

Department of History and American Studies

University of Mary Washington

Fredericksburg, Virginia

Marge Dickson

Rosie the Riveter and the World War II American Home Front Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by

Michael Corrigan

in 2012



This interview was conducted by a student in an oral history seminar in the Department of History and American Studies at the University of Mary Washington. Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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Interview with: Marge Dickson

Interview and Transcription by: Michael Corrigan

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**Michael Corrigan**

Okay this is Michael Corrigan. I'm here with Marge Dickson. Could you tell me what year you were born?

**00:10 Marge Dickson**

1930

**Michael Corrigan**

What day in 1930?

**Marge Dickson**

January 6, 1930

**Michael Corrigan**

January 6. Okay. And where were you born?

**Marge Dickson**

Philadelphia.

**Michael Corrigan**

Downtown or rural..?

**Marge Dickson**

In my aunt's house.

**Michael Corrigan**

Okay.

**Marge Dickson**

West Philadelphia yeah.

**Michael Corrigan**

And did you grow up there?

**Marge Dickson**

Yeah. We lived in the same house. We lived in one house first but then a couple of little places but then we ended up 25 years in the last house.

**Michael Corrigan**

So you didn't move around a lot?

**Marge Dickson**

In the beginning we did but once we got settled we stayed.

**Michael Corrigan**

Okay. And what was your family like in Philadelphia?

**00:48 Marge Dickson**

Very close family. My father was the youngest of eight kids and they all at that point they all lived in the same neighborhood and my grandmother was going from house to house. My grandfather died two months after my father was born. She worked a lot because she had to. But they were all in the same. And the neighborhood was like that. Everybody, it was an Italian street that we lived on but we were the only ones that weren't Italian. That was a very nice neighborhood and a nice place to grow up in. I lived right across from the church and the school so that was very handy too.

**Michael Corrigan**

Did you meet a lot of people through the church?

**Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah, at that point most everybody went to the Catholic School except for public school ones but it was mostly Catholic school. And that was why they used to say all I had to do was roll down the hill because I was right across the street from the school.

**Michael Corrigan**

And did you have a big family, a lot of brothers and sisters?

**01:51 Marge Dickson**

No no, I had one brother. And after twelve years my mother had another baby. So I have two brothers now. One four years younger than me and the other sixteen years younger than me.

**Michael Corrigan**

So being born in 1930 I don't know if you remember the Depression a lot, could you talk to me a little about the Great Depression?

**Marge Dickson**

Yeah we didn't get it really bad because my father always had a job. But we were not allowed to get this and that. Things were rationed and even in our own house we wouldn't ask for this or that because we knew we wouldn't get it. And everything was, you know, we did have rationing and everything had to be. My mother was a good...she knew how to handle things. My father too they both knew how to handle their money and make it go for what they had.

**Michael Corrigan**

Did your mother stay at home?

**02:50 Marge Dickson**

My mother stayed at home until like I was ... and then she took a job at night. She worked in a restaurant at night. But during the day she was always home. And then she was always there. If she wasn't there my father was there. And they worked together.

**Michael Corrigan**

Your father worked during the Depression?

**03:16 Marge Dickson**

He was a painter but he was more of an interior decorator painter. He worked for a company and he really was, not because he was my father but he was very-- if you needed a color, he could mix any color. And on the side he did a lot of work for his own in the main line of Philadelphia. Off of Sealy Avenue where all the big homes were, he did a lot of on his own work. So he did well. And he started, he left school, he was the youngest of the eight and he left school in the fifth grade and he used to have a... not a paper route but I think he worked at one of those little newsstands and he did that. He was a very self-made person, you know. He worked all from the fifth grade up and then he got into painting. So he really was a hard worker.

**Michael Corrigan**

Alright let's see. Do you remember December 7? The attacks on Pearl Harbor?

**04:26 Marge Dickson**

Yeah we were making curtains. They used to have paper, not paper but curtains that you used to roll them up. We were doing that on the floor the whole family and it's all over the news. That was really traumatic. It's a day you won't forget. In fact I was at Pearl Harbor about ten or fifteen years ago and we were on the Arizona and I said this is what was then. It just brought back a lot of memories of things that- everything changed then. A lot of stuff. But we had the air raids and my father was an air raid

warden and he used to wear hats and walk up and down the street. Everybody had to have their lights out. And then we had, we used to have it was like a junior commander or something where you had to go around and collect newspapers and rags and stuff. And my mother opted to have our basement. They would store it and the guy would come and pick them up. So I remember that, doing that. But then my father was drafted.

