

Frances & John Carter

The Real Rosie The Riveter Project

Interview 15

Interview Conducted by

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ARRA Convention, Nashville, Tennessee

For The

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Interview: Frances & John Carter
Interviewers: Kirsten Kelly
Date: June 27, 2010
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John: My name is John Carter and I am now 88 years old. We both were World War II vintage. I was a paratrooper in Europe and she was, worked on B-29 Bombers in Birmingham, Alabama. Now Frances...

Frances: And I'm Frances Tunell Carter. I was not married when I was working as a riveter. And I planned to be a schoolteacher, but I did this during the war. And John was, we're the same age, I'm 88 also, but I'm six months older, so half the year we're both 88, and...

John: You're six months younger than I.

Frances: Younger, younger. And we really felt like we ought to do something to try to help the men. Then I got to realizing that John was, he was not, he volunteered, but it was supposed to be volunteered, and then later Roosevelt said, "When we need you, we'll call you." And then I got to

thinking, since we are the same age, that actually I would have been drafted if I had been a boy. So that's why I wanted to go into the work. And my mother told me, she, we lived in rural Mississippi, and she told me that I could go as far away from home as Birmingham, and so I got a job in the sheet metal department.

John: Well now, she was a schoolteacher. She was teaching in her first year of school.

Frances: Well, two years of education...

John: She completed one year.

Frances: ...and I was teaching on a defense certificate, which may be a thing of interest to you all. It's a... back in, during the war, so many of the men were called out and they just needed a body in every classroom, and so we, if we had two years of college work, and if we had enough education courses - I had to go and take two more courses the summer after I finished junior college - and then I taught for one year and then I went to Birmingham to get the job.

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Kelly: So what were you teaching then right? And then can you talk about how became, how you became a Rosie?

Frances: I was teaching first, kindergarteners, first graders and second graders all in the same room. In rural Mississippi in 1943 - I had finished Junior College in '42 - in 1943 we didn't have real strict rules in rural areas about the children waiting 'til five, 'til six 'til they go to school. And so I had four year olders and five year olders and they would be in one table. And I had first graders in another two tables and then I had seats along the wall, desks, for the second graders.

John: How many?

Frances: Fifty-two. And I was eighteen, nineteen maybe, when I started. 'Cause I taught... it was an eight month school. And after the school was over I went to work over there in Birmingham. But I got fifty-six dollars a month for fifty-two children. That's not nearly babysitting.

But we had such a good thing. And we didn't really call it too much a victory garden - we should have - but we

didn't have any playground equipment and I had to get out and play with them during, and we had an hour for lunch, and they could eat their sandwiches, because we didn't have cafeterias, they could eat in fifteen minutes and you had to do something with them for the next 45 minutes so we played games, old-timey games, group games, and then we'd, I got on the idea of having a victory garden. It didn't do so well, but we enjoyed going out there and hoeing and so forth during the class period. Then they'd all get on the school bus and ride home.

Kelly: And so how did you hear about becoming a Rosie and how did that all, how did that all happen?

Frances: Well...

Kelly: To get to Birmingham.

Frances: Even out there in those rural areas, we got the word that they were needing women. And so, and I don't remember how much I got, but I think I started at 30¢ an hour. But I had been on an NYA scholarship at the Junior College, and had worked my way completely through the two years by working the summer and then three or four hours

during the winter, the fall semesters, and it, I think it was 10¢ an hour I got for that. It was called NYA.

John: That's National Youth Administration.

Frances: You worked on that too, didn't you.

John: Yes, I was in another community college, or junior college.

Frances: Did you get 10¢ too?

John: I got eleven and a half cents an hour for the work we did. I think it's what you got.

Frances: That's the difference in the men and women, I guess.

John: I think that was just standard wages, that much.

Frances: But it never came to us. We didn't know exactly how much we got because it was deposited at the school. And it was, it took care of my tuition and bo... Well, I guess it took care of books, I think it did. Everything... I had

to work for fees, special fees, to pay for that. I had to work during Thanksgiving holidays and Christmas holidays.

John: You might want to tell them how much money you had when you reached the college.

Frances: Yeah.

Kelly: Hang on just one second.

00:05:36:17-----

Kelly: Go ahead.

Frances: How much money I had when I reached junior college, Wood College, in Mathiston Mississippi. And my daddy gave me, he was a small time farmer, and he gave me \$1.86. And I rode the train to this school and it took \$1.50 to get my train ticket. So I had 36¢ left when I got there. And they didn't give us any cash for our work, so it was...

John: She worked her way, all the way through the two years.

Kelly: And then what, do you remember your first day as a Rosie?

Frances: Yes, it was really interesting. My mother said you can go only to that, to Birmingham. And I had a brother who was turned down, what'd you call it, what do we call them when they don't have, have health problems?

