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U. S. Air Force Oral History Interview

K239.0512-1205

Mrs. Charles E. (Glennis) Yeager

30 April 1980



**ALBERT F. SIMPSON
HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER**

**OFFICE OF AIR FORCE HISTORY
Headquarters USAF**

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interview

of

Mrs. Charles E. (Glennis) Yeager

By

Maj Scottie S. Thompson

Date: 30 April 1980

Location: Cedar Ridge, California

Edited and Transcribed by Beth F. Scott

FOREWORD

The following is the transcript of an oral history interview recorded on magnetic tape. Since only minor emendations have been made, the reader should consistently bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word. Additionally, no attempt to confirm the historical accuracy of the statements has been made. As a result, the transcript reflects the interviewee's personal recollections at the time of the interview and does not reflect the official opinion of the Office of Air Force History or the Department of the Air Force.

Editorial notes and additions made by USAF historians are enclosed in brackets. If feasible, first names, ranks, or titles are provided. Any additions, deletions, and changes subsequently made to the transcript by the interviewee are not indicated. Researchers may wish to listen to the actual interview tape prior to citing the transcript.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, ^{MRS.} ~~Barbara Ann~~ Charles E. Yeager, have this day participated in an oral-magnetic-taped interview with Major Scott S. Thompson, covering my best recollection of events and experiences which may be of historical significance to the United States Air Force.

Understanding that the tape(s) and the transcribed manuscript resulting therefrom will be accessioned into The Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center to be used, as the security classification permits, by qualified historical researchers whose access has been determined to be in the best interest of the United States Air Force, I do hereby voluntarily give, transfer, convey and assign all right, title and interest in the memoirs and remembrances contained in the aforementioned magnetic tapes and manuscript to the Office of the Air Force History, acting on behalf of the United States of America, to have and to hold the same forever, hereby relinquishing for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs and assigns all ownership, right, title and interest therein to the donee subject only to the following restrictions: Permission to cite and/or

quote any part of this interview must begin by me or my heirs.

Charles E. Yeager DONOR
Dated 30 Apr 80

Accepted on behalf of the

Office of Air Force History by: Scott S. Thompson

Dated 30 Apr 80

SUMMARY

Mrs. Yeager was born Glennis Faye Dickhouse in Grass Valley, California, on 2 December 1924. Her family moved to Bangor, California, and she attended school there through the sixth grade. She finished high school in Oroville, California, and attended Chico State College. Mrs. Yeager held various jobs during high school and while attending college part time. She met General Yeager before he was sent overseas and married him upon his return in 1945. She tells of their early years in the Air Force and of married life to an Air Force test pilot. A few highlights of their overseas tours are covered and some of the volunteer work she did over the years.

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Conducted by Maj Scottie S. Thompson
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T: What was your full maiden name?

Y: Glennis Faye Dickhouse. It used to be Dickhaus, and they changed it.

T: Your nationality?

Y: English and German--just about even.

T: Where were you born and when?

Y: Grass Valley, California, 2 December 1924. I lived in Grass Valley as a baby, and then we moved away. There was a depression. My father was selling insurance in Berkeley, I believe it was, and our house burned down.

T: How long did you live in Grass Valley before you moved?

Y: I think I was about 3 or 4 years old.

T: You had not entered school?

Y: No.

T: And your father was an insurance agent?

Y: Salesman. Our house burned down in Berkeley after we had moved down there. Like I say, it was during the depression, and the insurance company wouldn't pay off on the house enough to build it back. My father owned a small ranch out in Bangor, California, and we moved there.

T: Where is that?

Y: Bangor is between Grass Valley and Oroville. It is just a little wide spot in the road. There was a school there. At that time there was a gas station, a grocery store, bar.

T: How long did you live there?

Y: Until I was in the sixth grade? I started to school in Bangor.

T: Were you tomboyish?

Y: Oh, definitely.

T: You said you were supposed to have been a boy, and they named you Glennis.

Y: I think they wanted a boy real bad. I was named after a girlfriend of my mother's.

T: How many children on your side of the family?

Y: I have one sister who lives here in Grass Valley. I started to school in Bangor. I didn't go to school until I was almost 9 years old. In fact, I was 9 years old. We had to walk over a mile and then ride a bus for 5 miles, which is no big thing, but I had a baby sister, and they didn't want me to go by myself. So they made me wait until she was old enough to go. It didn't make any difference. I skipped two grades during grade school, and I ended up the same as everybody else anyway when I graduated. I skipped the fifth and the seventh grades.

T: Your folks had you study at home?

Y: I don't remember that so much. I remember doing homework, math mainly. I was a good student. I didn't have any problems.

T: Any of your family in the military?

Y: My grandfather on my father's side was shot and killed in a range war. My father was only 4 years old. They had a spat over there around Bangor where he was at that time. I believe it was sheepmen and cattlemen as I recall his telling the story. They killed him. Military service--no, not that I know of. I only had a sister, and my father, of course, was a veteran of the First World War and was in the trenches in France. That was just military service during that war. He was in the Army, yes. He went over with the troops and came back.

T: Did he ever tell any stories?

Y: Oh, yes, about the French girls--I don't know. (laughter)
He was just a baby when he went. He wasn't even 18 when he went. He came back and married my mother when he was about 22, I believe, or 23. She is living with me now. She has just had a stroke, and I take care of her.

T: When did your dad die?

Y: Three years ago.

T: How old was he when he passed away?

Y: Seventy-seven. When I was going to school in Bangor, they were trying to condemn the building we were going to school in in order to build a new one. My father was fighting to get that done. I remember going around getting petitions to have the building torn down. So they finally did pass this. I remember this so well. We went to school in a barroom. We had all eight grades in one room.

T: Was it actually a bar after school?

Y: No. It had been a bar. I remember that as plain as could be. Then they tore the old school down and built a new one. My last year there, I believe, was the fourth grade. We went to school that whole year, I remember that.

T: What did you do as a little girl out on a ranch?

Y: We were on a ranch and raised all of our food and everything--a garden, a cow, a horse. We had a lot of chickens. Actually, a poultry business. We sold eggs and things. Can you imagine eggs 5 cents a dozen and things like that?

T: That's what they were then?

Y: Yes, during the depression. We had excellent food. We always had fruit and vegetables that we canned. My father

was a great hunter and, in fact, taught me how to hunt and shoot and fish when I was--I have the gun I learned with--just a child. I remember being able to go with him, and there again, I think I was supposed to be a boy. I could shoot just as good as anybody. As I remember, I was toddling after him on deer hunts, squirrel hunts, rabbit hunts, and so on. I learned to shoot real young. I couldn't have been more than 8 or 10.

T: Your father was a great influence on you when you were growing up?

Y: I think so. He mined gold. He panned gold. Gold was only \$18 an ounce then, but it kept us eating. My mother had property in Grass Valley, which was rented all during the depression. It was a cleaners--Burtner Dry Cleaners. She owned that and got a rent check every month, and that's what we lived on during that time.

T: Do you remember how much it was?

Y: Oh, I could ask her, but I think it was like \$40.

T: That was pretty good back then?

