

Museum of History and Holocaust Education Legacy Series

Faye Edwards interview

Conducted by James Newberry

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Transcribed by Celia Clark

Born in a coal mining town in West Virginia in 1923, Faye Edwards took a job at a defense plant in Baltimore during World War II. In 1944 she enlisted in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) and completed two tours of duty in Europe before transferring to Japan. There she met her husband and started a family. She currently lives in Newnan, Georgia. Edwards recorded her oral history interview at Kennesaw State University in May 2016.

Full Transcript

Interviewer: Well this is James Newberry and I'm here with Faye Edwards on Tuesday May 10th 2016 at the Sturgis Library at Kennesaw State University. And Ms. Edwards do you agree to this interview?

Edwards: Yes.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. So can you tell me your full name?

Edwards: Myrtle Faye Johnson Edwards [laughs]

Interviewer: Ok. And when were you born?

Edwards: February the 5th 1923.

Interviewer: And where were you born?

(0:29) Edwards: I think it was Hudna, West Virginia. If not in that little town it was close by.

Interviewer: Ok. Um can you tell me about your family?

Edwards: Well I I don't remember my daddy he was killed in the coal mines. And my mother she remarried when I was ten or eleven. And I have a half-brother and sister. Two half-brothers and one sister.

Interviewer: Ok. So what did you know about your father's death in the cold mine?

Edwards: Very little. I suppose they just figured [shrugs] I wasn't old enough to know or something. And — we had just come back to my grandmother's. My mother's mother. And that's where we stayed most of the time until my mother remarried again when I was eleven or twelve somewhere in that area.

Interviewer: Did your mother work at all during that time?

Edwards: She worked for a while in a dress factory, but she was everybody's maid whenever they wanted to do something in the family. They'd trust the family with her and they'd go on vacation. And that's — she worked in a dress factory for a while, but mostly helping out with the whole family.

Interviewer: Did you get roped into any of that work?

Edwards: Oh yes [nods] when I got older [laughs] And too I found a job that in restaurants cause I was cooking at home and they knew, so I got a job as a pie baker in a city restaurant. I got out of that doing for everybody.

Interviewer: And that restaurant was in another town?

Edwards: It was in a town just close by us. It was Milton, West Virginia.

Interviewer: Ok so tell me how much money you made there.

Edwards: Oh goodness it wasn't much cause uh they gave me room and board so it was very little [shakes head]. It cause I was glad to get it. It was I got away from home and — after my mother remarried well I wasn't very happy there and uh just to get away I was satisfied.

Interviewer: So so tell me about the people you met there working at that restaurant.

Edwards: Oh it was a small town Milton, West Virginia. I met all the business people cause they there was just one big restaurant and that was they'd done everything they had meals and I ended up as being a pie baker there. And some of them would order whole pies so that meant extra work for me.

Interviewer: What were the most popular pies?

Edwards: Custard. Egg custard they called it.

Interviewer: Um.

Edwards: It was eggs and milk and flavoring. And that was when you put it in the shell the crust was raw. And this was just mixed up and it thickened in while it was being baked. And that was — the most — well most wanted pie and it took longer to bake than most of them.

Interviewer: I see. So you met the Cline family there?

Edwards: Yes [nods] I met Miss Cline and her husband worked in uh some kind of a factory in Baltimore I don't remember just what.

Interviewer: Ok and um can you tell me what are your memories of the attack on Pearl Harbor — in 1941?

Edwards: Not much just what I read in the paper and I can truthfully say I wasn't too interested in it. And hearing people talk about it and — as the old saying goes “in one ear and out the other”. [laughs]

Interviewer: So tell me about hearing of the job in Baltimore. How did you hear about that?

Edwards: Uh one of the women I was working with in Milton which was a small town she told me about it. And uh she evidently got in contact with the woman in Baltimore. And she called me and I moved there and I worked there and from there I went into the army.

Interviewer: Ok so let's talk about your move to Baltimore. Can you tell me what were your memories of applying for that job?

Edwards: I just went and reported that I was about the lady that had told me about it that I worked there. And that was about it. I guess they figured if she recommended me that I was ok. [laughs]

Interviewer: Do you remember the name of the factory?

Edwards: [shakes head] No. I sure don't.

Interviewer: So American Hammer Piston...

Edwards: [simultaneously] Piston Ring I worked in that. That one I thought you meant the restaurant I worked in.

Interviewer: I mean the name of the factory in Baltimore.

Edwards: Well that was uh American Hammer Piston Ring. We made piston rings size of the they called it a finger ring and and for ships you can stand up in six foot.

Interviewer: So they varied in size.

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods head]

Interviewer: And um can you tell me where the factory was located in Baltimore?

Edwards: [shakes head] I've forgot that was years and years ago.

Interviewer: Ok and do you know what the building looked like? You remember?

Edwards: [shakes head] I was just uh there wasn't much to it except the outside. And it and it was all machinery inside. You made all — the piston rings was the main thing, but they made other things too in that building it was just a big building it didn't have much shape to it except it was big.

Interviewer: Ok — so tell me about a piston ring. What is that going to be used for?

Edwards: In the motors. As far as I know but it was all sizes I know some of them went to companies that made ship motors and some of them was just like a finger ring. And I — I remember if some of them were broken you couldn't use and some of the people would show them off as a ring but they was broken but shouldn't they go in the broken I guess they melted them over I don't know.

Interviewer: So reuse them.

Edwards: [nods head] Uh huh.

Interviewer: Ok so did you go through a training period?

Edwards: [shakes head] No I just they hired me and then they showed me how to do how to work the machine that I worked with. They I got the rough rings they called them and then I put them through this machine and they went up where they would roll and that way they get old and rough and soften them —

Interviewer: Ah.

Edwards: — and if any of them was bad or something they couldn't be used well they went into scraps and they was remelted.

Interviewer: So what was the name of the machine you were using?

Edwards: [shakes head] I don't know. It was it was such a big it was a — a big machine and had two like grindstones for the rings went through to smooth them. But I don't remember the name of it's so many years ago.

Interviewer: How did you control it?

Edwards: They had it's like they had a switch on two or three switches and each one was for different size rings or what you wanted to do with them. The main

was to — I wanna say shine them up and uh really have them with no roughness on them. And — if any of them was cracked or look like they uh weren't right they went in the scraps and was remelted.

Interviewer: So did you work alone or as part of a group?

Edwards: I worked I worked alone on a on a machine and — it was a factory that a one person worked at one machine according to what she did and how big the rings were.

Interviewer: Ok — so would someone bring you the ring to work on?

