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We Nettie Whitley and Beth Heaves
Interviewee (print) Interviewer (print)

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30 Hale Street, Oxford, Ala 36203

on the date(s) of February 17, 1995
for the oral history collection being compiled by Dr. Marshall.

Nettie Whitley
Interviewee's signature

Address 230 Hale Street
Oxford AL 36203
Phone 831-2943

Date 2/17/95

Beth Heaves
Interviewer's signature

Address 1218 Homewood Dr.
Oxford, AL 36203
Phone 831-5525

Date 2/17/95

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: Nettie Christine Carter Whitley M/F Female

Address: 230 Hale Street, Oxford, AL 36203

Phone number(s): (205) 831-2943

Approximate age or date of birth: September 17, 1925

Mother's Name: Essie Carter

Father's Name: Chester Carter

Places lived and when: Born in Clay County, Alabama, lived in Delta, Alabama til an adult

Education: Complete high school and college degree

Religion: Southern Baptist

Business, political and social memberships (past and present) ^{present} member of Oxford City Board of Education, ~~FoAL~~ - Friends of Alabama Library

Present occupation: Retired

Former occupations: Worked in retail, Librarian

Special Skills: ---

Major Accomplishments: ---

National Events in which interviewee has participated: ---

Local Events in which interviewee has participated: ---

National born U.S. citizen? Yes No

Naturalized Citizen: Yes/No Date: ---

Country from which he/she emigrated: ---

Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in the possession of the interviewee: ---

Individuals recommended by the interviewee who might be candidates for an oral history interview: ---

Additional information: ---

Nettie Christine Carter Whitley
interviewed by Beth Reaves
on February 17, 1995
at 230 Hale Street, Oxford, AL 36203
The 1920's and the Depression through World War II and the 1940's

Table of Contents

Tape Heading

Basic Information

Born September 17, 1925, in Clay County
Parents: Essie and Chester Carter
Occupations: Father ran a country store and mother stayed at home
School: Kindergarten - attended Bethel School
Grades 1-9 - Delta, rode bus to school
Occupations: First job - Taylor's Dress Shop on Noble Street
1958 - went to work at Calhoun County Library as librarian
Religion: Attends First Baptist Church in Oxford, AL

The 1920's - A Young Child

Homelife: Lived with parents and one sister
Parents made sure they went to school and church
Effects of the Depression: Lived on farm and had no money
Canned own food and had farm animals
Mother made her first coat and all their clothes
Shared with others
Feeling about Herbert Hoover as President: Family was Democrats and didn't like him
He didn't help them in hard times
Radio: Many gathered at their house to listen to Grand Ole Opry
Movies: Didn't see any in the 1920's

The 1930's - Childhood and Teen Years

Depression Continued: No money or jobs but survived because lived on a farm
Shared home with those without one
Hardest time of their lives

President Franklin Roosevelt: Wonderful - help those who needed help

WPA - built roads

He gave underprivileged jobs

His radio speeches gave them chills

Television: Got one in 1940

World War II: Heard of its beginning while sitting on a hill smoking rabbit tobacco

Monday at school had assembly and heard Roosevelt declare war

One month later - boys left from school to go fight the war

No one from home went to fight

Received letters from friends that were fighting

One of her friends got killed in the war

War brought money to the economy and to her family

War was both good and bad

The 1940's - A Teen and Young Adult

Roosevelt Re-elected: Respected for declaring war

Told what was going on during the war

Brought country out of Depression

Pearl Harbor: Bitter because Japan sneaked in for the attack

Mixed emotions

More war caused more heartaches

Normandy: Heard on the radio that U.S. had landed there

Germans were lined up

End of the War: Atomic bomb - very secret, after dropped she was worried about its

