

Obama Kansas Heritage Project

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Interviewer: Kym Dickey, with Teresa Baumgartner and  
Steve Cless

Interviewee: Christina (Henry) Snyder

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Videographer: Steve Cless

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Run time: [1:02:32]

Note: Q1. Kym Dickey; Q2. Teresa Baumgartner; Q3.  
Steve Cless

Q1. Whatever. (Laughs.) All right. Christine, I'd like you to start by stating your full name and your date of birth.

CS. Okay. I'm Christine Snyder, born June the 1st, 1923.

Q1. All right. And what is today's date?

Q2. The 28th.

CS. October the 28th, 1913 -- I mean, 2913 [sic]. I'm sorry.

Q1. 2013, uh-huh. And where are we at today? In your home.

CS. Oh, you're in my home --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- in Wichita, Kansas.

Q1. In Wichita, Kansas, uh-huh. Okay. And so, what were your parents' names?

CS. Ed and Gladys Henry.

Q1. Ed and Gladys Henry, uh-huh. And where were they from?

CS. Illinois.

Q1. Illinois. And how did they end up in the Augusta area?

CS. They came out here on a train and got off in El Dorado, and then they went down around Atlanta first and worked in the oil field, my dad did.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. Then, he was moved to south Augusta.

Q1. What kind of work did he do for the oil field?

CS. He was -- he ran the pump station.

Q1. The pump station, uh-huh.

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. And then, where were you born at?

CS. South Augusta in a home.

Q1. All right. And you told me that was called Browntown?

CS. No, that's the school I went to.

Q1. Oh, okay. So you were -- it was a home in south of Augusta that you were born at.

CS. I live -- what they call -- on Miller Corner. It would be what they call a shotgun house.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. Several people lived in that neighborhood.

Q1. Okay. So there was a large neighborhood out there outside of Augusta?

CS. Yeah, not really large, but it was -- I don't know how many homes was there.

Q1. All right. And so you went to grade school at Browntown.

CS. At Browntown.

Q1. And what grade did that go up to?

CS. Eighth grade.

Q1. To eighth grade, mm-hmm.

CS. We had to go to El Dorado to take a test to see if we was able to go to high school.

Q1. Oh.

CS. That's something new, isn't it?

Q1. Uh-huh. So can you tell me a little bit about the -- the school? You said it was pretty special.

CS. It was a large school for that area, larger than any others, and they also had several classrooms. They had a stage. And bathrooms for boys and girls, and then we had a gym area that we played -- got to play basketball in or games.

Q1. Huh-uh. And a lot of elementary schools didn't have those kind of facilities back then; right?

CS. No. And they had a lot of what they called "community nights" that different things would go on around the school, and people come there.

Q1. Uh-huh. So you took your test in El Dorado and apparently passed it --

CS. I guess.

Q1. -- Because you got to go to Augusta High School. How did you get to school?

CS. My mother drove me every day to school.

Q1. Uh-huh. And what kind of car did she have? Do you remember?

CS. You know, I don't know. Let's see.

There's somebody at the door. Oh, that may be a guy checking the -- I don't know what he's doing.

(The video skips)

-- car. We had a -- I think it was an Essick. Phonetic spelling. Essex was an auto brand]

Q1. An Essick?

CS. Essick car.

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. Essick.

Q1. I've never heard of that, but you know I'll be looking it up online.

CS. Well, I have some pictures of it.

Q1. Oh, uh-huh. Maybe you can share those with us later.

CS. Then -- then we got a new car. I don't know -- a new Ford. I don't know when we got it.

Q1. So you went to school in Augusta, then, from 9th through 12th grade?

CS. Yes.

Q1. And graduated in --

CS. 1941.

Q1. 1941. Did you happen to know Madelyn Payne, the President's --

CS. No, I didn't --

Q1. -- Grandmother?

CS. -- I didn't. I knew -- I'd heard of her, but I mean personally, I didn't know her.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. She was a year ahead of me, and when you live in the country, you don't really mix with a lot of kids.

Q1. Oh, uh-huh. We've heard that from several different people that --

CS. Well, mainly, because you had to go right -- a lot of them had to go home and do chores, but I didn't have to do that, luckily. But the only time I'd stay late after school is when I played in basketball, or so, or tennis, or something like that.

Q1. Oh, uh-huh. Did they have girls' teams for basketball and tennis or --?

CS. Just in our homerooms.

Q1. Just in your homerooms.

CS. You couldn't have girl teams then.

Q1. Uh-huh. But you played basketball and tennis?

CS. Yeah.

Q1. That's fun. Did you have any siblings?

CS. One sister, Donna Dee. [Phonetic spelling]

Q1. One sister. And then, did she -- did she go to high school the same time you did or --

CS. No, she started grade school when I started high school.

Q1. Oh, so she's quite a bit younger than you are then.

CS. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, she's nine years younger than I am.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. They let her come to Augusta school. She should have went to Browntown, but they let her go to Augusta, because my mother took me to school every day, so make it easier on everybody to send her to town.

Q1. To have you all in town.

CS. She went to Garfield School. You probably did too.

Q1. Oh. I did for a few years.

CS. Mm-hmm.

Q1. So Browntown was mostly a community of houses, so you did all your shopping in Augusta?

CS. In Augusta.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. There was a little store there across from the school, a little grocery store --

Q1. Oh.

CS. -- but we did our shopping in --

Q1. So it was kind of a convenience store in Browntown.

CS. Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah.

Q1. Uh-huh. Are there anything -- anything special that you remember about your times of coming in town? Was there -- you know, when you did your shopping and stuff, was there anything, you know, that you got to do? Like, did you ever go to the movies or --?

CS. Oh, yes, went to the movie.

Q1. Uh-huh. And was the opera house built during that time?

CS. I don't think so.