Y: Yes, for Burtner Cleaners, which is on East Main Street in Grass Valley. It is a restaurant now, that building.

T: How much gold would your dad mine a month?

Y: Oh, I don't remember. In fact, I have a beautiful gold nugget necklace, of which three or four of the nuggets were nuggets he found. The rest of them I collected later, enough to make the whole chain. They all had to be the same size and everything or roughly the same size. Anyway, he would get nuggets. He would do sluice mining--that's with a sluice box--and panning. Then later on he went to work for a dredge company.

T: The panning versus the sluice----

Y: Your sluice box is in a sense the same principal. You shovel dirt into a box, and it washes down over the ripples.

T: It does a lot more by volume, right?

Y: Yes, and a lot faster.

T: Was this on the ranch property?

Y: Not on the property itself but in the streams all around there. In the old Honcut, which was a stream. I remember his doing most of that in that particular stream.

T: You lived in that part of California until about the sixth grade?

Y: That's only about an hour from here.

T: Back then it was a good trip, wasn't it?

Y: Oh, yes. I remember coming back to Grass Valley, and we had an old Whippet, a car. We had that old thing, and we would drive to Grass Valley, and it would be an all-day trip. I remember coming up old Highway 20 was just curve after curve. If they think it is bad now, they should have driven it then. That was really something. We would come over here to maybe check on the rental or whatever. We had all the family, all of my mother's particularly-- her family was all over here. My father's family was here too then. I am a third generation Grass Valley. They were born here. My mother's family was born here, her parents.

T: Do you still own the ranch over there?

Y: No, my father sold it. It was sold a number of years ago.
My mother sold the old building down on East Main too.

T: Were your folks religious people?

Y: No.

T: They make homebrew like General Yeager's folks?

Y: No. We used to make root beer, homemade root beer. I
remember those bottles blowing up all the time.

T: A big treat was to get a bottle of root beer?

Y: Well, I think it was definitely a treat. Anything, gee, I
used to try to save my allowance, for instance, which was at
best \$1 a week--that was a big allowance. That wasn't until
I got in high school. I tried to save that--and I went to
work when I was only 16 after school. I kept books for a
drugstore.

T: When you moved from Bangor, where did you go?

Y: Into Oroville.

T: This was in the sixth grade?

Y: I didn't go to the fifth. I skipped the fifth grade and went into the sixth grade from the fourth grade. They put me in the fifth grade a month or two and said "no way" and put me into the sixth grade. I spent a year in the sixth grade, and I skipped the seventh grade altogether and did the eighth grade and then went straight on through high school.

T: You must have made good grades?

Y: I did, and I was well adjusted and well developed and everything for my age. I was that much older than everybody because I didn't start until I was 9.

T: Is that true that California girls are a little bit ahead?

Y: I don't think so, no. As I said, I was normally bright, not to mention the fact that I had been held back 2 whole years at least.

T: What was your dad doing in Oroville?

Y: That's when he went to work for the dredge company, and he also later went to work for the county.

T: What was the dredge compan?

Y: Richter. They were dredging for gold. Oroville is rich in the dredging. In fact, the town of Oroville right today sits on the richest veins of gold there are. It is in a bend of the Feather River. The Chinese mined it. I remember, we had a Plymouth, a four-door Plymouth, and we went backing out of our garage one day and sank into a big hole. The Chinese had mined all around. They used to tunnel underneath the ground everywhere like moles. We backed out, and there was a tunnel straight under. I have forgotten how many loads of gravel it took to fill that thing up so we could get in and out of our garage.

T: Did they ever find out which Chinese did it?

Y: They did it years and years before. The whole town is that way. They never know but what something is going to fall in. They just did it.

T: Were they mining that much gold?

Y: This was years and years before.

T: Back in the mid-1800s?

Y: Yes. Now when my father was working on the dredgers, that was all around Oroville there. Most of them were redredging old dredger piles.

T: I guess they are redredging it now again, aren't they?

Y: Only in certain areas because it is more or less outlawed. They have to put the topsoil back on again now, and they can't afford it.

T: You would think with the price of gold, they might get to the point where they could afford it again.

Y: They might. They very well could.

T: What was it like growing up in Oroville, California?

Y: I was interested in swimming. I was a beautiful swimmer. I swam semiprofessionally. I wouldn't say professionally because I never got paid for it or anything, but we did give demonstrations and things for the Red Cross. I was an instructor and a lifeguard my last 2 years of high school. I worked for the City of Oroville as an instructor/lifeguard. They deputized me, too, because the park where I worked was in the Feather River and there was vandalism and so on even in those days. Not nearly so much, possibly, as now. I had a good job with them and also continued to hold down the job with the drugstore as the bookkeeper, secretary/bookkeeper and went to school full time. I was quite busy. I was also yell leader, cheerleader.

T: Did you wear the little short skirts in those days?

Y: Yes. Well, they weren't too short then. They made us wear them about 4 or 5 inches above the knees, but they had tights under them. We wore sweaters with a big block on them. I also lettered in tennis and basketball and volleyball. I even taught freshmen in my senior year.

T: Do you play?

Y: No. Somewhere back along the way, they made me quit. I had a heart murmur later on. Something went wrong with my heart. They said, "No, you can't play tennis, and you can't swim in cold water." This happened years later, of course, after I had children and everything. Anyway, they said don't do that. The last 4 or 5 years, they have told me to go ahead and do it if I wanted to, no problem. There is nothing wrong with it.

T: Was there anyone in your high school years that had a lot of influence on you, other than your family?

Y: Yes. A woman by the name of Freda Beek. She was my counselor in high school, and she was also my shorthand and secretarial, bookkeeping teacher. A man by the name of Mognus. These were teachers. They were my influence. Mr.

Fleming was an influence. He was my civics teacher. One project was to write what you would like to be, five different things that you would like to be when you grew up and when you go out in the world, five different things, and make them in order of what you would like to be. My top one was, I would like to work for the diplomatic corps. That's the only one I didn't make an excellent grade on. Reason--"You could never afford to do this." Years later, I worked directly under the Ambassador for the State Department while I was in Pakistan. Obviously, I have been all over the world.

T: Because you were a girl?

Y: I think possibly that was part of it, but that I could never afford to do anything in that line in the State Department because I couldn't afford to do it. In other words they had the idea in those days--and they were, I presume, all very wealthy people. So he gave me a bad grade on that. I got As on everything else, and I can't even remember what the other things were. He was an excellent man and a very fair man. Mr. Mognus was my English teacher, I believe, all 4 years. I can't remember ever having another one. He was very strict and a very good teacher. Mr. Conrad was my math and geometry teacher.

T: You have that look on your face--you weren't particularly thrilled with math?

Y: I didn't like him. See there, I can dislike someone and still admire them. He was an excellent teacher. I was stupid in math. I was not good in math. I did make As in it, but I was not good in it. I was not natural. I had to work. He was so exact. I guess math teachers are that way. I also think other people had a lot to do with my forming and whatnot, too, in town. The people who gave me my first job. I was only 16 years old, and I was going to school, and they let me work after school for 3 hours. This was in 1941 and 1942 and 1943. I graduated in 1943. Also, the City of Oroville, though I cannot remember his name--gave me a job with the City of Oroville every summer the last three summers and begged me to come to work after I got out of school.

