

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. SYBIL G. BALE

Today is September 23, 2001, and I am Hetsy Picard representing the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas, and I will be doing an oral history with Mrs. Sybil Bale. Mrs. Bale, will you spell your last name for us, please?

MRS. BALE: B as in boy, a l e, just like a bale of hay.

HETSY: Mrs. Bale is here with her husband who was one of the panelist for our Symposium. Mrs. Bale, we'll begin just by addressing some of the personal issues from your life. You were born where?

MRS. BALE: In Clovis, New Mexico, in 1920, and I was born and raised there, went through twelve years of school there.

HETSY: And then, did you go on to college?

MRS. BALE: No, it was during the Depression and I was a legal secretary and I went to Washington, D. C., in August of 1940, and went to work for the Lend Lease Program which at that time had brought British children to this country, and we were involved. And they had the "Dollar of the Year" men who worked, and when I went up there, we had four military men in the office and the Dollar of the Year men, and Nelson Rockefeller and a Major Chickering, a Major Riggs, and Mr. Bates who had the Bates Chemical Company in Philadelphia, and Edsel Ford. They had to get license for certain commodities to go overseas and they were limited in some of the commodities. And those license were first approved by the State Department, and then they came to our

office, and we had to make records of them and keep them and check that they did not go over their apportionment.

HETSY: Nelson Rockefeller, the name that you just mentioned, Nelson Rockefeller, and Edsel Ford and the Chickering and Riggs, were they members of the commission that was overseeing the Lend Lease program, or were they applying to the Lend Lease program?

MRS. BALE: No, they were, well, I guess they were overseeing it to a large extent.

HETSY: So they were part of a committee.

MRS. BALE: Yes, part of a committee.

HETSY: And the "Dollar a Year Man " what is that?

MRS. BALE: That is what the government paid them.

HETSY: I see. They were part of the committee, and they were a dollar year salary.

MRS. BALE: A dollar a year and all. An interesting note here, of course, the office grew.

HETSY: How many were there when you first went to D. C.?

MRS. BALE: Four girls and four men. You see, we were secretaries.

HETSY: Were you assigned to a specific person?

MRS. BALE: No, I kinda floated and when the office grew I was made a supervisor.

And my immediate supervisor, when it began to grow, they brought in a man named Jimmy Pennington, and I became very close to Jim and his wife and stayed in touch with them. And it was a close knit group and they, of course, the military men moved out immediately after Pearl Harbor. And we pretty much knew where they were, but in 1956 when we were at Fort Knox, Kentucky, the armored class at the Armored School had

graduated, and they were having a reception for them. Well, one of the oddities that happened, in that class one of our Marines was the top man in the class at this Army Armored school, and at the reception, I looked up and across the room was Major General Riggs.

HETSY: Wonderful. He had been Col. Riggs when you first knew him.

MRS. BALE: And when his eyes widened, I walked across to him, and his wife was with him, and we visited and, of course, I told him that we were still in touch, I was, with Jim Pennington and his wife. And they had four sons, and she said to me this is the first graduation he has attended. One of their sons was in the Armored class.

HETSY: Isn't that amazing! I'm gonna go back to D. C., and, first of all let me ask, how did you happen, as a young girl of but 18 or 19...

MRS. BALE: Nineteen.

HETSY: Nineteen. How did you happen to, first of all, decide you wanted to go to Washington, D. C., from Clovis, New Mexico, and secondly, how were you able to procure that position?

MRS. BALE: They came to me.

HETSY: They came to you. How did they know of you?

MRS. BALE: Well, I knew all the Senators from New Mexico, and I'm sure that I had been recommended first.

HETSY: Through the Senators from New Mexico?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: This is going to lead into a little bit of the background, your personal background, and then we're going to go back to D. C. You had brothers and sisters?

MRS. BALE: I had two younger brothers and my Mother and Father helped raise four other children. They kept them in the Summertime. The parents had divorced and those four children were with us most of the summers. Spent their summers in New Mexico with us.

HETSY: Now, with your brothers, did they participate in the war?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: And did they return?

MRS. BALE: Yes, my oldest brother did. The younger brother went in right at the end. They were both in the Navy. Curtis had his ship shot out from under him three times. The last time a Japanese plane hit it in the Pacific, and he came home. And he died in '79. Well, actually, in February of '80. And the younger brother is still living.

HETSY: And his name is?

MRS. BALE: Jimmy. And he lives in Clovis. Of the four children, one was a girl and there were three boys. The oldest boy was in the invasion of North Africa. The boy who was from February to May just older than I am, was taken prisoner on Java. He died in December, December the 6th. 2,000 (choked up).

HETSY: In the '40's.

MRS. BALE: No, just recently. And the younger brother was just a year older than my youngest brother and both of the other boys are dead. Collie's two brothers are dead. The older one was three years older than we were, and Calvin was just older than my own brother. All of these three boys are dead.

HETSY: But they all fought in the war, and they all came back including your two brothers.

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: So there total involvement by everyone your family was raising? Let's do just a little bit of background about your family because it helps understand how you got to D. C. and how you knew all the Senators. Your Grandfather was a rancher in the area.

MRS. BALE: That's right. He was a rancher in a community they called Ranchvale in New Mexico, and I was with him and my Grandmother a great deal of the time. I was the oldest grandchild and he knew everybody and everybody knew Granddad.

HETSY: And what was his name?

MRS. BALE: Charlie Hanes. The family had come to this country as French Huguenots in 1792 and settled in Louisiana. And my Great Grandparents came to Texas in 1875, and Granddad and my Grandmother moved on to New Mexico in the early 1900's. And raised their family there in New Mexico.

