

Dorothy Conner

Interviewer: What's your name I'm sorry.

Man in the background: What's your name mother?

Mrs. Conner: Dorothy Frances Conner

Interviewer: And you said your family were farmers during the great depression?

Mrs. Conner: Yes and my father lost the farm that he had bargained for.

Interviewer: How did you when did your family lose the farm about was it during the beginning of the great depression in the middle towards the end?

Mrs. Conner: Well I wasn't but in my teens like 13 and 14 there the years I remember.

Interviewer: What did your family do after they lost the farm?

Mrs. Conner: They had to move and they sold the place to someone else and he had to start sharecropping.

Interviewer: So it was a lot harder time for your family? Do you remember anything in particular or just?

Mrs. Conner: Well it was hard going it was hard to buy the medicine that us kids needed it was four boys and two girls and the girls were the oldest. I had a sister that was older than I was and I had a brother that was sick and his medicine was real expensive and I don't know how my daddy ever got the money to buy it but he always had his medicine when he needed it.

Interviewer: Did ya'll have to sacrifice meals or anything like that was there anything shortages that you remember after that that you didn't have before?

Mrs. Conner: Well it seemed that we had plenty to eat but maybe it wasn't what we needed you know what we always wanted or needed we had to raise as much as we could. Some things were given to us with clothes and all, my mother could sew and she could make them over for us.

Interviewer: So you were in your teenage years in 1939 or you were in your late teens around then?

Mrs. Conner: Not in 1939 I was in 1939 I was 21 years old.

Man in the background: Yes you were that's right.

Interviewer: Was your family aware of what was going on in Europe with Hitler and Germany and things like that?

Mrs. Conner: No

Man in the background: Yeh mother

Mrs. Conner: What was the question? I misunderstood.

Man in the Background: He wanted to know if your family knew about the war in Europe against Hitler.

Mrs. Conner: Oh yes I thought he said was my family from there.

Interviewer: I'm sorry, what did your family think about what was going on in Europe before Pearl Harbor?

Mrs. Conner: Well I had a brother that had his suitcase packed ready to come home and they bombed Pearl Harbor and he didn't get home until 47.

Interviewer: So was your brother in the military?

Mrs. Conner: Yes he joined the army in 39.

Interviewer: Did your family think before Pearl Harbor that the United States would be in the war or

Mrs. Conner: Well we didn't hear a whole lot about it except for the radio. We didn't have papers and things to read, but heard enough of it then and they thought that the United States would enter I know that.

Interviewer: What did your family think about FDR and the great depression before the war?

Mrs. Conner: Well they thought he was a good President but when was it Johnson that took his place?

Man in the background: No no Truman.

Mrs. Conner: They liked President Roosevelt.

Interviewer: They did? Did your family use any of the New Deal Programs that Roosevelt did? Any government benefits or anything like that or jobs or anything like that any of your brothers?

Mrs. Conner: No they didn't I didn't have anyone then except I had a brother in the Navy he was in the Navy and one was in the Army they are the only ones connected with the war.

Interviewer: Did you during the war did you do anything or did you stay at the house or were you working?

Mrs. Conner: Well back then I wasn't working I didn't go to work public work till 43 and then it wasn't connected with the government at that time.

Interviewer: What did you do?

Mrs. Conner: We were making shirts and then I don't know what year it was but we had a government contract and that was really bad to have to work for the government.

Man in the background: Go ahead tell the truth mother.

Mrs. Conner: We made shirts.

Man in the background: She worked for Gresham Shirt Company you might ask her that question.

Interviewer: So how was Gresham Shirt Company?

Mrs. Conner: That was Gresham Shirt Company. But they wasn't for the government then.

Interviewer: What did your co-workers back then think about the war?

Mrs. Conner: I didn't understand that.

Interviewer: What did the people that you worked with think about the war back then? Was it mostly women or?

Mrs. Conner: Well they didn't talk about it too much they didn't talk about it too much they didn't have boys old enough to go at that time and they didn't have the family here. They were they had some relatives in the north but they wasn't in the war and they gave everybody work that they could.

Man in the background: She's talking about the Gresham's it was privately owned.

Interviewer: Oh okay so you remember the rationing during the war?

Mrs. Conner: The

Interviewer: Rationing limiting on coffee and things like that?

Mrs. Conner: No

Man in the background: Do you remember rationing during the war mother? When you couldn't get

Mrs. Conner: Rations

Man in the background: You couldn't get certain things.

Mrs. Conner: Oh yeh we had we couldn't buy meat and sugar and coffee and we could get coupons for sugar and coupons for coffee. But you couldn't get meat bacon and things like that except when they would have it in the stores. The store shelves were practically empty and sometimes you could swap coupons with other people and get things that were necessary for you fro the family. And I don't know if this would be interesting but I had an uncle that said if you had money you could buy anything and my daddy met him at a grocery one day and he was in line for a pound of bacon he said Lawrence I'm mistaken I told you one day that if you had money you could buy anything. But this is one time I want bacon and I can't get it.

Interviewer: Did you know anyone that had a car during the war or did you have a car?

Mrs. Conner: No

Interviewer: You didn't know anybody that couldn't drive any?

