Glady Peterson: This is an interview with Guy Rogers and Marie Rogers on January 19, 1987, and our beginning topic will be the Charlie Russell Riders. Guy, before we get to the Charlie Russell Riders, it might be a good idea if we just kind of briefly reviewed some of the main points that were on some of your other tapes. That is, you were, I believe, born in Missoula.

Guy Rogers: Yes, I was.

GP: Grew up in Missoula. Went to school in Missoula. Worked in Missoula and finally became a member of the military service. It was the Navy...

GR: Army Air Force.

GP: Army Air Force...Army Air Corps, at that time, right. You not only served our country well, you gave a good deal of your life to serving our country in World War Two and even lost a leg due to a wound in...you received being shot down in France. Is that correct?

GR: In Germany, yes. I was shot down over Berlin.

GP: And you came back eventually to Missoula, and served as Missoula’s postmaster from the ’50s—1954, is that correct?

GR: That's correct, yes.

GP: Until 1972?

GR: That's right.

GP: We've already discussed many, many topics of your life, your World War Two service and your jobs prior to that and after that and in the post office and finally you got to retire in the early ’70s. I believe you told me that it was after you retired that you began the Charlie Russell Riders. Is that right?

GR: No, it was while I was still postmaster we started this. I got into it kind of on a tangent really. My kids were real interested in horses, and at that particular time, I got into it in about 1956.

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1 See oral history interviews OH 131-031, 032 and OH 158-002.

Guy C. Rogers, Marie C. Rogers Interview, OH 168-001a, b, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
GP: So it was long before you retired.

GR: Yes, and I was in it for, I think, 14 years. But back in the ‘50s, in 1952, an organization called the junior riders was formed by the saddle club. At that time the Missoula Saddle Club with a large active organization, which subsequently, created the Treasure State Charity Horse Show. And the Treasure State Charity Horse Show was shown for several years in the Field House at the University of Montana. It was a very pleasing show, but with that many people involved there was...they felt there was a need for a structured program of horsemanship for young riders so they created the Missoula Junior Rider Organization, taking in kids from the age of 9 through 18. Nine seems a strange starting figure, but it was determined at that time—and subsequent events proved it to be right—that it was a pretty good starting time for kids to be old enough and strong enough to handle a horse through intricate maneuvers. Prior to that. It was both a case of maybe they weren’t strong enough and maybe they just weren’t mature enough yet to handle a horse with precision.

GP: Probably not big enough either.

GR: That’s right. So the organization was formed and sponsored by the Missoula Saddle Club. At that time, they showed once or twice at the fair, and every kid that was out participated in it. So it was more or less a ride through of quite simple maneuvers that pleased a whole lot of parents and didn’t really amaze anybody, but it was good for the kids. Matter of fact, the old catch phrase was outside of a horse, it just fits exactly the inside of the kid. And this was true. But as the effect of the, well, the size actually and the interest of the saddle club waned, Missoula Junior Riders became almost an orphan organization. At that time in Missoula, there was also a very active Missoula County sheriff’s posse which specialized in drill maneuvers, much as a band would put on a drill, and they—rather than see a die—said, “We’ll take on the sponsorship.” However, their sponsorship really didn’t amount to anything except that you can use our name, and if any of our members would care to act as riding instructor or a drill master, that’s fine.

Well, it almost died at that particular time because it didn’t have strong leadership. There were about 35 kids altogether in the program. As you would have of it, you’d always have some that are very anxious to do an extremely good job and others that are just out there because everybody else is out there. They came out there to have a lot of laughs and a lot of fun. So this was about the time that I got into it. My two oldest daughters were old enough to ride in it, and they were interested in riding, so I was out there every evening that they drilled and the need for leadership became evident that they were searching for anybody to take it over. My assistant postmaster John Roberts and I took over the remnant of what had been the Junior Rider Organization. Just prior to that, it split, and a group called the Rattlesnake Riders formed. They happened to be the core of the kids at that time that really wanted to work seriously at becoming a drill team. So what we took over, inherited, were 14 kids without a great deal of desire or discipline, and it was up to us to determine something to do with them.
GP: Did those Rattlesnake Riders largely live in the Rattlesnake—

GR: Yes, they did.

GP: —and it was more convenient for them to be out there?

GR: That's correct. One of the problems always was how do we get to practice area. The practice area with the fairgrounds. So it was a project for the kids from the Rattlesnake to get to the fairgrounds, and our kids rode in from here, which is about two and a half miles.

GP: Where were the horses kept? Some at the fairgrounds?

GR: Well, very few kept at the fairgrounds. Almost all on acreages around the town.

GP: I see, so you had to get the horses over there too.

GR: That's right. And these were all teenage kids so...well, below teenage when you get down to the nine 9 year old. At that time, there were not too many of them had horse trailers. It was load them in a truck or find somebody with a horse trailer that would carry them or the kid ride them in. We had one kid that rode in from Lolo, and of course, this created the problem—a weather problem. For instance if it looks like it's going to rain today, you're going to have to call off the practice. But if you're going to practice at 6 o'clock, you're going to have to make the decision before 3 o'clock because some of those kids have already started to ride into the fairgrounds. I recall one time particularly, that it was pouring rain but it didn't start until quite late, and I hadn't called off the practice. But it was raining so hard that I thought, well, nobody will be out there, but on the thought that maybe somebody had been dumb enough to go out there and think that it wasn't going to rain that hard, I got my truck and I drove out to the fairgrounds. When I drove in the fairground, the doors—barn doors to the big barn out there—were open and 19 kids came out in the rain.

GP: Did you do this in the summer or the year round or after school or when?

GR: No, we did it all summer long. We started before school was out, and we had our problems with school events going on at the same time as the practices but not too early. We started in May. But then all summer long, we were involved with this until almost the school started in the fall. But it evolved really. The first drill that we had we had in the field against...the Rattlesnake Riders drilled and so did we at a horse show. Our team was...we almost felt we were going to have to lead some of those horses around because they were just...the kids just weren't good riders at all. But they developed where they could do it. We drilled in that Field House, and then I guess it was the exposure but enough families saw that, that we had kids coming out of the woodwork with horses. “Can we join your organization?”

Guy C. Rogers, Marie C. Rogers Interview, OH 168-001a, b, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
So that 14 kids, within two years, became more than 100 on horseback.

GP: Oh my! How in the world did you handle that?

