

Eric Walz History 300 Collection

Owen Wayne Stout – Life during  
WWII

By Owen Wayne Stout

October 26, 2002

Box 3 Folder 23

Oral Interview conducted by Merika Stout

Transcript copied by Victor Ukorebi October 2005

Brigham Young University – Idaho

This is Merika Stout, I am interviewing Owen Wayne Stout, on his experience during World War II. This is October 4, 2003. Colleen Engh Stout also answered a few questions.

Location: Stout living room in Oren, Utah.

Merika (MS)

Owen (OS)

Colleen (CS)

MS: Hi... Where were you born?

OS: Price, Idaho.

MS: What year?

OS: 1926.

MS: And the day?

OS: February 16<sup>th</sup>.

MS: How old were you on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941?

OS: I was about 15.

MS: What do you remember about that day?

OS: I remember coming home from church and somebody was running down the street saying "the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor," and I said "Where's Pearl Harbor?" Nobody in our neighborhood knew where Pearl Harbor was. We didn't find out until we went inside and got an atlas out and looked it up. We found out it was in the Hawaiian Island, on Oahu.

MS: What were you thinking about when you heard about the attack? Did you have any thoughts on that?

OS: Well I knew that America had been sending shiploads of metal, just junk, metal over to them for years. I had heard about them loading it at the west coast and shipping it over. So I thought to myself, that's what they've been doing, preparing for a war against us, and here they have people back in Washington as representatives of the Japanese Republic or whatever they their country, kingdom; anyway here they are back in Washington making a treaty with us and acting like they were there being friendly and un-war like, and all of a sudden, and we knew at that time they had been fighting China in 1937. They were going around in planes bombing peasants on the ground killing hundreds and hundreds of Chinese children. And they had no way of fighting against

those planes. Those people were not the ones that the Japanese were trying to fight, anyways, it was a political war nothing to do with anything. I don't think anyone in Japan could tell you why the war was started, even less so in China.

OS: I served in the military forces, Merchant Marines, but it didn't become the military forces until about fifteen years ago. When Congress decided that the merchant machine who hauled all of the goods to the war effort all over the world and were being killed at a higher ratio than any other [indecipherable] the only service that had more people killed per capita was the Marines. Navy, Army, all those, Coast Guard included had far less killed per capita than the Merchant Marines and yet during the war, we were not military, we were not armed forces, we were nothing; all we did was win the war. They couldn't have done anything without the Merchant Marines. It took all of us to the job.

MS: Where you ever under attack in the Merchant Marines?

OS: Yes, several times, scary situation. I was on a, I was assigned to a gun, handling the ammunition learning the big guns, like a 5 inch 38, 3 inch 50, and a 8 20 millimeter gun was on our ships, and the only kind of ships that I sailed on were liberty ships. So they had the two big guns and 8 20 millimeter guns and I was, anytime we had an attack I had to go that place where my job was and do it, it was kind of scary. Oh yeah, we had when we left up in the Philippines and we were headed back down to New Guinea, some planes came out from Minendou, which is a big island in the south end of the seven thousand islands in the Philippines; these planes came out and attacked our convoy and we shot down two of them right within one hundred yards of our ship it was scary, and these were Kamikaze pilots. When we were in Okinawa we saw those Kamikaze planes heading [indecipherable] trying to kill as many people on the merchant ships. That tells you how important our ships were to the war effort, it was just as important as a Navy cruiser, or an Army tank. They were suicide bombers that were called Kamikaze, and they were dangerous when the Japanese became very worried about the war. It reminds me of what the Palestinians are doing over in Israel right now. Blowing themselves up just to take a few of the enemy with them.

MS: What was your main home base or where was your home port?

OS: Well, the Merchant Marines had different ports, all the ports, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles, San Francisco even what was that where we loaded up C.B. stuff up north of little town on the Oak Coast, north of, Oxnard, a place called Oxnard, that's where we loaded ships with C.B. material, going out to the islands, [indecipherable] it was a fast 3-4 month trip, I crossed the Atlantic 6 times on that, then went down through the Panama Canal over to Europe before I was all finished. I was only in for just under three years. I was lucky in my age group; I didn't have to go in at the beginning of the war. If I had been five years older I would have gone in in [sic] 1941 when the Japanese bombed us. Fortunately I was young enough that I didn't have to get in there a[nd] get killed.

