

Drennan: July the 25th 1923

Interviewer: Been in this area of Blunt County most of your life?

Drennan: All of my life I've lived in Blunt County and I lived on Sevierville Pike I was born on Sevierville Pike and lived there until I was six years old. Then I moved to Predator Street right back and lived till I married Reese I lived there until through high well I was working at the telephone office when Reese and I married. And we've lived here 34 years our here.

Interviewer: Your father's occupation during the depression?

Drennan: He was an auto mechanic and a farm machinery mechanic.

Interviewer: Was his did his occupation change a lot during the depression?

Drennan: Well yes he worked for \$4 a week in Knoxville he had to go to Knoxville and I think it was a little over two years and \$4 a weeks what he made. And of course my brother and I both were in school at the time.

Interviewer: Did the impression impact everyday life for people in the community?

Drennan: Well it was hard on everybody because there was nobody making very much money and we had to save every bit we could to have enough food and clothing. I don't know how but it was real well everybody was a like there wasn't anybody that had any money in the community. And everybody had just about the same.

Interviewer: What did people do for entertainment during that time with the hard time with money?

Drennan: They most of the time people would gather at one home and they'd play sing someone would be there that played the piano and they'd sing or listen to radios. Maybe one person in the neighborhood would have a radio and everybody would go usually one night a week and would listen to the radio. Now my mother and father had friends a couple that they played Rook with. They would take they did that just about every night of the week. They'd go to their house and they they'd come to our house.

Interviewer: Could you see a great difference in the closeness of the community prior to the depression and after it?

Drennan: Well I think everybody was closer during the depression than they were before because they just about depended on each other the neighbors did. What one had why you know they would divide with the others some of the others.

Interviewer: When Pearl Harbor happened

Drennan: I was 16 a sophomore and the boys in the at school (Tape skipped ahead)

Interviewer: Did people at that time feel that or see Pearl Harbor coming feel that we might be attacked?

Drennan: No they didn't I remember that day it was December the 7th it was on a Sunday. And we had we at that time you went out and got your cut your Christmas tree and we had gone out to get a Christmas tree we didn't know anything about it until we got back. Well my brother he was just 14 at the time and when we came by why everybody began to tell about Pearl Harbor. And I never will forget mother said well she was glad that I was the oldest one because I wouldn't have to go and well he did have to it was so long that he did have to as soon as he was 18 he had to go serve.

Interviewer: Major changes that you saw after Pearl Harbor and the U.S. preparation for war?

Drennan: Well all the young men had to go and they we had of course they had rations we had stamps to buy gas and sugar and well and the washing powder I don't know why it was short. But you couldn't get it you couldn't just go in the store and ask for it most of the time it was didn't come that often. And didn't have silk hose the women didn't have silk hose to wear. They did later on go to somewhere in Chattanooga and buy silk hose and several of the people would get together and go down there and buy a whole all their friends and family.

Interviewer: Did your father did his job change because of the war?

Drennan: Well he just decided that he wanted to work on farm machinery it would he was still a mechanic but he changed. He worked outside most of the time he'd go to farms instead of they'd call and he'd go out and work on the machinery out there instead of it being brought in like they brought in cars.

Interviewer: What was it like being in school at the time when a lot of the older a lot of the seniors I guess males having to go? Did it kind of

Drennan: We there was a lot of them that left there was more girls then there was boys when and it was sad when they'd leave we because there was several that didn't come back.

Interviewer: Could you tell how it affected their school at all you know did they take the attitude that I'm going to be going to war here shortly so it doesn't quite matter as much?

Drennan: A lot of them it was like that they didn't care whether they did their work or not at school. They knew that they were gonna be gone and it didn't really matter to them.

Interviewer: The ways in which people tried you know to sacrifice for the rationing did they you know try to overcome the lack of sugar and lack of gas?

Drennan: Well what they did they'd save like if one person needed a pair of shoes see we had to have stamps for shoes and sugar and gas and they would swap like if I needed a pair of shoes and somebody else needed gas stamps or sugar or something we'd swap stamps. You know to get what we needed then they would save them up lots of times to get things.

