

**ADMIRAL NIMITZ NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF THE PACIFIC WAR
Fredericksburg, Texas**

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

**Interview with Anne Sloan, WAC, World War II, 1944-46
Fort Des Moines, IA, Plattburgh, NY, Camp Davis, NC, Lexington, VA and
San Antonio, TX**

Place of Interview: Kingsland, Texas

Date: 11 September 2000

Interviewer: Barry Basden

ORAL HISTORY OF ANNE SLOAN

Barry Basden: I am Barry Basden. I am with the National Museum of the Pacific War, and we are here today at Anne Sloan's house in Kingsland, Texas. This is 11 September 2000. We would like to start, if possible, by telling us when and where you were born—something about your background.

Anne Sloan: I was born in La Grande, Union County, Oregon September 12th, 1924 in my grandparents house which was on a chicken farm in the old town part of La Grande, and it was called the house with the icicles because it had such long eaves. My brother was also born in that house.

Basden: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Sloan: Just one brother. He was two and one-half years older than I

Basden: And what were your parents' names?

Sloan: Lloyd Irwin Busey and Sarah Grace Pickens Busey.

Basden: And what was your brother's name?

Sloan: John Mathews Busey. My name is Griselda Anne Busey Sloan—the whole thing.

Basden: Where did you go to high school?

Sloan: La Grande, Oregon. Graduated in 94—uh, 41.

Basden: 41?

Sloan: yes, that's better (with a laugh).

Basden: Where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Sloan: On the way home from church. We heard on the car radio, and I was devastated. I cried all afternoon. I just knew that my brother would get killed.

Basden: What did you decide to do then?

Sloan: Well, what could I do? I was going to school. I was going to college that year, and I finished that freshman year. I had a scholarship: 75 dollars—paid the whole tuition.

Basden: Where was this?

Sloan: La Grande. There is a college there: Eastern Oregon College of Education it was called at that time, and I think it is Eastern Oregon State College now. It started out as a normal school. I went to a lab school—third grade through seventh grade—the lab school for that college. And at the end of this college year, they came around offering a sheet metal class if we would go to work at an aircraft plant, we could take a free sheet metal class which met about 12 hours, as I recall, nine in the morning until ten at night with time off—one half hour each to eat or something like that in the high school shop during the summer. And a lot of us signed up for that. And I took that class, and I finished just before the 4th of July, and the instructor lived in Portland, and he took two of us down there to work at Columbia Aircraft. The other lady was very, very heavy set; she was a maid for one of the insurance people in town, and when we got down there, the only riveting job they had open at the moment she took because she couldn't stand heat, and the only other job they had open was in the processing and heat treating department which was real hot. She couldn't stand heat at all. So I took that, and they said I would be there a week and then I would transfer to over to riveting, and I never did. When the opening came, I was already enjoying the job enough, and I didn't want to change. It was like two or three weeks, and there were three of us plus the superintendent—no, there was the superintendent-foreman, and then there were three of us working for the foreman in the heat treating and anodizing and chromodizing department.

They decided to put on three shifts: there had been just one before that. They were working for Consolidated doing PBV-5 tails—two of those a week, and the flaps for Douglas Dauntlesses—you know, they have the holes in the flaps on the Douglas Dauntlesses to help slow them down. Those holes were punched out by American Can and then those were—everything for the Dauntlesses was chromodized and painted with zinc chromate paint, where the PBV-5s were all anodized and then painted with zinc chromate paint because they landed in the water and hopefully, the Douglas Dauntlesses did not land in the water—hopefully—which made a difference. They decided to make each of the three of us a lead person—so I was lead woman for the

day shift, and my boy friend, at that time. (of course, I started going with a kid I worked with—he was about my age) was put on second shift, and then there was a lady who was a little older and married who was working with us. They put her on graveyard shift. I think we were both too young to be put on graveyard shift. So—I was 17 – I might have had my 18th birthday before I became lead woman, and I had grandmothers working under me and all other ages. I didn't dare tell them I was 18 years old.

Baden: How many hours a week did you work?

Sloan: In Oregon, it was against the law to work over 60 hours a week if you were a woman-- at that time. There were a few weeks that I worked 72, but we signed out—the company got unhappy about it because we weren't covered by Workman's Comp if we were signed out. The lady who was on graveyard wanted to go see her husband before he was shipped overseas so the other two of us—by that time, the boy had been replaced by another woman. He had gone off to college or someplace, and the two of us split the 24 hours while this gal went to see her husband off. So we worked 12 hours, and we signed out after eight or ten or whatever would have made us over what was legal. It was against the law to work over ten hours for a woman so I guess we signed out after ten hours.

