Eric Walz History 300 Collection

Joyce McIntrye – Life during WWII

By Joyce McIntrye

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Box 3 Folder 11

Oral Interview conducted by Shannon Adler

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Brigham Young University – Idaho
SA: Joyce McIntrye on October 14, 2003. Okay, where were you born?

JM: I was born in Phoenix, Arizona.

SA: How old were you on December 7, 1941?

JM: I don’t even remember. I’d have to calculate. Let’s see, I was born in 1929. 41 from 29, how old were we? I’d be 12. I was 12.

SA: What do you remember about December 7, 1941?

JM: Oh, I remember it clearly. It was just one of those occasions you never forget. It was on a Sunday. We had just come home from church, and I was sitting out on our front porch. My parents were listening to the radio, and I heard my dad just made a really loud noise and I thought something was wrong and so I went in the house. He and my mother were talking and they were saying oh my goodness, that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor. And then they started talking about the repercussions and all the things that would happen. And the thing that’s one of the most tender moments I have is because of my little brother, who is seven years younger than I, because they were talking about the fact that there would be a lot of problems with food and rationing, etc. So he disappeared and he came back in a few minutes and he had his little piggy bank and he handed it to my mom and he said, “Please go buy us some food.” So that’s one of my, you know, kind of tender little moments that I remember. But it was very frightening for me because I just thought; oh I wonder if the planes will come over and bomb us.

SA: What were the reactions of those around you?

JM: Well my parents were extremely concerned, of course. And my father owned a business, a soft drink bottling business. He was concerned about his truck drivers because they were all young men, and he knew that they would become involved, and he was concerned for them and their families and there would be just a lot of, a great deal of concern in that area.

SA: Who do you think is most to blame for the war and why?

JM: Well, obviously, the very beginning of the war, it had been going on for some time before the Americans became involved. And from my perspective, of course -- as just a young girl -- I obviously thought that it was the Japanese. They’re the ones who came over and bombed our people you know, on – they attacked them, and they were not expecting it.

SA: What role did the media play on your thoughts about war?

JM: You know I don’t know that I really paid that much attention to it. I think, actually, my parents were the kind that tried to protect me and my brother. I think they always didn’t want us to worry about everything. They tried to make us, as children, just feel
more comfortable. So I don’t think the media had a lot of influence on me. Except when we would go to the movie theater and they would have movie reels which would show the things we see on TV now on a daily basis. And at that time it was very dramatic to sit there in a big movie theater and see the terrible things that were happening. So it did affect me in that way.

SA: Who do you know that served in the armed forces?

JM: I have a cousin and an uncle. And my uncle was a paratrooper. His name was Don Robert Rust. And my cousin’s name was Ted Lines, and Ted flew a fighter pilot, he was a fighter pilot. He flew a Mustang and he became a hero. He shot down – I can’t remember the number – it must have been thirteen planes, enemy planes. And each time he landed he drew some kind of a picture on his airplane. I forgot what it was. But I know our whole family was very concerned about him because he was right in the middle of it for years.

SA: In what way did you keep in touch with these people?

JM: Again, because I was fairly young it was just through listening to my parents discuss it. Ted was my mother’s older sister, Lula’s son, and so when the sisters would get together of course they were very concerned. And not only that, but Lula had been widowed early in her life and she had remarried Louie Allen, who had seven sons. And five of his sons were also in, you know, fighting in various places. So when the relatives got together, of course, it was discussing what was going on with these young men and wondering where they were and what was happening to them.

SA: Did you know anyone who did not return from war?

JM: No. I did not personally know anyone who didn’t return.

SA: Now, I know you didn’t know Grandpa until later, but didn’t, I remember grandpa telling me one time that he had a brother that fought in the – I don’t know what they’re called but those planes that have the little – they almost look like little bubbles that come out of the bottom and you can shoot from the bottom.

JM: He was on a bomber. He was a bomber.

SA: Yeah.

JM: He was the whatever – he was the gunner. He was the belly gunner or something. Yes, I didn’t know…

SA: And didn’t he die from being in that?

JM: Yes, he did. He was killed, but I did not know him at that time.
SA: I remember grandpa telling me about that.

JM: It was really sad and it really affected Grandpa. That was his older brother and he spoke of him often. He really admired him.

SA: So did you contribute as an individual and in your community to the war effort?