Edwards: They'd come in wooden boxes and they they was like this [gesturing with hands] and they was like this in the ring in the boxes like this. And you'd take four or five of them out at a time. And when you finished with them if any ones had a crack in it or a scratch in it them it went in scraps.

(10:06) Interviewer: Tell me what kind of uniform you wore?

Edwards: You could wear anything — you wanted to as long as it wasn't any fancy things that would be caught in a machine. But a lot of us got uniforms that was made out of denim. And it was very plain no buttons or anything to or anything to be caught in a machine.

Interviewer: Was it a full body uniform —

Edwards: Yeah [nods]

Interviewer: — or was it a shirt and pants?

Edwards: Full — like a full uniform. [shakes head] No pants.

Interviewer: Did it have short sleeves or long sleeves?

Edwards: Long sleeves and they fastened with a button at the wrist. Cause a lot of the machines when they you was working with them they would be like sparks fly out and —they didn't want you burnt. You had to wear gloves and I remember the top of them was cotton, but the palm was soft leather. Sort of a grey looking leather that —was rough leather.

(11:20) Interviewer: Did you have a mask or something? Goggles?

Edwards: No. We had to wear our hair covered.

Interviewer: And how did you pull your hair back?

Edwards: I usually wore it pretty long. I put a ponytail in the back and had it pulled back.

Interviewer: So you pulled it back in a ponytail. Did you put on a bandanna or a snood or something?

Edwards: Yeah they had the — the type of hood that that you wore when you certain — I worked on what they called a hatchet machine and you had a certain thing that you wore on your head and a certain uniform that you wore. Because it was much heavier than a lot of the uniforms, It was more like a blue jean material.

Interviewer: I see. So can you describe a typical day at work at the factory for me? Like when you arrived, your breaks, your lunch that sort of thing.

Edwards: Well it — you just had a certain time to come in. And you had a certain time for lunch and to leave and you didn't have no spare time. And you had so much time for lunch which not which was in minutes. And — when you entered that door, you can expect to be busy until you went out it.

Interviewer: Well when you came in did you have to sign in or show a badge?

Edwards: We had badges — that we had to wear on our clothes and most of us had either you can wear the uniform or you had denim — dresses. And that's what I worked in denim dresses.

Interviewer: What kind of shoes did you wear?

Edwards: Just plain Oxfords.

Interviewer: Did you have any breaks during the day?

Edwards: [shakes head] You just had lunch break and that was it.

Interviewer: Was there a cafeteria?

Edwards: [shakes head] I don't I'd never seen one unless there was you had to take your lunch.

Interviewer: What did you take for lunch?

Edwards: Goodness. I didn't take much because I don't like sandwiches. [laughs]

Interviewer: I see. So — did you have much interaction with other workers during the day?

Edwards: Well the ones that we worked close together. Our machines were you know close together with that and that was just about it. We all had the same break for lunch and we went to work at the same time and we left at the same time so there was [shakes head] no time in when you was working to have any breaks with anybody.

Interviewer: Were there mostly women or men working around you?

Edwards: Women.

Interviewer: Ok and were there any men working in the factory?

Edwards: [nods head] Yeah there was men most of the men something happened with the machine they men was the one that fixed it. But mostly women run the machines.

Interviewer: Did you have um what kind of interactions did you have with the men workers?

Edwards: I knew them but — you know — I looked and I seen them and that was it.

Interviewer: How did they treat you?

Edwards: With respect. But there was no — well I can't say if there was any action expect just —speaking to them and anything had to ask you about the machine and they did but otherwise you just didn't have any. You respect them as what they were and when they was working on your machine you just stayed out of their way.

Interviewer: Were there any Black workers at the factory?

Edwards: Very few. There was some but very few.

Interviewer: What kind of jobs did they do?

Edwards: They run machine when they was the ones that were there same as all of us did — they did whatever they was assigned to do and it was all piston rings all sizes there was copper and — well several kinds of metal. One kind of metal was it was when you run them was like black ash it showed up on you [laughs] when you breathe it you know. But the brass ones was the ones you really had to watch out for they would cut you. Very you had to they called it stalls you would take tape and make one for every finger when you wanted to do those brass and copper. Because they would cut you.

Interviewer: So tell me about how much danger uh there was in operating these machines and working with these piston rings.

Edwards: As far as I know, there wasn't too much because they had men and that checked the machines if anything was going wrong or it failed it or they weren't doing what they should do they had men that took care of the machines and women just run them.

Interviewer: Was it hot in the factory?

Edwards: [nods head] Yes and sometimes the metal was hot and too when you come out where you breathe all that dust from that black [gestures to face] you had all that black around you and — it was just a dirty job [laughs] to put it plain.

Interviewer: Not particularly glamorous.

Edwards: Yeah [laughs]

Interviewer: You were initially operating one of these machines. Did you get any promotion or advancements?

Edwards: Yeah the only one you knew was —on your paycheck. Ain't nobody told you just knew when you got your check where you got a raise or not.

Interviewer: And how much money were you making?

Edwards: I don't even remember.

Interviewer: How often would you get checks?

Edwards: Once a week. But —back then you didn't make much. It wasn't like —it was today you know you made very little but having a for women there wasn't that many women working there. If you had a job in certain machine shops you was just lucky cause it was mostly all men.

Interviewer: So did you make enough to get by and pay for rooming and stuff?

Edwards: [nods] Yeah I knew the family that I boarded with. I met them in another town in a little southern town in in a restaurant. And the lady she worked in the restaurant and I worked there too and when her husband got this job in Baltimore he moved the family there and they wanted me to move with them and I did. And so I had a job in the factory there. I quit working in the restaurant and went to work in the factory.

Interviewer: And you lived with them?

(19:28) Edwards: Uh huh [nods]

Interviewer: Ok so at the factory talking about promotions and making more money did you become what's called a line supervisor?

Edwards: Well I supervised when I was there about a year and it was I think it was either four or five machines that was in a section that I supervised then. But I had to pass the test they give you before you could be a supervisor. If you had worked there for awhile you were given a test —to see if you was qualified to be a supervisor.

Interviewer: What kind of test?

Edwards: It was what you do —with the job you have in the supervising the job that you have and that was size— and well you had to cut them down a certain size and —well it was just all about what you had been doing. You had to pass the test they had give you.

Interviewer: So when you became a line supervisor you said you had supervised some workers. Were they all women?

Edwards: [nods] Mostly. It was during the war.

Interviewer: Did you supervise any men workers?

Edwards: [nods] There were a few there that didn't pass for being in the army.

Interviewer: Uh huh so —

Edwards: Most of them were nice and some of them resented the women.

Interviewer: Tell me about that.