Q1. Okay. And --

CS. I don't know how new the Augusta Theater was at that time, but we went to that a lot.

Q1. I think it was built in '38, but I'm not exactly sure.

CS. Well, then, it probably started there when I started high school. That's when it was going then.

Q1. Mm-hmm. So in going back to high school, I know that you had to go home probably a lot, but some of the people that we'd interviewed said that they had gone to the drugstore and

listened to the jukebox and that kind of thing. Were you ever allowed to do something like that?

CS. Well, I never -- I didn't do that. I just had this little sister. If I had a basketball game, my mother knew I wasn't going to be able to go home until later, and she would come over to the high school and sit and wait until I got -- you know, she'd watch the games, then we'd go home. My mother would come and get us.

Q1. Were there any other kind of clubs or anything in school that you were involved with?

CS. Well, we had Girl Reserves, and I belonged to the Pep Club.

Q1. Uh-huh. What are the Girl Reserves?

CS. Well, it's really a Christian group, kind of like Hi-Y, but I can't think what they really -- it was kind of like a Christian group.

Q1. Okay. And Hi-Y was a Christian group too?

CS. That's the boys, uh-huh.

Q1. Okay. Well, that had come up when we were talking to Virginia Ewalt, and she wasn't sure what that was so --

CS. Well, I think it was -- pertained to a Christian background to it.

Q1. Uh-huh. So after school -- after you graduated from Augusta, you told me that you went to Butler County College.

CS. I went to nurses' -- entered nurses' training that year --



Q1. Nursing training.

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. In El Dorado?

CS. El Dorado, Allen Memorial Hospital.

Q1. And did you live over there or --

CS. I lived in the nursing home in the -- wait a minute. Come back.

It's not a nursing home; it's where the students lived, you know, in a home. We called it the nurses' home.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. Today that sounds bad.

Q1. Big difference, isn't it?

CS. But we didn't have a very fancy place to live in, because I was in a room with three girls, and they were used to being with that many girls. We had two twin beds, one rollaway under the bed.

Q1. So it was kind of crowded quarters, huh?

CS. Yeah, it was.

Q1. So --

CS. Then, see, I went to junior college there --

Q1. Okay.

CS. -- plus having classes at the hospital, plus working too. They kept us busy.

Q1. Sounds like it. So did you graduate from the junior college?

CS. No, no. I just had classes pertaining to -- that fit in our nursing schedule education.

Q1. Uh-huh. And then, was it during that time that you went to Kansas City for the training?

CS. Well, my husband was a Marine. He was in California, and he was sent to Chicago for schooling, and then he had a furlough, and he was going to come home and wanted to get married then, and at that time, the nurses could not be married and be in school, and so I went to the head lady and asked her if I could get married. I think her hat just went up [motions]. I was scared to death. So she finally gave me permission.

Then, I took -- take my exams, and then we got married, and then we had car trouble, and I couldn't get back over here to go catch a train to Kansas City, and he had to go into Chicago with me too, so he was both being -- you know, had to wait for a -- get a ride.

So anyway, the next day, we went -- I went to Kansas City, and he got off with me, and this lady was really -- to me, she wasn't very nice at all. She said I had to go on duty right now. I had to change clothes and go to work. I said, "I'd like to tell him goodbye." She said, "No, you cannot do that," and I said, "Well, I am," so it sounded real crazy today. I'm glad my kids didn't do what I was doing.

Anyway, I came home, and he went on to Chicago, and that was a very tearful crying session for me.

Q1. Uh-huh. So -- so what year did you -- you and your husband get married?

CS. 1943.

Q1. And what is his name?

CS. Gilbert Dean Snyder.

Q1. And he was already enlisted in the military at that time?

CS. He's a marine.

Q1. Uh-huh. And how did you two meet?

CS. We met at Cumberland Church. Do you know where that is? South of Augusta.

Q1. Yes, yes, out off of old Haverhill Road, I think.

CS. No.

Q1. No.

CS. It's not very far from 77 now.

Q1. Okay. I know the area.

CS. There's a cemetery out there --

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. -- Cumberland Cemetery. I think it's called Cumberland.

Q1. And so you met at church services there?

CS. Yes, uh-huh. Yeah. He was in high school and so was I. We'd known each other for a long time.

Q1. Oh. Did he -- and so he went to Augusta High School too?

CS. No, he went to Potwin.

Q1. Oh, okay.

CS. His parents had moved down there on a farm, and they used to live in that area, and they went to that church, so he was in school in Potwin living with his sister, so he came down to see his parents and came to church with them, and that's how I met him.

And what's funny, he used to -- my little sister was little, you know. He would always wink at her, and she'd say, "Mama, that man just winks at me all the time." My mother told her turn around, he couldn't wink. [Laughs.]

Q1. So where did you and Gilbert --

CS. Where were we married?

Q1. -- make your home at? Yeah, where were you married at?

CS. First Baptist Church in Wichita.

Q1. Okay. And then, where did you make your home at when you were first married?

CS. Well, we didn't until I went to California when he came back from overseas, and we lived in a garage apartment.

Q1. Okay.

CS. First, we ended up playing room in a garage. Very hard to get a place to live.

Q1. In California?

CS. In Central California in Pearl Valley.

Q1. Mm-hmm. So can you tell me a little bit about his service?

CS. Well, he -- after he graduated from school in Chicago, he went back to California and was sent overseas right then, to South Pacific -- on a lot of different islands. They repaired planes that had been shot at, and then they were bombed an awful lot on this island -- these islands, several islands.

And he really -- he had a good way of telling his parents where he was, because he had a grandpa that was Gilbert, had a school friend, Mary Anna, and an Uncle Roy -- the Roy Islands -- and some more. They could keep track of him.

Q1. So he could mention those names --

CS. Yeah.

