

Interviewer: Okay if you could just say your full name, the year that you were born, and where you were born.

Rittenberry: Billy Ray Rittenberry born September 10, 1935.

Interviewer: And where were you born?

Rittenberry: Clarksville

Interviewer: Okay could you tell us your parent's names and what they did?

Rittenberry: Yes my mother was Myrtle Christine Rushing her maiden name and Jessie William Rittenberry.

Interviewer: And what did your father do for a living?

Rittenberry: Carpenter

Interviewer: Okay do you have brothers and sisters?

Rittenberry: I have four sisters.

Interviewer: Four sisters

Rittenberry: I had four sisters I had two brothers dead.

Interviewer: Okay I realize that you were born half way through the great depression but I wondered if you had any recollections of the great depression and things like rationing things like that.

Rittenberry: Yes yes the rationing yes I remember going to the store for my mother during the Second World War and using the ration books.

Interviewer: Okay did the depression seem, I'm sure that it did, but did the depression seem to directly affect your family were you hurting?

Rittenberry: No no we weren't.

Interviewer: That's good

Rittenberry: My father had steady work in fact after the depression ended of course the war started and they started building Camp Campbell Kentucky and he worked through most of that project there.

Interviewer: That's great did he ever take you with him?

Rittenberry: No he couldn't do that.

Interviewer: Okay did you graduate from high school?

Rittenberry: No

Interviewer: How long did you stay?

Rittenberry: I went two years.

Interviewer: Okay the same as my grandpa. When you left high school what were you doing for work?

Rittenberry: I worked for a construction company and little bit before that I worked in a restaurant.

Interviewer: Okay

Rittenberry: And I started out as a dishwasher. Back then you did whatever you could find to do and we were kind of a poor family. We weren't destitute but you know and myself and my sisters as we got older we all went to work. But as I got older when I was about 15 I started working for Construction Company. And I worked as a helper for a while and I picked up the carpentry trade from my father. And that's what through my career the last 38 years I was a construction superintendent.

Interviewer: Okay

Rittenberry: And I did various projects around Clarksville and Nashville. I started in Kentucky, Detroit Michigan, Kansas City, Missouri, Akin Alabama, and Grandville South Carolina which is outside of Akin South Carolina and I did several jobs here in Clarksville. One was the Tile Sierra plant in Industrial Park and various office buildings around the Nashville area.

Interviewer: Okay were you drafted or did you enlist?

Rittenberry: Drafted

Interviewer: Okay in 58

Rittenberry: Yes during the time that I was drafted I was working in Richmond Virginia with a company out of Dallas Texas. And I got my draft notice there so I got my status transferred back to Nashville to be inducted out of the Nashville Area. And from there I went to Fort Chapman Arkansas for basic training and advanced training. And from there Fort Dix New Jersey which was the whole 6th replacement center. From Fort Dix to the Stugard area in Germany ____ Germany. Then I was with the 168th engineers combat.

Interviewer: Okay could you tell us a little bit about what basic training was like? If you knew anyone that you were there with or?

Rittenberry: I went in with two boys from Clarksville area one of them was sent home I don't know why and the other boy he was in the company I was in. Once we left Fort Chapman I never saw him anymore. Eventually he did come to work at the telephone company. We sold our home and moved to another area and he came over and put the telephone line in.

Interviewer: Oh small world. 17:56

Rittenberry: After that he's dead and the other boy I don't know if he's still living or not.

Interviewer: What kind of exercise did you have to go through in basic?

Rittenberry: Oh just the basic running, calisthenics.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: Every morning and of course we was trained on the rifle range and that was about the same thing for the first eight weeks there.

Interviewer: Okay and when you moved on to advanced training what kind of things?

