

Rhoades: And our recreation around there was skating on an old road that had been cut off by a new highway. And that was our recreation and getting together like I said going on these trips some good adult couple would take us on these little trips outings and we were I don't know if you want me to tell about the courtship.

Interviewer: Yeah of course.

Rhoades: Well you know that already.

Interviewer: Okay well it's up to you.

Rhoades: Anyway after I met him at one of these little get togethers of all the young people it was just a beautiful rocky area that belonged to friends of mine already been acquaintances since I was born. And so we all met there occasionally just to get acquainted with one another and tell stories and all that you know. And that's where I really got had my five minute date with Reggie. Got better acquainted with him and he got better acquainted with my parents then started hanging around a little more. So then we started dating a little bit then I was finally going with him when he'd take loads of coal to Hopkinsville you know and dump them in some shed. That was a big outing I mean it was a working date. He was working and I was riding along go with him and dump that coal he worked so hard you know. And he had to do it with shovels you know he'd back up to the place and push it into bins or something with a shovel.

Interviewer: Was anyone

Rhoades: And he was he was his mother started out with a tough way anyway because his own father died about two months before he was born. He had that kidney disease that you don't hear of anymore can't even think of the name of it right now you don't hear of it anymore. But his mother he couldn't lie down he was kept in a chair and she just kind of walked that chair with him you know wheel chairs. So he was born in a terrible situation there and didn't have a dad for a while. And then when his mother married again she married we call him Pa Smith. He was a good bit older than he was so he died long before she did so then she was alone for a while. And it was just it just seemed like that woman had more on here than any woman should have to take. But then after Reggie and I married and he we went to Savannah that was the most I guess that was the biggest time in our life because we'd had already had the son who was about eight or nine months old maybe when we went up there. And I had to go on a train I had never been out of town let alone on a well except in the immediate area. Let alone ride somewhere on a train with a baby by myself. Had to go to Atlanta and change in Atlanta and change across town and I had a very short fuse time of changing. And I was just carrying this one bit of stuff to hold the baby stuff and you know and him on one hip and that stuff on the other. You had to go down a long flight of stairs to get on the last train I was to catch and about half way down I thought I'm gonna have to set down and miss it. He was slipping on my hip he was slipping down my hip you know. I was struggling and a bunch of sailors were down there to catch that train and they looked up and saw my white and here every one of them came. They carried us all down there and put us on you know me and the baby and the luggage and put us on that train. And from them on they were wanting to hold the baby they took care of him one fed him his bottle you know. That was a blessing.

Interviewer: That's so sweet.

Rhoades: So I was well taken care of until I got there and Reggie met me and I felt good everything was back to normal. And we loved it and went to the ocean every opportunity we had and Jeff the baby first baby really grew up wading in that ocean. That's why that's where he is now he lived in Norfolk. And been there for a long time and he is moving back home and I'm so happy and I know it's a big fit for him to move back but I'm so happy that he is. And so he did well there at the \_\_\_\_ and we traveled on in a car babies would sleep like we had a coop that had a flat window on the back. And now that I think about that I would die if I saw somebody do that.

Interviewer: My grandpa used to cut the seatbelts out of his car because he said they just got in the way.

Rhoades: Well you know I'd make a bed in that place behind the seat for the baby and you know the youngest one she's the one that lives across over from me my daughter Debbie. And I don't know it's just it all is I could write a big fat book I guess but I'm not a writer so. But we enjoyed that we'd come home often for the grandparents to see these kids growing up you know. And we didn't mind that hard drive no we'd drive straight through get everything we needed in that little car and come right on over those mountains getting home. Anyway it was all a good life we then and then we the neon shop there finally closed down. So we headed home came back and stayed with family a little while and then got another place in Greenville no that was not the garage that was the first place but we got a small place I can't remember where that was or stayed with other family for a while. And Reggie started another neon shop in Madisonville Kentucky he and another guy. And it wasn't much business there but people got to hearing about his neon and there was a big neon shop in Clarksville so they for a while they got him to come on weekends and do tips for them. And so he did that for a good long while and we lived at the first house in Clarksville was on 41A no Cumberland Drive I guess. And we lived in just a little apartment on the back side of the house and the owner of the apartment lived right next to us. And I didn't tell about Savannah first Debbie was born in Savannah and it was so we had both of our children there. We experienced our first hurricane there first and only real hurricane that we were ever in. But people that we lived in with the house there lived upstairs when they got the alert for it they came up and told us to come downstairs that we'd be perfectly safe in their house. But we stood and watched it pick up a fence around there house just pick and go just a piece at a time just all intact but it just ripped it up and in the sky it went.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness.