GR: Three nights a week and two of us to handle them. Well, we soon found that we couldn't handle that many...we had a loudspeaker system luckily. There was a stand built out there in the fairground where we could stand on that and overlook. But we realized that we were going to have to break it into different groups. So we broke it, and at that time the thought of the Charlie Russell Riders [unintelligible]. We thought that we had enough kids up there and we were doing it long enough now that we could make a very good precision drill team, by picking the best riders of the group—the entire group.

GP: Did any of the parents help you?

GR: Well, they were willing to help, but I think the thing that worked the best for us is that they worked in backup positions so that we didn't...we had no parent trouble whatsoever. We had an amalgamation of kids and families. We had doctors, lawyers, ditch diggers, farmers, everything, and they all got along because they all needed each other. The older kids didn't look down their noses at the little kids—the younger kids—because without the younger kids, they didn't have a drill team. We took great...We worked hard to make sure that cliques didn't form. We were just extremely fortunate because in one of the groups that we broke in, we decided that one group would really just play horseback games so we'd have the Indian name for it is [unintelligible] games. We'd have barrel races would be one event, keyhole races, rescue races, and all different types of events, and they'd choose up team. But we would always choose the team.

GP: How did you know about all these things?

GR: Well, I got busy and got digging into the book to determine what to do with this type of thing. In addition to that squad, we had the beginners' squad, which we were then teaching horsemanship. Teaching them how to ride. How to control the horses. Of course, as they progressed, then they can move up to the next group. So we had about, oh, about 35 kids in each group, and it finally got to where we had...where we didn't get the parents in it, we got some of the riders on the drill team to take over some of these things. Of course, the little kids looked up to them, why someday they'd be on that team too.

But at about that time we decided that we wanted a very unique drill team. We wanted to have a drill team of about anywhere from 24 to 36 riders. We wanted half of them to be dressed as cowboys and the other half as Indians. This was the basis for selection of the Charlie Russell Rider with his involvement as a cowboy with the Indian. I noticed one day that when our kids would go back to catch the horses, they'd never take a rope for a bridle or anything. They'd just go back and jump on and bareback in the pasture and ride them in. But they were all three girls, and all three had quite long fingernails so they would reach down on the base of the neck and...
guide the horse by putting pressure of a fingernail on one side or the other. When it come time to stop, why, they'd put pressure on the finger nails on both front shoulders, and I thought looked pretty slick so I said, “You suppose you could ride that way through the drill?”

They said, “Well, if we had some way of stopping the horse, we could.” So I decided we that would create, what we called, the neck rope and really all it was was a fan belt from a car. We wrapped it in cloth so that it had a different appearance. We drove roofing nails from the outside through the inside and then cut them off so that there were blunt on the inside but there were like a rivet around the base of the horse's neck. So when they would want to stop the horse, they'd pull up on that neck rope and those rivets would come up against the horse and some of them would act like they'd just run into a barbed wire fence. They'd stop right now. So we took two of our kids out there, and they rode through the drill like that. Of course, everybody was highly elated, “Boy, I want to do that.” Naturally, all of them found out they couldn't do it.

But to begin with two of our daughters and John Roberts' granddaughter were the only three that could ride like that. But within a matter of several months, we finally got to the point where we could have anywhere from 12, 14, 16 kids ride the horses that way—no bridle, no saddle at all. But when we built the drill team, we didn't want to have the color bearer just ride into an area and stop and let the rest of the crew work around him. We wanted them to do everything in the drill that the unfettered riders did. So then we were faced with a problem of how were we going to have the Indian flag bearers carry the flag because they were quite heavy and they were very large. So we determined that we could fasten the flag boot, which was a leather cuff to the ankle of the rider and they could put the bottom of the flag in that and hold it with their hand and braced at the bottom in the flag boot, leaving the other hand free to operate the neck rope. But our entire drill was done at a gallop—a short gallop, very much in control of what, in Western parlance, is called lope—short lope.

Then we were faced with making all the horses travel in this gait at the same speed. Big ones, the little ones, the fat ones, and the thin ones—and all of them had an individual gait of their own. So then it became a matter of patience and skill for those kids to teach those horses to short lope, because the big ones wanted to try because it was a little slower than they normally gallop. The little ones, of course, had to gallop a little bit faster in order to hold the position, and we operated with two different spacings. One was head to tail spacing, which was just exactly what it sounds like. They were so close that they were almost like a bunch of circus elephants hooked together as they went around. But then when we would alternate them out—one, one direction and one, the other—then we would create what we called a horse-length spacing. And this horse-length spacing was the one that we needed to go through the crossovers, because we got into what we called—one of our maneuvers was called the three-ring circus. Three circles interlocked—all going different directions and crossing through at the gallop.

GP: Sounds complicated.
GR: Boy, it was. I’ll tell you.

GP: I don’t know how you ever...It must have taken hours and hours.

GR: It did. It did.

Marie Rogers: [unintelligible].

GP: A.m. or p.m.?

GR: P.m. After school.

MR: Worked them after school.

GP: And Saturdays?

GR: Yes, and Sundays.

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: But—

GP: Now, how often...Oh, go ahead, I didn’t mean to interrupt.

GR: But we didn’t have anything unless we didn’t have precision. Because whatever we did, it had to be done precisely. Incidentally, we never ever had a collisions through these circles—these interlocking circles. Never.

GP: No collisions?

GR: No.

GP: Did you ever have an accident?

GR: No.

GP: Somebody fall off a horse?

GR: Oh, yes. We did have one fall off a horse, and surprisingly it was a girl riding in a saddle. Never had an Indian fall off bareback. But it was...it then really became the thing to do to get around [unintelligible] their horses [unintelligible], because we showed at horse shows over at, mostly, western part of the state. We showed a K-O Rodeo every year. In the fall we had a big
picnic, and went different places. We went to the K-O rodeo ground one year and put on a drill up there. We put on a drill up there where the parents of all the kids had to put on the drill for the kids. We all had to ride our kids' horses and drill while they formed the audience. Let me tell you, they were a critical audience. And—

GP: No, is the K-O, is that the one up at Arlee?

GR: No, it's the one up Miller Creek here. They have that spring rodeo every year. But they really did look forward to that, and it really became...It kept getting bigger and bigger, and of course, kids came out with horses if they'd just gotten the horse and they really didn't know anything about riding so we had to teach them how to stay on top of the horse, how to control the horse.

GP: But you say...if it was only the two of you—you and John Roberts and then your drill team members themselves who taught the kids?

GR: That's correct. That's right.

GP: You never had any other adults?

GR: No, no, no. We didn’t.

GP: Do you, by any chance, have a list of the members of this? Did you ever keep such lists?

