

LAWTON M. CHILES JR. CENTER FOR FLORIDA HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM, FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE

Oral Interview With: Dr. Carroll Blake Gambrell, Jr.

Interviewer: James M. Denham

Place of Interview: Estates at Carpenters
Lakeland, Florida

Date of Interview: March 19, 2015

M = James M. Denham ("Mike")

C = C. B. Gambrell

M I'm with C. B. Gambrell, Jr., here in his residence and I'm glad to be here. Today is March 19, 2015, and we are here to discuss his memories. This is our very first day taping and I want to introduce Dr. Gambrell.

C: Good to be here. Thank you for inviting me.

M Wonderful, Dr. Gambrell when were you born, and where were you born?

C. I was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on December 1st, 1924, in the West End Baptist Hospital.

M. Who were your parents and how long were they married before your birth?

C I don't know how many years they were married, they were never separated. My father was twenty-eight when they were married, and my mother was 24. They were married in Birmingham, Alabama. She was from Yazoo City, Mississippi, and he from South Carolina, Oconee County I think it was. After World War I, he served a short time in the war, and was at Fort Gordon Georgia, and was part of the gigantic flu epidemic that took place and he was in the hospital for a while. He survived nicely and was later discharged along with a good many other people. He went to Birmingham, where he had a favorite uncle living, looking for work. The uncle, Uncle Frank, had good contacts and he helped him get a job and he had several jobs in Birmingham. Eventually, there were cutbacks and so forth; he was even a fireman on the railroad. When the cutbacks came, he was recently hired so he was let go. He went from there to Swift meat packing company and he joked often saying that his first job was in the frankfurter room and he saw what went in frankfurters, and when they turned him loose, he never wanted to go back. He went to work, fortunately, for the International Harvester Company and he worked for them for forty some odd years.

M. And all that was in Birmingham?

C. Yes,

M. He grew up in Oconee County, North Carolina. .

C., South Carolina.

M South Carolina, which is in the mountains, correct?

C. At the foothills of the Smokey Mountains. The nearest city was Walhalla, South Carolina. The road goes up from Walhalla. My mother, during all of that time was a high school graduate from Yazoo City, Mississippi, and she had an older sister living in Birmingham where her husband was in the construction business, and so she came to Birmingham also looking for work. She went to the Birmingham Business College and graduated from there and was right away employed by the Haverty Furniture Company. She worked for them for a long time. She and my father met at a Methodist church in downtown Birmingham.

M. Now Birmingham, back in those days, was really booming I would imagine.

C It was, it was big in the steel industry.

M. And for people who lived in the rural areas in the South it would have been a place where people would want to go to get jobs.

C. It was an employment center.

M. So you were born in 1924, what are some of your first childhood memories growing up?

C Well, there was a person who worked at the Haverty Furniture Company where my mother worked, and he was a part time real estate agent selling property. He had the right to sell property divided into lots on the far east side of Birmingham which was a long way from where it was located then, and he sold my mom and dad two residential building lots at the foot of a mountain that had been used in the past for mining iron ore. It had grown up with heavy vegetation. I was about two years old when they completed the house and moved to the new location and I remember the new location in particular Dad wanted a garden on the vacant lot next door where there was a beautiful dogwood tree and I remember that dogwood tree and the conversation that went with it. That was my earliest memory of anything.

M. If we could go back for a minute to your mother's family. She was from Yazoo City, Mississippi, what do you know about her family.

C. Well, she was one of eight children. Her father was in the construction business. There were four boys and four girls, and one of the boys, named Roy, was a football player and went to the University of Mississippi and I think he might have been either nominated to be an All American or was an All American, and that was a big deal in those days – lots bigger than it is now. Another one of the boys went to WWI and was killed in France; another one of the boys was manufacturing Superintendent for a huge pipe casting company in Birmingham, US Pipe and Foundry Company. The last child born to that group was Harry, and he and I were good

buddies. He became rather active in the air conditioning and heating business in Birmingham. Almost all of the children migrated to Birmingham for employment purposes. One of the four girls never had any employment. She was a homemaker during all of her life. .

M. This might be stretching it, but do you have any knowledge of the generations before that, of your mother's family?

C. I'm sorry, I don't know, but I wish I did.

M. What about your father's family?

C. He came originally from South Carolina where the Gambrell clan so to speak was fairly numerous in central SC and the story is told that five brothers came to the area of Virginia, migrated there from England, and began to separate. Two of them went to Central, SC, and became farmers. My dad's family immigrated from that.