Rhoades: Amazing scary but amazing but we felt safe because he told us we'd be safe. And we finally Clarksville neon shop talked him into closing his shop and coming down and joining him. And then after a few years he and then we lived on 41A in Clarksville in one room when we moved here. Then we lived in the basement on Hickory Grove for a while and that's the house you see on here. And then it was long about in the 50s that he got tuberculosis and he had it really bad. But couldn't get him back in the VA hospital so I had to isolate him down stairs and the kids could come to the door and talk to him but you know that's all. But miraculously they never got sick from the TB they both tested positive the contact was there. My daughter had a terrible time from just her test it put blisters all over her back and she was tiny still you know. Well he got sick and had to be put back in the hospital and that's when he stayed so long that time. And he I gathered the two children up that night after we'd gotten him in the hospital there or that day and went to my mom's just to sort of cool it for a while. And had some support and sometime close to midnight got a call that I should come he was bleeding out. And I had an uncle in town that was younger than my dad so he said he'd go with me and drive to Nashville at night by yourself. But mom kept the children left the children with mom and dad that time. That night when I left I took nothing with me but me and but I could always so I told my uncle I will drive because I calmed

when drive I calm when I drive. So I think I scared him to death all the way to Nashville and got there quick. But when I got there he was so bad the doctor wouldn't let me go in to see him. He said I'm afraid you will startle him and if he's startled he could choke and we couldn't stop it you know. And he would know something terrible was wrong so I sat outside all that night. So it was up in the day before I could go see him and he had five surgeries after that over a period of years. Well in one year he had several so but when I got down there I didn't get back home for six weeks. My children didn't you know I left them. So I thought I've just got to go back stayed in the hospital they let me stay with him in the room and they had him on kind of a slated board that they would he had to keep drainage all the time he had tubes everywhere in his back. You know those tubes had to drain down and so I spent I felt like I spent two thirds of my time down under his bed looking to see if everything looked normal you know and that sort of thing normal for that what was going on. But so that was there went his job that he didn't have he had the \_\_\_ for a long time before he got that. So then I had to find a job and go to work. So Reggie's well I need to back up a little bit because my children had to stay a mighty long time with mom and dad so eventually because while Reggie was there going through a lot of this medical I mean severe medical attention in isolation I took tuberculosis. And I was put in the county tuberculosis place in the same town but across town in Nashville. So when my poor parents and Reggie's parents came to they had both of us to visit you know I mean to check up on. Imagine what they must have been through I can't I didn't think about it then you know I thought they're safe I was thinking about the children you know they're safe they are being taken care of. And I stayed there I guess eight months and then recuperated the rest of the time at my mom's house with the children there. And I didn't have it severe but I had to take about 21 pills a day I didn't ever have surgery or lose a lung or anything. But on top of Reggie's lung problems it hit him with a lot of other things like he had hemorrhaging of the aorta had to have that surgery. It was just one thing heart surgery he had all kinds of things through the years there. And I finally got to where I could go back to work and I believe I'd go down there at least twice a week to the hospital and I would take the children with me. They were big enough at the time to do what they were told and not big enough to get in a lot of trouble. But they had some fine people at Red Cross people that watched in the what they called the rec room there while I was down there they weren't allowed to go see him. When we took him down there they could see him through a glass glass partition and then they had to go up there while I visited with him. So there was just all of that gets muddled in my mind as to when it came and all of that. Anyway we finally bought the house at Hickory Grove after he got into the shop down here and this was in 51 I guess.