Q1. -- And they knew where he was that way?

CS. Yeah. They'd just say something about them, you know, because at that time, they censored all the mail --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- you know.

Q1. So did you have any children?

CS. I do. We did, yes, after we got back out of the service, 1947.

Q1. Okay. So after he got -- came home from the war then.

CS. We lived here in Wichita, and he went back to work at Beech. See, he worked at Beech before he went in the service.

Q1. Oh, okay.

CS. He enlisted in the marines.

Q1. So after -- we'll go back to when you were in the nursing -- the nursing home.

CS. Yeah.

Q1. Did you graduate and become a nurse --

CS. No.

Q1. -- Eventually? No.

CS. See, I -- no, I didn't go back.

Q1. Oh, you didn't go back after that?

CS. No.

Q1. And so -- but Gilbert was gone overseas, and you were here during the war?

CS. Yeah. Then I worked at Boeing then.

Q1. You worked at Boeing. And what was your job there?

CS. I worked in small parts, riveted with machines.

Q1. You riveted with machines?

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. So you were a Rosie the Riveter?

CS. Yeah, that's me.

Q1. Uh-huh. How long did you do that?

CS. Let's see. I don't know for sure when I went to work. Probably -- let's see. Probably in June I went to work. I lived in Augusta and rode the bus -- Ballinger's buses --

Q1. Oh, uh-huh.

CS. -- back and forth. I worked on -- I worked third shift, because I got more money - [laughs]

Q1. Oh, yeah, the shift differential.

CS. -- and I worked there until probably December of '44, because I had -- I had an appendectomy, and he was -- he was on his way home when I was in the hospital.

Q1. Oh.

CS. I got word that he was coming home when I was in the hospital.

Q1. Uh-huh. And so, when he came home, where did you live then?

CS. Then we lived in California.

Q1. That's when you lived in California.

CS. Uh-huh, yeah.

Q1. Okay. And how long were you there?

CS. Uh -- that would be in December '44 until '45 when the war was over, and they released everybody. We got out, I think, in -- oh, November the 11th, Armistice Day, he got out.

Q1. Oh, mm-hmm.

CS. I remember that real easy.

Q1. And so, after the war, did you move back to Augusta?

CS. No, we moved here in Wichita.

Q1. You moved here to Wichita.

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. And then, is that where your sons were born --

CS. Yes.

Q1. -- were here in Wichita?

CS. Uh-huh, yeah.

Q1. So you would have grown up during the Depression era?

CS. Yes.

Q1. Is there anything you -- or what can you tell me about times here?

CS. Well, I was going to say, at my age at time, we were lucky. My dad had a good steady job, and he made good money, more than a lot of them did, because he ran this pump station -- pump engine.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. I guess that's what you'd call it. The men that worked on the rod -- rod roof -- worked on the rod lines -- that wasn't him but --

My folks, you know, they come from farm life, themselves. So they always had a big garden, and they raised chickens, and so we had plenty to eat, so I've never been one that didn't have enough to eat.

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. We -- we didn't have a cow. We had milk delivered. I don't know who did that. I can remember seeing a bottle of milk when it was so cold, it was frozen, and the cream was up over the top [motions], you know. I picked it up. Oh, I don't know.



Q1. So -- and I know -- what -- can you tell me a little bit about your house, like, as far as how was it heated and --

CS. We had gas heating. We had gas for heats and gas for lights, so our lights -- to us, they were bright, brighter than the lantern -- I mean, the lamps that people had, Coleman lamps.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. And we had plenty of gas. We'd cook with gas too. We had running water in the house, but it was cold. We did not have a bathroom in the house, but my dad had -- on this house would be a shotgun house, but they'd added a large room for a kitchen, and then my dad built a porch on it inside, covered up, you know, walls on it, and that's where we could take baths at in the wintertime.

Q1. Uh-huh. So you'd heat your water and fill the tub or --

CS. Yeah.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. We'd use a tub -- big ol' round tub.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. Can't imagine getting clean there, but it did.

Q1. So -- and is that the -- probably the same tub, maybe, you did your laundry in?

CS. No.

Q1. No?

CS. My dad was very mechanical, and he figured out -- he took a big oil tank, a clean one -- you know, a big -- I guess you'd call it an oil barrel --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- cut a hole in it, fix it, and so -- fasten on the rod line, and it would go back and forth and wash your clothes.

Q1. Oh, so you had your own homemade washing machine then.

CS. Yeah, we had a washer.

And then, to rinse the clothes, around this big -- had the engine in it. They had a huge tank -- wooden tank that had warm water in it, because it circulated in through the engine for the -- that kept it working inside --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- and so it was warm, so my mother used to rinse clothes in that water, but my sister and I, we were told not to get around it, but we could get up and kind of help, but we never -- that was a no-no for us, and we knew that you could drown in that thing, because it was tall.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. I know my dad used to take baths in there in the summertime, you know.

Q1. Uh-huh. So --

CS. It was always clean water.

Q1. That's good. As far as your clothes, did you buy those at the store? Did your mom sew?

CS. My mother made a lot, and we bought some at Calvert's.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. Yeah.

Q1. Calvert's was a great store, wasn't it?

CS. That's right. Wonderful people worked in there.

It was really funny; when my niece got married in California, I couldn't find a dress anyplace in Wichita, and I -- one day, I went to Augusta, found one. I bought it at Calvert's. I told my sister, "This is really hilarious; went back to Augusta to Calvert's."

Q1. Have to leave the big city to find what you wanted.

CS. I guess that's hard to do today over there, to find something.

Q1. It is. It is. It just is not quite the town it used to be.

CS. That's too bad.

Q2. Are you looking at me?

Q1. Yeah. Where do I need to go now?

Q2. Well, I'd love to hear -- because you -- you grew up -- the little shotgun house you --

CS. Yeah.