Rittenberry: That was automotive technician or mechanic. And I was the class leader I was picked as the class leader for that. And came out with a good average there and that was very helpful because then when I got overseas I went into the motor pool as a mechanic.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: And the duty in Germany was good very nice. We went to the field a lot. They would call an alert usually two or three o'clock in the morning. You had specific duties places to back your truck I drove a truck because I was a mechanic I also was assigned to a truck. And we had to come to a certain window or door at our barracks to load the tools which were in the middle of the squad bay and they were called pioneer tools. Rakes, shovels, hoes stuff like that. And then we would assemble in a convoy the whole battalion which consisted of about 850 men in the whole battalion there was several companies in that battalion. And we would go out in the Black Forest and usually this was done in the winter time mostly. And we had to drive in the dark and the lights on the truck they had blackout lights just a little dot. You had to have someone on the left side of the truck by the left front wheel to guide you because you couldn't see. You couldn't see any further than from me to her. Then we would fall out we'd set up our equipment machine guns. And we had lots of dynamite because we would build tank barrier. In a tank barrier we would place chart here and a chart over here well this chart here, the road was going this way, you blast a hole here and you put the you blast a hole out and then you drop dynamite in the bottom and you blow it out this way. And if a tank came over he would lob in here and he couldn't back out and if he came this way he couldn't back out.

Interviewer: Oh okay right

Rittenberry: That was called a tank barrier. And then we would build we would also connect with the bridge company that was attached to our battalion. We would go up a little north of Stugard on the Rhine River a bridged river and it was about two miles wide there and we'd bridge the river. It would take two or three days and we did most of this at night. And then in the daytime we didn't do anything we did everything in the dark in blackout conditions. And we'd go across the bridge the whole battalion would cross the bridge then we'd come back we'd tear it down load it back up. And then other times we'd go out into the forest and we would build timber trusses. We'd do this in the black in the blackout. And it was what you call a rock and rolling bridge it was built on rock and rollers it would rock back and forth it was on rollers. We did not use equipment to build that bridge we did it all by hand heavy timbers and steel supports. And as we added to the bridge we would push it on out and it can't linger over the ravine but the weight back here was enough to hold it from dropping off. And then we'd shove it to the

other side and it would meet rollers over there. And we would do this all in blackout conditions the next day we'd rest the next night we'd tear it all down then put it back up. And that was a good experience. And sometime we would go over to on the Czechoslovakia border and we could see the communist there was a barrier there I'm assuming you might have heard of the 38th parallel in Korea. You know the enemy over here and you're over here.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Rittenberry: We could see sometimes they would wave at us and we'd wave at them but we didn't have any contact with them.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: And driving to that area was beautiful country because we were south of Stuguard and then we would go east and we went around went through the little city of ___ Germany. And there's a church and I believe it was built in the 11th century and it is still standing today.

Interviewer: Wow

Rittenberry: Beautiful church we would have to go right around that and the streets in the little town were really narrow. And we would sit over there and we would do this in February this was field training exercise cold weather indoctrination. I mean snow that deep and it was cold but it was. And being a mechanic we had a tent that was about twice the size of this room and we had a gasoline generator. You put about 50 gallons of gasoline in this thing it had a little one cylinder gasoline motor and you start that up that was a blower. And you lit the thing it would burn the gasoline and the blower would push the warm air tent.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: Well the trucks would come in and they'd be loaded up with ice and snow and we'd have to go to a sawmill and get some slabs to put on the floor to pull the trucks on. And then we had to get under them whatever was wrong and the stuff is dripping in your face and all of that. But it was kind of fun you know being young.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: But it was kind of hard too but it was important. And for exercise we could play ball and we had a place where we could go into a gym and exercise if we wanted to. And a movie theatre

Interviewer: Oh okay

Rittenberry: And we had an EM Club for all the enlisted men to go and eat and drink beer and all of that was good. The comradely was so good between everybody.

