

Sara Gilbert

Hillsborough Remembers

Sara Gilbert was just thirteen years old at the start of World War II. Sarah tells of how Dale Mabry Highway came to be and of the building of MacDill Air Force Base. She tells of knitting socks for soldiers while in school and of becoming a "Victory Farmer." She also tells of black-outs and air raid warnings and how the war changed Tampa.

WWII

At Home & Abroad

This is an interview with Sara Gilbert (**SG**) of Tampa, Florida. This interview is being conducted on Tuesday, November 23, 1999 at Mrs. Gilbert's house. The interviewer is by Jane Ventrone (**JV**), representing the "Juniors to Seniors: Hillsborough Remembers Oral History Collection Project."

Jane Ventrone: How old were you and what grade were you in when the war started?

Sara Gilbert: I'm 71 years old now and when the war started, when they dropped the atom . . . when they attacked Pearl Harbor I was 13 years old.

JV: Do you remember what you were doing when Pearl Harbor . . .

SG: I certainly do. I was . . . when I was about ten years old my daddy got his first job after the depression he had in a long time. He went to work for Tampa shipyard. And the war rumors were going on. We were supporting the Europeans, but we were not at war. So, after my father got a job, he bought a place on the Alafia River, about 70 acres. So we spent all our weekends and all our summers out there building a log house. So we went out there one . . . December 7, 1941 . . . we had no electricity yet because it was just a camp, not really . . . just a log cabin.

JV: You were building it yourself . . .

SG: We built it ourselves.

JV: That's good.

SG: Cut down the trees and everything.

JV: Wow!

SG: While we were there, and we had just a little battery radio that we took just to play music . . . and the news came on about noon. They attacked . . . the Japanese had attacked pearl harbor and that was our first knowledge of what happened. And that was in 1941, and that was a real shocker because we was not really expecting, because we were friends with the Japanese. We didn't expect it. But we were already supporting the Europeans with building ships. That's why my father was building ships to send over supplies to the Europeans to fight Hitler's regime, Hitler's nazi regime. But we weren't in war yet until they dropped the bomb, until they attacked pearl harbor. And when they did that everything changed. They were at war.

JV: Okay. Did you, when you were in high school, did you have any friends who had to fight in the war?

SG: Yes, I was probably, yes, I was only 13. My sister is 5 years older than I and she lost a lot of her friends that went over in that first wave. They just sent a lot of the boys without any training they didn't come back. They lost . . . a lot of the males in her generation were . . . never came back from the war because they sent them without the proper training. So I wasn't really concerned about the war because I was too young.

JV: You were young.

SG: They built Macdill Field. That's where they built Dale Mabry Highway. That didn't exist until they built Macdill field. They built Macdill field and the planes were always in the air. I couldn't go visit my granny who still lived in Port Tampa because you couldn't talk because the planes were going overhead all the time, on Macdill Field.

JV: Did any of your family go to fight in the war?

SG: No. My father was exempt. Of course, he was a little too old too to go, to be drafted, and he was building ships for the war effort so they wouldn't have drafted him.

JV: Oh.

SG: And he went to work. He was a heavy equipment operator and he operated one of these big gantry cranes, real tall cranes that he'd go up, a long time to get up top, and once he got up he didn't come down till the end of the day because its so far to climb up. That's what he did during the war. He operated one of those big gantry cranes. He worked; in fact, he worked the shipyard until they closed it after the war.

JV: Did you have any really close people who fought in the war at all?

SG: Not family really, but I was in junior high school and then I went into high school and all the boys, of course every body wanted to get in, join the war effort, all the boys. They didn't want to be drafted so they would join the Navy before they were drafted. So all the boys, it was on honor, could join the service.

JV: I think that's what my grandpa did. He was in the Navy.

SG: If they couldn't get in the Navy, or the Coast Guard, they would be drafted. I met my husband when I was 14 . . . my husband, my boyfriend . . .

