

Interviewer: Go ahead and give your name and when you were born, again, I'm sorry.

Ms. Swanson: Mildred Anderson Swanson, born July 10, 1920.

Interviewer: And we can just say that you were 9 years old when the Great Depression broke out; do you remember anything that happened?

Ms. Swanson: No, I do remember my parents thinking that it would be a lot cheaper if we could live on a farm. So my dad bought forty acres and we moved out there. Had a sister and a brother, and we just stayed there one year.

Interviewer: Where was the farm at?

Ms. Swanson: North of Sioux City. And we stayed there one year and it really didn't...work either, -- my dad tried to keep his job at the (World?) Paint and Wallpaper company and drive back and forth. And it was too much so we moved back to town. We moved a lot, we rented and we moved.

Interviewer: What did your dad do during the Great Depression?

Ms. Swanson: He worked for a wallpaper and paint company. He was in a wallpaper department.

Interviewer: And he did that through the whole time?

Ms. Swanson: Yes, he did it through the whole time; he kept his job. But we moved a lot. We always rented and we kept -- every year we tried to rent something cheaper.

Interviewer: But just around Sioux City?

Ms. Swanson: In Sioux City.

Interviewer: How - and you were 19 -- yeah, 19 when WWII broke out in 1939?

Ms. Swanson: Uh-huh, 19.

Interviewer: And do you remember any of the threats of the Nazi Germany and Pearl Harbor? I'm sorry, let me stop the question. How old were you in 1939 and were you aware of any political developments in the world, as of Nazi Germany and Japan?

Ms. Swanson: No.

Interviewer: You weren't?

Ms. Swanson: Not that I can remember.

Interviewer: Did you believe the period before the attack on Pearl Harbor, that the U.S. would be drawn into it?

Ms. Swanson: I don't remember...anything about that.

Interviewer: Where were you when Pearl harbor hit?

Ms. Swanson: We were living in a rented house and we had a son who was born in..let's see, the war broke out in '41..and our first son was born in '42 and when he was a baby we packed up our little Ford, took some belongings and we went to California. And Norman worked in the shipyards at Vallejo, California for two years before he joined the Navy.

Interviewer: How did you feel when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Ms. Swanson: Sick. Just like everybody did, very surprised and just sick. I sorta knew what was coming then.

Interviewer: Did you feel that FDR, that supportive of FDR in the handling of domestic and foreign affairs, that – was he doing a good job, or...?

Ms. Swanson: You know, as much as I can remember, I did. No, I don't remember.

Interviewer: Political, or...?

Ms. Swanson: No, I was too concerned about a husband, and a baby and the war.

Interviewer: Before the war, during the New Deal Programs, do you remember any of the national (indiscernible) administrations, the civil works administrations, Social Security, WPA, do you remember any of those management groups that were going on?

Ms. Swanson: No.

Interviewer: So after you moved to California, was life different for you?

Ms. Swanson: Sure.

Interviewer: How was it being a military wife?

Ms. Swanson: Of course, the first two years that we lived there, he just worked at the shipyards and he worked nights and we had one child. It was different, except that a lot of relatives, close relatives and some not-so-close, moved out there also, and we all lived in this same kind of a

trailer park at Napa, California and they would all drive to work together and come home together. And we would have nice get-togethers.

Interviewer: The rationing during WWII, was it different for you, being a military wife, or was it the same?

Ms. Swanson: No, I think it was the same. I can remember when Norm was shipped overseas, I drove from San Diego to Erie, Colorado, where my mother lived, and had to get a couple retread tires, I think that 's what they call them, before I could drive them.

Interviewer: what were they?

Ms. Swanson: Then you had to have...they rationed us the tires then, just like they did sugar and everything else. And when we lived in San Diego, when he was in the Navy, at the base, we would drive down to Tijuana to get gas, because we couldn't...get much gas.

Interviewer: Was that a known thing to do?

Ms. Swanson: Yes, it was a common thing to do.

Interviewer: It wasn't rationed in Tijuana?

Ms. Swanson: No. They'd let you in, you could fill up, and go back home.

Interviewer: Did your family members feel seriously deprived for shortages of butter, sugar, gasoline and shoes?

Ms. Swanson: You know, probably at the time, maybe we were, but we got by and it didn't seem to affect us too much.

Interviewer: You just talked about the gasoline, going down to Tijuana, did you feel there was any other black markets for scarce items?

Ms. Swanson: No.

Interviewer: Just the gas?

Ms. Swanson: That's all we (indiscernible) for. And not often.

Interviewer: Did you participate in any scrap drives to collect iron, aluminum or whatever?

Ms. Swanson: No.

Interviewer: Did you buy war bonds or ever see the entertainment at a war bond rally?

Ms. Swanson: No.

Interviewer: Were you working during the war?

Ms. Swanson: No.

Interviewer: You just stayed home?

Ms. Swanson: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you recall the Blue Star and Gold Star mothers and the stickers in the front doors?

Ms. Swanson: No, I don't. I can't recall that.

Interviewer: Did you know service members who were injured or killed in the war?

Ms. Swanson: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Did you have telephone service and radio?

Ms. Swanson: I'm sure we did.

Interviewer: How did you feel knowing he was in the military but yet not going over there – were you afraid that he would have to go over there?

Ms. Swanson: We knew that sooner or later that he would have to go, but it was sort of a relief when he went after the war was over.

Interviewer: But you were always worried that he would go over during...?

Ms. Swanson: Yes.

Interviewer: and what would he have been doing if he had gone over?

Ms. Swanson: He was in ship repair.

Interviewer: So he would have stayed on the ships?

Ms. Swanson: Yes.

Interviewer: Many Americans look back on the war as the best years of their lives despite the sacrifices that they made during the shortages. How would you feel about that?

Ms. Swanson: No, I couldn't say that. Wasn't the best.

Interviewer: How do you look at the war years more than 50 years later?

Ms. Swanson: You know, I don't feel that I was deprived of a lot and I think that I was very fortunate because he was probably over there less time than a lot of men.

Interviewer: How long was he over there?

Ms. Swanson: I think he was only on that that ship about ten months, or eleven.

Interviewer: Many of you reported a feeling of psychic well-being because everyone had jobs after 10 years of the Great Depression and the nation was united behind the war effort. Do you remember any of that?

Ms. Swanson: No, I don't.

Interviewer: Was there anyone in your neighborhood, or acquaintances, whose loyalty to you was suspect?

Ms. Swanson: No.

Interviewer: Living around the military base, you probably knew a lot of military wives. Did you have that kind of acquaintances with the military?

Ms. Swanson: We didn't live on the base itself. We had an apartment that was built in a former lumber yard right across from the base. But we did go to a church where there were other servicemen and their wives and we made very good friends with a couple couples that we've kept in touch with all through the years.

Interviewer: How long have you been a Christian?

Ms. Swanson: Let's see, I became a Christian in 1939.

Interviewer: And did that help you get through the war easier?

Ms. Swanson: Oh, sure.

Interviewer: And your family as well?

Ms. Swanson: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you feel especially proud to be a patriotic American during those years?

Ms. Swanson: I think I probably did. I don't remember too much about the patriotism part, but I'm sure I did.

6

Interviewer: Did you feel that there was a unity between fellow Americans during that time, since the...?

Ms. Swanson: Yes, uh-huh.

Interviewer: So you say everyone felt sick after Pearl Harbor? Do you remember a kind of unity, that people stuck together?

Ms. Swanson: Yes.

Interviewer: So people stuck together? Kind of like the same that happened with September 11<sup>th</sup>?

Ms. Swanson: Yes, uh-huh.

Interviewer: Thank you

<end of interview>