Edwards: Well they just let you know that they didn't respect you. And I got as bad as they was — if they had any bad thing I marked it up against them. [smiles] So I felt if you could be naughty with me — I can be naughty with you.

Interviewer: [laughs] So you said they showed that they resented you. How did they show it?

Edwards: Just that —they if you had a problem and went to one of them they was supposed to know what they were doing. Nine times out of ten they would say they don't know or would tell you wrong just to be because they didn't want women to do their job — and it was pretty soon the women didn't

bother with them. And some of the men lost their jobs because the women complained about them so much. And they had been there and they was supposed to help us if we had a problem but they didn't. And it ended up that they lost their job.

Interviewer: So some of the women would complain to the management?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: And the management saw that the men were reprimanded?

Edwards: [nods] And — they were and some of them was pretty bad with the managers when they went to talk to them and they just fired them on the spot.

Interviewer: So what age were these men?

Edwards: Um they were all ages I guess cause this was a big plant. And a dirty plant. You'd come out and where you'd breathe that black dust you would all around your [laughs] [gestures to mouth] — It was a dirty job.

Interviewer: Did it cover your uniform? The dirty soot stuff.

Edwards: [nods] And you had to change everyday. It was dirt you know black.

Interviewer: Right. What was your shift? What hours?

Edwards: Well they were eight hour shifts.

Interviewer: Ok. Was it morning to afternoon? Or was it nighttime?

Edwards: They had a — twenty-four hours you — you worked eight hours. And too they was making these rings and they was doing [undecipherable 23:45] and went for — repair and make tanks and trucks and all this stuff to do for the war so it was twenty-four hours.

Interviewer: Ok so if you were operating one of those machines how many rings would you work on in a day? Can you remember?

Edwards: [shakes head] No because you had different things that you had to do. They would be rough on the outside and also in the inside. And — you had a machine that you had to stand and ring up and run it through this way to have the outside of the ring smooth too. And then the other machine went on the side like the center and on the outside. Sometimes they would be real rough and if you wore gloves, they didn't wear long with that rough metal.

Interviewer: So did you enjoy your work?

Edwards: Well yes and no [laughs] After a while you get tired of the same thing and too it was dirty work. You'd come out and you would be all around your face [gestures to face] you would breathe that dust and it would be meant you had to change uniforms every day because you had that black dust from that metal.

Interviewer: How did you get to and from work?

Edwards: On the bus. They was busses that run I worked in Baltimore they was busses.

Interviewer: Were there any blackouts in Baltimore?

Edwards: [nods] Yeah there was.

Interviewer: How often?

Edwards: Oh goodness I don't know. I don't remember. I know it was — you wouldn't expect it. Sometimes it was just — in the middle of the day they was shut everything down. And then at night a lot of the times it would be no no lights at all. And uh — that was the bad part at night when there was no lights cause everything was dark.

Interviewer: Right so did you ever get a ration book?

Edwards: [nods] Oh yeah.

Interviewer: You get one for yourself or for the household?

Edwards: I got one for myself. [coughs] When I went to work — yet you got a ration book of your own. And but when I was living at home they just had the ration book family ration book. But when you're on your own you get the ration book.

Interviewer: What kind of things did you have to ration?

Edwards: Well just about everything.

Interviewer: Here's the ration book number three.

Edwards: Yep [smiles]

Interviewer: So tell me about the card. What do you see on there?

Edwards: That's where I was living in Baltimore 755 West [undecipherable 27:08] in Baltimore. And I was boarding with a family by the name of Kline. And they were from Milton the little town I was from.

Interviewer: Right so um tell me the clothes. Did you have to change your certain number of clothes because of rationing?

Edwards: No not really but you had certain things you had to work in. And you usually go into — and wash up before you — left for work because cast iron with the machine you used — you breathe the black dust [gestures to mouth] And you had all around and you had to wash your hair every night when you got off of work — cause it would be from that dust and that machine.

Interviewer: Did you do anything for entertainment? For fun at that time?

Edwards: [shakes head] The time you put in eight hours into one of those machines you were ready to go home. [laughs] Get a bath and go to bed. [laughs]

Interviewer: So can you tell me? At the factory were you part of a union?

Edwards: No [shakes head]

Interviewer: So there were no unions at the factory?

Edwards: [shakes head] Uh uh.

Interviewer: Ok so I think you worked at that factory about two years?

Edwards: Uh huh [nods] I was there a long time.

Interviewer: This was all during the war.

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh.

Interviewer: So do you remember hearing any of President Roosevelt's speeches during that time?

Edwards: Oh I heard several people with speeches I guess I heard his but I don't know there was a lot of people gave speeches during that time.

Interviewer: How did you get your news? Did you keep up with the news?

Edwards: Well with the paper and the radio that's about it I guess.

Interviewer: Ok so um I want to transition. I know that you enlisted in the army —

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: — ok so let's talk about that. How did that come about?

Edwards: Well — I heard a lot of talk about it and I saw a lot of it in the movies and too dissatisfied with my job and the defense plants it — was a dirty job and we had several bosses that I didn't care for at all — they was just to me they didn't know any more than I did. [laughs] And yet they were always criticizing you. Not only me but the women had a hard time and I didn't even tell them I was leaving until the day before. And I put in for the army and I was notified when I was — but — would go with the army and —

(30:38) Interviewer: And where did you go to enlist?

Edwards: In Baltimore. This is one of my — this was the oldest daughter of the people I boarded with. Laverna Kline.

Interviewer: And you went to a recruiting station with Laverna Kline?

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh. We went to the same recruiting station but I boarded with her family in Baltimore.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And at the recruiting station how did you enlist? Tell me what was the process?

Edwards: Well you just filled out papers and — form. You put down when you were born, where'd you live, and your family, and what you had done. You know — working and just about your whole life history.

Interviewer: How did Laverna's parents feel about y'all enlisting?

Edwards: They didn't like it at all [laughs]

Interviewer: Why is that?

Edwards: Well they didn't want us to go into the army. And her daddy had been in the army and but her mother tried to tell him that the women's army wasn't like the men's but he didn't want to believe and but —their oldest daughter and I enlisted at the same time. And we weren't kept together though — she stayed in the States and I went overseas.

Interviewer: So did you have any contact with your mother and her family at this time?

Edwards: Yeah I did. But uh — I was just fed up with the whole bit — she had remarried. My daddy was killed in the coal mine. And she — remarried and of course I didn't like her husband and his children and I was a babysitter and I just got fed up and I —

Interviewer: So you felt sort of free to make your own decisions and do what you wanted?

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: Now you said that you saw movies about the WACS.

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh.