John: Oh, that was a 4-F classification.

Frances. 4-F classification. Had a heart murmur and they turned him down. But of course he was married and had two children also. And so he was working there and she felt comfortable with my doing that. I was also living part of the time with my aunt and part of the time with my brother and his wife and so they seemed to be interested in that.

And when I went over to get the job I went in to apply and this friend, cousin on my uncle's side, and he and his wife and the men went to take me up there and I went in though alone. They were going to sit in the car and let me go apply for the job. And they said - "We'll send you to Florida, but we can't, we just don't have an opening here."

So I went back and told them and I had to do this

training, that was training, I went back and told them and this Claude's wife said, "Give me that emblem of yours," you know her pass to get in, said, "I'm going to go in there and tell them there's a place vacant right beside me where I work." And so she did and they said, "Well if you have a vacant place, she can have it." And so that was interesting.

But then later - I didn't work all that long, about a year, but 'cause they were going to send me to Florida. They wanted to transfer you around, and my mother was ill with bronchitis, and so forth we called it. I guess we call it emphysema now. And so she, and I was the younger child, youngest child. And so she just didn't want me going away. And so then that's when I went back.

My sister got a job teaching high school english and the principal said, "I need a first grade teacher. Let me hire you both." So I did get out then and go to teaching but didn't, I would go during the summers to school and I taught some more during some of the times.

Kelly: Now how did you two meet?

John: Well the first time we ever...

Kelly: Hang on.

Off Camera: That was scary. Thank you.

John: The first time, first time we ever did sort of meet was, I was going to one junior college, she was going to another, in Mississippi, and I was on the basketball team. And so I went up to, with our team to play basketball. And she was waiting on the table...

Frances: It was part of my work. For that work I was going to get paid my tuition and so forth.

John: So I remember her. She doesn't remember me.

Frances: Well, it was a lot of boys at the table, and I was just trying to get them served and be efficient with my work.

John: So we discussed her, I mean among the teams, how we wished she had come down to Clark college where I was. But, nevertheless, we thought, I never thought I'd see her again. It was just a pleasant diversion. And the next summer, though, when she had finished junior college, and I

had too, and she had to go back to school to get a couple of courses in order to be qualified to teach.

Frances: As a defense teacher.

John: And in the little town of Blue Mountain, Mississippi they had a college where she was, my grandfather and grand... had had a dairy farm, large farm there. And he had died and my grandmother had asked me if I would come up and operate the farm. I had been working for them during the summers ever since I was thirteen years old I would go and help them make a crop and so forth. But after my grandfather died I worked for my grandmother until, actually, I went to the army.

And it just so happened that we saw each other at church one night, and recognized each other. Well, I thought she was, oh before then, we had met at her college because we were both Baptist denomination, and I had been asked to go up and help them to organize a Baptist student union. And the pastor, Baptist pastor of the church, had selected two or three of their students up there to sort of be the key people and had, Frances was the one that was handling their part of it.

Frances: So these three boys came up and I got them all dates with girls.

John: And she was engaged to one of the boys on the campus. And so I figured she was gone, I mean, spoken for. That summer though, at Blue Mountain College we would see each other occasionally, mostly just at church at night, because I was too busy on the farm to do anything else much.

And but she wrote me a little card, and about, a little postal card. Then you could write them for one penny. And it was about the name John, sort of a sarcastic little poem that she had found in her children's literature course she was taking there. And when, she didn't sign it but I knew it must have been from her. So when I asked her about it, she said yes, I thought, my sis... said her sister told her that she ought to send that to a John she used to know. "Well," I said, "Gee if I was a John that," I knew the other guy that she was going with was named J.W. and was, his real name was John. I said, "Gee, if it was a John she used to know that must mean the coast is clear." And she had told me that he was in the navy by then, so I was, by the time we left, I had decided that I was going to make a try for her.

Kelly: And it worked.

John: It worked. But the first time that I went to see her and of course, when school started she went that way and in the mean time I had joined the army but was not called to active duty. They said "go ahead and go back to school," so I went to Mississippi State University and they called me out during the year. But I went up to see her one weekend. She had come back home, she had come home on the weekends to the little farm where her parents lived. I hitch hiked up to [Pontauk?] Mississippi and she lived oh, six or eight miles out. I caught a taxi and asked a taxi driver if he knew where the, the Tunell's lived out on that highway, he said, "Yes," said, "I just carried a sailor out there."

Frances: Yesterday, I think that...

John: No, last week. He said, "I just carried a sailor out there last week." So, I decided, well, maybe I wasn't really, had jumped to the wrong conclusion. Well, sure enough I had jumped to the wrong conclusions. They were still, I guess you'd say still engaged. But never the less...