Interviewer: Well do you mind if I ask you some questions about you would have been a kid during the questions I'm about to ask you. I know your dad had the store that he lost during the depression.

Rhoades: Well that was before I was big enough I never lived there.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: As a person.

Interviewer: Right that you can remember.

Rhoades: But I was born there.

Interviewer: Right.

Rhoades: In that store.

Interviewer: I wonder if anyone in your family during the depression, if you remember, I know you were a kid suffered long term unemployment like couldn't find a job.

Rhoades: Oh everybody did but we lived off of our own lands we grew our food my mom put up that's the word we used put up green beans and even potatoes in cans. Canned sausages we had our own animals we had a cow for milk.

Interviewer: Did you ever share like pool resources with your neighbors and things like that? Did you have close neighbors or your friend her grandparents were across the street at one point?

Rhoades: Well they were well that was I don't remember any of that but we would have given oh we shared my mom fed the hobos off the train. You know the little train the regular train went down usually filled with coal wen down not too far behind my house there \_\_\_\_\_. And she would always cook you never came to my mom's house that she didn't have food on the table for you. She'd have food ready.

Interviewer: That's lucky during the depression.

Rhoades: Speaking of I've got some cookies if you want some.

Interviewer: Oh thank you so much.

Rhoades: I made some. But anyway she'd always bring out food to them and put the food on the cistern there they never came in but they knew where to find a house they would get food. Mom would always feed them you know come out and give them all this food. Our cistern had a big round top concrete top on it she'd lay that out for them on there and they'd eat their food and go on. They passed the word and so everybody.

Interviewer: You had people coming through.

Rhoades: Oh yes always and we all helped each other but we were all about in the same boat.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Most of us now we could swap once in a while things maybe we'd have something that the neighbor wouldn't have that we'd swap for you know. But I knew never knew my grandmother and my granddad on my dad's side very much. She had such a big family of boys and they were all big men she was a big woman. And grandpa I remember seeing him on his death bed he died of cancer in his this area somewhere. And I was remember going to that room and I was frightened to death about that you know when I was a kid. But in my grandmother's house I was always in and out my grandmother \_\_\_\_\_ my mother's mother the woman you saw.

Interviewer: Right.

Rhoades: And then even when they moved to Greenville to live when they were older they moved to Greenville to live with one of the their youngest daughter. And I was there all the time.

Interviewer: I spent a lot of time with my grandparents.

Rhoades: Oh yeah just loved them to death.

Interviewer: As you got older you would have been 11 in 1939 right 11? How aware was your family of the rise of Nazi Germany and the coming of World War II? Did you hear a lot about it like in the community?

Rhoades: We didn't even have a radio.

Interviewer: You didn't have a radio.

Rhoades: We went to a neighbor's house to hear the radio we'd go down there. You know I had a friend that lived close right next door that I'd go down and watch the soaps with they did have soaps. But that was the only news we ever got we didn't even get a newspaper.

Interviewer: Wow

Rhoades: We couldn't afford a newspaper.

Interviewer: How did you hear about Pearl Harbor do you remember?

Rhoades: I remember but I don't remember exactly how I heard.

Interviewer: That's okay

Rhoades: You know it was not it wasn't a reality to me I guess a lot of it wasn't. However there was I would go down and wave at the soldiers the train always went through when I was a kid you know because they'd go through there loaded you know with troops going somewhere.

Interviewer: Did you know anyone from your community that was called up?

Rhoades: oh every eligible young man was called up.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: At that time but you know they would have been a little older.