HETSY: Now did they have contacts in New Mexico that they decided to go to New Mexico?

MRS. BALE: No, that was back when the people could go and homestead an acreage, you know. You had a lot of people, families, come out there during that time. And they would homestead the allotted acreage and buy other land. Of course, then the Depression came along and that was a hard thing for everybody.

HETSY: And you were a teenager then, very early like twelve or thirteen.

MRS. BALE: I was ten in 1930, and, of course, went through high school with it. And we always had a garden. Mother and Dad had one in town, and Grannie and Granddad had one at the ranch. And we butchered beef and I didn't realize that a lot of people didn't have the things to eat that that we had. And I guess farmers and ranchers managed

better than other people. I don't know, but anyway there was never lack of food or anything that so many people had.

HETSY: And there's always a lot of work to do on the ranch. It never stopped, I'm sure.

MRS. BALE: It never stopped!

HETSY: So life just went on as it had.

MRS. BALE: You worked from can see til can't see.

HETSY: Right. So you graduated from high school and where did you take your secretarial course? Was it there in Clovis?

MRS. BALE: Yes. And I had taken shorthand and typing both in high school. And a very interesting note here, of course I had done summer work down at the University at Pertalis and again I knew Dr. Goddard which seems to amaze people but he was in Roswell. And they had a son about my age, and there was a crowd of us that ran together. And I guess it's strange, but there was just always this in the background that I knew people.

HETSY: That's right.

MRS. BALE: I knew people.

HETSY: And people knew you.

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: That's when they came to you from the Lend Lease Office, you said, "Hooray!"

MRS. BALE: Well I knew Senator Sam Bratton before Senator Hatch went up there, and Senator Chavez. And I have known the Senators since then, you know, but I have not known them since '50, since I married, like I did back when I was at home all the time.

HETSY: So they came to you, and did your family indicate to you that someone was going to come and approach you to go to D. C.?

MRS. BALE: No. My Grandfather had died, and I got the telegram from Washington the day of the funeral. And it was a difficult time for me, and I told Daddy I wanted to go and they said, "Fine."

HETSY: Now, was transportation a problem?

MRS. BALE: No, I rode the bus. Santa Fe Railroad ran through Clovis, but at the same time I could get a bus that took me fairly straight in. And we had a friend who was in Washington and had apartments and rented them. And Senator Hatch's secretary met me up there, and she took me first to where I got a room. I was there for awhile and then had an apartment. And interesting enough, a little side story here, when I was growing up the National Cathedral, Teddy Roosevelt laid the cornerstone in 1907. And some time in the early thirties, they had a campaign across the country, "Buy a Brick" to make money to support the building of the National Cathedral. Well, my roommate was from San Luis Obispo, California, and her youth group and my youth group raised money for this campaign. And we lived close enough in Northwest Washington that we walked to the Cathedral to see how it was going. Of course, it was still being built. My supervisor, Jim Pennington, whom I mentioned, was on the board of trustees for the National Cathedral, and the boys' school and the girls' school. So I had a lot of contact with the Cathedral.

HETSY: Was the boys' school and the girls' school, St. Alban's?

MRS. BALE: St. Alban's is the boys' school, and it's just the National Cathedral girls' school. And when Ed and I married and went to Quantico, we immediately went in to see Jim and Marjorie, and he was still on the board of Trustees, and we saw quite a bit of

them that time. We were back up there after he finished the Navy War College. He was stationed in Washington three years, and we visited them during that three years. The Marine Corps has a family service at the National Cathedral in Armed Forces Chapel every New Year's Day. And we attended that for the three years we were there, and I'm still in contact with the Cathedral.

HETSY: It is beautiful.

MRS. BALE: It is a beautiful cathedral.

HETSY: And they just finished it.

MRS. BALE: Did you watch the service last Friday?

HETSY: Yes, we did.

MRS. BALE: The window up over the main entrance was one of the last things I think they finished. But it's a beautiful place.

HETSY: It is magnificent. I'm going to backtrack us again now, going back to your work at the Lend Lease Office. You were more of a swing secretary, you were able to work with everyone. Were you working with contracts primarily?

MRS. BALE: We checked the license on the commodities that were given for overseas shipment.

HETSY: And then your "Dollar a Year" men, did you have a lot of interaction with them?

MRS. BALE: Yes, enough.

HETSY: How were they? What were their personalities? What were they like to work with?

MRS. BALE: Well, they were very interesting, very interesting. Each one was different.

HETSY: Can you just give us some vignettes, some biologic...

MRS. BALE: It's been so long ago. Each one had their own personality and it was a pleasant office to work in. It was really a nice place.

HETSY: When you were working with and around Nelson Rockefeller, do you...

MRS. BALE: He was fun!

HETSY: Was he jovial?

MRS. BALE: Yes, very jovial. And the Military men were. The Navy man who was in the office at the very beginning, one of the four, had taught at the Military Institute in Roswell, and so we had a lot to talk about.

HETSY: Now what was his name? Don't know. Okay. So you had immediately a connection with New Mexico and the office.

MRS. BALE: And, of course, the girls in the Senator's office were all from New Mexico and it was not bad.

HETSY: And then when you were dealing with Edsel Ford, was he more serious?

MRS. BALE: Yes, he was more serious, I think, than the rest of them. He didn't integrate as much as the rest of them did with the whole office force.

HETSY: Did they every entertain for you?

MRS. BALE: No, there was none of that. By the end of the time I was up there, there were over 750 in that office, and we were working three shifts around the clock. And if you took the night shift, sometimes we would go out in group on a break or something, but there was no other than that, there was no socializing.

HETSY: You saw that office grow from four women who were working with basically the four men to over 700 people. So that was from 1942?