Interviewer: I was gonna ask

Rittenberry: Because you're taught comradely because once you get into a situation you need to be with your company. And I thought it was real enjoyable I wouldn't take anything for the experience of it. I

was over there two years I went over on the USS Simon B Buckner which was a transport ship it was built it was converted to a transport ship later. But it served it was built in 1945 I think it was 700 tons. And if I remember right there were about 3500 people on it there were I know there were 200 dependents this is wives and children of some of the officers and enlisted men. And there were a few sailors on there and mostly just the GIs. And we slept in hammocks down in the bawls of the ship and the hammocks you know what a hammock does it swings back and forth. But we could not stay inside during the day whether the weather was good or the weather was bad. And the weather was terrible when I went over in September. The sea was rough took us nine days to get from Brooklyn port in New York to South Hampton England. We docked that night spent the night at South Hampton and then we were in the English Channel. Then a pilot came out and piloted the ship out of the channel and then he got off and we went on up to ___ Germany pretty close to Norway and came into _____. And you could see the ship when we got off the train we could see the ship it must have been a good almost a mile. And we carried a duffle bag and a hand bag and that's pretty heavy you'd walk a little and stop walk a little and stop.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: So from there got on a train and rode all night to Stugard and the crew was there to pick us up in the back of a big ole truck. And hauled us to the post where we were going and we were stationed on top of a mountain which had been an old German air base helicopter base. There weren't any helicopters there but it had been a little airfield it was called Nelligan Caser and we were there for the duration. We could go to town we could walk out of the post get a cab or walk down to the Strasbon I believe it was can we could catch this little cable car. And go down the mountain into the city ___ and then we could catch a train from there or get a cab and drive over to Stugard which was a larger city. One of the big industrial cities that was pretty well saved during the war because it was where they built a lot of their heavy equipment. It is also the home of Volkswagen and the Mercedes Benz. And it was a beautiful place they had left a few blocks untouched after the war. You could see where it was bombarded out of course trees were growing up in it of course it was only 13 years after the war.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: But driving through the country it was beautiful. Sometime we would drive on the autobahn for a little piece then we'd get off on a side road or whatever. I did have a sister and her husband and family were stationed a hundred miles or more maybe 150 miles from Swankford so I did get to go up and see them once.

Interviewer: Oh that's great.

Rittenberry: Took a little leave and went to see them. It was very nice and the duty was real good. And then when we got orders to ship out went back got on another ship sister ship to the one I went over on. Back to New York to Fort Dix and then out and then after that I came home, you got something to say?

Woman in the background: Well I thought a neat little thing talking about men that he met and he told me this story that on his way home for some reason all these guys that he had been in the service with that went other places he met there on the way back.

Rittenberry: Oh yes when I got off the ship in Germany when I first got over there I was the only one that went that I know of that went to that area they dispersed us to different places over there. Several bases over there we were in the 3rd army. And then I didn't see any of these guys until we all assembled back to port there and there were all the guys what I and that was very interesting.

Woman in the background: Tell the how many they fed.

Rittenberry: Huh

Woman in the background: How many they fed every day on that boat.

Rittenberry: Well there were about I think about 3500 people on the ship. Now we didn't eat out we had a mess hall of our own. We could not associate nor could they associate with us.

Interviewer: Okay

Rittenberry: The independents and officers were above deck they were on the upper decks and we were down in the bawls of the ship. And we would see them but we could not assemble we couldn't go up there and they didn't come down in our area. There were some children on there and as I said there were some navy people we didn't correspond with them. But it was really nice. I remember the one things that was real exciting for me was when I came into New York Connie Frances was singing God Bless American just as we passed the Statue of Liberty. It makes you have a good feeling about being back home.

Interviewer: Of course right

Rittenberry: So I got out and I came back to Clarksville and I had been working in Richmond and I called the company that which I had been working for which was out of Dallas Texas. And they held your job for you.

Interviewer: Oh wow

Rittenberry: But I had to go wherever they wanted me wanted me to go so I went to ____ Michigan. And I worked up there for several months then they _____ and I came back home.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: Then I lived in Florida myself for a while I worked for a contractor, met my wife. We dated a few months got married and.