T: Lifeguarding?

Y: Yes, and I also was the assistant director of the USO [United Services Organization (Inc)].

T: The eventual downfall.

Y: That's where I met you know who eventually, but I had been there almost 2 years when I met him. Miss Beek was the one who got me my job when I got out of high school. I was secretary to the superintendent of schools, Mr. Partridge, and he also had a lot of influence on my life. That's where I was working when I met "Chuck" [Brig Gen Charles E. Yeager]. I did go to night school at Chico State. Any other time I could, I even took a course--I went to school there off and on in a piecemeal way for about 2 years.

T: What military installations were around Oroville?

Y: There weren't any until the Air Force came in there. There was an old field out there, and they turned it into an airstrip for his squadron.

T: Here comes this dashing young flight officer?

Y: He wasn't very dashing. He was young. He looked like a baby. He had curly hair, and he was small framed in those days. You wouldn't believe how heavy--not heavy. He is not heavy yet, but he was not nearly so muscular. He only weighed about 150 pounds. He was the lowest ranking officer in the squadron. He was a flight officer so he had charge of their snafu fund, the fund that everybody pays into when they goof. He brought that to me and said, "We want to have a dance."

T: That's when he met you for the first time?

Y: That's right. I had never seen him before in my life until that day. He came in, and I was in charge----

T: Did lights go off, bells ring, and firecrackers explode?

Y: No. People came to me all the time wanting girls for dances. He was just another one. I said, "How many do you want, how many girls do you want?" He gave me the number. I have forgotten now, 18 or so.

T: How did you get these girls?

Y: I had a big long list of them. You would keep calling until you got them. They worked.

T: How did that sit with the local guys in the neighborhood?

Y: How did it ever sit with them in any town across the whole USA?

T: I know, but Oroville's being the size it was then----

Y: They had their camp followers too. They had a lot of girls that came along with them everywhere they went. I didn't

have too much trouble finding girls because they were new in town and everybody was excited with the uniforms and seeing all this. It really wasn't too hard. So I got the girls for him. I got the Elks Club----

T: You were working with the USO in addition to being a secretary?

Y: Yes. I had three jobs. I worked as a secretary all day long. Straight from there I went to the drugstore and did the bookwork. The only time it got really difficult was at the end of the month when I had to get out statements and everything. I worked 2 or 3 hours and maybe a little more. I would have my supper, and I would go to the USO and work until about 11 o'clock normally. I would work there on weekends also.

T: What would be, as you remember, a normal evening at the USO?

Y: Frequently, it was terribly dull. We had Ping-Pong tables and a basketball hoop set up at one end. It was a huge auditorium, a great big thing.

T: Was it the local city auditorium?

Y: Yes, that's where it was. My office was straight across-- they had a row of offices along one backwall. It was empty, and he came all the way across there. I remember his walking across there and asking for this dance. Anyway, he wanted me to go with him. He wanted me to go to this dance that I had set up with him, and I did.

T: He didn't waste any time?

Y: No. We started going steady.

T: What was your initial impression of this West Virginia hill-billy?

Y: The accent absolutely floored me. It was much worse than it is now. His English was atrocious. (laughter) I don't think they even know how to speak English really. It is terrible. It is still bad enough. Mine is not perfect, but--his English was terrible, absolutely awful. Then, of course, this foreign language they speak, which is bad. They have words for things I couldn't even figure out what they were words for. Poke for bag. I had never heard any of this. A paper bag is a poke in West Virginia.

(End Tape 1, Side 1)

T: What were some of the other words?

Y: They will say like, "Carry me to the store." They mean, "Go with me to the store." A lot of those things I had never heard before, and I couldn't imagine at first what all he was talking about.

T: Was he shy, bashful?

Y: In a way, yes. I think he was afraid of me, really afraid of me in a way, not as a man would be afraid of a woman, no, but just afraid he would do or say something wrong.

T: Your intellect?

Y: No, I didn't act--he said I acted prissy, whatever that means. That is another West Virginia term. I never had heard that either. I have many times since.

T: What attracted you to him?

Y: Probably the way he talked, I don't know. He was very interesting.

T: If you could understand him.

Y: I was extremely interested in all this flying. I was overwhelmed with the uniforms and things too. After all, I was only 18 or 19 years old.

T: If you had come along in today's world, do you think you might have liked to try that?

Y: Flying?

T: Yes.

Y: I have never cared for flying, but I would have done a lot of things differently. That's for sure. I had always wanted to be--when I went to high school, I was college prep all the way, and I threw in the business on the side. I carried seven solid subjects all 4 years. The reason was, I wanted to go to college. I got there, and I couldn't afford it. In those days scholarships were unheard of unless you were just an absolute--I was honor society the whole time and everything, but it didn't help as far as scholarships were concerned. I passed my English A exam for the University of California, but I couldn't afford to go. I couldn't even afford to go to Chico State except, as I did, by courses and things. I wanted to be a physical education [PE] teacher. I had an apartment in Oroville, and the first year I had it, I had a physical education teacher,

a new teacher, that came to our high school who lived with me for that time and shared my apartment with me. Those were in the days of frozen rents and everything. I had a rather nice little apartment, and she came and stayed 1 year with me. I guess she got transferred. I don't exactly remember. Anyway, that's what I wanted to be, a physical education teacher. I liked modern dance.

T: You moved away from home?

Y: I moved out of home before I--my family moved away before I finished my senior year.

T: And you decided to stay there?

Y: I stayed there to finish. I had my jobs and everything.

T: Where did they go?

Y: He went down to work in the shipyards in Oakland and my sister too. I enjoyed the physical activity things, and I wanted to be a PE instructor, but I didn't.

T: Do you regret it?

Y: You mention that I might have been interested in flying.

They had this CAP [Civil Air Patrol] program, and I joined it for awhile, but I never did fly. It was terribly expensive to do it. You really had to have backing or something to do it. That's about as far as I went with it. I was so overworked with all these other things I was doing that I dropped it.

T: How long did you continue to work at three jobs?

Y: The whole time he was overseas.

T: Did you decide to get married-----

Y: It was unspoken.

T: In his interview he said he didn't think he ever asked you to marry him.

Y: He never did.

T: Did you ask him?

Y: No. He started sending me all his money. He sent me all his money to put in the bank for him, and I just put it in my account with mine.

T: You would have been all right if he had not made it home?

Y: I would have just been fine. (laughter)

T: Were you still dating other guys?

Y: Yes, I did a few, but nothing----

T: He didn't know that?

Y: Yes, he did.

T: When did you hear about his being shot down?

Y: His mother called me. It was the hardest thing I ever did in my life, one of the hardest things--to write to her while he was shot down. I was writing her a letter like once a week trying to say that I knew he would be all right. How do you say that when you don't know a darn thing?

T: How did you really feel down deep though?

Y: Well, I didn't know because we had so many lost. When they were gone, they were gone, and that was it. I had no way of knowing. I knew that she would be the first to know because obviously they always----

T: How did you get the word that he was okay?

Y: His mother called me immediately, as soon as they got the telegram, and said that he was--he also wired me.