### **Michael Corrigan**

When was he drafted, do you remember?

### **05:47 Marge Dickson**

I can tell you exactly. I graduated from school in 44. Around 43 or 44. Because when I graduated from high school, he was a very family man and it really hurt me. He wasn't able to be at the graduation. In fact we didn't even know where he was at that point. And it was very traumatic for me. He was shipped to Great Lakes first in Chicago, right outside of Chicago. Then he was shipped overseas and then for a while we didn't know where he was. And they took him in the Navy but when he went down to the draft board because he had a bad stomach but they said, he came home and he says I didn't pass for the Army but I did for the Navy. So that was very traumatic. And he was the last married man to be drafted in our whole neighborhood. He lucked out. But I can still remember because then we were going down to the train and putting him on the train to go to Great Lakes. I can still visualize that. We all rode down with him to get on. And as I said he was very family—he had never been away from home. It was very traumatic for him you know. But he was Great Lakes and then they shipped him overseas. And he was on a PT boat and the boat was torpedoed. After it was torpedoed he got concussion stomach and they shipped him to St. Alban's hospital in New York and my mother had to go down and identify him. It was really hard on her. The whole thing was hard on her and they didn't give us that much money to live on either so that was really a hard thing. But she went up to St. Alban's and had to identify him when he had the concussion of the stomach. But he hated it so much that when they signed a paper, he signed a paper to get himself out with no pension, no medical things and he was hurting. So my mother was a fighter. She went down to the American Legion. And the American Legion stood by him and they got him back into the hospital. And he had three quarters of his stomach removed. He was there for... and that was another very traumatic time for me too. Going into the hospital and seeing all the wounded guys. It was very, you know sad. And at that point my mother didn't drive. She used to have to get a bus and it was even more fare and it was down in a part of Philadelphia where there was no transportation. She had to walk all that distance and she would go almost every day. It was just hard on her. Hard on him too. He was in there for a month or two months before they figured out what they were going to do. But he ended up, he had problems but I mean it was health. He was able to work again and all. And they did give him a pension, but that's through the American Legion. My mother swore by that American Legion. They fought with her to get what was coming to him. Its almost like today with the Wounded Warriors. They're not giving them like the... I went to a meeting the other day and people are coming but they don't get that much help. So it was like that then too.

**Michael Corrigan**

Do you think your father knew what he was signing?

**09:31 Marge Dickson**

My mother used to say, traumatic things used to come at night after he got out he would start screaming sometimes you know, so probably not. He just wanted to get out. He didn't care, he just wanted to be home with his family so I don't know if it was traumatic to him that he did it or if he just wanted to get out. I think just that is the reason why he just did it and wanted to get out. He wasn't thinking.

**Michael Corrigan**

So when he got drafted how did your family life change?

**Marge Dickson**

It was hard. My mother was up on a ladder painting the house when she saw him. She was really something else. But she got down because she pushed herself too much. But she had to handle everything herself you know. And we didn't have a phone so one of our neighbors was in business and he had a phone because of his business. So if my father called we had to go down to his house to talk to him on the phone. It was connection. There for a while we didn't hear anything. I remember that part it was really bad. And when I said my graduation came and he wasn't there, that was really a hard time for me. As I said I had another brother but he was born after he got back. This was after like twelve years or so. That's what I remember now.

**Michael Corrigan**

Just the whole family dynamic changed when he left?

**11:05 Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah, and one thing I do remember, he came home from boot camp. Nobody else was around but me. And my father wasn't very ? he wasn't the kind to come up and hug, hug everyone. But he came in and just put his arms around me and tears came down his eyes. I can still... that comes back to me when I think of that. It was really a hard time. When he had to go back again, this was after his boot camp and he came home, then he had to go back again. As I said in the whole neighborhood he was the only one that was drafted. I mean we had other people; most of the people were around the same age as they were—my father and mother. It was hard but you know. The only thing that helped was I did have a grandmother that lived not far and she helped a little but my mother had most of it on her shoulders. But she was a very strong woman so she did it you know. And as I said she was out painting one time. [Laughs] I don't take after her.

