

Gift and Release Agreement

PHEBE F. BIRKHIMER
and DOW J. BIRKHIMER
We _____ and Heather McFall
Interviewee (print) Interviewer (print)

do hereby give and grant to Dr. Suzanne Marshall, Assistant Professor of History, Jacksonville State University, all literary and property rights, title, and interest which we may possess to the audio or video recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) conducted at

Mr. + Mrs. Dow Birkhimer's home

on the date(s) of February 21, 1995

for the oral history collection being compiled by Dr. Marshall.

Phoebe F. Birkhimer
Dow J. Birkhimer
Interviewee's signature

Address 6940 N. 5607 LAKE ROAD Date 21 Feb 1995
JACKSONVILLE AL 36265
Phone 205 435 5749

Heather McFall
Interviewer's signature

Date 2-21-95

Address 5189 Pleasant Valley Rd.
Jacksonville, AL 36265
Phone 435 - 3938

~~Interviewee's signature~~

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: Dow S. Birkhimer M/F Male
Address: 6940 Nisbet Lake Rd. Jville, AL 36265
Phone number(s): 435 - 5749
Approximate age or date of birth: 8-2-17
Mother's Name: EMD Emma Mable Dean Birkhimer
Father's Name: EMB Edwin Martin Birkhimer
Places lived and when: IL, PA, OK, CO, KS, KY, NC, IN, AL, Australia, New Guenia, Biak Is., Philippines, Is, Japan & Germany.
Education: Graduate of Univ. of Illinois
Religion: Protestant
Business, political and social memberships (past and present): Elder in the Presbyterian Church, Deacon in the Baptist church
Life member of DAV
Present occupation: Disabled
Former occupations: Student, Retired Army Officer
Special Skills: Equestrienne
Major Accomplishments: 4 years and 3 months combat duty in WWII & The Korean War--earned (11) battle stars.
National Events in which interviewee has participated: Born again Christian, Marriage, U S National AAUW wrestling Univ. of IL
Local Events in which interviewee has participated: School Church flood control, Vol. fire Department
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: My sweet wife, Pnèbe E. Birkhimer
Additional information: _____

Contents

Dow J. Birkhimer and Phebe F. Birkhimer
by Heather McFall
on February 21, 1995
at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Birkhimer
about their lives during WWII and The Korean War

Tells parents names and how all worked hard
1920 sister died of flu
After this death the family moved
St. Francis attend elementary school
University of Illinois is where attended high school
Met wife there at PTA meeting
Lived on farm
22 years old graduated from University
Worked at ROTC; got .25 a day at same time was in National Guard and got .25 every time went to drill.
Worked 3 hours everyday as a janitor for .35 an hour
Took part in two major sports and maintained a B average.
Help dad on farm after high school
When senior coach tried to get him not to graduate in 1942
P.M.S. & T gonna send him to Artillery school in Oklahoma
"More schooling you get, better off you are"
In Horse Calvary and Horse Artillery
Graduated from Artillery School
Went to Fort Louis, Washington in 'Mule Pack'
Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor
Col. Rufner said "Had men who'd never seen mules, mules who'd never seen men and officers who'd never seen either one."
Guarded Olympic Peninsula; Huge Sunday Pearl Harbor was bombed he was home
Guard McCord Field in Seattle, Washington.
Had reports Japanese had come ashore

Life like?
Rough at time of bombing Pearl Harbor
Get up 3:00 in morning
5 minutes late got up 5 minutes earlier next morning; 5 minutes early got to sleep 5 minutes later
Muddy, wet, and cold
Barracks - long building with bunk beds or cots.
Good food
\$21.00 a month
Got PX check if ran out of money
Hard life

Common cause was protecting U.S.
Story about a mule
Rank?
Private-Lieut. Colonel

Battles?
In mule pack outfit

Colorado Springs - trained there about a year
Then were shipped to Newport, Virginia and then were taken east a while west a while then to Australia in 1942. Early in war fought from New Guinea up to Japan.
Stanley Mountains
Not fun and not easy
Got Battle Stars
Atomic Bomb - Harry Truman had guts to drop it cause many people are alive today because of it.
Heard the bomb dropped by air force takes a team
Howitzer - a short barreled cannon for firing shells at an elevated angle. 105mm (.5 inches)
Took about 2 ½ minutes to load it
Philippine Islands - in Manila Bay practicing amphibious landing and had been doing it for three years. So they knew what they were doing.
This is what they were doing when President said to drop the atomic bomb; good thing he did cause it was estimated one million men would be lost.
After Japanese surrendered he sailed up to Hiroshima.

