

Interviewer: Okay so if we could start out if you could just say your whole name and the date and year you were born.

Dunn: Elizabeth Granger Dunn I was born October 27, 1922.

Interviewer: and just to get started if you could say your father's name and his occupation.

Dunn: My father's name Samuel Aaron Granger and he was a farmer his father and grandfather were farmers. And my great-grandfather built the house where I grew up and my sisters grew up. He was it was just deeded down to the family. And my father and his brother whose name was Thomas Edgar farmed and in later years after my uncle died when I was eleven years old daddy had had heart problems and almost died of a heart attack actually when I was five years old. And he had to have help on the farm so we built a tenant house and he had someone who lived there a younger couple that lived there and helped him with the farm.

Interviewer: So this would have been around late 1927 around there?

Dunn: I was something like that well it was later than that I was eleven years old so it would be when my uncle died.

Interviewer: Okay how did your family manage during the great depression?

Dunn: Since we were on a farm we raised fruit we had an orchard of apples, pears, peaches a large orchard actually. We sort of gave a lot of that to our neighbors and family. But we canned mother canned of course there was no freezing back then.

Interviewer: Right

Dunn: And so mother canned fruit and vegetables and we also had cattle we had hogs and always had a hog killing in the early winter time and cured hams shoulders side meat and such to have meat later in the year. In other words we provided for ourselves actually didn't have to go to the grocery and buy a lot of things except the staples. We also took wheat to a mill that was located just a few miles away I would say about probably five or six miles away from home. We would take the wheat to the mill they would grind it into flour for us we took, and I remember making many trips with daddy there, we took corn and they we had corn meal they provided corn meal for us. So as far as buying things we bought sugar and we bought other things that were not produced on the farm I'll say.

Interviewer: Do you remember if anyone in your family or anyone that you had a close connection to was unemployed long term during the depression? Do you remember people having problems?

Dunn: I don't remember that since we were living on a farm.

Interviewer: Right

Dunn: And since my father and his brother needed help people in the area would have jobs helping other farmers. So most people who grew up out in the country would have plenty of neighbors that they could help and so it wasn't they didn't have unemployment like now with factories.

Interviewer: Do you remember anybody coming from maybe out of town or like knocking on your door asking for food or anything like that?

Dunn: I don't actually our home was off the road off of the main road I would say and people actually didn't know where we were to come and ask for food. But that wasn't done very often we didn't have people just coming by regularly asking for food no.

Interviewer: Okay so in 1939 you would have been seventeen right? How aware were you at seventeen of what was going on in the world politically?

Dunn: I heard my parents talking about it some actually they didn't discuss politics a lot occasionally we would have people coming in who would get on into political talk. But that was fairly rare we didn't have electricity we didn't have water in the house we had a hand dug well where we got the water for all of our needs. And then we had a pond where we fished and where the stock got water of course. We raised the food that the horses and cows needed and I was young and the depression didn't mean a lot to me since our farm was paid for. And it didn't have to be mortgaged but many of our neighbors I would say several of our neighbors had to mortgage their farm and some of them lost their farm completely because they couldn't pay the mortgage.

Interviewer: Do you remember what happened to them after they lost their farms?

Dunn: Some moved to town and tried to find work other work than farm work. Some moved into rental houses from other farmers and were able to get by.

Interviewer: Do you remember much about the guy that lived in the tenant house and worked for your dad?

Dunn: Oh I remember them very well.

Interviewer: Was it a family?

Dunn: It wasn't a family when they first moved there just a couple.

Interviewer: Okay

Dunn: But they did have children they had at least two children while they lived there.

Interviewer: Was he local?

Dunn: Yes he was very local in fact his parents lived close to us they were actually a fairly close neighbor.

Interviewer: So when you were seventeen, eighteen years old how much had you heard about Nazi Germany and the threat that they potentially posed?

Dunn: Again it was so far away and at the age that I was I wasn't particularly interested in what was going on in Germany. It just seemed at that point that it didn't affect me that much or our family that much. We read about it of course we took the Curry Journal which of course is still being printed. That kept us up to date actually on what we knew that was going on overseas. We had a radio and listened to

that also many people or I'll say a number of people close to us who lived close to us did not have radios. And particularly on Saturday nights they would come over to listen to the Grand Ole Opry at our house.