**Michael Corrigan**

After he got drafted how did you feel about the war? Were you...?

**12:20 Marge Dickson**

It's hard to say because you just had to take things as they came because we had to live with what was going on. We didn't know what was happening or what was – you sort of thought because they had the air raid sirens and you had the whole... and then I had a cousin that was killed. I don't know where he was. He was in the Army somewhere. But he was killed over there. It wasn't a cousin that I saw a lot because they lived in New Jersey and at that point, you would never... you've never seen that far. Mostly everything was in the neighborhood you know. The trolley and the bus but there weren't that many cars around then. If you had a car you didn't go that far. But he was killed and I had other cousins that their husbands to be or their boyfriends were in the service. And then I had another cousin, her husband was killed too during WWII too.

**Michael Corrigan**

Did you think about your father a lot?

**13:17 Marge Dickson**

Yes I was very close to him. Yeah like I was his daughter you know. He was a very quiet man but very deep. He would do anything, very family-oriented. That was another thing that was so bad because he always had his family—and with his father dying right after he was born, he never had a father. Lived with his grandparents and he was very close to his mother. Everybody would grab him. My aunt was very close to him because she practically raised him because my grandmother had to go back to work. She was like a housekeeper so his oldest sister took care of him. He was very into family. Even with our kids, grandfather... because my mother had died early so he was very into our kids. And Christmas that was another thing—he made it home. He never missed a Christmas. The whole year he went in and he was out before Christmas came. And that to him... he used to sell Christmas trees. In Philadelphia you didn't believe that Santa Clause came until after you went to bed. The tree was brought by Santa Claus. He used to go out and sell Christmas trees. He would come in and that time and put. He just was very into his home and, you know both of them were. They got married young. But it was hard on my mother.

**Michael Corrigan**

Was there any community outreach to your family?

**Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah, even the neighbors were all really good. And the church. In fact I just went up for my class reunion for grammar school. These people that I have known since I was six years old—and some of these people I still keep in touch with. But it was a neighborhood because everybody knew everybody

you know the Church and the pastor was very close to my father. He wasn't one of these ones that was very religious and would want to go but him and the pastor were very... he used to go over and paint the school desks for him in the summertime. He wasn't the kind that would do things you know, go over. He would do it but you know he didn't want any praise for doing it. He would just do it. They got along really good together. He was a very peaceful man.

**Michael Corrigan**

Being in an Italian neighborhood was there any anti-war...?

**Marge Dickson**

My mother learned to speak Italian. Oh they were all very good. As I said one always took our phone calls for us. It was only eight houses in the block. In fact I just went up last week for the first time since I got married. We have been married for 57 years. We went up to the Church because I said before I die I want to go in and see and we went up and went to Mass two Sunday's ago at that Church. Our house faced it and you could see it right... but no the Italian people were... we had our house here and here, it just so happened that ours had all the Italian people. Only eight houses on the block.

**Michael Corrigan**

Did you work at all during the war?

**16:47 Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah. No no I didn't. Not at that point. As I said we used to go around and collect stuff and do that and that. My brother did paper routes. We were all joking about that the other day. He had a paper route and he would give me some money if I would help him. I was only in eighth grade. I would've been fourteen. But we did do a lot of junior commando's. Like I said picking up newspapers and other things. But I did, you don't want to go that far... but I did go down when I started working, this is when the war was still going on. I volunteered to go down to Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base and entertain. Yeah we would go down to the dances. From work they had a bus and take us and we would go down and entertain. I guess it was soldiers—Air Force too they had Air Force.

**Michael Corrigan**

How did you get news about the war at home?

**Marge Dickson**

Radio. Yeah we had one of them Philco things that you know, it used to come on that.

**Michael Corrigan**

Did you listen every night?

**Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah, my father was a big one, he always had that. That was one of his things he liked to do. There wasn't that much we got on there. I used to laugh because they had soap operas. My mother used to put that on and his mother used to really like that. That's all you used to get and your news would come in. I still remember Roosevelt coming on and everybody would stop if he was going to come on. I don't think anyone missed listening to that. It was a big, you know. Today they listen but only when they want to hear something you know but this was everybody did it.

