

Madison Historical: The Online Encyclopedia and Digital Archive for Madison County, Illinois

Joyce Taff Oral History Interview

Charles Delano, Interviewer

Granite City, Illinois

October 4, 2018

Charles Delano (CD): Hello my name is Charles Delano and I am interviewing Joyce Taff for the Madison County Oral History Project. Today is October 4, 2018 and we are in Joyce's home in Granite City, Illinois. Joyce could we start the interview by you just telling me a little bit about your family and where you were from?

Joyce Taff (JT): Okay, I was born in St. Elizabeth's hospital in Granite City, Illinois. I've lived here most of my life except for six years when my dad was transferred down to Fort Worth Texas. I lived there from second grade to the middle of the seventh grade when we moved back up there, or here, Granite City. And I've lived here ever since.

CD: Ok. So then, uh. How many siblings did you have?

JT: Uh ok. I have one brother who is alive and one brother who died when he was nine hours old. He uh received, he uh. We didn't have incubators back then and he didn't, remember the Kennedy baby passed away.

CD: Yes

JT: He died from that same lung disease. And uh he's now buried up, well he's buried at Calvary. And um. I had the pleasure of Fr. Jeff, last year, moved him from the baby section over to the family plot. So now all the family will be together. And Fr. Jeff came up and said a Mass in the chapel. And uh. At the grave site, he blessed the grave site. And that was very important to me. Cause it was my older brother who has three children. He has two girls and a boy. I can remember standing out in my grandparents' yard by a big tree they had and praying to God that please let my baby brother live. I don't know why that sticks with me but it has for all these years. Um. One other thing [indistinguishable] I'll tell you when we were in Texas. That a before I go back on my family or I don't know how you want to do this Charlie. But, ah. We lived, lived in like a farm in Texas. Mom would come and my brother would come to pick me up from school. When we got home, the gas hot water heater had exploded and our house was on fire. And that was very traumatic for me, because I could hear my dog inside barking and the firemen said we can't get her, can't get the dog out. My mom said it said it [indistinguishable] in later years. She said if I knew then what I knew now, she said I think you had a nervous breakdown. Because I do have bad nerves. So that was kind of a big thing in my life, and it still affects me to this day with my nerves. And Um. But, for me alive. I had a typical, I was very blessed. I was loved unconditionally by both parents. My brother and I are very close and are still very close. Also with his wife, and my nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews. Uh. Every six years apart. I um. I went to school in Granite City High School. Graduated from there and then I took typing but I really didn't have a major skill. So I moved in

with my grandmother who lived here in Granite City. My parents moved over to Missouri. And uh, she sent me into keypunch school way back when. And uh I was able to go to school. I got a job at an insurance company over in Clayton. And that's how kind of I started my career in keypunch and when we talk more about the Depot later, I'll explain how that worked in. Cause that's how I got hired at the Depot.

CD: Okay. And what was it like growing up in Granite City?

JT: It was neat, it was uh, course different time. You could walk the streets, not be afraid. Uh. I worked at the Washington theatre. Uh. From 16 to probably my senior year, or 18. Over a year had passed. Learned a lot of responsibility, had to learn my arithmetic. Because every night, I worked in the concession stand part. So every night we had to count candy. So multiplication tables came in really handy. And we had to count how many, so every night we had to count candy. So multiplication tables came in really handy. And we had to count how many hot dogs you had left and all that. Never the buns but the hot dogs, you see. Strange. Oh uh. My uh. My boss, Chis Patshaw was very nice, understanding man. Very free. When we weren't, when I wasn't working we'd go to events at the high school like the football games and basketball, you know whatever sport happened to be going on at that time. Uh. Had. I met my best friend, we lived like a block apart, didn't realize that. Then, one day we were both walking to school at Sacred Heart and we realized we lived that close. So when we became good friends, walked to school every day, walked to the high school. Which is was much further then you know now but um. Had, had a. We had a certain circle. We weren't, I wasn't, not in the in group. But um. There was probably about ten of us who ran about together. We'd take little trips during the summer. Um, it was each other's parents or whatever. And I, I guess we, some of the girls got married after school, um. I did not. Mary Ann and I started traveling together and.

CD: Who is Mary Ann?