MRS. BALE: I came home in July of '41.

HETSY: So you came back to New Mexico in '41.

MRS. BALE: I was there just about a year. I went up in August and came home in July.

HETSY: So you went up in August of '40 and returned to New Mexico in July of '41.

MRS. BALE: I was there when Congress passed the Selective Service law in 1940, and I attended some of those sessions.

HETSY: As an observer?

MRS. BALE: Yes. And you could tell what was coming.

HETSY: You could tell the magnitude of the commitment was building?

MRS. BALE: Yes, that's right. And I had told Senator Chevez, Mother came up there and we were at Roosevelt's inauguration in January of '41, and I told her then I was coming home. But I had told him, I said, "If you will get me home, and God forgives me for leaving New Mexico, I'll never leave it again."

HETSY: Who did you tell that to?

MRS. BALE: Senator Chevez.

HETSY: So he did get you home? (laughter)

MRS. BALE: Yes, and when we married and went to Quantico and went in to see him, he looked at me and said, "Do you remember what you told me years ago?" I said, "Yes." (laughter).

HETSY: So in a year you saw that office grow from eight people to over 700 people?

MRS. BALE: Seven hundred and fifty people.

HETSY: My word! Then you returned home.

MRS. BALE: I returned home and went to work for a lawyer. I was in the hospital, we won't cover that, it was early November, and the 200th National Guard Unit was down at Fort Bliss. And a couple came to see me and they had given 'em leave. And I asked Jake where they were going, and he laughed, I remember him laughing, and he said, "Well, I guess we're going to the South Pacific. Then have issued long underwear." And they went to the Philippines.

HETSY: Now we need to get back to how you two met? When did you meet and how did you meet?

MRS. BALE: Ed had the recruiting station for the Marine District and I had written him from Clovis. At that time, of course I was, you see, after World War II, I was out of it til before the Korean War started when they started the draft board up again.

HETSY: So when you returned from Clovis, you did not meet Ed for another ten years?

MRS. BALE: I was with the Selective Service. I was an auditor with Selective Service from January of '42, then I went home after the war was over.

HETSY: May I stop for just a minute. As an auditor for Selective Service, what did you do?

MRS. BALE: You audited the draft boards.

HETSY: So you made sure that...

MRS. BALE: The questionnaire, the files and everything. The questionnaires had to be filled out properly, everything filed properly, it was just like a set of books, really. And they sent me down to Lovington, and I was supposed to audit the board and continue on. And I got down there and it was bad. It was bad.

HETSY: The records were not well kept.

MRS. BALE: Well, it was partially the records, but the storage closet in the office was full of whiskey bottles and a few other good things. They had fired the clerk, and I had to find a new clerk. And I called the Methodist minister and told him I wanted somebody who didn't drink or smoke. And he sent me a woman whose husband had enlisted in the Navy. He had worked for Phillips Petroleum and I hired her. And her daughter is the woman who visited us Monday and Tuesday in Las Cruces.

HETSY: Before you came down...

MRS. BALE: Before we came down for the program. And I finished the audit and thought I was leaving, and the whole board threatened to leave. It was hard to get people to serve, and we had a five-member board. And General Charlton, who was head of Selective Service, called and told me what was happening. I didn't know that the Board felt like this and he said, "Sybil, we're in a bind." And he said "I really would like for you to stay there if you feel like you can." And I stayed. Now, General Charlton I had known all my life. He and Johnny Miles who was governor for two terms, had taught in schools at Clayton in Northern New Mexico. And General Charlton had a daughter, from January to May older than I, was who died when we were three years old with diptheria. And I had always been close to them. And I stayed, and I stayed until the end of the war.

HETSY: Did the board in fact change?

MRS. BALE: No, they stayed with me.

HETSY: Then why was it difficult to find people to serve? Was it because men were going into the service?

MRS. BALE: Well, most of the men were older men. The younger men were going into service, and you wanted somebody older on these boards. Most of them were, I would say, from '40 on.

HETSY: How did the Draft Board work? You know we have generations now in which there has been no draft. So what was the function of the Draft Board and how did it implement that?

MRS. BALE: The men registered.

HETSY: At age, all the men of the area registered at what age?

MRS. BALE: Eighteen, I think was back then. They had to fill out a questionnaire in which they answered questions, and there was always the form that they could check if they were conscientious objectors and if they were married and they listed how many children they had and they had to list their occupation.

HETSY: Was there a medical examination?

MRS. BALE: Oh, yes!

HETSY: Did they have to go through a medical examination?

MRS. BALE: Not until they were called up. You took them by classifications.

Classification one was single, and three was married men, and four were the physically handicapped.

HETSY: It stated on their form that they had something.

MRS. BALE: And you took them in age groups.

HETSY: Did you take the youngest first?

MRS. BALE: Yes. The youngest single men went first and the rules were very fair. The deferments, occupational deferments, if need be, and of course a lot of the ranchers and farmers, the Santa Fe Railroad a lot of the people got deferred.

HETSY: The government needed the railroads.

MRS. BALE: That's right and down in Lovington it was oil country and you had the people needed in the oil industry and that type of thing.

HETSY: Were doctors deferred, of course, they needed doctors?

MRS. BALE: No, not really. Most of them volunteered. They were not called, they mostly were overage or volunteered, and it ended up with the civilian population being short of doctors, of course. Another interesting thing that happened, the government had taken over the boys' school up at Los Alamos.

HETSY: This was during the time when they working on the atom bomb.

MRS. BALE: That was a working school. The boys worked. The last semester those boys had, they did in Taos at the Sagebrush Inn. They did their last semester there. Of course, Robert Oppenheimer had gone to school there, and he was the one who suggested that area for Los Alamos.