**Michael Corrigan**

So did you like FDR because of his fireside chats or his radio appearances?

**19:20 Marge Dickson**

I was still too young to really get, I thought he was... but I think then unlike now you really respected the President regardless of who it was and everybody would listen because he was the President. I know it's not like that today but it was like that then. Who he was, you know. You didn't get what you get now. I think part of the problem now is you get too much information. We didn't get a lot of information, just what you heard on the radio. I don't even know if we even had radios in cars, probably not but that's...

**Michael Corrigan**

Speaking of the rations you mentioned earlier, do you remember any during the war that really affected you or your family the most?

**Marge Dickson**

All I remember was that you didn't get so much meat I don't think. And I remember the butter. We got a little orange pill and you put it in and I can remember at my grandmother's house mixing the thing up and... you weren't allowed to do that much. You had to watch what you spent. Even though we were working, you still had to watch. They had a milk truck that used to come around and we only had little corner stores then, there was no super market. I think you had ration stamps that you had to use. I remember those and you could only get so much. But we only had three of us at that point.

**Michael Corrigan**

What did you do for fun during the war, did you have any hobbies or sports?

**Marge Dickson**

I used to just get involved. The boys in our class had a football team and we would go and watch that. And we had movies at our school/church every Friday night they were like a nickel. I guess just doing things in the neighborhood with your own little group.

**Michael Corrigan**

What kind of movies would they play at the church and the school?

**21:42 Marge Dickson**

They were just regular movies you know. They were not like they are now. They weren't X-rated or all that. Especially with nuns there. I'm trying to think... we had dances, there were school dances. I wasn't old enough but once anybody was over fourteen, every parish had a dance and all like that. In fact my mother and father they met a dance. Years back when they were doing the Charleston they met a dance. I think it was one of the churches in Philadelphia but they did have that. And movies, you used to go to movies. They were like 23 cents or something like that—at the regular movies, other than that other... and a lot of afternoons, Saturday afternoons you would be there all afternoon. They would show this and cartoons...

**Michael Corrigan**

Do you remember news updates during the movies or anything like that?

**Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah it always started like that and then the news reel would come on. Oh yeah, that was a big part of it. That was always the first start of the movie.

**Michael Corrigan**

Did you enjoy those updates?

**Marge Dickson**

I don't know, I think we were too young to really realize you know. We knew what was... we had part of it with my father but still... the whole thing, when you're fourteen it doesn't hit you like you do when you get older.

**Michael Corrigan**

Did your family plant a victory garden?

**23:26 Marge Dickson**

Our houses were funny, there was a row house here and then way on the other side there was another row house and in the middle was a victory garden for everybody. You could plant whatever you wanted in there. And then we had, on the other side we had George the Ice-man. He delivered ice for our refrigerators. So that was there. But the whole thing in the back. We did have hucksters? They used to call them but the victory garden, anybody could use it.

**Michael Corrigan**

Was it was a big community garden?

**Marge Dickson**

Yeah that's the only thing I remember with that. But the other ones would come screaming in "oh we have this and we have that." And we had another one it was George the water-ice man. He would come around and sell water-ice in a little cart. And then we had, what else did we have? That's about all I can remember. Oh and they did have, I guess they did have milk men at a certain time before ... they did have horses that would deliver milk. But we had no supermarkets or anything, just little corner American stores. Then they would have a little neat store or a convenience store where they sold Ice cream and that was it. And we did have trolley cars. They went right by. You could walk up the corner. It was spoiling because you didn't have to have a car. Then they came up with buses and we had buses. All that stuff came on us as it went on. To go to school I just had to cross the street. Then when I went to high school I had to take the trolley and then the subway surface car.

**Michael Corrigan**

So you mentioned your father was drafted either in 1942 or in 1943.

**Marge Dickson**

yeah because I graduated in 44 from grammar school.

**Michael Corrigan**

Then he went into the Navy and was on a PT boat and then was torpedoed. What year was that? Was that right after he got in?

**25:51 Marge Dickson**

It all was in that year because he wasn't in a whole year. He did all this in one year. It was amazing that all that happened in one year. As soon as you get done with your basic training you were off, shipped.

**Michael Corrigan**

Do you remember where he was at? When he got torpedoed?