M. You already mentioned that you had a lot of aunts and uncles.

C. A good many.

M. Did you see them frequently during your childhood?

C. Well, my favorite uncle and aunt was my mother's sister. He was a good bit older than she was, and they never had any children. They sort of adopted me along the way. I just thought they were great people. My uncle had a Model T Ford and he had been in the construction business and was a cabinet maker carpenter type person – really very nice cabinet work – and he eventually became part of the security force at the US Pipe and Foundry Company. He used to take me on fishing trips; he liked to fish, and he always remembered to take me with him.

M. Now, were you the first child born to your family?

C. Yes.

M. Did you have any other brothers and sisters?

C. I had two sisters, the first sister was born five years after me, and a second sister was born three years after that. The three of us grew up as children, and I always remember that Mary, the second sister, comes to mind. We had a family cow, and I was the milker of the cow. Just to look at the cow seemed to frighten her, and she yelled and screamed. .

M. Well, if you had a cow, that meant you lived not in town, you probably lived a little bit in the country.

C. On the far outskirts

M. So how many acres, or an acre?

C. Two big lots.

M. Two big lots, okay. So did you milk the cow and get the milk from the cow?

C. Oh yeah, I was the only one in the family that could milk the cow so I was a pretty important person regarding that. I never did get a vacation unless the cow got pregnant. I was the custodian of that cow from the later part of grade school all through high school. And the only reason anybody else learned to milk the cow was because I went off to college.

M. When you were growing up, who were the people, besides your family, that you knew and admired and as you were going to elementary school that you remember?

C. Well, we were members of the Ruhama Baptist Church that was a long walk from where we lived, and we usually went in a car. We had a Model A Ford that we ran the legs off of. It was a real transportation success as far as we were concerned, and a good many of our friends came through the church. It was the college church for Howard College, it is now Samford University, and a good many of the faculty were active in the church and my Sunday School teacher quite often was one of the faculty members. We had a good many friends associated with church activities.

M. What were, besides fishing, and I want to go into that a little more, what were some of your most enjoyable pastimes? I know you had to work hard.

C. We were real active people with our relatives in South Carolina.

M. So you visited there pretty often?

C. Yes, it was just about 300 miles from our residence to the farm house there. I liked to go there in the summer time because they had horses, and I liked horses.

M. What was the closest town to the farm house?

C. Walhalla, and Senaca.

M. Okay, so fishing, where did you go fishing in Birmingham?

C. Well, the water supply for Birmingham is Lake Purdy. It was a real famous fishing ground for lots of people, and my uncle liked to go there because he had a favorite spot. We also went to some of the creeks and the creeks got bigger as time went on. He used to seine for minnows so we would have live bait, and I would go with him for that.

M. Now, what was your, can you take me through your elementary school, let's say up until sixth grade. Do you have any vivid memories of elementary school?

C. The direction that my parents both, my mother left the furniture business and joined Wimberly and Thomas Hardware Company. She was their senior secretary person for a good many years. When she and Dad left home, I would ride with them to the nearest school, Barrett Grammar School. Sometimes there was no one there and they would put me out, and in the winter time, I stayed near a hot steam pipe that was pretty comforting until school opened. Then, I don't know why it was thought to be a position of some importance, but if you got to open the outside door of the Principal's office, you were pretty high up on the respect scale. I migrated to that position for quite a while.

M. What were your favorite subjects in elementary school? I guess you didn't have subjects up until high school.

C. I liked arithmetic and finally toward the end of eighth grade we got into some algebra, which I dearly loved, and still do, geography and history. I like those two subjects, and of course PE was always high on the pole too.

M. Now, what sports did you play? Did you play baseball?

C. I was an outfielder for our neighborhood team, and our sponsor was the American Legion. I don't know if it exists today.

M. Oh, yeah, absolutely.

C. American Legion was prominent in my early days.

M. Did you have anything happen to you or your family that was hurtful, or any bad memory that sticks out in your childhood, any tragedy?

C. I often looked backwards toward that, and we didn't have anything until my mother died of a ruptured artery in her abdomen. That was really the first calamity you might say.

M. When was that? How old were you then?

C. She was sixty-five, so I must have been about forty something.

M. So you were grown.

C. Yes.

M. You were, by far, grown. So your father was by that time you were in high school. Your father was working for International Harvester. Did he have to do a lot of traveling?

C. He had several different jobs there, and one of them was a traveling job visiting all of the dealers throughout the farming area of Alabama.