JM: Oh my goodness. We had a Victory Garden, I remember that. And actually the reason I remember it so much is because my dad plowed up our whole backyard and they planted all kinds of things. But they planted various kinds of tomatoes. And as they started growing, one day I took the salt shaker and went out and sat down in the middle of the vines and ate, I don’t – who knows how many. So that taught me quite a few lessons. But as a result I broke out in these horrible hives from one end to the other. So that taught me quite a few lessons. That doesn’t matter; I still like tomatoes. So I know we did that, and then – during at school they had war bond drives and we bought stamps and put in little books. And at various times as teachers will, they give you the opportunity to be the captain to go buy the stamps. And so that was kind of a fun thing to do. I don’t know, personally I can’t think of my stamps that became war bonds when you got enough stamps.

SA: How do you feel your community was impacted in comparison with other communities around the country or around the world?

JM: I think we were in a very safe environment. I don’t know that, other than shortages of various materials, I don’t think we were impacted in any material way except there was a great shortage of Levis for all the boys and silk stockings for the girls. And because my father was a soft drink bottler, there was a shortage of sugar so it impacted what – how many bottles of soda pop he could make and then that impacted on how many he could sell to the grocery stores which they – the quantity. But it was nothing that was tragic. There was also a tremendous shortage of leather, and so I do know that we had stamps, ration stamps, ration books, and with each stamp you could get a pair of shoes every so often. And I didn’t realize this at the time; I think my mother did not have a pair of shoes every so often. And I didn’t realize this at the time; I think my mother did not have a pair of shoes during the whole war because as a child you know, I wore mine out, you know, stomping on my feet and jumping around. So I know I’m the only one that ever got new shoes. And using their stamp to do that. So I don’t think we were really – you know – we weren’t deprived of much.

SA: What were your thoughts about the role of women at this time?

JM: Actually, obviously my mother was the influence in my life that influenced me in all ways. I just thought she was – you know – I thought she was smart enough to be the President of the United States. She was a wise woman. And I just know she and the little neighbor ladies used to get together and sit on the front porch and sew, and they would pass different items of clothing back and forth. They would take, if there was any material that was still really good out of some garment, they would cut them up and make
skirts for the children. Different things like that. So I think that was a neighborhood that they all tried to help another. So as far as other woman go I don’t think I have much – I can’t remember anything else other than my grandmother, my aunt and my neighbor ladies.

SA: How did your perception of the role of women change?

JM: During the war I don’t know that it changed too much. As I got older, of course, it changed. I think that women – I think women were very resourceful. And I think not only are they very nurturing and they take, you know, they really – they handle things well. I think in times of tragedy or when things are going on I think they’re the glue that holds things together. And I don’t think that’s changed too much. I still think they do that.

SA: Do you think that as a result of World War II that more opportunities were opened to women?

JM: Oh, of course. Because during – it was definitely a turning point because there were songs and everything else written about Rosie the Riveter and things like that. Because many woman went to work at that time because the men were all, not all, but the majority of those who were able were fighting. They were – so it left more women at home to do these things. So after woman once became able and saw that – how much they could gain by working out of the home, I think that could start the tremendous movement. And I think it has escalated to the fact that now it certainly isn’t unusual for women to have careers and to work.

SA: What was your image of Hitler, Mussolini, and Hiroshi during the war?

JM: Oh, I just thought they were horrible men! You know, I thought they were very evil and I just, you know, when we would go see these newsreels, and it scared me. I just thought they were terrible men. I just couldn’t understand how men that evil could continue to do things and not just be wiped off the face of the earth. It hurts, you know it just hurts your heart to even think about the terrible tragedies that they caused.

SA: Had you heard about them before the war at all? Or did you not even know they existed until…

JM: I probably didn’t have a clue who they were before then. You know at twelve years old you really aren’t too up on what’s going on in the world. You know your own little… you know, where’s my doll? Where’s my girlfriend? Let’s go jump rope. Let’s play paper dolls. You know that’s kind what my life was all about.

SA: What was your image of Roosevelt and Churchill and other allied leaders during the war?

JM: Well, I was very impressed with them. President Roosevelt used to have a fireside chat over the radio type of thing. I thought he was very handsome and very – a very
dynamic leader. And of course I think the same with Winston Churchill. I felt they were very, you know, dynamic leaders and I think that they, from my perspective, they were the good guys. And I was impressed with them.