Frances: Well, in a manner of speaking.

John: Well, by the time, I come to find out that the John she was talking about really, was another John.

Frances: Everybody I went with was a, named John.

John: I was the third John.

Frances: Well, not everybody.

John: On the list. Well, there were three of us Johns. But at any rate, when we got overs... all of us got over seas I could write a better letter than they could. And she [would have better learned...]

Frances: We ta... figured up about a week ago that we really saw each other about thirteen different occasions. Now, I went up to his home and visited and met his parents and so forth and he came to my home and met my parents. And that was a longer, more like an overnight sort of thing. But we, then he was called into service and stayed in France and Europe and Africa for twenty months and so...

John: So we really did never live close enough to, we never had a date where I took her out anywhere until after we were married. But I can shoot a pretty good line through the mail and by the time I got home we had been, we had become engaged. I had sent enough money to a jewelry store for her to go down and select her, her engagement ring, and so it was official.

But if I can tell another little incident that happened when she was a riveter here in Birmingham, when she first come over, I was in school, not in school, I was in camp, in basic training, at Fort McClellan, Alabama. And when I found out she was in Birmingham, it was only, oh, it's only about an hour and a half away. But then everybody hitch hiked and it took me a little longer. But anyway, I got a pass and came in to see her one weekend and she was going to show me the handiwork that she did as a riveter. She had riveted together a little ash tray. And so she handed it to me, the thing fell apart. I said, "Lord help us, if that's the way these airplanes are put together, then, if I ever get up in one of them, the safest thing I can do would be jump out of it."

Frances: So that's my claim to fame. I recruited a paratrooper.

Kelly: That's a great story.

Frances: And another thing, though. Finally he was off over there and I got the ring. And I went down and picked it out. The jewelry store had picked out three for the amount of money he had sent, and so I chose it, I've worn it out though, and so, I didn't, after that I took it home and I didn't tell anybody. And I had my own little ceremony to myself you know, and meditation time about it and put it on and then all of the sudden I was showing my ring, and they said, "Where did you get it?" And I said, "The jewelry store yesterday." But...

John: By then she had left the ri... the defense plant, and was back in school at University of Southern Mississippi.

Frances: Yeah, when they wanted to send me to Florida and I, my mother would be unhappy for me to go. Of course I was twenty years old and had worked a year, but she still, the youngest child, she just thought we couldn't get away and since she was sick, we wanted to stay close by. And we, we really didn't really remember though much about each other, not dating very much, and then when I was, I would go to

school a while and then I would go back and teach another year or something. And so, when we got back to the school the last time, in '45, John called and he said, "I'm, I've come in to New York," I guess.

John: Yeah, it was.

Frances: But he said, "I've ridden a troop train then to Shel... Camp Shelby," which is thirteen miles from the University of Hattiesburg campus, where I was in school and working on a bachelors. And he said, "I've caught a ride in to the Greyhound bus station, come meet me."

Well, it was nearly midnight, and I had stayed over, after Christmas holidays began, just waiting for that troop train to get there, and I, it was the funniest feeling though, I didn't know whether I'd recognize him. I hadn't seen him much before he left and then...

John: Twenty-two months, that was awful.

Frances: Twenty-one, twenty-two months he was there. And I went down, thinking he would be the only one standing there at the Greyhound bus station. But when I got down there they were, there were soldiers all over, just wall to wall,

and I was running around through them and they saw me and thought I was a loose woman, and then I told John I believe I could have gotten a hundred dates that night. But we found each other and recognized each other and then I went on home that very night, because...

John: Her mother was sick and she needed to go home.

Frances: Yeah, and she wanted me to come on home for Christmas and get the house fixed and everything.

John: So we married in March then, after that.

Frances: After, that was in March, 1946, so we've been married forty, sixty-eight, sixty-four years.

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Frances: Well, we went back to school first, if you want to go back that far. We both had to get...

John: I had a lot of G.I. time coming, to go to sch... educational work, so...

Frances: We got our bachelors after I was, I lacked one quarter, and he lacked about a year and a half, 'cause they pulled him out his junior year, and then we went to get our masters and got it in the same ceremony, and got our doctorates in the same ceremony.

And then we quit going to school, and then well, we had had one child when John had got the G.I. Bill, and the G.I. Bill was, when we found out about it, says you must get in school by next July, and that was about, oh when was it, anyway we had to get in, we got in when the semester began in January, with a fourteen months old baby. And uh...

John: Went to the University of Illinois. And so it took...

Kelly: What did you study?

John: It took us about three or four years there because we had to come back and teach a little while and then, and then go back to school.

Kelly: And what did you study, or what did you get your PhDs in?