JT: Mary Ann is my very best friend, my BFF. And um. She has had to put with me for over 62 years. And she's a, very calming influence in my life. When I get upset, she can calm me down. My mom and dad as I said before both loved me unconditionally. As a child, I only received one spanking and that was from my Dad. That was shortly after he retired. I didn't see my dad till I was 3 years old, because he was over in Germany in the War. I was born in '42, he didn't get home until '45. So, I was three when I saw my daddy for the first time. Mom said every soldier that I saw I used to call daddy. And um. I had run out the street in front of the car. Well he was very upset. Of course I got a spanking. Mother told him he could never spank me again. Which you know I understand because he was upset. If my brother, I remember one time, my brother and I were fighting, and uh. And I don't know why, we were just kinda punching on each other. And my mother came in the room and said okay you two want fight, fight it out. You know, just hit each other, do whatever you want, and we both started crying because we didn't want to really hurt each other. It was just a thing to do and [indistinguishable] from, I mean my brother and I are as close as two siblings can be, maybe even closer. All I know is that I can pick up that phone anytime and he'd be here in a minute. And that's, really feels good inside to know that um, same thing with my nieces/nephews/sister-in-law, that they would be here. But it's um, good having a littler brother 'cause you can. I used to, you know play like you know he killed me or something and he believed me. [laughing]. I don't know how he figured I was talking to him if I was dead but you know. So that's some of the goofy things but growing up here in Granite was nice. It was uh a quiet little town. You knew your neighbors, um. I can remember going down to the local little grocery store was like a mom and pop thing.

And uh. You would just go in and put something on the, a tab you had, ya know. You paid it off at the end of the month I guess, I don't know what they [indistinguishable]. Which uh. That was kind of neat, it was a small-town type thing. And we had a really good, two really good places, well three, to eat in Granite City. There was Snack Shack which had really good chicken, which is over by our Hospital now. Uh, Barney's Root Beer, which all the kids hung out at but that's closed now. It's now the Schnucks parking lot and um. What was the other one? Snack Shack, Barney's, oh. Ah, Park and Eat. That's where the BP station is in Granite now. They had the best pizza burgers in the world, and everybody has tried to, in this area, tried to duplicate them, no one has. Now, I just found out last night, in a meeting, that they said there's this new restaurant in Granite that's open called the Diner. And they have the closest to that Pizza Burger, and this is from people my generation that belong there.

CD: Well you mentioned that it was much safer earlier. So, how has that changed as far as being able to walk around Granite?

JT: Well I think it. [Sigh]. A friend said they think things as far as kids walking and drugs got out of control. Now I don't know this, when air conditioning became invented. Because people used to sit on their porches, then they started going into their houses. And uh, It made it different, but to me, Mary Ann and I would take the bus home after work at night, didn't feel any threats. Uh. You could walk home from the football games or you know there wasn't a threat there. But now you don't even know. I guess it's basically like when during that time, you weren't afraid to pick up a hitch hiker or you know offer somebody a ride. And they weren't afraid of you either. But now that's all changed, you never know now unfortunately. You know if they've got a gun or if they're on drugs or if they're trying to hurt you or whatever so. Safe in that way I guess.

CD: Well then, did the military base and the Depot, did that play any role in your life growing up?

JT: I think it did, yes it did. I don't think it did, I know it did, um. I. It made me more aware, I think. I've always liked history but when I went to work for the Depot, because it was an active military base. I worked there from 1965 to 1970, when they closed the army Depot down. Now it stayed open as a warehouse place and then a made other things of it since. So it's still open but it's not called the Granite City Army Depot any more, um. It was always neat to go in, in the morning, with the flag going up. You had to get out of your car morning or night whenever you were close to that flag coming down or up going up. Stand there. You just felt like you were a family because of the military presence there. Everybody kind of worked together, whatever group you were in, whatever office. And for me, it was the flag, just getting out of the car, and just standing there, and knowing that you know these guys are fighting for me to be, 'cause this was during the Vietnam era, war. So, it a made a very big impact on me, 'cause I always tell people that I really miss that flag. Even though I went to work for another military installation, it was in a big building downtown St. Louis. We didn't have that. And I think, when the Depot closed, for Granite City that really hurt. Because at lunch time, all of us would go downtown Granite City. They had a Woolworths, you had a place, different places we went to eat, different businesses. They had a show down there. You know. And all of that ended up, probably within two years after the Depot closing, all closed. So that was a big impact on Granite City, losing a lot of income for downtown.

CD: And how did you first get a job with the Depot?