Interviewer: What did you see in those movies? Why did it seem appealing?

Edwards: Well this things they was more or less on their own. It showed the things that they had done and the way they'd dress and everything so it appealed to me and I thought if they can do it I can too.[laughs]

Interviewer: So how long did you have before you had to report somewhere for an exam or something?

Edwards: Uh probably about a month.

Interviewer: And where did you go? Where did you report?

Edwards: In Baltimore, Maryland.

Interviewer: Uh huh and where did you complete your physical exams?

Edwards: There. And they had a recruiting station there in Baltimore. About all big cities had them — where you could enlist and all the things you needed, they'd call you up and tell you when you had to report.

Interviewer: They'd give you a call you on the phone?

Edwards: Uh huh. They'd tell you where to report to duty. And that meant you had to get your uniform and all that stuff. And when they called you and you got your uniform that was it you was in the army there was no backing out or nothing. So I — enjoyed it. I had a rough time sometimes but I got overseas and things I'd never got to go otherwise.

Interviewer: Well now where did you report? Where did you have to go to get your uniform? And —

Edwards: In Baltimore, Maryland. I was boarding with this family and working in a defense plant and — [scratches nose] that's where I went.

Interviewer: So you transferred to Fort Oglethorpe.

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And that's in Georgia.

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: So how did you get to Fort Oglethorpe.

Edwards: By train.

Interviewer: Ok so you arrived at Fort Oglethorpe and you went into basic training.

Edwards: Right [nods]

Interviewer: Can you describe basic training for me?

Edwards: Well you have you — live in the barracks. A lot of people. And basic training means you learn all army. You have the drilling — everything. You dress for army dress and what you would be doing in the army. And it's just [laughs] a lot of stuff you're not used to. But I — got settled and liked it and went on several years.

Interviewer: And what sort of physical training did you have to do?

Edwards: Oh all kinds of —physical training you do. You have marching and drilling — different things, calisthenics, anything. Exercise you had it. And there was no getting out of it. You did it or else.

Interviewer: Did you have any rifle training?

Edwards: [shakes head] No we didn't have that.

Interviewer: So women in the army were not carrying rifles?

Edwards: [shakes head] Uh uh.

Interviewer: Ok. Um did you work in the kitchen at all?

Edwards: Just when I was assigned to —KP.

Interviewer: What's KP?

Edwards: Working in the kitchen. Washing dishes and mopping floors and all [laughs] that stuff and uh usually the people assigned to the kitchen don't have to do that. They just do the cooking. And KPs take care of the — kitchen. You know washing dishes, and doing the floors, and all that stuff. But — I just did office work most of the time and of course I had to take my turn at KP.

Interviewer: So what do you see in the pictures there?

Edwards: All in cook's uniforms. These are cook's uniforms.

Interviewer: Ok what do the uniforms look like?

Edwards: They're all white. And you have to wear a net over and you have a white cap. But you have to wear a net on your hair. Any time you worked in an army kitchen you wore a net.

Interviewer: Did you like that kitchen duty?

Edwards: [shakes head] No [laughs] That was a dumb question. [laughs]

Interviewer: [laughs] Oh so did you have um any shifts watching the barracks?

Edwards: Let me look at this —

Interviewer: Sure.

Edwards: — another time. This is a cook's uniform and this is Class A. And this is different uniforms —

Film Crew: [coughs]

Edwards: — and that's the winter uniform, and that's the summer, and that's the working uniform.

Interviewer: Ok and take a look at this photo. What is that?

Edwards: That's a company picture. Of everybody in that company. And Class A. And there's me with the red —

Interviewer: Right in the center.

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And did you make any close friends in that group?

Edwards: Oh yeah. You have your —you make friends that even surprises you the people that you're friends with. Really close. But you meet people that you'll be friends for life and some of them that you can't stand to be around them. [laughs] They'll probably feel the same about you. [laughs]

Interviewer: Ok and you have another photo of — Is that the same group?

Edwards: Well this is for the whole company and this is just for —small like my company. And this here's for the whole —Oglethorpe.

Interviewer: So that's all the women in —

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: —in the army in Fort Oglethorpe —

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: — and those are the ones in your company.

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: So the one's in your company is a smaller group out of the larger.

Edwards: Yeah. This one's all the company — the whole Oglethorpe group.

Interviewer: I see. Ok —

(40:01) Edwards: And this is for —this is for a just a regular group.

Interviewer: So um can you tell me you said you did office work?

Edwards: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: What sort of office work?

Edwards: Anything you do in the office. I had to answer mail. You do typing of any kind. Whatever you have to do —unless you are in an office all the time you don't know all that's to be done. But if you're assigned for a couple days or something you have to do whatever they want you to do. Because somebody has been sick or going home or something. Cause everybody's not in it at the same time.

Interviewer: Right. Did you train other soldiers?

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: Tell me about that.

Edwards: [laughs] You get some they're really comical that don't know their right from their left and two you just crack up you have to turn your back on them. You — just can't believe somebody that's —well that don't know their right foot from their left.

Interviewer: So you would train them in physical training?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: And would that be around the grounds or something?

Edwards: Yeah teach them how to march and — have to salute and all that. And I don't think some of them ever learned how to salute. [laughs] And too the right one from the left. [shakes head] You just wonder how they got as far as they did.

Interviewer: So did you have any interactions with uh men who were in the army?

Edwards: Well just in the office work. There'd be some time being in the offices you'd be in but they — went their way and you went yours. They had one company and we had our company.

Interviewer: So what time did you have to get up in the morning?

Edwards: We had revelry at 8:00. That's when you had to be completely dressed. And when you blow that whistle that means you fall out and you better be completely dressed. And then you had retreat at five o'clock and that means you have to be there at five. And that means you're dismissed but that don't mean you're not you're finished if you have work to do. You have all the cleaning to do and your uniform, and the barracks, and all and you sign KP that means working in the kitchen.

Interviewer: Right.

Edwards: They don't give you much spare time. I tell you.

Interviewer: So um what kind of food did they serve in the mess hall?

Edwards: They served good food but it wasn't always like what you were used to. But they — can't say they serve enough food. But you cook a lot of food and its not gonna be taste like what you just cook for a meal. For a family.

Interviewer: Right. Did you ever go off of base?

Edwards: Oh yeah they — they give you time off. You well like on weekends you can do things but sometimes you're assigned things to do. And but yet there's not all the time that you can — be off. And when you're off you can go anywhere you please as long as you were back on time. Like if you get off base you have a certain time to get back. And you have to sign in when you get back. And there's always a penalty if you don't make it.

Interviewer: What sort of penalty?