Interviewer: Older right

Rhoades: However you know I was I remember when Reg left to go to World War II I was with him of course I've got a picture somewhere I don't know where that is of us sitting on at the court house. You know they got together at the court house to be taken from there to somewhere else another town Evansville probably. And you know I was I thought I was perfectly grown then you know completely grown then.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Of course I wasn't but we were sweethearts and so I didn't date in my high school year even. I mean in my last year of school.

Interviewer: Right because he was deployed.

Rhoades: Because while he was gone I wouldn't even go with the group or anything like that anymore.

Interviewer: Do you remember if your family or even your husband well at the time he would have been your boyfriend but said anything about the way about like President Roosevelt? If they thought he was doing a good job or?

Rhoades: Reggie would seldom talk politics or his life in prison camp.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: I mean it was miracle this girl we knew only a very little of this that she's got in this book until she interviewed him on the phone first she interviewed him several times on the phone. And then she came out to see him and interviewed him some before the book was before she wrote that. She also wrote there's another story about her uncle in that same book and they were the best of friends Reggie and the uncle. As a matter of fact they found our property for us that we built on out at the farm.

Interviewer: Did while he was

Rhoades: And they were best friends.

Interviewer: That's nice.

Rhoades: And their children now are you know of course they're both dead both gone.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Naturally and so but we were still in contact through church and that sort of thing and any activity that's family oriented.

Interviewer: While he was gone did you because you would have been goodness fresh out of high school did you work?

Rhoades: Oh yeah I worked but I went to neighbors and fixed all the little old ladies hair. And got fifty cents for it I think a quarter or fifty cents. But the people who could afford it loved for me to come and do their hair.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: So I had that job I'd do that every Saturday I was fixing hair all day just about. No I never had worked anywhere in my life never expected to but be a house wife.

Interviewer: Right did you know anybody who took advantage of any of the new deal programs like the CCC or?

Rhoades: Oh yeah

Interviewer: You did?

Rhoades: My father's youngest brother did.

Interviewer: Oh okay do you remember if he had was it a good experience for him?

Rhoades: Well evidently it was gave him a livelihood and I remember I don't guess I ought to tell that but I remember one time I spent the night at my grandmother's during a storm because my mom and dad had gone somewhere and I was still pretty young. But I was there and I slept on a cot that AG was his name I slept on a cot when he came home and I kept feeling something crawling on me and biting me. And bedbugs he had brought bedbugs home.

Interviewer: Oh no

Rhoades: From the camp the barracks camp whatever it was. And oh my grandmother was horrified she said oh no it couldn't be but I just knew it was. And in those days bedbugs were prevalent I remember when I was just a just old enough to remember my mom would get all of her bedding springs and all out of the house every spring. Out in the yard and burn over the springs and places like that to be sure there was nothing anywhere. I've never felt one at my mother's but I did at grandmothers but she didn't know it was there because.

Interviewer: Well right because she wouldn't have slept on

Rhoades: Right

Interviewer: Well do you know did members of your family like your uncle or your dad or even yourself or your mom work at all towards the

Rhoades: WPA

Interviewer: Did you are you gonna tell us a little about that?

Rhoades: Gosh I just they called it we piddled around. Oh yeah people nearly everybody the man of the house had some temporary jobs with WPA when some of the other jobs failed. And so it was just a common thing and then we also got like I never saw fruit except what we grew on our trees. Except at Christmas time like a banana for instance we didn't have a banana until Christmas. And then it came in a commodity that we got. We would get some state commodities and everybody got them so it wasn't any kind of thing like somebody loafing or anything like that.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: It was just the way it was it was life then.

Interviewer: Did you feel like it was your family's duty to like do what you could for the war effort to help support

Rhoades: Oh absolutely everybody did.

Interviewer: Did you participate in like scrap drives and things like that?

Rhoades: I don't personally remember that but we had and I used to have one of those little books with stamps in it.

Interviewer: Right ration books?

