

# Interview with Margaret Carney

**Interviewer: Lee Bailey**

**Transcriber: Lee Bailey**

**Date of Interview: March 8, 1986**

**Location: Mrs. Carney's Home, Waco, TX**

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*Begin Tape 1, Side 1*

**Lee Bailey:** Today's date is March 8, 1986, and I'm in the home of Mrs. Margaret Carney, in Waco, Texas. She's going to be relating some of her experiences during both of the wars, World War I and World War II, and her experiences as she was growing up also. I just wanted to tell you what we're going to do with these tapes after we finish with them. The tapes are going to go into a permanent archive at Southwest Texas University for future reference, and also I would like to put a copy in the Baylor Library for future reference in McClennan County. People wanting to do any kind of research, family research, etcetera, can have access to those tapes. Is that all right with you?

**Margaret Carney:** That's fine.

I was born Maggie Rose Earls, in Marlin, Texas, on October 7, 1911. We didn't live in Marlin very long. We moved over to the little town of Chilton. In those days, there was a little town—a self-sustaining town—about every five miles. My father, in his late twenties, had the grocery store, the tailor shop, and the newspaper [*Chilton Homeland*]. Just at the beginning of World War I, he gave credit to everybody, like everyone else was doing at the time. He was going to have to go bankrupt, but instead on taking bankruptcy he decided to work it out and pay off his debts. He went to Waco, and Mother stayed back in Chilton and ran the grocery store. I was three or four. Daddy came to Waco and was a strikebreaker on the streetcar. He was a motorman, and at the time I thought a strikebreaker sounded wonderful. Actually, he was walking the picket lines and driving the street car. Later on, we came to Waco. Do you have a question?

**Bailey:** I wanted to ask you what the picket lines were in relation to the streetcars.

**Carney:** Just like the picket lines are today. It was World War I, and they were striking for more money. I don't think there was a great deal of labor organization, but they were striking for more money and the streetcars had to go on. Daddy crossed the picket line and drove the streetcars. My first inkling of World War I was when I was three or four years old. Kerosene lamps—there was no electricity in Chilton. We were sitting at a kitchen table, and Daddy and Mother were discussing if the war in Europe would affect us. That is when it did begin affecting us, by bringing on the debt at the grocery store. Yes?

**Bailey:** What do you mean by bringing on the debt at the grocery store?

**Carney:** Well, when the war started, people started charging. When all these stories about the war coming began, people started running out of money for some reason; I'm not sure. They started charging their groceries, and they charged so many groceries that Daddy didn't have any more money. That's when he went broke in the grocery store and either had to take bankruptcy or go work off his debts. That's when he went to Waco.

Mother and I came to Waco in June of 1917. We came on the SAAP railroad, the San Antonio Aransas Pass Railroad. We were quite familiar with it because we used to go down to meet the trains and get on it and ride five miles to Lott, where Aunt Eddy, my mother's sister, used to live. So we got on the train, and I can remember how it looked. It had plush red velvet seats, and there was what they called a "candy butch"—a man with a cap. He came through and sold newspapers and had candy in little glass pistols. Mother got me a glass pistol full of little candies. Daddy couldn't meet us so we got on a street car and came up on Bell's Hill. We weren't sure exactly where our house was, but we saw Mother's flowered comforter in the window and we knew that was our house. We got off there. The soldiers were at Camp MacArthur in Waco. Camp MacArthur was a huge collection of tents. One Sunday, one of our friends who had an open touring car—all cars were touring cars then. There were no sit-ins. He took us out to Camp MacArthur, and we drove up and down between rows and rows and rows of tents. The tents were built up. They had floors and board up to about waist high. The top of them were canvas tents. That was Camp MacArthur. Also, in connection with Camp MacArthur was Rich Field, where the planes were flying. Of course, even during World War II, there was no Air Force. It was the Army Air Corps. The planes were attached to the Army at MacArthur.

**Bailey:** Was this Camp MacArthur an Army base here in Waco? Was it a permanent installation?

**Carney:** It was an Army base in Waco. The soldiers were mostly from—just like World War II—the soldiers were mostly from the North, and many of them stayed in Waco and married Waco girls and became leading citizens of Waco. The soldiers—we had, at that time, the Cotton Palace Fair in the fall. In those days, everybody was suspicious of anything German. People with small children were afraid of spies, and when we'd go to the Cotton Palace or even on the streets of downtown—I was about five or six—the soldiers would try to give me candy, just like any little girl. Mother wouldn't let me accept it because she said it was poisoned and the soldiers might be German spies.

**Bailey:** And she was serious about this?

**Carney:** Very serious. In those days, anyone with a German name was at a disadvantage because their neighbors thought they might be spies. Even in Waco, the high school principal, Mr. Ginheimer—of course, Ginheimer is a German name—the story got out that he was a German spy and he had a wireless [microphone] on top of the Waco high school. Of course, it was entirely false. During this time, your grandmother, Sally Goodman—she was Sally Mae Moore

then—was about nineteen, a very attractive young lady. She and her friends, one at a time, used to come spend the week or the weekend with us, and she dated the soldiers from Camp MacArthur. She had several different beaux from Camp MacArthur. One funny time, we were sitting on the front porch—their uniforms had—they didn't wear boots; they wore leg-ons [also known as puttees]. It was kind of like a tape, and they wrapped this tape around their britches bottoms to make leg-ons, they were called.