T: You didn't get any money during that time--they stopped the pay, right?

Y: I guess so. I don't remember that. He used to send the money himself. He didn't have an allotment or anything. He just sent me the money and said, "Here, keep this. Keep this for us." So what would you think? (laughter) Weird, right? He never ever asked me to marry him. The first inkling that I got, not inkling--I knew that we were serious. I didn't want to get married before he went overseas. I saw too much of that. They would get married, and they would lose them every time. We played it the other way and without saying so. I think that was it. I couldn't see marrying somebody that was going to go over there and be doing what he was doing. Besides, we had only known each other for 4 months.

T: Tell me about the caboose ride?

Y: This was while he was still at Oroville, and they moved the whole squadron to Casper, Wyoming. He finally got time to

have a little weekend leave. He was to meet me at the old Kit Carson Hotel in Reno. I bought a ticket on what I thought was a passenger train. I just bought a ticket to Reno. I got to the train station, and I was sitting there waiting for my train to come. Finally the ticket man said, "Lady, aren't you supposed to be on that train? It is getting ready to pull out." I said, "What?" It was a typical freight train. I said, "Where?" He said, "You get on that caboose at the end down there. Sometimes we take passengers on that." I got on it and rode the caboose all the way up there. When I got there, he wasn't there.

T: How long a trip was that in those days?

Y: It is all the way through the Feather River Canyon from Oroville to Reno. I don't know. It was a long time.

T: It must have been 6 or 8 hours.

Y: It was. It was a hard trip.

T: It was a pretty trip though, wasn't it?

Y: Yes. I was gussied up to the nines. I even had a hat on. I thought I was going to be on a passenger train, and here I was in a caboose.

T: Were there any other passengers?

Y: No! I was the only one. I was riding in this caboose with this conductor or whatever he was back there. We stopped in Portola. I think we stopped somewhere else, but I can't remember where it was. I got there, he was not there. He wasn't at the hotel. No word, nothing. I just didn't know what to do. I walked down the street.

T: Was it on a weekend?

Y: It must have been a weekend because I was working and I had to have time off. I think I did take 1 day or something. Anyway, I took off and went up there, and he wasn't there.

T: You waited?

Y: I waited and waited, and finally I got a call into the base. They gave me the runaround. You know how they do. I wasn't a relative or anything so they won't say anything. Finally, I got a friend--I think it was "Don" Bochkay [Lt Col Donald H.], but I can't remember which one of the boys it was. I knew quite a few of them. I got one of them to tell me what was wrong. They said that he had bailed out of a plane that day and was in the hospital. So I loaded myself back on the caboose and went home. They stopped in Portola overnight.

T: Where did you stay?

Y: I knew a friend of mine who used to live next door to our family. He had been with the railroad for a long time. He was then stationed in Portola, and I went and called them, and he came and got me and took me to their house for the night.

T: You were upset?

Y: I was terribly upset! I didn't know how bad he was hurt. They didn't know. The next day I got a telephone call, a couple of days later, I got a call from him, and he said that he was going to be all right. It wasn't but a very short time that they got quarantined and everything to go overseas.

T: You didn't see him?

Y: Yes, I did. I caught an airline and went to Casper. They had already quarantined them. They would sort of keep them in camp for a few days before they shipped them out. I went there and met him. I was there 2 or 3 days, as I recall, and then went back on the airlines. I did all of this without reservations, without anything. I went down there and waited for a seat, got on it, and the same way coming

back. I went there and got on this plane, my first airplane ride. I had never been on one in my life.

T: Did you like that?

Y: I thought that was interesting, yes. I learned a lot on that. I had ridden trains.

T: Do you remember the airline?

Y: I think it was American. That's when they had nurses on board. It was big deal, but to get a seat on one was really something.

T: Do you remember what kind of airplane it was or anything about the airplane itself?

Y: C-47. It looked something like that. Didn't they have a commercial one that looked like that?

T: Yes.

Y: That's what it looked like. It wasn't a very big plane as we know them now. It landed, and he met me. Of course, like I said, I knew a lot of the people there, and we had a real good time. I went home, and the next day----

T: Did you have one of those tear-jerking-----

Y: No. I was sorry to see him going overseas as anybody would, but we knew he was going even when he was in Oroville so why would I think any more about it then? That wasn't it. I think I was sad to go back home by myself. I just didn't enjoy that, but I got home, went to work the next day, and my supervisor said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "You have red marks all over you." I went into the nurse, and she took one look at me and said, "You go home and don't you leave your apartment until I tell you." Come to find out, I was the only case in the whole town of Oroville with chicken pox. I was 19 years old, and I had chicken pox, the worst case anybody could imagine. I have still got some scars from it.

T: And you had just left him?

Y: I had just left him, and they were supposed to be in quarantine. (laughter) That was the funniest thing.

T: You didn't tell anyone?

Y: No, I didn't tell them. I am sure they had all had it. I did everything that way. I always had things late. I had the mumps when I was--God, I don't know how old. I had the

chicken pox when I was way over the hill. I had all these childhood diseases. I didn't even have the measles until after I had four kids, and I finally got it. Everything was backwards.

T: After he returned, and he came back in early 1945, didn't he?

Y: We were married in 1945.

T: He came directly here?

Y: He came to my apartment in Oroville. He didn't even go home. He came straight there, and we played like we were married. I even wore a ring turned around upside down so the conductor wouldn't say anything. We went back on the train all the way to West Virginia. Nowadays you would just get on a train and go with a man, and you wouldn't think anything about it, but you just didn't do those things then. I played like I was married.

T: Did you have a Pullman?

Y: We had a Pullman. (laughter) Did Chuck tell you the story about his closest friend, "Bud" Anderson [Col Clarence E., Jr.] and him, who came home with him? He went to Newcastle,

which is right down here below us. Did he tell you that story?

T: No.

Y: We went down there to get on the train to go to West Virginia, and he had been going with Eleanor, his wife, for sometime, but she didn't want to get married because her husband had been killed so recently. He had been a pilot, and he had been killed about a year before. Bud said, "No, she isn't going to get married. She thinks it is too soon," and so on and so forth. That's the way we left him. We left for West Virginia, and we had a great time. We got married. We came back to the rest and recreation center at Del Mar. We went up to our room and put our things away and got our bathing suits on and went bouncing out onto the beach, and who is laying in the sand, but Bud and Eleanor. They had beat us by 3 days. They had already been married. They were there. They got married on the 22d, and we got married on 26 February. We still get together on our anniversary. We just had our 35th anniversary. They came up, and we all had a good time.

T: Other than working, did you have any hobbies growing up?

Y: Of course, sports activities were my biggest thing. I was a pretty good roller skater, and I bicycled and played

tennis and swam. I did a lot of mountain climbing and hiking. I can't say that I--oh, I used to collect movie stars' pictures. I remember that. I had stacks of books.

T: Did you ever want to be a movie star?

Y: No. I used to be told I looked like Vivien Leigh. I am sure it is only because of my coloring. When Scarlet O'Hara came out and that particular thing, everybody said I looked like her, but I think it was just my coloring and size probably.