Interviewer: Could you tell us a little about your time in Germany? Did you Have civilian contact with German citizens much?

Rittenberry: Yes not much but we'd go down to a little place like a restaurant but it's a guest house. Now it can be like a little a place to eat and of course beer is everywhere over there. But upstairs in this building it was about like a hotel people would have rooms. I remember one time I got a pass I went down by myself to a kind of ___ and I ate. The first time I ever ate a ___ schnitzel it's really good. And I got a room for the night and when the lady carried me up to my room the covers on the bed were as

thick as the mattress because the weather was so cold and they didn't have a lot of heat. I thought this is kind of strange I hadn't seen anything like that. But yes and sometime we would see some of the older men and they would talk a little bit about the war. They were glad we were there they didn't like the war they were not communist.

Interviewer: Right so they were happy that you were stationed there.

Rittenberry: Yes and in their broken language they could speak to us a little bit and they loved our cigarettes. Their cigarettes were awful they loved American cigarettes. And of course we would always we could buy them they were real cheap. And we would give them cigarettes you know and they would talk with us it was really nice they were really really nice people.

Woman in the background: Did the language prohibit you from having

Rittenberry: It did a little bit but you know I picked up a few words.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: I couldn't speak a lot of it but you get a mutual understanding with anybody. You can pick anybody that can't speak our language but if you try you can communicate with them you know. And I thought that was very interesting.

Interviewer: Did you ever have contact with anyone who was resistant to you because you were American?

Rittenberry: No they were very glad that we were there.

Woman in the background: Don't you think the post might have helped their economy?

Interviewer: Sure

Rittenberry: I'm sure it did.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: But it wasn't unusual to be traveling on the autobahn and see people ski to get from one place to the other.

Interviewer: Wow

Rittenberry: And it was just a beautiful country and nice people I really liked it.

Woman in the background: I think he went in probably at a good time because I think he mentioned communist I don't think we heard the word communist that much.

Rittenberry: Well we only heard it we were restricted to post.

Woman in the background: It was Nazis

Rittenberry: On the first day of May because that is a communist day so we could not travel.

Interviewer: What day was that?

Rittenberry: On May the first. Now if we had to travel some type of duty they gave us a certain route that we had to take to stay away from these areas. But I never saw any violence or anything like that. Everything was just real good.

Woman in the background: It sounds like it was controlled where they were.

Rittenberry: And the food in our mess hall was very very good except the first day. I had ridden a train all night and I was pretty hungry and I was looking forward to breakfast. So I went to the mess hall and I got a couple of eggs and sausage I think potatoes and milk. And when I cut my eggs open and tasted them the cows I mean the chickens had gotten into onions. Now our poultry came from the Netherlands the ___ they called it then. And the milk the cows had gotten into onions. So the eggs and the milk had a slight

Interviewer: Tasted like onion.

Rittenberry: And I didn't like that. But basically it was the food was always real good. And the cooks in the field we did not have to pull KP they had Germans hired to do KP.

Interviewer: Okay

Rittenberry: They didn't do the cooking we had a mess cook in every company but the Germans did the KP cleaning up everything. And toilet facilities were very primitive.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: We would dig a hole fix a little outhouse like thing and then there were no lights so we would run a white ribbon.

Interviewer: Oh

Rittenberry: From where we were all congregated out to that area. And then when we left we had to cover that up. And the forest over there you couldn't believe it you would walk through the forest and there were no limbs no leaves mostly pine and fir trees. But the forest was so clean they kept everything clean. And the burgermeister which is the mayor of the towns they or some person who worked for them would inspect every day they would walk the street in front of your house you clean your half of the street and the person on the other side did the same. You never saw garbage, trash anywhere just very clean. And you could see them plowing with cows they would have yolks on them like an ox. And they would plow with the cows then take them out and milk them and there were no mules over there they had horses big ole draft horses. They didn't have any mules as to why I don't know. But they were all just really nice.