SA: What is your opinion of the Japanese and the Germans now?

JM: Well, I’ve had the opportunity to work with a variety of them and I think that they are, you know, they’re all human beings just like we are. And I think they have the opportunity to progress and grow, and hopefully the fact that, you know, the war is over and peace have been restored as far as the Germans and Japanese are concerned – I just consider them, you know, fellow men, our neighbors. But I did have an interesting experience at one time in my working life. I did become one of those working women, and I did have a career. But I was working for Collins Radio in Newport Beach, California, and there was a great number of engineers. One of the other engineers had been a German fighter pilot. And the see them work closely together was a really kind of interesting. Because they still had a little bit of animosity toward one another, but because they were professional men, you know, they worked through it. But nevertheless, the difference in their personalities and everything was overwhelming. Mr. Peterson, who was the American, you know, arrived at work driving an American car. Fritz Schindelbeck, the German, had the black leather jacket on, and he arrived on a great big roaring motorcycle, so it just, they were interesting – just to watch those two work.

SA: When did you first hear about concentration camps?

JM: This was kind of ongoing because for a period of time, even in Phoenix around our Papago Park area, there were some enemy soldiers who had been retained here. And you would see them being driven in their trucks and everything. And so, at that time, you know, I’m sure our parents and teachers would discuss more about concentration camps that were going on overseas and how, you know, the atrocities that were going on there could compare to how these men were being treated like human beings and well treated and well fed even though they were prisoners. And so you just drew that comparison and you kept wondering how could people be so mistreated? I still don’t understand how anyone can mistreat another human being.

SA: When did you hear about the concentration camps that were happening over in Germany?

JM: While it was going on – and I just, you know, because I was growing up too. I was a teenager and you think when they were talking about some of the terrible things that were happening, again it just made me wonder how people could do that to other people. And I just thought eventually it has to come to an end. And of course eventually it did.

SA: How did your thoughts on war change as a result of this knowledge about the concentration camps?
JM: I just thought war was a terrible thing. And I just thought, unfortunately, there are going to be evil people who create wars, and then if you’re going to take care of – freedom doesn’t come free. Freedom is not free. So you still have to fight and protect your country. But, you know, war is never going to be a happy situation. It’s always going to cause a lot of heartache for a lot of people, and yet sometimes it’s going to be unavoidable because there will be forces who are greedy, and evil, and want to dominate. It’s basically greed. A lot of people are interested in power and in owning more, and they want to take over other countries, and they have that, you know, I-am-the-ruler type of attitude. And that’s not what freedom is all about, and so I think it just continues to make me so very, very proud that I do live in the United States. And, you know, every time I hear the Star Spangled Banner or see a United States flag fly, I always just get a lump in my throat and I just think of the things it stands for. And all the people who have given their lives, and all the people who continue. I am very grateful for the military forces that protect this country. And like I said, freedom is not free.

SA: How did your religious beliefs help you cope with your experiences?

JM: It has always helped me because I have an understanding of who we were before we came to this earth and why we are here, and the experiences that we are supposed to be having. And knowing that there is life after this life helps us to understand that when we do lose people, whether it’s during this war or other times that we will have the opportunity to be with them again. And so it’s a comforting feeling and gives you a great deal of peace. I have friends that do not have the same belief that I do, and they are devastated when they lose a loved one. They just, they cannot cope with it, so I’m very grateful for my religion.

SA: What were your thoughts of religious leaders at the time of the war?

JM: Well, I’ve always admired and had a great respect for our religious leaders. I believe they are men of God, and I believe they are given the authority and responsibility for leading the church here on the earth and I have great respect for them.

SA: How do you feel about the American’s use of the atomic bomb to end the war in the Pacific?

JM: I think that was one of those things that probably had to happen. But I think that it had very sad repercussions. I feel very sorry for the people who were affected by it. But I think as technology becomes available in all sorts of ways, I think there’s always going to be those who are hurt by it, as well as those who are helped by it. I just think that’s the role of science in life.

SA: What were you life goals before the war?