Q2. -- described from your childhood, was that by the pump? Was that on the same land as the pump --

CS. Yes.

Q1. -- Out in the oil field?

CS. Yes, uh-huh. Yeah, we had another -- we had a cave there we could go in storm -- thunder storms. My dad had -- we had beautiful flowers down there. My mother planted beautiful -- had planted a lot of gladiolus bulbs --

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. -- and they were beautiful. In fact, she took a bouquet -- I get -- in the hospital when I was in training, the flowers. And we -- my dad -- I don't know where -- I've often wondered -- you know, stuff you wonder when you get older -- where he got the lumber at, because he built a double-car garage. We had a house for chickens, and he also built a barn. He also built me a nice playhouse. Where he got all this lumber, I have no idea. You know, you just think, "Well, where did all this stuff come from?"

Q1. So the cave was -- was that a natural cave?

CS. No, man -- man-made.

Q1. It was one that you dug out for a storm shelter?

CS. Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. It -- it had another building right by it that had all the -- where my dad kept the records of everything of the power. And then, a big slab of cement in front of this powerhouse was where I learned how to roller skate on that.

Q1. Oh.

CS. It was a big -- big porch-like --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- and that's where I learned how to skate. And I loved to skate. Augusta had their nice skating rink when I was in high school. That's one place I went to a lot.

Q1. Was to the roller rink?

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. Uh-huh. So now, did they have the -- did they have shoe skates back then, or were they just -- you strapped them onto your shoes?

CS. Clip-on, yeah. Clip on your shoes.

Q1. Uh-huh. And you used a key, I think to --

CS. Yeah. Mm-hmm, yeah. Yeah.

Q1. -- To tighten them, or make them shorter or longer, and locked them into place.

CS. I don't know if they ever got shoe skates there at Prigmores or not.

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. I just don't know how -- when they went out of business, really.

Q1. Now, was the roller rink -- was it on 7th Street?

CS. Uh-huh, down there where Jack -- where Jack has his restaurant.

Q1. Uh-huh. Okay. That's what I thought I'd heard from a long time ago.

CS. Uh-huh. Yeah, that's where it was.

I don't -- I don't think it burned down. The -- his restaurant burned down one time, but I don't know what happened. Maybe it was tore down, I guess.

Q1. It could be.

CS. But (inaudible) that was a good place to have real good clean fun at. Wasn't anything going on bad then.

Q1. Uh-huh. A lot of the girls talked about during the war years that they would get together and, like, go to the park and take pictures to send to the guys overseas. Did you ever do anything like that?

CS. No, because, see, I wasn't around there. I spent most my time working at Boeing, because I worked, then, ten hours, shifts, and then it took me an hour to get to work and an hour to get home.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. Didn't have much time.

Q1. And you were still living with your parents at that time; right?

CS. Mm-hmm. Yeah, I was living in Augusta. I was staying -- we was living in the oil building then.

Q1. Oh.

CS. It was easier to get to work --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- and back out and forth out there.

Q1. Uh-huh. So they had moved into town then?

CS. No, just my mother and my sister.

Q1. Okay.

CS. My mother worked out there too.

Q1. Out at Boeing?

CS. At Boeing.

Yeah, that's a long time ago; isn't it? You know, in high school, I had perfect attendance except for one day. They had a blizzard, and I could not get to school, and so they ended up letting me have perfect attendance for all four years.

Q1. Oh. For all four years?

CS. Uh-huh, because -- because the snow storm kept me from coming in.

Q1. They probably didn't have school that day anyhow, did they?

CS. No. I don't know if they did or not.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. To me, they had bigger snows then than we do now. I don't know if we did or not.

Q1. Uh-huh. So you said you were in the Pep Club?

CS. Yeah.

Q1. So was that for basketball and football?

CS. Yeah, for everything, uh-huh.

Q1. Mostly, uh-huh.

CS. Yeah, basketball.

Q1. So you'd go to all the games then and --

CS. Uh-huh, stand out in your sweater and freeze to death.

Q1. Okay.

CS. You know, when -- I was going to say something else. Oh, forgot what I was going to say.

I used to -- see, we lived out in the middle of the field. When we moved -- we lived over on the corner, and then we moved to the Wallace lease, and that's when we lived down in the middle of the field, and I had to walk to catch the bus.

Q1. Oh, uh-huh.

CS. And there was three different areas I could get off at, and if the boys was ornery on the bus, I'd get off of this one and go home that way. So I didn't want them teasing me when they got -- when I got off.

Q2. Describe the Wallace lease. What's -- what was that?

CS. Well, the Wallace lease is just natural grass there. It was a big area. There was -- a stream came down through there from the water running off these oil tanks, and there would be water. When it rained, it'd be a lot of water, but it wouldn't be very big, you know. But it made -- the salt in the water made a solid -- you could walk down there and not get in the mud, and I used to play down there.

My daddy built a bridge, and it was just so wide you wondered if you was going to hit it when you drove across it in a car.



Q2. So when you lived on the --

CS. See, I was gonna --

Q2. The first house you described, the -- the -- the little  
shotgun house --

CS. Yeah.

Q2. -- was that on the Wallace lease, or was that before that?

CS. No, that was -- that was up there at Miller corner.

Q2. Oh, okay. Okay.

CS. Another thing, when our -- where I lived, there was an area that  
was smaller than this room, but it was kind of rounded-like and  
dented in, and the nicest grass was in there, and they always  
said that was a buffalo wallow place.

Q1. A buffalo wallow?

CS. Where the wallow -- where the buffalos wallowed in that.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. And it was a different kind of grass and everything. It had a  
lot of pretty flowers around there. You know, wildflowers --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- in the fields. I used to run all over picking flowers.