Interviewer: That's neat.

Dunn: Other neighbors did have radios it wasn't that but there was some who didn't and they always wanted to know what was going on in the world. And they liked to come and hear Grand Ole Opry music.

Interviewer: What year were you married?

Dunn: I was married September 7, 1947.

Interviewer: Forty seven so was that after Uncle Earl got back and everything I guess?

Dunn: Yes

Interviewer: Did you know him already before the war? I don't know anything about when you met or anything like that.

Dunn: Yes we actually met in high school.

Interviewer: Okay

Dunn: And I graduated from high school in 1941 he was a little over a year younger than me. He graduated in 42 and of course the war was going on in 41 and my birthday was in October and in December of that year December the 7th is when war was declared.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor being bombed?

Dunn: I heard about it after going home from church if I recall correctly we heard it on the radio. And that was December 7th 1941. I think I'm right on them days.

Interviewer: Yeah I think so do you remember your parent's reaction when they heard about Pearl Harbor or anything they might have said to you?

Dunn: I don't recall anything in particular that they said but I do know that we kept the radio on and of course it was a battery radio. And we had just turned the radio on for news and some special programs we didn't keep it on all the time like we do today with TV.

Interviewer: Right okay did your parents and you were old enough by that point to understand you weren't a little kid did your parents support FDR and the way that he was handling the war?

Dunn: That's something that I don't remember. It was just something that was so distant far away and of course I had friends who were being called to go to serve in the war. And I was very conscious of those I had cousins who were in service during that time well shortly after war was declared. I had some relatives and friends.

Interviewer: Your mom was a Johnson right?

Dunn: Yes

Interviewer: Do you remember there being a sense within our circle of friends in your circle of friends did you talk about people who were being sent over did you was it something that kind of pervaded the community?

Dunn: There were a number of people our church was the center of our activities actually at Sumner Spring Church. And several people in the community and in Simpson County were called to service and of course we were always concerned about their safety and where they were located.

Interviewer: Do you remember any kind of drives or anything at church like letter writing drives sending anything to support the boys? Some churches would plan those.

Dunn: I don't remember anything special I think more individual contacts with people and not an organized at least organization in our community.

Interviewer: Do you anyone in your family or your community that took advantage of any of the new deal programs that FDR instituted like the CCC or the TVA the WPA?

Dunn: There were people I could not name them that were WPA workers. Actually I went to college at the Business University in Bowling Green in the fall of after I graduated in early 41. I worked part time now this was on Saturdays and after school after my classes I would say at college at National Youth Administration.

Interviewer: Oh okay great.

Dunn: It's called NYA.

Interviewer: What did you do there?

Dunn: I was typist and filing clerk there. One of my friends who was not going to college one of my high school friends who was not going to college actually was working there and I asked her about work and was interviewed and hired to just work part time of course there.

Interviewer: Do you remember how much you earned per hour?

Dunn: I don't recall I'm sorry.

Interviewer: No that's okay.

Dunn: Sometimes I wish I had kept some of that information just for my personal.

Interviewer: Right well Hayley is a pack rat she keeps everything so. So that was in 41 you said.

Dunn: Yes

Interviewer: Okay do you remember anyone around you having a change in employment after Pearl Harbor maybe to help you know work in a factory to help the war effort or anything like that?

Dunn: I did in later years but not that soon.

Interviewer: Okay what did you do did you say you worked in a factory?

Dunn: I didn't

Interviewer: You didn't do you know anyone that did like to support the war effort?

Dunn: Well in later years while the war was still going on a very good friend of mine who went to church where I did her husband was called into service. And she went back to her home which was near a factory and she started work there as a and she worked for several years. In fact I have book written by her son James Russell Harris who told about her work in the factory.

Interviewer: Oh what was her name?

Dunn: Her name was Mildred Harris. She was a long time Sunday School teacher here and a dear friend of mine at church. I have that book that tells about her work in the factory.

Interviewer: That's very neat.

Dunn: She was working for the war effort.

Interviewer: Right especially while her husband was gone. What do you remember about the rationing system of the war?

Dunn: Well of course there was a shortage of many items during that period of time. Rationing as far as it affected me and our family actually pertained to what we buy at the store. There was sugar rationing meat rationing and we had books of stamps. We were allotted a certain number of stamps or books according to the number in our family. And when we used those we didn't get any more of that item then until the next time that they would issue the stamps.