HETSY: Did Dr. Oppenheimer die after that time?

MRS. BALE: No, much later. It was a closed community, as you know. People didn't know what was going on up there. It was called the "Manhattan Project" and it had started the process back earlier and we had people who worked on the Manhattan Project couldn't explain to us what was going on. But the word was that they were to grant those people deferments and all. And, of course, it was a secret environment, nobody went in without a clearance and all.

HETSY: Did you have occasion to go up there?

MRS. BALE: I didn't want to go. (laughter) I went of course after the war, but I didn't want to know anymore than I already knew.

HETSY: And what did you know actually? With your contacts, you probably knew more than others.

MRS. BALE: I knew more than that. The head spotters when they did Trinity, and one of the members on our board had a ranch over not too far from where they did that trial, came in the morning after and I remember Millard saying, "I got" that was his expression, "the government is doing some thingies over there."

HETSY: Did it turn into a mushroom?

MRS. BALE: No, it turned his calves, it was calf drop time, and some of the calves were as white as this kleenex.

HETSY: And their natural color was?

MRS. BALE: Red.

HETSY: Red. Were there any health issues?

MRS. BALE: He didn't live there. He lived in Lovington.

HETSY: He wasn't there.

MRS. BALE: He wasn't there and the foreman called him and told him. Now, Nettie and Earl were living in Seminole after the war. The Phillips moved their people around. And Millard had had a stroke and he had a black man who drove for him. And when he used to go to Midland from Lovington, he would stop in Seminole to see Nettie Hedrick.

HETSY: Nettie being...

MRS. BALE: The woman who worked for me there in Lovington.

HETSY: And Earl was the rancher?

MRS. BALE: Her husband, but he worked for Phillips. Now Millard was the rancher in Lovington. And an interesting note there, Clarence Scarbrough lives in Midland. The Scarbrough family had built the Scarbrough Hotel in Midland, Texas, and Clarence had gone into service. He wasn't married, and he had gone into service. And Millard was handling all the Scarbrough estate for Clarence. He was an only child and Millard and Mattie had one boy and he volunteered and was in the service.

HETSY: Did they return?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: Now we have you down there in Lovington working with the Selective Service Board and you are there for five years?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: When did you meet your husband?

MRS. BALE: I had gone back to Clovis in 1946. I was back in Clovis when the Korean thing started.

HETSY: That was about '49.

MRS. BALE: '48. And I had six counties

HETSY: That you were overseeing?

MRS. BALE: Yes. And I was tired of the kids coming in, and there was no way you could not, we had a Navy and Army recruiting office, of course, and the Draft Board was right by in the Post Office, those two offices. But we had no Marine recruiter, and the boys would come in and wanted to join the Marines. Well, I finally wrote to Dallas to the Regional Recruiting Office and said we need a recruiting station out here. And Ed

was over at the District, and he came out to see what in the world was going on. And that's when I met him.

HETSY: You actually asked to meet him? (laughter) And he was sent to you. That's wonderful. So you met and did you date? Did he court you for very long?

MRS. BALE: Yes. We didn't marry until '52. He went to school in Quantico.

HETSY: You were working in Clovis in '49, and then you met and then did you date from that time on?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: And in '52 he went to Quantico from Dallas. Well, how did you keep this long distance romance?

MRS. BALE: By telephone.

HETSY: Telephone.

MRS. BALE: I had those six counties to cover and a lot of driving.

HETSY: But your six counties did not include Dallas?

MRS. BALE: No, it was New Mexico. But it was interesting. But lots of personal things enter into these things. I had known the sheriff and his wife. They had no children. I had known them for many years, and one time when Ed came out when the Jailer took his vacation. Bessie and Bill always moved up the apartment at the jail which was on the top floor of the courthouse. Beautiful apartment, really nice! And I always moved with 'em. (laughter). One of the first dates we had, I had all the keys to the courthouse.

HETSY: And all the keys to the jail as well. (laughter)

MRS. BALE: And we had the Chairman of the Board up at Quay County, Tucumcari, and his wife had one daughter, and she was married and gone, and, of course, I stayed with them when I would be up at Tucumcari, and Roy and Grace were really neat.

HETSY: So Ed would come up there to Tucumcari?

MRS. BALE: No, now he did meet them. Roy visited Clovis a lot. He ended up, he was Republican, and we had a Republican governor and he ended up as the appraiser for Easeman Department of State Highway.

HETSY: And of course at that time highways were just being built, national highway system was just coming out.

MRS. BALE: Yes, and he did that, and Grace had cancer of the esophagus, and Ed and Mother and I drove to Albuquerque. She was in Albuquerque in the hospital. She said I don't want you to change your wedding if anything happens. Well, that funeral was the day we married.

HETSY: Had she smoked? I'm just curious.

MRS. BALE: No, she never smoked to my knowledge. But when Ed was in Korea, I brought our son back to Clovis for Christmas. And Roy had a brother in Denver who had come down to see him in Santa Fe. And George brought him on to Clovis so he could see

Charles.

HETSY: Oh, that's wonderful. Now we're gonna get back, we'd just gotten married and your were married in Clovis?

MRS. BALE: In Clovis.

HETSY: And then did you have a honeymoon?

MRS. BALE: We went to Quantico.

HETSY: Quantico was your honeymoon. (laughter)

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: Did you go by train?

MRS. BALE: No, we flew. There was a feeder line in Clovis and we flew to Dallas and then on.

HETSY: Did Ed have orders to go to Quantico?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: And then how long were you...

MRS. BALE: He was there in school until May, the end of May, and then we went to San Diego.