Edwards: They will serve you duty — extra duty and you can get time like somebody gets a sentence where they have to do certain things and they will find you something to make you do and you know not to do it because the — penalty can be bad for your record.

Interviewer: Did you ever go to any um USO events?

Edwards: Oh yeah. We used to have them on the base a lot and if you wanted to go and if you didn't have duty you could go.

Interviewer: What kind of events did they have?

Edwards: Just regular just the ones — that you'd want to see too often. It was usually the same thing over and over just about.

Interviewer: Ok and could you tell me about seeing the actress uh Lana Turner at Fort Oglethorpe?

Edwards: I — I recall but I can't — you know it's been so long ago that oh [laughs] Oh yeah *Keep Your Powder Dry*.

Interviewer: What's *Keep Your Powder Dry*?

Edwards: That's the name of the movie and these are the actresses really and it's the WACS that — was in the movie but not the main characters. And these are the main characters and this is in — well I guess— they was in just in — the background I guess you'll call it.

Interviewer: So the main stars they came down to Fort Oglethorpe to film?

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And were you included in the movie?

Edwards: No — I in the movie I was probably in one of these.

Interviewer: So they might have gotten a shot of you in one of the companies?

Edwards: Uh uh [shakes head]

Interviewer: [laughs] Ok so I'll take that. Let's see — so do you remember how long you stayed at Fort Oglethorpe?

Edwards: [shakes head] Its many many years ago.

Interviewer: Ok so maybe a year or two.

Edwards: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Ok and when did you leave? Why did you leave? When did that come?

Edwards: I don't really remember when I got out but I got several years in. I just decided that I didn't want to stay in the army any longer and I went to work in a defense plant.

Interviewer: Ok so you were sent to Fort Monroe?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods head] West Virginia.

Interviewer: In Virginia. And what kind of work did you do there?

Edwards: I done office work I was just whatever come up, was typing, shorthand, whatever came up I did it.

Interviewer: Ok and was this work sort of secretive?

Edwards: There was some of it. And too when I had the secret work of somebody who would come in walk in where I was at my desk. I had to roll this under —down in the typewriter. Or if I had it out — I had to turn it over where nobody could see it. I didn't like to work — with that because if somebody did see it and reported it you was in trouble.

Interviewer: Ok so did you have to ever destroy documents?

Edwards: [nods] I used to like if you made a mistake in some — we had a certain amount of time before we — had to leave work. And we'd go to this building where had a furnace in it and we'd put this in there and burn it and stir the ashes because you'd be surprised what could stay if you'd burn it and not stir it up.

Interviewer: And who told you you had to do that?

Edwards: My boss.

Interviewer: Who was your boss?

Edwards: Oh goodness I had three or four — I can't remember. [shakes head]

Interviewer: Ok.

Edwards: But they'd tell you like I confused something you made a mistake you didn't just erase it and keep going. You had to get rid of it and you had so much time before you got off of work to go to the main building and they had a furnace there. And you take the trash can if there's stuff in it and put it in there and stir it up till it was all burnt. And you'd be surprised, and you'd be surprised how much you can see on typing if you burn it but don't stir it up.

(50:35) Interviewer: Right so um you said you didn't like that work.

Edwards: [shakes head] I didn't like the secrecy — of it because you'd be typing something and somebody would come in at to your desk and you'd have to roll it under or get rid of it somehow. You couldn't let anyone see it if it was a secret. I worked in secret work.

Interviewer: So do you remember any of the information in those documents.

Edwards: [nods] Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you tell me?

Edwards: No [laughs]

Interviewer: Why not?

Edwards: Because they're secret.

Interviewer: They haven't been declassified after all these years?

Edwards: I don't know. Nobody told me that. [laughs]

Interviewer: Ok so what was your rank at this time?

Edwards: Tech sergeant.

Interviewer: Ok did you have an opportunity to become an officer?

Edwards: Oh yeah several times. I was asked to but I — liked the girls I was friends with. Cause I knew I wasn't gonna stay there forever and I preferred my friends to another rank.

Interviewer: So when did you —how were you able to leave Fort Monroe and the work you didn't like? Did you choose to leave? Did you get a transfer?

Edwards: I — I just got out of the army from there.

Interviewer: Well first you went to Des Moines.

Edwards: [nods] Yeah

Interviewer: And you did some training there.

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: And that was in preparation to go to Europe.

Edwards: Uh huh [nods]

Interviewer: What sort of training did you do in preparation to go to Europe?

Edwards: Well they had — different marching and different just different if you would be — in the States or overseas.

Interviewer: Ok. So you shipped out of New York. Can you tell me about leaving New York Harbor?

Edwards: I felt very bad. I was upset because when you leave the States and you don't know when you are coming back or not. It gives you a funny feeling.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And you were in a winter uniform?

Edwards: That's so they wouldn't know where we were going.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Edwards: They didn't want nobody to know where we were shipping out to and we —we wore winter uniform and that was the only way not to let them know. If we had a summer uniform they would have known — have some idea of where we were going. But in a winter uniform in the summer it doesn't —don't exactly tell them where you were going.

Interviewer: So the army was worried about spies?

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: Ok. So the war was still going on at this time?

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh.

Interviewer: Alright. So there was a threat there is what you are saying?

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: Ok. So um— where were you posted in Europe? Where did you work?

Edwards: In Bremerhaven which was a port city and in Frankfurt a while and in I was worked in Le Havre and for awhile when a shipment was coming in and that was in Le Havre. But in Bremerhaven — that was permanent winter uniform and Frankfurt too. But when we went to somebody some other one well — what was that one?

Interviewer: Take a look at this photo. It says processing new arrivals.

Edwards: Yeah we — was meeting in this bus it come in with these people and that's me. Processing new arrivals.

Interviewer: And that was in Germany.

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And what did it mean to process new arrivals?

Edwards: Well you see they are all in civilian clothes. And I'm the only one in uniform and you assign them uniforms and they have to fill out papers that you know where they lived, where they are born, whether they are qualified — but you meet the busses when they come in. And that's me.

(55:22) Interviewer: So would they be coming from other places in Europe?

Edwards: No. They'd just be coming from — they'd enlist in the States.

Interviewer: Ok and they'd be coming over from there the United States.

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Ok and you'd get them in uniform as they arrive in Germany.

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok so were you doing the same work there as you did in Le Havre, France?

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh.

Interviewer: Ok so there are soldiers coming in through Bremerhaven, Germany through Le Havre, France.

Edwards: [nods] They was coming in from those places but not at the same time.

Interviewer: Ok so let's take a look at this photo it looks like you are in an office space.

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: What are you doing there?