Interviewer: What about for your dad tires and gas for the farm do you remember?

Dunn: Well gas was rationed also because so much of it was being used for the military. I don't recall I think maybe we didn't use a car unless it was absolutely necessary.

Interviewer: Right I know sometimes farmers were allotted extra gas to run their tractors and things like that. I didn't know if you knew anything

Dunn: Yes it so happened that my father did not have a tractor until later.

Interviewer: Okay

Dunn: He used mules.

Interviewer: That's hard work.

Dunn: Yes for the farm work.

Interviewer: Okay do you remember hearing anything or knowing anyone who had personal experience with a black market for scarce items? I know sometimes things would be sold.

Dunn: Oh we heard of that and we heard of people who would give some of their ration stamps to other people and whether under duress or just giving away when they had extras possibly. Other than that I don't recall anything about it.

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

Dunn: I didn't personally no I was in school see at that time.

Interviewer: Right do you remember your family or yourself buying war bonds?

Dunn: Yes we bought war bonds. In fact I recall and I was mentioning that to somebody it was to Beth I was talking to Beth about it. We would have war bond drives and we would have days when it would be sales war bonds on sale. And I remember one time in particular that they we were several people with typewriters and of course they were all manual typewriters on the court house square the weather was favorable and we were typing our war bonds and selling war bonds. And I was telling Beth the other day that one of the people he was actually postmaster here for a while was noticing who was working several people were working on the typewriters and he came up to me and complimented me on my speed with typing out the war bonds you know.

Interviewer: Good job.

Dunn: And I said of all things I remember that.

Interviewer: It was a nice compliment.

Dunn: But I did type out war bonds.

Interviewer: Do you remember your mom or dad saying anything about buying war bonds being your patriotic duty and something that you needed to be a part of?

Dunn: I think we just went along with what most people did. We didn't make a big issue of it but we did participate some.

Interviewer: Do you remember any special entertainment that they had at war bond rallies or anything like that?

Dunn: I don't remember that. I'm sure that we possibly did have some bands involved that was in later years I was out of high school of course then.

Interviewer: Right do you remember anybody I know like your friends said did work in a factory at some point. Do you remember anyone being involved with labor unions any kind of workers labor organization?

Dunn: I don't remember anything about any particular things about labor unions at that time.

Interviewer: I know a lot of people say that during the war they were making decent money but because of rationing had nothing to spend it on. Do you remember having that feeling I mean what did you do with the money you were earning?

Dunn: Most of the money that was earned on the farm was selling the products that were raised corn and tobacco and wheat and barley. And I don't remember anything in particular there were rallies but I just don't remember how much my family participated in it because I came home some weekends from Bowling Green. The times I did of course we had a family car as most people did then one car per family and I rode the bus back and forth from Bowling Green and my father would take me to the bus station and then he would pick me up when I came home.

Interviewer: Was your education something that your parents really wanted you to pursue because I mean it's not that common in you know the 40s for a woman to attend college.

Dunn: My mother had attended college actually one year.

Interviewer: Really I didn't know that.

Dunn: Yes and she then took a teachers examination they called it. She passed and she became a teacher after one year of college. There was a shortage of teachers and she taught actually for eight years and that was before she met my father. So she was the time she went to college of course was long before the war years.

Interviewer: Right what year was she born?

Dunn: Before me but after mother married my father she didn't teach well I think she taught one year after they married that was all.

Interviewer: Do you remember people in your community being blue star or gold star mothers? Do you remember seeing thing hanging in the windows?

Dunn: We did have a few right now I'm trying to recall and I just can't recall people that had gold stars in their window. But there were of course some that did some had lost their lives.

Interviewer: So I know you had a radio but you didn't have a telephone correct?

Dunn: Oh we had a telephone.

Interviewer: Did you?

Dunn: We did have a telephone yes. We had a telephone that part of the time was connected to central office.

Interviewer: Like a party line?

Dunn: Yes and you rang the phone and got central and central called your number for you. We were on a party line and we had we would ring the phone with somebody on our party line everybody had a different ring number of rings.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Dunn: And sometimes there was easy dropping on a party line.

Interviewer: I was going to ask if that ever happened. I'm sure it did I don't believe I would be able to stop myself I don't think.