**Bailey:** It was kind of like a low-rise shoe with a tape going up the leg?

**Carney:** No, it wasn't attached to a shoe at all. It was just a piece of cloth that they wrapped around the bottom of their uniform and held it close to the leg. Anyway, we were all sitting on the porch eating watermelon—your grandmother included—and the soldiers were Yankees, and they didn't exactly know Southern customs. Mother served watermelon sliced in round pieces on the plate. This one soldier took his in his lap, and unfortunately before he was through, the juice of all the watermelon was on his lap, and his uniform was completely wet on the front. He was most embarrassed. Of course, this was 1917 or '18, and people were embarrassed more easily then. I was a little six-year-old around the corner somewhere, and I remember that quite well.

World War I was a most dramatic time from the viewpoint of a six-year-old. My father also had a sister the same age as your grandmother—about nineteen or twenty—and she dated soldiers too. She had a piano, and they always sang. I was six, and I learned all the songs. I could sing them and maybe pick a little of them out on the piano—organ, we had an organ then, not a piano. Aunt Hassie had a piano, and she was always having soldiers there, and they were always singing.

**Bailey:** Do you still remember some of the songs?

**Carney:** Yeah, like "It's a Long Road to Tipperary," "Over There," and one of the funniest ones—one of the one's I liked—was "Smile Awhile You kiss Me Sad Adieu" [titled "Till We Meet Again"]. I didn't know what kind of kissing "sad adieu" was. It was adieu, meaning you kiss me goodbye—sad goodbye, but nobody said adieu. They said "sadikanoo," and I thought that was a special kind of kissing that was called "sadikanoo kissing." But anyway, I learned all those songs from that time.

We had some privation, I guess. We had to eat whole wheat flour. It was hard to get flour. Now, I don't know about World War I, whether you had to have stamps to get food or not, but that didn't concern me too much. It did concern me to have graham biscuits; I didn't like them. I wanted white bread. We also grew Victory Gardens. We would plant little Victory Gardens for the war effort, and we got a little prize. One of the saddest times of my life was [when] I lost my little prize that I got for having a Victory Garden in World War I.

**Bailey:** What was the significance of the word "victory?"

**Carney:** Everything was for victory—victory of the war, you see. You grow a tomato, and that helps win the war.

**Bailey:** I want to get back a little bit to the songs you said you remembered from World War I. Do you still remember any of the verses?

**Carney:** I remember a few starting off, like (sings) “Smile awhile you kiss me sad adieu, when the clouds roll by I’ll come to you, then the skies will seem more fair, down in Lover’s Lane my dear, wedding bells will ring so cheerily—will be my memory, so smile and pray each night for me, till we meet again.” They’d sing that and cry because they were going overseas.

**Bailey:** You didn’t understand why they were crying, I guess?

**Carney:** No, I didn’t know why they were crying. Oh, yeah, a cute one was, (sings) “K-K-K-Katy, beautiful Katy, I’ll be waiting at the k-k-k-kitchen door.” (Laughs) And then there was, (sings) “Over there, over there, send a word; send a word, over there. For the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming—something else.” Anyway, that’s because all the Yanks were going over to help the Europeans fight the war. And, (sings) “It’s a long road to Tipperary, it’s a long road to”—well, I’ve forgotten that one too, but anyway, all of those were sung all the time.

**Bailey:** And y’all would just like to sit around the piano and sing World War I songs?

**Carney:** There was no radio, there was no television. People entertained themselves, and the piano was actually the center of entertainment. And if you had a date on Sunday afternoon, nobody had cars; if you went somewhere, you went on a streetcar. I mean almost nobody had cars. You went somewhere on a streetcar, but mostly the soldiers would come to the houses for a good meal—Sunday dinner—and they would stay all afternoon and sing all afternoon and then stay for supper too, see.

I thought of what I wanted to say a while ago. In the winter of 1917 and 1918, at Camp MacArthur, there was—well, in Waco and all of the United States—a very, very terrible outbreak of flu. It was a real epidemic. And, of course, there was nothing like antibiotics or anything to take care of flu at that time. My mother belonged to the Red Cross. She did volunteer work for the Red Cross, and she helped Compton’s Funeral Home, which was at Eleventh [Street] and Austin [Avenue] at the time. Now, I was something like six, and a child’s imagination is sort of different from what the real facts are, but Mother came home and she said, “The soldiers were dying so fast that the bodies at the funeral home were stacked up like cordwood.” Well, I’m sure they were stacked up in caskets—you know, wooden boxes—but my little girl mind just saw rows and rows and rows of soldiers bodies stacked up like cordwood.

**Bailey:** Was that one of the first outbreaks—serious outbreaks—of influenza?

**Carney:** It was the first one that I knew anything about. I don’t think they called it “flu” before then, or it may have been a new virus or bacteria, I don’t know.

**Bailey:** Was it just in Texas, or was it nationwide?

**Carney:** It was nationwide, I think. It especially was so bad in Army camps because they were so close and everything. It was really very terrible at Camp MacArthur.

**Bailey:** One thing I wanted to ask you about World War I was what were people's reactions in town to men that did not want to go to war?

**Carney:** Oh, I'm glad you asked that. Even before we left Chilton, one of the rich—we had, I think, two very wealthy families in Chilton, and one of them had a son—and I shall not mention his name—who took some kind of heart medicine before he went to take his physical exam so his heart would act up, and he was not accepted. People knew what he did and from then on he was called a slacker. People did not speak to him, and when they walked down the street, if he was on the sidewalk, they moved as far as they could to the other side of the sidewalk. Oh, it was a very patriotic time, and anybody who was a slacker had just ruined himself.