Baden: Did you work six days a week?

Sloan: Seven days a week, most of the time. We'd work eight hour shifts and then ten hours to make up the 60 hours. They needed every bit of help they could get. They had pretty primitive equipment when I first started there. We were doing skins—which were longer than the acid tanks we had to put them in. So we had to jerry rig things so that we could anodize those without them burning if they touched the side of the tank or anything wiggled in the tank, why they would burn the skins and ruin them. So, finally, we got tanks which were long enough so they could go in straight which was helpful, and they got an automatic generator which would run itself up. Up until then, they had a kind of old donkey engine thing that we had to be really careful with on how we ran it up to the desired amperage.

Baden: What was life like in the city at that time and were there any war scares, offshore scares or anything like that?

Sloan: No offshore scares that affected Portland. I was off the coast, in Portland, Oregon. We went to work before it got daylight and you went home after it got dark, and it rained all the time in Portland, of course. There weren't any scares really. I ate all my meals in restaurants practically. But ration points were a real hard thing for people who didn't eat in restaurants. I just had a room. One of my friends from La Grande came down and we roomed together in a house of a family friend of mine. He was a butcher, and he could get more meat than the average Joe because anything that was about to spoil they could charge off, you know, and bring home. And so they did it pretty well, and I gave her my sugar stamps—even if you were eating in restaurants you could get a ration book so I gave her my sugar stamps so that she would have a little bit more to can with.

Baden: What was the process like for getting ration stamps and how did that process work?

Sloan: You went to some office and signed up for them. I don't really remember too much about that. I don't think they mailed us a new one—they might have, I can't remember. That's a long time ago.

Baden: How did they control it? How did they make sure you didn't get extra or whatever? You had to turn in an old one to get a new one?

Sloan: I think that was probably it. You had to have ration points for shoes and that was my biggest problem: shoes. The acid where I worked ate shoes up like crazy. And leather shoes would last for a little while, but a lot of the shoes put out at that time were wood covered with cardboard and cloth, and they would just go to pieces in nothing flat with that acid on them. So I really had a tough time keeping in shoes. Also in clothes. Wool pants don't get eaten up with acid like cotton, and Meier and Frank had a whole bunch of the ugliest colors you ever saw in wool ski pants that were leftover—these were pre-war things, and I guess I bought every pair they had that I could wear. I was skinny then; I could wear pretty much anything. Chartreuse and purple and horrible colors, but they would last for a couple of weeks—one of those pairs. They would eventually crack from the acids we got on them, but that sort of thing was really hard: the work clothes.

Baden: How did you protect yourself from the acid?

Sloan: We wore rubber aprons and used rubber gloves, but I got acute acid poisoning while I was working there and that is why I quit. I asked the doctor finally—I started breaking out where I hadn't got any acid on me, and I asked the doctor what was going to happen next, and he said he didn't know. He hadn't known anybody who was stupid enough to work in it that long. So that is when I quit and went back to college.

Baden: When was that?

Sloan: The end of 93, uh 43—I keep wanting to put a 9 there. 43.

Basden: OK, so you were at this place...

Sloan: About 18 months. I started, well, I had giant hives from eating strawberries and that related to this acid poisoning some way or other, and I was beginning to have problems that way so I went back to the University of Oregon for a term and that was pretty miserable. All the teachers who were of draft age were gone, and there were about 100 civilian boys on campus—I would guess—and they had taken over all the dorms for the GIs on campus. There were a lot of soldiers on campus, and the girls' dorms were in the boys' fraternity houses which were a lot less than good, but that is the way they did it.

The math teacher I had had been a professor emeritus of the math department, and he was really ancient and he was deaf and he had arthritis really badly, and he gave the same lecture—the first lecture of algebra—he gave it over and over, and over again, and he couldn't hear you telling him “hey, you have given that lecture before a jillion times.” We all went in to drop the class and they wouldn't let any of us drop it.

Basden: What was your major?

Sloan: At that time, I was wanting to be a doctor. I don't have the eyesight for the work with the microscopes that you need to do so I got out of that. I couldn't do it. Anyway, they got a woman who was teaching ground school to give us three or four lectures on algebra, and we had to take the final on that—what little we learned in those three or four lectures. I think it was three. We hardly knew her name yet and here we are taking the final, but she was good. This fellow had been good, but I mean he was—they took him away some place. Poor guy.

Basden: What were all those GIs doing on campus?