Edwards: I'm processing people who come in and uh top secret. And if you notice you don't see nothing with the print showing. When somebody even though he was in uniform and he's first sergeant. We didn't know what he was doing you know what his job was or anything. And we would just turn our papers over in — when was talking to somebody. So nobody could — read their papers. And —

Interviewer: Where was this?

Edwards: This was in Frankfurt I think. I just thought it was — cause I was in France and Germany in the army. And this is Ada Tucker here and I forgot her name and that's Ada Tucker we was real good friends. And he come in and you can see the papers was turned upside down on the desk [undecipherable 57:17] even though he walked in there — he was first sergeant.

Interviewer: And he's an African American.

Edwards: [nods] He — He's the First Sergeant African American.

Interviewer: So you had any interactions with Black soldiers?

Edwards: [nods] Yeah. Yeah in the army there is no difference.

Interviewer: Ok and you remember the name of these other people?

Edwards: Yeah. Ada Tucker and Ethan Cartwright.

Interviewer: Ok so when you were posted in Germany did you see destruction?

Edwards: Oh yes it was bad. You can walk across the street and it would be two- or three-story building and part of it would be gone. You would see inside where the wall had been and I guess — something had just tore the building up. And they was some people, older people who hadn't been down on the street for several years. The staircase was — just bombed out. And the people would get up there somehow some way and their friends but they was old and they didn't take the chance of trying to come down. And they'd stayed up in the third floor for years I guess.

Interviewer: Because they were trapped?

Edwards: They couldn't — they was afraid to come down. The stairwell wasn't safe.

Interviewer: What about the German people? How did they react to the American soldiers?

Edwards: Well some of them were real nice and others — weren't so nice. So you just reacted the way they did to you. If they was friendly to you was to them. And if they was sarcastic you could be sarcastic right back.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your — the place you stayed in — the living condition is Le Havre?

Edwards: It was a tent. And the beds was I don't know if you've ever seen them or not. They are like a wood frame that they fold up and they have a barracks bag — of material — a coarse green stuff. And there — in the end of the — two ends they are crossed like this at both ends. And this part in here is that green stuff like a barracks bag and that's where you sleep.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Edwards: And you can just fold them up.

(1:00:15) Interviewer: Were you always in a tent or did you have nicer places to stay?

Edwards: No. We was in barracks for a while that the Germans used. And they wouldn't use them anymore and we used them. And — then we was in tents too. Just according to where we were at what — we lived in.

Interviewer: Did you ever uh see or meet General George Patton?

Edwards: [nods] Yeah.

Interviewer: Tell me about that.

Edwards: Oh he was a real nice guy. He was real friendly. And he respected the military. You could tell that right off. If you didn't have on a uniform. He didn't have no use for you. It was real plain.

Interviewer: Did you uh know his personal driver?

Edwards: Jones. [nods] I sure did I dated him. [laughs]

Interviewer: [laughs] Tell me how you met him.

Edwards: By — at my office. When — General Patton had an office within the same building I was in. And that's where I met him. In the building I was in the day room waiting for the orders for where the General wanted to go and that's where I met him at.

Interviewer: How long did y'all date?

Edwards: Oh two or three years.

Interviewer: Uh now am I correct in asking did he propose to you?

Edwards: [nods] Yeah [shakes head] I wasn't ready to get married.

Interviewer: So for that long a time you dated the personal driver of General Patton.

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: So you got to see Patton on what I would think many occasions.

Edwards: [nods] Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Ok.

Edwards: And he — always called me Sarge. [laughs] I don't know where he knew my name or not but he always called me Sarge. [laughs]

Interviewer: So you had good interactions with him?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: You know a lot of people say he was — kinda tough.

Edwards: Oh well I guess he was when he needed to be but he wasn't with me.

Interviewer: Do you remember ever seeing any uh prisoners of war?

Edwards: Oh yeah —well at Fort Oglethorpe they had the place where they had prisoners. And they had a fence you know a metal fence up high — where they kept them. And uh I was never inside of one of the buildings but you could see them you know. And too I have took stuff out of the mess hall in my hand [laughs] and when I passed by I would give it to some prisoner pressed up against the wall. [laughs]

Interviewer: Why did you do that?

Edwards: Because I felt sorry for them.

Interviewer: Did you talk to them?

Edwards: Well I'd say a few words but you weren't allowed to stand there and talk to them.

Interviewer: Did any of them present any gifts to you.

Edwards: [shakes head]

Interviewer: A bracelet?

Edwards: No — not a prisoner.

Interviewer: So uh can you tell me do you remember the end of the war?

Edwards: [shakes head] I sure don't.

Interviewer: You don't remember any celebrations?

Edwards: [shakes head] I don't even remember where I was at when they ended the war. Whether I was overseas or in the States.

Interviewer: Ok so uh — lets see —why did you return to the States?

Edwards: It was time for me to reenlist or get out of the army.

Interviewer: Lets talk a little bit about these photos.

Edwards: This is Edith Cartwright and I can't even remember that other girl. Cartwright and Cedarburg. That's — that's Edith Cartwright and that's Anne Cedarburg and that's me.

Interviewer: And where are you?

Edwards: In Belgium. Brussels, Belgium.

Interviewer: Were you traveling?

Edwards: Well we were probably there on leave.

(1:05:41) Interviewer: Did you go a lot of places on leave?

Edwards: Quite a few. When I had leave coming I always went to a different place.

Interviewer: So did you — that was your opportunity to travel?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: What was your favorite country?

Edwards: Um France, I guess.

Interviewer: Here's another photo. What do you see here?

Edwards: That's when I got the uniform, I guess.

Interviewer: Is that a postcard?

Edwards: Yeah, it looks like it. Yeah — that was when I first got the uniform.

Interviewer: Ok so you returned to the United States. Ok. And uh then you went to Japan. And how did that come about?

Edwards: Well, I married a Sergeant and he was shipped to Japan and I went over there as a dependent.

Interviewer: So, you were not assigned to go to Japan you went over there as a dependent of your husband.

Edwards: Right. [nods]

Interviewer: Where did you meet him?

Edwards: I met him in the States. He was from Columbus, Georgia and I met him in the States.

Interviewer: How did you meet him?

Edwards: I don't remember. It was just so long ago that I — because I was living with a family that knew his family and I just —met him that's all I can tell you.

Walt: [undecipherable 1:07:14]

Interviewer: Go ahead.

Walt: Ok she's getting confused about that. She actually met him when she was travelling to Japan. She was assigned to go to Japan. And I think they met in San Francisco and traveled back to the ship to go to Japan and they were both stationed. She was in Yokohama. He was in Tokyo. And they dated and eventually got married in Japan. So she wasn't married to him when she went to Japan she met him on the way.