GR: I did it for quite a long time, but it changed so much each year that I wouldn’t have the faintest idea where it is now. Even the maneuvers, you know, I changed the maneuvers every year in order to keep it fresh, because it took hard work to do this with precision and when the older kids had done this a year before there was a tendency to, “Oh I know it all. I can waltz through this.” So we made beginners out them every year.

GP: Were there prizes awarded for this? Did you take places in that sort of thing, or was it just a matter of appearing in shows.

GR: No. No. It was just a matter of showing our drill team; although, most of the kids were showing their horses in other classes. So when we’d go...for instance there was a big show of horse show at Stevensville each year that we’d put on the drill, and then all of the kids would be in the various horse show classes. As a matter of fact, we were quite tickled that we had three girls in their event that they liked the best—the horse show event was the Western Pleasure class and each one of the youngsters won the Western Pleasure class for three years. A different youngster each year. But I was announcing the drill and was up in the announcing booth, and I stayed there after we put on the drill and they put on the Western Pleasure class and I think it was our youngest daughter won. One of the women in the booth turned to another woman and said, “She won that last year.” I didn't say anything at all, but it had been a
different sister that won the year before. So there were a lot of things besides the drill team, but the drill team was the core of it. And finally, as the top of the deal, we were hired to go to the Great Falls State Fair and paid 500 dollars a performance to put on four performances at the state fair in Great Falls.

GP: Do you happen to remember when that was?

GR: Gosh, I don't remember what year it was. I can remember—

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: But this was a great experience because we had to camp out over there. We took 24 horses and 24 kids, and we camped out and fixed all our own meals, sheltered all the horses in the Great Falls sheriff posse camp that they had out there.

GP: I certainly hope they had some parents along on that. [laughs]

GR: We did. We did, we did. But they wanted us to perform in their parade over there too, and that parade area was...oh, I'd say that was five miles from where we were camped that we had to get all of our costumes and horses ready for that thing and mount up and ride the five miles the Great Falls to put on the...to ride in the parade.

GP: Did you ever have some pictures in newspapers of your group?

GR: We have, but I couldn't tell you when or where.

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: We always were going to get a photographer and get a tape made, you know, motion picture of our drill, but we just never got around to it really. We were so busy putting everything together and getting ready to travel. When we’d go somewhere to put on a show, the big problem was to get all the horses.

GP: I can imagine, but did you ever take any pictures for your own record or do you have your family’s—

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: [unintelligible].

GP: What I’m thinking is it would be nice if the archives [Mansfield Library’s Archives and Special Collections] had a picture of this drill team too.
GR: Yes, yes. It really, it became very proficient. I think one reason because they didn't, they
didn't fight against discipline. At the same time, we were doing this, the sheriff posse asked me
to announce their drill. They had a drill team too. However, we finally got proficient enough
that when we were requested to put on a drill somewhere if we were going to do it, the sheriff
posse wouldn’t do it.

GP: Is that right?

GR: That’s right.

GP: Showed them up.

GR: We really did. But when I was working with the sheriff posse, they’d call out to somebody,
“John, move up. Your spacing’s a little too long.”

Immediately, he’d come back “Well, mine’s all right. His is what’s wrong.”

Kids didn’t do this. Just when I said, “Your spacing is wrong, move it up,” they got embarrassed
and moved up. So as a consequence, we had great discipline because they were out there and
wanted to do their very best that they could do. They weren't just filling in time. It really
became something that was recognized. I know one time we were putting on a show at the K-O
Rodeo, and the cowboys were working on a bucking chutes to get from the bucking horses
ready for the event as soon as we finished and I heard one of them turn around and say, “My
god, look at there, those kids riding without any bridle.” So this was quite a compliment.

GP: It was impressive. Well, what happened to the group?

GR: After I decided I'd been in there long enough, I talked another man into taking it. His name
was Clyde Backer (?). He was drill master for a couple of two or three years. Then of course, he
had to go on to something else too. Then one of the ex-riders in the drill team took it over—a
girl. She found she was too near the age of the kids that were riding in there, and she had some
discipline problems. As a result, it gradually filtered down until it still exists, but it's a small
group of riders and the number of...they don't highlight the bareback bridles with horses
anymore because they don't have enough...well, enough kids capable of it and enough
discipline to really bring it off.

GP: I thought of a couple of things. While you were talking, Guy, one was, did you ever concern
yourself about having liability insurance in those days?

GR: This was the principal reason that I quit. Really, it was because I got to thinking, we really
are not an entity. We are a group that...I’m the drill master that in essence says, “Come on, kids.
Bring your horses out to the fairgrounds, and we’ll have some fun.” I suddenly realized that if
somebody got hurt, I was just vulnerable as I could be. So by that time, my kids were old—too
old to ride any—so I didn’t have quite, oh, the same feeling toward it, at least to justify taking a chance. As a result, I decided I’d better get away from there while I could, because it could have been a very dangerous deal.

GP: Yes, it certainly could have.

MR: [unintelligible].

GP: No, and I’m wondering if maybe the individual families might have had enough insurance to cover their own family.

MR: [unintelligible].

GP: Yes, it’s a nice picture. If you had a copy of this, or a copy could be made, I think the archives would be interested in having a copy of that.

GR: If you want to try to copy it [unintelligible].

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: Yes, they were.

MR: [unintelligible].

GP: I know that in the archives there are lots of records, but when it comes down to pictures of people in the community who were doing things like this, they don’t have that many so it probably would be appreciated. I imagine that this one could be copied. They do do that in the archives if you wouldn’t mind.

GR: No.

GP: I wanted, before we stop here, there’s something I wanted to ask you—either or both of you. Do you think that there is as much interest in this sort of thing today as there was...when was this 15, 20 years ago when you were involved in this?

MR: [unintelligible].

GP: You think there’s as much interest?

GR: Well, there’s as much horse interest, yes, but not this type of activity. This is, I guess, somewhat similar to band practice and marching practice and that type of thing. It takes a large group with that as their one goal to put up with all the hard work and the sublimation of the individual characteristics—
GP: And the time!

GR: And the time, that’s right. That’s right. So there is much of this left anymore. Now, I think one reason possibly that ours lasted as long as it did too, when we created the Charles Russell Riders, we raised the top age limit from 18 to 21—

[Break in audio]

GR: Had there been a place for them to go, I think, we would have lost them to an older riding group. But the only older riding group that was close at that time was the women’s posse from Hamilton, and this of course was too inconvenient for them to go to. So we had some of the older riders, and, of course, these were the more proficient riders that we took to Great Falls when we got paid the money to put on the show there as we did. We also were invited one year to go to the state drill team competition as an invited show group, which was not allowed to be considered within there. We were the composite group to show what everybody was working towards. So this was really an honor that, to my knowledge, that was the only time that was ever done—state competition.