M. Did you ever go with him?

C. I didn't, but he would come home on the weekend. They supplied him with a pickup truck. When our son was just a little thing, he named his grandfather, "Granddaddy Pickup."

M. Obviously, your mother was not working. She was a homemaker, or is that not true?

C. She worked on and off with the Wimberly and Thomas Hardware Company for a great many years. But, I believe at that particular time, she was working.

M. Okay, that was probably pretty unusual back then, wasn't it?

C. It was, a bit.

M. Now, you grew up and you lived a lot of your adult life in strict segregation.

C. Yes.

M. Birmingham, obviously, was a very segregated area and all cities and counties in the South were segregated and many communities in the North were segregated.

C. That was a common and normal thing when I was growing up.

M. What did you think about that, or did you even think about it?

C. Well, there was a black community on the other side of the mountain. Our house was at the foot of the mountain on the north side. If you went up over the mountain and down the other side there was a black community there. Part of the remnants of that iron ore mine and most of the houses that they occupied were part of that development. Well, when my Mom couldn't be there she . .

M. Kind of a "Company Town" situation where the workers. . .

C. Yes, and my Mom employed some of the ladies from there as maids at our house. And that is one of my earliest memories of one of those ladies. They would walk up the mountain and down the other side, and there we were. Well, I still remember Lilly, one of my favorites, and she had a house full of kids that she left when she went to work. I got to know those youngsters because she would occasionally bring one or two of them to work with her. I remember the Christmas that I got a bicycle, which was a big event. What I did was put that bicycle on my shoulders and I walked up and over that mountain to that black community and let those youngsters ride my bicycle. They nearly tore it up because they didn't know how to ride it. They did their best. I never really thought that they were, except for color, any different than anybody else.

M. Did your parents ever talk to you about that situation or did they just kind of keep silent about it?

C. We never had a family discussion about it that I remember.

M. Now, back then, steel in Birmingham was going full blast.

C. Yes,

M. I would imagine.

C. Primarily it was U S Steel Mill which owned the local steel company, Schloss-Sheffield Company.

M. Yes, so that would have been a big presence in your life I would imagine. A lot of your friends worked there, a lot of your friends' parents worked there. Was it a daily situation that you would always think about the steel industry?

C. The iron and steel industry, was on the far side of Birmingham in Jones' Valley –we were in the far east of that. Most of the steel activity was in the western end of that valley. So there was nothing that was real close although Schloss-Sheffield had one blast furnace between where we lived and downtown, in fact it was pretty close to downtown and if you were fortunate enough, you could ride what was called a street car in those days and there was a viaduct going over the ground area near the blast furnace, and you could see them empty the slag and impurities out and it was quite an interesting sight of glowing lava.

M. As a kid growing up, that would be pretty astonishing. Did that affect you; do you think that had any impact on you eventually going into engineering?

C. No, so far as I know it didn't affect me. I'm not sure that I looked forward to working in a place that was hot with odors coming out all the time.

M. Well, you mentioned going downtown, how often did you all go to town?

C. Well, the street car agency ran, in my opinion, an awfully good street car service. The school kids could buy tickets, and I think they were seven cents apiece. You could buy a book of tickets and you simply gave the motorman a ticket when you got on, pick a seat, and you could get a real long ride if you went to the end of the line.

M. How far was that from your house the end of the line, to go into the city?

C. Gosh, the transportation went through the city and out the other end. It was quite a long way; it must have been thirty miles.

M. So you could do that without much trouble. Did you go downtown pretty often?

C. Yes, I threw newspapers starting with I believe the fifth grade. They had incentive plans to get you to obtain new subscribers. If you got one, you got a ticket or two. Then they had a bus and they would bus us down to the movie house. Which didn't do well for my studies!

M. Was that the main attraction, going downtown to the city to go to the movies?

C. Yes, and there was a big city auditorium downtown that often had athletic type events. I remember that my Mother and one of the other ladies in the neighborhood, Judge Thrift's wife, they liked to go to the roller derby. We'd load up our car full of people and go downtown to the roller derby quite often; at least once a week and sometimes more often.

M. What do you remember as the first political awareness, either the first political campaign, state or National?

C. I used to listen to the radio whenever I could. Our U.S. Congressman for the local area was campaigning on the radio. I don't know why, but I listened to him, and he got elected, and then re-elected. That was the first that I remember that I knew anything about politics.