Rhoades: Yeah I had a ration book in this house it's probably here somewhere I just can't find it right now. But I may run into it again one of these days but I did have one saved. And then my dad then when he was he worked like different shifts he worked mostly midnight shift. But he's work at other things too but he's one of the only one of the ones that had a vehicle there so he'd take neighbors to the hospitals or get their groceries or whatever they could get whatever they needed you know. He worked and helped I remember that and I don't remember ever feeling hungry. But I remember how wonderful it was to get those bananas at Christmas. And we didn't have grapes we had gooseberries you ever hear of gooseberries?

Interviewer: I have heard of them but I've never had a gooseberry.

Rhoades: Oh I can think of them right now and my mouth starts cramping. We played a game with gooseberries us kids. We played games that you made up you know. MY neighbors would be around and they'd be dad had homemade lawn chairs that he made our there now they call them Adirondacks or something.

Interviewer: Oh yeah right

Rhoades: Well he made a handful of them himself now and we'd set around in those and the gooseberries all lined one of the garden areas it was the outside line next to the grass before the house. So and they were pretty they were always green and pretty but when they'd come in we'd sit out there and pick had a game about how many we could get in our mouth. And try to chew them without crying at one time.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything because I know you talked about fruit do you remember anything else I know like jelly for instance you would get jelly substitutes.

Rhoades: My mom would make we had a great big pear tree in our front yard but he wouldn't let us pull a green pear. They had to ripen and fall from the tree if we had one at all before Christmas time. But then at the end of toward the end of the season we'd take the green pears still on the tree and wrap each one individually and put them under the front bedroom bed to ripen for Christmas. So we'd have the fresh fruit for Christmas.

Interviewer: Did your family buy or anyone that you knew buy war bonds?

Rhoades: Oh yes.

Interviewer: Do you remember like going to war bond rallies and seeing the entertainment they would have?



Rhoades: I don't remember any entertainment in that area unless it was you know. But yeah there was war bonds and all of that was just an everyday thing for us as a child at least.

Interviewer: Well you didn't know any better exactly that's true. Do you know anybody that specifically like your uncle and your dad that had any experience especially as minor with labor organizations unions during that time?

Rhoades: Oh there was unions and I started to tell you that the company the mine company that dad worked for had a big company store.

Interviewer: right

Rhoades: And you didn't get paid with cash you got paid with flints like some kind of little round and I had some of them too for a while I don't remember what I did with them. I know some of my family still has some but I don't have any. And but yeah and you'd get your meal and your flour and all the basics and you canned everything you ate just about yourself you didn't.

Interviewer: Did your mom ever can meat? I know some people canned meat.

Rhoades: Yeah sausages uh huh she'd pour the sausage grease into it and that would seal it all up in that jar. And actually that's what that old chifforobe out there used to be used for by my grandmother and she put all that stuff in there in that chest on the back porch.

Interviewer: Do you remember, yeah my grandmother did that, do you remember any of your family ever talking about because the fact that you were paid in a way that you could only shop in the company store do you remember

Rhoades: We didn't think anything about that.

Interviewer: You didn't feel like it was more difficult

Rhoades: We never had at that time it would cost maybe a dime to get into the movies.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Or something like that and I was so little I just got in free for a long time when I should have been paying.

Interviewer: Right because you're so tiny that's funny. I remember my little sister used to do that.

Rhoades: If they didn't ask me any questions I'd just walk on in.

Interviewer: Smart girl.

Rhoades: I didn't think anything was wrong with that then.

Interviewer: You didn't have a telephone in your house right?

Rhoades: No had to go to the neighbors for a telephone.

Interviewer: I was going to ask where you had to go your neighbor's house.

Rhoades: Uh huh yeah sure did and of course we knew the telephone operator. There was this little operator building in our town and we knew her real well. You know you just call her up and talk to her like.

Interviewer: Really she's a friend.

Rhoades: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you remember ever listening in on party lines?

Rhoades: Oh half the time when you picked up the phone several of the neighbors would pick up theirs at the same time.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Oh yeah and then you'd say hi. Have a neighborhood consult right there.

Interviewer: That's so funny. I know some people talk about trying to get to the phone really quickly before the person that the call was for picked up so you could be on the phone to listen eavesdrop.