T: You were married in 1945 in West Virginia?

Y: It was something else in that town. He was like--I don't know. They had something like a reception--a shower like for us. They bought all of these gifts. You wouldn't believe the beautiful set of silver. They had it in the high school auditorium. Everybody came.

T: He was the local hero.

Y: That's right.

T: An ace, a young guy.

Y: Twenty-one. When I was 21, I was just short of----

T: Are you older than he?

Y: No. He was almost 22. I was not quite 21. We got married in February, and I was going to be 21 in December. I had to get a wire off to my parents and get permission to get married in West Virginia. I had to ask permission from my parents to get married. I was almost 21 years old.

T: They had this big shower. Was that sort of a "Welcome home, Chuck" thing?

Y: It was. And my God, I didn't know these people or their language or anything, and here I was.

T: But they are nice people?

Y: Very nice. We got married in his family's big house, in the living room, in the parlor, the one they kept the doors shut on all the time. A local lady sang our wedding song, and the local preacher married us. They had a bank of flowers there and everything, and we took off for Huntington. He did ask me to marry him finally the night before we got married.

T: Does he remember that? He claims he doesn't.

Y: We went down and got a ring, and when he gave me the ring--obviously, when he gives you the ring, he is asking you. He didn't say it in so many words, but we did all of this without his ever asking me.

T: What about your parents? Did they know before you sent them a telegram that you were going to get married?

Y: Not for sure.

T: That was pretty risqué riding all the way back to West Virginia with this guy in a Pullman.

Y: And he hadn't even asked me to get married yet or anything. That's right. Well, I always said if I did it over again, I would never get married again and have four kids too. It wasn't so racy as you think.

T: From West Virginia?

Y: We then started the real rat race. We went to Texas, but before we could go to Texas, I had to come all the way out to California and undo my apartment, get out of it, pack all of that stuff.

T: Did he go to Texas, and you came back to California?

Y: Yes. After Del Mar. We went to Del Mar first. He went to Texas, and I went to Oroville.

T: The beginning of the TDYs [temporary duty] and separations?

Y: It didn't start right away, and it was my own fault. I got pregnant. That's the way it starts.

T: You have four children?

Y: Yes, we have four. I got pregnant with "Don" about the second month we were married.

T: Where is he now?

Y: He is in Telluride, Colorado, and he is 34 years old now.

T: What does he do?

Y: He is a mason and a beautiful skier and an absolutely professional kayaker. They have done the Colorado River four times now, all the way down.

T: The sccond kid?

Y: "Mike," "Mickey," Michael. He is in the Air Force, and he is at Hill Air Force Base in Utah. He is the father of our three grandchildren--Jason, Jennifer, and Matthew, in that order. They are all in school now. Then there is Sharon who is married, and she is in New York in Churchville, New York. She doesn't have children. They have been married 7 or 8 years now. I have forgotten exactly how long. Then there is Susan who is 29. She will be 30 her birthday, and she lives in Grass Valley. She owns her own home downtown and works for Riebe Automotive.

T: You were in Oroville, and he was in Perrin Field, Texas?

Y: I was only in Oroville just a few days to clean up and pack and leave. I went straight to Perrin Field.

T: Then he found out about this program where a POW [prisoner of war] could choose a base.

Y: We went to Sherman and Lubbock.

T: And he decides to take Wright Field?

Y: He went to Wright Field, and I went home because I was sicker than a dog.

T: You came back to California?

Y: No, home to West Virginia. Bought a house.

T: You were pregnant?

Y: That's why I was sick.

T: He gets the word on the X-1?

Y: Yes. He went to Edwards Air Force Base. It wasn't Edwards then; it was Muroc. I was still in West Virginia. I have forgotten how many days old Don was before he saw him. He was born in Huntington. He couldn't get back right at the time.

T: Did the Air Force take care of the baby bills?

Y: No. I had all of my children in private hospitals except Susan. The last one was born in--and was one of the first babies born at Edwards Air Force Base. They had just started delivering babies there then. Sharon was born up at Mojave, which is a little old 14-bed hospital. We got caught

in a snowstorm taking her home. They had a helicopter search party out after us and everything else. We had a real time getting home from the hospital after she was born.

T: His folks were there?

Y: Yes. The fact of the matter is until Don was born I just about lived with them. Then after he was born--I had bought a house. I decided it was too big and rattly, and I sold it. Then I rented another one, a smaller one, for awhile because I knew I wasn't going to stay there. Mike was born there too. I lived in Dayton for awhile while "Donnie" was a tiny baby.

T: That's right because he was out here TDY and he went back there.

Y: That's when I came out. I brought Donald with me. I left Mike with Mrs. Yeager. He was 5 months old approximately, 4 months old maybe, and I left him with Chuck's mother and came out here with Donald and stayed in the guesthouse. In those days you had to get out of it every 3 days so I used to sign out of it and sign back in it. That's terrible. (laughter) Until we found a place over in Rosemond at the Zabrowski ranch.

T: Forty miles away?

Y: Yes. He drove that every day to work. Chuck went back to drive our car and Mickey out and pick "Bob" Hoover [Capt Robert] up. Did he tell you about this?

T: No.

Y: Okay, Bob Hoover got married that day, and Chuck met them at the church, picked the two of them up, and headed for California in our little single-seat Ford. Bob Hoover is about 6 foot 3. Colleen and he had married that day, and they came all the way across this country with a 5-month-old baby in a car. That was the funniest thing. What a wedding! They drove it in 54 hours, I think it was, straight through, never stopped.

T: Only he and Hoover would do that.

Y: Yes. That was the funniest thing.

Y: They got there, and poor little old Mickey--well, my mother-in-law had made Karo syrup and boiled water in one bottle and had told him to mix so many ounces of that in this--she sterilized a bunch of bottles and everything--with one of these little cans of milk for his feeding. That's what

they did, but about so many hours out, the sloshing around of the Karo, it fermented. That little baby was so drunk when he got there that you just wouldn't know. He had this stupid grin on his face. He was so happy. He had just messed his pants when they got there, just as they drove up. They had this awful smell in the car. I was so glad to see him. I took him out and said, "Well, at least you could have changed him."

(End Tape 1, Side 2)

Y: I said, "At least you could change his pants." Chuck said, "Change him, hell no. We just put on another blanket." Something to that effect. We told it down at Bob's roasting they had for Bob Hoover about 2 weeks ago. We told that story.

T: After the release was made and the world knew about Chuck Yeager, the guy that broke the sound barrier, what kind of change did that bring in your life?

Y: Nothing much at the time. Oh, they invaded us quite a bit immediately when it first broke. There were photographers, and I didn't know how to handle them. I didn't know what to do with them. I couldn't make them stand back and wait a minute or anything like that. So when it happened, I

remember one particular--I have those pictures yet. The Times, I think it was, reporter came and a photographer and everything came swarming into our one little old bedroom house that we had. The children were sound asleep. They wanted pictures of me and the children and Chuck and everything. Instead of my telling them, "Okay, come back when they are awake," I went in and got the little guys up and laid them on the bed. Here they were really asleep, you know, and their big eyes looking up, "What's going on?" These flashbulbs flashing and everything. This was the change, as far as I was concerned--I took awhile to get tough. It took me awhile. I couldn't handle it then. I didn't know what to do. Other than that, it was no problem.

