewer: I guess they had newsreels do you remember watching those?

Castile: I remember going to the movies and they had newsreels on before the movie came on and that was in place of the television we have now that was the news you could see it on at the movies.

Interviewer: Is there anything you would like to add?

Castile: No just keep asking me questions.

Interviewer: Well that's all of the questions.