

Interviewer: Ms. Mary do you mind telling me your full name?

Mary: Everybody won't believe it but Mary C the letter C Byrn.

Interviewer: And when were you born Ms. Mary?

Mary: Oh goodness well I thought I was better oh you mean my birthday?

Interviewer: Yes ma'am.

Mary: Isn't this terrible.

Interviewer: Well if you remember later tell me okay.

Mary: Okay

Interviewer: Were you born here in Tennessee?

Mary: Yes I was

Interviewer: Okay

Mary: And I can't tell you to save my life. I can tell you more about

Interviewer: When it comes I you remember because I know as we've sat here and talked things have come to you you know when you're not nervous and it comes to you. So don't worry about it okay. Now you told me earlier that your husband got drafted and you were living in Jackson Tennessee.

Mary: That's right and he wanted me to stay there could he could picture us there in a home. So I lived back two little boys in Jackson Tennessee.

Interviewer: During World War II.

Mary: Right

Interviewer: How old were your babies?

Mary: The older one I think they must have been about two years and four years.

Interviewer: They were little.

Mary: They were little and they missed their daddy well the little one didn't the younger one didn't but the older one did.

Interviewer: Really

Mary: Yeah

Interviewer: How did you get by when he was away?

Mary: Well we lived he was a railroad grade man.

Interviewer: Okay

Mary: Worked on the railroad and of course he was wounded badly during the war. And so he couldn't that kind of work when he came home. But we were fortunate enough that we bought a business. He loved cars and all that kind of stuff and we bought that and I worked in that too with him and got a sitter for my children.

Interviewer: During the war how did you make a living?

Mary: Well I didn't I don't I can't remember but I made it fine. Somebody helped me I guess.

Interviewer: Okay that's fine. Do you remember rationing during World War II?

Mary: Yes I do.

Interviewer: What was that like?

Mary: But I can't well it didn't bother me.

Interviewer: Really

Mary: Because you got enough stuff that you didn't need and the little I had two boys. And I can't remember being mad about it or unhappy about it or anything.

Interviewer: Did you find when you went to the store let's say you have your ration coupon and you go to the store was there plenty to get at the store or did you have to wait for more to come in?

Mary: I don't think so I don't remember ever having to go back.

Interviewer: Okay

Mary: I lived in Jackson Tennessee at that time.

Interviewer: Did you drive?

Mary: Oh yeah I could drive. Oh I'd been driving before I married even.

Interviewer: Really

Mary: Yeah I could drive. And I had wonderful neighbors I lived in Jackson. Well what was the name of it? But anyhow there were a lot of houses.

Interviewer: In a subdivision?

Mary: Yeah and I had friends in there that I could call on to keep my children if I need to go to the grocery store. And my parents and family lived here in Tennessee I mean in Dickson Tennessee.

Interviewer: Okay

Mary: And my mother would send down one of my sisters when they got out of school on Friday and they would stay with me until Sunday evening. And then I put them back on the to go back home because my children didn't want to stay with just anybody.

Interviewer: I see I understand. Did you make your children's clothes or did you buy them?

Mary: Oh I bought them. I'm not a seamstress.

Interviewer: Okay so you said you lived in a neighborhood and everybody helped were there a lot of other women in the neighborhood whose husbands had gone in the service?

Mary: Yes I'm sure there was but I had friends just close around even my children knew them and they would stay with without crying if I needed I didn't leave them unless I needed to go to the grocery store or something.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: People were very nice.

Interviewer: Well that's good to hear that you helped each other during the war.

Mary: Right

Interviewer: Did you have a hard time finding gasoline for your car?

Mary: Well I was careful.

Interviewer: I see

Mary: And I don't think I did because I had those two small boys and you just don't do much when you I had two of them. And the youngest one was really young I can't remember how old he was.

Interviewer: Yeah so you kept house.