HETSY: Now while he was in school in Quantico, what was he training for?

MRS. BALE: He was in school.

HETSY: He was probably getting special training.

MRS. BALE: Well, it was the Marine Corps Senior Officer's Course.

HETSY: And he graduated from that. How long was that?

MRS. BALE: It was for nine months. He went from September til May. And he flew back for the wedding and we went to San Diego and I was pregnant. And, oh, it was not a good time. And he was at a Marine recruit depot, had some reserve units that came in during the summer to train, and they held him there until Charlie came because...

HETSY: Charlie was your son who was due.

MRS. BALE: And he was born in December, and Ed left in March and went to Korea. And was there a year and came back and he was up at Camp Pendelton 'til May and we went to Fort Knox for three years.

HETSY: So it was March of '53?

MRS. BALE: Charlie was born in December of '53. He went in '54, and he came back in March of '55.

HETSY: March of '55. And then you all went...

MRS. BALE: To Fort Knox.

HETSY: To Fort Knox.

MRS. BALE: And this was his third tour. Yes, he had gone to school there, to Armor School twice. But he was teaching this time.

HETSY: Third time.

MRS. BALE: Third Time.

HETSY: Now when he was in Korea, you were...

MRS. BALE: I stayed in San Diego. We were living in a friend's house. He was in the Navy, and he was on the East Coast and we lived in their house and when we left they came back.

HETSY: Perfect timing. What was the feeling when you were, compare the feeling of a young girl in D. C. for a year which was probably a lot of fun, what was the feeling in San Diego now you're a more mature woman with a baby and you have a husband who is actually off in the war?

MRS. BALE: The wives had their club meetings. We still had our meetings and I was very active in the church.

HETSY: Which was the Episcopal Church?

MRS. BALE: Well, it was the Methodist out there. We had not gone to the Episcopal Church. Ed said I ran a hotel. I had a lot of company. Mother and Daddy came out, and Bill and Bessie, the sheriff and his wife came out, and my brother and his wife came up from San Francisco. It was one of those times. I had a friend in Phoenix, and she and her little girl came over, and just a lot of company.

HETSY: You were involved with your community and the other service wives and the church.

MRS. BALE: And the roommate that I had in Washington lived in San Louis Obispo, and she made two trips down there. She brought her two girls one time and spent a week, and then she brought the two boys and spent a week. And we made all the tourist things.

HETSY: Was there a lot of communication back and forth between Ed in Korea and you?

MRS. BALE: Oh, yes.

HETSY: Now, did you do that with letters?

MRS. BALE: Letters.

HETSY: 'Cause there certainly was no telephoning going on.

MRS. BALE: No. And if people came back there was contact.

HETSY: And where was Ed in Korea? He was in the Armored Division so he was...

MRS. BALE: He was in the Armored Division, he had the tanks.

HETSY: Did you ever know where he was during the time that he was over there?

MRS. BALE: Yes, but I can't tell you now.

HETSY: Was there much rationing going on?

MRS. BALE: No, no. It was not like it was in World War II.

HETSY: So he came back and you all went to Fort Knox and he was teaching in the Armored school there, and that was 1955 to '58 you were at Fort Knox. And then we're beginning to get into...

MRS. BALE: We went back to San Diego, and we left there in '60 I guess it was. And he went to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and finished there and we went down to Washington and he was there for three years.

HETSY: So that gets us probably up to about 1963.

MRS. BALE: '64 and we went to Guam for two years.

HETSY: You were in Guam for two years. So then that's '65. We're getting close to Viet Nam now.

MRS. BALE: Yes, Viet Nam really started while we were in Guam. So he brought us home in '66, and I stayed in Clovis with the children, and he went on to Viet Nam and came back in '67 and we went to Camp LeJuene and he retired in '69 after thirty years in the Marine Corps.

HETSY: My goodness. It's amazing. Now when he was in Viet Nam, how did that differ from his time in Korea as far as your relationship and communication?

MRS. BALE: Not really any. It was just like it was, a weekly letter sometimes more than that.

HETSY: Did you all do tapes? I know some of my friends who had husbands would send recordings.

MRS. BALE: No, we didn't do that. Now I met him in Honolulu. He came back for a conference in Honolulu, and the wives all met the men out there and we got stuck. He was supposed to go back, I think it was a five-day conference. We ended up being there nine days in all.

HETSY: Was it was a nice place to be stuck?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: And with your husband that you haven't seen in awhile. (laughter)

MRS. BALE: We went out with the other couples there for the conference.

HETSY: Now you had Charlie, and he was growing up. He was a baby in San Diego and he has been moved to Fort Knox and Ed has gone to the War College, but did you have other children?

MRS. BALE: We had Cissy at Fort Knox, so we had the two children when we went to the War College.

HETSY: She was a baby.

MRS. BALE: She had never seen snow, and we lived out in the country, and of course it snows deep back there and she hated it. She absolutely hated it. And Ed took her one Saturday morning and went to the commissary. And the snow was banked up on each side of the street and it was black from the smoke of vehicles, and she was standing next to him, and four years old, and she said "How long is this stuff going to last?" And Ed said, "It's going to last until the Easter Bunny comes." And she stood there a minute and she said, "Oh, hell!"

HETSY: Spoken like a true Marine! (laughter)

MRS. BALE: And her Father almost hit a telephone post. She said, "I might as well get used to this." He said, "Yes, you had." And they came home from the commissary and she wanted her snow suit on. Well, I got it on her and got her out the front door and she wanted right back in. (laughter).

HETSY: Did she ever get used to it?

MRS. BALE: She never did really like it. And Charlie would stay out until he was absolutely stiff with cold and all, but Cissy never did like the cold weather.