T: How did you handle his being a test pilot?

Y: I didn't. I didn't pay any attention to it. I knew he was flying and what he was flying and all about it, but that was what he was doing essentially from the day I met him. So I really didn't do anything about it or handle anything about it. I knew that was what it was. That's the way it was.

T: You saw the names of the streets?

Y: Oh, yes, and the widows and all of that. I went to enough services to last me all my life. I tried not to think about it. I don't think I did think about it.

T: Was that sort of the standard for the other girls?

Y: I think honestly what I believe after all these years of doing it, and also during wartime and when they are gone-- what I think is the individual personality of the woman herself and secondly or along concurrently with that is the relationship she has with her husband, the communication they have, how much he has turned over to her, for instance, for her to take care of and do herself so that she never becomes dependent on him. I was never a dependent ever in my whole life.

T: You ran the household and took care of----

Y: I have done everything from day one.

T: Finances and that kind of thing?

Y: Oh, definitely. I have never been a dependent. I remember many years later when the wing went from North Carolina to Korea and left all the wives. Chuck was the wing commander. I remember having talked to the wives several times and also

having handled many of their personal problems that the one thing I personally tried to stress with them was just exactly that. I said, "You knew this was your husband's job, and you knew that you had to do this." I did blame the men for not leaving their wives sufficiently educated to handle the things they had to handle when they were gone.

T: Did you notice a difference, relatively speaking, of the girls that were married to the World War II guys like yourself and the new ones?

Y: There was a difference, that's true. The World War II wives, the older women, you mean?

T: You still had the girls who were gung ho and wanted to be a part of the Air Force and then you had those----

Y: And you had those who weren't. The only difference that I can right off the top of my head think of was that many of the World War II wives--their husbands were World War II pilots--eventually had the choice of getting out if they wanted to whereas the new ones were all career. They are career. That is it. Of course, many of them did eventually get out because of other reasons, but these people made the choice, drew the line at the point when the war ended. There was a period in there where they either stayed in or

stayed out, one or the other. That group that did stay in--i.e., Chuck and all--was real dedicated Air Force types. That was it.

T: Did you want him to stay in the military?

Y: I think so. Chuck did not have a college education. We saw the Air Force for him, since he was doing what he wanted to do, as the place to be.

T: You were stationed at Muroc, now Edwards, for 9 years.

Y: Seventeen altogether, off and on.

T: Well, the first time.

Y: Yes, 9 years, most of it TDY.

T: Not only Mach 1, but he also went through Mach 2 there.

Y: Two and a half.

T: What else?

Y: We moved four different times.

T: You never did live on base the first time?

Y: The first three we were not on base. Then we went to Wright-Pat for 6 months, came back, and we were on base at the south end of the lake. You talk about wondering whether you are in the right place at the wrong time or something. He called me from the base one day, and I had wanted to see the wing fly, the little ones, the XF-92A was the number on it. I had never seen it fly. He said he was going to fly it and for me to go out in the yard and take the kids out and watch. I saw it coming. We lived right off the end of the lake, right off the end of the way they took off. They took off right over our house. It was an old ranchhouse. I went out there and was watching him come at me. He got about 50 feet off the ground and went back down. He was running out of lake right at me and the two children. I was just sitting there. It all happened so quick. It finally cut as if he tried to turn it or something and went skidding, and all I could see was this big pile of dust. I went straight into the house and called the tower. They had him on--I could hear him talking on the intercom loudspeaker. He was all right. He just had a scratch on his nose. It was really something. It lost power altogether, I guess. He will have to tell you what happened to it.

T: Did you notice any real change in him after he broke the barrier and after the publicity?

Y: None at all. It was nothing like what goes on today when somebody does something like that. Number one, there was no news about it. Number two, nobody thought anything about it really, no big thing about it at all. It was done. As time went on, it was doubled and tripled and so on, and all these other fighter planes and things came out and one thing or another. It really wasn't any big thing. It went on into the moon thing.

T: Mercury and then Apollo.

Y: Yes, the different astronaut programs, of course. That part of it--everybody was much more interested. So somebody broke the sound barrier. No one even remembers the name. It has only been the last few years that, I think, the thing with the value of history of certain things has brought this all back. People are great researchers now, you know, roots and that bit. The philatelic people, the ones that are interested in covers, postage stamps, and all that sort of thing, many things like that have brought this back. It has become more and more hectic now.

T: How many requests do you normally receive?

Y: On an annual basis? I would say that it would average out to be about 3,000 a year.

T: For photographs and autographs?

Y: Autographs, yes. To sign covers, to sign pictures, just plain signatures on a card, whatever, a signature. The reason I say that is because onetime he sat down and did 500. That was just a small one. Then he sat down and did 5,000.

T: And he has never done it with anything other than his own hand?

Y: His own hand. He does not use pen machines or anything. He said he never would. If he got so tired he couldn't do that, he won't do it.

T: You don't receive any reimbursement?

Y: No, we do not. We never have. Most people if they want autographs, like covers and things, will send a self-addressed, stamped envelope. A lot of them don't. He has not sent back all of those that don't. If they don't, if it is a cover, he sends it back because they are valuable. If they are just asking for something--the thing that really bothers

him the worst of all, that I know of, is people have asked him to write a story for them about himself. That bothers him worse than anything I know. He just tears it up and throws it in the wastebasket. If they haven't got enough gumption to go about and do a little research themselves--all they have to do is go to the library--then why should he take his time and sit down and write them a story about himself?

T: You didn't go with him to Command and Staff College?

Y: No. I had four children in school, and I decided to stay, and the same with the Air War College.

T: You went to Germany. This was your first trip overseas?

Y: In 1954 we went. We were in Germany 3 years and France 1 year. I really did enjoy that. I thought it was good for the children. We did a lot of hunting and got to know the German people quite well. I learned to speak the language well enough. Like I said, I can speak it, but I don't read or write it. I can understand what they say, and I can talk enough to get along. French got me. After learning my kitchen deutsche, I couldn't handle the French. I tried, but we were only there for a year. It didn't last too long. Then we came back to Victorville. We bought our first

house, really our first house that we actually lived in.

T: He was promoted to lieutenant colonel [LC]?

Y: Yes, he was. It seems to me he was. No, he made LC at Hahn, Germany. I remember Colonel Ascani's [Maj Gen Fred J.] pinning his leaves on. He made LC before we went to France. We were in Victorville, and the children were like--"Susie" was 7, that's the baby. Don was in the sixth or seventh grade. We were there 4 years as I recall, until 1961, and then we went back to Edwards, and he was Commander of the Aerospace Research Pilot School.

T: That's where he had the problem trying to get a house, at Edwards?

Y: Right.

T: Finally got one.

Y: We got one.

T: You stayed there from July 1962 until July 1966. He was the commandant.

Y: Yes. The kids were all into high school.

T: They really grew up in the desert, didn't they?

Y: Don and Mike graduated at Edwards, and Don went to the University of Redlands, and Mike went up to Cedar City, Utah, to college.