GP: And where did you go?

GR: That...no. I guess it was [unintelligible].

MR: I think so.

GR: But there were posses came from all over. We were disqualified from being...we were unqualified to participate in too because we had a mixed group. As I stated before we started this tape, about 95 percent of these riders were girls. But we did have, I think, four boys. Had we been willing to drill without the boys, we could have competed in this competition. But the boys were part of the drill team too, and we felt we didn’t want to split it up.

GP: Why was it that it was mainly girls?

GR: I think this is true universally. Boys have too many distractions. Basketball, football, baseball, automobiles. To them, a horse is more an animal to do something with. To a girl, that horse is almost a doll—it’s my best friend and it’s my cat, it’s my dog. I love it and love me. Boys don’t feel it.

GP: I wonder too, back in those years, girls were not involved in sports so much.

GR: That’s entirely right. You bet.

GP: Now, with Title IX, it brought girls into sports.
GR: Yes.

GP: I think they're there to stay.

GR: Oh, I'm sure. We would have boys come out on their horses to join this organization. Great place to meet girls. But after they'd been in some of these horseback games and had their nose rubbed in the dirt by some of these girls, they wouldn't be back again. But there were three or four that had been with us from the start. Here again, there was no problem. It was amazing that the entire group got along as well as they did, and they did this for 14 years that I know of.

GP: Just as a matter of interest, do you keep in contact with any of those girls?

GR: A few of them, yes. Every once in a while, we're out eating somewhere, somebody will come on over that is a stranger and say, “Guy, I want to thank you for the years and the fun we had.” [laughs] But they're women now, and they've got two kids.

GP: Sure, just like your own girls.

GR: Yes, right. Right. We got a lot out. We gave a lot because we were a lot of vacations we didn't take—couldn't take—because we had to be up with Charles Russell Riders, but we watched our kids grow up the way we wanted them to grow. This was another thing. We never lost a rider from any difficulty, from...I'm speaking of crime or drugs or alcohol or anything of that nature. It was kind of an unspoken code that these things you don't do if you're going to drill, and we just didn't have any trouble with them at all. Once in a while...I can remember one night, we'd get a little inattention from the group as a whole. Maybe they'd been out giggling and laughing and playing before we started. I recall one night out there that my three kids were in the drill team, had ridden in there, and we made one turn around and nobody was paying any attention to spacing. They were laughing and talking with each other. I blew the whistle and said, “That’s it for tonight. It’s obvious you’re not out here to make this thing any better and to maintain the spacing so I’ll see you next week.” Boy, I’ll tell you the complaints that came right back from the girls and the parents too, and I said, “No way. We’re out here to get something done. If we’re not of a mind to do it, don’t waste my time and yours I’ll see you next week.” I sent them him home and came home and to defend myself to my own three kids. “We rode all that way in there...” But I’ll tell in the next practice we had was one the best we ever had. They were paying attention and getting it done. It was the only way you could do it, but you had to have a group that was willing to take this discipline and not get mad individually.

GP: Well, I think that you've given us a lot of information about an unusual group, and unless you can think of any other things you want to add, we’ll—

GR: No, I really can't. I think that was about it.
GP: Can you think of anything, Marie?

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: Mention no parent help. I could clarify that this wasn't true, because they were the ones that made the uniform. Got the kids there ready on time, got them dressed, on their horses, got them out there—found a way to get them out of the fairgrounds week after week—and then stood by and waited until they were through for about two hours to three hours. This was where the parents were invaluable because without them we wouldn't have had the drill.

GP: Well, thank you very much then. I'm wondering if on this same tape we can't switch subjects now and talk about another subject which is important to both Fort Missoula and the University [of Montana] archives, and that's dealing with a show that's coming up soon at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula dealing with World War Two. Before we began this tape we talked a little bit about some of the things you remember that took place as a result of World War Two, wherever you happened to be—how it affected your lives. Perhaps we could record a few of these things that we remembered, and maybe you could even remember some more.

Were you both in Missoula when World War Two broke out?

MR: No, I wasn't. I was in Minnesota.

GR: Yes, I was in Missoula at the time. It, of course, like the rest of the country was in such a shock that it was almost unbelievable.

GP: I think I'll get my comments in. I was in Chicago. Were you in one of the Twin Cities?

MR: Minneapolis.

GP: I was in Chicago, and I don't remember anything immediately. The only thing I remember is the shock on the Sunday evening when I found out, and the next day going to work. I worked for Time, Inc. in the office, and I was 17 or 18 years old. The ladies were all crying, and everything stopped in the office and Roosevelt was on the radio and they broadcast that over—this was a big office building I was in. Must've been maybe five floors of this building, and everybody sat there and the...it was mostly women employees and the ladies were in tears. I was young enough that I couldn't really understand what this was going to mean to everybody. But these women could.

MR: I didn't give it that much thought either [unintelligible], terrible but I was so far removed from the [unintelligible].

GR: I think the reaction was [unintelligible] in men and boys particularly. I know in recruiting offices were just jammed with...They had more people down there trying to sign up and join the
army and the Air Force than they could handle, because there was a feeling that we had been attacked and it was time to react.

GP: I was, I know, very strong feelings of patriotism. I was going to ask you, Guy, do you think that this was probably still because of the tail end of the Depression? A lot of these young men were feeling that this was a place to go, in addition to the patriotism?

GR: I think, subsequently, this was true. I think for two reasons. I think initially it was just an emotional thing that “I’ll show them they can get away with that kind of stuff.” Secondarily, then very shortly after that was a draft. In my own particular case, I enlisted in the Air Force. I enlisted in the Air Force because I knew that it was inevitable that I was going into the service, and I wanted to go into some service that I could learn something that when the war was over I could apply to a normal public life and not just have all those years taken out of my life. So I think this was true and particularly those that were unemployed, as you say, this was employment.

GP: What about back in Minneapolis, Marie? How did you react to it, or how did the people around you react?

MR: Well, it is rather hazy, but I admit that I didn’t really react too much to it, because it was so far removed.

GP: Were you working at the time?

MR: Yes, I was working. [unintelligible] two other girls at that time. The three of us talked about it, and our friends and boys that we knew talking about it and one at a time they were caught in the draft and they would be gone. I remember getting letters from them and things. It was [unintelligible] ego trip.

GP: To the boys?

MR: Yeah.