HETSY: Now having moved as you all did, where did Charlie and Cissy end up in college and where are they now? Where have they settled down?

MRS. BALE: Cissy works for a title company in Houston. We sent her to A&M with a pickup, a horse trailer and a horse. And Charlie is a long-haul truck driver and loves every minute of it. Well, he drives from coast to coast, and we see more of him since we moved Las Cruces than we did up in the mountains. And Cissie and her two girls live in, well, the oldest one is back at A & M, but Cissie and her husband and the youngest girl are in Houston.

HETSY: They're relatively close.

MRS. BALE: They're close, relatively.

HETSY: So they've had some wonderful experiences, too. I'm going to ask you and if it isn't too personal and if you don't want to discuss it you don't need to. I know it's very difficult for you, but your two brothers who did fight in World War II. We've talked about them earlier. Curtis, who was the youngest, I believe.

MRS. BALE: Jimmy is the youngest. Curtis was the oldest.

HETSY: Jimmy was the one who had his ship shot out.

MRS. BALE: No, Curtis was the one.

HETSY: Curtis was the one who had his ship shot out from under him three times.

MRS. BALE: He was on a Destroyer always, and the first two times he was in the Atlantic; in the Pacific the last time when a suicide plane hit the Destroyer.

HETSY: That was a kamikaze plane.

MRS. BALE: Kamikaze airplane.

HETSY: So the other two times were they torpedoed in the Atlantic?

MRS. BALE: Yes, they were torpedoed.

HETSY: And did you all learn of this from him, or did you just know the boats he was on?

MRS. BALE: He came home on survivor leave all three times. They brought the ship into New Orleans the two times in the Atlantic, and the first time, yes, I guess the first time they brought it in to New Orleans. The second time they brought it into Philadelphia. The first time they brought it into New Orleans and he was home on survivor leave. And they called him back. He was in electronics and they were having some problems rewiring and stuff and they called him back. And then the second one, they took his ship into Philadelphia shipyards, and he was there for, well, I think he came home on survivor leave. And then they sent him to the Pacific because that's when they were making the final push out there and all.

HETSY: As with each experience, was he in the water for very long?

MRS. BALE: I don't think so. He never talked about it. I remember one of his shipmates came to see him after the war in Clovis and spent the night with him. And Mother said both of them sat up and talked and Mother said they had nightmares that

night when they went to bed. And we never pushed at it, never pushed at him to talk about it. Really, Ed never has unless he gets with a group like this, they don't talk about it. And then Jimmy, he went in late in the war and was on the transports that brought the boys back. He and the youngest boy of the other...

HETSY: The other four children that your parents raised.

MRS. BALE: And they brought the troops back. But it was hard, and I thought a lot, of course everybody did about food during World War II, it wasn't like that in Korea.

HETSY: It wasn't like that in Viet Nam, either.

MRS. BALE: No, well, Viet Nam was terrible, but it was completely different. It was completely different. And World War II we had the rationing, you know, and we did without. We had to do without things.

HETSY: Such as gasoline?

MRS. BALE: That's right and food, shoes and sugar were rationed. The casualties were terrible in World War II, and especially in New Mexico. We lost so many in the Philippines, 150 in the Bataan Death March.. It was completely different.

HETSY: How did people keep their spirits up if all of these death notices are being returned home?

MRS. BALE: I don't know how to tell you. We did. We just simply did. We all worked hard and long hours and my Mother went to work. She had never worked and she went to work. My Aunt had a dress shop in Clovis and she went to work in that dress shop to keep, I imagine, from going crazy. And I remember I said something one time about joining the Women's Corps or the Navy. General Charlton said, "You're not going anywhere." He said, "Your Mother has had all she needs to take care of." He said,

"You're not going anyplace." He said, "The work you're doing is as important as you would be doing in either service." That was true!

HETSY: Well, that's right. Your involvement was a critical part of that war.

MRS. BALE: It wasn't fun, and you worried about people you saw, as I am sure the commanders in the services worried about the people they sent into battle. But it was something that had to be done.

HETSY: New Mexico had a relatively small population.

MRS. BALE: That's right. This is why we knew everybody, you know. Church and school and everything else, you knew people and it was hard. And I remember down at Lovington, the election came along and there was one bus out of it. And if I rode it home in the afternoon I wouldn't get there in time to vote. and couldn't get back the next day to work. And the District Judge for Clovis was holding court in Lovington and I rode to Clovis with Judge and Mrs. Compton and we barely got there in time to vote. I rode the mail truck at three o'clock in the morning back to Lovington to be there for work. That was the sort of thing that we did, and I was one who always voted. You might be an illiterate but you went to vote. I don't understand these people. And I remember one time in Clovis, and this is before World War II, and I was on the radio. Sen. Hatch was there, and I don't remember which election year, and I don't remember why I was on the radio, but I was. And I said on the radio, "If you don't vote, don't complain about what happens after that." And I had a call from him waiting for me when I came out of that studio. He said you hit it on the head, if they don't vote they shouldn't complain. But I just simply have never understood people not voting.

HETSY: That is a phenomenon, I think, that has started since the protesters with the Viet Nam war. I think that's when that started.

MRS. BALE: I think that's true.

HETSY: I hope that that's changing. I hope the United States tragedies that have occurred recently will promote...

MRS. BALE: I think it will.

HETSY: I also think the fact that we haven't had a draft for a number of years, we have generations of people who don't understand the military and that probably would be a little bit of that changing, too.

MRS. BALE: And another thing, and this has been a very difficult thing for me, we grew up in Clovis, and we had a black school and a white school. We had a Japanese colony there, and we had the Mexicans down there.