M. Now, was that in high school, or elementary?

C. Then, there were some of the kids in my group that participated in high school politics. I never did that.

M. Do you remember any Presidential elections?

C. Yes, the one I remember had to do with Roosevelt.

M. Nineteen thirty-two?

C. I believe it was his first term.

M. His second term would have been 1936.

C. I believe that's the first. I knew who he was but didn't know much about it, although my dad did.

M. You would have been about twelve years old.

C. Yes, or thirteen. Well, anyway, my mom and dad would discuss things now and then. I didn't pick up on it very well, but one of my classmates', Shirley Dorough, father was a republican and a republican does not vote in a democratic primary . . .

M. Pretty strange.

C. We used to kid Shirley about that, and Roosevelt won again. That was a big event in my high school class.

M. By that time, that was the third election so that was 1940. The world scene was getting pretty complicated. Let's see, you would have been about sixteen or seventeen years old.

C. I should probably interject here into the conversation that I took three years of ROTC in high school.

M. Okay, let's go into that a little bit.

C. I don't know why I did that, but I thought it would be a good thing to be associated with the armed forces. There was a regular army sergeant that directed the program. He was quite a nice person and knew how to recruit kids. We had actual rifles, no bullets, but dry rifles.

M. Now, back in those days, was it understood that if you were in ROTC in high school and then get to go to college that there would be financial benefits? Or did that come after WWII?

C. It must have been after.

M. There were really no scholarships associated with ROTC in those years.

C. I wasn't aware of any.

M. Now of course it is a big inducement. What kind of student were you in high school? Were you a good student?

C. I was an average student because I did a lot of things outside of school. I don't want to offer them as an excuse for not having made top grades, but there was a lot going on in my life. I had total control of the cow at home, and then I threw newspapers for a long time, the *Birmingham News*. Then too, I was in ROTC, they would follow us out in the formation, and send us downtown for every parade that came up. Even on the weekend we were obligated to march. If I could have applied myself in any free time as a result by dispensing of one of those activities, I might have done better.

M. I sure ROTC didn't hurt with the girls either, did it?

C. That's right!

M. So your junior and senior years, when did you start thinking about what you were going to do after high school, what college to go to, careers, that type of thing?

C. One of my favorite cousins who was a good bit older went to Presbyterian College in South Carolina. I always respected that and thought that was a good thing for me to do; go to college. I liked to do mechanical work, building and so forth, I thought, well, if I'm going to learn how to do that, I really need to go to college. I guess I pretty much pointed myself in that direction. It turned out that I visited three or four colleges, Auburn was one, University of Alabama was one, Alabama had two locations then in Tuscaloosa and a center in Birmingham. So, I thought I can always give it a shot and I can always transfer, change, whatever. One of my favorite teachers in high school was Mrs. Parker. She taught mathematics. I had an algebra class

with her and I dearly loved that subject and her teaching was excellent – at least for me anyway. That tied in with doing something with in engineering.

M. So what were some of the colleges you investigated besides Auburn and Alabama?

C. The reason we visited Auburn and Alabama was that they were both state schools, and the tuition was low. One or two of the neighbor boys, who were older than us, had gone to either Auburn or Alabama and they would tell us how great things were. I had a girlfriend, and I thought if I go to Auburn, that is a long, long way and I wouldn't get to see her very often. So I chose the University of Alabama. It was only sixty something miles away, and I figured I could take a bus home. So that is primarily the reason I went to the University of Alabama; was my girlfriend.

M. Okay, so it wasn't long before you got to school and even back in high school that the international scene began to unravel. What were some of your first memories of an awareness of the unsettled world? You can go back even further if you need to.

C. My roommate at Alabama was Richard Evans; he was a Yankee from New Hampshire, a long way away. He was a mechanical engineering major, and I thought he did pretty well. He was above a C average student and in the early days of engineering programs all around the country they were heavy mathematics oriented to get ready to solve problems later in the curriculum. Anyway, I guess as much as anything, I choose mechanical engineering, even though I didn't finish in mechanical engineering, I found a curriculum program that I liked better but it still had those strenuous fundamentals that you had to master, and it was Industrial Engineering. So later, after the war, I transferred to that program, and ended up doing pretty well.

M. So when was it that you began to get an awareness of the world . . .

C. Oh, sorry. Dick and I liked to go to the movies. So, if after a hard day of studying, and so forth, we always made an excuse to go to the hamburger place and get a hamburger and then go to the movies. We did that at least once a week and sometimes more often. In those days the newspaper headlines and radios were blaring about the war and all of that. We were pretty well aware of how things were going. I still remember, very vividly, that we went to see the movie, "Guadalcanal Diary". If there had been a recruiter on the sidewalk outside of the building when we came out we would have both joined up! We were really motivated. That was the first time that I remember that I got excited about the war. That was a very convincing movie.