JT: Ok. I was working for this insurance company, as I said earlier. The treasurer absconded with the funds, so then I was out of a job. So ah, somebody said well why don't you take the civil service test and see if you can get on with the government. Well I did. I got called. Uh, went on an interview, and I got hired. So that's how I got on with them. I started on the nightshift, called the third shift at the time, as the keypunch operator. I kind of progressed up like another grade and uh. I was one of the persons, because it was during the Vietnam War, I was one of only two people could operate a transmitter, is what they were called. It was a keypunch machine but you put the punch cards in there and that transmitted all the information to the different arsenals, Depots, of all the equipment that was moving and moving out so. That was kind of neat to do. It uh made me feel like I was part of the real action but I mean real action [laugh], I was doing something for my country, um, In, probably within a year, year and a half of doing that, I got moved to the day shift. They were looking for a keypunch supervisor and I got it, to be a key punch s supervisor. I got that position interview, got that position. Um, little hard supervising people that you'd been on the same level with before. Some took it well [laugh], some didn't take it well. Um, and I enjoyed that, I enjoyed the camaraderie of the people I worked with. As I said, very close-knit family there, um. And at the end of my career, not working at the Depot, but when I retired 31 years later, I um, was still at a computer, I was working for a computer agency. But I was an administrative assistant. You know I took care of all the training needs and uh um, the charts for briefings for my bosses and stuff like that. So, you know it advanced for me. It got me hired after my grades.

CD: What were some of your other duties as a supervisor? That were different...

JT: I had to write the appraisals for people, for my peers I guess you would call them. Um, I had to make sure, I had to do all the scheduling. I had to prioritize the work load as it came in. I had the authority to approve or disapprove leave like vacations, sick days wasn't usually to bad cause if you're sick or you're sick. But if someone, you got, say you had six two people and two of them were on vacation at the same time then you kinda had to make a decision there on what you were gonna do.

CD: So, do you work a, what kind of people did you work with that in this environment then?

JT: um. Mostly the women were the keypunch operators. The machine operators who operated those big old IBM machines. I don't know if you've ever seen them, they're giants. That was mostly the men did that work because there was like uh wired boards that you had to wire. You know to take in and out. But what I, when. My boss, my big boss was very nice. Uh, not that my other bosses weren't nice too. But he was kind of a mentor for me, um. Like I said, working for the military is just to me, is just incredible.

CD: So, do you work with civilians then mainly, or did you work with enlisted?

JT: Both, both. We had um, officers. We had enlisted men and we had civilians, all within our same department. Uh. I worked in what they called warehouse 37. So, it was kind of a big building, like a big warehouse. So, you had different offices also in there. Like you might have a procurement office in there with the uh data processing center. Which that would have been in. You might have maintenance down the way, so you had a lot of people and a lot of buildings.

CD: Did you supervise uh military personnel at all? Or was yours just the civilian division?

JT: Mine was just the civilian part. Now uh, when they, the military used to come in from Wisconsin

during the summer for training and uh sometimes I would have to just do them for the summer, military guys if they would come in. But not often, usually they would put them up there on the big machines or something like that.

CD: And you mentioned a lot how you felt connected, like you were doing something during the Vietnam War.

JT: Mm-hmm

CD: Did, was there a sense of community there between the civilians and the army personnel?

JT: Very much so.

CD: And what would you guys do during off hours?

JT: Uh. We would go sometimes, we would go, even at lunchtime, we would go to the NCO Club, Non-Commissioned Officers club and have lunch together. Or sometimes we would go there for uh evening, for dinner. Or we would meet off base, I had some military guys, over here, not here where I live now, but our house or our apartment. So, you know just to make them feel at home and welcome and of course if they had families then they were also invited but.

Anything to make them feel, you know, welcome.

CD: Mm-hmm. And you started working for the base five years before the Depot closed.

JT: Yes

CD: Did you know, when did you first find out that they were probably going to close the Depo?

JT: On my way to work, sitting in my car, waiting for a train, they announced on the radio that the Granite City Army Depot would be closing. That's how we all found out.

CD: And how...

JT: On the radio. [laughing]

CD: How long was this before they actually closed it?

JT: Uh. I'm gonna say maybe 8 months, it might be a little longer.

CD: How did that uh, people react when they first found out, especially since it was on the radio?

JT: That's what upset 'em the most. It's the fact, that they, that's how they had to hear about it. It didn't come down from the commander or the head of personnel and stuff like that. And uh, they worked well to get us all a job somewhere else, um. Or people retired. You had some choice in what you wanted to do, retire. Some people moved out to Utah to another base. Some moved to um, trying to think of some other places, up to Rock Island, Illinois. You could go over to St. Louis, cause at the time there was several

places over there you could go and that's what I chose to do.

CD: And then so, why did you choose to go to St. Louis and where were you at over there?

