

ORAL MEMOIRS
OF
DELORICE HONEYMAN
An interview conducted on
April 18, 2015

Interviewer: Tanner Thomasson

Angelo State University
West Texas Collection

“War Stories: West Texans and the Experience of War, World War I to the Present”

LEGAL STATUS: The oral memoirs of Delorice Honeyman are unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on June 25, 2015.

This interview was conducted as a course assignment for the upper-level history class in the Department of History at Angelo State University in collaboration with the *War Stories* Project.

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The electronic file and complete transcript of this interview were processed in the Department of History at Angelo State University and are available at the Dr. Ralph R. Chase West Texas Collection, Angelo State University, San Angelo, Texas.

THOMASSON: Alrighty, okay, can you state your full name for me?

HONEYMAN: Delorice Irene Honeyman

THOMASSON: Okay, and let's just make sure we get that. Uh, when and where were you born?

HONEYMAN: Eureka, Kansas. April 17th, 1920.

THOMASSON: And is that where you grew up your whole life?

HONEYMAN: I grew up around, yes, Eureka, in the country.

THOMASSON: And can you tell me about, you know, growing up in the 20's and 30's?

HONEYMAN: It was wonderful... Just uh, my grandparents on both sides had big families. And uh, especially the Brookovers had so many reunions, especially at Thanksgiving and at Christmas time. And that included me and my uh, my great, great, ah, uncles and aunts. They were all alive when I was born, my great grandmother had just died before I was born. I knew all them, I knew their families, and they were usually at all these reunions, these two reunions at Thanksgiving and Christmas. And we cousins, we were always down at my grandparents on Sundays, we would always go there on Sundays, especially during the summer. And we cousins would all—I had a lot of the cousins, first cousins, and there was just a lot of things to do, they had a huge place, farm, and they grew everything you could imagine, all the fruit and everything that they grew. And of course I took part in it, and uh, during the summer, picking off some of these things, and canning. I would help, doing that. And the garden work, and anyway just grew up.

My folks always took time out to have a little fun. They belonged to card parties. Cards, you know playing cards, there were about four five tables of them, And we kids always went to these, uh, card parties with them, and sometimes we wouldn't get home until one or two o'clock in the morning. And it was fun, and we all knew each other so well it was just like being brothers or sisters. And none of us ever dated, and even when I was in college I still came home for the summer, you know, during the summer, and I'd go with my folks to some of these parties. It was just fun growing up.

Then I went to, I didn't get to go to school, at Eureka, because I was just over the, I couldn't go there. Because I was in the Reese community, and Reese was a little town, small town, and I cried my eyes out. Of course they would've had to pay tuition. But I went there, and I'd never seen a basketball, and they played basketball. And I got to play basketball. My dad was quite an athlete. And of course from the time I was born he had me on my feet running and doing all these things, we were active. Well anyway, so I got to play basketball, and I was short. Most of our players were short. Of course, a lot of them were taller than I was, but not tall like they are today. And we played half court, and anyway, I was a guard. I didn't have to make the baskets, I had to get the ball and to the, give it to our forwards. And I made all state. I was in all start. And kids today look at me and they say "you couldn't have been all state, you're so short. How could you play basketball?" I said, I played basketball, and I made all state. So I really enjoyed that town, that little town, and I'd go back and forth. My folks got me a car, it was a Ford, and it was

way back in the 30's. I graduated in 1937. And ah, anyway I drove back and forth and picked up people to take to school, and what else did I do? Well, I was very active with my folks and dancing, I loved to dance, and I loved to sing.