JV: Your husband now?

SG: And he wanted to get in the war so bad and he went to, he went in, to Fort Benning Georgia, he was a volunteer, and he went in and they

wouldn't accept him because he had asthma.

JV: Was he really upset?

SG: Yes, because all his friends had already joined.

JV: Were you happy?

SG: No, I wanted him to get in because he wanted to get in. Everybody wanted to support the war effort. Everybody.

JV: That's good.

SG: We collected scrap METAL, before they attacked pearl harbor. My daddy said we shouldn't be doing this. They're making bombs to fight . . . he had a lot of knowledge. And when I was about . . . I have to tell you this. When I was in junior high school, in a Geography class, I was knitting socks for the Russian soldiers because we were on the Russian's side at that time.

JV: In Geography class?

SG: Yeah because the Russians were fighting Hitler at the time. So in our Geography class, as a little side thing, our teacher had us knitting socks for the Russian soldiers. My daddy didn't like communism. He said "we're gonna be fighting them next because they're communists." And that's what we did. We knitted socks for the Russian soldiers.

JV: Wow, so they had everybody participating.

SG: Yeah, everybody. When I graduated from Memorial, I met my husband, my husband now, then and he couldn't get into the service so later on he joined the Merchant Marines.

JV: Oh, so what do the Merchant Marines do?

SG: They took supplies over to Europe.

JV: Oh. So did they change any other things in school, like what you were learning and what you were doing to fit the war and the war cause?

SG: Well, no, but I had a job. I went to work, see because a lot of people had gone into the service. So I went to work when I was 15. The legal age to go to work was sixteen so I got a work permit so I could work when I was 15. There were so many jobs available. I went to work with the 5 and 10 cent store when I was 15. And later I got on with a department store. And we had rationing.

JV: What were the rations like?

SG: There was no gasoline. Gasoline was rationed. There were no tires for the cars. There were no new cars at all. There were not tires . . . the tires you could get were made . . . that's the first synthetic tires and they were pretty bad. Synthetic tires were pretty bad, but that's all you could get. Meat was rationed. Sugar. Coffee. Shoes. You could get a certain pair, number of pairs of shoes a year. And the shoes they made were not leather because all the leather went to make boots for the soldiers. So the shoes you got were kind of crappy looking . . . pardon my language . . . crummy looking cloth shoes. Because there was no leather shoes. Let's see, what else did they ration? They rationed just about everything. And my daddy worked for the shipyard and he drove a Model A Ford to the shipyard. Well, we had another car. We had a '36 Plymouth. I know it wasn't a new one. It was an old one. And to conserve gas my daddy was very smart. He had a little gas tank rigged up on the Model

A Ford and he would fill that with gasoline and he would start the Ford . . . the Model A Ford . . . with gasoline and then he would switch the tank with kerosene. So he ran on kerosene to the shipyard and back home.

JV: That is kind of neat.

SG: And that way we'd have our gas to go somewhere in our other car.

JV: So they didn't provide extra gas for people who had to drive to their jobs?

SG: No they didn't. Now, sugar, they raised the sugar. They rationed sugar but you could get extra sugar if you wanted to make jelly. You could get extra sugar for that.

JV: Oh really? So could you say, 'I'm going to make a lot of jelly this year. Give me a lot of sugar'?

SG: Well, you would have to prove it. People were honest. They didn't lie about it.

JV: Oh, that's good.

SG: And my mother went down, took classes on how to cook, had fish one day. We always had fish one day anyway a week. And had to use cheese one day so you wouldn't have to have meat. Meat was rationed. You couldn't get that much meat. Everything was rationed.

JV: Let's see. Did you ever see any letters from people who were fighting in the war, when you young?

SG: Actually, the letters I got was from my boyfriend, who is my husband now. And actually he got in the war . . . well, I'll tell you about that. He wanted me to marry him when I was fifteen and I said, "No, I'm

off to finish school." So he kept persisting, so I had a change . . . now, this is something else I did for the war effort. I was a Victory Farmer.