MS: Where did they train you?

OS: I trained for ten weeks on Catalina Island, which is twenty-seven miles off the coast of San Pedro; which is a port town for Los Angeles. I trained there and I became an engineroom worker and after close to two years, doing the menial jobs in the engine room, like fireman and water tender and oilier [oiler] and wiper, I took a test and became a third assistant engineer which was an officer rating, and the main reason I did that was not only for the extra money but that I got to have me own room to myself. I didn't have to live in a coxal with a bunch of other drunks, I mean they were drunks and they smoked in there; it was a terrible situation.

MS: Did you keep any friendships and acquaintances after the war that you had made during the war?

OS: No, I remember a lot of people I knew; I didn't really continue to have any contact with. I knew one young man that was my fireman when I was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineer. He was from Brooklyn NY, his name was Russell Santora, I took him to the San Pedro Ward and introduced him to Colleen Engh who was the bishop's daughter and I later married her. And she met Russell, who was a very talented young man in art, he could draw beautiful pictures. I took him to several meetings there. Well, he was actually a Catholic, he was my closest friend. I was on ships with LDS guys that were trash; they were just looking for the next drunk. Every time we went ashore, it was an excuse to get drunk and make a fool of themselves. They smoked and they drank and they chased after wild women.

MS: While you were in the Merchant Marines, did you meet anyone from back home, or did you come across people you had known?

OS: I never met any of my personal friends, oh I went into the service to train with in Salt Lake City, his name was Ben Madern, and we were, he took a different route, he trained to become a deck hand and I trained to be in the Engine Room, so we were split up after the first few weeks of basic training. I knew guys from Salt Lake City that I never have contacted since I got out. They are probably long dead based on the way they were living.

MS and OS: Laughing.

MS: How did the military train and prepare you for combat, because you were in the Merchant Marine, did they train you?

OS: Exactly the way the Navy was trained, they called it boot camp, and we had D.I.'s, drill instructors; that started with us when we first came in, and took us through how to march, use a gun, and we had quite a few classes. We had to learn a lot of things about being on ships. We had to get a certificate, to prove that you were capable of handling a life boat. Every ship has to have about 90% of the crew that are skilled at handling life boats. In case they have to lower the life boats and get into them; it's a difficult thing to do that. So I learned that. We had a class where we had to learn how to jump off a forty foot tower into the water there in Catalina. That might sound like a fun thing to do, but it's scary. They didn't want you to dive they wanted you to jump; you would if you were

on the side of the ship. Well I don't know many ships, unless you were up on the bridge that is that high above the water. Most places you dive into the water is only about fifteen feet. We were up about forty feet, and a lot of people wouldn't do it, it was just too scary, they were afraid that they would jump wrong and end up flat when they hit or hit their head first you know. Then on top of that, after you jumped in you had to; you had to swim through water that had had gasoline...oil poured on the top of it that was burning.

MS: Wow!

OS: I don't even know if the Navy had to do that. But a lot of seamen that didn't know how to so this died during the war. What happens when you come up, splash around you with your hands on the surface. What happens is that it drives the water out. The fire goes back from you and you can have a place to swim.

CS: You did it.

OS: I used to do that without any problem at all, course I was eighteen.

MS: Oh my goodness, you couldn't even get me close to that. I'm so scared of heights.

MS: Is there anything that you wished they would have prepared you for?