JT: I started out at in a building that's no longer there, the Cotton Belt building. And I chose to go over there because it was closer than going, moving out of Granite City. I would have had to go to like Utah, Rock Island, Illinois, Alabama, so St. Louis was my logical choice, um. Retiring from my career, most of my career, after we moved a couple times, was in the, they used to call it the Mark Building, but when I retired it was called the Robert E. Young Building. It was across the street on Clark, Market and Clark. And it was across from the police station. So that's where I retired really from. And at the time, when I started out it was called SEMA, when I retired it was ALSA, which is the acronym for Automated Logistic Systems Agency.

CD: Did many people transfer to St. Louis or did a lot of people leave Granite City completely?

JT: Most of the people that I knew of transferred to uh St. Louis area. Now, I know at least maybe six to eight people who went on to Tubing, Utah, they were out there.

CD: And then did the closing have a big effect on the Granite City population, things being offered as far as services, restraints, things like that?

JT: Yes, 'cause some restaurants had to close, um. I remember downtown, Woolworths especially. We used to go there sometimes at lunch and they had [indistinguishable] a lunch counter. And when we went down there for lunch, that... Woolworths stayed open, [hiccup] excuse me, but the lunch counter had to close. You know they just didn't have enough business. Uh there was a couple stores downtown, um. Clothing stores that had to close. And I know that put people out of buss...I mean unemployed. And there was a show downtown, that closed. The Washington Theater where I worked, it stayed open, but now the uh bus depot is there.

CD: So downtown, was downtown the hardest impacted area?

JT: Yes, yes.

CD: How are the other um parts of town affected, if at all?

JT: I'm not real, I think downtown was hardest hit. Some of the areas like Belmore Village, that was hit a little bit because there was businesses out there but not as bad as downtown. Downtown I don't think has ever come back from all that because it used to be a bustling metropolis. Now it's just died down. It's coming back a little bit but now like it was when I was there. I mean I still go there.

CD: Ok. So, the Depot is just closed, you've moved over, or you're working in St. Louis I should say. What did you start doing for your new job?

JT: Um, I went into the keypunch section as a keypunch supervisor. I was hired over there for that, um. I went over there in June of '70. Uh, I stayed with that agency until I retired 1995. Uh, going through different name changes of course. Uh, got out of the key...I went from keypunch, I was still keypunch

supervisor. The hardest thing I had to do as a keypunch supervisor was I had to fire [indistinguishable] yeah I did have to fire, she had been given three warnings, because she was not performing her job well and she was deaf. That was my hardest thing I've ever had to do as a supervisor. Uh, very nice lady but she liked to, as I told you earlier about [indistinguishable] working priority order. She only took out what she wanted to do and the other employees would complain she's not taking any of the hard work so you know she was talked to by me and then my supervisor also had to talk to her. Well when she'd been given her third warning, supervisor, my supervisor said you're the supervisor you let her go. So that was kind of a hard thing to do. And uh but after there, I went to the computer room. Which I learned a little bit more skills on the computer and things like that. And then I got a chance to go down, get out of the complete computer field of the keypunches, the computers and all that. And uh, go into like an administrative job. And uh I, I did take that interview, took that job and then I, with that kind of progressed through there and that was working with uh. On how, they were called system change requests. And it was how to change things in the system through, I think there was four different commands that we worked with and um. So I processed all of those and then we from that I got a job on a special group, there was just myself and another lady, where we taught everyone the new procedures as things changed over and I was the uh main person to do that and I was lucky enough during probably like the last 8 years of my life [meant careers], I got a lot of awards. Got some bonuses. um. When they decided that they were gonna move part of our agency in a re-org, I was lucky enough to get a job with another gentleman who I really enjoyed doing stuff with and that's where I got to go into doing training for the employees, um. And doing his briefing charts, to take up Washington DC and stuff like that so. I really enjoyed that part, last part of my government career doing that.

CD: And that was your last few years, you were working for this gentleman?

JT: Yes.

CD: And then you mentioned some awards. What awards did you receive?

JT: Ok. You can. I got some awards for, outstanding awards for performances on my job, um. Sometimes those awards involved bonuses, which was you know over your salary, which I received the bonus, um. Got awards for training others, so you know, just kind of.

CD: All job and performance related then.

JT: Yes. Yes. I got an award for being so. It's hard to talk about yourself, without sounding like you're tooting your own horn, um. I, I was told that I was the very best person I had for a trainer. Now don't ask Mary Ann that because I don't care about teaching her [laughing], I don't have the patience.