**Bailey:** Were there many men that did that?

**Carney:** Not many because it was a real patriotic time. But there were a few slackers in World War I. It was such a patriotic time—just like it was in World War II—there were a few slackers in World War II that I know of because people were so patriotic and then it was supposed to be the war to end all wars. I remember one day—I guess it was the day after the war was over; I had just turned seven—I was seven on October seventh, and then, of course, the war was over the eleventh of November, and I was standing on the front porch by my daddy's bicycle, and all the bells and whistles in Waco started ringing and blowing. People were screaming and yelling and running up and down the street saying the war was over. It was a very, very happy time.

**Bailey:** Do you remember soldiers coming back from the war? Did they come back in busloads?

**Carney:** I remember my Uncle Elias, your grandmother's brother. He was in France, and in those days, of course, communication was quite different than it is now. It was practically nonexistent. People used to find out if their kinfolks were dead by reading the paper. During the war, my mother read the paper every morning to see if Uncle Elias had been killed or was reported missing. I remember how joyous everybody was when Uncle Elias came back. Of course, that was good news for the whole family. Almost every family had somebody to come back.

**Bailey:** So a lot of families didn't know if their son or relative was going to make it back until they actually showed up?

**Carney:** Well, yeah, or until they read that they were dead in the newspaper. It was much slower news—for instance, when my husband was killed in Korea [Robert Carney]—it was even slower than it is now—I didn't know it for two weeks when Bob was killed in Korea. In World War I, it was a long time before you could find out.

**Bailey:** Could it have been two months before you found out?

**Carney:** Yeah, I imagine so. Now, that kind of finishes World War I, unless you want to ask a question about World War I.

**Bailey:** At Camp MacArthur in Waco—it sounds like it was a large Army camp?

**Carney:** It was. It was huge. It was one of the largest ones in the United States.

**Bailey:** G.I.s walking around town was a common site?

**Carney:** Yes, very common. At that time, there was a downtown Waco. Of course, there's not a downtown Waco now; it's all in the malls. At that time, it was a crowded street on Austin Avenue, and the soldiers—many people, like Mother and them, invited—especially when the soldiers went to church, the people at the churches would invite the soldiers who attended church to come home with them for Sunday dinner. Many people were very, very nice. As I say, the Yankees liked it so in Waco, many of them married and stayed here. The people were quite nice to the soldiers.

**Bailey:** I don't have any more questions about World War I.

**Carney:** We'll just skip over to World II now. I have already gone to college and been teaching school; we may hit that on a different thing, but now we're going to skip over. I am teaching science in North Junior High School. I am also working on a master's degree in music.

**Bailey:** Where was North Junior High School?

**Carney:** North Junior High School in Waco. Another student and I were out at Lake Waco. We used to study. I was taking extra courses at Baylor [University] as well as teaching. We were at Lake Waco in my car, and Harold went to sleep. I had the radio on, and I was studying. All of the sudden, there was an open line to Hawaii, and there is a direct broadcast from Hawaii. This is December 7, 1941. For a long time, there was an open line, and you could hear the people yelling and screaming, and this radio announcer saying this was the real thing. Later on, they cut it off and made it come through different channels. I thought it was—like many people did—one of those drama things, and suddenly I realized that it was for real. That was December seventh. By the way, they were having open house here in my house that very same day. It was a brand-new house in 1941.

**Bailey:** By the time you had gotten back to the house, had everybody already heard about the same thing you did?

**Carney:** No because not everybody had radios in those days. By word of mouth, it got around in a few hours. The next day, in my science class, we were the first school in Waco to have an intercom system where you could talk back and forth. The principal had a broadcasting system in his office. The next day, they turned on the radio for all the school to hear President Roosevelt

declare war and that Congress had just declared war. That was on the eighth of December. I belonged to a music club, and when the war first started, we decided that we—they were selling what were called “war stamps.” You buy—all of the money you had extra, even twenty-five cents, you put in war stamps. They didn’t do you any good, except they added up to war bonds finally. If you get enough of them, you get war bonds.

**Bailey:** This was a way of contributing money to the war purpose?

**Carney:** Yes, to the military.

**Bailey:** And they would cash the stamps in after the war?

**Carney:** Well, I didn’t ever get that far. I don’t even know what happened to war stamps. (Laughs) Anyway, we would go down and sit in front of department stores in town on Saturdays and sell those war stamps. After a little while of doing that, they asked my music club president if they’d send somebody down to the USO [United Service Organization] to play the piano every Saturday afternoon. I play by ear, as well as by note, and especially liked popular music, so they sent me. That’s how I got into my Army career in World War II. I went every Saturday afternoon and played in the evening. I just mostly sat at the piano all afternoon. Do you have a question?

**Bailey:** Where was the USO club?

**Carney:** It was on Seventh [Street] and Washington [Avenue], in the lower floor of the Shrine Building.

**Bailey:** Was it a place the G.I.s could come on free time?

**Carney:** Oh, yes. It was not connected directly to the Army. The government didn’t pay for it. It was supported by contributions from the public. It was a huge, nice, black clubhouse atmosphere. At that time, there was Blackland Flying Field here in Waco. It was Waco Flying Field, and then it was named James Connally [Air Force Base] for one of the local heroes. There were lots of airmen. Remember, it was the Air Corps still. It was not the Air Force. The ones from the air field came almost every night to the USO, but the ones from Fort Hood would come on weekends, on Saturdays and Sundays. There was always a cookie jar full of cookies that the local club ladies kept filled. Finally, I worked so many hours on weekends; they put me on partial staff, so I was paid a little bit for each weekend. While I was doing that, I was helping the—the soldiers would sign up—different families would sign up to take soldiers home for Saturday night and Sunday.