Interviewer: Ok so — uh Walt is saying you met your husband in San Francisco.

Edwards: Probably. [nods]

Interviewer: Ok. [laughs]

Edwards: [laughs] It was long ago.

Interviewer: And you were assigned to go to Japan in the army.

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh — yeah.

Interviewer: Uh did you want to go?

Edwards: [nods] I wanted to go anyplace that they'd send me that I hadn't been.

Interviewer: Ok. And uh — oh — nice picture!

Edwards: Oh. That's him.

Interviewer: And where was that?

Edwards: It was here in the States somewhere. In Japan? In a ship Linda says I forgot.

Interviewer: Ok so — that was on the ship? Ok — so um — you met him en route on the way to Japan. And you were going to be stationed in Yokohama?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: And uh what were you going to do in Yokohama? What were your duties there?

Edwards: I was WAC.

Interviewer: Ok —did you do office work?

Edwards: Oh yeah. [nods]

Interviewer: Ok and — where was he stationed?

Edwards: Tokyo.

Interviewer: Ok and how often would you get to see him?

Edwards: Oh it was according to how much work you had to do after — uh duty hours. And mostly — two or three times a week not even counting a weekend.

Interviewer: What did you like about him?

Edwards: Everything. [laughs] He was just a nice guy and — I don't know —

Interviewer: What was his name?

Edwards: Charlie Edwards.

Interviewer: Ok and — in Japan what kind of place did you stay in? What were your sleep living arrangements?

Edwards: It was mostly uh they was made out of plywood — buildings. And they had like a stove in the middle of the building and they was cots up each side. And I think there was twelve cots —there was one you know it had a square building and was built with sand and the stove didn't have any legs it just sit down in that sand. And it'll be in the middle of the building. That's the heat you had.

(1:10:29) Interviewer: What kind of food did you eat?

Edwards: Mostly rations.

Interviewer: And how would that be served to you?

Edwards: Just give you a box of rations.

Interviewer: What was in it?

Edwards: They was — a can a little can of cheese sometimes they was — meat of some kind and crackers and that's about it. And instant coffee there'd be

some instant coffee. But coffee you'd never had coffee till you drink it out of a tin cup —ration cup.

Interviewer: Was it good or bad?

Edwards: Bad. [laughs]

Interviewer: And uh did you have any interactions with the Japanese people?

Edwards: All of them that I met was nice.

Interviewer: How did they treat you?

Edwards: [nods] Good. They'd never acted like they resented us at all.

Interviewer: Ok so could you tell me about this picture? It says WAC parade in Tokyo.

Edwards: Yeah — we had parades there and — this is us in the summer uniform.

Interviewer: Why did you have parades there?

Edwards: That's that's just the army. The army is going to parade you regardless of where you're at.

Interviewer: Ok. [laughs] And then it looks like you a what they call a bookend in this photo. What does that mean?

Edwards: There — can be made into a picture and there put on something like wood or metal or something and you stand them up like a —

Walt: Can I interrupt?

Interviewer: Sure.

Walt: Um her and another WAC were about the same size and build and they also had a couple of men that were about the same size and build they would put the on each end of the parade stands. That's what I meant by bookend. There's another WAC on the other side.

Interviewer: So there's a general there on the platform.

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And they've chosen some soldiers including you to stand on either side.

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And it was referred to as a bookend.

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Do you remember that day?

Edwards: Oh yeah we was always having parades. And they always pick somebody that was about the same size.

Interviewer: Ok.

Edwards: And this girl here and me were about the same size.

Interviewer: What was her name?

Edwards: I don't remember. It's been so many years ago. We wasn't friends we were just in the same company.

Interviewer: Ok so — tell me about um — did you ever come up for a promotion in Japan?

Edwards: [shakes head]

Interviewer: That you gave up to a male soldier.

Edwards: Oh I — before I made master I did. And this guy I knew had a family and — but they— they didn't do it — but I offered for him to get the promotion and I wouldn't but they didn't to it that way. They said you earned your promotion.

Interviewer: So they gave it to you.

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: Ok — so um — when did you get married?

Edwards: [laughs]

Interviewer: Did you get married in uh — Japan?

Edwards: Yeah I guess I did. In Yokohama?

Interviewer: Yes. This is your certificate of marriage. It says you were in Yokohama.

Edwards: Yeah that's where I was stationed.

Interviewer: Who married you? Who performed the wedding?

Edwards: I guess its this guy here [undecipherable 1:14:50]

Interviewer: Do you remember your wedding day?

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you have anybody there other than just yourself and your husband. Did any of your fellow WACS come? Did any of his fellow soldiers come?

Edwards: [shakes head] No.

Interviewer: It was just a very private wedding.

Linda: Her officiant was a commanding officer. He was a preacher.

Edwards: 10th of November 1949.

Interviewer: So — your officiant the person who performed the wedding was your commanding officer?

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: And that because he was a pastor?

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok. And that was in 1949. And you had been in Japan all that time?

Edwards: Yeah [nods]

Interviewer: Ok a couple years. Alright and did you start your family in Japan? Did you have a child in Japan?

Edwards: Yeah that's her. [points] [laughs]

Interviewer: What's her name?

Edwards: Linda. Linda Jean.

Interviewer: Ok now hold up this photo — for the camera. So who's in that photo?

Edwards: My husband, me, and the baby — Linda Jean.

Interviewer: And that was in Yokohama?

Edwards: I think so.

Interviewer: What did it feel like to be starting a family over in Japan?

Edwards: I can't remember when we come back to the — come from Japan? Yeah Oklahoma —

Interviewer: But you were born in?

Linda: I was born in Japan.

Interviewer: So you come back to the States and you went to Oklahoma?

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh. Fort Till.

Interviewer: Ok — and that's because — your husband was still in the military and you were in the military?

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh.

Interviewer: But uh —do you remember when you were discharged?

Edwards: [shakes head]

Interviewer: Ok.

Linda: She was discharged when she got married.

Interviewer: Ok so — your daughter Linda said at that time you had to get discharged when you got married. So you were discharged in Japan?

Edwards: [nods] Uh huh.

Interviewer: Ok so from then on you were uh moving with your husband as he was moved from place to place.

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: Did you work at any time after that?

Edwards: [shakes head] Uh uh.

Interviewer: So did you work in the home?

Edwards: Oh in the home but — other than to have a paying job I didn't have.

Interviewer: How many children did you have?

Edwards: Three.

Interviewer: And what are their names?

Edwards: Linda Jean, Michael Charles, and Walter Jean.