CD: [laughing]

JT: Uh, but. It was something that um, I guess, not that I don't enjoy training Mary Ann but. I really enjoy that and they recognized that at the agency's level, so I got things from that. We got um, this is kind of something off site, I don't know when they blew up, the uh building in Oklahoma City, a group of us got together and made ribbons for sale so we could send money down there for the Oklahoma City Bombing, um. Just a lot of other little things I became involved with at work, and that. So, you know. I would get, I wouldn't say an award, but a good job you know, and that was the whole group not just me

and things like that. I enjoyed all that.

CD: And you worked in the computer room for a while.

JT: Yes I did.

CD: What was it like working in the computer room, back when you had all those old machines?

JT: Noisy. I, it was okay and I thought that would be what I really wanted to do the rest of my life because it was just really fascinating, but the more I was in there. And as a, I'm sure every agency or place, lot of pettiness going on, and I just didn't like the way some people were talking about others, and that's why I decided to make a move out.

CD: What were your duties while working in the computer room then?

Joyce: Um. Kind of the same as, you know when I a keypunch supervisor, cause I'm still supervising on one side. But on the other side [sigh], how do you explain this? The computers took tapes. So I worked in the tape library it was called, which is these big reels and you know, you'd have to categorize those, so if a programmer would go in or a computer operator would go in, they know, which one to pull or where it is, they're on the computer so. I mean it doesn't sound like a whole lot but uh. And then um, I got to run some of the machines, uh uh. They were called peripheral equipment, it wasn't the computer. Big guys for peripheral equipment. So, it a, you know like the sorter, if you had to sort the cords. Another one where you'd have to put in the boards and um get out certain reports from those boards, how they were programed for. Different stuff like that.

CD: What were the computers doing and what was the goal of your office?

JT: Computer office?

CD: Mm-hmm

JT: We were a support system for the whole agency. Uh. When the programmers came in who were writing the programs on other floors, 'cause we were on a floor all of our own and we were behind closed doors. Because most things that we did were uh secret or higher confidential. So, what was the question? I forgot [laughing].

CD: Just what is your office do I mean...?

JT: It, it was really supporting the programmers cause. Whatever the keypunch people did, we typed up, we typed up... We typed up everything the programmers had programmed out of how they wanted this program to run on the computers. So, they did that, then we took that information, course give it to them on their little punching cards, and uh. They would make additions, corrections, and then the computer operators, the big... you know, the big guys that ran the big machines. They would input all of that. Then it would come into a tape.

CD: And you mentioned it was a confidential/secret. So did you have security clearance?

JT: I did. I had top secret. But you can go higher, much higher in all those secret levels, top secret levels.

CD: And was there the same sense of camaraderie that you had at the Depot, when you were working over in St. Louis?

JT: I can't say, no there wasn't, not the closeness or the camaraderie, um. It was more of a, I wanna get a promotion and get here and here and here, there. Where at the Depot, it was everybody would work together. Now at my last five years, it was more of a camaraderie. That, the office that I worked in there, now I can't speak of the other offices but our office worked together, that was good. And we all did things outside together. In fact, I even uh, Mary Ann and I even went on a vacation with like four groups of people. You know, so you know. It, there was camaraderie there, we'd go to each other's houses and stuff like that. Uh, for the whole office, not just you know me.

CD: And then what types of uh people were you working with, especially in the computer room, when you uh first worked there?

JT: Uh, systems analysts, programmers, um...computer technicians. Because that's what I became was a computer technician, when I was in the computer room.

CD: Was it mainly men or were there a lot of women working there as well?

JT: It was a mixture.

CD: Did you have that kind of segregation of jobs like you did back in Granite City where the men would be the big workers, and the uh...

JT: No. No...

CD: ...and women would be the keypunchers?

JT: No. No.

CD: No.

JT: No. You know I can't really speak too much about the computer room after I left it. I, I think it was on an equal basis. But you know they had three shifts so I only knew but see the day shift, I don't know that much about the other two shifts. But uh, as far as programmers and systems analysts, they were probably, maybe a little bit more men. Because some of the ladies were married, had families. The guys had gone to college, gone to school for this. So, but everybody seemed to get along ok. I mean, I'm still friends with a lot them and go out you know to lunch or go out to dinner and stuff with 'em. So.

CD: And then your last five years you were working as an administrative assistant.

JT: Right.

CD: What were you doing, um in there? What kind of people were you working with?