(Thirty seconds of unintelligible tape)—The director, Mrs. Brazelton, the director of the USO, said, “Maggie Rose, you have to be back in the morning at seven o’clock for a Mother’s Day breakfast. They are going to bring a program from Fort Hood, and they wanted someone to accompany a soldier who is going to play the violin.” I him I would be there, so I rushed home and got a little sleep and changed clothes and was back at seven o’clock on Mother’s Day to

accompany the violinist soldier from Fort Hood. Well, he was brought in by the commanding officer of Special Services of the Army. Now, this is the Army itself—Special Services. It was the one that entertained the soldiers. It was charge of all the athletics, football, basketball, boxing, dances, USO shows—all of that.

**Bailey:** Nationwide?

**Carney:** Nationwide, with the Army. It wasn't a corps by itself, but it was a division of the Army. It was Army Special Services. The men in it were either enlisted men or officers and were in uniform. So when I had finished playing the next morning, Major Adams, the commanding officer of Special Services of Fort Hood, was there, and he said, "The Army wants you," and I asked what he was talking about. He said, "I need a director of service clubs at North Camp Hood, and I would like for you to go to work by the first of June." That was the fifteenth of May. I gave our report cards on the twenty-ninth of May, and on the thirteenth of May I was at North Fort Hood, which is at Gatesville, over on Highway 84.

**Bailey:** Did you quit your pursuit of your master's degree at Baylor?

**Carney:** Later on I got it. That was much later.

**Bailey:** So you stayed out of Baylor to go to Fort Hood?

**Carney:** No, I wasn't in Baylor. I was teaching school. I had already taught school seven years. I was doing my master's just on the outside. Later on, I got it. Anyway, I got to North Fort Hood—it was North Camp Hood; it was not Fort Hood until after the war. North Camp Hood, on a Saturday, had no sidewalks. It was mostly caliche, which is a gumbo kind of clay. It had been raining most of April and May, and the main thing was to get your feet out of the mud. There was a service club and on the same grounds as the service club, just a little removed from it, was the guesthouse. The guesthouse was built like all of the barracks were; they were temporary. At North Camp Hood, they were very temporary. They were tarpaper buildings. The guesthouse was a tarpaper building. Do you know what I mean by tarpaper?

**Bailey:** Not exactly.

**Carney:** The insulation is on the outside, and it is tarpaper. It's that black tarpaper, and it's just nailed to the outside for insulation. There is nothing over the insulation.

**Bailey:** Was the tarpaper nailed directly to the framing of the building?

**Carney:** Yes.

**Bailey:** Can you see the framing from the inside?

**Carney:** From the inside, you could see the studs. It wasn't lined from the inside. Each hostess—there was a director of the clubs—that was I—and you had to be thirty-one to be a

director, and I was thirty-one. I had a junior hostess. You had to be twenty-six to be a junior hostess. Then there was a cafeteria hostess who ran the cafeteria attached to the service club. There was also a librarian, and each of us had a suite of rooms in the guesthouse, consisting of a little sitting room, a bedroom equipped with an Army cot—an iron Army cot, not a wooden one—and a private bathroom with a bathtub, which seemed kind of elegant at the time. That was where we lived. Now, upstairs were guest rooms for the soldiers' families when they came and visited on the post.

**Bailey:** So, were these tarpaper buildings two levels?

**Carney:** Two stories, yes. The guests did not have private bathrooms. They had common latrines. Do you know what a latrine is?

**Bailey:** Not exactly.

**Carney:** (Laughs) That means you've never been in a—a latrine is a bathroom. I mean, it's for body functions. The latrine was separate from the shower. The shower stalls were common, and the guests all showered in the same stalls. They were private; they had separate stalls in them, and the latrines were the bathrooms. They were called latrines even for the women. They were the women's latrine and the men's latrine. When the visiting general came to the service club, it was the first thing—I learned right away that if you keep your men's latrine clean, you got a good grade from the general. I learned a lot of things. The first day I got there, somebody said, "Get a detail and police the area." I didn't know what a detail was, and a police means a cop. What that meant was to get some soldiers and pick up the trash on the grounds. I learned many new words—some of them not very nice—while I was in the Army. (Laughs) We had dances once a week. There were two clubs at North Camp Hood. Our dances were on Thursday night, and the other club's dances were on Tuesday night. One night, we had a sing-song, and the other night we had a bingo.

**Bailey:** What type of music was played at the dances?

**Carney:** Oh, the finest in the world. We had the best professional musicians. We had fourteen piece bands, and I mean with saxophone and trumpets and bass fiddles and great pianos. The guys who wrote the music to *Meet Me in St. Louis* was one of the soldiers. When I was at South Camp, he used to come and play the piano all the time; the one who wrote the song, "Meet Me in St. Louis."

**Bailey:** Did you get to play with him?

**Carney:** Oh, yeah. See, all the professional—everybody—they were in the Army. They loved to play for our dances. They didn't get paid for it. That was part of their duty; they belonged to Special Services. But, they got sandwiches and Cokes afterwards for playing the dances.

**Bailey:** Were these bands stationed there permanently?

**Carney:** Yes. These were the bands for our dances. Now, in the USO, the bands would come, like Stan Kenton's band. I sang with Stan Kenton's band—jazz band—when he was at South Camp in the field house. When we'd have the huge USO shows for the whole post, we'd have them in the field house, which was a great big gymnasium-barn sort of thing. We had excellent, fine music. Of course, we would bring the girls in from surrounding towns. Connie [Connie Vickery] came one time, and, well, it was after the war, and it wasn't for enlisted men; it was for some officer candidate trainees there. But we would bring the girls in from—they would meet at the USOs in different towns or in different places. We would send busses from Camp Hood, and the girls would come to the dances. Many romances budded, and a few marriages took place. In fact, Talley—the man I went with—his sister married Michael Dallilo from New Jersey because she met him at one of our dances.