One time, my dad made a big sled, a large sled, pulled it behind  
the car, and we drove in this empty field over there and got --  
you know, it was a lot of fun. You didn't -- wouldn't hit  
anything.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. And my dad used to hunt rabbits when it snow -- in the snow, and kill them. We used to eat a lot of rabbits.

Q1. Eat lots of rabbits.

CS. But just ate it when, when it was -- snow was on the ground or -- they were running rabbits. They was alive or --

Q1. Oh, uh-huh.

CS. -- healthy rabbits, I should say.

Q1. Mm-hmm. So I saw that Augusta held -- held several, like, fall festivals and that type of thing. Did you ever come in town for those or --?

CS. I can't remember much about that.

Q1. Okay. Can you tell me where you were at when you first heard that the war ended?

CS. Oh, I was in California.

Q1. You were in California?

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. Uh-huh. And --

CS. And that was -- that was a shocking day to me in a way. Uh, Dean's was a group that worked on the airplanes -- or in the morning it got so hot, you couldn't touch them in the afternoon -- and they didn't fly them.

And so when the war was over, he came to the house, and we picked up -- they all just left the base, just bingo. Didn't have any passes. There was three couples of us, and we didn't

want -- this is a bad thing to say, but it's the truth: they didn't like this one guy real well, but he had gas tabs  
[laughs] --

Q1. Oh.

CS. -- so -- so he was good to have with you. He had gas tab. So we all -- they all left, and we went to San Diego. Now, we lived in El Centro. They went to San Diego, and Dean had a brother there in the navy.

And then, by that time, it was lunch time -- or passed lunch. Everything was -- they didn't have any food left over, sold out. They were just sold out. And then, we went up to the coast to LA, got rid of both these couples, and we had -- Dean had a marine friend that lived in Santa Ana, and he said, "Well, let's go see them," and they knew a place where we could go eat. We hadn't eaten all day, because everybody was just running. And like, I had another friend that worked in Douglass. She said everybody just left, just walked out of the plant.

Q2. To celebrate?

CS. Yeah, just sat -- you know, it's strange. And like, we stayed all night up there in -- in California in Santa Ana, it was. It really a -- close to Santa Ana. Stayed all night and came back, and I wondered, "Gee, what's going to happen?" Nobody said anything. They all came back to the base. Crazy.

Q1. So they must have kind of expected everybody to just --

CS. I don't know what they thought.

Q1. So did you hear it on the radio or --

CS. I heard it from him.

Q1. You heard it from him when he came home?

CS. Yeah. Uh-huh, yeah. You know, it was kind of surprising to just think -- and of course, then - see -- that was in August wasn't it? The war was over in August?

Q1. I think so.

CS. Yeah. Like he had a furlough to come up in June, and we didn't think he could get out right away, so we were both lonesome to come home, so we drove home. By that time, we had a car. We'd been walking before that [laughs]. We had a car, and then June got back there, and the first thing we knew in November, we was out.

Q1. Oh. What kind of roads were between here and California? Were they paved roads?

CS. Yeah, oh, yeah. They was paved. It was nice paved.

Q1. They paved that, uh-huh.

CS. I know we had -- our car had on -- I don't know if they were retread tires there or maybe it was poor. He told me when I was driving -- he'd like to -- he'd sleep a lot, and I'd like to drive. He said, "Don't you go over 50 miles an hour," so I didn't. [Laughs.]

Q1. Well, that was another commodity that was kind of hard to come by during the war too, wasn't it?

CS. Oh, yes, tires. Yeah.

Q1. Tires, and you had gas rationing. What other types of things were rationed?

CS. Sugar.

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. Well, it was hard to get shoes then too.

Q1. Oh, yeah. Nylons? Stockings?

CS. Well, nylon came after the war.

Q1. That was after the war?

CS. I remember getting my first nylons down at Kress's.

Oh, I tell you, this is really funny. We was coming home. We was in Clovis, New Mexico. We'd been driving -- well, from -- we drove from Yuma, Arizona, clear to there to Clovis. That's on the edge of Mexico -- New Mexico --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- and I said, "I can't drive anymore," and he said he couldn't either, so we stayed all night in a real nice hotel, we thought. Had beautiful beds in it. Had twin beds, so we had -- each had a bed, and I took a bath and went to bed, and something started -- I had itches, and I got up, and I looked all over the bed. I couldn't find anything. I took another bath, got back in bed again, and dozed off, and something started eating on me again.

I jumped up, found a bed bug on the wall, which I did not know it was a bed bug, but I thought it had to be. Had a bite under my eye, bites on my arms, my leg, so then I had another bath, got in bed with him in a twin. Neither one of us -- we couldn't sleep, so we got up and left. And we was too young to know we should have complained, but we didn't. We just left. Everybody was afraid of us at first, thought we'd brought them back with us. [Laughs.]

But, you know, that -- my son got bed bugs in Colorado this summer.

Q1. That's what I was going to say. That's the big thing lately, it's been bed bugs.

CS. Yeah, it is. Yeah.

Q2. They're making a comeback.

CS. Oh, gosh.

Q2. She's looking at me.

Q1. I'm looking at you, yeah, that's right.

CS. Can't hardly see you.

Q2. I -- I don't know if it would be difficult to do this or not, but because you lived several different places during the war years, and that was when you were married and -- could you kind of summarize a chronology of -- from -- from when you first heard about the war to where you lived when, or would that be too complicated?

CS. Well, I was -- I was in training when I heard the war. In fact, I had a date with Dean. That was on -- that was on a Sunday, wasn't it? And we came back. I don't know where we had -- where we had been. Come back, and somebody told us there was a war, and the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor.

Q2. And at that time, you were still in --

CS. Nurses training in El Dorado.

Q2. In El Dorado. And what was he doing?

CS. He was working at Beechcraft.