HETSY: What about the Indians? Did you have them?

MRS. BALE: We didn't have Indians in Clovis. They're back West but not our area. And we had five Jewish families in town, and there was never any prejudice. There was a little change among all of us. Of course, the Japanese children went to school with us and so did the Mexican children. The black school there was much interaction and there was a man who was a porter on the Santa Fe Railroad and they had four boys and they all worked at the hospital. And I can remember the times that I was in that hospital those boys coming and singing before they started work in the morning. And I told the two Japanese here for this symposium about this. The Japanese colony was there and they were picked up.

HETSY: I was going to ask you, were they able to remain with you?

MRS. BALE: No. And when, I guess all of my class had been looking for the boy who was in our class, and none of us had said anything. One of the younger classes than ours had their class reunion, and his cousin was there and one of my classmates' sisters got Heroshi's address from him, and her brother was teaching at the medical school at the University of Oklahoma. And he called Heroshi, and Heroshi flew to Oklahoma and met George.

HETSY: Was that recently?

MRS. BALE: No, this was about '88, maybe '89. They came to Clovis. Forty two of our class had dinner with Heroshi.

HETSY: How wonderful! Where had Heroshi's family been taken?

MRS. BALE: They took them to California and he tried to enlist, and of course couldn't. And Eleanor Roosevelt had visited that camp and he talked to her and she got him into the Army Intelligence. And his unit went to Italy as the battle went up the boot of Italy. And he came back and made a doctor. He was a doctor in Chicago. And all of us wrote to him until he died. He had cancer and died.

HETSY: What was his name? Heroshi?

MRS. BALE: Heroshi Ebihira.

HETSY: And that was his last name?

MRS. BALE: Yes. The Mexican family, who lived a couple of blocks from my family, had two boys older than I was and two girls one my age and one younger. They sang in a quartet and they sang in our church choir. And I played for these kids. And we were always close. They had a sister who was about my Mother's age. There was a wide gap in there. And the oldest boy became District Judge in Clovis.

HETSY: And what was their last name?

MRS. BALE: Nieves.

HETSY: Nieves.

MRS. BALE: Nieves. And one of the Jewish family had a daughter my age and we were close friends. And about '91, Ed and I made a trip to Roswell. She and her husband had a dress shop there. And we had another classmate who had married a man from Marathon, Texas, who had a ranch and he had died but Dorothy was still down there. And she met us all in Roswell and we had a reunion, and had lunch. And Ed said to Dorothy Vohs, the Jewish girl, "Sybil has always said that there was no prejudice in Clovis." And he said, "Do you feel that way?" And she looked him and said, "I didn't know prejudice until I went to the University of California."

HETSY: Oh my goodness! (laughter)

MRS. BALE: She went there to school.

HETSY: She was at Berkeley, perhaps.

MRS. BALE: No, she was in Los Angeles. The principal of the colored school died early on after Ed and I married. The woman who taught there too died after we moved to the mountains, and I always stayed in touch with her until she died.

HETSY: What did the people who were colored, there was segregation because of the educational system at the time, and that was typical throughout the country?

MRS. BALE: Well, there was segregation in Lovington, too.

HETSY: Because people lived in different areas, but the interaction came with the everyday life.

MRS. BALE: With everyday community lives. The Mexicans settled down along the railroad because that was where they worked. And that's where the Japanese colony was because that's where they worked. And people didn't have cars in those days.

HETSY: And did black families also work along the railroad?

MRS. BALE: Yes, because the women usually did cleaning and all, but the men were porters and what have you. I ran into it the first time in Washington, of course. We had what we called "runners" up there, and they were young black people. But the one who was the runner for our office and was supposed to get supplies when we needed them, and if we had new people come in needing typewriters or machines, he got those. And I reached the point where I went with him to get those machines. And there was a thing posted one day that there was a Civil Service job available in the building we were in.

We were in the Treasury Building, and I said to Arnold, he had had two years of college, and I said to him, "Why don't you apply for that job?" And he looked at me and he said, "Miss Sybil, I couldn't get that job." Well, I didn't know, and I said, "Why not? You're qualified." He said, "I'm black." And that was my initiation to discrimination, because I had never known it, and I wasn't comfortable with it, either. It really bothered me.

Really bothered me. Of course, I had never been out of New Mexico to be exposed to it, and they just did not have it

HETSY: What was the population of Clovis back then?

MRS. BALE: It was about 20,000.

HETSY: Was there one high school basically?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: And one elementary?

MRS. BALE: No there were two elementary, one on the East side and one on the West side. So they moved to main street and the big school. There was a high school at Pleasant Hill, there was a high school at Texico High School, it was all twelve grades out at Ranchvale where the ranch was.

HETSY: During the war, how did people manage their ranches because you had all the men going off to war? Were you able to keep the cattle?

MRS. BALE: Oh, yes.

HETSY: And run the cattle?

MRS. BALE: Oh, yes.

HETSY: And the government needed the meat.

MRS. BALE: Yes, they needed that and the wheat crops. And while I was down at Lovington, of course, help was hard to get, and I had a rancher friend family down there whose foreman out at the ranch mother died in the middle of shearing and branding season, and I branded sheep for two days. You did what you had to do. I just called Gen.Charlton up and said, "Hey, I'm working." (laughter) And I went out and branded, you brand sheep with paint.

HETSY: Now they spray them.

MRS. BALE: They spray them. But back then we branded sheep with red paint.

HETSY: You have to really paint them all with a brush.

MRS. BALE: No, you dipped the branding iron in and slapped it on, but when the lambs come is when they shear too. The wool buyer was there and the man who shipped the wool was there, so I ended up, not only branding the sheep, the lambs, but I made the

shipping labels out for them to ship the wool on the railroad. It was a time when you did what had to be done.

