

Interviewer: First of all Mr. Self and Mrs. Self would you tell us your names your full names.

Theodore: Theodore Melton Self.

Interviewer: When were you born Mr. Self?

Theodore: August November 22, 1928.

Interviewer: Okay Mrs. Self.

Mary Ann: I'm Mary Ann Self and I am you want me to tell my age?

Interviewer: You don't have to no ma'am we won't ask you to do that.

Mary Ann: My birthday is 2/9/32.

Interviewer: Okay and Mr. Self you served in Korea stateside is that correct?

Theodore: That's right.

Interviewer: Could you take me through a typical day while you were serving? You'd get up in the morning and then what would you do?

Theodore: Well I basic training you had to go through that. Then after you got through that you would have a job to do but I always played some kind of ball always in high school and college. And the first winter I was in Amarillo we had boxing matches.

Interviewer: Okay

Theodore: And we put seats in the hangers and had boxing matches. Then in spring we started baseball season and I played on the baseball team. And when we played at home all I had to do was line off the field and get it ready for us to play. If we played away from home I didn't do a thing but catch a plane and go there and play ball.

Interviewer: What branch of the service did you serve in?

Theodore: Air force

Interviewer: You were in the air force. Okay and what did you do in the air force during Korea?

Mary Ann: Just about what he said. He was on a base with all of the sports and then when he'd play ball they'd jump on a cargo plane and fly to New Mexico play ball there.

Interviewer: So he played ball for the navy?

Mary Ann: Well air force.

Interviewer: Air force I'm sorry you did say that forgive me. And you were with him during this time.

Mary Ann: Yes I was with him in Amarillo. I didn't get to go with him when he was in basic. We married in 1950 and this was 1951.

Interviewer: Okay

Mary Ann: And so I worked in Amarillo in a shrine temple a Shriners Temple while he was at the base about how far was the base out there.

Theodore: It was about ten or twelve miles.

Mary Ann: About ten miles out of town and so he was having a good time playing ball he was serving.

Interviewer: What rank were you?

Theodore: Well I was a corporal at that time. And later on about 13 months later I signed up for OCS Officers Training.

Interviewer: Okay

Theodore: And I got in and oh my goodness sometimes I wished I hadn't gotten in. It was hard hard hard

Mary Ann: Academics were real hard.

Theodore: Academics

Mary Ann: He liked the marching and I like the physical training he could do that but

Theodore: But then I got out of that.

Interviewer: Yeah

Mary Ann: Yeah his second lieutenant bars.

Interviewer: Second Lieutenant bars.

Theodore: And they sent me to Wyoming

Mary Ann: Supply school

Theodore: Supply school

Mary Ann: And I got to go with him there. We lived in Cheyenne Wyoming.

Interviewer: Did you live on base?

Mary Ann: Close no we didn't live on base but we lived close. We were in a little apartment and we would go on base and go to the movie and the PX and it was fun. He didn't like it but I did.

Theodore: Buy our groceries.

Mary Ann: Yeah we would buy our groceries at the PX he wanted to come back and coach so.

Theodore: And after that we were sent to Cheyenne no

Mary Ann: South Carolina

Theodore: South Carolina and we was waiting on a radar unit and the war ended and

Mary Ann: That was August 1953.

Theodore: I was actually a surplus officer they didn't need me.

Interviewer: Surplus

Mary Ann: Nonessential

Interviewer: Okay

Mary Ann: Nonmedical nonessential

Theodore: And captain that morning said you can get out if you want to. I said start hose papers and so I had a job in Dickson waiting on me.

Mary Ann: Coaching here in Dickson.

Interviewer: Coaching here in Dickson and I believe there's a land mark here in Dickson that's named after you Mr. Self am I right?

Theodore: Well they named the gymnasium after me.

Interviewer: Isn't that great.

Mary Ann: He coached girls' basketball that's what gave him notoriety. Girls' basketball was just nothing then. Nobody would come see them play then after two years he started winning and then they did not have a losing season after that. They went to the state three times.

Interviewer: Wow went to the state three times. And that was when it was was it a high school still?

Theodore: Yeah

Interviewer: Dickson County High School.

Mary Ann: It was just Dickson High School.

Interviewer: It was Dickson High School.

Theodore: It seat it would seat 2800 and we filled it just about every night. And that was good come from what was here.

Mary Ann: Started they had three high schools in this county then. White Bluff, Charlotte, and Dickson and then in 72 they combined and consolidated the big school up on the hill.