GR: I think, too, I think really even in my particular case, I was old enough, but I was 24 years old—old enough to know that you can get hurt over there. If you were using your head, you wouldn’t rush right into that particular thing, but it was the greatest adventure of our time. And this feeling of adventure boys, particularly, [unintelligible]—if he goes, I’m going to go, I don’t want to miss it.

MR: A lot of excitement about going.

GR: Yes, there was.
GP: I remember my brother is older than I am, and he had to register for the draft and he had quite a low draft number, I think 78 or something like that, which is fairly low. So he enlisted in the Navy Air Corps—Naval Air Corps—and he went into training and we never could understand why he did that because he never could even stand a Ferris wheel and he washed out. He was rather humbled by that experience. But I remember that there were fellows his age who went in, went through the training, and it seems to me they went to the South Pacific, and they didn't last long.

GR: No.

GP: I mean, there were a lot of tragedies among my brother's peers.

GR: There was a tremendous number of fellows that washed out during Air Force training, and it certainly was nothing to be ashamed of because the training was at an accelerated pace and particularly one thing they were building into you with your ability to withstand pressure. The only way they could do that was to put pressure on, and all the way through Air Force training—Air Corps training, pilot training—I expected to wash out the next day and everybody that was in there felt the same way. We were being pushed so far, so fast, that we were almost stumbling to keep up with this thing and thinking...well, I can remember writing home and telling my folks that don’t be surprised if I wash out and I was one all of who were writing the same message home. This schooling is so rapid that it wasn’t a case of who was the smartest or who was the best qualified. Many of my friends washed out all the way through there, and I considered them certainly as capable and as smart as I was, at least.

GP: Well, it was the flight part of it that got him, but he applied for the Merchant Marine Academy and he was accepted there. He graduated from there and was in the Merchant Marine for a long time after that.

Did you have any brothers?

MR: I had one younger brother.

GP: Did he have to go?

MR: Yes, he did. [unintelligible] he quit high school and [unintelligible]. And spent four years in Florida. Four years in Florida [unintelligible].

GR: I was just thinking, you know, when you speak about learning at an accelerated rate, I can remember flying an airplane across the ocean from South America to Africa all by ourselves—nine men riding with me—hoping I knew what I was doing. It had been less than a year that I'd been standing...before I'd been standing on a street corner at home thinking what a great guy Lindbergh was. So it's amazing they were able to teach, school, that many people do those things way beyond what anybody thought he could do.
GP: There’s a show on public television right now that comes on at 10:30 on Sunday nights which is about World War Two, flying out of England. Have you caught that?

GR: Oh? No.

GP: It’s a series. It’s had 3 of 13 on, and we’ve been enjoying that.

GR: That’s on channel 11?

GP: Yes, 10:30 p.m. on Sunday.

GR: 10:30 on Sunday. We’ll have to watch that. I haven’t seen...

GP: Let me think now. 10:00 Sunday night, not 10:30. 10:00, and we’ve really been enjoying that. I think you people would too.

GR: [unintelligible].

GP: Well, then getting back then to some of the other things that you remember about that period. It did somewhat change the lives of the people who were remaining behind in these communities, and I know that the government created certain agencies to help. The only one whose initials I can think of right now is the OPA. Do you remember the OPA at all?

GR: Office of Price Administration, yes, I do.

MR: [unintelligible]. I had no [unintelligible] myself.

GP: You were in Missoula by that time?

MR: Yes, I was in Missoula.

GP: Did your move out, or did you come out here by yourself?

MR: No, I came out here by myself. I was married by that time. But I can remember going [unintelligible] and buying groceries. [unintelligible sentence].

GP: When it came in?

MR: When it came in.

GP: How did you know when it arrived?
MR: Well, on the first of the month, [unintelligible].

GP: They didn’t sell beer in the stores or wine in the stores here, then, did they?

GR: No, no.

MR: No.

GP: Well, they sold beer after we moved here, but they didn’t sell wine. We moved here in 1965.

GR: The Office of Price Administration, incidentally, is the one that put the ceiling on all the prices to keep from skyrocketing. As a result of that, we had to ration.

MR: That’s right, and we got our ration books once a month.

GR: I remember, although I was really...the war on the home front didn’t touch me too much other than early on. I can remember when we were coming up from Roswell, New Mexico, on a leave to Missoula, driving up, and it was a great project to get the job because you had to have gasoline rationing stamps. And because there was so much rationing, there were very few service stations open. So you’d get to town and have to stop and wait until there was a station open so you could use your gasoline rationing stamps.

GP: You couldn’t buy tires. What would you do if your tires wore out?

GR: You could maybe get a used tire somewhere.

GP: Were they making synthetic tires at that time?

GR: Yes, yes, they were.

GP: This is when they really were invented.

GR: That’s right.

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: That’s right.

MR: [unintelligible].

GP: No, we didn’t either. I was a war bride. I imagine you were too, weren’t you?
MR: Yes.

GP: I know that I was going to the University of Illinois when I met my husband who was an Air Force cadet in meteorology school. And we got married when we did because he was supposed to go overseas, and as it turned out, he didn’t. We were married in Arkansas, and I remember that my mother sent us the stamps—the ration stamps. I don’t think I ever had a book or anything like that, but I guess she felt that we wouldn’t eat right if she didn’t send those stamps. I know we must have used them for meat at the time.

MR: [unintelligible]. I don’t recall using my ration stamps [unintelligible].

GR: I can recall now that you mention, sugar and flour were rationed. I can remember [unintelligible] teaching school that year in Clinton and saying that those people were hoarding like crazy, piling up the stuff as fast as they could get the ration stamps because they knew there were going to be shortages. Of course, that set off a fear that there’d be shortage of other things too, and some people hoarded things that really never were in short supply.

MR: Yeah, like nylon stocking.

GR: Yes, yes.

MR: [unintelligible]. You could only have so many pair that [unintelligible].

GP: They weren’t so good in those days either.

MR: No, they weren’t.

GP: I remember when I would be wearing them, I had heard a horror story about how if you were crossing the street and you walked into the exhaust of a car that they would disintegrate. I never had it happen, but I always had that fear. [laughs]

MR: [laughs] I have heard that. [unintelligible].

GP: Oh yes, the [unintelligible]. The rayon before that that you always had to yank up. They never stayed up. I remember that.

GR: Were shoes rationed?

MR: Not that I know of.

GR: [unintelligible] they were.

GP: Somebody suggested to me that they were, earlier today, but I don’t remember that.
MR: I don’t remember that at all.

GR: Those rubber heels might have disappeared.

MR: I have no idea.