OS: I think that they did a good job, I think maybe they should have taught more about how to live together and common courtesy. They threw you in with people who were strangers, sometimes different nationalities, into...sometimes 2-3 guys in the same room. And they had no, nothing in common, except that they were both in the service. In the Merchant Marines. I had situations where there was a forty-year-old man above me in and he went out in Sydney Australia the first night we were there and got drunk, he came back and he wet the bed right through the mattress. I woke up to something tapping the blanket down here (he pointed to his legs) hitting my blanket. I got up and went over and turned the light on and I saw what he had done. I yanked him out of his bed, I put him out in the hall, I grabbed his mattress and took it out in the hall out on the deck, and over the side it went. (Merika Laughing) I decided that even though that mattress dried, I wasn't going to smell that mattress the rest of the trip. That trip lasted almost a year. And would you believe that just two nights later, in the same town the deck engineer who was Philipino was sleeping in the bed across from us, and he came in late after I was asleep laid down on his bunk drunk; had a cigar in his mouth and he went to sleep and I woke up at 3 o'clock in the morning and suffocating smoke, that cigar in his mouth had fallen down and was burning the mattress. It smoked and all around where it was burning and making smoke. And he was so drunk, that he would move over every time the heat got close him, he would move away, but he didn't have enough [indecipherable] to do anything. I got up and turned the light on opened the door to let some smoke out. I grabbed the guy he was 45-year-old man and here I was 18 years old. I got him and threw his mattress overboard. I wasn't going to be in a room with a stinky mattress. Either way, of course I didn't make any friends there (Merika laughing), but I did what I

had to do, and, course there were extra mattresses on the ship so they got another mattress. I don't think that they ruined the mattress [again]. That's my story.

MS: What was your image of Hitler and Mussolini and Hirohito, during the war?

OS: We hated them. We thought they were crazy people, just like people thought about Saddam Hussein right now. He's crazy and Goudalphy is another one we think is crazy, what country is he from? Lebanon. We think he's crazy too but apparently the people like him because he's still in control. What amazes me, I always thought the German people were a pretty bright group of people, brilliant, but when it came down to controlling their politics, they had no control, they were all afraid to organize and fight back, so they just went along with him, and helped kill six million Jews and about five million... whatever Germans died during that war. All they did was destroy their own country, because America and Britain bombed Germany flat. I mean just a terrible; the big cities were nothing but ashes, rubble. And that because we let a crazy man control things.

MS: Yeah. What is your opinion of Japanese and Germans now?

OS: I think that they are great people when they're doing what's right they are good people, every nation is that way.

MS: When did you first hear about the German concentration camps?

OS: It was while I was in the service, there was very little about before I went into the service. I didn't go in until 1944, but I really didn't read the papers in those days I sold the papers, but I didn't read them much. I shouted the headlines when I sold them when I was about 12 years old.

MS: Did you feel like the American people were kind of left out, like we weren't told things that the Army may have known, do you think?

OS: No more than necessary. I think that in a way you have to consider the enemy is all around you, everybody is a potential yeah.

CS: "Loose lips, sink ships."

OS: Yeah that was all over the placards all over the sea ports.

MS: Yeah.

OS: Loose ships sink ships... "Loose lips sink ships" and that was specifically for the Merchant Marines.

MS: Yeah.

MS: How did your life change as a result of WWII?

OS: How did I like the changes?

MS: No, how did your life change?

OS: Oh, oh it really changed. I was just out of High School and I went in. It was a whole different life, but it had some good factors about it. One was going to San Pedro, and meeting my future bride. And that's why I met her, even though we lived in the same neighborhood within four blocks of each other. Just four blocks we lived from each other and I didn't know her. She was three-and-one-half-years younger than me, so I didn't have much occasion to socialize with that you know. I didn't play with little girls. (Merika laughing)

MS: Was there any trauma that stayed with you like post traumatic stress disorder?

OS: No, I'm not very neurotic; I mean I hope I'm not. Things don't get me down create problems for my whole life just because something had happened.

MS: Do you feel the gospel played a part in that? Just being able to have a perspective on that?

OS: I think it helped to keep me stable in what happened and what was going on. I think that a good religious training in any church would have helped a person to get through the war becoming psychotic. Some of them did go crazy.

CS: You went to church wherever you...

OS: Yeah, wherever I was, first thing I did when I came ashore was get a telephone book and look up the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and boy I'll tell you. I went to church in Seattle; Tacoma, Washington and San Pedro, California, San Francisco; Sydney; Tokyo; and over in Europe I was only in Mt. Naples, Napoli, and Marce France, and I wasn't there long enough to find any connection with the church there, course Naples, Italy was a pretty, it was bombed out too; because the German were there.

CS: Australia, Australia.

OS: Oh yeah in Australia, I mentioned Sydney.

CS: Oh.

OS: Sydney is in Australia (Owen laughing), but there was only one branch in Sydney at that time, now there are several stakes in Sydney, but there was a little branch called...let me think of the name of it now, it'll come to me.