**Marge Dickson**

In Trinidad wasn't it?

**Jack Dickson**

South Pacific. A Jap sub torpedoed it.

**Michael Corrigan**

And he came home and was in the hospital after that?

**Marge Dickson**

What was the name of the one in South Philly? Naval Hospital. There in South Philadelphia.

**Jack Dickson**

They thought he had amnesia too. That's why she had to go over to New York to find out where he was. He didn't even know who he was.

**26:49 Marge Dickson**

That was very scary. That was very traumatic because she had to go through all these guys that were very, ... and it was hard when we would go visit at the Naval hospital to see all these guys. It makes your heart go out to them. I knew she had to walk to St. Alban's. I think she went by herself too.

**Michael Corrigan**

So when he came home did he stay home for the rest of the war?

**Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah, well he came home but then he would—he was in the Naval hospital for a couple of months but then he was here. He didn't want to go away again. He was a homebody anyway. And he was young when he got married; he was only 19 I guess. And she, she was a year older than he was. They were 19.

**Michael Corrigan**

Do you remember the war coming to a close?

**28:08 Marge Dickson**

Oh very much. As I said we lived across the street from the church. And when it was announced they rang the bells. We had a bell on top of the church and they rang the bell. It was so traumatic and everyone went to church. It was so traumatic I can still remember that as if it were yesterday. Everybody was so happy. I remember one time one of my cousins got married and her husband to be was in the Army and they had to get married during the week because they only had so much time. But I still remember him in his uniform and then he had to leave. But that was a big thing you know. I don't know what year was that? What year was the war over?

**Michael Corrigan**

1945.

**Marge Dickson**

45? So he must have been home by then because, yeah. All I remember is the bells ringing and we all went to church. I don't know what else after that.

**Michael Corrigan**

Do you remember any big celebrations in the neighborhood?

**29:26 Marge Dickson**

Not really. We belonged to the American Legion. I guess everybody was just so relieved that it was over. He was the only one, as I said we were the only ones affected by it. They had kids, some people had kids that were affected and I had cousins that were affected. But people around my father said he was the only one that was affected.

**Michael Corrigan**

Do you have any favorite memories during the war? Or one thing that really stands out to you?

**Marge Dickson**

Just that. When it was over. And I do remember the air raid things. People going out with their hats on and our street was right here and there was a factory down the end of our street. It was a residential area but they had a factory and a church here and a factory here. People used to go up and down. My father before he went in was an air raid warden. But that's basically I think.

**Michael Corrigan**

Were you personally afraid of air raids? Did it bother you too much?

**30:43 Marge Dickson**

You know, I think you just more or less... it came on and you accepted it because you had no other way. I think if that happened today you would be more aware because of the television you can see what's happening overseas. But at that point we weren't aware... I was in a co-op babysitting club when we were married and there was a German girl that was in it and she was explaining how horrible it was over there because it affected them personally in their homes and they had to get out. I mean they had to evacuate her. And we didn't get nothing, in ourselves we were affected by our men going but we were never affected personally. She said it was terrible and you had to hide places. In Germany and I guess a lot of the countries overseas got it. Just I remember her telling us that story, how bad it was.

**Michael Corrigan**

Do you remember seeing any propaganda posters or any songs?

**Marge Dickson**

I do but I don't remember what they were. I know what you're saying but I don't remember exactly what it was but I remember them.

**Michael Corrigan**

What about Hitler and the Nazis, did you have a personal fear?

**32:07 Marge Dickson**

Oh yeah, Hitler you didn't even want to talk about him. And it was him and Mussolini. Mussolini and Hitler but Hitler was the real baddie.

**Jack Dickson**

Tojo too.

**Marge Dickson**

Who?

**Jack Dickson**

Tojo and Hirohito. The Japanese leaders.

**Michael Corrigan**

Was Mussolini a big topic in your neighborhood?

**Marge Dickson**

Oh now I remember. This is crazy. We had a cat and my mother named him Mussolini. I don't know why but we had a Mussolini cat. I have no idea why. But that's funny you brought it up. I wouldn't even have thought about that unless you said that. We didn't have a Hitler one though.

**Jack Dickson**

Didn't they sell war stamps in your grammar school?

**Marge Dickson**

Oh yes war stamps yeah and bonds.