Man in the background: Did ya'll have a car or did you know anybody that did have a car?

Mrs. Conner: Well I had to ride to work.

Man in the background: Ya'll had a car mother in 39.

Mrs. Conner: Yeh we had a car and during that time in 42 my husband worked at Fort building Fort Campbell and we had a car a truck a jeep. We might have had a jeep at that time cause he used it to work on the farm.

Man in the background: Couldn't buy tractors.

Interviewer: How difficult was it to get gas and tires for the car?

Mrs. Conner: Well it was rationed you had a hard time getting it and when you did they were real expensive the tires were. I don't remember the price of gas but I know the tires were high real expensive.

Interviewer: Did ya'll do any scrap metal drives like iron or anything like that for the government?

Mrs. Conner: No

Interviewer: No did ya'll buy any war bonds or know anybody that did?

Mrs. Conner: Not then we didn't buy any because we didn't have that kind of money.

Interviewer: Do you recall blue star or gold star mothers? Putting stars in there windows out in front of their house?

Mrs. Conner: I can't recall who any of them were.

Interviewer: Do you remember people doing that though? Putting stars on their windows even if you don't remember who it was.

Mrs. Conner: No maybe I didn't understand.

Man in the background: There were what color were the stars?

Interviewer: Blue and gold star.

Man in the background: Do you remember any blue or gold start mothers that put stars in the window?

Mrs. Conner: No I don't know cause I didn't get out very much then you know. My son was born in 41 and he was just 1 year old in 42 and we moved in the house with my mother and daddy and my husband worked at Fort Campbell at night and we were there at home we couldn't go out no where cause he had

the only transportation we had. We didn't have a phone and so I don't remember any of the mothers doing that.

Interviewer: What did your husband do at Fort Campbell?

Mrs. Conner: He drove what they call a pan moving dirt.

Interviewer: Did you know any people that service members that were killed during the war or injured during the war?

Mrs. Conner: I not in the

Man in the background: Uncle Bill got wounded.

Mrs. Conner: Yeh he was wounded several times he received the Purple Heart. He was a Staff Sargent and he crawled through a field and just as he got to the end where he could go under a fence he got shot but they got him to the hospital and they saved him. But he had a hole in his shoulder where they hit him that was real deep and all and then in 47 he got home.

Man in the background: Tell about Daddy's brothers.

Mrs. Conner: Whose

Man in the background: That went into the war daddy's brothers that went to the war.

Mrs. Conner: Every person went with my brother and my husbands had three brothers in the service and one was stationed in Greenland for a long time and he left there and went to Poland and when they drove him out of Poland he met a girl and all of her family was killed and later he told her if he got out and come back to the states he would bring her to the states if he had to marry her. And he did marry her cause her family was good to all of them that was stationed around close. And one boy was wounded and he came home and then the other one didn't come home until the war was over.

Interviewer: What services were they in?

Mrs. Conner: They were in the army.

Interviewer: Do you remember what they each did?

Mrs. Conner: No I did know but I've forgotten so much.

Interviewer: Man in the background: Well Uncle Jimmy cooked and the other two were in the infantry.

Mrs. Conner: Well

Man in the background: You remember that?

Mrs. Conner: I remember now that James the older brother did cook and he said they would save food back where they could have some I remember him saying that. And the other one we didn't hear from

him as much as they did the other one. But he would write we would get letters whenever we could but he didn't have much of writing he said.

Interviewer: Your son says you had two brothers that were in the Navy what did they do in the Navy?

Mrs. Conner: I really don't know one came out as soon as his time was up but the other one stayed in until 47 he was still in the Navy. And he was stationed off the coast of California and got to come home for his mother's funeral but my brother that was in the Army didn't get to come home he was in Maryland at that time and didn't get the message until a week later and then he came home.

Interviewer: How did ya'll learn about what was going on during the war? Did ya'll listen to the radio hear from friends, newspapers?

Mrs. Conner: We would listen to the radio as much as we could but the letters that they wrote you never knew when you was going to get one or nothing but that was the best way we heard from the family but we couldn't just heard much about the war about

Interviewer: What looking back on the war how would you place it during your life was it a good time, bad time some people think it was a good time coming out of the great depression and having money and look back on it well but what's your opinion on it as a whole?

Mrs. Conner: Well I think it was bad times for everybody to try to get back on their feet. You was down to the gritty gritty and it was hard getting back. And I was glad to go to public work in 43. I didn't make but \$16.40 a week but it would go further that \$50 now.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you remember that struck you as interesting or odd about the war?

Mrs. Conner: It well you could see so many people that come from the war wounded and that always bothered me to see somebody walking on crutches or maybe with a leg gone. And a lot of families were broken up because of the war I don't think it was it was a good time for it to end but not a good time for everybody to go through. When you loose everything its hard to get back.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to add or want to say?

Man in the background: Is there anything else you want to say mother?

Mrs. Conner: I would like to say that by him helping to build Fort Campbell we saved our money and we were able to buy a tractor and then later to buy cattle and then later to buy this farm in 1946. And we were glad for all of the boys to get home and we have been here ever since 1946 and I just wish that everybody could say the same thing.

Interviewer: Thank you