JV: A what?

SG: A Victory Farmer.

JV: A Victory Farmer.

SG: They got the students from the high schools and they sent us to Connecticut for the summer to work for ten weeks in Tariffville, Connecticut. I have some pictures. I was going to get them out and show you but I can't find them. And what we did . . . we went up in the train, and what we did is work in the tobacco field so they could have tobacco to make cigarettes to ship to the boys overseas. I worked there all summer and made some money. I had never been out of Florida until then.

JV: And you were fifteen?

SG: I was sixteen by then.

JV: You were 16? Wow!

SG: We came back through New York City. We went to Rockefeller center and all of New York City. And rode the train back home. Of course, the war in Europe was over. I wasn't here to celebrate because I was up there. But, while I was there, we dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima. That was the end of the war. I was in Connecticut during that time. Everybody was just, some of the people had brothers overseas so they were just crying, they were just overjoyed. The war was over. And everyone wanted to go to New York so bad. We were near Hartford, Connecticut and we wanted to go to New York City so bad and celebrate. You've seen all the pictures on 5th Avenue.

JV: Yeah.

SG: But the teacher ended up being the Dean of Girls at Hillsborough high school. She was a Biology teacher. Mrs. Vowdell . . . she was real strict on us. And she wouldn't let us go so we just had to be satisfied with celebrating with the Tariffville people. They were out in the street celebrating.

JV: With what people?

SG: Tariffville; that's where we lived. A little town, Tariffville.

JV: Oh, ok.

SG: They had the tobacco farms. We had the big dormitory, big, big building. We shared a room with one or two other people. We'd get up in the morning and they'd take us to the tobacco fields and we'd sow tobacco. They taught us how to sow tobacco. We did peace work. The more tobacco you could sow they more people got paid. I was never very fast. But if you were too fast they wouldn't let you sow and they'd make you be what they call a leaf girl. You just put the tobacco leaves up on the table.

JV: Oh, they didn't want to pay too much.

SG: But that was an experience. I was contributing to the war effort. I was a Volunteer Victory Farmer.

JV: That's great. That's a lot to do when you're sixteen.

SG: It was exciting!

JV: And going up there by yourself.

SG: Well, no, not by myself. We had a whole car full of people on the train.

JV: But without your family and stuff.

SG: I wrote my husband every day and when I got home, guess what. He joined the Merchant Marine when I was gone and when I got home he was in the Merchant Marines and he was getting ready to ship out. And, first when they dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima the war was over. So actually when he went over seas, he was, uh, the war was over but they were still sinking the merchant ships in the Atlantic. So when I got home I went back to school and he went overseas. And I wrote him every single day and I got, I think I have five letters he wrote to me. He was not a very good letter writer. I still have them. No, no, his sister burned them. I have the letters I wrote him.

JV: His sister burned them? Why?

SG: I don't know. I still have the letters I wrote him. I wrote him every day.

JV: Wow.

SG: I was working at the time at a theater selling tickets. And when he came back from that trip I accepted an engagement ring. Because we had been dating for three years. I'd never go steady.

JV: Really.

SG: So I accepted a ring. So then we got married, that was in March, and we got married in May. And I was ready to graduate in June, so we got married and he was getting ready to go overseas again, so I said well. I knew that if we didn't get married then we never would because we had been going together for three years. So I eloped. We ran off to Georgia and got married and he decided that since he had a wife and he had to sign the papers for the ship. So he didn't do it.

JV: He didn't go?

SG: He didn't go on the ship.

JV: That's romantic.

SG: So I just stayed home.

JV: So what year was it when you got married?

SG: '36. Two weeks before I graduated.

JV: Before you graduated high school? Wow, that's awesome!