JM: I was just interested in – I just loved school and I was just interested in going to school and getting an education. And just seeing what life is all about. As a teenager, what do we always think about? We just want to see what’s going on in the world. I was
very curious, I was always interested in things, but I also was very, I was not a very
adventurousome person. I was always more interested in what was going on right around
in my home, my home life, my neighborhood, my school, my friends, type of a thing. I
don’t think I had a really broad desire to, you know, go save the world all by myself.

SA: So how did your goals change as a result of the war?

JM: Well, it became more interesting because a lot more young men came home from the
war. It was just very, there were a lot of weddings that took place. Some of my friends
who had older sisters, they began getting married as the men returned home. Then they
started the regular things that girls do – the baby showers and wedding showers. And like
I said I was a very home-oriented type of person. Then eventually as I grew up, then I
became interested in getting married and having a home and raising children myself.

SA: Now, let’s talk about grandpa for a minute. So, what was it that he did in World War
II? [Robert John McIntyre who is now deceased]

JM: Grandpa was in the Navy. And basically that’s what he did. He was fairly young, and
I think he was not in the war for any long length of time. And he was over in the Pacific
Islands, and he was extremely, very proud to be a sailor. Excited about helping the war
and like I said, because he had lost a brother, that gave him added incentive to go do his
part. Then when he returned from being in the war, his interest was in becoming, because
he had just barely gotten out of high school when he went into the navy, so he was
interested in furthering his education. So that is what he did. He became, of course, as we
all know, a tremendous artists. Which was – his talent has benefited all of us.

SA: When he was just out of high school, did he get called to the war? Or did he
volunteer?

JM: He volunteered. He volunteered. He just couldn’t wait. That’s what happened with a
lot of the young men, I think. They just, you know, they just wanted to go be a part of it;
they just wanted to be involved; they wanted the war over with. They wanted their older
brothers to come home.

SA: Did you know a lot of them that volunteered or would you say a lot of them were
called?

JM: I think in my own personal little circle … probably half and half. I knew those who
volunteered and those who were drafted. But now like with my Uncle Bob who was the
paratrooper and my cousin who was the pilot, they volunteered.

SA: Did the war have any long-term effect on grandpa? Well, of course, with the death of
his brother, but did he see or experience anything traumatic that stuck with him
emotionally for the rest of his life?
JM: He really didn’t because he was never involved in actual fighting. Because as young as he was, he went in at the very, kind of tail-end of the war. So even though he served over in the Pacific Islands, I think he saw some of the ramifications of where the big battles had taken place – how all the islands were chopped up and had been bombed and different things like that. Of course, as a young man it really impressed him as far as knowing how much damage could be done. But since he didn’t really personally see anyone, he wasn’t in the fighting, so he didn’t really see anyone get hurt or killed.

SA: That’s all the questions I have.

JM: Well thank you very much. I hope this is beneficial. Actually it was an interesting time in a lot of people’s lives. It has had an impact on many, many people. And one of the things that happened right after the war, of course, was as the men came home there was a great influx of building. You know, the GI Bill, a lot of them went to school on the GI Bill. And a lot of homes were built. A lot of them went back to college. It was interesting to see the rationing stop. The sugar was available. My dad was able to make, you know – his business spurted. We had the shoes and the clothes and everything became busy and bubbly and everything was happier.

SA: So did that, the soda pop business, did it go back to normal completely or was it affected forever after that from the war?

JM: It was affected forever. In that there was a big growth spurt, you know.

SA: So it was affected positively?

JM: Oh yes. Yes it was because during the war there was such a limitation on what, you know, the products that were available to them. So the little, everyone got to have as much soda pop as they wanted, was what it boiled down to. So no, it did make a difference.

SA: When did the rationing stop?

JM: I believe, no I think it stopped… One other thing that I think was interesting that, speaking of women, that happened and I can now remember my mother and the other neighbor ladies doing this; they took first aid classes and they practiced on each other. How to, Heimlich maneuver and, you know, all the different things. And they had all these bandages and they would pretend they had different kinds of wounds. They took it very, very seriously and so that was interesting too. And then, of course, we had times that we had blackouts too, when you turned out all your lights and didn’t turn them back on. Different things like that.

SA: What was that for? They went out on their own, or you guys would not use your electricity?
JM: Oh, no, no, no. Oh well, no. It was mandated. I mean, they said this is a blackout time. Turn the lights out. And they also had what they called block wardens, and that would be a volunteer. Probably an older man that was too old to go into the war and they’d kind of, like a neighborhood security person. They’d look out for things. And so I think that during the war it drew neighbors really close together. I think that everybody kind of looked out for each other. And I do know that there was a lot of sharing that went on, you know, like I said with the clothing for instance. When anybody did have any little extra something, you know it was up and down the neighborhood, it was food or whatever. So I think it was a bonding time for a lot of people.