END SIDE 1

Why decide to join?
In ROTC met a Sargent who said war was coming
Inducted for one year
In service (army) for 20 years or so
Matter of making money
Saw General McArthur; he commanded Southwest Pacific which was area of operation during war.
Stunned when Pearl Harbor was bombed
Thought we were doing all we could to stay out of war.
Great Britain we helped cause they were like our mama and daddy
Fighting Japan never crossed my mind
On D-Day was somewhere fighting Japanese in South Pacific
When bomb was dropped he was practicing amphibious landings.
Japanese press didn't tell the truth the U.S. knew about Pearl Harbor
We didn't know how many atomic weapons we have
Dropped bomb and said is that enough? No; so dropped another.

We were sent up to Japan for a diversion, but we didn't know that.
Differences in schools
1 teacher taught 8 grades
Asked questions about studies
Speak and Hear at same time you retain better.
When graduated from grade school could go to high school then ready for College.
Dad made cross ties
Went 3/4 years to school the last year 7 days
Knowledge
Buy books from friends in higher grades
Splice a rope by looking it up in dictionary

Mrs. Birkhimer

Wabash County, Illinois
January 14, 1917
Since been married - Colorado Springs (3 different addresses); Oklahoma; Kentucky; Germany
(3 years); Munich; Ausberg; Fort Bragg, North Carolina
Had to find a place to live
Lived in an old storage building rented from two maiden ladies
Telephone
Had no refrigerator but had ice box
Couch pulled out to make bed and one leg was broken so had to use a coke bottle to keep it up.
Husband had health problems when got back from WWII.
He was in hospital
Across from there home was the colored area.
Streets built with dips in them
Streets flooded and car drowned out in Fort Raleigh
He had MP's out looking for her cause she wasn't home
Married 6 years before had children then had 2.
Called from Alaska and was going to Korea
Jim (son) fell and cut his head
Washed diapers in bathroom

END SIDE 2
BEGIN TAPE 2

Many busloads going off to war and she and her 2 sons were only ones to wave goodbye to them
all.
Harsh lady at hotel didn't want children in her hotel.
Told the lady she was hopeless
Barbara came and asked if she could rent a room there.
4 children dead and 4 living

Went to California after 3 months to live with son that was a priest.
WWII gone 3 years without seeing or speaking to each other (Mr. and Mrs. Birkhimer)
Mail - take a picture of it
Air mail - laid somewhere a week or 2 get a dozen or 14 at a time
Where gonna live - "little decision" (Made by Mrs. Birkhimer)
There was a school house in the backyard
Only man ever wanted to marry.
If don't know the sorrow of separation, can't know the joy of being reunited
Separated a lot; but she went everywhere she could go.
Camp Hale - sent there for some reason maybe that I was smarter than others.
Cabin there: 40 below 0. Took Mrs. Birkhimer with him.
Smoke stack stopped up
30 below inside the cabin
Running water - he'd run by the river every morning and get a bucket of water
Freezer - Raise the window and sit stuff outside
Gone 1 ½ years in Korean War
Had many opportunities cause of school
While married in army lived in 23 places
Indiana and Alabama - best for last
Next move is heaven, but they moved to Alabama and someone said they'd heard Alabama
called a lot of things but never heaven.

Proposal

Heather McFall
History 202 MWF 11:15-12:15

Dow J. Birkhimer
6940 Nisbet Lake Road
Jacksonville, AL 36265

Born: Wabash County, Illinois
August 2, 1917

Time and Place of Interview: January 25 at the home of Mr. Birkhimer

Mr. Birkhimer was in the army for 20 years. He was in World War II and the Korean War. In World War II he served in the Southwest Pacific for three years. In the Korean War he served 15 months combat.

I will read the chapters in my book about World War II and the Korean War. I will need to go to the library and look up information on the ways people lived during my interviewer's life.

I also may talk with his wife about how her life was when they had to move around from place to place during Mr. Birkhimer's years in the service.

*1
a separate
interview?
sounds good -
still need a
legal release form, etc
too. you can Xerox*

*X see
add'l questions
→*

+

Questions

1. What was your life like as a child?
 2. Why did you decide to join the service? *Why the army?*
 3. What was your life like in the army?
 4. What was your rank in the army?
 5. How many places did you live in during your service years?
Battles in? Describe, etc
 6. Did you ever meet President Eisenhower or General MacArthur?
 7. Where were you on "D" Day?
 8. Where were you on the day Pearl Harbor was bombed? (Dec. 7, 1941)
 9. What were your feelings when Pearl Harbor was bombed?
 10. *Battles in?*
 11. *Daily life in the wars? { WWII
Korean*
 12. *Where was he when bomb was dropped on Japan?*
" " " " on V-E Day?
V-J Day?
- Keep focused*
Get some good stories
& details