Dunn: Yes there were sometimes there would be ease dropping. And sometimes there would be people in conversation and we'd go to the phone to use it and they'd be talking and sometimes just listen in find out what was going on. That's the way it was also and this was just part of the time the connection between our particular section of telephones was discontinued and if we wanted to call someone out of the community that was not on our line we would have to call the grocery store the Old Show Grocery Store. And they would call for us when we needed help if we needed a doctor or somebody give a message to somebody and that went on for quite some time when we didn't have an actual connection with well we'll say to call anywhere.

Interviewer: Right did you or my grandma or Aunt May was still real little send letters to anyone overseas? Did you write to Uncle Ronald at all?

Dunn: Oh yes oh yes. We sent letters of course I was seven years older than Louise nine years older than Mary and I had friends that I wrote to. Cousins and just friends and I wrote to Ronald on a regular basis actually after we were in high school together for a year. So we had letters going back and forth all the time.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything does any particular letter that you got from anyone overseas stand out?

Dunn: I would ask them sometimes what was going on or something they would just in their letter they would write about thing that were going on. Right now I don't think of anything in particular it was just more or less what they were doing at the time and how the situation was. Ronald was never in combat he was never in fighting actual fighting.

Interviewer: Okay that's good. A lot of people look back on the war years as good years as a good time in their life even though we were obviously fighting and there were shortages here at home. I wonder how you it's been obviously over fifty years since the war I wonder if you remember if fondly or if it was a negative time in your life.

Dunn: I was always glad to get the letters and to know what was going on with people who were in service. And I would try to write back what was going on at home and in our group our friends.

Interviewer: Right keep them updated. Do you think that the war years do you look back on it with good memories or were you happy when that part of your life had passed?

Dunn: I was glad very glad when it was over. It was a stressful time and of course we got reports back of people we knew people we didn't know who had been killed in action. And that was very stressful for members of their family and their friends. So it was a very stressful time and we didn't know how long the war would be continuing and what would happen next with our family or friends.

Interviewer: Right at what point did you start hearing about the atrocities that the Nazi's had committed things like the Holocaust and what did you hear?

Dunn: I don't recall what year I first heard of that. There were always stories about what was happening. Many of those stories may be not true or exaggerated or else just something that was being told and we weren't sure if it was correct or not. It was a very anxious time very anxious time for everybody.

Interviewer: I know that you lived in a close nit community but some people the answer to this question is yes so I'll go ahead and ask it. Was there anyone in your neighborhood or any acquaintances you had whose loyalty was suspect during the way maybe due to religion or ethnicity or anything like that?

Dunn: Not that I know of no everyone was behind their boys that were in service. And of course we had some friends who were in service also girls women who were in service yes one of my dearest friends childhood friends was in the ways.

Interviewer: Oh wow that's neat. Do you know anyone who was a contentious objector?

Dunn: Right now I don't recall of any back then in more recent years of course I've heard of more contentious objectors but I don't recall any at that time.

Interviewer: Okay do you think that the war years shaped the way that you see your country? I know I mean did you feel particularly patriotic and you were just talking about people were behind the boys.

Dunn: It's hard to say we lived through it.

Interviewer: Right

Dunn: And it was as I said before a very stressful for everybody because everybody knew somebody if not in their family they are in their connections or people they knew were involved in it. And that was very stressful.

Interviewer: Could you tell a little bit about what Uncle Ronald did as far a setting up things for was it MacArthur that he set up his tech stuff?

Dunn: Yes actually after he graduated from high school in 42 he wanted he knew that he would be called into service and he wanted to get into the signal core the army signal core. So he went to school in Louisville and actually the school that he attended was communications leaning communications of all types of communications. And then he went from there to advanced schooling at Lexington they called it the signal depot and got further training. He did this because he wanted to get in the signal core when he got in service and he thought if he knew a lot about it already he would maybe he could get into that branch of the service which he did. He volunteered he knew he was going to be drafted but he volunteered after he had been to school and did get in the army signal core. And remained in that he was in several camps in the United States and then was sent to Hawaii and was there for a few months