And I uh, my great Aunt gave me, she was from Chicago, she graduated in vocal and piano and ah at Oregon. So three majors. And she came to Eureka, Kansas and met my great Uncle, and they were married. She was such a wonderful musician. And she directed the choir at our church, directed the choir at our church I'd been a soloist back when I was about 15, 16, 17 years old. Of course then I went to college, I graduated in you know, vocal, and music and then, uh. I didn't wanna be a teacher, so I worked at Kansas University for the Dean of campus student affairs. And studied voice under, under, uh, I've forgotten her name, but she had sang opera. She was in New York and they had her as a teacher, she was wonderful, I knew her name as well as I knew anything. Senior moment. Sorry! [laughs] I'll know it after you leave. But anyway, (Scriefff) her name was Alice Scriefff. (Spells out Scriefff) And, and I was working there, back home, and that's when I met my husband. I told you about him.

THOMASSON: So what can you tell me, I mean, growing up were you more of a farm or a ranch?

HONEYMAN: Oh it was a farm.

THOMASSON: It was a farm?

HONEYMAN: Well, it was a farm, but it became a ranch because you know, they had dug up our ground. And it had (muffled 6:08) we had a lot of crops. You know, like alfalfa (Muffled 6:15) corn and that sort of thing. But we were in the part of the country, in the foothills, and its beautiful grass country. So, uhm, later on, well after my husband and I were married, then he and my dad, they finally made it into ranchland, all grass. And so, it's just beautiful, the grass in Kansas in the foothills. Like a lot of Texas, people, ah cattle, have come up there to graze there the summertime. And, so, we became more of a ranch than a farm. When you think of a farm, it's all row crops. And what else do you wanna know?

THOMASSON: Let's see... what conception did you have of the United States around? Tell me about, you know, World War II, you know how did that affect you in your day to day life?

HONEYMAN: Oh my goodness sakes, well of course I was in Lawrence part of that time, and of course I sang, uh, we had a, uh, oh a uh, I forgot what you call it, the Army. Some of the students were there from New York. And they heard me sing, cause I was doing a lot of singing and they heard me. And so I was, and they asked me to be for a red cross show, to do a solo, so I sang, I did a solo, and uh, "Night and Day" was one of the songs, and. But anyway, we went to, uh, oh well, we did the Red Cross show in St. Joseph Missouri, and that wasn't very, very far from Kansas City. But we did that show, and of course I sang there as a soloist with my church. And I was in the, Messiah as a soloist in Wichita, Kansas. And so I was singing a lot of the time. And, I knew all the new songs that came out you know, during that era from the 30's on. My mother had a (inaudible 8:21-8:27) I loved to sing. I can no longer sing. And when we returned I joined, uh, the music club that my great aunt had started in Eureka. And, um, and then, um, there were

three others, we became a trio. We sang all over Kansas. Oh my goodness, and we had so much fun. And I sang until I was 80 years old. Then I had to give up because my voice. I don't sing anymore. Now I'm 95 so.

THOMASSON: So you were pretty young when World War II kind of started happening?

HONEYMAN: Well yeah, I was in my 20's. Yeah.

THOMASSON: And how did you feel? I mean, just day to day? How did the war affect you?

HONEYMAN: Oh you know, it was like, of course, when I was at Lawrence, we would go to Kansas City sometimes just for fun. Of course there were soldiers all over the town, and sailors and you know. And it was just fun, meeting those people, those men, and uh, and just be girls. We weren't dating, we were just out to have fun, to go Kansas City. And uh, then of course we would go to the movies, went to a lot of movies, and then, they always had the news on before, you know, before the movie would show. And uh, and you would sit there and cry, because they would show pictures of the war you know, in Germany and France, and all those places. We'd sit there and cry. And then we would go down to the train when they would come through sometimes, with the men. And they would stop in Lawrence of course, the train, and we'd be there, and there would be all these soldiers and sailors, of course just military people. And uh, it was just fun, to see all of them, but it was sad at the same time because of the war. Oh yeah...no...and we'd send em off.

THOMASSON: And how did you, what was your conception of the USA at the time?