Woman in the background: Were you the one that saw the pictures?

Interviewer: I did

Rittenberry: Then we went on to when I got back home as I said I went on to ___ and I worked a while then I came back home then I met my wife and got married. And how long was it it wasn't long

Woman in the background: Seven months

Rittenberry: Seven months we'd been married then I got the call back because of the buildup of the Berlin Crises. And so I was stationed at Fort Benning Georgia I was down there for I stayed for a while then when I got ready to get out I cleared post you turned everything in but I couldn't leave. So all of our group was shipped out and I heard that they sent a lot of them down to the coast of Miami. That's where they were bringing the ships in Cuban missile crises. So it got kind of touchy there for a while.

Interviewer: Right

Woman in the background: My daughter was due the 6th

Rittenberry: So I was when I went back I was attached I think they called 156,000 of our service personnel to come back in and help train the National Guard for military service. So they infiltrated us a few of us in each outfit to train the National Guard. So I was with the 391st engineer battalion combat. And then when I was ready to leave I extended my time so my daughter would be born there. So I went over to the 577th engineer battalion instruction and well before my unit left I was a mechanic. Then the CO of the National Guard outfit I was attached to he moved the ___ sergeant out he was a specialist field class and I was a specialist field class I got promoted to specialist field class. So I had changed my stripes over to sergeant stripes I was a mortar sergeant. Then when I extended and went over to the next company I had to take those stripes off and put the ___ five stripes on.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: And I don't know I was in there for several months until the time they got that straight.

Woman in the background: They actually let him out in August ___ but we didn't know that until I had made preparations to go. And we switched over to seeing an army doctor and that sort of thing and there was no other army doctors on hand and I had the baby was five weeks old when they did the six weeks checkup because the doctor was gone. It was all closing in on the time for him to be out so there was no one there that week the guys they had left they were all on alert. And he had turned everything he had to fight with turned it in and he couldn't leave.

Rittenberry: Before I was drafted things got tight for work and then I was looking for a job. And everywhere I would go they were still drafting people and everywhere I would go they would say well son we would hire you but ___ so they wouldn't hire me. So one day I think I'll just go join the army.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: So I went to Nashville and they did a physical and they kept us over night and they did everything but swore us in and some come back. So then I found I job so I didn't go back.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: So it was a little bit after that that I got the notice.

Interviewer: When you were drafted can you tell us a little bit about the testing you had to go through? I know you had a physical were there any other tests specifically that you remember that you had to pass? I know sometimes they do like IQ tests and tests to see where

Rittenberry: Yeah they did an aptitude test used that's how you wound up and I didn't know anything about automobiles. I could change a spark plug and a tire that was about all I knew about it. But you learn you know and being attached to an area where you could learn something. Everything has always been a challenge to me anyway you know. If something can't be fixed I'll usually figure out a way to fix it. But so I for the rest of my life now I still like to tinker with I keep the cars running and all that stuff you know.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: And still do all the carpentry work here whatever but I've been retired for what almost 11 years now. But it's been good life I've enjoyed it and I wouldn't take anything for the opportunity to be in the military. I've never thought much about it but if the circumstances would have been different I might have re-enlisted I didn't think about it.

Woman in the background: But the value of a dollar a mark was equal to 25 cents and everybody including is sister I think they would get help occasionally over there you know in Germany in terms of the value of the currency and I just ___ a little bit about the depression. I think it affected all of us everywhere.

Rittenberry: Well as you know or you may not know they did not rebuilt it until 1950 and then in 1985. It was a beautiful country ___ in combat luckily I wasn't in combat. Had I gone ____ and I feel real good about it I just have a good feeling about it.

Interviewer: That's nice to hear not everybody does.

Rittenberry: I do not like the idea that they cut the draft out. I think there's been deterioration in the amount of people. You know it taught you a lot of discipline.

