

Interviewer: Please state your name and your birthday.

Hickerson: Imogene Hickerson and my birthday is 5/13/29.

Interviewer: Okay and where did you and your family where did you grow up at?

Hickerson: Dickson County

Interviewer: Dickson Country and what were your parents doing to make a living during that time when you were growing up?

Hickerson: My father was a farmer and it was seven children in our family.

Interviewer: Was it boys and girls?

Hickerson: Boys and girls and my brother the oldest boy when he got out of high school graduated from Charlotte High School up here he decided he's join the National Guard you know to make a little money.

Interviewer: What was it like in Dickson County growing up during the depression years?

Hickerson: It was very hard we didn't go anywhere we didn't do anything extra except stay at home and help our mother and daddy.

Interviewer: So everyone was working on the farm?

Hickerson: Yeh

Interviewer: Did you have any extra to sell or anything or was it

Hickerson: Most of it was used on the you know on the family.

Interviewer: Making enough just for your own survival?

Hickerson: Yeh

Interviewer: And was there a lot of neighbors around you?

Hickerson: Right

Interviewer: Were ya'll

Hickerson: Doing the same thing.

Interviewer: Were ya'll helping one another as much as you could?

Hickerson: As much as we could.

Interviewer: And did your, your mom and dad they both worked on the farm?

Hickerson: On the farm my mother worked just like my father did.

Interviewer: Out in the fields?

Hickerson: Yeh cut wood one the field made sorghum molasses see we had to make everything we had to eat. So he grew everything on the farm and you know the sorghum, peanuts you know we'd have stacks of peanuts in the field drying out that's that we'd do in the wintertime pull those peanuts out when they dried out. You stacked them until they dried out.

Interviewer: Do you ever remember getting anything extra like did you ever have any kind of treats or anything like that?

Hickerson: No we didn't know what treats were no back then.

Interviewer: Were ya'll getting to go to school?

Hickerson: Uh huh

Interviewer: Did ya'll go to like a one room school kind of thing?

Hickerson: Well now our school my parents moved in this area when I was four years old so before when lived across the country here you know on another highway the boys and girls that were old enough to go to school did go to one room schools. But I never did because when we moved to this community and they bought a farm just below here why the school house then we might have had two or three grades in one room but we never had a one room.

Interviewer: Did they allow you to go home during harvest times and things like that?

Hickerson: My parents never asked us to be out of school for work.

Interviewer: So they wanted you to get your education.

Hickerson: They worked until we got home yeh.

Interviewer: Did all of you graduate high school?

Hickerson: Uh huh

Interviewer: How were you getting your news in like the late 30s and 40s did you

Hickerson: We didn't just from neighbor to neighbor.

Interviewer: Because you didn't have a radio or a newspaper?

Hickerson: I had a radio I wish I could remember I remember out neighbors coming in and sitting around and listening to the radio the first one we got. And of course there was no televisions.

Interviewer: Right

Hickerson: And that was just on Friday or Saturday night.

Interviewer: Well did you hear anything about the European what was going on there with Germany?

Hickerson: We did hear a little bit but we'd hear it like if we went to church you know someone would hear something and tell everybody at church.

Interviewer: So it could be a little older news and things like that?

Hickerson: Yeh right

Interviewer: Just bits and pieces whenever you could hear it. So what did you hear about Germany?

Hickerson: We were walking to church on Sunday night when Pearl Harbor was bombed. And we of course it was real scary to the kids you know because we just thought Pearl Harbor, they'll be over here by morning you know but now we know the distance better. We my brother was in the National Guard at that time when we heard about Pearl Harbor so it wasn't over two weeks till he was notified to come and they were going to send then off to train in a camp, because they may have to go and help see.

Interviewer: Right

Hickerson: So that was the first I really knew about war.

Interviewer: Did they tell you anything different at school or anything? Did they talk about it at school?

Hickerson: Oh they talked about it uh huh but I was not really that old to understand what I really heard about it I just knew my brother was gone and that he might have to go fight war.