John: Well, mine was in agriculture. I was in agricultural education there for a while. And hers was in home economics education, both of us were in education, and both of us in fields that have sort of gone by the boards since then.

Frances: But we, we took a, it was a doctorate of education. School teacher doctorate is what we called it, and they persuaded us to do that instead of of a PhD - that's what we meant to work for, and they said we had the best school system in the world, really, 'cause we mass educate every, all our people, and there's not enough written in other countries. You have to have two languages for a PhD and we took twice as much course work, sixteen hours, of hour...

John: Rather than passing the German and French, or whatever two languages we might have took.

Frances: And so we took twice as much course work.

John: So rather than getting a PhD, it turned out to be what they called an EdD, doctor of education.

Frances: And so then that gave us, with the doctor of

education, we went to Samford University, and that's not Stanford, it's Sam, S A M F O R D. It's a Baptist School in Birmingham. Well, we taught at Clark College first, and that's where John had graduated from. And then we taught at Wood Junior College, where I had graduated. And then, that was home economics and the educa... agriculture.

John: Agriculture.

Frances: But then we went to, when we went to Illinois we got education, so we put education, and got us the doctor degree too, and went to Samford to teach in education and psychology.

Kelly: So you've really stayed with education your whole life then?

John: Yes, we have.

Kelly: How, so tell me how the idea to work together to talk about Rosie and the war and kind of tour to classes now, how did that all come about?

John: As it came about, when the, about the 50th anniversary

of World War II there was a renewed interest in it, and they, when they, back to how she got into the Rosie the Riveter Association, there was a notice in the Birmingham newspaper that over at Warm Springs, Georgia one Saturday, they were going to have a special Rosie the Riveter program, honoring the Rosies, and they were trying to get as many as they could to come over there. Well, one of our friends saw it and told us, so we drove over. It so happened there weren't very many other Rosies there.

Frances: Four, three, there were four of us that went.

John: Well, there were more than that, all told, only four came to the little meeting that you had, I think.

Frances: Well, maybe so.

John: But, they, because of the program that they had, and this lady that was presenting the program, Frances decided, well, we ought to have an organization about us. So the next year, they did that once a year over here, so the next year we went back also, and she had told them, at the Little White House, that she would like to have a meeting of all of the Rosies and see if they wanted to organize.

And so that's how it got started. And after it did get started, she went back and wrote the bylaws to it, and Little White, you know Roosevelt's Little White House in Warm Springs, Georgia.

Frances: Where he went for his water therapy for polio,

John: He had a little, what they call a Little White House where his office was set up while he was down here while he was president. And so they helped to get the officers for the first year and asked her to be the president the first year.

Frances: And then we had three other officers, we have four main officers.

Kelly: And what are, as this started to grow, how many years has this been?

Frances: It was in, December 1998 that we call it the founding day, December 1. And the reason was, well when we met, there were two Rosies there, and the two husbands, not another had, no one had come that I had contacted, and expected to come. Of course they had had to come from

Alabama and they just didn't show up. And they all agreed that it just wouldn't work.

And John thought that I just wanted to do a little local club. And my idea was to do something on a national level. But I didn't know how to start. I had never really founded anything, but I knew...

Well we went home and I was very dejected 'cause they said, "Look, there's no interest. Nobody's here." And John said, "We'll have to wait 'til another year or never. Probably never get any interest." And so I was so disappointed and I went home and I couldn't get it out of my system and I decided I'd start writing the bylaws. And I would write and John would re-write. That's the way we do.

John: Well, she contacted Little White House though, over there, and they said, "Yeah, go for it."

Frances: And I said, "Now if we should get an organization started, would you let us be on your Rosie day?" They had a Rosie day. They have, in Little White House they have a patriotic emphasis every month. And in June they had Rosie. Sometime they had Theodore and Eleanor, not Theodore, but Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor and people impersonating them. And so we got in on that.

But the lady that was making the speech, her mother had been a Rosie, but she was a drama teacher and she just hatched her up a program and told five, she had to impersonate five people. She had a bus driver, she had a filling station operator and she had a riveter and two or three others.

And flex time I guess we started because she had a little doll up there for her, for her thing she was looking at, and the, she juggled the little baby, you know, while she was talking and said, "My sister and I, I keep the babies," both had a baby. And said, "I keep them for two days a week and she goes to work and then she keeps them and I go to work." So I guess you call that flex time and that's what we started there. And...

John: But at any rate after, after she did get this started, and it floundered for a few months, but then it caught on, and they had their first convention back at Warm Springs, Georgia, and I believe there were about forty, thirty-five or forty people showed up.

Frances: Thirty-five, and we just had one day and we had a little business meeting and elected the officers and the staff.