Q2. Okay. You told us that.

CS. Yeah.

Q2. I'm sorry.

CS. Yeah, mm-hmm. That's all right. I -- I'm all mixed up myself.

Q2. And then --

CS. And then I lived in El Dorado until I was married then, and I left then, and I lived at home for a short time.

Q2. After you were married?

CS. Uh-huh.

Q2. And when did -- when did -- when and how did he enlist?

CS. When and how?

Q2. Mm-hmm.

CS. Well, he -- he came over to join the Marines here. He was really from Butler County, classified. He came over here to enlist in the Marines, and they were full. They couldn't take

him, so they -- they said, "Well, we'll get you later," so then he came -- went home. He had a notice he was going to be drafted in the army. He did not want the army, so he came back to the Marines and showed them this letter. They said, "We'll send you to Kansas City and get you --." So he wasn't taken here, but he was sent to Kansas City and then put in the Marines.

Q1. And so then he enlisted in the Marines then?

CS. Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Q1. And was that in '43?

CS. '4- -- well, let's see. When would that be? That'd be probably '42.

Q1. '42?

CS. Yeah, because he was in the Marines three years. It would be '42, in the fall of '42, because I know he was in California at Christmastime in the Marines.

Q2. And you weren't -- were you out there with him from the beginning?

CS. No, no. No, no. No. We all thought he was in, you know, basic camp, and then he got out there. I can't remember when they sent him to Chicago. It might have been -- I don't know. I know it'd be after Christ -- it'd be in the -- it would be in '44 when he -- no, wait. It would be in '43 he went to Chicago.



Then he graduated. I went to his graduation in July. His mother and sister and I went up on the train.

Then -- then after his graduation, I was going to see my grandmother that lived on the eastern part of Illinois, and so I was scared to death I was going to have to get -- get a cab by myself to go catch a train, because they looked so grumpy, old guys up there, and so he was lucky to get off the bus -- I mean the base and took me down there to -- to get on, so I never will forget it. We cried so when I left him in Kansas City. He said, "Now, don't cry this time." I said, "I won't," but back of my mind, when he got settled, I was going to California, so that was that, so --

Q2. So when in all this time period did you work at Boeing? Was that when he was in training?

CS. No, when he -- no, when he was overseas.

Q2. When he was overseas.

CS. No, wait a minute. He had went -- he hadn't left Chicago yet. I think he went overseas, I think, in August, and I don't know for sure.

Q1. And Chicago is where he did his training?

CS. Advanced training.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. He did the basic training in San Diego. There's a lot of bases around there. You have to take your -- shooting guns and

whatnot. Marksmanship I guess you'd call it. I don't know what you call it, but --

Q1. Mm-hmm.

Q2. So do you remember how long you worked at Boeing?

CS. I don't know for sure. Probably from June to -- May or June. I don't know. I know I quit in December of '4- -- '44.

Q2. I'd -- I'd love to hear more about your time as -- as a Rosie the Riveter and like --

CS. Oh.

Q2. -- How you -- how you learned that jobs were available. It seems like a lot of women paired up with family members or friends and --

CS. Well, I heard --

Q2. -- commuted back and forth.

CS. I knew they had a school, and north of the Broadview Hotel is where I went to school. They had a training school. The man that taught me ended up being -- had a real good job at Beech, and I think he's still alive, but he's -- he's really old now. He in -- has to be in the late 90s if he's alive.

I -- they taught you how to drill and -- and how to put the rivets in and how to take them out and -- and just all stuff like that. It was hard to get -- I rode a bus over to the Kings-X on -- used to be a Kings-X on Oliver --

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. -- and -- what -- Kellogg, yeah, and I'd get off the bus, and go in there, and wait until a city bus came, then we'd go downtown on Douglas, and you'd run up there, and then you really had to rush to catch a city bus to come out, so you didn't want to miss your bus going to Augusta, because everybody was moving like that.

Q2. Was it hard to learn -- did you -- did you have the natural strength to do it, or did you have to --?

CS. Oh, I enjoyed doing -- I enjoyed doing that.

And then, oh, when I went to work at Boeing, I always -- they used -- I don't think I ever did drive any rivets. I used these machines to make your parts.

What was real hard, you knew you had to work fast, and you'd work fast, and you didn't do it good, so they'd tell you, "Don't be so fast, just -- ". You had to take the oil off a lot of these pieces of aluminum. You'd have to do that.

No, I enjoyed doing that. I used to get so tired when I worked third shift. I - oh, I could just sleep if I'd lay on the floor. [Laughs.] But it seemed like you'd come and go, you know, you wouldn't wake up.

Q1. So after your children were born, did you work outside of the home then?

CS. Not very much. I used to sell Avon --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- and then I worked at our church on a Mom's Day Out program for about 26 years. And to me, at that time, I thought it was important to raise my children good. That's the way I looked at it.

Q1. I agree. And it seems like they're taking good care of you now so --

CS. They -- they both went through college, and the youngest boy went to the University of Alabama to get his master's degree so --

Q1. So did your husband -- what did he do after the war? Did he continue working for Beech?

CS. Yeah, he come out and work for Beech.

Q1. Uh-huh. And did he retire from there?

CS. Yes, uh-huh, after 45 years.

Q1. What did he do at Beechcraft?

CS. Well, he started in working on the line, and then he built up to -- to -- he ended up being a foreman, but I can't think what you call before that. Oh --

Anyway, he was lucky. He had worked in probably all of the departments out there. He helped to work on the hel- -- it was over the -- not over, but was one of the main guys over helicopters. He used to be a dan dover [phonetic spelling] --

Q1. Oh, uh-huh.

CS. -- and there was a bell.

Q1. And what year was that that he retired?

CS. 1986, I think.

Q1. '86?