T: You are beginning to get more involved in the officers wives clubs. Did you do much of that?

Y: I did it because I had to, but I didn't like it. I was parliamentarian four or five different times for four or five different clubs. I also had different interests. I was a comparatively good bridge player, and I did play bridge, not party bridge. I ran the bridge club several times.

T: Were you involved in volunteer projects?

Y: Yes. When I left the service in 1975, they gave me a 30-year pin for Red Cross volunteer work in the hospitals. It wasn't all in hospitals. I did a lot of swimming, teaching and instructing for the Red Cross for the kids at the different base pools and things like that, just different volunteer projects of that type. My last 15 years or so-- no, it couldn't have been that much. I started hospital work when we first went to the Philippines really full time. I actually worked full time.

T: The kids had grown up?

Y: Yes. I only had the two girls with me then. They were juniors and seniors in high school. I worked in the lab at the big Clark Air Force Base Hospital. I worked almost every day, at least 4 days a week, 8-hour days. Then I worked in almost every hospital near whatever base I was at after that--Seymour Johnson, Norton, all of them.

T: He was Commander of the 405th?

Y: Yes. That was my big thing there. I had a maid and a yard boy. We had all this help and nothing to do. They needed help so bad.

T: Did most of the wives do things like that?

Y: Not most of them. The ones with children can't do things like that, when you have little children, unless you do something like I did. I taught AJBC bowling, American Junior Bowling Congress. I was an instructor. This was while we were in Victorville. I went to San Bernardino and got an instructor's certificate and came home and organized two different leagues, American Junior Bowling Congress leagues there at Victorville.

T: Did you enjoy your tour in the Philippines?

Y: Yes. I didn't mind that nearly so bad. The one bad thing about it was the fact that we were in war and we had casualties and things like that. It was a little bit hard to take at times.

T: I asked the general this morning what would happen to the families, to the wives, and he said that you got very involved with them.

Y: Yes. He was wing commander, and we had five squadrons, and I did the best I could to keep in touch with all of them. I did work with the officers wives club. I was parliamentarian again there too. I also worked on the scholarship committee and things like that. I tried to make as many of the squadron things as I could. I would say the last year I was there, I didn't do too much because I went to work almost full time at that hospital. You felt really needed there. That was someplace that you could do what you could do.

T: He came back and took over the 4th at Seymour Johnson.

Y: He left me the day we got there practically. He dumped me and left. (laughter)

T: He took off for Korea and the Pueblo crisis?

Y: The Pueblo crisis. They had sent the wing. The wing was already gone. He had to go catch it. There I was with all the other wives. This was what I referred to before, the first real experience I had of what the new wives were all about. These were all pilots and crew chiefs, et cetera. They took the whole package over there. I have forgotten how many babies were born while they were gone and all these things. Some of these poor women were left without a red cent because they took off and left within--I have forgotten how many hours' notice. They left. These men had left them desperately in need of funds and a lot of other things. I always felt that the onus was on the men to do something about that. I said so many times and so many times even after they got back that I hoped it didn't happen again, but it does because there are some men who won't teach their wives. I admit there are wives who can't learn either, but still I do believe the men ought to see--if their wives can't handle it, they ought to have somebody who can.

T: Who fared better, the enlisted man's wife or the officer's wife?

Y: I don't really know. Probably the officers' wives because they could do something else about it. In other words they

could go to family. They could afford to leave and go to momma or do something. Often the enlisted men's wives just couldn't afford it. However, we had a bunch of organizations that did help some, not a lot but some. Everybody made it through just fine. There were no desperation cases or anything like that really. It was all taken care of sooner or later, but it could have been much more simple.

T: You are beginning now to get a lot of time under your belt as a----

Y: At this point, yes. I am getting to feel it.

T: Nothing shocks you are surprises you any more, does it?

Y: No. And I also had a son in the war then too. Don was in Vietnam or was getting ready to go, I should say.

T: How did that affect you?

Y: His going? Oh, I hated that. Chuck and he were both over there at the same time.

T: He would go down and see him.

Y: He saw him a couple or three times. As I have said many times, I probably overprotected all my children. I wouldn't let them watch spooky movies, and none of them would even pull the wings off of a fly. They are fairly nice kids. Oh, they were roughnecks and whatnot. What I am trying to say is that they are kind and gentle people.

T: You never have had any trouble with your kids?

Y: Oh, plenty. Here was a boy, and he has been your first. You have tried to do the best you can by him all the way, and he is a darn good kid. You send him over there. You have spent all this time teaching him not to do anything unkind to anybody or anything, and then you tell him to kill. It was hard. It was terribly hard. I think, there again, one of the hardest things, if I can compare any of them as to which is the hardest, was writing to him and telling him that he had to do what he had to do.

T: Did you worry more about him than you did Chuck?

Y: Much more. Although I was always--and I have said this many times--glad in a way that it was he and not the other boy.

T: Was he stronger?

Y: No, he was a willow. He could accept anything. I don't know whether Mike could have or not. He might have. He is turned like Chuck--he might have. In a way he is. There is a West Virginia phrase for you--"turned."

T: Instead of changed?

Y: No. He is like him. He is turned like him. He acts like him a lot in many of his ways. Don was a paratrooper. He had two Bronze Stars, one with V. There is a story. Did Chuck tell you? When he was on point with his platoon and they were jumped, I guess he must have killed a bunch--I don't know. He never would tell me. He probably told Chuck, I don't know, but they gave him the Bronze Star with V. When the general came down there to put it on him, to pin it on him, he said, "Here is one I bet your dad doesn't have?" Don said, "Yes, he does, sir." (laughter) I have the medals now. Don gave them to me and said he never wanted to see them again, but I am sure he will change his mind someday.

T: He goes as Vice Commander of Seventeenth Air Force at Ramstein as a brigadier general?

Y: I guess he told you about pinning it on before he was?

- T: Yes. He was frocked, and that was the first time I have heard that expression in the Air Force. I knew about the Navy.
- Y: They had to do it because of the situation. Seventeenth Air Force Vice Commander.
- T: Did you enjoy the tour?
- Y: I enjoyed the tour very much. I, there again, did a lot of hospital work.
- T: Did you have both girls with you?
- Y: No. We left Susan at Marshall University in West Virginia. We took Sharon with us. She wasn't 21 when we left. She turned 21 after she was over there. She got married while she was over there.
- T: Anything particular stand out in your mind?
- Y: Not a lot. We had a rather short stay this time. We only stayed 18 months. I think the shock was being sent to Pakistan. When they sent word, I said, "Where is that?" I was really shocked. I had a grandson born while I was over there and didn't get home to see him until later. Sharon got married. Things happened.

T: Did the people talk to you about our involvement in Vietnam?

Y: Yes. They were reserved about it. I think we avoided talking about it rather than not talk about it. I think we all just more or less mutually or silently agreed that we wished we weren't in it and let it go at that.

T: Is that the way you came to feel about it?

(End Tape 2, Side 1)

Y: I think I felt that we should have been allowed, as military, to fight the war. I just don't think we ever did. I think the war was being run politically rather than militarily. I think we could have stopped the whole thing at any point. I think we could have won the war. That is what I think, and I don't think it would have cost us as much as it did. That is my own personal opinion. I know absolutely nothing about it as to what the extenuating circumstances were. I had a son and a husband in it, and that's all I know about it.