M. "Guadalcanal Diary," now what year was that?

C. Nineteen forty-three; 1943.

M. Was that a movie about the Battle of Guadalcanal?

C. Oh, yes. One of our famous high school friends, Thomas McKinney, had joined the Marines and was there on Guadalcanal, we had somehow learned that, and we had a close tie to the circumstances.

M. Now, what year did you enter the University of Alabama?

C. Nineteen forty-two.

M. Wow, that would have been that year. Walk us through the process of your joining the military and leaving the University of Alabama. What was the decision process like?

C. A story goes with that, and it is a little bit amusing. I went home, it was only sixty miles and I could catch the Greyhound bus to go home for the weekend, and while I was home, dad and I were talking about the progress of the war. He said, "Do you think you're going to be called up?" I told him I thought I probably would be. He asked if I had any preferences, and I told him I would like to be a fighter pilot. My mother heard us, and I went on and gave him more information than I should have and I said, "You know it troubles me a little bit, Dad, because those fighter pilots only live about five minutes in combat minutes, when you are really shooting." Well, my mother overheard that, and she didn't understand it, and I'm not sure my dad did either, but I didn't think any more about it, and I went back to school. Come either Monday or Tuesday, I was in class, and a runner came to class with a note for me. He interrupted the class. I thought, great guns, what have I done now? It said, "Report ASAP to Colonel Foster's office at the armory. What on earth did I do? So, I went to see Colonel Foster. The adjutant was waiting for me and the door to his office was closed so I couldn't see anything. He went on and knocked on the door and said Colonel, Mr. Gambrell is here. He said, "Show him in." So I went over and entered the door, and there sat my Dad. My Dad had come down to the campus from Birmingham because of that five minute banter that my Mother had overheard, to determine if there was any possibility of some other kind of activity in the military. Well, the Colonel, see now that was the eighth of December of 1942, and the Colonel offered me the opportunity to enlist to volunteer, not go through the draft in a special unit that would permit me to complete my freshman year.

M. So you had only been in school one quarter?

C. One quarter, they were on the quarter system.

M. You hadn't even finished on quarter.

C. I hadn't finished at that point.

M. Oh, my goodness.

C. It was the eighth of December 1942. It finished at Christmas time. So he said that if you joined the reserve corp. it will permit you to finish out the year. Well, that was pretty appealing. He said because I would have a special service number, different from the draftees, so I would always be something special. How good of an exposure was that? But anyway, I joined the

enlisted reserve corp. right there in the Colonel's office. My Dad left happy that I was in the Army. He had been in the Army years before. Well, I started the second quarter. I was about half way through the second quarter when here came orders. I didn't get to finish out the year; I got to finish out the quarter and then went on active duty in April of 1943.

M. Now, did you have a girl friend at that time?

C. Yes, Olive White, she was one of the White girls. There were lots of them, and her dad worked where my Dad did, the International Harvester Company. I didn't even know her, but she appeared in English class one day as a transfer student from a high school in Cincinnati, Ohio. And all of the kids started making fun of her, being a Yankee and whatever, and that really wasn't true. She cried, and I thought poorly about that. They took advantage of her, so I began to show her some attention. Later on we married. She's in the nursing home with a case of Parkinson's disease.

M. So walk me through the process of enlistment and what it was like to be put in the Army; where did you go first?

C. Well, I was called to duty to report to Fort McPherson, Georgia, that was an Army post in Atlanta, and I went over there and I was there for three or four weeks. Much longer, all the other recruits came in and were there three or four days and they were gone. They kept me there and I don't know why. It doesn't matter. They gave me a job to do and was supervising, I did know several other people. One of them was a football player from the University of Alabama. He was a good person. When I was finally called up they sent me to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, to engineers basic training. That when the engineer path began to surface in the Army records. I went there for basic training and I was there for, I don't know, maybe a month or so, and they took our platoon and marched it over to one of the Army buildings where they had desks and pencils, and all that, and they gave us an intelligence test. Well, we didn't know what it was, or why it was, or anything else, so it turned out that I scored high enough that they sent me to a classification center at the University of Wyoming and we slept on the basketball court in Army cots. While I was there, it turned out, that was the processing order to send me to study engineering at Yale University. I was there at Wyoming while all the other people I had entered with had already left, and I was hanging behind. Well, they chose thirty-eight of us, put us on Pullman railroad cars and off we went to New Haven, Connecticut and when we got off of the train, they met us and took us to the dormitory and then they said when you have time to catch your breath, you need to report down here on the lawn. So we did. Who was at the lawn? Glenn Miller and his Band. They were at Yale collecting themselves and so forth prior to shipping out. So we were welcomed to Yale by Glenn Miller and his band!