SA: The blackouts, what was that for? What did that contribute?

JM: Sometimes, although of course, we never did have enemy planes fly over, you know, where we were, but it was like the Boy Scout thing, be prepared. So it was like, they would do these blackouts because if its, because they did that all over in the wars. You know, the lights would go out so when the bombers were coming to bomb, they couldn’t see. And the technology was not as great then either. That’s why a lot of times they wouldn’t hit their targets quite as much as they could when they could see what was going on. It was a precautionary thing to do. Just in case. You know, everybody, that’s why they were doing all the first aid and everything. Training, you know, was in case this happened; would we be prepared for it? Would we be prepared to help injured people? Those kinds of things. And so, as a child and you know as I said as a teenager watching this, it was interesting to watch all the neighbors who do these various things. I would say this, I always felt very safe as far as that goes. I just, but then I had, you know, my mother especially was a very protective type of person. She always tried to make us feel everything was going to be okay.

SA: Would you describe it as the most patriotic, the most unified as a country that you’ve seen anybody? Or have you since seen that?

JM: Oh, it was very, very, very, you know, and yet I’ll say this. You know, just in my own thinking just here off the top of my head here, after nine-eleven. I think that recently. I think that really affected Americans probably as deeply as Pearl Harbor did, emotionally. I think it really upset people to think that this could happen right here in our, you know right in our country. I think it was a really rude awakening. Very sad for all of us. So the two – I think those are two very dramatic times that – we’ve been involved in other wars since World War II, but they were not of the scope. So they weren’t, of course, as involved even though it involved a lot of people. But I think that for me personally, since I didn’t have anyone involved in those other wars. Well, anyway, I think this has been interesting and I appreciate your asking me this, and I don’t know how much insight it has been for you. But it was an emotional time for everyone in a lot of ways. I think it just depended on – you know – who you were and you know like I said – the most emotional time for me while it was going on was when my grandmother and my other aunts would gather around and, you know, they would discuss what was going on. There was a great deal of concern. And because my cousin Ted was such a hero, he would have – there would be articles written up about him when he, you know, as he
would shoot another plane down, or whatever, you know, different things. So he was really kind of the hero of Mesa, as far as that goes. So it made you feel really proud. As far as my uncle who was a paratrooper, I didn’t hear as much about him until after he came home and then he, you know, talked quite a little bit about, you know, the different things that they did and where they would go and when they would jump. And I thought would really, you know, to have your face all blackened and everything and to be dropped behind zones, to jump out and it just wouldn’t be a lot of fun, I don’t think.

SA: So he did the kind of behind enemy lines thing?

JM: Yes he did. And then he ended up, of course, being the Assistant Chief of Police in Phoenix. So he was – he protected us in all kinds of way. So I really can’t think of anything else, other than it was just a growing up period for me. And I just think it’s too bad that mankind, per se, can’t just love one another and go forth. And as long as there are people who are willing to protect and to go forth, the good guys are always gonna win. That’s the way I feel. So I think it’s been interesting, and I hope this has been your little insight about the war from like a young child, teenager point of view.

SA: Now that you’ve seen all that happen, do you think we’ll ever see a war again of that scale?

JM: I hope not. I don’t know. I’m gonna say no, I would hope not. I would hope that the good guys can keep the bad guys under control enough. But you know the thing that’s frightening, in a way, is because we have so much technology, you know, there’s a lot of damage can be done by just one missile, one whatever. But I do not believe, like a lot of people; think that they’re going to destroy the world. Civilization will be eliminated. I do not believe that. Again like I said, eventually the good guys will always win. Because I think there’s enough goodness in mankind, per se, that, I just think that good will prevail. There may be periods of time that the evil forces may think they’re winning, and they may for a while. I just think as long as we who live in America remain cognizant of our neighbors and treat them well and remember who we are and why we are here, even if everybody does not believe religiously as we do, if they believe in the good of mankind, you know, love thy neighbor type of a thing that we’ll just be okay. Thanks again. I appreciate it.