HETSY: Really, and of course the government needed the wool for uniforms. So everything, the economy in New Mexico was able to maintain itself because everything that we needed for the war effort, regarding meat, you needed the lamb, you needed the beef, you also needed the wool. So the sheep came from that area and you had oil and you had mining.

MRS. BALE: Yes. The copper mines are over at Silver City.

HETSY: The State itself, as far as the economy was concerned, was able to maintain itself during the war fairly well.

MRS. BALE: Fairly well. And the people worked. Like I said, if there was a job to be done somebody filled in and did it.

HETSY: Word got out that someone needed help and people would just show up.

MRS. BALE: People showed up and helped.

HETSY: How was housing in Clovis at that time? I am wondering if there was any kind of an influx in population?

MRS. BALE: Yes. We had the Army Railroad Battalion come in there, and of course they had basically tents out South of town. The Air Force came in there, the Cannon Air Force Base and all. But you had mostly single men, officers some times brought their wives, but they managed. There were apartments and houses.

HETSY: Were they built for them?

MRS. BALE: No, they built some shelters out at the Air Force base. The Railroad Battalion didn't do any building, but the Air Force did. You did what you had to do.

HETSY: And that is true, I suppose. It was more so in World War II. You did not have shortages during Korea and nothing in Viet Nam as far as shortages. We all remember that too.

MRS. BALE: Some really heroic things happened in World War II and all.

HETSY: On the home front as well as in the battle field.

MRS. BALE: On the home front as far as with the Military. Now we had in Lovington, I never shall forget one time, the men could transfer if they had moved, they could transfer to the board where they had moved to, and we had this man that transferred from Arkansas. And we didn't have their questionnaire. All we had was their request for transfer for a physical. And we had a bus load of men to report to go to El Paso for a physical. And, of course, I was back at my desk and Nettie came in there and I don't think I ever saw her as upset before or since. She was as white as that cup, and she said I want you to come and talk to this man. She said I don't think he should go for a physical. I got up at the front office where the men were reporting. He had one arm, and he said to us, "I can do something. I want to go." He had transferred away from his draft board because it showed on his questionnaire that he had one arm. It was about the second or third transfer he had tried, and of course we couldn't send him. And it was terrible. It was not only for us, but for him, because he so wanted to do something for his country and could not.

HETSY: Did you ever find out what happened to him?

MRS. BALE: No. We both had wondered. In fact, Nettie talked to me about it often and her daughter asked me about him when she was there Monday and Tuesday. She said, "I remember my Mother telling that story and wondered if you ever heard anymore from

him." I said, "No, we didn't hear anymore from him." But he wanted to go so bad. It was a time when people did what was...

HETSY: Oh, they did more.

MRS. BALE: Walked the second mile.

HETSY: That's right. Well, I certainly appreciate your enlightening commentary on...

MRS. BALE: The Draft Boards did well, and did the best they could without pay, and spent many hours.

HETSY: You were not paid, either. There was no compensation.

MRS. BALE: Oh, yes.

HETSY: But the Boards themselves, which consisted of the five civilians...

MRS. BALE: The five civilians. But I remember the Draft Board in Clovis, one of the members worked for the Santa Fe Railroad and he had been in World War I. And he kept wanting to go back and wanting to go back. But General Charlton came down there one time when, I guess we had a District meeting I don't remember now why we were there, but anyway the General said something to Ray, and Ray looked at him he said, "You tell Sybil the color of a man's eyes and she'll tell you his name." Eventually, Ray did go back. He went into active duty and was in Italy.

HETSY: Even having fought in World War I?

MRS. BALE: Yes.

HETSY: Did he survive?

MRS. BALE: Oh, yes. But his son my age went to Korea and was taken prisoner of war.

HETSY: Did he return?

MRS. BALE: Yes. He amputated his own leg. And Ed came home while we were at Fort Knox and said to me, "Is Tommy Harrison any relation to Ray Harrison?" I said, "Yes, Tommy is the boy my age." He said he was here. And he went to call. He came in to talk to the men about being a prisoner of war and they had already flown him out.

HETSY: Did you ever have a chance to hear him talk about being a prisoner of war?

MRS. BALE: No. They speak to the men but they do not talk to the women. This brother, adopted brother, Collie, had married a classmate. They brought Heroshi to Clovis for dinner with our class. And Mary Lee asked him if he minded going, and he said, "Mary Lee that's behind me."

HETSY: But Heroshi had not fought, I mean, Heroshi for all practical purposes was an American.

MRS. BALE: He was an American. And I think that's what Collie felt. I think it was the thing that he felt, that Heroshi was an American who had fought just like he did. But Mary Lee did ask him.

HETSY: Well, those were the times that we hope that we do not have to live through again, although we certainly are facing challenges.

MRS. BALE: But I think, in many respects, this may be worse than those.

HETSY: I agree. In what respects do you think that?

MRS. BALE: The uncertainty of where they will strike.

HETSY: The terrorists will strike?

MRS. BALE: The terrorists.

HETSY: And then also not knowing the enemy.

MRS. BALE: Our daughter works on the 33rd floor of the Bank of America Building in Houston, and I hadn't said anything to Ed, but the first thing that I thought of was this building was 60 stories high and that'll be the next one they hit.

HETSY: They evacuated the buildings in Houston and Dallas. Mrs. Bale, I just want to thank you again. This was a wonderful experience for the Nimitz Museum and for you to share your memories with us.

MRS. BALE: Well, as I said, my upbringing was a little strange.

HETSY: It was wonderful. Thank you again.

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