Interviewer: Was anyone else in the community that you knew effected? You didn't know anyone else that was going to have to go?

Hickerson: No

Interviewer: Well did your brother actually get sent over?

Hickerson: Yes my brother went and he got sick with sinus trouble.

Interviewer: While he was in Europe or here?

Hickerson: No while he was in the states and they sent for my mother to come and father so a community man carried them to camp where he was to see him and of course he was just real sick with high fever. And they didn't think he would make it of course they didn't have penicillin at that time to fight meningitis with and that's that he had he had spinal meningitis from this sinus trouble. And so he just got worse and worse and worse they came home to see about the kids at home and they called my mother back and said they didn't think that he was going to make it. Well that didn't mean a lot to me because I was say like 10 years old you know I just knew that he was gone and that he was sick. But he died before she got there so that was really hard for my mother and daddy. Eighteen year old son you know to be carried off like that. Of course he was not the only one so they brought him back and a lot of the men come back with him of course we didn't have the funeral homes to support like they do now.

And so they put him down at my house down at St. Paul Road we lived on St. Paul Road and so I guess Dickson Funeral Home was there but that was the only one and maybe one in Erin or somewhere. But anyway daddy and momma wanted to bring him home so these boys that came home with him around the clock they stayed right by his casket the whole time. So they would stay and just do shift work you know so we got to know a lot of them and they were not from far off when we really got to know them they were from around here you know. But of course without telephones and anyway to get around we didn't know them.

Interviewer: Were all those men were they going to war too?

Hickerson: They were in camp with him.

Interviewer: Did you talk to any of them about how they felt about

Hickerson: Yeh we did of course I was the youngest one I had a brother younger than I was and he was younger and didn't know as much that was going on as I did but yeh my older brothers and sisters and parents talked to them quite a bit. Cause times was getting rough here.

Interviewer: Why was that?

Hickerson: You know the you know well I lost my words the we were fixing to go into the depression we were fixing to go into the depression. And times was just really rough of course the army buried my brother you know done all the expense of that.

Interviewer: Well what do you remember hearing throughout the war about how things were going?

Hickerson: Well we knew that's what was making us go through the depression over here was the war time over there. We couldn't get sugar we couldn't get a lot of things was rationed and we always had sugar we were poor but we always had sugar on our table until that time come. So I remember my mother made sweet ketchup you know sweet tomato ketchup and I remember when she couldn't make it she couldn't get the sugar to make it why we used molasses on our bean to make them sweet I mean we were that hooked on sweetening our beans. So when she told us how to do it you know. But yeh they were very much at each others throat over there.

Interviewer: I guess you heard about that kind of at church and everything to through the news?

Hickerson: Right

Interviewer: Did was there anything else you remember not being able to get having to go without?

Hickerson: Gasoline we just couldn't we had to walk from here to Charlotte to get our groceries. We couldn't afford you know we didn't have gasoline to put in the car so I remember that. And we had a peddler that come down by the house that would bring groceries by farm families and so that's how we got a lot of groceries. We would swop eggs for groceries momma would give us a little extry few eggs to get bubble gum and stuff with you know. Times were hard.

Interviewer: So ya'll were kind of trading for a lot of the things you were getting?

Hickerson: Yeh he was a good ole man he would trade with us.

Interviewer: Do you remember now I'm oozing my words did your parents have to go anywhere else did they get a chance to get some new work with a lot of the industry or anything? Ya'll still farmed?

Hickerson: No they had to pay for the farm through farming you know.

Interviewer: They had to keep working just to pay for the farm?

Hickerson: Uh huh

Interviewer: Well do you remember anything about the town of Charlotte being affected by the war?

Hickerson: Yes you it just almost went broke you know cause they couldn't sell anything cause no one had money. They just Charlotte just was dead.

Interviewer: Just because of the lack of things for everyone.

Hickerson: Money that people had that lived around here of course we didn't have any industry over there either.