Interviewer: Right

Woman in the background: He prefers to be doing something rather than sitting and watching a ball game and so he would have stayed busy. But to learn another field that you could have possibly worked in

Rittenberry: Growing up in construction now I started out I used to help my daddy when I was a little boy. He would work on the side when I was eight years old I would help him on a Saturday you know so I picked up the carpentry trade. And then as I got older and he had his own business in the summer months I worked for him. And I remember him telling me one time he was hanging a door said, he did everything with hand tools you didn't have power tools maybe a power saw was about all you had. And I would have whatever I knew what he needed next and I'd have it in my hand. And he turned around and said you need to let this boy hang your door. Oh no he might mess up something he said well how's he going to learn. But anyway it was real good.

Interviewer: Talking about being a little bit younger could you tell us a little bit about the memories that you have of World War II?

Rittenberry: Yes as I told you I was pretty young when they started Fort Campbell but we had blackouts in Clarksville and they flew around and dropped people said it was flour I don't know what it was probably lime or something. Anyway they would have blackouts and I remember we had this big radio a big Zenith radio it was short wave something new of course it had a light on it and they would always tell us on the radio or in the paper when we were going to have a blackout. And remember my mother saying okay it's getting dark put that door lid or that cup towel over that light and we could hear planes flying. And we could listen to the radio keep it real low.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: Yeah and you know being very young and not I couldn't read the paper at that age. But mother would read the paper see the headlines and then I was in school and you learned to read and you picked up on a lot of that stuff. But I do distinctly remember we've still got some of these old ration books. And I remember my dad would work and I believe he was, where was ___ from, Tupelo Mississippi. There was a shell loading plant and he was working down there and I got hurt and he had a car but he didn't have enough coupons to get gas so some of the guys gave him enough coupons to get enough gasoline to get home.

Woman in the background: A lot of swapping back then.

Rittenberry: And he came home to see about me. I wasn't hurt bad but I got cut on my arm pretty bad. And then after the war I remember him he went to there was a big boom after the war and they started building a lot of houses post war housing that was the there are a few of the subdivisions around Clarksville you will see some of those houses. And he went to Florida and worked and we were all in school at the time except my baby sister and he was going off so far and we weren't really up on leaving you know going so far away. But it didn't happen he said no we will stay here.

Interviewer: Do you remember I know you were very young but do you remember your family saying anything about whether or not they approved of the way that FDR was handling the war and domestic policies?

Rittenberry: No

Interviewer: I know you were young.

Rittenberry: No I don't. But I do remember he was well _____. And I remember when he died I was old enough then to remember when he died it was real mournful for our country. And that's when Truman came in and he was a good president. And we got the war ended after that you know. But there was a big boom you could feel it after the war ended. And then it wasn't too many years after that we got into Korea which was a bad thing.

Interviewer: Can you tell us what some of your memories of the Korean War did you have friends or community members that you knew that fought?

Rittenberry: No I had some friends that were there after the war they were not in it. I did have to work my dad had a guy working for him that was in the Second World War he lost his leg.

Interviewer: Wow

Rittenberry: And I remember when they would eat lunch at work and this little boy came by and he would stop every day and just talk to us. And before that Woodrow said was picking at him and said boy can you do this and he took his knife and stuck it in his leg. Well he did come no more he ran off down. He had a wooden leg from here down.

Interviewer: That's funny.

Rittenberry: He was injured in Germany.

Interviewer: Right

Woman in the background: Was they asked you the original question about FDR was your family of the opinion that he brought the country out of the

Rittenberry: Yes oh yes I do remember momma and daddy about the president has done good. But it wasn't so much the war that he did good he did good bringing the nation up.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: This reconstruction.

Interviewer: Do you know anybody that was a part of any of his programs like the CCC and the TVA in this area especially opened up a lot of jobs.

Rittenberry: No I didn't because I guess I was too young. I remember my mother talking about the CCCs because I remember when we'd be driving you'd see pine trees there are a few of them left on 41 here. But they'd grow the pine trees the ___ was and they'd rebuild the land

Woman in the background: The state parks a lot of those were.