Sloan: They were studying—I don't know—ground school—before they went into the pilot's training or what, I don't know. We had no contact with them. They weren't allowed hardly to speak to anybody else. They didn't want any co-mingling type thing between those GIs and the civilians. They wanted them working. If they didn't keep their grades top-notch, they were out. I think that was weekly. I think there were around 3,000 or 4,000 of them on campus, but you didn't get to know them at all. So you didn't get to ask them what they were studying.

Basden: So how long were you in school?

Sloan: Just that one term which was January, February, end of March, I guess. Then I went up to work at Boeing. I was spending money a lot faster than I could afford to spend it at that school not learning very much so I went up to Boeing to work, and I went up there as an expeditor. I couldn't work around the acids so I had to stay out of that. So I expedited the trailing edges of B-17 wings, and they were real sharp pieces—they were heavy aluminum and they were—what do you call it—can't think of the word—corrugated like this, and then sliced. They fit right into the very edges of the wing to support it, and they were sharp as razors. I got blood poisoning just carrying some from one place to another. The edges just barely clipped my hands, but they had that fish oil on them, and I got blood poisoning from that.

I didn't really like working at Boeing. Relations between the employees and the union were bad. They did not support the employees—the union didn't. There was very little education going on as to what was done. I had to see that these trailing edges got through each department so they would be available, and when I first took over that job, they were just about to slow down production of B-17s because they were out of those. Nobody liked to work on them, they were so sharp. I went to this one woman who drilled holes in them. She put a template on, screwed it on, and then drilled holes according to how the circles -- around each place was supposed to be a hole, there would be a color and she had to use that size bit. I said: “if you don't do those, you are going to stop production of these airplanes.” She said: “is that what we are making here?” Now, I thought that was gross that somebody was working there and didn't even know what we were making. It was very few feet from where she was where they were rolling them out onto the tarmac—when they got finished. They were doing one an hour at that time.

Basden: One B-17 an hour rolled out?

Sloan: Yes and right across the road, they had a field where they tested them—they test piloted them over there. But the workers were so confined that they had to use the same first aid station and the bathroom and they couldn't leave this little cubicle area in the plant. So she didn't even know what they were making. I mean it wasn't probably a hundred feet from where they were rolling them out and she worked. So I explained to her what we were doing there. I had-- as an expeditor-- I had the kind of badge that took me everywhere except the blueprint room and the, I think it's where they did the engines—someplace I had no need to be at all with working on wings. I could see everything that was going on. But in the office, it was a block square office where I reported in the mornings, and I went out in the field from there. Every week when we got paid, we had to chip in a dollar into the check pool, and they picked a number off the check, and it always went to this secretary of one of the big shots. The big shots had offices around this block square. I am sure the secretary got to sign the back and hand it over to her boss. That's how—it was about 1000 dollars every week in there. I went over...

Basden: How much were you making then?

Sloan: 92 cents an hour. So I was giving more than an hour's pay every week, and I went to the union about it, and they told me to "drop dead." Well, not in such polite words as that! But they told me to get lost. So I objected to that. One of the foremen in one of the departments that I had to work with—he wanted a bribe every week. You either brought him two pair of hose or two cartons of cigarettes every week or your stuff wasn't going to go through there. He had a real neat little black girl, quite young, who was his clerk, and when he told me that I was going to bribe him or else my stuff wasn't going to go through there, I told him that it was going to be a cold place you know where before I ever paid him a bribe, and she signaled to me to head to the bathroom and I went to the bathroom, and she came in there and she said "you just don't worry about a thing, your stuff is going to go through there just fine." She was glad to hear somebody tell that guy off. He needed to be told off. If it hadn't been for her, I would probably have been out of a job. I mean that if I couldn't get my stuff through there, I'd be out of a job. But telling the union what was going on didn't do a bit of good because I did. They told me to mind my own business. I objected to Boeing, so anyway, I didn't really have enough to do once I got things organized there to keep me busy so I decided to go into the Service as soon as I was old enough which was in September of that year.

Basden: September of 43.

Sloan: 44.

Basden: 44.

Sloan: Yes, I started work up there about the first of January. I had to quit 60 days before I turned 20. You couldn't be in a defense industry for 60 days before you enlisted. They didn't want people leaving defense industries to go into the Service. So I went down to Portland and took a job washing dishes in a restaurant, and the girl who did the salads and sandwiches quit about a week after that so I moved over to doing the sandwiches and salads which was a much more pleasant job. That was what I did for the 60 days between...

Basden: Do you know how the restaurants got along in the rationing situation?