HONEYMAN: Well, I grew up loving my country, and then, even back in grade school. We saluted the flag every morning, and uh, that was every morning. The flag would fly outside, and if it was bad weather, then we had a flag inside. We would pledge allegiance. No, I loved, I grew up loving my country and I loved geography in grade school too. And learning about other countries, you know, but I just loved seeing these big maps of all the different countries. They would--you could roll them down, they could roll them up and they would roll them down and you see different countries. And we studied a lot about foreign countries and our own country, and our own state. I loved my state, and uh, I love the United States.

THOMASSON: So how did you feel about Germany and Japan and?

HONEYMAN: Well, well, Hitler, you know. (laughs). And, and of course Japanese, and of course there were a lot of strong remarks made about the Nazis, and the Japanese, and that sort of thing. I never had a feeling, 'cause when I went to Germany, I loved the people, and of course I knew I was of German background, too. But of course we were all against the war. And uh, we just couldn't, now whether we shouldn't. Well, yes, it's a good thing we entered that war. Uh Korea? No. Or any of the other wars since then.

That's the way I feel. I feel like this war, we shouldn't have war anymore. Now we have a lot of the problems with ISIS, and all that's going on now, and I don't know what's going to happen.

But uh, and of course I did feel like it was a good thing when Harry Truman, our president, dropped the bomb. And he didn't do it personally, but had it dropped and that was a good thing;

it was awful thing to have to happen, but it did end the war. And there was an awful lot of this. And I had a very dear friend that was killed, in Saipan, and he and I were quite (inaudible). We had met in our freshman year of college. And he wrote me all these wonderful letters, and told me all about the war, and even sent me pictures of Tarawa. And what it was like and showing all these bodies and all the destruction. And I had those put in Emporia, in the museum, where he had finished school, and ah, in college. So I took them up there, and they put them in the museum for him. No, it was sad, that war, we did a lot of crying. We were very happy afterward. [Laughs]

THOMASSON: So tell me about, you know... You met your husband, and four months later, you were married. Tell me about going to Germany, and living overseas.

HONEYMAN: It was wonderful. I was so happy on that boat. At first, Bob said, he said, I just don't think you should come over, it's war torn, you know. And then the first thing I knew, that my sister's husband, was sending for her. And then, then of course Bob, the next thing I knew then Bob, my husband, was sending for me. The of course the neat thing was we did get on the same train ah, to ah, New Jersey, and waiting there. And of course, then we got on the same boat going over there. I was happy. And that was my first wedding anniversary, and all the trips we took. Oh I loved my husband. I had 67 wonderful years with him. He loved to travel, and he was so- oh, I'll show you something (muffled sounds where she is pulling a card out of a cabinet)

I'll let you read it. It's very private. On our engagement, when we were engaged for those four months he sent me a dozen roses every month...and on our first month after our marriage, I got one rose. I thought, why didn't he give me a dozen? The next month I got two, I mean the next anniversary was two roses, until I got a dozen roses. And then from a dozen roses it went to just a dozen roses once a year. (Laughs)

But anyway, my husband had dementia, and we lived in the Kansas Masonic home, which is one of the finest places you could live in the United States. And uh, my husband was a Mason, and uh, when he moved there, you didn't even have to be a Mason, but that's where my husband wanted to live. And we were there from 19—ah, oh 2008 we went into the home, and I came down here in 2013. But at that time, he decided we should be in a home, he was losing his memory. And then soon after we moved he said I think we need to be in Wichita because our doctors were in Wichita, and we lived too far, we were tired of commuting. And ah. But anyway, so, we moved into this wonderful home, and anyway, he got so bad toward the last, that he had to over in the pavilion. The home had everything, it had the rehab and it had the ah, independent living, which we were independent living, and then the assisted living, and then they had the skilled nursing, called the pavilion. And it was all connected in this beautiful home. If you're ever in Wichita, Kansas, it would be a great thing to go there if you're interested in nursing homes. But anyway, he had dementia, and then the last few months he was in, of course, over in skilled nursing. I was still had my apartment, but you could walk all the way over, you could walk for miles in that place. It's all connected. But anyway, I had my birthday it was in April the 17th and that was in uh 2013, and anyway, in April was my birthday. And I don't know how he got this card, but his memory, he was losing his memory, but he never lost his memory for his

family or anything. But uh, he gave me this card. (Birds chirping) That's my bird clock.....Can you read his writing? (Silence while reading)

THOMASSON: Aww

HONEYMAN: And it was his mind, and two days before he died, you know, I just, he was so much more like himself. Then was more like himself when he wrote that card on my birthday, and he died on April 30. And I was born on that, of course it was April 17 that he gave me this card. And so, I carry it with me....He was a wonderful guy.