SG: But actually, the war was over when he went over seas. You see, it was just over in '45 but, like I said, they were still sinking ships.

JV: That's really scary.

SG: Now lets see, what did I tell you about the war? What else do you want to know about the war?

JV: Well, actually, around Tampa and when you were in Connecticut, I'm sure there was a lot of propaganda for the war, maybe on the radio and on posters. Did you see anything like that?

SG: All the time.

JV: What was it like? Did it ask people to join the war?

SG: Oh yes. That's why everybody was so gung-ho. We had so much propaganda thrown at us. We need some more propaganda today so people will be proud of their country again I guess. Everybody'd leave; everybody left because they were willing to go out and fight and die for their country.

JV: We don't really have a lot of that now.

SG: And also, there wasn't much for the teenagers to do during the war because they kind of ignored us, the ones of us that were my age. I was too young to get in the war. I was too old . . . I was kind of in the middle, my age, because I was thirteen when it started. So we kind of were left to our own devices and we didn't have anything to do so we just did our own thing. We were mischievous but we didn't get in any real trouble. They had the vice squad. If you were out after 11:00 they would take you in and call your mother, take you to the police department and call your mother.

JV: The vice squad? [Laugh]

SG: The vice squad. And they had a place, the Teen Canteen they called it, down on Warner Street. And you'd go in there and you'd play records and dance. And you'd go in and you'd sign and they could call your parents so they knew where you were all the time.

JV: That's really good.

SG: They tried to keep tabs on us. They tried, but they didn't do too good a job. But, you know, because there was nothing for us to do. We were kinda left to our own devices. We were in the in-between age.

JV: Yeah, you were.

SG: I was thirteen when it started. I was too young to go off to the war. Or go to work for the shipyard. Although I did have a good friend who went to work for the shipyard as a welder and she was very young.

JV: Really?

SG: She dropped out of school and she was a welder.

JV: Wow.

SG: And she came back and went to school at Hillsborough and she was a year behind everybody because she was from Sarasota. She was embarrassed to go back to Sarasota. And she was a welder all during the war. Because she was small and they could put her down in the holes, the wells.

JV: Wow.

SG: Well, I didn't have no . . . I guess my parents were too strict on me. They wouldn't let me do something like that. Her parents were more lenient. But she was a welder by the time she was about sixteen.

JV: Well, I know Macdill was in Tampa and my dad was telling me about how they had Drew Field, which is . . .

SG: Oh yeah.

JV: Can you tell me what Drew Field was?

SG: Well, Macdill Field, like I told you was a big deal because it just brought so many people into this area. They built Dale Mabry Highway. They also had Drew Field; they guy that my sister married was stationed out there. She met him. And see, I wasn't allowed to date the soldiers because I was too young. I didn't even want to. They were all too much older than I. But they had Drew Field and that's where my husband went to work, for Drew Field. If you didn't want to go to school you could go to work, anything and make money. So he went to work for Drew Field in sheet METAL making big money for that time and dropped out of school. And they he went in the

Merchant Marines. And they also had Benjamin Field.

JV: What was Benjamin Field?

SG: Do you know where Temple Terrace is?

JV: Yes.

SG: Well if you go out there now you can still see the runways, all around.

JV: Oh, really?

SG: Where the industrial park is.

JV: Oh, okay.

SG: If you look around at the concrete. That's what's left of the old runways. It was a training area for the, I think, probably the Germans.

JV: Yeah, the planes.

SG: But Benjamin Field was training . . . we were surrounded by the military.

JV: I guess so. So, did that bring a lot more people into Tampa - building Dale Mabry and everything? It got a lot more populated didn't it?

SG: When everybody got out of the service they remembered Tampa and they liked it so well they just moved here to stay. Because Tampa had pretty good climate.

JV: Yes.

SG: Compared to somewhere where it's cold and snowy all the time.

JV: Yeah, so with all of the military surrounded us were you ever scared of anything like a bombing or something?