CS. I think that's about right. He went to work in -- in '40 -- I don't know if he went to work in '40 or '41. It'd be -- '41 would be 45 years, wouldn't it? Yeah.

Q1. I think so. That's not my strong suit.

CS. Yeah. '40 -- '41. '45 would be six -- '86 -- '86 when -- well --

Q3. Do you have any recollection of the Dust Bowl?

CS. Yes, I remember that.

Q3. How was it in this area? What was life like then?

CS. Well, to me, it wasn't real dirty dust, you know, a lot of heavy dirt; it was -- it would be dusty. You wouldn't see the sun, but it wouldn't be really what you'd call heavy. You could see, but dust would come around, you know. And I guess at the age I was it didn't faze me too much. They just said, "The Dust Bowl," and the dirt was blowing. I don't know.

What I remember more than everything was the grasshoppers, the invasion of the grasshoppers.

Q2. Describe that.

CS. They'd come through the garden, you know, and just -- just a lot of them. You'd try to catch them, you know, chase them out, which was silly, but you did being a kid, you know, and I'd

catch some of them and try to -- and then all of a sudden they was gone. I don't know.

Q1. Probably pretty much ate your whole garden and --

CS. They would eat your garden, you know, and stuff. I don't know. I can remember when -- and they used to have these -- I don't know what they called it in El Dorado, maybe some kind of, like, festival there. One time, they -- we was catching turtles, the box turtle -- I'm sure that's what it'd be --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- took a load of box turtles over there to enter in, and they'd already called it off. I don't know what happened to all them turtles my dad had up -- trailer.

Q1. So your sister was nine years younger than you?

CS. Yes.

Q1. What did you do to entertain yourself when you were younger and at home?

CS. Oh, I was -- I always followed my dad around when he checked his wells. I did that a lot --

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. -- and I played outdoors, and I had this playhouse, and --

Q1. Oh, you said he made you a playhouse.

CS. Yeah, a nice playhouse. When I was, I think, about eight years old, I, at school, liked to play on the merry-go-round, and I hit my ankles every time and got an infection in them.

And I walked home from the bus one night, my folks wasn't home, and I was sick, and I got near the playhouse, and they came later, took me to the doctor. I had blood poison in my ankle. It went -- streaks went clear up my leg. I was lucky I didn't lose my leg. I know my mother doctored me day and night with that. At that time, they put a black tar-like stuff on you. I don't know what it was. I don't know. I doubt they'd do it today.

Q1. To try to draw it out or something?

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. And then she soaked me. And I can remember sitting in front of a gas heater, you know, the stove, and on my little chair leaned back, and turn the chair upside down, you know, and lean it back, and lean back on that, soak that foot.

Q1. What was your --?

CS. And that has hurt me for years when the weather changes.

Q1. Oh, uh-huh. What was the -- your favorite meal that your mom made?

CS. Probably fried chicken.

Q1. Fried chicken?

CS. Yeah. We had a lot of fried chicken. [Laughs]

Q1. What was the favorite meal you liked to make for your family?

CS. Oh, I just don't have any -- we always liked chicken and noodles, and we always -- my mother made her own noodles, and I do too, and I like chicken and noodles.

Q2. Sounds like you had a really happy childhood --

CS. I did.

Q2. -- And really wonderful parents. What do you appreciate --  
(phone rings) oops. Is that your son?

CS. Well, you know today --

Q2. You can't be too careful.

CS. If I told him there's three more in the house, he would faint  
[laughs] right on the phone.

Q2. He'd probably call the police -- (simultaneous talking)

CS. He probably would. He probably would. Bless his heart.

Q2. Oh, well, that's a sweet son. I tell you what.

Q1. "Mom held hostage. We need the SWAT team."

CS. He said, "Don't give any names." I said, "I'm not giving any names." I guess I did give your two -- my two boys' names.  
Take them off.

Oh, that was -- bless his heart. They are always telling me, "Don't -- keep your screen locked, so they can't come in." But, you know, today is a different world, you know.

Q1. It sure is. It sure is.



CS. Like, I used to ride a bicycle around where I lived on the, to -  
- streets and roads. Now, I don't drive the car around by  
myself.

Q1. Even with the doors locked.

CS. Yeah. I mean, it's -- it's sad.

Q3. How is -- how is the world different today than it was when  
you were growing up, just in general? How has that changed  
from a -- from a kid's prospective today?

CS. Well, you'd probably say, because you have TV, and you hear  
about the whole world, never knew that other world existed until  
today. Don't you think that's true? You know, really, we can  
worry about more stuff. What'd I hear today? England and them  
had a bad rain yesterday or something. You know, you think,  
"Well, them poor people." Never had them on my mind before. I  
don't know. I think it's because people know about everybody  
really today. Things -- you know, you pick up more stuff. I  
don't know.

Of course, everything's so different, you know. Like when I was in  
nurse training -- it's so different now, you know. When I was  
in -- which I think was a good deal -- and now they -- so free.  
In the hospitals, they just had certain hours for visiting only.  
You could not sit on a patient's bed, which is good. Today you  
can sit on that bed. You can go all day long, children can come  
and go, and they are good to bring little bugs. I don't know.

Maybe they don't. I don't know, but they do. That's one thing I notice.

Q1. Yeah, there's not as many rules for some.

CS. And there's more staph infection today than they ever had before. That's why I guess I had surgery two years ago. I was going to have it in the morning, and they couldn't get me in until afternoon, which is good for me. I got to stay all night. Otherwise, I would have went home that afternoon, and I -- I just don't know.

Medicine has changed so much. They do so much. I have a friend 90 years old. She's a little bit older than me. She had four bypasses, but she just had a lot of trouble. I don't know if it's worth it or not.

You're not too old yourself, do you think things changed since you was a kid?