THOMASSON: So tell me, what are your most vivid memories from living there?

HONEYMAN: Living?

THOMASSON: In Germany

HONEYMAN: I loved it, Heady was wonderful, and pop. And all the, of course, I got acquainted with all Bob's friends you know, all the service people. It was fun. Played bridge. Played bridge a lot. And of course we traveled a lot, they had all those wonderful places we went, other countries. Oh it was just absolutely, well, it was a honeymoon.

THOMASSON: How long did you live in Germany?

HONEYMAN: Well, we came back in 1947

THOMASSON: So about two years?

HONEYMAN: Yeah, about two years. Well no, we lived there just a year. It was just a year. So all those outings were just a short time.

THOMASSON: And what do you remember about the kind of work he was doing?

HONEYMAN: Well, uh...I think Bob would've been better as, he was a wonderful teacher, in the military and with all that. But he went into the insurance business, and he was wonderful in the insurance business. But he was gone a lot, he traveled a lot and I was raising two kids. And, uh, of course, the time we had together, he was devoted, and we talked to each other all the time on the phone when he was away traveling. But he was flying a lot from one place. We lived in Omaha, Nebraska, loved Omaha, Nebraska. It was one of the most wonderful places I ever lived. And we had so many friends, most of those are gone now, but. And then of course, he uh worked for Regulars Mutual Insurance, and he went right up the ranks, and was vice president, in line for the presidency. And the Omahafest in Indianapolis, we went there. And then he had an offer to go into an agency, in a real insurance agency in Wichita, Kansas, so we could get back close to our parents. And his mother was still alive. So, no, we just had a wonderful life. He was gone sometimes for a week or so, you know, or five days at a time. But yeah, because he had other states that he had to take care of in the insurance business. But, he was a brilliant man, and we took all these wonderful trips to New York City. Oh yeah, he always bought me clothes, but I used to wear platforms. They are wearing platforms again today. Oh my, well I was wearing those when I was, when I met my husband, I would go to Kansas City wearing my platforms. And uh, anyway, I had beautiful clothes. And so, I'd get a new outfit, and he was always the

speaker at all these, uh, conventions. And uh, anyway, oh my, I love New York City. Have you been to New York?

THOMASSON: Uh-uh.

HONEYMAN: Oh my lord, go to New York, oh my gosh, and there's so much to see there, and oh my goodness its lovely. I could tell you so much about New York, I won't go into that, but oh my goodness we walked the street. And the first day we got in. Bob said 'well, what do you wanna do?' And I said, it was on a Sunday, and I said 'I wanna walk down Fifth Avenue.' We walked down Fifth Avenue, and there were all these people and their families, all these little kids, all dressed up, I mean really dressed up, beautiful clothes. Oh it was so much fun. Oh my goodness. [laughs] We saw and went to so many uh, musicals, saw the *Sound of Music*, *Camelot*. And at first when he was so busy with the convention I was with another friend of mine, and we'd always just get in a cab and go different places. I could tell you a lot about New York. It was wonderful. Loved that place. And Chicago. The kids were living in Chicago, David and Carol. Of course we used to take them out, uh, cause we used to go to conventions there, and down in San Antonio, and San Francisco, and uh, Sacramento. Oh my lord.