John: Decided where they would meet the next year, and then it has grown from that so that now they have, getting up close to four thousand.

Frances: The first year from December the first, I joined for my daughter, our daughter, and granddaughter.

John: As Rosebuds, you know.

Frances: I have, we have two granddaughters and they were Rosebuds. And then there was another lady that joined, and that was the five. We opened a bank account with twenty five dollars.

And we only charge ten dollars for a lifetime membership fee, and then, we do that because we want the Rosie's to join for the Rosebuds, 'cause if a teenager has ten dollars she doesn't want to spend it on genealogy, and so that's why we keep it low and so we operate on a shoestring. But eventually we're going to have to have dues, but we don't have right now enough I say woman power, not manpower but woman power, to collect dues and so forth and so we just, when they qualify they're in it for life, 'cause that's what they did.

And there's no records on us. And there were on the veterans, I mean the soldiers all through the, back...

John: But the women that worked of course, when the war was over, most of them were just dismissed and went home without no records, they're just having to find them. But it's gratifying to see how it is working now. This is, Dawn Lean is the first Rosebud that has been elected as the national president. And now, let's see, she lives in Michigan, the vice president is a Rosie that lives in Oregon, the secretary is a Rosebud, lives in Texas, and the treasurer is a Rosie. So they're half, she lives in Alabama. But the, two of the national officers are Rosebuds and two are Rosies.

Kelly: So the breath, so the range of where your members are and your officers is huge.

John: It's huge.

Frances: Well, we wanted it to be that way. We did not want it to be a regional thing.

John: There are members in every state. And local chapters

scattered throughout the country.

Kelly: And what is..

Off Camera: Sorry, I want to stop you before you ask a question because we only have five minutes of battery.

00:29:00:18-----

Kelly: So we're going to. What is, what is your favorite thing, when you meet up with...?

Frances: When you meet a Rosie? I guess it's, as John and I were talking just now, I guess I could say that it's when the Rosies seem so appreciative that we have an association. And as I said, this morning, I think you all were in there, that three of them cried during this last time when they published that article and we had such an influx of new members. But it's very gratifying. Nobody has ever really paid much attention to the Rosies. And since there were no records on it, they just hadn't, actually the 50th anniversary helped us though, and in the memorial at Washington D.C. we do, we have several Rosie friezes I guess you'd call them, between the columns that stand for

every state.

John: That's in the World War II Memorial.

Frances: Yeah.

John: Incidentally, she was asked to come to the dedication of the World War II Memorial and be on the program and CNN also helped her there at the dedication.

Kelly: So you're getting your, you're getting your Rosie out in the world, after...

Frances: Yeah well, it's slow, but, with now, I'm hoping with the officers working, one thing, we said that the, when we've transitioned to the Rosebuds, and we're doing half and half now, and a few more years it will be all Rosebuds, and they do it honoring their mother's work. And it just seems like we need to teach them the jobs and I hadn't realized that in working you won't have as much time to do as when you're retired. Not even to be home to answer the telephone when they call.

Kelly: So if you, if you were go, to look back to the girl

you were when you were a Rosie the Riveter, what, what would you say to that girl now? If you could look back at yourself at that age?

Frances: Well, maybe there again, appreciate it. Because I knew such a little bit. I was real happy then that I was able to do the work, but you know, I didn't really realize how much we had to learn, how much we didn't know, and then what we did.

Time Magazine said that what we women had done was a miracle when they found out how many ships we'd built and how many welders. But we want to say, though, there were a few good men there and most of our men were, beginning when we were in school, in training, they were people who had expertise and skills and they were probably exempted from the military to stay home and teach women. But they had to do it.

I noticed one thing the way we worked. When we went up on a problem, we women would immediately go and ask how to get out of it, how to do it and so forth. And the few men who were turned down because of various reasons, health and otherwise, maybe too old, too many children dependent, and, or maybe farmers, or had the skill that they got exempt, and they would just sit there and puzzle and puzzle and

work it out. But we had no background for that. And so we didn't know anything to do but just try to learn it. And I guess, as I look back I'm wondering how we all, how we did it, because they, there were 88,000 ships that were built.

John: One of the things that I'd like to point out when we do get an opportunity to go and talk. Which, incidentally they've asked us to come to Washington D.C. twice, and out to San Antonio and Salt Lake City and so forth, because there's not too many of us left that will make talks on that.

Frances: Well, we...

John: But one of the things that I'd like to emphasize is that our air force was able to bomb the German factories pretty well out of existence, so that they couldn't make airplanes, or tanks. If we shot down an airplane, they couldn't replace it. But it was different with us. Our factories kept operating. And I think the one main difference that made it possible for us to win was the fact that we had stuff to fight with the enemy didn't have, was limited near the end of the war.