**Jack Dickson**

Yeah but if you couldn't afford bonds you would get little stamps and when you got \$18.75 you would cash it in and get a war bond. That was where the war bond was... \$18.75

**33:10 Marge Dickson**

They didn't have gas rationing, that was before that.

**Jack Dickson**

Yeah they had gas rationing in WWII sure. A,B, and C.

**Marge Dickson**

Did they? Because I remember years later when you had to,

**Jack Dickson**

C went to doctors and people that had to travel for a living. But A, and B that's why everybody car-pooled during the war. Everybody. And I think the A which most people got was like four gallons a week. You couldn't go very far. And gas was cheap, it wasn't the money but if you only had four gallons and cars only got like ten miles to the gallon, you didn't go very far that week.

**Marge Dickson**

And then a lot of people took jobs. You had to get a job that was,

**Jack Dickson**

Well the kids all got jobs.

**Marge Dickson**

I have a friend in Northern Virginia, she was Rosie the Riveter.

**Jack Dickson**

Women, a lot of women. That's the first time. Women all stayed at home until the war. There were very few women that went to work. The women started working in 38, 39 when they started doing lend-lease. Lend-lease was we would make equipment and send it to the Brits and the Russians and to the French before we were in the war—we aided them. But then when the war started, they drafted all the men and they had kids like me, like I said picking tomatoes at Campbell's Soups over in New Jersey in the farms over there. And making boxes which held ammo things for the Navy. Ten cents a box, big deal. But kids did it.

**Marge Dickson**

Well everybody like most women got out of high school met guys who went in the service. Now our kids, I have five sons and none of them were in the service. Well how old are you?

**Michael Corrigan**

I'm twenty-four.

**Marge Dickson**

Well see mine are-- my youngest is forty but none of them served.

**Jack Dickson**

That's when they first started the draft in late I guess 38, 39. The draft started and there went all the young men. Most of them on Pearl Harbor day, thousands. Boy there was lines around the block to sign up for the Army or Navy. But after that they needed more men and they started drafting. Well with that they said we need people to run the factories and that's when they got women. The women went to work. I know at Edward G. Bud's they made tanks. Jeez, two-thirds of the workers were female because there were no guys around. Some that were 4F but everybody else, they weren't here they were off to the service. And that continued in fact until after WWII when I went in the Korean War started, still had to draft again. I was on one of those air craft carriers and I got the notice I was going to be 1A for the Army. I wrote back and said sorry about that, Charlie, I'm already taken. But the draft was a big deal, but that started way before Pearl Harbor. Started about 38 or 39 and I think it was either in Philadelphia or New Jersey where they drafted 15,000 the first month but after that, my god, 25-30 thousand a month were drafted. It was quite something.

**Michael Corrigan**

So your school sold stamps? Just to try to raise money?

**37:16 Marge Dickson**

Well this was the government. I don't even remember how much they were. Do you? I just remember, when he brought that up I had forgotten about that. In a private school they sold everything. We sold pretzels and we sold candy. But everything was... you didn't get. We were satisfied with what we had because we knew there wasn't that much around. Just more or less whatever was there you were thankful for. You wouldn't get anything extra. If you need, you were desperate to have. Unlike today you know. I don't know how they would handle it today.

**Michael Corrigan**

Well this is kind of a weird question I guess to finish up... Is there anything that you experienced during the war that you wish still existed, or you wish could... I guess still be here today?

**Marge Dickson**

Well I think what I just said. We valued things more than today because we didn't know what was going to come. Your values. We could be satisfied with anything. Like I said we weren't really hard up but you still were careful about what you spent. We didn't get all luxurious with things because you didn't know

when it was going to end. Fortunately it ended and we were able to get things together and we were satisfied with everything. We didn't get an overabundance with anything and that's the way it was. And we were so thankful to have my father back and that was more important than the money or anything. We just had a good family life. And he had the same thing too. We were fortunate; both of us had a good family life you know. His mother and father were very—well he lost work too. His father too so. That's all I can say about that.

### **Michael Corrigan**

Is there anything else you would like to add? Anything that people should know about your time during the war?