MS: Before you were in the war in the Merchant Marines how did you contribute as an individual and in your community to the war effort?

OS: Well I bought war bonds, and I had a job while I was in High school, I earned 75 dollars a month and I took 25 dollars, well, 18.75 dollars, I put 18.75 each month on a war bond. Then the younger kids had dimes and quarters, they bought stamps. These stamps were ten cents and when you filled up a book it was worth...how much? Do you remember?

CS: Five dollars it seems.

OS: It seemed like it was five dollars, when you put 50 cents in it, and that was all I could do. It was a lot easier to get good jobs when the war came along because all the people had gone to the war. So I had a job during the war that you wouldn't believe that a seventeen-year-old kid would have, but I worked in surgery, at the LDS Hospital in Salt Lake and I was doing things that nurses used to do.

MS: WOW!

OS: Before they lost all their nurses. One of them was, every morning I'd come in and the head nurse would hand me a slip of paper, it was a little slip and it would tell me which ward to go to, which room and get a patient coming to surgery. And I would go down to the ward and find somebody, a nurse to help me get this person onto my cart...

CS: Gurney.

OS: Gurney they called it, and we would get that person course they were well-drugged, so that they didn't care if they were on a gurney or a street car. So I would just take them down, out of the ward, down to the elevator, up to the top floor to a surgery, take them into the room that the slip of paper told me to and I would get somebody in there to help me slid them off on to the table and I would go to the next job.

CS: You had a lot of things.

OS: Oh I had a lot of things to do besides that that was just the first thing I did each morning. Then after the operation I took them back down. Usually a nurse was with me after they were on the way back down.

CS: In Clearfield, was that anything with the war?

OS: I worked at a Naval Supply Depot, in Clearfield, Utah. They had huge warehouses there, the people that made stuff for the Navy, they shipped it to Clearfield, then it was put in different big huge warehouses about fifteen warehouses. And then, they when people needed it, on the ships down on the coast they would tell somebody in the Navy what they needed, and where to send it. So I was among a bunch of other kids my



age...doing that job loading and unloading onto trucks, we were either loading it on trucks or taking it off trucks. It was a hot job during the summer.

MS: What kind of food did you have while you were in the Merchant Marines?

OS: Better than I was used to.

MS: (laughing) Why is that?

OS: Because the government had a lot of money to spend on food, and what amazed me was that most of the people I was with on the ship were grumbling about the food being so uhh blah blah. And I was thinking, man this is the best I've ever eaten. I mean I could...

CS: Real Butter. No, we had margarine at home; we had butter [on the ship]. They had ice cream almost every day. They had bakers, they had one guy who did nothing but bake, he made the bread, and he made rolls. He made great food; he was a big black guy. He was 6'5", and used to be a boxer, but he was getting kind of old but still a good cook. And then they had a chef that was interesting to work with.

MS: So how large was your family?

OS: I was one of six children; five boys and one girl.

MS: What do you remember about the rationing? Was there specific things?

OS: Oh definitely, rationing that was one reason we weren't [eating the way that we should, because there were a lot of things rationed, sugar was one of the first things that got rationed, and gasoline was the big thing. If you were just an average citizen, you got a "C" sticker and that gave you about 2 gallons per week, and if you had a gas hog car then it was not very far for each week. I think it came to you in the mail. If you had some kind of related military, government job when you had to drive like we did up to Clearfield then you'd get a "B" sticker, then if you had a really important job you got an "A" sticker. Anything that required more driving got an "A" sticker. I never did see an "A" sticker because I didn't have one. I had a "C" sticker 'til I went into the service.

MS: What did you drive when you worked up on Clearfield?

OS: I had a 1934 Chevy coupe, but usually we drive a bigger car it hauled more people. There were several of my friends who worked there. We went up there in a car full, and that way we all got "B" stickers. So we had plenty of gas to waste.

MS: (laughing) How do you remember the war affecting your community?

OS: Well it made a big difference because one thing is that Utah got Kerns. There was a big empty area out Southwest of Salt Lake City, was nothing but a huge field, and

suddenly it became Camp Kerns. And during the, I remember a radio announcer, radio commentator during the war saying that, how'd they put that? They said in Russia they have...