GR: The quality, the octane rating on the gasoline was way down low. Many vehicles had trouble operating efficiently because the high octane gasoline was used to for the Air Corps overseas. I can remember when I was in training, the change from 100-octane gasoline we were using at the time to 90-octane gasoline. The lower octane rating in the gasoline was such that when we’d go out there and take off in an airplane, we’d have to go a third farther than we had before to get the airplane in the air, just didn’t have the power that the 100-octane had. But they were saving it for use overseas in war zones. These were, 90-octane and the gasoline that was available for automobiles was lower than that. Of course, our octane ratings now are 85, 86, 87.

GP: But we don’t have the big engine cars [unintelligible].

GR: That’s right.

GP: My husband after we were married, or when we were married, was stationed at Blytheville Air Force Base. Were you ever there?

GR: No.

GP: It was a training school, and by this time he was a weather officer. Those were stressful days for him because they had so many green student pilots there and they did not have the sophisticated weather forecasting techniques that they do today. There was a lot of stress connected with sending those kids out, and there were a lot of accidents too in those days. Only recently my husband was mentioning the fact that he was on duty one night, and they changed those shifts constantly. He never knew from one 2- or 3-week period to the next when he’d be working late. They were three shifts round the clock. But he said this one time Jimmy Doolittle came in and asked for a weather clearance, and he said what a thrill it was to meet him—what a nice person he was.


GP: In England?

GR: Yes. I had a nephew, who just a year younger than I was, flying out of the base within 20 miles of where I was stationed and Jimmy Stewart was his commanding officer, and they thought a lot of him. They really liked him real well. But when I went over one time to see my
nephew, they were just returning from a mission, and Jimmy Stewart had been flying co-pilot in the lead airplane and a German shell had come through the side of the airplane behind his seat—blew a hole in the side of the airplane. So when I met him, they had to go into a debriefing area, and my nephew said, “Come along with us and meet this guy.” So I went along with him and I was introduced to Jimmy Stewart in that debriefing, and I’ll tell you that was that voice of yours was about half as strong as it is now. He was really shook, but not afraid. But it was really a shook. It just seemed like meeting almost and listening to him, like meeting a little kid. High voice, you know, but they swore by him—everybody in that outfit. He was great. A very appealing guy.

GP: I can imagine. Another thing that I can remember is when we were still living in Arkansas at that Air Force base, my husband got a leave. This was in April, I believe, of 1945, and it seems to me that while we were on the train going back to Chicago from Blytheville, Arkansas, Roosevelt died. I’ll never forget how that affected the country.

GR: Oh yeah, you can say so.

MR: [unintelligible], and been home, what, about a week?

GR: Yes.

MR: About a week, and he’d taken our [unintelligible] and gone up to Flathead Lake to a [unintelligible]. [unintelligible sentence].

GR: What a feeling of loss and some fear. How are we going to get along now? He’d been president for so long. All the way through the war.

GP: And Truman, up to that point, had not that much respect—

GR: He was a non-entity.

GP: He was a non-entity.

GR: That’s right. Well, that was a great shock. It was kind of ironic in some respects too because even at that particular time I was, in essence, a Republican but nonetheless, boy, when he died, I lost my leader. Politics didn’t [unintelligible] at all.

GP: That’s true. I remember that too.

MR: [unintelligible] what would happen now.

GP: That’s right, and the press did not give him the kind of respectability he deserved. They talk about him being a haberdasher and that sort of thing.
GR: Right. Right. Right. It really was a pretty strong test of our method of government that we came through, and I say, and with flying colors. It was that instant sense of loss and direction and what's going to happen now. Well, we had listened to him through all of those troubled times, and he had buttressed our feelings all that time.

GP: That's right. And he gave the country, I don't know if we can include the Republicans or not—I think he did the Republicans too—a certain sense of hope that we didn't have before he was president.

GR: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure this is true. Well, yeah, you take a look at that Depression. The Depression was depressing for everybody, and he was there and managed the recovery from the Depression. As a consequence, I don't think politics entered into the overall feeling. The methods that were used were effective regardless of who had done them. The WPA [Works Progress Administration], the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps], all of these things—these were constructive things that somebody had taken hold and done something, regardless of what party he belonged to, he was the man of the hour.

GP: Getting back to the World War Two, you were living with Marj Kraabel Marjorie Steele Hightower Kraabel], right, but it was because her first husband was in the service, is that correct?

MR: Yes, Stan Hightower [John S. Hightower, 2nd Lieutenant, Navigator].

GP: Stan Hightower, that's right.

GR: He was my navigator.

GP: He was your navigator?

GR: Yes, yes.

GP: And he was killed then on the plane in which you were shot down. I guess I had forgotten that from our earlier interview.

GR: And my bombardier was from here too, Joe Root [Joseph Root, FO, Bombardier]. He was killed when the airplane exploded.

GP: I see. How many survivors were there?

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3 The plane was shot down March 6, 1944.
GR: My co-pilot and me.

GP: Out of a crew of what?

GR: Ten.  

GP: I suppose—

[Break in audio]

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: No, no. That's my crew.

GP: This is your crew?

GR: Yes, this is me. This is Stan Hightower, this is Joe Root.

GP: Right, I want to repeat what I said. If I had been in that position, the shock of it would still be with me. I don't know if I could ever get over the question, you know, that common question 'why them and not me?' or something like that. And this is your crew of...I see nine people here.

GR: Yes, one [unintelligible] isn't in the picture. Matter of fact, this picture was taken just before we went overseas, and the man who’s not in that picture went through all of our training with us, got to the embarkation point and refused to go.

GP: Is that right?

GR: Right. He got on the phone and was talking to his wife the night before we were to leave, and he said, “I can’t do it.”

GP: What would happen to a person like that? Isn't that some kind of treason?

GR: Yes, he was...but he wasn’t cashiered out of the army. He was sent back into an army, regular army infantry division after he’d had all the [unintelligible].

GP: Now, you say that some of these, but not all these men, were from Missoula. Is that right?

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4 Francis Proteau, 2nd Lieutenant, Co-pilot, Oregon
5 The men besides Hightower and Root who died included: Leroy Smith, S/Sgt., Radio operator, New Jersey; Raymond Fiebigier, S/Sgt., Aerial gunner, 2/E, California; Virgil Morrow, Sgt., Right waist gunner, Kansas; Marvin Wilson, Sgt., Tail turret gunner, Georgia. The men who were missing in action [MIA] included: Marvin Lademan, Sgt., Ball turret gunner, Michigan; Harry Goldstein, Sgt., Left waist gunner, New Jersey.