JT: Uh. They were programmers, systems analysts, who, they were the ones who were uh. I had been having their work keypunched for years. I was working with the actual people now. Uh, procurement analysts, budget analysts, um. So it was a different kind of a, out of the computer field, but into the. How do I wanna say this? The more professional I guess uh. And I don't mean that nastily, you know. They were doing budget and uh procurement stuff with, the computer room you're working with, people who know technology, computer technology. So these people had to know more and uh we had every year uh, twice a year, we had a, different commands come in and I'm talking about Alabama, Rock Island, New Jersey, uh DC and then us. They would come in. I had to uh make up the packets that they looked at. And uh. So, there was a lot of decision making in those groups where there wasn't as much up in the computer field.

CD: What are you deciding? What are, what's this this group doing?

JT: Okay. Each one of those commands that I just named.

CD: Mm-hmm

JT: They would submit what I told you before were SCRs, systems change requests. They would write them up at their commands too.

CD: Mm-hmm

JT: They would have to go through DC, it's the government don't forget [laughing]. And if they wanted something changed, they would protect their prioritizing things. How, which, whose command's things is the most important at this time. What is this you know? Does this make more sense than this one you know? Decide which ones they might get rid of or keep or whatever?

CD: And so they all met in Granite to meet for a conference on this?

JT: No no no, this was in St. Louis.

CD: Oh I'm sorry, this, this is, um, you're right, you're in St. Louis and they had a conference in St. Louis.

JT: Yes, every two, twice a year.

CD: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to talk about with your career?

JT: Can't think of anything... I felt very blessed when I retired, that so many people came to my retirement party. In fact, I even, fact it was was, everyone from the agency was invited. We had it in the auditorium. I got to get up and speak and thank everybody. And then I had a luncheon a week later and that was quite well-attended, it was at the Embassy Suites down on the landing. And I felt very honored that so many people thought that much of me. You know from the lowest grade people to the highest grade people. They attended, so that was very, special for me.

CD: We talked a lot about your career but what's going on in your personal life. As we follow this thirty years, I know we're switching gears a little here...

[Laughing from both Joyce and Charles]

JT: Uh, okay. Well let's see, I'll start since we're talking about work things. Why, um. I went to work for Holy Family [Joyce's home parish] in 2003. Our business, when Father, when we got a new pastor, I won't name names [laughing]. Uh. He wanted to know where all the computers were, well they didn't have any over there. So, you need someone with confidentiality because you don't want everybody to know how much is in your checkbooks, how much everybody makes. So, he approached Mary Ann and I, because the uh business manager at the time said I think we can trust these two people really well. I know them well, you know, know 'em from Church, all the, Joyce and Mary Ann do a lot of things around here, um. So, he, we went in and he talked to us, and he asked us if we'd be interested, and we said yes but were gonna have to break it into two parts because one of us can't do payroll and the other one write bills. You can't have one person doing that. Of course, we do now but [laughing] it's um. So I took the payroll part thinking that would be the easiest part [laughing], Mary Ann took doing the bills. So, I did that from 2003 uh, that pastor left and we got our current pastor and um. I did that 'til 2016 I believe. And uh retired from that.

CD: Mm-hmm

JT: Uh, and that was just basically, I was basically the human resource person because I had to report, give reports to the diocese all the time. I had to make sure the health insurance was uh reflected the diocese, who gets what you know. If there was a letter, someone who wanted to know, like a bank if they wanted to get a loan. You know give them that, those figures to do with payroll, or what they make, their income, um, got like I said into the insurance towards the end, which is diocese mandated and all that. Because our business manager was just trying to oversee most of the other things that were going on, um so that's what I did in my working stuff till 2016. I still volunteer um. I told our current pastor that I would keep the safe environment, which is Protecting God's Children and background checks. That I would keep that up as a volunteer in my retirement, and I have been doing that, um. Sometimes it's a little hard to get people to realize, even though you have Protecting God's Children, which you only need once, once you're had it. Or your background check, if you have to more have done every five years. Well they don't understand why they have to have background checks every five years. Well you know, fact I'm working on some people from school now, that the uh secretary sent me who want to be uh chaperones to go on uh field trip for relatives. Most of them already have all of theirs but they uh. I'm okay, I'm down to the seven people I have to get a background check from. But there's a lot, there's not a whole lot of work if you keep it up with it. But it's still sending it out, and if they don't mail it back, giving' em a call, stuff like that. So that, that's what I'm doing work wise. After retirement, Mary Ann and I both decided we wanted to do work for our Church. Now we were doing, working carry out fish fries, we were working. And we were doing things at Church, you know we were Eucharistic Ministers and um. Then when Mary Ann retired, we started getting into catering, not getting paid, we did this out of the goodness of our hearts, and we still do it out of the goodness of our hearts [laughing]. Not as much as we used to because uh, we used to do the uh Boy Scouts, the graduation, um the anointing Mass, the Confirmation, you know, just so many different dinners, the pastors wanted. Uh our big thing that we do know, or I still do is the anointing Mass and uh birthday party for baby Jesus. We used to do the senior luncheons for the little seniors, but due to age and knees, and we just can't stand that long or do that much. Doing a lot, we're very blessed that we have a lot of workers who do the leg work and we can Mary Ann who has the brains can just sit there and tell 'em what to do. And I just sit there and cut up