Rhoades: Well I'm sure there was plenty of that went on.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: We never had a phone when I was a tiny child or I don't remember how long it was before we had a phone. We didn't have anything that wasn't a necessity.

Interviewer: My grandma didn't have electricity until she was 15.

Rhoades: We had cows and pigs we didn't even have a horse and I've loved horses all my life. I'd go other places like the place out on the farm where we used to go to ride horses and stuff like that. And riding horses and skating what was a highway was the entertainment that we had.

Interviewer: Well you would have been when the war broke out a senior in high school right or maybe even a junior when it first broke out.

Rhoades: Well yeah I would have been a junior when it first broke out.

Interviewer: Do you remember your teachers or your classmates talking about the war or saying you know this is what's going on or?

Rhoades: Well I don't remember an awful lot about that your mind was totally occupied with you know trying to keep your studies going. Geography was one of the toughest things I had. I could do math real good easy had a tough math teacher I mean tough meaning tight.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: She wouldn't take any kind of foolishness what so ever. She taught math and she meant for you to learn it. But now geography and that sort of thing I never studied it wasn't another world out there my world was just this little world.

Interviewer: Right I understand.

Rhoades: In those days.

Interviewer: Do you remember anyone in your community, I know you had a tight knit community, but anyone that because of ethnicity or political affiliation or anything like that that was considered kind of suspects during the war?

Rhoades: No

Interviewer: You didn't trust them?

Rhoades: No no no you would never have thought of any kind of anything like that even anybody doing you any harm. I mean there's many when I had to walk for a while we lived in a house with my grandmother and granddad in when they lived on a big farm. And I remember it just a little girl walking down this long dark alley get to meet the school bus to go to school.

Interviewer: It was a different time.

Right: Yeah and there was never any fear of anything going on.

Interviewer: Right do you know of anybody that was a contentious objector during the war? Like didn't want to serve didn't you know that refused to go?

Rhoades: I don't remember hearing much about that from my time.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: I don't remember.

Interviewers: A lot of people look back at the war years even though we were at war it was a hard time there was rationing but they look back on it as one of the best times in their lives. They feel like it was

Rhoades: You grow

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: You learn to depend on yourself your own ambitions. You except not having things that you might just want.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Your want list wasn't real great because you didn't give it a thought. You were happy to have what you had if you were warm we used to gather around another way we made some money during that area. A time was when dad would raise corn we'd all set around a big pot stove pot belly stove that was in a bedroom area in that house. And mom would put quilts on the back of chairs to keep our backs warm and we'd set around that stove and shell corn. And we'd stack it up I remember seeing stacks of corn going up the corner of that room. Daddy was tall and strong he could lift them up and they'd set there maybe a week before they went anywhere you know. But we'd get our meal that way he'd have some to grind and some to sell and some to give to neighbors like you say share some.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: If they didn't have corn.

Interviewer: Speaking of corn do you know anyone especially that lived maybe in the country during the depression you were a kid and the beginning of the war that made moonshine?

Rhoades: I don't know that knew but they were out there somewhere. Yeah and it wouldn't have had to be very far because we lived in what you would call country now although there were streets you know with houses fairly close together on little blocks it was still country.

Interviewer: Right do you remember as the war went on knowing any blue star or gold star mothers that had you know?

Rhoades: Yeah I'm sure there were I just don't remember who they were if I got out some of my old pictures I would know more about that. You know it's something I haven't given a lot of thought to.

Interviewer: Do you want to tell us a little bit about what you started to say about the Battle of the Bulge and what he had told you about that?

Rhoades: Well he didn't tell us anything.

Interviewer: Right she got it.

Rhoades: We pretty well got it out of that book. He talked about it after we had been to that meeting.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Because he saw that he had already been through the hard part releasing it from himself talking to her. And then when she did that and then we were honored at Fort Campbell he was honored and of course they invited the family. But and the girl that wrote it was honored and she won the prize that year.