**Bailey:** So, I guess it was a pretty big day when the busloads of girls pulled in to Camp Hood?

**Carney:** They came in the evening. Oh yes. Of course, there were four or five times as many men as there were girls. As the men came in, they got a—I don't know if you've ever seen a cloth laundry tag. You can get a laundry tag of different colors. So, we would have four colors, and each man would get, to go on his button, a laundry tag. So, we would have a set. A set is three numbers: a fast one, and a slow one. In those days, it was more or less jazz and more or less ballads. Each man would get a color of a laundry tag, and the ones that didn't dance would sell theirs.

**Bailey:** Oh, so the laundry tags enabled them to go out on the dance floor.

**Carney:** Yes. The service club was a huge, nice clubhouse with a big ballroom floor. There was a balcony around the edges, and we tied a rope around the post of the balcony, so you couldn't get on it. We had a floor committee of usually sergeants with a floor committee band on their arm. They didn't let anybody on the floor—past the rope—that didn't have the right color laundry tag.

**Bailey:** Did you have to give them a tag whenever you went out on the dance floor?

**Carney:** No, no. You just wore it. You wore it, and there would be all greens dancing. They would play three numbers—a set—and then the greens would leave the floor, and the blues would come on the floors. (Laughs) The girls stayed on the floor all of the time.

**Bailey:** Boy, girls got a little more exercise than the guys did.

**Carney:** Yeah, but they loved it. They really loved it. I usually danced with the fat sergeants to keep the girls from it. There was one sergeant who did the Polka, and he wouldn't Polka with anybody but me. He used to nearly kill me—wear me out—during the Polka, but it was a lot of fun. That's about all about the dances. Do you want to stop the thing for a minute?

**Bailey:** Do you have any remembrances about any entertainment that went on during World War II?

**Carney:** Yes, one of my best remembrances is of Red Skelton. Remember, there was no air conditioning, and Camp Hood is in a pretty hot spot. You would get your Jello in the cafeteria and by the time you got to the table with it, it was soup. And stuff like that. So, we had many entertainments in the clubs themselves, not in the field house. This one time, Red Skelton came, and he really was—he gave a terrific show. We had dinner first, and I sat by him at dinner. He was charming; I really got a kick out of Red Skelton.

The shows at the USO brought to the different service clubs were outstanding. Many of them were professional people. I remember one time, the man—I don't remember his name—who wrote "The Music Goes Round and Round"—you wouldn't remember this song—It goes, (sings) "Oh, the music goes round and round, oompah, oompah."—something like that. Anyway, he came in, and he was so nice to begin with. He said, "Just hang me on a nail anywhere." We put him in one of those guest rooms over there on an Army cot, and boy, he came down after we set him up, and he said, "I cannot sleep in a place like this." He was real snotty. Some of them were, but most of them were very, very nice and were very nice to the soldiers.

**Bailey:** Did Red Skelton stay there in the guest quarters?

**Carney:** No. I think he went on to South Camp Hood.

**Bailey:** At that time, was he a popular entertainer?

**Carney:** Oh, he was young. After all, this was forty-three years ago. Do you realize that was forty-three years ago?

**Bailey:** He was a young man then.

**Carney:** Yes. When I was thirty-one. I'm seventy-four now, so he was quite young and quite popular. He was a real hit with the soldiers.

**Bailey:** Did you stay at North Camp throughout the war?

**Carney:** Well, I stayed in the guest house. I went there in 1943, and I was married in 1948, and I was the only hostess who stayed for five years. I was the only hostess who was director in all the different service clubs. I wanted to be sure and say too that at that time there were—they were called "colored" soldiers in those days, not black. There were no colored soldiers at North Camp, but there were colored soldiers at South Camp. It was quite segregated, and the colored soldiers had their own barracks and their own chapels and their own library. There was no desegregation whatsoever.

**Bailey:** Did anybody question the fact that there was segregation?

**Carney:** Not that I heard of. During the war, no telling what they were saying amongst themselves, it was a fact. They had everything that the whites did, but it was segregated. I had one day off a week, but, of course, would not take it on weekends; that was our busiest time. The hours suited me fine. We worked until ten thirty or eleven o'clock the next day. The only trouble was, I got—I had a lack of Vitamin C from not eating breakfast, and one morning I woke up and all of the capillaries in my skin had burst from not having any Vitamin C. But I loved the hours. I'm a night person, and those hours suited me just fine.

**Bailey:** That's still a long day—an eleven-hour day.

**Carney:** We were on duty, but it was more of a social thing. The club was off-limits to the soldiers during working hours. They were not supposed to be there until supper time. But, the club was open during the day for the families who visited there.

**Bailey:** So, would you entertain the families during the day?

**Carney:** Yes. Oh, you might be interested in this. We had trouble with nursing mothers. The soldiers were all so young. They would say, "Maggie, please ask that lady to go upstairs to nurse her baby." The women just insisted on sitting down anywhere and nursing their babies, and it embarrassed the soldiers. I played the organ in chapel, and the organs were in the balcony in the back. You could look down on the soldiers—they were supposed to be there for six weeks, and some of them didn't quite get six weeks of basic training before they were sent to the front. You could see the G.I. haircuts and their white necks from the balcony. All their white necks were almost shining where they had their G.I. haircuts. Of course, they were quite young.