And the Brookover on my mother's side, it was a great thing until after she retired, because they were getting together, and so far as we know all the Brookover are related. They kept their name, (spells Brookover), German. And then of course we used to, and we got acquainted with all these, there was another brother, there were two brothers who made it to the United States. And of course we got acquainted with the other brothers' families. So and mother stopped having those reunions, 'cause I don't remember, people having continued that. That was fun right after we retired because we got to do all those trips, and we did them by car. We just always drove, it was fun. He was tired of flying, and he was flying out of Omaha and all those places. That was during the red carpet days. It was wonderful. They'd pick up your luggage They'd meet you and take you right through to the station. And uh, and they'd be right there to pick up his luggage, he never had to take 30's luggage. And of course, I always flew with him too to all these, ah, conventions. And my lord, we always flew first class. Oh we were waited on, we had filet mignons, the food was wonderful. It's a lot different today flying. Oh, I just had a wonderful life.

THOMASSON: What can you tell me about what he was doing in the Army? About his career in the Army, what can you tell me?

HONEYMAN: Oh well I can't tell you an awful lot about that. He was a battalion commander, and uh, as far as his Army, when the war was going on, I didn't know him. I met him, well, the war was, uh, Japan was still going, but then see I met him in August, and then the war was over. You know, he was on leave. So uh, I can't tell you much about him other than that. I know he went through the ranks, up to, you know. And then of course you have that one write up about him making in the regular Army. And that was uh quite an honor. He had lots of medals. He was wounded in Africa, and I didn't know him during all that time, while the war with Germany was going on. I met him after.

THOMASSON: Do you know what unit he was with?

HONEYMAN: Yeah, well, yes it's in the, well it's in his obituary.

THOMASSON: Oh it is? Okay.

HONEYMAN: You didn't read it?

THOMASSON: I didn't read all of it, I skimmed it.

HONEYMAN: Well I can get it and I can tell you.

THOMASSON: Oh it's okay, we've got it.

HONEYMAN: It's right over there. Now you read it, then you'll know.

THOMASSON: I was going to say, if we've got his unit, we can kind of look and see.

HONEYMAN: And David wrote that obituary too, with all of the information I had written up for him. So he has all that.

THOMASSON: And then, so you were in, you know, Germany until '47, what was he doing then?

HONEYMAN: Well we were in [location] at the constabulary. Well help me get that, do you have time?

THOMASSON: Yeah

HONEYMAN: Yeah let me just read it to you. [Long pause] I loved his mother. Oh my goodness, she was so...Six kids, you know, and five of them all earned their degrees, and that was something else.

THOMASSON: So he never went actually back and finished school?

HONEYMAN: No, Bob got his degree.

THOMASSON: Oh he did?

HONEYMAN: Oh, oh yes, at Kansas State University. Oh yeah, here. Go on, read this here. Um, let me see here, He was born in March of 1923 in Madison, Kansas, he was raised in Earl, Kansas farms, and so forth, okay? (Clears throat) I'm losing my voice. And his father died in a farm accident, I told you about that. And, uh, Bob enlisted in the, well you know about that, 'cause you heard me talk about that. When he enlisted he was 16 years old. And, he served eight years of active duty during World War II. And Bob saw action in North Africa and in Europe. He was wounded in Africa. And he told me he was flown back to, he was flown to England and then from there back to Walter Reed Hospital. Here, in the United States. And, and he was shot in the back, and he was temporarily, he couldn't move, he was paralyzed. But that was, they removed, you know, some of the bullets, and he got his, everything back, so then he went on to Europe. And under George, ah General George Patton in both theatres.

And then after V.E. day, Bob returned to Europe with the U.S. Constabulary occupation forces, and was stationed Essen, Germany, you know that. And he was released from active duty and

joined the Kansas National Guard, and was with the 137th infantry. Oh, now I can tell you about, you know, what he was with. 13th armored division [muffled] 13th armored division is what he was with in Europe. They didn't put that in here. 13th armored division. He was a tanker, with the tanks.

THOMASSON: I was going to say, when you said Patton...