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John: Most of the men were called away to go to the armed, go to the military, but the women came in and made the planes and made the tanks and made the ammunition. And that was the reason, I think the one key factor that allowed us to win, was the fact that we, that they provided to us what we needed whereas our air force was able to eliminate the, to a large extent the Japanese production, but even more so the German production.

Kelly: One of the things that, as someone from the younger generation, after I've talked to so many Rosies, is that there, is learning how many Rosies went to work. For the first time in America, this is, you know, a huge amount of women that were working for the first time, and it really opened doors for the next generations. What do you, what do you think about that?

Frances: Well, I think it was wonderful. We, I don't know whether you were there this morning when I talked a little bit about this. We, we want to do the association for the legacy that we want to create it to the women. And then we did open the doors for the women to go to work. Now,

sometimes men don't care too much about that, so we don't want to over emphasize it. But we did things that we didn't know we could do. And then actually, then we changed fashions, about the pants suits and so forth.

But in our speaking, John, he tells a little bit about his work as a paratrooper. And paratroopers are different now, because they, they're just about extinct because, you jump, don't jump behind the lines. The war we're fighting now, we don't know who the enemy is, might be the next door person, and so he talks just a little bit about that, and then he gives a tribute to these Rosies and then I tell a little bit about it. And there were about, we don't know for sure, but over six million women who worked for pay and then another three million or more, depending on what... Ford Motor Company had upwards toward ten million at one time just on some big thing they were doing and we don't know the exact numbers about that.

00:36:02:13-----

Kelly: Now can you, you were talking a little bit today, just so people understand, you were talking about the Rosie the Riveter Day and Memorial Day. Can you explain a little bit about that so future generations can understand what

you mean?

Frances: About Rosie Day?

Kelly: Rosie Day and Memorial Day and how, what you feel about that?

Frances: Well, it's getting formulated pretty much now. About the Memorial Day, which is giving tribute to those who lost their lives, paid the supreme sacrifice, in, it doesn't do so much about the World War One, I don't think, but it certainly about World War II and the rest of, Vietnam and so forth. And I was just maybe, I didn't want to, I hated to say it, but I, maybe I'm a little extreme about that, but I didn't want us to have a good time. Some of the chapters have been saying "Oh, have a picnic. Have a party." And so forth and then the ladies said today, they planted a tree to honor a Rosie. But that's not what, we need to be honoring the dead. Or I thought that...

John: Well, I think it, Dawn Lean sort of made it clear that she was recommending that how the Saturday before Memorial Day as emphasis on Rosie, and that wouldn't really take away, I think, from the...

Frances: No, except that's the reason she wanted it, so we could always know when it is, just remember the Saturday before Memorial Day, so our Rosie Day and Memorial Day are intertwined there. But I think we can work that out and realize, you know, what, as our daughter said, nobody in future years is going to be patriotic very much at all, it seems.

John: Well...

Kelly: And you were talking the difference between patriotism and political today a little bit too for the association. What did you mean?

Frances: Well, what I didn't tell in full, but, in our history project, and we have kids from fourth grade writing history projects and we've had two dissertations, and I heard of one today, in progress. Doctoral dissertations, and so that's one of our projects, is to carry on the history, but we are historical, patriotic, and what's my other one? Historic, educational.

John: Educational.

Frances: Educational. We're helping these young children write pro... things and...

John: I think she primarily wants to emphasize they're not women's libbers. That they are not the feminist movement. That sure they did open the door for women to do work that they hadn't done previously. But they didn't do that on purpose. I mean, it took, it just worked out that they did open the door, and when they proved that they could do the same kind of work that men had done, but she wants to emphasize that that's not their purpose. They are not trying to push for women's rights. The women did it, not to get their rights, but to help win the war and get it over with.

Frances: Get the boys home so we could marry them and have children and get on with our lives. And so that's very important to me, that...

John: Some of the kids that write, that write her questions in order to write their term papers and so forth want to emphasize, by asking her, did she get paid as much as the men did. And they probably didn't.

Frances: Did I get harassed, or harassed, whichever you want to call that word. You can tell that some teachers are feeding that into those little minds.

John: There was, well, there was a certain amount of harassment, I'm sure.

Frances: Oh, yeah.

John: She didn't experience it, she said.

Frances: No, I didn't, but you know, the men might have felt we were trying to take over. And some things we could do better than a man, because we had been used to knitting and crocheting, we had dexterity in our fingers, working with those rivets that the men didn't have. And then also we had been used to doing things and, some of the ladies were little and they could get into the nose cone and do rivets down in that and the men didn't want to. They were bigger, you see, and they didn't want to do that. So in some ways we did better.