Q3. Yeah. Are you kidding me? Technology's --

CS. Telephone's shocking to me, kids and their telephone. They get the weather, they get -- take pictures, they look at pictures, they can find the news. Someday we're not going to have a newspaper around. But ol' fuddy-duddy like me doesn't have a internet or -- or nothing.

Q3. How are -- how are people different now than they were? Just, you know, people in general. How are people different do you think, or are they?

CS. Oh, I don't -- I don't really know.

Q3. Are they friendlier now? Friendlier then? Happier than they are now? Busier?

CS. I'm sure they are busier. People are busier. Probably people -- certain groups have always been friendly and happy, and some people are sad. I don't know. I think we have a lot more mental illnesses now than we ever had before, and why, I don't know. I don't know if it's kids getting on drugs or liquor. I don't know what causes it. I can't understand -- you know, children -- never heard of children having, what, autism.

Q1. Autism?

CS. Yeah, never heard of that before.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. And maybe it's been there, and we didn't know it. I don't know.

Q1. Uh-huh, and the ADDH [sic], or the hyperactive disorder.

CS. Yeah, they got so much, yeah. I just don't know. Hmmm. Well, anything else you want to know?

Q1. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the --?

CS. Oh, you're talking about how I rode the bicycle a lot. That's something else I did when I was in the country.

Q1. Was ride your bicycle?

CS. Uh-huh, get out my (inaudible) and get on the street.

Q2. Ride it on the roads?

CS. On the road, uh-huh. It was kind of hard, the rocky roads --

Q1. Mm-hmm.

CS. -- gravel roads.

Q1. Oh, yeah.

CS. And then we -- in high school, we had a club to earn your letter A for Augusta, and another girl and I, we rode our bicycle a lot on 77, went south then east down there where I live. I mean west, then south again. It's no wonder we didn't get killed by riding a bicycle on that highway, because big old trucks would go around us.

Q1. Yeah, all the oil-field trucks and --

CS. And gasoline trucks were --. Of course, today you have huge trucks going down the highways. That new -- that 77's a new road that comes close to my house -- our house now straight out of Augusta, straight south, where it used to go over east -- I mean west. Have you ever heard of Alexander Corner up there?

Q1. I don't think so.

CS. Yeah, then heads straight down toward around town. That's all empty.

Q1. Uh-huh. And were those brick roads at the time or dirt roads?

CS. I think they was paved, maybe gravel too. Probably gravel, probably gravel. I don't know. I know our streets around us is -- my dad -- we -- when we moved out of the field, my dad would -- I don't know where he got all this extra oil, but it was old

oil, and he made a road out of that by pouring that on it, let it get hard, so we didn't have a muddy road to drive through.

Q1. Did you ever get to go on vacation anywhere?

CS. Went to Colorado. I used to go to Illinois too.

Q1. To see the --

CS. Grandparents.

Q1. -- Family?

CS. Yes. I just had one grandmother left. Real young my grandparents let -- died when I was young. My grand -- my grandmother on the Henry side died when my dad was 11 years old, and then when I was about five or six, my grandfather died, and then my other grandfather died when I was a little bit older, not much. I know before my sisters were born, so I had to be under eight then when that happened.

Q1. Oh.

CS. Then my grandmother died before my oldest boy was born.

Q1. When did your father pass away?

CS. '59.

Q1. '59?

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. If you don't mind me asking, you said that you and your mother lived at the oil building in Augusta?

CS. At that time, it was easier to get to work to stay in town. We'd go home on the weekend.

Q1. Oh, okay.

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. So your dad stayed out at the house --

CS. Uh-huh, yeah.

Q1. And -- and your little sister stayed with you too --

CS. Uh-huh.

Q1. -- During the week?

CS. To go to school, uh-huh.

Q1. About how far out was Browntown from Augusta?

CS. Well, I lived about four miles south of Augusta, and it was probably about --

Q1. Okay.

CS. It was probably the same. It'd be the south, where we'd go east a little ways.

Q1. Uh-huh. So did you ever go out to, like, Gordon or Bois d'Arc?

CS. I went to Gordon, because that's where they voted. I can remember my parents voted there.

Q1. Uh-huh.

CS. And Bois d'Arc, we had friends that lived out there at Bois d'Arc.

Q1. Uh-huh. And wasn't there a flyer mill out there at one time?

CS. I don't know.

Q1. Okay.

CS. I used to go to Rowkie -- Camp Rowkie - [phonetic spelling]

Q1. Oh, uh-huh.

CS. -- and loved to wade in the water. That was when they had the low water bridge. Do you remember that?

Q1. Uh-huh, I do.

CS. Did you ever get in the water and get leeches on you?

Q1. Oh, no.

CS. I had leeches on my toes. If you didn't get them off, you had a sore toe.

Q1. Mm-hmm. Was the Augusta swimming pool --

CS. No.

Q1. Was it built then? No.

CS. No, no pool.

Q1. So you had to go swim with the leeches?

CS. Yeah. I just waded. I never did get to really swim.

Q1. Well, is there anything else that you would -- any words of wisdom for future generations or --?

CS. No, I don't -- I don't know of anything.

Q1. Anybody else?

Q3. I've got about 30 seconds of tape left.

Q1. Oh, 30 seconds. Okay. Say it fast. Hurry.

So -- well, thank you so much, Christine. I loved hearing your story and --

CS. Oh, I -- you know, when you get my age, there's so many things to think about that has happened -- that has happened.

Q1. So, well I hope that your --

CS. Good things, sad things, happy things.

Q1. I hope your sons will really enjoy seeing your DVD.

Q2. I'd have loved to have met your parents. They sound like wonderful people.

CS. Well, nothing else on the DV now?

Q1. I think we're done are we done. Are we done?

Q3. Yeah.

Q1. Okay.

[END]