Interviewer: Was most of the trading of stamps was it just done around your community with people in your neighborhood?

Drennan: Uh huh with friends and we did without lots of times any way we could. I think it hurt more than anything was the gas because you couldn't go anywhere you just had to go where you really needed to go at that time.

Interviewer: When you first got electricity and how that changed?

Drennan: Well I was in the sixth grade when we got electricity. We had used oil lamps we had a lantern lamp. It was the best of the oil lights supposed to be a better light than any but it was really hard to try to study we would try to get our lessons in the daylight instead because the light wasn't too good. And when we got electricity then it was so different we could wait until night to study and then we had could have well we had a battery radio until we got electricity then we could have electric radio. And we had got an electric stove we had used a wood stove up until cook stove until that time then we got an electric stove. And you could have we had an ice box they came around and the ice man came around every day and you could buy ice a block of ice and put in the just the well an ice box it was just a box. Well then after that we could have a refrigerator yeah a refrigerator after we got electricity.

Interviewer: Did a lot of people around the neighborhood get electricity around the same time?

Drennan: Yes most of them did.

Interviewer: So everybody pretty much went through the experiences together. A radio when you got the electric radio did it pretty much become one of the focal points of the house?

Drennan: Yes and people if your neighbors didn't have one why you'd invite them over at that time Saturday night was the main thing was the Grand Ole Opry. All the neighbors that didn't have one would come into one house one place when you had the battery radio you couldn't get it too good and it was better after the electric one. And well the radio at that time was like when television first came in how everybody wanted to see to hear them.

Interviewer: Do you remember when you got your first television?

Drennan: Yes that let's see that was just before Reese and I were married. That was the first that they had was in Blount County around 1950.

Interviewer: I'm sure it was a major entertainment.

Drennan: It was

Interviewer: Now television when did you get your first television?

Drennan: It was in 1950 just before Reese and I were married. A lot of people didn't have one and if they didn't have one why they'd you would be invited to your neighbors to watch it. Usually on Saturday night was the main thing the Grand Ole Opry all the old shows was Andy Griffins and well I can't think of some of the older ones.

Interviewer: The change in the roles that women had during the war.

Drennan: The men all the young men mostly had gone the ones that weren't married was gone that had worked at Alco and the women a lot of women worked at Alco during the war they took over the men's jobs while they were gone. And I didn't work at Alco I worked at a grocery store for a year then I went to the Telephone Company and nine years at the Telephone Company. Anywhere that there was several men worked at that time that went off to war women took their jobs because they didn't work. Most of the quit when the men came back a lot of them worked on and got their 25 years or whatever but most of them just worked during the war. At men's what was men's jobs.

Interviewer: Could you tell a difference between the views that people held between the Germans and the Japanese?

Drennan: Well I think everybody thought more of the Germans than they did the Japanese because they were mad at the Japanese because they had bombed Pearl Harbor. Even though they were in war with Germans most everybody thought more of the Germans than they did the Japanese at that time.

Interviewer: Well hearing about the concentration camps a lot of the things Hitler was doing over in Europe?

Drennan: Yes they did and a lot of them were well there was several from here that was in the concentration camps at one time. And it we you'd hear not all of the bad stuff but you'd hear enough there'd be enough come through that you could sort of in your mind know what was going on. See there was there was Prisoner of War Camp down at Crossville. We didn't know about it until after it was being as close as we were to Crossville I didn't know that there was a prisoner camp down there until after the war was over.

Interviewer: How did people gain the information of what was going on in the European Theatre?

Drennan: Well through newspaper of course it was censored a lot of it. You had to read a lot between line and when they'd sometimes when they'd write a letter they would get maybe say a word or two that you could connect to what it was really meaning. But it would be at least a week or two before something could happen over there and it would be at least a week or sometimes two before it was you got it here in American that you got a hold of it. You didn't have the TVs to or to bring it just as soon as it happened.

Interviewer: Was there a real rise in patriotism around the communities during the war?