Guy C. Rogers, Marie C. Rogers Interview, OH 168-001a, b, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
GR: That's right. There were three of us from Missoula—the pilot and the navigator, the bombardier—and the co-pilot was from Great Falls, Montana. But these were from all over the country.

GP: I see. So this is you.

GR: Yes.

GP: That’s you, and this is Hightower. And this is Root?

GR: No, this is Root here.

GP: Oh, over here. I see. So this is Hightower.

GR: Yes, and we’re standing over here beside the [unintelligible.

GP: Was he a brother of...was his name Wayne? Or a cousin?

GR: Yes, that’s the same family. Oh yes, yes. Wayne and Joe, I think, were brothers.

MR: I have no idea. I didn’t know them.

GP: I know Wayne Hightower, the construction man.

GR: Yes, his dad, John Hightower, was the one that started all of it.

MR: Yeah, Wayne was a cousin of Joe and Stan.

GR: Joe and Stan were brothers.

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: Yeah, you were really conscious of it all the time because two things happened. One, I suppose in a way it was good. For about a year, I had a certain about of amnesia. I couldn’t remember the name of the people on my airplane.

GP: Which other one survived?

GR: This one, the co-pilot. He’s dead now. He was in prison camp—a prison camp—that the Russians overran and was released. Came back, and in a month of coming back, he was flying an airplane dusting crops and flew into a power line. So I’m the only one left.
GP: Was your survival due to the fact that you were in the cockpit?

GR: Evidently. The airplane exploded at 20,000 feet in the air.

GP: I was hit by something.

GR: Yes. Yes. We were both blown clear. I wasn’t blown completely clear. I got tangled up in a piece of the cockpit. I passed out. My leg broke up here, and I passed out. When I came to, I was in the air coming down, but I was tangled up in a piece of the cockpit. I was coming down like a leaf would fall, and my clothes had burned off and I’d caught on fire. It’s pretty well disappeared now, but I used to have a line across here—

GP: You can just make it out slightly.

GR: —where I had a helmet, flight helmet on. See, I burned my face and it burned both hands and burn my clothes off, and I couldn’t raise my head and I had the white, long underwear. I noticed a red mark on and finally realized it was the ripcord of the parachute. So I tried to untangle myself in that piece of tin with a broken leg. I didn’t try very hard, but I pulled the ripcord and it opened up in the air free of the cockpit and I was so close to the ground, I could see the leaves on the trees and I’d started out at 20,000 feet. It was kind of ironic thing in one respect in that when I landed, I landed right in the small field in Berlin and a guy, a civilian, came out and tried to run a horse over me as I was laying on the ground. Two German soldiers came over and ran him off. One of them left and brought back a ladder. They rolled me over on the ladder to support the broken leg, and they got on either end of the ladder and walked the relatively short distance to a jail. Walked in and laid me on the floor, and I looked up and my co-pilot was sitting there. He’d been blown out of the airplane completely clean and clear and opened his parachute came down, and came down almost—

GP: Was he hurt?

GR: No, not at all. We were the only two that came out of it. Later on in prison camp, I talked to a man who was shot down on the same raid, but he was shot down on the way out and he saw our airplane explode. He said there were three airplanes that exploded at the same time. Evidently what happened, it lifted the wing and cleared the top of the cockpit, and my co-pilot went right out through and I came out tangled up in pieces.

GP: How long was it before you knew this took place, Marie? Do you remember? Days or weeks?

MR: Days. I got word—

GR: Telegram.

Guy C. Rogers, Marie C. Rogers Interview, OH 168-001a, b, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
MR: Got a telegram.

GR: Got a copy of that telegram in an old scrapbook.

MR: I got word that he’d been [unintelligible] in action, the day I came home from the hospital with our first child. It was three months after that that I learned he was a prisoner of war.

GP: You had no idea then?

MR: Well, I had gotten word through HAM operator from New York [unintelligible] that he was a prisoner of war.

GP: Isn’t that interesting? You have no idea how it got translated across all that—

MR: No, no. No idea.

GP: —area.

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: [unintelligible].

GP: Isn’t that amazing? I don’t suppose you have any idea either, Guy, how that took place. You were too sick to worry about it.

GR: Yeah, this first month I didn’t know anything about it. Gangrene set in, and I lost my leg.

GP: Yeah, I know. All that’s on that other tape, I know.

GR: Do you want to see something interesting. These two pictures were taken in the prison camp by Germans.

GP: [unintelligible].

GR: [unintelligible].

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: But this is a camp that was for repatriation. They gathered us from all over Germany to a repatriation camp to be exchanged with a like number of Germans from this country [unintelligible]. So they treated us differently here than anywhere else. They wanted us to

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6 Obermassfeld Hospital 1249, then later, Dulag Luft I.

Guy C. Rogers, Marie C. Rogers Interview, OH 168-001a, b, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
come home saying, “Oh, those fellows aren’t really all that bad.” So this picture was taken in the prison camp.

GP: There are several there who lost legs.

GR: Yes, these two have got legs off, but this one is below the knee. This one has got a knee that was made for him in prison camp.

GP: Is this one...does he have his leg?

GR: Yes, yeah. He’s got the right leg off, and I’ve got the left one. All of us are amputees—leg amputees. This guy’s got an arm off. This was kind of interesting. This guy’s wearing a leg that was made by a Scotchman who were prisoners of war, had been for five years. Had been taken at Dunkirk and [unintelligible] by this time. And they made that wooden leg out of artificial milk can—[unintelligible] milk cans—that would come in there through the Red Cross—the food parcels and that type of thing. They constructed artificial leg for that guy. He had a leg off. [laughs] But you wouldn’t think that the Germans would take these kind of pictures for you.

GP: No, you certainly wouldn’t.

GR: But they did it because they wanted us to come home and say, “We were really treated well there.” And in some respects, we were treated as well as we could have been. It was a war zone. They had shortages too.

GP: Sure. I know you told me about how they saved their penicillin for themselves, and I’m sure they had orders to do that. It wasn’t that they didn't want to give it to you.

GR: Right. And they had food shortages too. They had to feed us, and they were getting more and more of us all the time. So they had restrictions on them for doing some things that maybe didn’t like to have done. But beyond it all was the unspoken realization that they had lost the war once before to the English and to the Americans, and they abided pretty strictly by the Geneva conference rules [Geneva Conventions] as it applied to Americans and English. The atrocities and that type of thing undoubtedly were committed, but they were committed against other people. It was a rare instance really, because...well, I had a doctor tell me, “Today, you’re my prisoner of war. Tomorrow, I may be yours.” And he was.

GP: I remember you said that earlier on tape.