But during the war they wanted, they kept, had been posters. "Come to work. Come to work." And they raised the

age on up 'til finally they said if you could move at all, come on.

We had blind people working, and they could sort rivets very well because they could use just the feel, touch. And so it was just really everybody working. The native americans worked and black people, we called them colored people then, they got to work, and they had never done anything except domestic work and so this was a real, real thing for them.

Some of them wanted to keep working, and some of them could keep on working, but, as I said this morning, they, we didn't need that many ships and planes after we won the war, so that's why we were cut off. But the, and the men should get their jobs back, too, but some people didn't get to come back that got killed. And so there were some jobs and some people stayed on working. But I wanted to go back to school and finish school. And teaching was what I wanted to do.

Kelly: Well, you did keep working.

Frances: Yeah.

Kelly: You did keep working.

Frances: All in all, I guess we worked about forty-seven years. We worked at, he worked thirty-one at Samford and came from Associate Professor to Dean of the School of Education. And then I worked, I was Assistant Professor and got up to Professor and worked at early childhood and elementary education, and that was all right, in psychology, in the school of education, until he got to be my boss. And so they said, "We've got to do something with Frances, Fran."

John: And so I fired her the first.

Frances: When they called him in and told him they wanted him to be the dean, the dean was retiring, and so he, they said, "We want you to be the dean, but we don't know what to do with Fran." And so John said, a good thing he said, "I'll ask her."

And so he came home and I said, "Oh, I'm so happy they've offered it to you and I'll just flip down there tomorrow and tell them if they'll pay you enough, I will, I'm not that ambitious. I'll quit working." So that's what I did. I went down and I said, "If you'll pay him enough, that we can live on one school teacher's salary, then I

will just quit working." And they said, "No, we want you to keep working, but maybe we'll have a job half time for you."

And so a home economics teacher, I had two majors, early childhood and elementary education and home economics, and so a teacher retired or moved away or got married or something, and I got the job half time, and then pretty soon I got back to full time, 'cause they needed me in education.

Back in those days Samford didn't have enough money to hire people with doctorates, and so they used anybody that had a doctorate, and so I'm sure I got to go back in the school of education and work part time in that, and home economics was in the school of liberal arts so I had a different dean. But that would not, I can see why that was good. John would help with the schedules and he, somebody might say I had 9:30 class that was always better then the 8:00, you know. And then also when I went off on a professional meeting I'd have to ask the dean and that would be John, and we usually got a little money from the school, and then we would go to that, and they might say, "Well he's giving her more time and more money," and so forth. So I could see why it worked out.

But when I went back, full time half home economics

and half education, I never did go to his staff meetings. I went to the department of home economics.

John: Then you should be running the place.

Frances: Well, we've worked together in different schools all the time. And we've been two individuals, professionals. When we first went to Samford, somebody came around to me and said, "When, are you on a temporary basis, or long term?" And I said, "Well I guess I'm permanently hired. I'll just go in to see." So I flipped down there again and talked to the dean of the school, I mean of the whole university, and he said, "No, you were hired for full time for, on a definite long term basis."

00:44:58:04-----

Kelly: Well that was unusual, well I mean, that was unusual for women at the time, right?

Frances: Yeah, it could have problems.

John: And that school was unusual for a husband and wife to have both of us.

Kelly: Yeah, but as a woman it was unusual to keep working the whole...

Frances: Yeah, yeah.

Kelly: The whole time that you were raising... And you had a daughter or a son?

John: We had both, a son and a daughter.

Frances: A son and a daughter. Our son is, Wayne Carter, John Wayne Carter. In, since, people came over from Europe, the old world, the first son in every generation has been John, and John's daddy is John Franklin and he's John Thomas, and then our son was, we was just getting a name pretty, we didn't even know John Wayne, and I'm not sure he was a famous movie star when he was born.

John: Yes, he was, but we didn't realize that we were naming him after a movie star.

Frances: And then our daughter is a librarian at an elementary school and she's a Rosebud and does the

newspaper.

Kelly: Oh yeah, we talked, we yeah.

Frances: Named Mail Call.

Kelly: Yeah, yeah, and she, so she worked, and so, in a way the Rosies kind of did open a door for a lot of women to think about their lives differently. And it was the first time in history that they were really really getting their own money, too and it was...

Frances: Since we've retired we have gone to third world countries and have taught. And we've both, John's daddy taught 'til he was eighty-nine, and so John wanted to stop at sixty-five. He said between sixty-five and seventy-five there's a window of opportunity that we could travel and do things. So we don't take vacations just for the fun of it. Well, when we had young children we'd go to the beach, but we just, we're too much workaholics and so we just did that 'til we, 'til we were about eighty. And we may go overseas again you have to die somewhere, I guess.

