LD: Alright today is October 25, 2003, and this is Lindsay Dick interviewing Ruth Peck. Alright, to start out with where, where were you born?

RP: Rigby, Idaho.

LD: Rigby, Idaho, okay. And how old were you on December 7th, 1941?

RP: About twenty-four.

LD: What do you remember about that day?

RP: Well, we were living in Utah at that time and I’d just had a baby in September. So I remember where we were living that it was Sunday morning and we had just gotten the word. Wham! It was just a terrible feeling. You know, to know that that had happened.

LD: What did you think when you heard about the attack?

RP: I just thought it was terrible. Couldn’t hardly believe it. Didn’t think it would go on like it did.

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

RP: Well, I thought they was terrible tyrants. Wicked.

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

RP: Well, during the war, I guess it had been going on for quite a while, the war had, before we heard about them.

LD: What thoughts went through your head when you heard about them?

RP: How terrible, how could be, people be so cruel to each other that always bothered me.

LD: How did your life change as a result of World War II?

RP: Well, when we had to go without and had stamps, you know, had to have stamps to buy stuff, it just kind of changed, I don’t think that it was ever the same. Course there was a lot of, what do I want to say, prosperity, people were making more money and all that, but it wasn’t worth it to me, I just, course I wasn’t involved in anyway, I didn’t have anybody, my oldest son was the one that was born then so he was not very old he was just a baby when it happened in forty-one. So we just kind of went along, had to have stamps for everything, you know butter and meat and tires, sugar. Bobby didn’t have, he was my second child so we weren’t hurt to bad that way. Because we didn’t have a family to feed, but I really felt bad for those that did. You know the shoes for the little kids, just a lot of things that were rationed.
LD: Did your religious beliefs help you cope with your experience?

RP: Oh yeah, yeah I thought, I thought it’d be come out alright, I didn’t, I just couldn’t see that it couldn’t. But it, course it wasn’t in this country but then it took a lot of people, a lot were killed. It kind of strengthened my testimony, the way that things went so…

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

RP: Not very much. I did whatever they asked me, you know, but Rigby was a small town and, you know, there wasn’t too much to do there. Except in the city but you know, and of course I had two little babies, two kids and I had my third one, well that was in forty-five, so that was when it was about over. My husband didn’t have to go thank heavens. I was glad of that. He did get called up but we had, right after I had my third child and I was just sick. But he didn’t pass the test, he had a hernia and they didn’t take him, but he did have to go down to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake to be examined and, so he was, would have been drafted. Course that was right at the end. It was in forty-five. So it wouldn’t have been too long. I would’ve hated to have him leave me with three little kids.

LD: Earlier you mentioned all the rationing. What do you remember about all the rationing that took place?

RP: Well we just had to have all these stamps ya know, to buy anything. Like I say we weren’t bothered too much cause we had them two kids and they didn’t eat very much, where you know we didn’t have to. We had an old car, that didn’t really need tires. I don’t remember whether we, I don’t think we had to buy any, but I do remember that you could only go thirty-five miles an hour, when you’re traveling. And we went down to Salt Lake for conference one time with our Bishop, and he drove thirty-five miles all the way. And it was a long trip! But then we were glad to do it ya know. To help, and we tried to be careful, you know, doing things the right way, and didn’t try to hoard anything. A lot of people did. Sugars a lot you know. But we tried to be patriotic and do what we should.

LD: How did the war affect the community?

RP: Well, there was quite a few of the boys that were killed. My husband worked, there were two or three out of the Post Office went had to go, and he worked in the Post Office while they was gone. And they were, it was kind of a sad time, people were, you know how’d it be. Everybody in a small community knew everybody and felt bad for anybody who’d, who lost their son, and there was several that were killed from Rigby.

LD: How did their families cope with that, what did they do?

RP: Well, I don’t know, I didn’t, I wasn’t really involved in the families but I know that they felt really bad, kind of like you would if you had a son killed. I don’t think they’re, I
don’t know of anybody that was really bitter or anything, but, course I didn’t know their feelings.

LD: Did you know anyone personally that went off to war?

RP: Oh yeah, I knew ‘em, well I knew who they were and that, but not that they weren’t I wasn’t involved in their families or anything.

LD: What was it like to have all the young men gone off to war?

RP: Well I guess I wasn’t looking for anyone, so I don’t, I imagine well look there were some girls there that I knew quite well, their boyfriends went and one of them had a boyfriend that was killed. My brother went. He was in the, just seventeen in the guard and they took the guard up to Portnos, Washington, this was just four years training. This was before the war, then the war broke out while they were up there. And so he was in during the whole war. He was sent over to New Guinea. But he was, we worried a lot about him I’ll tell you, but he came through okay. But then he took it up, there, it was part of his career. And so he was in there twenty years. We didn’t get to see him very much. Course they, it was a war all that time. But he was in the Korean War and the, I think that was after the Second World War, wasn’t it? He was in the, he was in the Second World War and then he was doing the Korean War and then the Vietnam War too. Oh, my mother, she just, it just about broke her heart, but he came, he did come home okay. [Indistinguishable—mentions something about now and then being in the war.]

LD: What are some of the most vivid memories of the World War II experience that stand out to you?

RP: Oh dear, I guess the ones that were these kids had to go, when they were called up to go. A lot of them went with the guard. Our Guard down in the, the National Guard, one of the first ones to go you know. It was hard to see them leave. I think that was about as hard as they gave, but it was wonderful when they came home. But as far as the war, I don’t, just hearing what I heard you know it’s, the terrible things that they did to them in Japan, most of them I’ve read, since you know the war, I don’t actually remember from the war. But I know the atrocities and things they did to the men was terrible. That I think, that affected me. When I was young I used to like to watch the war shows, but as I got older I couldn’t even, I didn’t like to watch them. They had the Bataan March you know, and Corregador and all those where they fought and it was so terrible. Then I read two or three books about it. That made it worse.

LD: Did the war affect your brother in any way?

RP: No.

LD: Did he actually go out and…
RP: Well, he was, I don’t think, I really don’t know, I’ve asked him two or three times, and he said, well there was fighting all around him, but he didn’t ever have to go right up to the front.

LD: Well, that’s good.

RP: He was an officer and of course they went too, but as far as I know he didn’t really get into the thick of it. But of course they were in danger a lot of the time.

LD: Alright, well, that’s all of my questions.

RP: I didn’t tell you very much, did I?

LD: Oh, it’s fine, is there anything else that you’ve been thinking about?

RP: I had a son that was in the Navy after the War, but he didn’t well he got pretty close it was when they were having trouble over there, but he wasn’t in the war. This one that was little, born at the time of all of it, I thought I’ll never have to worry about him going to war, you know, but he joined the Navy and he didn’t actually go to war but he was in some scary places. Can’t even remember where. Don’t even want too! I wish I could’ve told you more.

LD: Oh, this is just fine.

RP: But I was just, I was young and you know, had kids to take care of. So I didn’t, I didn’t get in to it too much, but I know I felt bad when anything bad happened.

LD: With how technology was at that time did you get news right away about the things going on?

RP: Just on the radio there was no T.V. or anything, but it came over pretty good on the news, or you know on the radio, but it isn’t anything like it is now. Like you can hear every word or it was that day or the next day, or, but it wasn’t as good then.

LD: Well, thank you very much.

RP: Well, you’re welcome. I hope it did you some good.

LD: Oh, you did.

[Later on Ruth mentioned that she and her husband bought a few war bonds for support.]