

JO SANFORD  
HOMEFRONT WWII

State your name for the record please.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Josephine Stanford and I go by Jo.

During the Great Depression how did you and your ..... were you old enough to remember the Great Depression?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Not really but I remember the year following it when we really came out of the depression.

Okay like the early 40s?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Uh-huh, late 30s and early 40s.

Was your family employed; was your dad working?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes, he was a farmer.

Okay, so you had plenty to eat then?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes.

You were here in Tennessee?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh yes.

Right here in Montgomery County?

**Mrs. Sanford:** In Montgomery County, yes.

Do you remember ever being hit hard during the Depression?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Well, you know, I just thought we were all alike. We didn't have much. I didn't know really that we were too different from anyone else. I thought we were all that way.

So really the farm, that's the only occupation he had? Was it a big farm or small?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Small.

How many brothers or sisters did you have?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I had eight brothers and two sisters. My older brothers were so much older than I that we weren't home together. They were gone by the time I came along.

Now did they go to World War II, your brothers?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I had three; two that were in the war and the other one was in the war but I don't think he was ever in a battle.

Were they both Army or Navy?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No, one was Coast Guard and one was Army. He was in the Big One.

The Big Red One. He saw action didn't he?

**Mrs. Sanford:** He saw D-Day; he was in it all.

How old were you then when they left for war?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I was a junior in high school at Pearl Harbor and my brother was about three years older than I was.

You have a pretty good memory. Did you go to work when you got out of high school?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes I did. I worked for a year or so before I went college. I worked for the BF Goodwrench Company making gas mask. I worked there for awhile and then I went into the \_\_\_\_\_. I guess I was with the BF Goodwrench Company for a year or a year and a half.

On the \_\_\_\_ here in town?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes.

Where are they located?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Vulcan.

Vulcan. Okay so it used to be BF Goodwrench. Was it mostly women with the guys gone?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yeah a lot of women because a lot of the men were gone.

I'm going to kind of go back a little bit before the war. About 1939, let's see that doesn't put you very old does it?

**Mrs. Sanford:** In 1939 I was a freshman in high school.

Oh you were a freshman, okay. How aware do you think, do you remember your family talking and being worried about the Nazi's and what was happening in Europe at that time?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I remember it was the summer before I went to school before I started as a freshman. I remember about invading Poland. I remember that.

Did you'll talk about it at school?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I don't remember that we talked a lot about it at school. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, of course we didn't have television, but when President Roosevelt made his speech and said "The greatest thing we have to fear is fear itself" our principle, Mr. Matthews, got us all together in the small high school in the auditorium and got a radio and we all listened to Roosevelt's speech on the radio. I was just scared half to death.

Oh I bet you were. Well that was momentous. You got together and listened to it on the radio. Was there anybody scared, maybe a few friends in class where it seemed like kind of on the west coast they were afraid that they would be attacked next? Did you feel that here much?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No I didn't feel that way.

Nobody was really concerned?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No.

Now you brothers, were they already in the military when Pearl Harbor happened or did they sign up?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No, I think it was after Pearl Harbor that my brothers signed up.

Okay, okay; and they both came back from the war?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes.

That's good. Do you remember how you or maybe your parents felt about the way that President Roosevelt handled the war and the domestic problems and all that?

**Mrs. Sanford:** We were all pleased with President Roosevelt. He really, I thought, helped us at that time before the war. We started getting jobs back; WPA and those kinds of jobs.

Did anybody in your family, were they affected by any of the policies like the WPA or the CCC; of course they have TBA right here.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh yes, the cc camp; the CCC. My husband was in the cc camp and so were two of my bothers.

Oh okay, now was this before you were married to your husband?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh yes.

Were you married to him when he went over to the war?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No.

You didn't meet him until afterwards?

**Mrs. Sanford:** During the war I met him, then he went overseas and then he was occupying Japan for a year. After he came home from that, I guess that was in 1946 when he came home, and we married in 1947.

He was in the Army?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No, Marines.

Oh, I'm sorry. Don't tell him I said he was in the Army. He will be upset with me. Did you correspond back and forth with him then?

**Mrs. Sanford:** All during the war.

Did you keep all your letters?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I have every one of them.

Do you?

**Mrs. Sanford:** He begs me to throw them away. But I haven't.

Okay, well don't. I think those are important to keep. It has to be printed for future generations.

**Mrs. Sanford:** It shows parts where it was cut out and sent to him so some of them have several parts to them; maybe a line or two.

How often, the mail was pretty regular from there?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh no. He was in Okinawa and Saipan and \_\_\_\_\_; I have forgotten all the islands. Some weeks I wouldn't hear at all. Some days I would get stacks of letters.

Now you were working at BF Goodwrench at the time?

**Mrs. Sanford:** At that time I had already gone to Martin College in Pulaski.

Martin Methodist? In your correspondence, he didn't keep your letters, does he still have them?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No. I suspect it would be hard to keep letters over there.

I was just thinking if you had a connection of girlfriends that also had guys that were away at war at the same time or were you kind of by yourself at Martin Methodist.

**Mrs. Sanford:** While I was there, I don't remember anymore.

You were back here, do you remember about the rationing during the war?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Sugar was rationed. Meat was rationed and coffee. Butter, you used oleo margarine. Back in that day it was not colored. We had to mix the coloring into it ourselves; and then we thought it was the greatest thing since sliced bread, they put a little bubble of coloring in it and you could burst that little bubble and squeeze it all in that package and get the coloring all in the margarine.

That was a great thing.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh that was a great thing.

How much sugar and meat did you get?

Mrs. Sanford: I don't remember. I don't really know that. But it wasn't a whole lot; very little.

You just had a little card and that's how they knew. Do you still have yours by any chance?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No, I surely don't.