Interviewer: Oh good for her.

Rhoades: And so you know that was

Interviewer: Before he was captured did you write back and forth?

Rhoades: Oh we corresponded back and forth we got and but we never got a word from the time we were notified that he was missing in action we didn't know that he was dead or alive. I think it was like a five month period but anyway it was several months. And he lost his grandmother during that time here who was another little bitty woman. She was the tiniest little woman I ever saw and she was all crippled up when I met here but she was another sweet lady. And his mother was my second mother really I you know I really couldn't tell much difference in the way I felt about them.

Interviewer: Was that Ma Smith?

Rhoades: Yeah that's Ma Smith. And his sister and her husband tried to entertain me as much as they could I stayed around with them a lot while Reggie was gone. We'd get together and we had a jukebox and she and I would dance up a storm while we made up stuff to send.

Interviewer: Oh really what kind of stuff did you send?

Rhoades: Oh little candies homemade candies we'd send boxes you know when we could. And but then when we got this message all we could do was wait. We got no word from for months and then we got word that he was in a hospital that he was we never got word that he was prisoner of war just that he was missing in action.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: Until another country it's in that book but I can't remember which one it was now came along and retrieved them and took the ones that were living out of there. He weighed less than 100 pounds when he got out of there he couldn't have lasted very long. And not far from them when they left there they saw a big building filled with first aid I mean Red Cross stuff that was supposed to have gone to the prisoners. You know they didn't get them. So they took them to this hospital in England and you know if it were today's time I could have flown over but we had to wait until he was physically able to even be sent back to the states to the hospital.

Interviewer: He was so weak. This is a really personal question but during the time that he was missing in action you were spending time with his sister and what did you

Rhoades: I always felt he was okay.

Interviewer: That's what I was going to ask.

Rhoades: Oh yeah and I relayed that to Ma every chance I got I said I know in my heart he's going to be okay. Of course that was youth speaking but at the time I did I believed it.

Interviewer: Did you know anyone else in your community that had boyfriends, husbands, brothers who were missing?

Rhoades: No

Interviewer: So you were going through it by yourself.

Rhoades: I know there's bound to be some out there but our time was consumed with ours I guess.

Interviewer: Oh course right.

Rhoades: But I don't remember I don't have any recollection of that and I know there must have been.

Interviewer: What year did he come home when he was finally well enough?

Rhoades: I don't even know let's see if I've got it down anywhere no this is all of our married time here.

Interviewer: And you married

Rhoades: It's probably in there.

Interviewer: You married after he came home right?

Rhoades: Not long after he came home.

Interviewer: Right wanted to go ahead.

Rhoades: I told you about painting the porch? When he drove up I was painting mom and dad's porch and I was painting it grey. And we knew he had gotten to the states but we couldn't do anything about that either.

Interviewer: You didn't know when he was coming.

Rhoades: Didn't know when he was coming or anything. But we were sprucing up getting ready for him so I was painting the porch I was the painter and had the bucket of can of grey paint there had the brush just a going and this car drove up and it was Reggie. And before he could get out of the car I was on my way out there with paintbrush in hand and I slung the bucket somewhere I don't know where I slung the bucket. But I still had the paint brush and I got paint all over him.

Interviewer: I'm sure he thought that was okay.

Rhoades: He didn't care.

Interviewer: Oh I love that.

Rhoades: And you know it was after he came home we saved and saved with money you know trying to save money I was sticking in a chest of drawers front room chest of drawer we called it and saved that money until we could get enough to

Interviewer: Yeah Katie is engaged right now so I 'm sure she is all saving she understands.

