

Interviewer: Okay today we are here with Nancy Robinson. I would like to say thank you for letting me do this interview on behalf of myself and Dr. Zieren's class. I'm just going to ask you simple questions we've talked about some of this stuff before anything that you feel like sharing go ahead and you know just say it. If there's something you don't feel like talking about no problem we can avoid that and go to another subject. First off how long have you lived in Clarksville?

Robinson: All of my life with a few breaks with military moving. But I was born and raised in Clarksville.

Interviewer: Where at?

Robinson: Actually I was born out in St. B but I moved to New Providence when I was five years old. My family moved to New Providence and I grew up went to school there went to Clarksville High School which was the only high school.

Interviewer: You said you moved when you were five.

Robinson: Uh huh

Interviewer: What year was that do you remember?

Robinson: Well I was born in 34 so I guess that would have been 41.

Interviewer: Forty-one okay. What did your parents do?

Robinson: My mother was a homemaker my father had a grocery store.

Interviewer: During WWII, it might be hard now for you to remember some of this, but when they started doing the rationing for WWII how did that affect you know your family your dad with the store things like that?

Robinson: Well there were always those that thought they deserved more than others. And they were always for him to give them to let them have a little more sugar than they were supposed to have or can milk was big thing then for the public. For us it wasn't because we had our own cow but gasoline we learned to walk. We had a car but we really learned to walk because of the gasoline. Of course he had the little gas station there also.

Interviewer: Let's go to December 7, 1941. Do you remember hearing the news

Robinson: Yes I do

Interviewer: About Pearl Harbor? Where did you hear about it?

Robinson: From my mother. My brothers and sister and I had been out playing that day and we came in and she was praying. And we didn't know what had happened to make her cry as she was. And she told us then that the Japanese, which mean nothing to me then I had Japan was nothing, and it became very large in our minds after that had bombed Pearl Harbor. Well I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was but if it was big enough to make my mother cry like she was crying I knew it had to be important. And then we learned as each day went by how important it was and all of the lives that were lost. Not to count the

ships the material goods that was lost. But it seemed like the biggest thing in her mind as she brought into us children was the deception that had happened while with President Roosevelt. That they were sitting with him talking peace and all the time they were there killing our people and theirs.

Interviewer: How did your parents feel about President Roosevelt and his administration? Did they ever talk politics when the kids were around?

Robinson: My mother did. I don't remember much about my father talking about it but my mother idolized President Roosevelt. And if he stood on his head or if he rode horseback stripped stark naked she thought it was alright although she was a devout Christian. But whatever President Roosevelt did was for our best interest and that we should support that interest in our prayers and trying to live the best conservative life that we could and helping our fighting men.

Interviewer: You said your mom heard it so she heard it on the radio so you did have a radio at your house?

Robinson: Yes we did we had a little radio wasn't very big and the sound wasn't very well as I remember because we used to huddle around the radio on Saturday Night to listen to the Grand Ole Opry. That was a big thing then but if President Roosevelt was going to speak there was silence.

Interviewer: That shot the evening for the Grand Ole Opry?

Robinson: Well it shot everything if he was going to speak. The minute that radio came to the table an extension cord up over your head to plug it in. We had overhead lights and sometimes I remember her putting the churner in the middle of the table because the cord wouldn't reach. And everybody listened when President Roosevelt was speaking.

Interviewer: It was a Sunday when Pearl Harbor was hit did you when you, your brothers, sisters and family members when you went back to school was there anybody a discussion at school with the teachers or anything like that going on?

Robinson: The only thing that I remember about that was that I was afraid to go to school because I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was. I didn't know how far away I was from Pearl Harbor and I remember our teachers talking about that we were safe in the school that it was okay to be there that we weren't in danger of being bombed.

Interviewer: Let's talk a little about your brothers and your sisters. How many brothers did you have?

Robinson: Two brothers

Interviewer: And sisters?

Robinson: One sister

Interviewer: What was were you a really close family with your brothers and sister?

Robinson: Yes we were. My older brother wasn't so much into it as my little brother was. But my little brother was he kind of took mother's philosophy I guess as we all did in those Japs better be careful

better be careful. And he was so glad when they started building Camp Campbell because now we those Japs. Now I still didn't know where Pearl Harbor was but I figured if we were going to have all of those soldiers there they couldn't get to me.

Interviewer: You told me one time before about something your brother did with an old wooden cheese box. You want to talk about that again?

Robinson: My mother prayed for Hitler and whenever we would have our evening prayers and she insisted that we pray for Hitler but we did it only because she said we had to. But my brother hatted Hitler and we would get cheese in a wooden box and so he took those wooden boxes and he built himself a gallows and then he cut out a figure and painted it to make it look like Hitler. And at least once a day he hung Hitler that was all there was to it he was going to get rid of that dude whatever it took to do it. But it was a big thing for him that was really something because and he didn't just want to just do it secretly he wanted all the family there when he hung Hitler because Hitler was going to die. And if he had anything to do with it he was going to. But he had that little figure with that mustache on Hitler and then a hair hanging down over his eyes and he would hang Hitler.