### **39:55 Marge Dickson**

Just knowing that people were helping you. You know you had family and church people that really stood by and you knew somebody was always there. And you know people were together like that because... well today sometimes you don't know who is next door to you or what. People all rallied around everybody; if they could help you they would do it. Don't you think that was the, values? I think that left with us. You want this and you want that but you're satisfied with what you have. And as I said you never did without but I still had the value. My father wouldn't give us something just because—it had to be something you needed. It gave us good values.

### **Jack Dickson**

Well during the war, a lot of things you couldn't buy because everything went to the war effort. Like refrigerators. You couldn't buy another refrigerator. They turned General Electric or whoever it was that sold refrigerators, turned it to making ammo or something else. Everything was for the war effort. Everything. Commercial goods and then also too as far as mine goes, there were price controls. Everything they told you what you could sell it for. And that was it. There was no talk of going on strike. If you went on strike, my God, the hell if I were the government. I think the railroad tried to go on strike, that was near the end of the war when Truman was in there. And he got highly upset with the railroad for going on strike. He took the railroad over. He said its federalized. He had the G.I.'s were on the rail line for a little bit.

### **Marge Dickson**

Oh they did that on our trolley cars. They took it over. The government took over and we had to get on and there was an Army guy with a bayonet.

### **Jack Dickson**

Yeah but that was something different. That was localized, it was in Philadelphia and it had to do with the blacks first starting to come in their own. Seven black guys wanted to be trolley car conductors and of course they could easily do that but the PTC, Philadelphia Transportaion said no. They didn't hire

blacks. Then all of the sudden there was a lot of uprising and all and they sent the National Guard in and at every trolley stop there were soldiers.

**Marge Dickson**

They rode on the trolley. You got on and there was this guy standing there.

**Jack Dickson**

One guy sitting on the trolley, guy with a rifle and a guy standing at every stop. You're ten and eleven year old kid and you're going "what's this?" Well they didn't want riots so they just sent the Army in and there was no riot or anything. They're liable to bayonet you or something. That ended though and they did that. That's when they first started getting their own and then there was no problem. Then they would hire anybody after that and they did. It settled very quickly and very easily after that. That was the beginning of the blacks coming into their own. They did and they made it. And it stuck.

**Marge Dickson**

I'd say now that seventy-five percent of the drivers of buses are black. Even here I mean.

**Jack Dickson**

They can drive a bus like anybody else, you know, sure why not?

**43:47 Marge Dickson**

You see these buses that go by now and they're like a monstrosity and would you like to be driving one of them in the city? I was in the other day and I thought oh that poor guy. We were up in northern Virginia one day and then we were in Philadelphia and I said both of them, they were like a train.

**Jack Dickson**

Yeah times they were different then.

**Michael Corrigan**

This was in the 1940s?

**Jack Dickson**

1940s yeah, like I said when the war started it went from nothing. People lived a very simple... there were no t.v.'s, there were no computers, there was none of this fast pace. And there were a lot less cars. And Sunday you sat around and you went to Church and after Church you sat around and your mother made dinner and the family sat around the radio and listened to the news.

**Marge Dickson**

And nobody did anything on Sundays. Our big thing, we would have our big dinner at lunch and then our father would take us out for a ride somewhere. That was our big Sunday. Sunday was, in fact, a lot of places up in Pennsylvania weren't open on Sundays and our pastor, the first pastor we had was very stern. Our father was painting his own house and he called the cops on him. "You shouldn't be doing that on Sunday."

**Jack Dickson**

Try that today.

**45:16 Marge Dickson**

But that's the way it was. In fact up in Pennsylvania somewhere, we were going to one of these timeshare things one time and we took... we just had my youngest one at the time and we were going to stay at a hotel- they put us up in a hotel. And we went up there, my youngest son would get halfway there and he would say "I forgot my suitcase." So we finally found a place. And then he went and he had a suit and he had a grey pinstripe suit, he forgot his shoes. All he had was grey sneakers.

**Jack Dickson**

No they were red, red sneakers.

**Marge Dickson**

So my son says to him, dad why don't you go to the place? Oh Sunday...

**Jack Dickson**

I was standing behind you so nobody could see my feet.

**Michael Corrigan**

Well thank you very much.

**Marge Dickson**

And I enjoyed doing it.

**Michael Corrigan**

I'll stop it right here.

**46:32 Jack Dickson**

Just reminisce hun.

[End of tape]