Interviewer: Right but this was the high school that was on College Street.

Mary Ann: Yes that's where it was.

Interviewer: And now it's a middle school. I do believe I have seen your picture in the trophy case.

Theodore: You have?

Interviewer: I think I have.

Theodore: Lord have mercy.

Interviewer: I think I have with basketball and girls lined up. See I went there so many years ago back when it was a junior high. And they had all those pictures in the trophy case back then. And I remember seeing I did not know that was you that was the basketball coach in all of those pictures.

Mary Ann: See the medical records have him Theodore Self that's the reason nobody recognizes him but he's called Melton.

Interviewer: Right

Mary Ann: So that's the reason

Interviewer: And I think on the side of the building it says Melton.

Mary Ann: Oh yes nobody knew him as Theodore.

Interviewer: Okay

Mary Ann: Our son was Theodore Ted but he was you were called Ted in the service weren't you?

Theodore: Yeah

Interviewer: Was there any concern is this something that was talked about a lot when you were in the service about the containment of communism? I don't know if you and your friends got into those discussions it was right before the Cold War really got going.

Theodore: We I don't remember us discussing any of that no I don't remember.

Interviewer: I know it really the Red Scare and everything happened.

Mary Ann: It was terrible about that time.

Interviewer: During that time

Mary Ann: Yes it was

Interviewer: McCarthyism

Mary Ann: Yeah it was just bad it really was.

Interviewer: Well do you have anything else you would like to add about your experiences? Do you have any funny stories that you can recall?

Theodore: No

Mary Ann: Tell them about the airplane that you went riding in.

Theodore: The first airplane we traveled in airplanes.

Mary Ann: And had to wear a parachute.

Interviewer: A parachute?

Mary Ann: Uh huh

Theodore: Our first trip we went they said you could hear zoop zoop zoop those sounds get ready to jump.

Mary Ann: Three buzzes

Interviewer: Three buzzes

Mary Ann: Get ready to jump.

Theodore: And we was coming back one night and it was raining and they turned the windshield wipers on and that buzz went off zoop zoop and it stopped. They scared me.

Mary Ann: He was ready to jump.

Theodore: And I went up there and asked the pilot what in the worlds the matter. He said oh I just turned the windshield wipers on.

Mary Ann: So he didn't have to jump.

Theodore: Man I would have jumped.

Interviewer: Had they trained you to jump out of a plane or anything?

Theodore: No

Mary Ann: No just strapped a chute on him.

Theodore: Oh my goodness. No they didn't train us but I sure would have bailed out.

Interviewer: I believe I would have too if they said jump then just tell me what to pull on this thing and let me out.

Mary Ann: Tell me how to land safely.

Theodore: I had a good time really.

Mary Ann: Yeah he did

Theodore: But I wanted out so bad I wanted to be coaching so bad.

Mary Ann: And he coached here for how many years eighteen? Taught for 34 but coached for about 18. Went into principal ship

Interviewer: Oh okay

Mary Ann: He got kind of nervous coaching had got pretty hard on him to coach. He liked to practice him but didn't like to coach on the sidelines. But he had some good teams' football teams too.

Interviewer: Did the GI bill help you all.

Mary Ann: Yes it did get his master's on the GI bill.

Interviewer: Wonderful

Theodore: I went to Austin Peay four years on a football scholarship.

Mary Ann: The whole everything was paid for the four years.

Theodore: I went to Peabody for my master's on the GI bill. I got 54 hours above a master's it was TSU they did not have enough whites.

Mary Ann: Yeah they wanted white students.

Interviewer: Okay so you got a minority grant.

Mary Ann: Yeah he did.

Interviewer: Marvelous

Theodore: Yeah

Mary Ann: So his education just really cost almost nothing.

Interviewer: That's good

Mary Ann: It was because he came from an Alabama mining town and his parents did not have the money to send him to school. In fact his daddy was so surprised he said you mean they're going to pay for you to play.

Theodore: He couldn't understand that.

Interviewer: What did your daddy do?

Theodore: Coal mine.

Interviewer: He was a coal miner.

Mary Ann: And he worked in the coal mines a couple of summer before I knew him that kept him in college because he knew he didn't want to go back to the coal mine.

Interviewer: Well thank you so much and Mr. Self you have been a big asset in Dickson County and I appreciate you so much talking with us and letting us tape your interview. And I thank you too I appreciate you too.

Mary Ann: Well you're welcome