Mary: Well my mother they lived in Dickson and I lived in Jackson Tennessee.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: And one of my sisters my mother would put them and they would come down and stay the weekend so I could get out and do things.

Interviewer: That was nice.

Mary: It was.

Interviewer: How many sisters did you have?

Mary: Let's see Helen and Nell and Betsy and Ilene.

Interviewer: Four sisters did you have any brothers?

Mary: No I did not. He had died when he was a little fellow and I can't even remember him or anything.

Interviewer: Okay you had four sisters did they marry

Mary: I was the oldest of the four.

Interviewer: I see

Mary: But they oh yeah that tickled them to death to get to they'd ride a bus.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Mary: To Jackson from Dickson and catch a cab and come out to my house.

Interviewer: That was a big adventure.

Mary: It was

Interviewer: Yeah

Mary: It was nice. My mother was marvelous and my husband's mother was too. And she would come she had her own car and she would come if I got into something I couldn't do without the children.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: And she'd come down and stay a night or two. I did fine and it's a miserable time to be there in the war.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: But the little boys were small enough that I had the best neighbors. I lived in oh where there's a lot of houses.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: And everybody you know.

Interviewer: Were you ever afraid there might be someone coming with a telegram or did were you ever nervous about the phone? Did you have a telephone?

Mary: Yes I did.

Interviewer: Okay were you ever nervous about the phone being bad news or something during the war?

Mary: Well it was scary.

Interviewer: Okay

Mary: I had those two little boys.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am.

Mary: Two babies actually.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am.

Mary: And he was wounded and

Interviewer: How did you find out he got wounded?

Mary: Well the army took care of that. They were very I don't know they took care of that to bring the news to me.

Interviewer: I imagine it scared you.

Mary: It's scary yes cause I didn't know how bad he was which he was pretty bad. He was through the stomach and he was young he couldn't have made it we were both pretty young.

Interviewer: Yeah

Mary: And so but he got well

Interviewer: Good

Mary: Come home they let him come home and but he couldn't do he was a railroad grade man.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: But he couldn't do that anymore. That he just couldn't he wasn't healthy enough to do that. That's pretty hard work catching a you've seen them haven't you on the railroad. Come by and catching that well he just couldn't do that.

Interviewer: Where was he when he got wounded was he in France.

Mary: Jackson Tennessee oh

Interviewer: Where was he when he was was he in France?

Mary: Yeah he was in the war.

Interviewer: Okay

Mary: But I had wonderful neighbors you couldn't have asked I guess people were more I don't know how they are now but I had the nicest I lived in where there was a lot of houses what do you call that?

Interviewer: I think it's a neighborhood.

Mary: Okay

Interviewer: Yes ma'am

Mary: And my next door neighbors I could knock on the wall.

Interviewer: They were that close?

Mary: That close

Interviewer: Did you live in an apartment building or were you in a house?

Mary: No it was I had my own house.

Interviewer: I see

Mary: But there were others built right on it they had theirs too.

Interviewer: So you had electricity and a phone?

Mary: Oh yes

Interviewer: All those things. Do you remember back then they had some substitutions like margarine sis you remember getting margarine was white and you had to mix it?

Mary: I can't I don't remember that.

Interviewer: Okay they had Rex Jelly.

Mary: Oh yeah they had rationing.

Interviewer: Yeah

Mary: But I can't remember it bothered me hardly any.

Interviewer: Well that's fine that's fine. So when he came back home I'm sure you helped him get healthy again.

Mary: Yes

Interviewer: And then what did he do after he got well?

Mary: Well he couldn't do what he had done before.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: He was a railroad grade man before he went in the army.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am.

Mary: Well what did we of course he got what do they call it he was given so much.

Interviewer: Was it like a compensation for an injury?

Mary: Yes I guess that's the word. And I can't rammer how much that was but he could not work on a railroad anymore.

Interviewer: So he had to find something else to do.

Mary: Yeah and he had to find another job.