HONEYMAN: With the tanks, yeah. with Patton. So is all that, all that with Patton. He never talked much about his war experiences. He talked some with my son I think.

THOMASSON: That's incredible.

HONEYMAN: But you know the neat thing about my husband, and then the insurance business, he was very, he worked so hard in insurance. And uh, course he'd be out off, sometimes at night too. You know, if somebody had, if their house burn or something. And uh, but he could always go to bed and sleep. He could always, and then he'd come home from work. He never talked about his experiences in that, in that field. Which was wonderful, because some husbands come home complaining all the time, it was wonderful. He was a wonderful guy.

THOMASSON: Let's see,

HONEYMAN: I'm just lucky. I'm very lucky. I know that today it's different. I hope you have a good marriage, you're not married?

THOMASSON: No, I was uh, going to school and stuff first.

HONEYMAN: I understand and that's a good thing to do that, 'cause I had my education. I was three years older than my husband.

THOMASSON: I was going to say, I was--

HONEYMAN: But you know he looked older than I did in some ways. Oh my lord, he could hardly believe that I was as old, and he, of course he would. He had. You know had really started lying about his age, because he was only 16 when he enlisted, and his mother signed the papers. So, he was three years younger. Took him a while to tell me how old he was. And his mother said 'you know, Bob, if you don't tell Dee how old you are, I'm going to tell her.' And he said, well you may not want to marry me. But this was after we were engaged. He said you may not cause I'm three years younger than you are. And well, you know, I kept thinking I knew some of those kids up in Madison that were his age. Because I thought, well these guys were younger than I was, you know. [Laughs] But I found out. But he got so mad about it, to have to tell me.

THOMASSON: That's funny

HONEYMAN: He told a lie.

THOMASSON: Ah a little bit

HONEYMAN: He didn't tell me one I don't think after that. But anyway, he was released from active duty and joined the National Guard, 137th infantry regiment, where he served as battalion commander. He served as a, in an apprentice position. All the other guys were older than he was

that were, ah, majors. And he was a battalion commander and he was a lot younger than they were. That impressed me a lot. Battalion commander, Then he left the service, attained the rank of major, retired from the National Guard in 1979. Then, then we got married, that's on here. You can have one of these if you want it. Or do you have copies?

THOMASSON: We've got copies

HONEYMAN: Anything else you want to ask me?

THOMASSON: I mean just anything else you'd like to add, I mean.

HONEYMAN: Well, we adopted our son, I had a problem with pregnancy. I had a miscarriage or two, and then I never got pregnant. So we finally, we adopted our son, Jim. And he was two and a half. Then when he was six years old, it was right around the time when we ended up at K State. And I was running [muffled] motel, and just before Bob graduated, it happened. I got pregnant. Didn't know it until that summer. And, anyway, I was pregnant, and because he had gone out to Arizona and came back, and I thought. I was wanting to sleep all the time. And so we stopped by the farm, and mother made chicken, wonderful, always wonderful chicken, fried chicken. And it just smelled terrible. Yeah! And I thought my lord, what did mother do to this chicken? Well I seen now, was pregnant. I got nausea and vomit. [laughs] Oh I got nausea, and I was pregnant with Carol, and I sang to her all the time when I was pregnant, and she was born she was adorable. She was born like her dad's family, born like the forests. She had this beautiful voice. She, ah, started when she was talking she was singing because I was singing to her all the time [laughs] I was pregnant. And when she was about a year and a half, 18 months old, I started singing again. You know, I started singing again as a vocalist, and soloist at the church, and I was practicing and she wouldn't leave me alone at the piano. So, I finally, my son had this little song book that he had from when he was in grade school. And so I got it out and so I played these, she learned all these little songs and singing. And she could sing the Star Spangled Banner when she was 2 and ½ months old. Some of the words didn't come out quite the same, but she had a perfect voice, oh she has a gorgeous voice.

[Remainder of interview focuses on her children.]