Drennan: Yes at first everybody was real patriotic and our churches was full too there for a while. Everybody was trying to be a good American at that time most of them the people that had sons in service especially would show their patriotism. And like I say the churches was full too at that time.

Interviewer: Comparable the surge in patriotism at that time to the way it is now with September 11th?

Drennan: Well at first everybody was trying to be a true American and was showing their patriotism. But it started after a little while it sort of played out but seems like when 9/11 happened that everybody of course they could see it as it was happening. And everybody was watching it on TV they was glued and people seemed to be closer than they were when the war. I think one of the things that the war started that struck out there a year or two before it really hit America and this happened just all at one time. There was a little difference.

Interviewer: You mentioned that your brother got called was that a traumatic experience for the family when you found out that he was going to be going?

Drennan: Yes it was he was 18 in June and he was called in six weeks after he was 18 he was called to service. And him being the baby of the family there were just two of us. And my mother she was aware anyway and it just liked to killed her when he had to go. We took him over to the armory and he left from the armory used to but over on Hall Road there. He left in a bus and went to Fort Oberthrope and he was then he was stationed in Macon Georgia. He had six weeks training in Macon Georgia he came home and stayed 30 days. We took him back to Knoxville on the to catch the train the 16th of January and six weeks form the time we took him to Knoxville and he caught the train he was overseas. He was on and went right on into battle in the battle and he was gone three years I believe. He was gone about three years and after the war was over he broke his arm I think he and one that was while he was still overseas. He broke his arm and they sent him back across and he got stay at home 30 days and then he went back to Augusta Georgia and stayed until he was discharged. I don't remember how long he was there but that was a the longest two years three years that we never put up. My mother wrote him every day she didn't miss a day writing while he was gone. I didn't write him that often but mother did she.

Interviewer: Could you did you feel a change you know in your feelings toward the war when your brother went?

Drennan: Yes because I had I really had somebody in there. Of course I had cousins and friends before. But it was different when you had a really had a blood relative in.

Interviewer: Did you see a lot of change in your brother from his war experience?

Drennan: Yes he grew up a lot while he left as a 18 year old and he came back as a grown man and his attitude had changed a lot from the time that he went until he came back. He was well he was just a different person altogether he was sort of nervous too at one you know being in the service. But he had grown up in every way when he came back.

Interviewer: Countries emotions about when the bombs were dropped on Japan?

Drennan: Well most people were happy because most of them had friends and loved ones in Germany and France. And they were gonna have to go to Japan if the war kept on. And so when it was over they were all happy because of the they didn't have to the boys got to come on home. But it was the night that war was the day that they said they war was over everybody that night went up town. At that time you could go through Maribel straight through and everybody that had a car they'd have a car load of people and here they went up through Main Street a hollering and blowing horns. Because they were just real happy that the war was over.

Interviewer: The community change when the soldiers came back from the war.

Drennan: Well they all they was of course the soldiers were grown up and the people more so they were different than what they were when they left. Well they left as boys and came back as men and the people would accept them different they made them feel like they had grown up a lot. And was thanking them for what they had done for the community.

Interviewer: Were a lot of the soldiers viewed you know in a higher regard than they were?

Drennan: Yes they were a lot of them and everybody was just happy that they got back. There was a few and too there was some of the boys that didn't go to service and they were sort of felt bad when the boys did come back. They made excuses for not going and lot of the soldiers' sort of felt about some of them the way they did. Most of the people tried to welcome them home and thank them for what they had done.

Interviewer: When the soldiers returned did they just pretty much go back to the job that they had previously?

Drennan: Most of them did because they could go back to their job it was held for them. And they just took up where they left.

Interviewer: Did that cause any conflict with the people who had been doing the job when they were gone?

Drennan: Not too bad I don't think most of them well a lot of them at the plant a lot of the woman had taken those jobs. And some of them of course wanted to stay on but a lot of them had said since the men came back they would give their job up and they did give it up. And I don't think it caused too much of a conflict.

Tape ended