Interviewer: Did he go to college or did he use the GI bill?

Mary: No he went to school.

Interviewer: He did.

Mary: They paid for his schooling. Now he was smart he even if he hadn't had but he got a what

Interviewer: The GI bill?

Mary: Huh

Interviewer: The GI bill did that

Mary: I guess it was.

Interviewer: Okay and he went to school.

Mary: Well of all things I can't tell you but he was hurt pretty badly.

Interviewer: Yeah so he went to school and then do you remember if he used that schooling to find another job?

Mary: I guess he did. We lived in Jackson Tennessee and that's a big nice that's a nice place. He was a railroad grade man of course he couldn't ever do that anymore.

Interviewer: Right

Mary: And well he went to work he went to work parts cars. A man hired him and of course he got a what do they call it he's hurt so bad the government.

Interviewer: Yes

Mary: I can't think of the word.

Interviewer: You're doing fine.

Mary: Well

Interviewer: So he

Mary: He had that see and we could have lived on it but we'd have had to been very very careful.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am.

Mary: And then

Interviewer: His benefits.

Mary: Yeah benefits.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am

Mary: And but he got that job but he liked parts and he got a job with a oh they didn't have parts. They had them but not that wasn't the main thing that they had.

Interviewer: You had said something about cars.

Mary: Yeah now when he worked for himself when we got up that's what we had we had a auto parts store.

Interviewer: I see oh wonderful.

Mary: Oh he loved it he liked it.

Interviewer: And you helped him?

Mary: I did the book work.

Interviewer: You did the book work.

Mary: And the boys were little boys but they were in school so. I have a my oldest son is a nuclear engineer.

Interviewer: Is he really.



Mary: Oh yeah with his Ph.D. doctorate. But O'Neal the young one he's just a plain ole boy. He might not like me saying that.

Interviewer: Well we need plain ole boys too don't we?

Mary: But he got a job in a parts store because they like parts their dad you know.

Interviewer: Isn't that funny how that runs in families' things that you like.

Mary: Well boys just liked that.

Interviewer: Yeah

Mary: I did too I did the bookwork so.

Interviewer: Yeah

Mary: We was all involved in it. Am I telling the right things?

Interviewer: All I ask is that you tell what you remember yes ma'am.

Mary: Okay

Interviewer: It's nice that your family worked together like that.

Mary: We did and my mother we lived in Jackson Tennessee and my mother I had sisters I was the oldest of so many girls. And she would send one of my sisters down every weekend to stay with my children so I could get out and do what I had to do.

Interviewer: That made a big impression I can tell that was very important to you.

Mary: It did the boys loves them because they knew them and they was.

Interviewer: It's nice that your family helped you out like that.

Mary: Right

Interviewer: It sure is. Well Ms. Mary thank you so much for your time and for letting us hear your story.

Mary: Well I don't feel like I talked too much.

Interviewer: No not at all do you happen to remember what your birthday is or what year you were born?

Mary: I knew it September the I can't tell you. Isn't that awful I've never

Interviewer: It's okay

Mary: But he had to be in the hospital for a good long while he was wounded in the stomach.

Interviewer: Did you get to see him in the hospital?

Mary: Oh yeah

Interviewer: Well that's good.

Mary: Oh

Interviewer: You went and saw him.

Mary: I had sisters that's younger than me and my mother would send down a sister on the bus.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am.

Mary: To keep the children because the least one wouldn't stay with anybody hardly except my sisters. And she'd send them down on Friday afternoon and they would catch a oh what do you.

Interviewer: A taxi?

Mary: Yeah I couldn't think of that word and come out to the house we lived in

Interviewer: Subdivision.

Mary: My husband was a railroad grade man until he was wounded he couldn't do that anymore.

Interviewer: Well Ms. Mary I sure appreciate your time thank you so much.

Mary: Oh well I got startled everywhere.

Interviewer: You did great thank you so much.