T: Let's go to Pakistan now. You made a big hit there.

Y: You heard! What do you mean, hit? I don't know about that.

T: I know that you worked for the US AID [Agency for International Development].

Y: In the State Department. I worked to develop a program or a basis for population planning materials. In other words, a retrieval system and the basis of the system so that when anybody in the country of Pakistan or the State Department or US AID wanted information on population planning, they could have it at the tip of their fingers. I didn't know what I was getting into. I hadn't worked for years. I was growling at a party one night that I was bored stiff. I had eight servants, a 17-room house. Don't raise your eyebrows. They were absolutely useless. They were all men. They only do certain things. You have to have eight or ten to do the job of one good one. That's the way they are. They drive you crazy. They want to eat. You have to feed them. That's all they want. I am not kidding you. You have one to wash from the floorboards down and one from the floorboards up. You have one to cook. You have one to do your sewing, one to do your washing, where any one good one could do it all or maybe two for such a big house. You have a driver. You have a gardener. You have a guard. All of these.

Here I was in this hassle every day of who is supposed to do what and why. I had a head bearer, paying him three

times what he was worth. I finally said, "Okay, if you want to keep your job, you do it. You tell them what to do every day, and if I don't find it done when I come home at night, that's it." That's when I went to work. I was growling. I said at a party one night, "I am so bored. I can understand why many of the women who come over here don't make it long." This fellow--he was in the Population Section of US AID--said, "Come to my office in the morning. I am going to put you to work." I said, "You are kidding," just offhand like that. He said, "I am serious. I need help." I went down there, and I said, "You know, I don't know from beans what I am doing." He said, "You give it a whirl for awhile. We will put you on contract." They contracted me to do this.

T: Were you paid?

Y: Very well. Another good thing about it was I worked approximately 5 to 6 hours a day. I didn't feel that I could go back to work the 8-hour-a-day bit. I ended up working 8 hours a day. I started out with reservations. I had fun doing it. I had a lot of fun.

T: You must have left Pakistan with a good feeling?

Y: I did. You know, the war was on while we were over there. That was very bad because my little grandson, Jason--I got a telegram that he was to be operated on. I wanted to come home and be with Linda and Mike and the baby. I hadn't even seen the little guy yet. He was 14 months old. The war was on, and I couldn't get out of Pakistan. Finally, with the help of the Ambassador, I was on the first plane out of there with anybody on it, with all the pigs and chickens and everything else. I got on this airplane, a PIA [Pakistan International Airlines], into Amsterdam. It was on New Years. I had two New Years, at Amsterdam and again in New York. That was really something. Anyway, I got to Denver. They were in Denver, Colorado, then. He was to be operated on the 3d, and this was the 1st. Mike met me at the door and said that they had already operated and that he wasn't going to live. The doctor said "no way." He had a huge big neuroblastoma, a cancer in his adrenal. It was just a terrible shock, just really terrible. I was there a month. They decided on radiation for him. I stayed the whole time he was in the hospital, a whole month. He went on with radiation treatments at home for 2 more weeks after that. I went back to Pakistan.

They let him rest for 2 weeks. Two months to a day after that, they operated on him again. The first time they had

just sewn him up and said "no way." That thing had grown on his intestines. They operated on him again, and it was all dead, and they peeled it off of his intestines and off of his adrenal and off of his kidney and got it all out of there and sewed him back up. Chuck came home that time to be there in case something happened. That little dickens is 10 years old now and not a sign of cancer.

T: Do they keep pretty close check on him?

Y: You better believe it. He has been operated on three more times since then for adhesions and things. He was cut from almost his backbone down past his belly button. If he had had a zipper on, it would have been great because they keep opening him on the same thing all the time. The most recent one was--this is going on the third year now. He was in Alaska, and they did him again. He kept getting adhesions in one spot. It was growing on his intestines. It would grow together, and he had this horrible pain, just absolutely terrible. So they took out 5 inches of his intestines, sewed the two ends back together with a tube in the middle of it to make sure it wouldn't grow together there. With a string on it all the way up through his esophagus out his mouth. Anyway, about 3 weeks after the surgery, they started pulling that, and they pulled that plastic piece out of there. Isn't

that something? He has just been fine ever since that. He is just great. He plays soccer and everything now. He is our miracle baby. He really is because that baby was 14 months old. On Christmas Day his greatgrandmother was out there visiting them and having Christmas with them, and I have pictures of them. He was what seemed to be a perfectly normal little baby. On New Years Day, they operated on him, emergency. That's how fast that thing grew. It was huge. You could see it. I could see it in him.

T: Then you came back.

Y: We came back from Pakistan to Norton, and that was the end of it. I worked in the emergency room 2 years there at the hospital.

T: Were you ready to get out?

Y: Yes.

T: You looked forward to the retirement?

Y: If he had been offered a job to stay in, I would have stayed in, but I was ready. We had already bought this house. I was staying up here in Grass Valley waiting for our quarters to be vacated.

T: You stole this place?

Y: Stole this place, and we leased it until we retired.

T: Would you do it over again?

Y: Oh, yes. Some things differently if I knew what I know now like anybody else, but that's all. I would do it all over again. Chuck is an impetus, a catalyst to me. I wouldn't do anything if it weren't for him. He goads me into doing things. He makes me do things that I would never do on my own. I wouldn't have had any of this life if it had been me. I am a very--what is it when you are very methodic about things and do everything just as it is supposed to be done and whatnot? With him, it is never that way. It is always some wild goose chase or something. He is always trying something. He loves to travel. He is absolutely antsy. I wouldn't if it weren't for him. We have this trailer, and we take off. I love it once I get out away from here, but getting me to go is like pulling teeth. Once I get going, I am just fine. A lot of things throughout our whole life have been that way. If it hadn't been for his making me do it, I wouldn't have done it. I have never been sorry I did or anything. It has been great. I would never have had the experience of doing a lot of things if it hadn't been for him.

T: Anything generally you would like to say about the Air Force?

Y: I think you have touched on a subject there. The Air Force, I don't know it today like I did. I really don't. That's probably because you do have a different way of joining the Air Force than we had. Our whole reason for being in the Air Force was different.

T: Patriotic versus whatever it is now.

Y: It was. It's a job now. In those days it was not only patriotic, it was also a job, but you had the choice in other words to be there. That's how I feel about it. I think the pilots still marry the most beautiful women in the world. I have seen them. They are so young and beautiful I can't believe it. I was recently at a luncheon type gettogether, all pilots and pilots' wives, and that was the most gorgeous group of people you ever looked at really. I am very sincere. I think Air Force pilots naturally pick much better looking women than the Navy does. (laughter) I am just saying that. I am serious about the other. They really do. There is something about Air Force pilots. I think they have some kind of competition or something. Don't you?

T: I think so.

Y: I suppose after I think this over, I will think of a million thinks I should have told you but didn't.

T: When we send you the transcript, please add to it if you think of something.

(End Oral History Interview #1205)