CS: Gulag.

OS: No, what was that place where that Gulag's were?

CS: Siberia.

OS: Yeah they have Siberia, and in Germany they have some place that's bad that's not very, maybe [indecipherable] or one of those.

MS: Like Auschwitz or Birkenou?

OS: Yeah Auschwitz and Birkenou anyway but here in America we have Kerns. In other word that was the view of most of the soldiers that went out there. A camp that had been thrown up a bunch of shacks to put people in, and they were, I don't know what kind of training they were getting, but I think they left they left there and went directly into the war, but we had a lots of problems with the soldiers that came in and got drunk in town, and the trashy girls went with the soldiers and nobody else did. That's the way it was all over the country. The trashy girls in every community where there was a base were anxious to go with the guys, course all the boys were gone to the war, so the girl had to go with somebody, if they went out at all.

MS: Did you know any young men who did not return from the war?

OS: Several, several people that I know died in the war. Personally close friends.

MS: How did their families cope with that?

OS: They were brave and accepted it; I don't know anybody who committed suicide over it. They just accepted what had happened and wondered why me, just like we do nowadays, when one of the children dies accidentally. Or get killed in Iraq.

CS: Lots of patriotism in that war.

OS: Yeah lot of patriotism, contrary to the way it is now. This war is a lot like the Revolutionary War. In the Revolutionary War there were kings men, the people that loved the king.

CS: Tories.

OS: Tories they called them, who absolutely hated the war, and they wanted to go to England and a lot of them did, right after the war. They went to England and we were glad to see them go. Because they were helping the enemy fight their own kind. And it

was a terrible situation. It's amazing, I mean after reading a number of books on that war, I reached the conclusion that there is no doubt that it was providential that America won that war. Even the people during the war, including Benjamin Franklin and, and all those who were really leaders in that war; they recognized that without the Lord helping them, they never would have won that war. They never should have won that war. We were fighting the biggest Navy and the biggest Army in the World. It helped greatly to win that war to have, after halfway through the war to get France on our side, because France and England had been fighting for years. And France didn't really want to get involved because they were afraid of getting into another war with Europe. So they were quietly helping us to win the war. They were a lot different in those days than they are now, the French people.

MS: This one is for you (Colleen). What was it like, to have all the young men gone off to war?

CS: Well it didn't affect me because I was a little bit younger. So mostly it was relatives that I would write to. And that was kind of exciting to have some military person, Army or Navy, that you could write a letter to and they would write back.

MS: So you didn't...Did you have your dad serve, boyfriend, whatever?

CS: No but they had to be involved in some kind of war effort, and be exempt from serving, now of course they took the young people first, but they kept taking them older and older, they had a draft. And it was always a possibility that even if you had a family you could be called in to served in the war. So you had to have a war job to be exempt, like my uncle Henry he had a floral but that wasn't exemption enough, then he raised vegetables and that helped, for victory gardens and so forth. But he got a job on the railroad; he kind of kept both things going; because he could be exempt for being on the railroad.

OS: Guess who, did exactly the same the thing? President Hinckley.

CS: Oh yeah he did the same thing.

OS: He went into the war effort working for the Western Pacific Railroad. Or was it the DNRG? I think it was the Western Pacific. Anyway he had to go to Denver and live. And that's why he went in to get, to be able to help in the war effort and not have to go into the service.

CS: And my dad went to Wendover, and worked at the base where they find the Atomic bomb left from that, you know the day. They didn't know what they were working on.

OS: B-29 that dropped the bomb.

CS: On Nagasaki.

OS: On Nagasaki, and Hiroshima.

CS: Yeah. So anyway he had to go out there and live, because it was too far to come home every weekend, or every night. So he'd come home maybe every other weekend, and he just had to live out there in the barracks, or in his truck. He built a little what he called a dog house, in the back of his truck with was to be like a camper now days. So he could live out there during the week.

OS: He also worked at the ammunition.

CS: At Remington Arms, small arms ammunition, because of that he was exempt, but he owned a service station and everything was rationed, you couldn't get tires or batteries, or gas. So he had to close down his service station. And he had these other jobs.

MS: And that was who? Your dad?

CS: My father, Howard Engh.