damage, innocent were killed

Truman said it needed to be done

Celebrated the end on Noble Street

Wanted to Join War Efforts in High School: Father would not sign for her

Penicillin: Sister had pneumonia and it saved her life

Back to Her High School Days: Attended Lineville High School

Home Economics class - had to make dress and model it

Participated in basketball and drama

Senior year - met her husband Swope Whitley

After High School: Went to school to become a librarian

Schools attended - Business school in Tallahassee, Florida

University of Alabama

Auburn University in Montgomery

High School Days Again: Wanted to be majorette

School didn't have a band because all the boys were fighting the war

What She's Doing Today: Retired librarian

Takes care of sick husband

Active in the community - member of the Oxford City School Board

**Member of Friend of Alabama Library (FOAL) - lobby for money for
libraries**

Oral History Interview Analysis

Beth Reaves

Dr. Marshall

American History 202

13 April 1995

Oral History Interview Analysis

For this oral history interview, I interviewed Nettie Christine Carter Whitley. She was born on September 17, 1925, in Clay County, Alabama. Being born in the 1920's, Mrs. Whitley and her family lived through one of the hardest times in the United States, the Depression. She told her life story of growing up during this hard time. She also lived through World War II and recalled some events of the war. Finally, Mrs. Whitley remembered Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States and his serving four terms.

Mrs. Whitley was only a small child in 1929 when the Stock Market crashed, but she recalled many events that followed the crash leading to the Depression. She was living with her father and mother, Chester and Essie Carter. Her father ran a general store in Clay County and her mother tended to the house and Mrs. Whitley and her sister. Mrs. Whitley lived with her family on a farm so they always had enough food to survive even though they had no money during these hard times. They grew vegetables during the summer and canned some of them for the winter months when it was too cold to have a garden; they also had farm animals to supply their meat. Mrs. Whitley remembered that her mother made all of her clothes and the first coat she had was made from one of her uncle's old navy jackets, thus recycling material because they did not have the money to buy it. Mrs. Whitley and her family shared everything they had with those that were less fortunate. They even opened their home to those that were without during

these hard times.

Herbert Hoover was elected President in 1928 and was guiding the nation during the Stock Market crash and the Depression. Hoover cannot really be blamed for these events that ruined the nation because the United States had been building up to a crash for a long time. Mrs. Whitley and her family felt that it was his fault though and greatly disliked him. They felt the Hoover "did not do for us what we thought he should do because we needed help desperately. Hoover was reluctant to interfere with the American economy and he called the depression "a temporary halt in the prosperity of a great people. So her family welcomed the defeat of Hoover by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932.

Roosevelt became President on March 4, 1933, and ^{years, nearly} three weeks before his inauguration a banking panic began. On March 6, Roosevelt's third day in office, he declared a national bank holiday and closed all the banks until the Department of Treasury could audit them. By doing this, Roosevelt restored the confidence of Americans in their banking system. He also devised three New Deals to help reform the American economy. These New Deals provided people with jobs, food, and health care. The people that worked these jobs helped the nation because most of the jobs were on public projects. For example, Mrs. Whitley recalled the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of Roosevelt's programs, helped build the roads up to Cheaha Mountain and helped the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in making Cheaha into the nice park

it is today. Mrs. Whitley and her family declared Roosevelt a wonderful President because he "helped the people who needed it."

During the Great Depression, Mrs. Whitley attended kindergarten at Bethel school and grades one through nine at Delta. She went on to attend Lineville High School in the late 1930's. She enjoyed high school were she participate in basketball, drama, and home economics. During Mrs. Whitley's high school years, the United States became involved in World War II. The war began on September 1, 1939, when German troops invaded Poland. The United States became involved on December 11, 1941, when Germany and Italy declared war on the United States and the United States in turn declared war on Germany and Italy. Mrs. Whitley remembered where she was when she heard that the United States had been brought into the war. She was sitting on the top of a hill with some of her girlfriends smoking rabbit tobacco when someone came and told them the news. This news did not affect Mrs. Whitley and her friends until the next day when they went to school. The whole school was called into an assembly and they heard President Roosevelt officially declare that the United States was going to war. This really upset the students and they left the assembly crying. The real effect of the war came about a month later when "a lot of the boys (at school) volunteered" to go fight.