things [laughing]. So, you know we're still active in our Church, we try to uh, go to everything special there is uh. Our pastor is very good with having religious things, cere- I shouldn't say ceremonies- uh Masses that you know we never had before. And we always try to make those. So, it's uh [indistinguishable] the St. Ann's Sodality, have been for years, I was present for 22 years of the [laughing] St. Ann's Sodality. Uh.

CD: What is the St. Ann's Sodality?

JT: It's like a lady's club or altar society type thing. Uh, it used to be called the Holy Family's Lady's Club. Our current pastor [laughing], does not like it to just be called Lady's Club. He says it should be St. Ann, so we changed our name like three years ago to St. Ann and so. Uh which only makes sense, instead of altar society. Anything that uh he needs like uh, we're doing the altar wine for him now, you know buying that. Uh, we have um, taking care of the homeless, were doing some things on that. We just try to you know do different charitable things I guess is a good word for it, I don't know. So, we're quite involved in all of that. Uh we did the food pantry for several years now, and we handed that off couple years ago. Uh it its' just, the pro-life movement we're very involved in that, uh. We did the, everything for that for years, then three years ago we gave that up, [indistinguishable] so where a lot of the younger, the youth group has taken that over. And uh now we just attend, we can attend and listen to the talks and uh, we don't march down, we just stay in Church for you know, say the rosaries, and stuff like that so. Let's see. I mean, seems like we're at Church a lot, but I can't remember what else we did. [laughing].

CD: Ok well...

JT: Oh, we have Totus Tuus.

CD: You do [laughing]. So, I'm gonna jump back a little bit to uh, when the military base actually closed and when they...

JT: Are we doing, am I doing okay?

CD: You're doing great Joyce [laughing].

JT: Okay [laughing].

CD: You're doing great Joyce [laughing]. No wrong answers here [laughing].

JT: Okay

CD: But I know like the uh military base really slowed down and shut down between 1995 and 19...

JT: 1970 it officially closed. Its 65 goofus not...

CD: Well I mean the ent-, not just the Depot, but the entire installation...

JT: Yes

CD: ...in the 90s. So how did that affect the community in your opinion? Was there, did most things

close because of the Depot or were there more effects after the entire base closed?

JT: I think there was probably more effects because like the military didn't come in anymore, so they didn't bring any revenue to Granite City. Uh you know, this was when they would go out I guess the National Guards or whatever they were for the summer. That made the officers club, the NCO Club close. The living facilities for the military got turned into apartments. Uh, couple good things: they built a YMCA down there, um, the commissary closed that was there. There's something else they built recently down, I can't think what it is now.

CD: So there hasn't been a lot of negative effects actually since the base closed as far as you can tell.

JT: Not that I know of, there could be I don't know.

CD: Mm-hmm

JT: 'Cause I know they've rented it out to several people, they do have warehouses down there. Some of the buildings have been torn down but I don't really, you know we don't have a good Granite City paper, so I don't know everything. Other than by word of mouth or Facebook [laughing].

CD: Ok, so. As we're starting to wrap up I mean, is there anything that you would like to tell us about your life, knowing that you're going to an archive, people in ten thousand years will look back at Joyce Taff [laughing].

JT: [laughing]...and say what an idiot. [Both laughing]

JT: I really enjoy. Well look, I'm gonna step back a bit to my childhood. One memory, I mean. I didn't know my dad's parents very well. We were in Texas when they passed away. I was eight and my brother was two. So, didn't know them real well and they lived in Alton. They moved to Alton in forty something, two I think. Um. So, I wanna uh ok. But my grandparents, my mom's parents, the Kramers. I can remember sitting out as a kid on the back porch with my grandfather, and he taught me about the constellations, the stars. Uh. How to take care of the birds, feeding them, we'd go around with a little hot water kettle in the winter time and put it, you know he had little saucers out. So, you know those were good childhood memories for me because he took that time, uh I. And he had rheumatoid arthritis so badly, I can remember in later years he would just sit on his bed and rub his hands and rub his hands. Um. My grandmother was a very big influence on my life as far as religion. Uh, very important to her...um. Mom and Dad were not as religious [laughing] as they were but I mean. Mom went to church, my dad was Methodist. But they did get married in the Church, so you know in later years. Uh, what was the original question [laughing]?