MS: In what, with your dad living so far away, how did you keep in touch with him, were you able to stay up to date with him?

CS: How did we keep in touch with him?

MS: Yeah with him and other people that you knew in the war?

CS: Well we wrote letters, three-cent stamps, one-cent postcards. And he would phone now and again, you were very careful about phoning because it cost money. So usually only had a long distance call very frequently [sic] [sporadically].

MS: How about you Grandpa? How were you able to keep in touch, were you able to stay in touch with your family during the war?

OS: Those three-cent stamps were a big bargain, and we had those real light-weight pieces of paper that just folded out and you wrote on them, the inside of the envelope. What was that called?

CS: V-mail.

OS: V-mail, and you could buy those in the Post Office and they were already stamped, and you could ship those, but one thing that was interesting. When I was in the Merchant Marine in Europe I could buy those from the Army and the Navy people buy those airmail stamps six cents each. I mean not very much though, most of those three-cent stamps were done by train or bus or something. Air mail was quite a luxury. You didn't send airmail, everything goes airmail now. But in those days they didn't have that many planes, didn't have the capacity to do it so they. So anyways I bought a whole bunch of those stamps, and sent sheets of them home to Colleen, and to my folks and my family.

And the main reason was because over in that country everything that you had that the Italians or the French wanted that you could sell, you could get an inflated price out of it. You know everything; in fact our ship would sell to the people on the ship cigarettes for twenty no sixty cents a carton. There are twenty packages [in a carton] and you could sell those to the people over there for one dollar or two dollars or three or four hundred Lira. And their official rate was two hundred Liras per dollar, but you could get twice that much then take the money and buy stamps. And you were getting the values of the stamps. Everybody did it, not that it's any excuse for doing it, but that was one way that we made some money. 87.50 per month was not much income, and that was the standard wage over there. A seaman First class or a Private First Class, they made about \$87.00 – 90.00 per month.

MS: When did you meet Colleen?

OS: On Sunday, oh no it was Tuesday night wasn't it, I met you at MIA.

CS: It was Sunday, it was Sunday.

OS: That's right, Sunday, Sunday I met her first. Then I saw her later. Sunday I met her Sunday.

MS: What year was that?

CS: 1945, April 1945. And he came to Sunday School in our ward, because he had looked it up in the telephone book, to find a chapel got off the ship and walked up to it. And I saw the president of the class and I took the roll, and we often had servicemen come so it was quite a feast or famine, we either had just a few people in the ward or a lot of people, when the ships were in or whatever. We had Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines; everybody would come when they were there. Anyway he was one of the people in the class and I saw his name on the roll and it said Owen W. Stout, 66 Hollywood Ave, which is his home address, Salt Lake City, Utah and my grandfather lived there at 36 Hollywood Ave. So after class I asked him, I stood outside the door and when he came out, I asked him if by any chance he knew my grandfather that lived there and he said "Well sure I know him, he's our neighbor." Then he proceeded to tell me everybody else he knew that were my relatives. That's how we got acquainted and I invited him home for dinner. That's where it all began.

MS: How long did you two date before you got married?

CS: We hardly dated he always gone.

OS: I finished out the war and when the war was over I was home for three days and I was called on a mission. So I came home and I went on a mission for two years, to the Southern States.

CS: So 99 percent of our dating was writing.

OS: Yep, we got to know each other through the written letter. Very few telephone calls.

CS: I don't even know if we ever went to a movie together. Did we? I don't think so, we went out to dinner once in Los Angeles, at "The Pig and Whistle", and then one down in San Pedro, I think that's the only time we went out to dinner. Mostly he just came to our house and I played the piano and sang and we visited with the family and we talked went for a ride.

MS: Much like it is now still. (laughs)

MS: So after the war you went on your mission, how long did you serve, how long were missions at that time?

OS: Two years, regular two years.

CS: In the Southern States.

OS: Then I came home, from my mission I rode in a car down to Mesa, Arizona with two other missionaries.

CS: You were released on your mission.

OS: I was released on my mission, that's the way they used to do it. Not like it is now. And then I got to Mesa I stayed there about one week and worked for my cousin who was [a] farmer. And he needed some help, and I drove a truck and worked harvesting the corn, maize whatever it was. Then I took a bus stopped in Provo and I called Colleen.