Well, I stayed at North Camp for a year, and then I was sent to South Camp. At the North Camp, I was at the Leon Drive Service Club, which is still standing—or was just a few months ago. At South Camp, I was sent to Thirty-Seventh Street Service Club, which later became a non-commissioned officers club. This is when the war really got hot. One of the things I remember most about South Camp is that I would come to Waco and get the school children and the junior high schools to make Christmas boxes for the soldiers. They would put in a toothbrush and a pencil, a handkerchief, and maybe a little stationary, and wrap it up real pretty. I took it to the service club, and we would have a Christmas party. We'd pass the boxes around. They'd sit down in a circle, and we'd pass the boxes around. When the music stopped, you got to keep the box that you had in your hand. On this night, in 1944, we had our Christmas party, and that night they were flying out to the Battle of the Bulge, and most of them were killed. They went straight from my Christmas party up to the field house where they had midnight mass, and we went to the mass too—the hostesses did. Their barracks bag was a little Christmas present they had got at the service club.

**Bailey:** And they were flying out directly to go flight at the Battle of the Bulge?

**Carney:** Yes. And one of the battalions—it was probably a regiment or company or something—was Hawaiians. Of course, Hawaii was not a state at the time. They were such wonderful soldiers. I think nearly all of the Hawaiians were killed in the Battle of the Bulge—they used to give programs. We'd have a talent show, and these Hawaiian soldiers would take their G.I. jackets and tie around their bottoms for a grass skirt. Then they'd do the hula. It was so cute. One of them was a prince, and he was so cute. He was actually from royal Hawaiian blood line. He was the most handsome thing you've ever seen. But, that Christmas always stands out in my mind.

Oh, and I will tell you this. A lot of the times they would ask me to sing. That was one of my duties, to play and sing like I've been doing all my life. That night, they wanted me to sing, "O Holy Night" and "The Lord's Prayer," and I sang that. Sometimes later, I got a—I was just called Maggie then. I wasn't Ms. Earls or anything. All soldiers called me Maggie. I got an envelope addressed to "Maggie, Camp Hood." That's all it had on it: Maggie, Camp Hood, TX. It said, "You don't know my name. I never did talk to you, but I always listened to you when you sang. I just want you to know that sometimes when I'm in a foxhole, and I get real scared, I can hear you singing "The Lord's Prayer," and I'm not scared anymore."

**Bailey:** Boy, that's great.

**Carney:** Of course, President Roosevelt died suddenly. We had to cancel a dance that night. Oh, I'll tell you about the dances at South Camp. I told you that it was real hot, no air conditioning.

*End Side 1, begin Side 2*

**Bailey:** Did you have any favorite songs when you were singing at North Camp or South Camp?

**Carney:** Oh, I didn't tell you the songs of World War II. I told you the songs of World War I. Of course, "You Must Remember this, A Kiss is Still a Kiss" [titled "As Time Goes By"]. That was very popular. Then, "Embrace Me, You Sweet Embraceable You" [titled "Embraceable You"]. And, "I'm in the Mood for Love." The most popular of all songs in World War II that they always wanted me to play was "Stardust." That was it. They always wanted to hear "Stardust."

**Bailey:** Do you remember some of the words?

**Carney:** I never did sing it. I only just played it. (Hums) I never did sing it. I only just played it.

**Bailey:** What are some of the other popular songs?

**Carney:** "How Deep is the Ocean." (Sings) "How much do I love you? I'll tell you no lies. How deep is the ocean? How high is the sky? How many times a day do I think of you? How many roses are kissed by the dew? How far would I travel, to be where you are? How great is a distance, from here to a star? And if I ever lost you, how much would I cry? How deep is the ocean? How high is the sky?"

**Bailey:** Boy, that will tug at your heartstrings.

**Carney:** Oh yeah, that, and “Embrace Me, You Sweet Embraceable You.” That was popular. Yeah, we had some good ballads—real danceable tunes. But the guys from New Jersey didn’t do slow dancing. They did jitterbugging. The fun thing about me, Lee, was I danced all through World War II doing the Charleston instead of the Jitterbug. (Laughs) I could get by with it. For the Jitterbug, I could kind of Charleston. I learned to Charleston back in the twenties or when I was in college. The Jitterbug—you know, they’d throw them over their heads and under their legs.

**Bailey:** So that was a real dance during World War II?

**Carney:** Oh yes. Like the “A-Train,” or “In the Mood.” (Hums) That’s the Jitterbug tempo. And then there was slow dancing. Oh, and the rumba. I had a pretty good rumba. I had some lessons in the rumba.

**Bailey:** What was the rumba? Was it a type of dance?

**Carney:** Yes, it’s a type of dance. I can’t even remember a rumba tune right now. It was a Spanish dance-type. A few people could do the tango. I finally learned a pretty good tango. Of course, there was the polka. The real popular dancing at the time for the young kids, the young soldiers, was the Jitterbug, and boy—energy—you’ve never seen such energy in your life. Dancing now doesn’t really have—you just get out there and shake. Jitterbugging was couple-dancing, and then couples danced together and did all of these acrobatics.

**Bailey:** There’s a country-western version of the Jitterbug now, but it’s not quite like what y’all used to do. (Laughs)

**Carney:** My Jitterbug was sort of a pseudo-Charleston. I got by with the older soldiers. In fact, I think my speed of jitterbugging was just right for them. See, we had sergeants and master sergeants. Ours was the enlisted men’s club. The officers didn’t come to our club. The PFC’s and privates—at that time there was no NCO club—Non-Commissioned Officers Club—for the top sergeants, and they came to the service club too. One of our best friends was a master sergeant who was a mess sergeant, and he kept us supplied.