Interviewer: Let's go for a minute back to rationing and the fact that your father owned a grocery store. Was, and a gas station attached, was this a central location for people to bring back certain items say you know the rubber from an old tire, grease that they used for cooking like that? Was your father did they bring it to his store for him to take back to a certain location or was it just something they all knew where to go with this stuff?

Robinson: I don't remember anything about that I do know that we had been extravagant before that with the amount of lard that we used. And my daddy used to take when we would kill hogs and ring that lard from it that he would take that someplace but I don't know where he took it. But it was to go towards the war effort.

Interviewer: You said they started building Camp Campbell did your mom or anyone in your family have the blue or gold stars put in the windows?

Robinson: No we didn't have.

Interviewer: Any of your neighbors or anything like that?

Robinson: I remember a neighbor having the gold star a very close friend and her son was killed. And I remember the gold star mothers but we didn't have that.

Interviewer: The community you lived in you said in New Providence how did it affect the people in the community when the people you went to church with others you walked past everyday going on your way to school and what not. When they left to go off to the war if they were old enough how did that affect the community as a whole?

Robinson: Unity especially if you knew someone particularly that was going off to war. This really brought the community together in unity and prayer and so forth. It didn't matter if it was money or if it was food that was needed we had to support our fighting men that's just the way we were raised.

Interviewer: Tell me another story that whenever you heard the planes fly over or the trucks coming.

Robinson: Well my brother was learning his Morse code he was in the Boy Scouts and he was learning Morse code. So when we'd hear the planes at night in the summertime we would go out and spread a blanket out and lie down on the ground and he'd use his flashlight to flash those planes. I doubt that they really saw it but they may have but that was his way of saying we're here for you.

Interviewer: Was there anybody back into a community level was there anybody in your community that people looked at a little different for any reason? Say they had a German nationality or an Italian nationality? Did anyone have any ill feeling toward anyone like that that you can remember?

Robinson: I don't remember any adverse feelings there but we had Jewish families in Clarksville and we were very protective of them. We just felt like we had to smile at them even if you didn't want to or to say good morning because they were Jewish and their people were being treated so badly. And we knew about that our mother kept us informed about how the Jews were being mistreated. And that was another thing that bothered my brother so very much because we would pray for the safety of the Jewish and then she would turn around and pray for Hitler. No that didn't go he didn't like that a bit but he did it he went along with what she said do. But I don't remember anybody being discriminated against because of national origin.

Interviewer: This is a little bit different question here for you. The time that you were growing up WWII era and obviously you went through the Korean War and the Vietnam War as well how would you relate the feelings of people in WWII and Korea to the way the people have a patriotic feeling now today is it was it more of a patriotic feeling back then or do you think it's about that same that we had after September 11th?

Robinson: I think it's about the same for September 11th but not for Vietnam.

Interviewer: Right

Robinson: Not for Vietnam at all. Of course I was older then but everything was patriotic you know you wanted in some way to show your patriotism as well as your support and your sympathy for those that were under attack. And then Vietnam was such an unpopular war though my patriotism was high because my husband was over the fighting in that war. And I just it wasn't a question of whether he should be there or not the situation was there. And because he felt it was his duty to be there.

Interviewer: During the time that WWII was going on 1941 and beyond that do you remember ever the schools ever organizing or the church groups ever organizing say an aluminum drive things of that nature or drives to sell war bonds?

Robinson: Yeah we bought saving stamps that was the big thing in grammar school to buy the saving stamps. And it was such an honor to start filling up that book and filling up that book. You saved every penny you could find one on the ground always counted.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to talk about? The way you felt the way your friends felt anything at all?

Robinson: I think that my mother's love for the military carried over into my life. Because we would hear the trucks now we lived quite a ways off the highway but we would hear the tanks sometimes and a truckload of soldiers that were being transported to the L&M Railroad station that were to depart. And

if it was 2 o'clock in the morning my mother got us up and we would stand along what is now New Providence Boulevard then it was just the road to Clarksville. And beyond the intersection there it was Camp Campbell because everything was farm land but we would stand on the highway and wave to these soldiers and they would throw out their names and addresses. And my mother wrote to every single one of them now I don't remember if she ever got an answer I don't remember any of the letters that came back and she kept those names. And when we would have our prayer time at night she would pray for those soldiers by name. And it was just an important thing for her and I guess for all of us to respect what the military was giving up the lives that they were willing to give for our safety and I still feel that way today. Which is evident I married one of those.

Interviewer: Well I think that about wraps it up. Again I'd like to say thank you for letting me do the interview and we will look at this in class.

Robinson: Okay I hope I don't scare anybody off.

Interviewer: No that's what I told you, you should have worn your bathing suit we'd have had a better interview.

Robinson: That would have been bad.