Rhoades: You're not having any of this kind of trouble. Well and we married we didn't have a formal wedding at all and didn't even tell my momma and daddy until after it was over. I didn't want them to have to fuss about it and so his sister and her husband we got with them they took us. They were our standups and they took us to get married we went to the preachers house and got married. And nobody there but us you know and then we went and told his mother and daddy and mom and dad and we stayed at his sister's house that night. And we stayed there for a while. He still was you know not in the

greatest of health but at that time but her looked good. They just moved him up I mean they had pumped him so full of vitamins and everything his face was fat when he came home. And looked back like he did you know as far as his size. But I can't imagine what he must have looked like when he was a prisoner.

Interviewer: Did he you may not know the answer to this I don't know if she did he keep in touch with anyone that he was in the camp with?

Rhoades: He did for a while and I tried to get in touch with them after he got so sick here you know after he took the tuberculosis and to stay so long again in the hospital. And Reggie's mother and dad came down and stayed with me and one of the tender spots when they found out when I found out I had to go to the hospital my little son at that time who was just two years older than his sister and she was not old enough to understand anything about it. But he put I was in the bedroom sitting on the bed and he came in and put his arms around me around my neck and he patted me and he said don't you worry mamma I'll take care of Debbie I'll take care of my sister he said. And boy was that tough and it was that was the tough decision I had to make though we didn't feel like Dr. Doughn was in town then and he was my baby doctor and he really had a personal interest in everything that happened to every one of his babies. And so we got together the parents got together and Dr. Doughn and me and tried to decide what would be best for the children because who knew how long I was going to have to stay.

Interviewer: Right of course.

Rhoades: So they decided that it would be better if they had not to stay with grandparents because you know they were thought of as older being older. And they thought somebody younger and so my brother and his wife had married and you know and they were married and lived in Alabama. And they gave up their home, no they had no children never did, and so they adopted some later on and those are our children too. But they kept Debbie and Jeff and I know that was really tough on them because they had never been parents before and I know it was hard tough. But they stayed with them they moved in and took care of my children and we lived in the let's see where did we live at that time? Gosh I can't even remember I don't know I guess we lived on Hickory Grove and so they lived they took care of the children got them in school and all.

Interviewer: Right and you ended up staying for eight months you said?

Rhoades: I stayed away from them for eight months because I needed to.

Interviewer: Right of course.

Rhoades: And then I even stayed in bed for a good while after I got home. And when I came home Reggie was being able to come home on weekends some then too. We had twin beds in the bedroom there at home and the precious girl I don't want to leave her out who was a neighbor of mine in \_\_\_\_ growing up but her parents were really weird they wouldn't let her participate in anything with anybody else. They had a storm shelter they'd go to and they kind of stayed to themselves and they dressed here when kids were beginning to bring their dresses up a little they dressed her in long dresses and you know she didn't have anything out of the home.

Interviewer: Right

Rhoades: But anyway when she graduated from school valedictorian from high school and so by this time her dad had already died and her mother had softened up a little bit. But they let her come well Reggie had a cousin who put a plea in the paper down there that I needed help so I could go home and be home with the children. But then I thought of Martha and I asked her because they wouldn't let her go to public work at all but they allowed her to come to my house.

Interviewer: Right to come to your home.

Rhoades: That's where she met her husband too.

Interviewer: Oh see

Rhoades: Her husband once she got to my house when she got to my house I started helping her dress different and I had a good friend and I had a wonderful friend who was running the U.S.O. then. And so we talked I said we need to let her have some kind of life you know she loved my children like they were her own and they loved her the same way. And her husband was a soldier he died he and Reggie died about the same time. But anyway I mean later her's died then mine but when this happened no they actually died close to the other because we were in the hospital at the same time at one time. In and out in and out you know one of those things. But anyway she said he allowed her to come and so she came and I talked to my U.S.O. friend and she said I will said I would like to have her come and help serve refreshments and that sort of thing. And said I will be careful that she doesn't leave the building with somebody you know that sort of thing. Well she had been going for a long time and she'd come home all excited and tell me about things that had happened you know. And then she finally she said I've met somebody I'd like to date there and so I said okay you bring him here.

Interviewer: Right so she could have some time with him.

Rhoades: And they courted in that living room for a year and even well

Tape ended