SG: Yeah, we had blackouts. The German subs were out in the Gulf of Mexico. It didn't effect us as much as it did the people on the beaches. But we had blackouts. We had air raid wardens. Each neighborhood had an air raid warden. They would come warn you if there was an attack and when they had a warning, a blackout and we had curtains. We had to turn off all the lights and close the curtains.

JV: Wow.

SG: So that was an air raid warning. And each neighborhood had an air raid warden. He or she - usually it was a he, then - it was his job to go tell the people they were in danger each blackout. I remember doing that maybe three or four times.

JV: Did you ever have to do anything like that in school?

SG: No.

JV: No? I heard there are bomb shelters under Hillsborough. Is that true?

SG: No.

JV: [laugh]. Well, there have been rumors about that.

SG: I don't think so.

JV: Well, that's good to know.

SG: Ask me about something else and maybe I'll think of something else to tell you. Oh, I had a friend whose boyfriend's sister, who had three children, her husband was drafted. He was not that young but he had three kids and he was drafted. So she would go and take us, myself and my two girlfriends over to the Olympic center. It was over on Lafayette Street and Kennedy Street and the river and we

would go over there and entertain and dance with all the guys who came in on the merchant ships. You see, Tampa was a big port, so I'd go over there and dance with people from every country in the world. That was some experience. I was only sixteen then. I think that was when my husband was over seas. I was off dancing . . . but you couldn't date them. You couldn't date the boys. They would ask you out and you'd have to say no. You were just the hostess. You went there to dance with them. Like the USO. It wasn't a USO, but they had it there to entertain the merchant shipmen.

JV: USO?

SG: Yeah, that was something to entertain the servicemen during the war. I was too young for it though.

JV: Were there any religious movements during the time of the war? Did people get more religious at all, more faithful, whatever their faith was?

SG: Across the street from me, off Buffalo and 10th street, it's a vacant lot but we moved there and they had a Church of God there and every time there was something happening in Europe they would just . . . we called them holy rollers because they'd be out praying all night long.

JV: Holy rollers?

SG: Yeah, because they would have these, they would feel the Holy Ghost and they would just roll on the floor and have these fits. They'd call them holy rollers. It was the Church of God. If there was a big battle in Europe or something they'd be up all night doing that. All night. And we thought it was funny because we were Methodist. But movements? I can't think of any movements.

JV: People probably got more nationalistic with the country, more than religious I guess.

SG: They were very nationalistic. Well, they were religious because a lot of their sons and daughters were over seas fighting. And fathers. We had two wars.

JV: What were those?

SG: Well, the war in Europe and that was over first, and the war in the Pacific, with the Japanese.

JV: So with the Holocaust going on in Germany, did you know a lot about that at the time?

SG: Nothing about it.

JV: Really? There were probably a lot of Jewish people coming over here, but nobody really

SG: Well, usually the people who had money. If the Jewish people came they had a lot of money. None of the poor Jews came over because they had no money to come.

JV: But nobody really thought anything about it?

SG: We didn't know about it until after the war.

JV: Was it long after the war?

SG: Well, when they started going in they found some of the camps.

JV: So what did you think when you heard about that?

SG: Well, I don't know, the Jews have always been kind of a group of people who have been downtrodden and despised and hated by a lot of people. Especially, the Jewish people in

Germany were very rich, profitable. They controlled all the money and the Germans resented it. They really did. They had a lot of money. They made their home in Germany and they were in control. The Germans resented that I guess. I knew they were hated . . . I heard about that. But not that it would cause something like the Holocaust. But I know, I had heard about it because in this country it's always been like that.

JV: So did you become pretty informed about all the world affairs and the war as it was going on? Did you know a lot about what was going on?

SG: Pretty much so. We had no TV's then. We would always listen to Edward R. Morrow on the radio. Every afternoon, Edward R. Morrow. We listened to the news reports. We stayed pretty well informed. We were without television. We had the newspapers.