Oh, that’s another thing I wanted to tell you about: how hard it was to get different products in World War II. He kept us supplied with cake. He brought the hostesses cake every time he came—about twice a week. Of course, we could get cakes in the cafeteria there. But people at home like Mother—you had food stamps. It’s not the kind of food stamps you have now. They weren’t free. They would only allow you to buy so much sugar. It was especially hard to get sugar and bacon and tires and shoes. We hostesses got extra show stamps because we danced as part of our job. I was allowed to buy an extra pair of shoes. See, you couldn’t even buy a pair of shoes without stamps allowing you to buy them.

**Bailey:** Was everybody allotted a certain number of stamps?

**Carney:** Everybody was allotted a certain number of stamps, and there was this business of black market stamps. Somebody would get hold of them and sell them for a great big price.

**Bailey:** Would you get these stamps in the mail every month?

**Carney:** I don't know where you got them. I really don't remember.

**Bailey:** Did you buy everything you got at the store with stamps, or could you use regular money to buy things?

**Carney:** You had to have money, plus the stamps. The stamps allowed you to pay the money for the product.

**Bailey:** So if you didn't have a stamp but you had the money, you couldn't buy the product?

**Carney:** You had to go out and buy some black market stamps.

**Bailey:** Was that a pretty common practice?

**Carney:** Not common, but it happened. A lot of times, especially with tires and gasoline. You could only have so much gasoline.

**Bailey:** How come sugar was scarce?

**Carney:** Well, it all went to the Army and the armed forces.

**Bailey:** Were there shortages pretty much throughout the war?

**Carney:** Well, I think they just saved everything for the military effort. There was plenty of sugar in the Army. There was plenty of bacon in the Army, but the civilians didn't get a lot of all that. Oh, you might be interested. People started using Karo syrup instead of sugar, even in their coffee. White Karo syrup and honey. They would use honey to cook with instead of sugar.

**Bailey:** Was there a black market for items other than stamps, such as shoes or sugar?

**Carney:** Yes. Yeah, there was a black market. Unfortunately to say, a lot of soldiers at Camp Hood used to tote things out of the Army post and sell them. It got to where it was so bad that people would put bacon and stuff in their hubcaps. A lot of times they got by with it, but they did spot checking at the gates. Sometimes, they would take off four hubcaps, and find four pounds of bacon. (Laughs) That, I think, kind of throws a light on it. I think that about finishes me up, unless you have some questions.

**Bailey:** You mentioned earlier that most of the soldiers at Camp Hood, North Camp and South Camp both, were Yankees. Where did all of the soldiers from this area go? Where were they sent to?

**Carney:** Most of the soldiers from this area were sent to other camps all over the United States. It was a policy at that time not to send basic trainees to camps near their homes. I suppose it was an emotional thing. It would have been bad to have them so close to home and not being able to go home. At Camp Hood, we had soldiers mostly from Massachusetts and Connecticut. They used to come in and say, “May I have a desk of cards?” (Imitates Connecticut accent) I would say, “Are you from Connecticut or Massachusetts?” He said, “How did you know?” (Laughs) Then, we would have the dance, and there was one little Irishman, and the only thing he wanted about the dance—we used to serve great big gallons of punch, and he called that the “potty.” He would come in and say, “Maggie, when are we going to have the potty?” (Laughs) But very few Texas people were at Camp Hood.

**Bailey:** Do you remember when the war was over?

**Carney:** I remember when V-E Day [Victory in Europe] came in May. I think that was May eighth or something like that, in 1945. We were in the guesthouse, and we wanted to celebrate, and the librarian and I wanted something to drink of liquor nature. The only thing that either one of us had—she had a little old bottle of hot Crème de Menthe. We drank that, and it made both of us sick. That was in celebration of V-E Day. Of course, we had a dance that night. On August twelfth or something like that was V-J Day [Victory in Japan]. It was my day off, and I was on the way from Waco back to Camp Hood. We scheduled a dance real fast and had a big celebration at the time.

Oh, I left out two good things about who took care of the service club. Over at North Camp Hood, we had illiterates. Everybody went in the war, whether they could read or not-read or write or not. For our work crew, we had a group of soldiers who were illiterate. In fact, one of them was quite a character. Most of them made an X—that’s the way they signed their name—with an X. Well, this guy was from South Carolina, and he carried on a brisk correspondence with his family back in South Carolina, and he had the hostesses—my junior hostess and I would take times about writing his letter for him. Boy, he would get one back, and he would have to have it answer the next day. He couldn’t even sign his name, but he was a whiz with numbers. You could not mix him up on way or the other on numbers, and he always called out the bingo numbers for us. He felt he was so important calling out the bingo numbers. They cleaned the service club and the cafeteria and the library at night. At South Camp, we had German POWs. I wanted to be sure and hit that, and I nearly forgot it. The German PW camp was at South Camp Hood.

**Bailey:** What does P.W. mean?

**Carney:** Prisoner of War. I'm sorry; you're supposed to know all these things. (Laughs) They lived in tar-shack barracks way off, kind of at the edge of South Camp Hood.