right now I don't recall how many. And was on his way to Japan when peace was signed with Japan he was one of a group and the youngest of a group of five who were sent to Japan to Tokyo to build establish and maintain General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in the _____ building and I don't recall how to spell that in Tokyo. And he remained there and was there when the war with Japan ceased or he was not in Japan he was in Hawaii when it ceased but he was there when General MacArthur was of course in charge more or less of what was going on in Japan at that time. He was when the war was over and well he was there maintaining or helping to maintain General MacArthur's headquarters for a while and I don't recall how long now. And then he had enough points that he could be released from service that's when he came home. He came home and his brother Bill who had been in the European Theatre and had been wounded not seriously but it affected his I would say mentally. It was a rough time for him he was in several battles and he was already home. And at that time with Ronald's training in communications they decided to set up a business there which became Dunn Brothers Radio business. And they worked there for 48 years.

Interviewer: Wow pretty good run. Well that's all the questions that I have.

Dunn: There's something else I wanted to tell you.

Interviewer: Oh yeah go ahead.

Dunn: During the war effort, did you turn it back on?

Interviewer: Yeah

Dunn: I was actually after a year in college I was offered a job as secretary bookkeeper office force for the Simpson County Board of Education and Superintendent of the schools in Simpson County. This secretary who had had that job was in a serious automobile accident and nearly died and was not going to be able to come back and actually they the superintendent called me from to see if I would drop out of school, it was right at the end of the second semester. If I would drop out of school and come and take that job because he needed someone immediately his wife who had been my English teacher in high school told him why don't you call her and see if she will come back. So I talked with mother and daddy and they thought well whatever I wanted to do. So I decided that in order to well keep mother and daddy to pay all of my expenses although I was working all the time I was doing something I worked at Charles store as well as the NYA when I was going to school Bowling Green it was the university. So I quit my job and I came back and took that order and I was there for I'm trying to think now how many years two years I believe and then the superintendent actually the superintendent's office was in the new Simpson County high school building at the time where the high school was located. And I was working as secretary and they could not get a commercial teacher it was time for school to start and we had a commercial department and that didn't have a teacher. And Mr. Foster checked with the administration and the state administration and found out he could get an emergency certificate. And so I started teacher one year after going to college now I had had typing in high school but I quit and took over that job and remained there and he asked me then to teach half a day and work in the office half a day. And I didn't have better sense just did it I was getting more money that a way you know but I had to do a lot of the office work after hours I would say.

Interviewer: Right

Dunn: To get caught up in it but I was paid more of course. But after that time of teaching I decided to go back went back to the Business University and got an Associate degree there in Business and then later transferred to Georgetown Baptist College and finished there then many years later when I was teaching and got a master's degree at Western.

Interviewer: What's your master's degree in?

Dunn: In Education.

Interviewer: I did not know that.

Dunn: I had two majors I received a major in business at Business University and then I got a master's in English at Western I mean at Georgetown excuse me Georgetown. And I got a major in English at Georgetown and it was later years that I was teaching that I went back to Western and got the masters in Education.

Interviewer: Well okay

Dunn: I offered when your mother and Louise were graduating from high school and I was married to Ronald already and he agreed that it would be okay. Mother and daddy had helped me through much of my work I mean through my education and when I was at Business University and when I was at Georgetown I worked also to help pay for my expenses worked at the college. And so I partially worked my way through but they helped me so much of course and I told them that I would help them both of them to get through college if they wanted to go. And of course your grandmother and granddaddy decided to get married instead. I think Louise maybe if they hadn't married I think she probably would have gone.

Interviewer: Well she's so smart.

Dunn: And when Mary graduated from high school she didn't want any more school.

Interviewer: I kind of understand that.

Dunn: Yeah she didn't want any more school she had had enough she wanted a job and she got it. But I told them that I would use some of my salary while I was teaching and working to help pay their college expenses of course I expected them to do some work like I had done.

Interviewer: Right

Dunn: To help pay for themselves but I was going to help them whatever they needed and then neither one of them wanted to do that.

Interviewer: Well you saved some money.

Dunn: I did uh huh I did what I could do to help them to go on with their education but they neither one wanted to do it so that's the way it was.

Interviewer: What year did you get your masters do you remember?

Dunn: Actually it was 72 I was almost 50 years old.

Interviewer: That's wonderful.

Dunn: Yes and I went to night school and I went to summer school and kept on teaching all the time.

Interviewer: Right hard work.

Dunn: Uh huh right.

Tape ended