Mrs. Whitley was grateful that no one in her family got the call to fight, but she recalled one of her friends got killed. There were two brothers, who were twins, that attended school with

Mrs. Whitley. They were both fighting in the war. One of the brothers was killed "because of the shock of the shells that was falling" and the other brother dragged his body to safety so it would not be tortured any more. This was just one of the many tragedies that happened during World War II.

Some major events that Mrs. Whitley recollected of World War II. She was "very bitter" about the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, because Japan "sneaked" in for the attack on the United States. She heard on the radio when the United States landed in Normandy, France, on June 9, 1944. The voice on the radio said that the German troops were lined up on the shore to attack the Allies when they landed. Toward the end of the war, word got out about the atomic bomb. The bomb had been kept very secret, therefore no one knew the true extent of what its damage could be. Mrs. Whitley became worried when the bomb was finally dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, and then again on Nagasaki, Japan, on August 9, 1945. She knew that many innocent lives had been lost and that the damage was extensive, and she felt sorry for the innocent victims.

World War II finally ended on September 2, 1945, when Japan signed the surrender agreement and V-J (Victory Over Japan) Day was declared by now President Harry S. Truman. Mrs. Whitley recalled the celebrations that took place when the war was finally ended. She remembered people celebrating and dancing in the streets on Noble Street, in downtown Anniston,

Alabama.

Some good did come out of World War II. The war cause the United States to have to produce supplies to fight the war. Therefore, many people were hired to produce these supplies that the soldiers need in their fighting. All these jobs gave a boost to the economy because people now had money to buy more things. Mrs. Whitley's family felt the boost of the economy and had money to spend for the first time since the beginning of the Great Depression. This was the one good things about the war, but overall the war was bad because so many Americans lost their lives in defending their country.

Some people wonder how Roosevelt could be re-elected after he declared the United States to war. Mrs. Whitley respected him for declaring war because it was something he had to do because war had already been declared on America. She also respected him because he told the American people what was going on during the war. She recalls the speeches that Roosevelt gave sent "cold chills" throughout her body because he was such a powerful speaker. Finally, she felt Roosevelt was re-elected because he brought the United States out the depression that had hurt so many people. These were the reasons Roosevelt was re-elected after World War II.

Mrs. Whitley, along with her family, survived the hard times of the Great Depression and the trying times of World War II. She married her husband, Swope Whitley, before the war. After the war, she went on to attend the University of Alabama and Auburn University in

Montgomery, Alabama, and became a certified librarian. She retired from the Calhoun County Library and is now very active in her community. She attends First Baptist Church of Oxford, is a member of the Oxford City Board of Education, and is a member of the Friends of Alabama Library (FOAL) that lobbies for money for libraries. She is now enjoying her peaceful life despite all the hardships she had to face as a child and young adult.

Excellent
Well-written
A

Beth Reaves

TT 11:00

Questions for Interview

- I. **Tapc Heading**
- II. **Basic Information**
 - A. When and where were you born?
 - B. Who were your parents and what were their occupations?
 - C. Where and what years did you attend school?
 - D. What is your past occupation(s) and what do you do now?
 - E. What is your religious affiliation and what church do you attend?
- III. **The 1920's - A Young Child**
 - A. Tell me about your homelife as a child.
 - B. What was the effect of the Depression on your family?
 - C. How did you or your family feel about President Herbert Hoover?
 - D. Did your family have a radio or see any movies?
- IV. **The 1930's - The Child and Teen Years**
 - A. Did the depression continue during the 1930's? If so, what was the effect?
 - B. Tell me about Roosevelt and his two terms as President during the 1930's.
 - C. In 1939, the first TV broadcast came out. Did your family have a TV then?
 - D. World War II began during this time. What do you recall about its beginning?
- V. **The 1940's - A Teen and Young Adult**
 - A. During the 1940's, Roosevelt was reelected for two more terms, one during the war. How did he get re-elected.
 - B. How did you feel about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and Japan and Germany declaring war on the United States? What do you recall about the invasion of Normandy? Tell me about the end of the war and the atomic bomb being dropped on Japan.
 - C. Penicillin came about in the early 1940's. What do you recall about this important drug?
 - D. Where did you attend high school and what did you do there?
 - E. How is life with your husband, Swope?