GR: And when you think about the transportation. I can remember the Allies bombed their transportation for months—railroad transportation, highway. How do you get the supplies to your own troops? It’s a tremendous thing. That’s the one blessing that we have in this country. I hope it never changes. We have never fought one here.
GP: Yes, except the Civil War.

GR: That’s right, and of course, the Revolutionary War.

MR: We won’t be that lucky [unintelligible].

GP: No.

GR: I’m afraid not.

GP: Well, let’s hope that our leaders can figure out a way to get along with the rest of the world. Well—

GR: Well, you know you think about shortages too. I can remember being in prison camp in a small town in Germany, and those people had to continue working and producing and spending as much time as they could doing that because the rest of the time was almost spent in bomb shelters. They had the bomb raiding, the sirens go off, and they tell me in Germany that if you were injured—a German injured in a bombing raid and were not in an air raid shelter—the German government didn’t assume responsibility for helping you. They wanted everybody to get in the bomb shelter and save themselves, but these were people that were working all night long, working all day long, and right in the middle of it they would have to leave, go down in the air raid shelter, and when it was over, wonder how their family—in another part of town—had fared. These were war pressures that we didn’t feel at that time, but we may feel if it ever happened again.

GP: Because I know you’ve already discussed this at length on another tape, I just want to add maybe, or review, a couple things on here. How long was it before you actually came back to Missoula after that?

GR: Almost a year to the day.

GP: A year to the day?

GR: Yes.

GP: And this was when you two were reunited. Is that the first that you saw him after that, Marie?

GR: Yes.

MR: Yes.
GP: Or were you in a hospital somewhere in the States or—

MR: No, [unintelligible]. He came to Staten Island, and [unintelligible].

GR: Yes, a hospital in Staten Island and at that time determined that I was going to go to the [unintelligible]...We did to, yes. Was sent to a hospital in Brigham City, Utah, where were examined by our people then, given one-month’s leave to come home and the expiration of that time was come on back and get the necessary medical attention that we needed from that point on.

GP: Now, was that a veterans’ hospital at the time, or what kind of a hospital was it?

GR: No, it was a United States army general hospital. [unintelligible] hospital, yes. It doesn’t exist anymore, but...It was actually for it was actually intended for amputees and mental patients, and I’ve had people ask me which I was. [laughs] And I tell them, I [unintelligible] right on both accounts. [laughs] But then we came home on a train, and Marie met me in Butte.

GP: Was that the first you saw him?

GR: Yes.

GP: In how long?

MR: Oh...a year?

GR: Year and a half.

MR: Yes.

GR: I had never seen my daughter. She was a year old.

GP: Isn’t that amazing? What kind of an experience was that? Did you feel that she was your child?

GR: Oh, yes. But it was this kind of traumatic. Two things I think of. The first thing I did...of course, I didn’t have a leg then. They set me in a rocking chair and said, “Now, here’s your daughter. Hold her and rock her.” Well, the first thing I did was rock over backwards in the chair because I had weighed so much more above the waist than I did below. That scared her to death of me. But the next morning, of course, when we woke up in the bedroom, why, here she was standing in her bed looking at me, wondering what in the devil I was doing in the bedroom with Mommy. [laughs] But that’s why we took her and went up to Flathead Lake for a month where we just the three of us—

7 Rogers was officially liberated on July 21, 1945.

Guy C. Rogers, Marie C. Rogers Interview, OH 168-001a, b, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
GP: So she could get acquainted with you.

GR: —so we could get our family together.

GP: Well, are there any other things you’d like to add, Marie, that you recall from those days that stand out in your mind?

MR: [unintelligible].

GP: Well, you’ve added a lot already.

MR: [unintelligible].

GR: Yes, that’s right.

MR: [unintelligible]. We had a friend who owned a dairy and he [unintelligible].

GR: Creamery actually.

MR: Beg your pardon?

GR: Creamery.

MR: Creamery. Yes, a creamery. He started watching for places for us to live. Finally found a little house, one bedroom, on [unintelligible], and we moved in that [unintelligible].

GR: He had all his drivers reporting back any time moved off [unintelligible].

MR: [unintelligible] vacancy somewhere.

GP: Well, I remember those days too from St. Louis because my husband was not even officially out of the Air Corps when he went back to school at St. Louis U [University]. I remember one thing that people like us did was on Saturday night when they would throw the Sunday papers off in huge bundles on a corner in downtown St. Louis—in fact, it was right where the Post-Dispatch was printed, published—that was the first place in the city where you could buy the papers and there were lots of people like those down there. I remember there was such a mad scramble for those papers that I, not being too tall, I got somebody’s elbow in my throat trying to get a paper. Then what you would do would be to get a cab, and you read the paper in the cab and find an address and go out. Inevitably, somebody would be there before you. We did not get a place to live that way. You about had to know somebody. That’s how we got our place too in St. Louis.
MR: [unintelligible].

GR: They had cadets here during the war, at the university too, after I left. There was quite an influx of people. I was playing golf...This is a digression. I was playing golf with someone, with a fellow who I play golf with just a couple years, and we had a 50-year high school reunion we went to. His wife was in the same class I was. We were reading the resumé, we discovered that he was in the next squadron...in the same group that I was in in England, in Norwich, England. He was the next squadron on the flight line at the same time I was there. [unintelligible].

GP: Isn't that amazing? Well, it is a small world. I think I mentioned to you once before that my brother-in-law was stationed at Norwich, and he was back there, oh, about three years ago for a reunion. He's going again next summer. And Jimmy Stewart was at that reunion a few years back, and he led the band. They played Glenn Miller music.

GR: Oh, yeah, you bet. [unintelligible] be able to do that. Yes.

GP: Are there any other things you'd like to add then?

GR: Golly, I can't think of anything; although, as we're talking and I'm thinking back, you know, one thing that I guess things being bad give you a better appreciation of what's good. When you think back to us growing up [unintelligible], that was a pretty rich, pretty rich time. More so because [unintelligible]. I don't know. Maybe you can feel good about feeling good unless you've felt bad.

GP: I think there's a lot to that. I think that's what makes those of us who lived through the Depression have a different perspective on things. We're able to manage with less than some of our children.

GR: You bet. You bet. You bet. I'm sure that that was true in our case. I've always felt that we felt things more than we would have otherwise because [unintelligible].

GP: No, I wouldn't either. It definitely colored my life. I'll never forget it. There's no way. It's just a part of me, I know that. Well, I'm going to thank both of you and L, and am grateful that once more we have lots of information from you people which I know will be valuable to the archives and to Fort Missoula.

GR: Well, that's great. We enjoy talking—

[End of Interview]