JV: Did you talk about it with your family a lot?

SG: No. They had a section that the boys from Macdill, the soldiers were not allowed to go down. We called it lower Franklin Street. Actually it's the northern part. They weren't allowed to go there, the soldiers. But as a smarty teenager, me and my friends, we went there. They just had the dives, bars and stuff. At one time that's all there was down there. We used to go to the theatres down town. We thought we were so smart, wanted to know about sex and venereal diseases and they didn't tell anybody stuff like that. So we'd go down there and see it and all it was was a training film they showed the soldiers about how not to get venereal disease. So we'd go down there and see it. Cause nobody talked about it then, not like we do now. But I knew because we'd go down there

and find out. We'd go down there and see these movies. We saw "Reefer Madness" that told them not to smoke marijuana because it'd make them go crazy. We went down to see that one time.

JV: That's really interesting.

SG: But I did it because I was curious. Not as many people were informed as my friends and I were, ecause we were curious and we wanted to know the stuff. There were not malls. But downtown Saturday night you couldn't walk, in downtown Franklin Street. All the people that lived around Tampa would go down and shop and it would be packed all on the sidewalk. I worked all during the war. I'll tell you something else. I was working at a department store called O. Faulks. And when I was sixteen years old they had me selling nylons, which were almost nonexistent. You couldn't get them because they took all the nylon to make parachutes. So the ladies that wore nylons would get on a list and they'd get some nylons in and they would save them a pair of nylons. They had no panty hose then. That was before panty hose.

JV: So what's the difference between nylons and pantyhose.

SG: You had a garter belt to keep them up. There were no panty hose. You hooked them with little hooks to keep them up. Panty hose came later. They were out near the end of the war. But nylons were a very serious commodity. I didn't have a cash register. I just had a cash drawer. They would come collect the money once in a while, like on Saturday. I took in a lot of money because I sold hosiery and cosmetics and they'd collect hundreds of dollars out of my drawer so I wouldn't have so much money.

JV: Only once a week they did it?

SG: No, they'd do it in the day.

JV: Oh, I thought you said on Saturday they'd do it.

SG: No, Saturday was the biggest day. And here I was only sixteen years old and I was having all this money, making change, and I was just a kid.

JV: You had a lot of jobs when you were really young.

SG: I was very responsible. But I'll never forget those nylon hose because they women just wanted to get those stockings so bad to wear, to look nice. And that's when they started painting their legs with paint. They painted them.

JV: They painted their legs?

SG: Make-up. It was leg make-up to make it look like they had stockings on.

JV: Really? Wow, did you ever do that? I've never heard of that. Was that a style for a long time?

SG: And that made it funny because the stockings had seams. They have no seams now but they had seams right down the back. So they'd take the leg makeup, I think they had a tube – I never used it – but they'd paint the make-up on their legs, whatever color they wanted, and then they would take a black marker and make a seam right down the back just like if they had on hose.

JV: Wow!

SG: Silly isn't it?

JV: That seems pretty elaborate just to look nice.

SG: Well, you know women. They'll always be vain. And they wanted to look like they had the hose. They couldn't get the stockings so they made it look like they had the stocking.

JV: Pretty creative I guess. Well, I guess I could ask if the war had any affect of the rest of your life after that.

SG: Oh yes because, well, I got married just before I graduated and you couldn't get an apartment. There were no apartments. The OPS ceiling was on so they couldn't raise the apartment rent. There were no apartments to have so we'd go out at night, the night before the Tribune came off the press, and get the Tribune. We'd get the flashlight and see what apartments were available. We'd real fast drive to an apartment and try to rent it. We finally found one to rent. Our first apartment was just a little dumpy place on an alley on Tampa Street. Just a little place. We lived there for a while till we could find a better apartment. We finally found an apartment. This widow was renting half her house. She made half the house into a duplex. We had a living room, a kitchen, a bedroom, and a bathroom. We had to refinish her kitchen cabinets. And something else. And otherwise she wouldn't let us have her apartment.