Kelly: Well, is there any last favorite memory, or favorite

little story that you have that you haven't shared with us that you'd like to tell before we send you off to dinner.

Frances: I'll let John go first.

John: Well, I think we have covered most everything that I can think of at this point. We are grateful for people and movements like yours, that's taking an interest now in trying to preserve the legacy that the women, Rosie the Riveters, left and give them the recognition that we think is due them. So we appreciate what you all are doing to do preserve that.

Frances: And the reason I asked you this morning to get it straight about New York City College because we, the library of congress is doing this also and we've done it from Alabama and Mississippi and, I believe Louisiana.

John: Now, but I believe you said this is New York University, now, isn't it?

Kelly: Yes.

John: Not City College?

Kelly: No, it's New York University. Yeah, it's quite a big deal.

Off Camera: It's a private university. It's a private university.

Frances: Is that right? Good.

Off Camera: I have a question.

Frances: Ok.

Kelly: Oh, good.

Off Camera: You're wonderful educators, you've educated me. I want to know the definition of a woman's libber.

Frances & John both laugh.

Frances: Well that was a word...

John: It depends on who's giving it.

Frances: That was a word...

Off Camera: What's your definition, when you say you're not, I just, I want to know what you, because you're so many wonderful things to me.

Frances: Well, I guess you're familiar with when they tried to get the constitutional amendment passed.

John: ERA

Frances: Which failed.

John: Get the, get that amendment, women's rights amendment, what was that amendment to the constitution that they lacked one state getting? Here several years ago? Equal rights, ERA, equal rights amendment.

Kelly: Well that's equal rights...

Frances: But in layman's terms, I guess I would say that a women's libber is a coined expression, it may be in the dictionary, the new dictionaries, I don't know, but I would think its women fighting for their rights, equal pay, equal

work and so forth.

John: She's not against that.

Frances: I'm not against it.

John: It's just that this organization is not...

Frances: What we say is we are, we want equality of genders, not you know, fighting above and so forth. And I have belonged to a B & PW club and...

Off Camera: What's that?

Frances: Business and Professional Women, and they were complaining, there were some kindergarten teachers at a convention I went to and they said women don't help each other. When some of them make it to the top, they don't turn around and help the women. And so I'm for equality and so forth.

There is one thing, though, when we worked full time at Samford, we, being two individuals, the first thing that hit us was somebody had died and we were going to send flowers from the department, and they said each one would

pay an amount. And they gave us the same amount as a couple. And we said, "No, we'll take two total." There were five people in the department when we went there, and we said we'll pay for two of them. We're two individuals. And we tried to do that. And we worked together, all of our married lives, in fact, he's got a job. I was in debt when I got through college and he came home from the service, and he'd saved a little bit. You see you get fifty dollars a month back then, a month. But you got room and board, of course, and then...

John: I got more than that. I started out with that.

Frances: As a private, as a private. But then he got to be paratrooper and that doubled his pay. But it was...

Kelly: It was more dangerous?

Frances: Uh huh.

John: And, and then...

Frances: But does that help? Did I answer her question?

Off Camera: There was someone at the door. Sorry. Yes, you answered it perfectly. Hello?

John: I think, I think...

Kelly: Come on in. We're just about done.

Off Camera: Ok, we can wait. Do you want to have it? No, we have too many people, we'll wait. Ok.

John: I think...

Off Camera: You sound more 'liberated' than anybody I ever met.

John: I think I was the one...

Frances: Well, I tell you, that answered the question.

Off Camera: 'Cause you sound liberated and equal.

John: I think I was the one that used the term 'women's libber,' anyway. And I think both of us may consider it if that if that is the main purpose of somebody, that's their

work, that's their emphasis is to make sure that women are raised. That's not the purpose of this organization, to be although they were instrumental in doing it, that wasn't their purpose, and it's not the purpose today, I think is what, what I thought she meant.

Frances: And we have to really, do merit rather than pushing just for, you know, rights. And another way we tried to do at Samford, we had two babies and so they, one was two, in the second grade, and one was fourteen months when we went to Samford and we decided then, we had night classes. And he said, I will, I will tend to the children and you take your night classes just like a single person.

And that's what I'm thinking of is, is but, it's a coined word, and it sort of has a, a really, a bad connotation. But on the other hand I would like to say its just women getting their deserves, getting paid as much. And its still not equal in the pay. But then we women, sometimes do have to, when we're having babies, we have to ask for exceptions because of our family more than the men. And that's the way we worked it out. Of course we had healthy babies, and that makes a difference. So I don't know if that answers your question or not.

Kelly: Wonderful. Yes, we kept you a little over.

John: But I mean, I expect, we're, if we're going to go to dinner. Are you all coming to dinner?