CS: I was at the "Y" at the time. On Saturday, in my dorm, he said he was at the bus depot, and would I like to go up to Salt Lake with him. "Would I Like To Go To Salt Lake With Him?" (laughing) So I have about forty-five minutes to get ready, my roommates called a cab, and they all helped me get ready and I went down and got there about five minutes before the bus came. And that was when I saw him for the first time, in two years.

MS: WOW.

CS: So we went to Salt Lake and three days later we were engaged.

MS: So how long were you guys engaged before you got married? And where were you married?

CS: We were married in the Salt Lake Temple, and we got married February, 1949.

OS: Three months, we were engaged three months before we got married. After I got home.

MS: One last war question: What was your most vivid memory of the WWII experiences, things that stand out, for both of you?

CS: Mine was things that were not only rationed but hard to get, and so you didn't have elastic in your underwear sometime or in your stockings, they wouldn't stay up. And you couldn't find all the clothing that you'd like, you'd just buy what you could find, you didn't have a lot of selection. And we were very busy doing the patriotic thing, collecting grease and collecting newspapers, metal and...

OS: Grease to make soap with.

CS: And we'd go around door to door collecting it, from the housewives that would save it. You know.

OS: Save tin foil, lead foil.

CS: You'd save your toothpaste tubes, and your old records, they could use those, it was amazing how many things they wanted, and you'd go around collecting them, or they would have a drive. At school they were always talking about the war effort, and so saving things, and putting up with and doing without, and not complaining. It was a wonderful time really because we learned all these songs. In school in a cappella choir, we'd sing all of these patriotic songs, you know, and that was fun. And everything had to do with Red, White and Blue and flags and, I mean you had a real patriotic fervor. I didn't know anybody that was against the war, or who complained really, if you did you were black listed. And that would be terrible. There were draft dodgers, people that. Then you'd go to the movies and they had news reels, that's where you got most of your news except the radio, and they would show pictures of the battles and the ships and the planes, and everything, and it was, very heart throbbing to see all of this. And of course your dad [Owen's father] took another job and my mother worked for a while because they needed people so badly and it was kind of the patriotic thing to do, get a job, because men had to leave and go to war. So my mother worked in a couple of jobs, one of them was a bakery, then when we moved to California, it was even more drastically different, and we moved there in 1944 and then they had black outs where you had to have black curtains on your windows, and they had curfews. You couldn't be out at night doing things. And of course there were servicemen everywhere. Just gobs and gobs and gobs, so I would take the ferry over to Terminal Island and it would be like two hundred sailors and me, on the boat.

OS: There's a bridge over there now. It used to be a ferry.

CS: St. Thomas.

MS: Now what were the blackouts?

CS: They were afraid that we could be bombed, they didn't know. So they had a perimeter on the coast where they had guns and everything, in case there was an enemy,

submarine, there could have been planes. And so at night they didn't want any light showing, I mean any light. And so it was pretty dark and to had to buy black material to put in your windows and not let any leak out. And they would have air raid wardens going around like they did in England, and checking to make sure that they couldn't see any light coming from your house. And they would turn off street lights and on the cars the top of the light was painted black, so that the only light shown down not up. That didn't last very long.

OS: There was about one-third of the head light that the light could come through, and the upper two-thirds was black.

CS: And you couldn't always get a telephone. Everything was dear and difficult. You had to stand in line to hamburger, I mean there was lines, lines everywhere for everything. And so to get decent food, well you never could buy butter, and with something like bananas, you might find a store that might let you buy three bananas, and so that was kind of a luxury, you never knew what it was going to be one thing one time and something else some other time. And sugar was hard to come by, but we had stamps for coffee which we didn't use to we traded with the neighbors for their sugar. And so we always seemed to have enough sugar, because we could take our coffee stamps to them.

CS: A star was that we had someone in the service, and gold star was if they had been killed. I think it tells about that in here. It was a worrisome time, as a child you didn't worry a lot. And all the talk about the Nazi's and the Jap's or something, you know, it was kind of scary. But for adults it was hard because your sons or husbands were in the service, and you didn't know if you'd ever see them again.

MS: Wow, that would be hard.