There has been talk of the black market during this time. Do you have any recall of black market items?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No. I know when my brother was coming home from overseas and also when Bill came home, some friends let me have a few extra points.

Oh so you could use \_\_\_\_\_. That was sweet. Did you participate in any kind of drives to collect iron or aluminum or any of that if there was some of that going on?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I can remember it going on in school but I don't remember it what kind. I know at school we would have those drives.

Okay. War bonds at the war bond rally?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yeah, we all bought war bonds. I cashed mine in though.

When you were working at BF Goodwrench before you went off to college did they have any kind of labor union or anything going on there at the time you remember? At the assembly you worked at you were making the gas mask were you out on a .....?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I was on an assembly line at first before I went into \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know, I guess they had the union but I don't remember anything about it.

Well you were just there a short time and then off to college and that is where you made your education and became a teacher at Martin Methodist.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Well, that was just a two year college so I just went one year there and then I came home. I worked a while and then I went back to school. After Bill came home I worked a year before we were married and he worked a year.

Where did he work after he got out of the Marines?

**Mrs. Sanford:** He worked at Fort Campbell. He was on that secret project for awhile and I think he worked at the fire department. He quit that and went to school at Austin Peay. We both graduated from Austin Peay.

Well good, that's nice to know.

**Mrs. Sanford:** We lived on the campus at Austin Peay.

You did? What dorm?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh we weren't in dorms, we were in tire shacks. They were kind of like Army barracks.

I know what you are talking about. So they didn't even have the dorms.

**Mrs. Sanford:** We had the single people that I guess lived in them and maybe some married couples; but we had an apartment, a two bedroom.

Did he get to go to school on the GI Bill?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes.

Oh that is a good thing. Does he still get together; do you guys meet up with his buddies from that time period?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No. Often times he has wanted to, but we never had.

I always here about them going on.

**Mrs. Sanford:** A lot of people do that. He's never stayed in contact very much with them.

When he was gone off and you were at college do you recall any blue star or gold star mothers or stickers in the windows?

**Mrs. Sanford:** We had one here in Montgomery County that I remember.

Did you know?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yeah. Ethel Adkins. It was her son Frank Adkins that was killed and quite well-known. I knew her, but at college I didn't know anybody.

Plus at a place this small.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Now they may have been there, I just didn't know them.

Now was he the only service member that you personally knew that was killed or injured during the war or did you know other people?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh yeah, one of the boys in my class was killed during the war; from high school. I knew his dad but I can't recall his name.

The boy from high school, do you remember where?

**Mrs. Sanford:** He was killed at Iwo Jima.

You did not have a telephone, is that what you said, during the war or did you?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No, we didn't.

No TV but you had the radio.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes, just a radio. We may have had a telephone part of the time. Out in the county we didn't get electricity until the 30s.

When the Americans look back on the war years as the best years of their lives, despite the sacrifices is that how you look back on them for you?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Not as the best years of my life. With my children have been the best years of my life and my grandchildren.

How many children do you have besides \_\_\_\_\_?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I have a son.

Okay you have a son and a daughter.

**Mrs. Sanford:** And we have four grandchildren; two boys and two girls.

I think that the reason why people say this is because they say after the depression it's a good feeling for everybody to have jobs. Do you remember that it kind of lifted the country?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh yes. People had jobs, had money or change; it was a good time. In the 50s was a good time. The boys were all home from service and in school or with jobs. It was a good time.

There was some talk of course of spies. Do you remember anyone that you might have known whose loyalty might have been questioned during the war?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No I didn't.

Montgomery County probably wasn't real \_\_\_\_\_, but families had been here for many generations at that time.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Fort Campbell came here at that time.

Is that the first time Fort Campbell was here. Did they put that up...?

**Mrs. Sanford:** It was being built probably during the late 30s. 1939-1940, I'm not sure. Bill would know.

Did you know anyone who claimed to be a \_\_\_\_\_ and just did not go?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Not now I can't think of no one.

\_\_\_\_\_ boys still would have been boys at that age. Did they still want to go after Pearl Harbor?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I'm sure quite a few did. Bill, my husband, surely did. He signed up very early. His mother had to sign for him.

Oh God.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Of course I didn't know him then.

He went in the Marine Corp. I guess he was wanting to go. Does he ever say differently after he got there?

**Mrs. Sanford:** No.

He was very proud.

**Mrs. Sanford:** Oh yes and he still is.

Good for him. So you'll didn't get married until he gets back? You didn't even know him until he was back. No you did, because you corresponded, I'm so sorry!

**Mrs. Sanford:** He was in service when I met him.

Was he home on leave?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes. I met him through his brother. I was working at Goodwrench and then everybody who could rode together. There was such a shortage or tires and gasoline. Several of us were riding to and from work with Bill's brother. While he was on leave he had brought his car so he came to pick us up and that is when I met him.

That's a good story.

**Mrs. Sanford:** He had just taken his girlfriend home from a date and I met him.

Good for you! How long have ya'll been married now?

**Mrs. Sanford:** 54 years; it will be 55 in March.

Is there anything else that you remember about the war or anything that you want to talk about?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I remember how completely different it was then than now. Now we see it while it is happening.

Oh like on CNN?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes. Then we would just pick up what we could on radio.

Did you know really much to turn the radio on? Did they tell you like we had a big battle here or there?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I don't remember that but I'm sure it was way after before we would ever know about it.

When D-Day was going on do you remember knowing about it?

**Mrs. Sanford:** Yes, I remember it being on the radio.

Oh okay. They didn't have the big bombing campaign before.

**Mrs. Sanford:** I don't know.

Thank you! Is there anything else you want to cover?

**Mrs. Sanford:** I can't think of anything.

(Tape Ends)