(1:18:03) Interviewer: Ok and um did you live on military bases?

Edwards: Part time — and then we lived in the closest town. We was in Oklahoma we lived on a base. They had — just two or three houses on a — in Oklahoma. And — but usually the army base has quite a few— houses. But in Oklahoma they didn't have.

Linda: [undecipherable 1:18:37]

Edwards: Pardon?

Linda: It was a game reserve in Oklahoma with deer and chickens and everything.

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: A game reserve? And that was in Oklahoma?

Edwards: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And your husband oversaw that game reserve?

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: What branch of service was he in?

Edwards: I can't —

Interviewer: He was also in the army.

Edwards: What was he Linda?

Linda: He was in the army.

Edwards: I know he was army. But — he was first Sergeant of the Company.

Interviewer: So did he spend his career in the army?

Edwards: He was — in the army for many years.

Walt: Thirty years.

Interviewer: Thirty years?

Linda: Thirty-two.

Walt: Thirty-two.

Interviewer: Alright, so you retired in Columbus?

Edwards: I — I think so yeah best I can remember.

Walt: She's getting tired.

[break in interview]

Interviewer: Ok this is James Newberry and I'm still here. Um — so we are going to start back in Japan. So I just want you to tell me a little bit — so you got married in 1949.

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: And when you got married uh you were discharged. And that's because at that time if you had children and you were in the army you couldn't remain in the army.

Edwards: That's right.

Interviewer: Ok. So — were you still posted in Yokohama in this time?

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: Or Tokyo?

Edwards: In Yokohama. That's where I was at Yokohama and my husband was in stationed in Tokyo.

Interviewer: Ok. Did you move to Tokyo after you married him?

(1:20:35) Edwards: I moved there and I got out of the army and got married and I lived in Tokyo.

Interviewer: Ok and did you have a maid in the house?

Edwards: Well I could have had but — the maid that you had there is so different to what you were used to. To me it was better to not have one.

Interviewer: Did you cook your own meals?

Edwards: Yeah. [nods]

Interviewer: And were you still getting the the C- rations from the army?

Edwards: [shakes head] After your married you— you have your own home. You don't get them.

Interviewer: And where did you get your food?

Edwards: They had — a commissaire. It wasn't a big one but you had — you could buy stuff there and you could also buy from Japanese. And that's where the fresh vegetables usually come from.

Interviewer: And uh you had one child Linda. Did you have a second child there?

Edwards: No, I don't think so. Did I? No, I just had Linda.

Interviewer: So your husband was transferred to Germany. But you were pregnant again?

Edwards: Uh huh.

Linda: She went to Oklahoma, got pregnant in Oklahoma, then we went to Germany. He went to Germany.

Interviewer: So um your husband went to Germany but you stayed in the United States because you were pregnant?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: Is that right?

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: And where did you have your baby?

Edwards: In Columbus, Georgia. Or Phoenix City? Yeah that's where Ma and Papa lived my in-laws. Part of them lived in Columbus and part of them lived in Alabama. [laughs]

Interviewer: So this was your husband's parents?

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: And you stayed with them while you were having the baby?

Edwards: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok. So uh did you ever um visit your mother back in West Virginia?

Edwards: Yeah a few times but not many. Is everything seemed to change after my mama married my stepdad.

Interviewer: Right.

Edwards: And it wasn't you know we didn't have any problems, but I didn't care for him.

Interviewer: So did you go to Europe to be with your husband after your child was born.

Edwards: Yeah —

Linda: Germany. Germany.

Edwards: Yeah, Germany.

Interviewer: And where was your husband posted in Germany?

Edwards: I don't remember.

Interviewer: Ok — alright so you have grandchildren?

Edwards: Yeah. How many do I have Linda?

Linda: You have — six.

Interviewer: Six grandchildren. Any great-grandchildren?

Edwards: No, not so. Do I?

Linda: Uh huh.

Edwards: Well who has them?

Linda: Four.

Edwards: Pardon?

Linda: You have four great-grandchildren.

Edwards: Who has them?

Linda: Ashley has two and Sean has two. You have four.

(1:24:18) Interviewer: Six grandchildren, four great-grandchildren. So um I want to ask you Ms. Edwards what does it mean to you to share your World War II experience with me today? Why is that important?

Edwards: Well it just — bring back good memories. It brings back some bad ones. [laughs] But — whatever I know is over — and I don't have to live them again.

Interviewer: Do you feel proud?

Edwards: Well yes — I guess I should. I went into a country that was against us and I made it. And I — hope that I changed some of them because I got along good with them. With some of the people — that we had them was maids, house boys, and different things and I treated them like I should and I think they liked me or at least acted like they did. And — I just didn't — have any hard feelings towards them because I knew they didn't make the decisions. It was like the Americans. Only some people make the bad decisions and everybody had to abide by them. And it was the same way with the Germans.

Interviewer: So both in Germany and Japan you had maids —

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: — and other people who worked for you from that country.

Edwards: Uh huh. [nods]

Interviewer: And that's because — why did they need to work for you?

Edwards: Well they needed work and they was in whatever country they was in. It helped me out too because I had the baby and — too with your first child it's kinda hard. [laughs] And you learn with the first one. [laughs] And

anyway that one of the reasons that I had — they was you know they was good people. They was no part of the war and they just had to go along with what their government said like America did.

Interviewer: So uh did your children learn Japanese and German?

Edwards: They learned a little uh but not a lot.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So Ms. Edwards you were — a part of the first wave of women going into the military.

Edwards: [nods]

Interviewer: And how do you feel about that?

Edwards: Well I was real proud that I was the first and in the first group. And that we won a war. [laughs] I was just real proud of it.

Interviewer: Ok so so lets talk about your husband's retirement from the military. And where did he retire to?

Edwards: In Columbus, Georgia.

Interviewer: Ok so when he retired y'all settled in Columbus?

Edwards: Well we did for awhile but — we didn't stay in Columbus long. We lived in Oklahoma. We lived in Oklahoma longer than any place that we lived.

Interviewer: Ok. Where do you live today?

Edwards: I live in Georgia — right outside of Columbus.

Interviewer: You live in Newnan?

Edwards: No. What is the address Linda?

Linda: It's Newnan. You live in Newnan. You were in Columbus fifty-six years.

Walt: Yeah. After Oklahoma.

Linda: After Oklahoma.

Walt: Fort Benning is right next to Columbus. That's why they retired there.

Interviewer: Right. Alright. Well thank you Ms. Edwards. Is there anything you want to add in the end?

Edwards: No. I can't think of anything. [laughs]

Interviewer: Ok well thank you so much and we will stop there.