Rittenberry: But his program for the what did they call it they didn't call it reconstruction but it put the people back to work. Rebuilding the infrastructure which is what our president now is talking about doing which it needs to be done but. Anyway we had the CCCs the conservation core and let's see what was that other one?

Interviewer: There was the WPA

Rittenberry: WPA the working people's organization. And I believe her daddy was a time keeper at that time.

Interviewer: Not here in Kentucky.

Rittenberry: And yeah he was pretty well liked by everybody. I don't remember ever hearing even though I was young ever hearing anybody ever say anything bad about him. It wasn't like it is today there wasn't so much politics. I remember more about President Truman because I was older.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: He was a no nonsense guy.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: A lot of people did not like him they said well what does he know about politics ____.

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: But he had they said he had a sign on his desk the buck stops here. He was a no nonsense guy. And a lot of people did not like him when he gave the order to drop the bomb _____ dropped the bomb on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. But had to do something you know. And it's all changed now you don't ever see it like that no more. But things do change but everything got better for the United States we became a super power of modern day. And we have a lot of other countries you know depending on us but of course we give them a lot of money too. But it's really been nice growing up in the United States. You go to another country and see the destruction you can appreciate it more.

Interviewer: Right do you remember when you were a kid being involved in anything like scrap metal drives and things like that?

Rittenberry: Oh yes we used to gather cigarettes were in packages not inboxes. And they had this aluminum paper like aluminum foil and we would get it and I remember we would wrap balls up that big around and we would take it to the drive. And there was an old man that came by our place a black man and he had a wagon with iron wheels on it from an old wheel barrel he had made himself. He would come by and he would buy glass, any kind of metal, copper, aluminum scrap. We cut the tops and bottoms out of our cans canned food we mashed them down. We kept the tops put them in it and mashed the can flat because it didn't take up room. And I was going to school at the Greenwood I don't know if y'all are familiar with it or not.

Interviewer: Yeah sure

Rittenberry: Greenwood School which is an administration building now.

Interviewer: Right over on Greenwood Avenue

Rittenberry: Right near the old high school which is condos now.

Interviewer: Yeah they are apartments.

Rittenberry: They had a statue Strawberry Alley they call it now which was a __ tree that has the rifle in the man's remember

Interviewer: Right

Rittenberry: Somebody stole it an all of that. They took that rifle out of his hand during war because they was afraid someone would put it in the drive. Clarksville had street cars at one time the old tracks are still in the streets down Madison Street up 10th Street up Franklin Street. Well I remember seeing them take all of that up for the cause. But last this old man would come by and he would sing a song any bottles any bones any rags today same old rag man coming your way. That was his little ditty and he had a little bell hanging on his little wagon. But everybody was doing something for the benefit of the country.

Interviewer: Do you know anyone during World War II or shortly thereafter that was involved with any kind of union organizing labor unions?

Rittenberry: No I do know that my father in later years joined a union as I did myself.

Interviewer: Right was there anyone in your neighborhood and I know you were from Clarksville but that because of their religion or maybe they were immigrates or anything like that people were hesitant to be around?

Rittenberry: No I don't know anything about that of course we didn't see many folks back then.

Woman in the background: What about the

Rittenberry: The Germans okay when I was a little boy we lived close to the railroad off of Franklin Street. And I would go up I saw these men working building a building. I'd go up there sit on the railroad and watch them you know. And I went home and told my mother she said where have you been I said I've been watching them men drive that wood building that building up there. I said I can't understand the people and it was years later I found out they were German prisoners.

Interviewer: Of wow right

Rittenberry: From Fort Campbell Camp Campbell but they would hire them out and they would send that money they made they would turn it into marks and send it back to their families. But they were working and they were talking and they were just real nice and hard workers. But I remember they were all large robust with blonde hair.

Interviewer: Right

Tape ended