Interviewer: Right well what about hearing about the end of the war in Europe? Did you hear about Germany finally surrendering?

Hickerson: Yes that was a really good day for us to hear we thought well the war will surely be over soon but of course I had already lost my brother but I had two more to go.

Interviewer: To more brothers that went.

Hickerson: Not that not to that they went to the other.

Interviewer: The Korean War?

Hickerson: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So how did you hear about the war being over in Europe?

Hickerson: I heard it through someone at church told my dad and of course when daddy knew it he told my mother. Of course they were afraid their children would be called see and it was it was a joyous thing for us to hear.

Interviewer: So you're happy that the war's over then. Did you hear anything about the concentration camps and things like that?

Hickerson: Oh yes

Interviewer: Did you hear about them the same way?

Hickerson: Uh huh

Interviewer: What did you find out about those?

Hickerson: Well we would always find out the bad things you know the worst things. And they were most of those camps like that were mean to the other side you know and beating the soldiers and whipping them and just very very mean to them.

Interviewer: Did you hear about anything with the Jews and things like that?

Hickerson: I don't remember what I hear about the Jews.

Interviewer: You don't what about Truman what about Franklin Roosevelt did you feel like he did, did you hear a lot of good things about him throughout the war?

Hickerson: Well throughout the war yeh and I guess he did as good as he could during the war.

Interviewer: Did you feel like he was trying to help your family?

Hickerson: Well I'm gonna tell you at the time when your poor and you don't have anything you think of everybody else being in the same shape you know around here right there. Because everybody was in the same shape right around here. We knew he couldn't help everybody but we just wanted him to help peace so our boys could come home.

Interviewer: Well what about the Truman deciding to drop the bombs in Japan did you hear about them?

Hickerson: Yeh

Interviewer: What did you hear about that?

Hickerson: He wanted to and we were afraid that Japan would then take retaliation and come over here see.

Interviewer: So your community ya'll were a little nervous about him doing that?

Hickerson: Yeh right

Interviewer: Well how did you feel after they dropped the bombs in Germany I mean Japan and decided to surrender? Did you hear about that through the church and

Hickerson: Yeh

Interviewer: What did you hear what did you hear about that?

Hickerson: Well we just heard that it had been done we knew they was talking about it but then we heard that it had been done. So we were frightful cause we knew if they did one thing one place they'd come back fire back again at the other.

Interviewer: Did you hear about how devastating it was in Japan?

Hickerson: Yeh

Interviewer: They talked about how bad it was?

Hickerson: Yeh

Interviewer: And then I guess you heard that Japan had surrendered and the war was over?

Hickerson: Right

Interviewer: What did everyone in your family and your community what did everyone?

Hickerson: Everyone was just rejoicing and talking about you know wonder how long it will be before the boys get home. They lost they lost about 20 of that infantry that my brother was in boys that lived right around here.

Interviewer: After you met all of them did your family try to keep up with that group of guys?

Hickerson: We did.

Interviewer: Did you do any letter writing?

Hickerson: Letter writing and just no telephone but you go to the corn mill to grind your grain you always meet up on somebody that you can talk to ask about so and so's boy. Well you know a lot of time they would already be buried. So it was just a bad thing.

Interviewer: Well what did you learn from the letters? Were they writing you letters too?

Hickerson: Not me as an individual because I was still too young for that.

Interviewer: But you family?

Hickerson: My family my daddy and momma kept in touch with their parents and stayed up on their condition you know a lot of them were dead though.

Interviewer: Well so in kind of looking back WWII was a pretty difficult time for your family.

Hickerson: Very

Interviewer: And the community as a whole.

Hickerson: Yeh seemed like that hurt worse than of them.

Interviewer: Really?

Hickerson: Yeh hurt worse than any of them. I guess as time grew on they got these bombs and different things you know to fight with. But when it first started they just went with a little ole gun under their arms.

Interviewer: Well do you have anything else you want to?

Hickerson: I've got a picture of my brother the day he left (tape ended).