JV: Was thirty dollars a month really cheap?

SG: Well, yes because there was nothing to rent really. You were lucky if you found anything.

JV: So before you found an apartment did you live with your parents?

SG: We lived with my husband's parents for two weeks until we found a place.

JV: With the Korean War and Desert Storm, have you compared those wars with World War II as they've happened?

SG: Yes. The Vietnam War was very sad because it didn't have the support that we had. But Korean War was a political thing. I didn't keep up with that too much. We adopted a little baby girl. Too busy raising her. And the Persian Gulf War . . . that was the biggest piece of propaganda I've seen since the Second World War. President Bush just fed all this propaganda. We were saving this little country. Everybody in that country is wealthy, millionaires because of the oil. It was just a political thing. That's just my personal opinion. I was against the Persian Gulf War all the way. A lot of people got all gung-ho about it. They went and a lot of people got hurt. A few lost their lives. I was against the Persian Gulf War. And the Vietnam War too.

JV: Were there trains, or trolleys around Tampa during World War II that took people around?

SG: Streetcars!

JV: Yeah, streetcars.

SG: Yeah, a streetcar for a nickel. For transporting you around town. The old building industry got together with somebody and they finally got rid of the streetcars. You'd get off work and they'd have this big huge bus to come home. You'd have to stand up to get home because they got rid of the streetcars. I loved the streetcars. They were nice. I lived in Port Tampa. You'd pay a nickel and get a ticket and go all the way to Ballast Point and pay another nickel and go all the way to Port Tampa. Or if you didn't go that far you could go anywhere and just get a transfer. Some people went to high school with a streetcar ticket. That's

how they got to school, on streetcars. They stopped right in front of Hillsborough High School on Central Avenue.

JV: Wow, that's neat.

SG: Got special rates because you were a student.

JV: Did you go to school like that? On a streetcar?

SG: Not at all. I lived about two miles and I walked. Just on Memorial and Hillsborough. I just didn't think anything about walking. I just did that.

JV: I live about fifteen miles from Hillsborough. It would be nice to walk to school I think.

SG: It was about two miles. If it was really cold in the morning my mother would feel sorry for us and take us.

JV: How do you think your age during the war influenced your thoughts about it, and your opinions that formed?

SG: I was kind of young but when the boys started getting in I was worried about it. Some of my good friends who got in were older than I.

JV: Did your husband go to college at all?

SG: He ended up with the fire department and he took some classes. He has almost enough for an AA. But he didn't want it.

JV: Did you have anything else you want to talk about?

SG: Well the older girls had a ball. Like my sister was five years older. She married into a family. She's 80 now. He was overseas and she was not

really engaged. But she dated a lot of soldiers. There were a lot of war movies to glamorize the war.

JV: Did you see a lot of them?

SG: Oh yeah. That's about all they had was war movies. A lot of that was propaganda, which was ok.

JV: Well I guess everybody in the United States was happy at the end of the war with the atomic bomb and everything. Now people talk about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There are a lot of mixed feelings in the world about the atomic bomb.

SG: I know that. But if they had not dropped the bomb when they did there would have been a lot more lives lost. Because the Japanese were fanatics. They would not have given up. Never. They would not. We would have had to invade their country. There would have been a mass slaughter. They would not give up. We went in and set up a government for them, a democracy, like a military government. And that's why they do everything they do today. And now they are so rich. I say that they lost the war but they won the peace. We did the same thing in Germany. The East Germans went to Russia and they had a hard time. But the West Germans, we helped them get in their feet.

JV: You saw a lot.

SG: I was going to show you my ration book. I have one in there but I couldn't find it.

JV: Oh.

[The remainder of the tape is casual conversation about pictures being shown to the interviewer by the narrator.]