M. Wow!

C. Tony Martin was the singer and, anyway, I was there studying engineering for 15 months. Then the Battle of the Budge got active and they cancelled the program all over the United States and sent most of, well practically all of my people. I lived in Berkley College Dormitory and they sent them to Camp Pickett, Virginia, to the infantry. I think Patton's infantry. In my case, I had a physical condition that needed correction with an operation, so I

brought that to their attention. They sent me to the Air Corps Hospital nearby and I was operated on me and reconstructed some of my insides. Then the big question came up, "What's going to happen to you?" Well, they sent me to the Combat Engineers on maneuvers in Tennessee sleeping in pup tents. It was hot and dusty and all that. Back to my time at Yale, the fifteen months I was there, for four quarters – they were on the quarter system – that is a great school. They treated us just like regular students.

M. I was going to ask you, was it kind of like going to college?

C. It was. The only difference, they gave us text books and everything, the only difference was we wore uniforms.

M. And they paid you, I guess?

C. Yes, it was just a great experience.

M. Did you meet people there that you still, did you make any really good friends there? That's almost a year-and-a-half.

C. Well, one of my classmates was Jack Emerick, and he had been a University of Michigan football player, and he was a pretty bright fellow, I thought. The two of us, they sent both of us, I don't know why Jack was held up, but the two of us got in a Pullman car and off we went to Oklahoma. We served together in that unit for the rest of the war. But, then there was another young man, his name was Buch, he came from Los Angeles, California, and I got to know him quite well. Two of my classmates there, Clifford Altoff and Van Danielson were killed in Patton's Army. Cliff Altoff was just a brilliant student. That was a real loss I thought.

M: Dr. Gambrell, you left Yale?

C: We went back to Army duty and we were there, that was part of the preparation for the unit to go overseas. We were there, I don't know, two or three months finishing out the program, then we lined up all of the vehicles and we drove cross country to Oklahoma to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. We were there another probably three months, then we orders to ship out of New York POE. So then we got on troupe trains and off we went to New York and got on a Liberty ship there and headed out to Great Britain, in fact England, the lower southern part of England.

M: I believe you left something out; I think you left out your girlfriend in that process.

C: Oh, yeah, you are right. We continued to date rather regularly after being in high school together and she was quite a good student. She went to what was Howard College in those days. She had a working job at the switchboard and she finished two quarters there and then finances got in the way and she went to work in the local industry. I believe it was one of the meat packing houses. She was in the office force there. When we could, we dated and so forth. When I went off to the service, why we began to think maybe we should get together before I go overseas. So we married in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She got on a train along with one of my other buddy's wife from Birmingham. They came out to visit. We were married in the First Baptist

Church in downtown Tulsa by Dr. Storer. That was on a Saturday night, and got up early the next morning and went to church. He recognized us from the pulpit, and that is an enormous church! Anyway, we married and she stayed out there probably about a week. They gave me special dispensation to go to the guest house on base. Then she went back to Birmingham and continued to work at her job until I got back. She would send packages and letters frequently.

M: Okay, so you were in New York City, and you've been in about almost two years, you've been from Alabama to Atlanta, Wyoming, to Yale, to Oklahoma. You've seen a lot of the country up to now.

C: That's right!

M: So what were you, I guess you were just so busy you're not even thinking about it at the time, but it must have been an eye opening experience at the time.

C: Well, it was and I really was not able to take advantage of those locations like I would have liked to have. Although, I did get to see more of Oklahoma than a minimum; I did pretty well out there. You could catch a bus at the main gate, say on a Saturday or a Friday after work, and go to Tulsa. Tulsa was really accommodating to the soldiers there. There were places to sleep overnight and restaurants, and whatever. Although, meat was rationed, a soldier could get a steak without a coupon; which was pretty good. We had a sergeant in my section, he was what you called a tech sergeant, Wayne Geesler. He often would go to the motor pool and get a truck drive around the unit, and anyone who wanted to go swimming, he'd go to a swimming pool that was just off base a little bit. We would have an entertaining afternoon which was really, very much appreciated.