CD: Just, what would, is there anything you'd like to tell us?

JT: Okay. um. My mom, well I wanted to become one of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

CD: Mm-hmm

JT: And I knew there was a lot of research to that. My mother had been researching the family tree for

two or three years. And you know, at the time I wasn't, I wasn't at the age I was really excited about that or wanted to know much. But I, all of a sudden I got interested in it, and I don't know what sparked, oh I know what sparked it there was a, no that's now what sparked it, anyway. I started going over the library in the evening, the St. Louis Library, 'cause we were right across, well not across but right down there by it. And Mary Ann and I would go there with couple friends, who were also researching and uh. Started finding out things, and I thought now how am I gonna find out about the Taff family. I went to uh one of these books about the history of different counties in Missoura and I knew that they came from Maurice County, which is down by Rolla. And so I picked it up, I looked at the chapter, and it said the history of the Copeland Taff family [laughing]. Now it, that was a God movement for me [laughing]. So, I read a little bit about that. I uh, found out more stuff, I was able to get into the Daughters of the American Revolution, which I'm very honored to get into. I went to Valley Forge and also got the records from the Virginia State Library. My fourth great-grandfather, Peter Taff, wintered with George Washington at Valley Forge. I have the documents and the papers that verify that. Thats a very neat thing to know. Um, I also through that joined the Daughters of 1812 through another uh grandfathers, a Copeland grandfather. I've been able to get into the Daughters of the American Revolution and I really, I think because history does play an important part of my life, I feel very honored to be in those organizations. I have done several Ancestry, I got on Ancestry. My mother if she was alive now would just be in heaven. I know, well she's probably there anyway [laughing] but she would have loved Ancestry. Because she did everything by hand, she had so much documentation on her family that I thought where in the world did she get this. But it's right because I've gone to these places and she was right. So, I have, every place that all of my relatives have lived throughout all their lives, I have made up books and taken to the libraries or the historical societies in those counties and presented those to them. So, their history will carry on through those books and hopefully it will help someone else. I've got books in Indiana and Kentucky and Illinois and Missoura and in a Pennsylvania. So, the only place I haven't really been is Virginia and that's where everything really started. And uh I've got a, at the Madison Country Historical Society now. And I'm getting ready to do some for the Hayner Library in Alton. But it it does help, when you are doing research if someone has something. I know when I went to the Jersey County Library uh in Jerseyville and asked for something. She said well this is all we have on that day. Well it wasn't very much but it was more than I had so um, by what she gave me I started doing some researching because my dad's mother's mother was a Greeely. That's who I was looking for and I've been able to, I took some books up to her, she was so excited, this little lady is in her 80s, so she was really excited, so it makes me happy that I can contribute to that. And I'm not trying to do this this to, you know, say oh wasn't she a great person. I just want people to know these were real people, if you need help, it's here for you. You know, I'm glad I could do that for them, if they so choose to use it I you know. And its uh, same thing with belonging to those organizations. Uh, I'm proud that I belong to them. I feel honored that I could qualify and belong. I don't do that to be snobbish. I just think they're, I mean these are people who if they didn't fight for our country, we wouldn't be where we are. I pardon me, I shouldn't say it that way [laughing] we wouldn't have a country. So, you know, you know, I love my genealogy work. I [sigh] it gets frustrating at times but I, I love doing that now. And I love to read, I love to read. You know, I try to read at least x amount of books, I say twelve a year, once a month. You know, I try do one and I have been keeping that up. Sometimes it's just little books, like right now I'm reading *Abolitionists of Alton IL*.

CD: Mm-hmm

JT: A lot of that I know, I don't. And uh, oh, I did, which you may not want to put in your interview

[laughing] but uh. My grandparents when they moved to Alton, they moved into the Enos apartments. I don't know if you've heard of them. It used to be way back when the Enos Sanatarium. Now before that it was someone's mansion, Nathan somebody's mansion, or Nathaniel's. It is haunted and they have underground tunnels from it being an Underground Railroad site. I did not know any of that until I went on a uh underground railroad tour with the Alton visitor's bureau and to think that my grandparents Taff lived in that building. I guess that I didn't know them that well. I mean that really is interesting to me. So. I think that's it, Charlie.

CD: Well thank you very much for the interview, Joyce.

JT: You're welcome, Charlie. You probably have a lot of useless nonsense there but.