**Bailey:** Would they fly these prisoners in from Germany?

**Carney:** From Africa. They were captured. The ones we had were the elite Afrikorps, Afrika Korps. They were the elite, college-age, eighteen-, nineteen-, twenty-years-old. They had already been captured by 1943. They were captured in Africa. Now, I have forgotten all of my World War II history about who was in Africa and so forth. Anyway, these kids were captured in Africa, and they were quite intelligent. They did our janitor work, and, for instance, if we were going to have a sing-song, we'd set up all of these chairs. If we were going to have a dance, we'd clear off [sofas] and things from the dance floor. They worked all day. They worked during the daytime. They worked every day, and they could not change—they were such creatures of habit. They had been trained so rigidly that if for some reason we had the dance on Thursday instead of on Tuesday; it threw them off all week. They could not adjust to any kind of change at all. Most of them were very, very nice. We had a big map of Europe over the radio. There was no TV remember, just the radio. One of them named Hans—I would ask him to come and listen to the news broadcast every evening. When the war was over, he was listening. I said, "Hans, you'll be going home soon. Do you want to go home?" He said, "Madam, nobody ever asked me what I want to do in my whole life." See, he had been trained. He was about twenty years old. We had kind of a nice arrangement made with them. We had western furniture. It had golden oak arms and backs, but it had soft cushions. The soldiers would drop change in the cushions. Every night, we had to dump the cushions for fire regulations. During the daytime, the PWs would look in the cushions and find change. In the storeroom, they would put it on a shelf, and we'd get it and buy candy bars with it and put the candy bars back for them. It kind of got to be an intrigue that we furnished the PW's with chocolate bars. For a while, they were giving the PWs leftover turkeys and things that otherwise—do you know what they did with the turkeys, the cooked turkeys?

**Bailey:** No.

**Carney:** They buried them in the ground. Surplus stuff. They also buried typewriters and different other surplus things that they weren't supposed to get rid of.

**Bailey:** Does that mean that they were trying to get rid of things still under their budget?

**Carney:** Yes, something like that. I don't really know what is had to do with budget. The mess halls were giving some of these turkeys or leftover meat to the German PWs, and some citizens got word of it and complained because the German PW's were eating as well as the American soldiers were. They stopped that and started feeding them cabbage and stuff.

**Bailey:** So the German PWs were treated pretty well.

**Carney:** Oh, they were treated well for a long time. Of course, they still had plenty of food to eat, but they were not given the leftovers from the American soldiers. Oh, there was a big to do about the German PWs eating so well, and they finally stopped feeding them so well.

**Bailey:** Do you remember, in World War II, when the atom bomb was dropped? Was there a general understanding of what had happened in Japan?

**Carney:** Well, I think the main feeling was a joyous feeling. The main reaction was, “Thank God, the war is going to be over.” I don’t think the horror part of it struck us right at first. Everybody knew that the European war was over, and then hear we were going to fight the Pacific war. The European war was just a step, and everyone was prepared to go ahead and fight the Pacific war. I think there was just a great rejoicing almost because the horror of the thing did not hit us at first. The destruction and the horror didn’t hit us then; besides at that time, Japan was our enemy, and we were all out to destroy Japan. A few years later, I was living in Japan.

**Bailey:** What year did you move there?

**Carney:** Well, Bob went to Korea. We were married in San Francisco in 1948, and Bob went straight to Korea. I met him one year later in Japan. In 1949, in January, that was just four years after the atomic bomb. Going over, I was frightened of the Japanese, but the Japanese were the most wonderful people. I carried some of my sterling silver, and I kept it locked up in my make-up box so my maid couldn’t get it. I realized later, she would have given her life for anything I had. We lived in Tokorozawa, outside of Tokyo. Later, we moved to Fujinomiya outside of Yokohama. We were there for fifteen months.

**Bailey:** Did the Japanese react nicely to you, while you were there?

**Carney:** Oh, nicely. They couldn’t have been more courteous. I wasn’t afraid at all. I was directing a choir at Johnson Air Force Base, about ten miles from where we lived. Oh, by the way, at Tokorozawa, our apartment had been made from the Kamikaze dormitory. Do you know what the Kamikazes were?

**Bailey:** The suicide pilots?

**Carney:** The suicide pilots used to live where I lived. I would go by myself at night to choir practice at Johnson Air Force Base. One time, my car broke down, and some Japanese people came running out of this village and fixed my car. Of course, I’m sure they knew that they would have been shot at sunrise if they had done anything to an Army person. I know that’s true. I never experienced any fear of any kind while I was there, except right at first.

**Bailey:** Getting back to Camp Hood. After the war was over—after V-J Day and V-E Day—did you come directly back to Waco, or did you stay at Camp Hood for a while?

**Carney:** I stayed on. I hadn’t even met my husband yet.

**Bailey:** Did you meet him at Camp Hood?

**Carney:** Yes. He was an officer, and he used to come sit in the library and watch me when I couldn't see him. He couldn't come in the service club, but he came to the library. The last year I was there, in 1947, the government got so far down in the barrel of finances that I became not only the director of service clubs but the post librarian, too. I ran the library that last year, and that's where I met Bob. I stayed on until after I was married, and I went back and helped with the library books until 1948. I left in 1948, so I was there a full five years.

**Bailey:** You left in 1948 and went to Japan, right?

**Carney:** Yes.

**Bailey:** So you didn't spend much time in Waco, in transition.

**Carney:** Yes, I spent practically a year waiting. I was supposed to go immediately to Korea. I was supposed to meet Bob in Korea in three months after we were married in San Francisco. See, this was in 1948, when the Communists took over China. They sent all American personnel out of China to Korea and took up all of the housing in Korea, so there was no housing for me in Korea. That's the reason I didn't go to Korea in the Army of Occupations. So that about completes my Army career.

**Bailey:** Do you remember what the economy was like in Waco after the war? Was there a surge in business activity?

**Carney:** I cannot tell you that.

*End of interview*