Sloan: Well, that restaurant was fairly upscale for that time, and they had beef on the menu and veal and pork, but you got pork--they could get pork apparently. Some of the people objected to getting pork sandwiches when they ordered beef sandwiches, but there wasn't anything you could do about it. I don't think they had any big trouble except that. I didn't see any other shortages there. A lot of people in Portland—if you got invited out for dinner, you had better figure that you were going to eat horse. That is because people didn't have enough ration points to invite anybody for dinner unless that is what they did eat: horse—didn't have any ration points. There was a horse meat market there, and I am sure I ate quite a bit of horse. It never worried me. The horse meat market had a sign "not for human consumption," but no one paid any attention to that.

Basden: What can you tell us about that?

Sloan: I didn't pay any attention. You just figured that it was going to taste a hair different than beef and eat it.

Basden: It tasted a hair different, huh?

Sloan: Yeah (laughing). At that time, I was a kid, and I had a big appetite and didn't really care what I was eating. It was a lot better than bear. Bear is not my favorite food. About the best meat there is is moose. That is good.

Basden: OK, so you washed dishes and fixed salads and sandwiches for 60 days and then what happened?

Sloan: I went down and enlisted. I had already gone down and taken tests and that sort of stuff you had to do. On my birthday, I enlisted and about two or three days later, shipped out.

Basden: What was your induction like?

Sloan: They were so nice and polite to us while we were taking the tests and before we took the oath, they were—they just couldn't be nicer.

Basden: Did you have to take a physical before you....?

Sloan: Yes, a physical, and this silly I.Q. test. And I aced it and they were starting to make something of it, and I said: "do you mean that somebody missed one of those?" I mean that was easy. It was sort of like those Ohioan-Californian tests you took in school where they had the blocks piled on top of each other and you had to count them, and it depends on which way you look at

them, how many there are, and that was one of the things in there. But it was a real simplified version of that—just a few questions. It wasn't anything big. Anyway, the minute you took your oath, you were in the army, boy! I mean they changed their attitude the minute we all lined up and took our oath.

Baden: I have talked to other people that say that they didn't get much of a physical when they went in at that time

Sloan: Well, a doctor told me that I had a heart murmur, and nobody had ever said that before. And he also told me that it was benign, and that has proved to be true. I have had them x-ray me and do other tests and stuff like that because they weren't satisfied that I had a heart murmur and it was benign when I told them. They wanted to see for themselves, and they agreed.

Baden: So you feel like you got a pretty good exam going in?

Sloan: Yes. Now there was a WAC in—where was she stationed?—she was stationed with us in Plattsburg, I know, but she was someplace else I was too. San Antonio—I think they shipped her from Plattsburg to San Antonio eventually. She got in someplace down south, and they paid 10 dollars a head for the ones they passed. That is what they paid the doctors. Ten dollars was not that little an amount at that time, but still it was cheap. He let her in with both syphilis and gonorrhea. I guess they didn't get paid if they didn't pass them. The government spent a ton trying to cure her, and probably cure all the ones she exposed. She was in the hospital up at Plattsburg for, I would guess, four or five, maybe six months that I was there, and some of those idiots on the broken arm ward would get exposed.

Baden: She had no standing orders not to, huh?

Sloan: Oh, I am sure she did. But—and they did because I told them. I told them what she had and told them to leave her alone. But some of them were stupid. In those days, if somebody broke their arm or leg, they would put them in an orthopedic ward until they got well. I mean how boring can you get? I went over to the PX and got a bunch of pipe cleaners. In those days, they were just little, short white ones—that's all they had and gave them to those kids in the orthopedic ward to make things out of because they had nobody coming in, and there were no gray ladies allowed. The guy in charge of the base didn't like gray ladies so he wouldn't allow them. Do you know what a gray lady is? They were sort of like a Red Cross only they were volunteers, mostly middle aged or up, who brought books and various things in, wrote letters for the GIs; they did a lot of services like that, but he didn't like them. I don't know what had ever happened where he had been before, but he didn't like them, and he wouldn't allow them so after I got off work, I would go around and see what I could get for the guys. They couldn't go to the PX, they weren't allowed to do anything. I would go over to the PX. One time, I brought one back a hot dog and he was having an operation the next day. He wasn't supposed to be eating. Boy, I heard about that. I was glad he didn't die on the operating table. I would probably still be locked up some place. He knew better than to tell me to bring him a hot dog, but I didn't know that he was going to have an operation. Anyway, they would make dogs and stuff out of these pipe cleaners and do something to keep from going crazy. They had a few paperbacks there for them to read, but not much.

Baden: OK, so you passed a pretty good physical and then you took the oath the same day.

Sloan: No. It was a day or two later. OK. They had to do this other stuff first. A whole lot of us took the oath at one time. Then, all of a sudden, we were GIs. They could yell at us, and they did. They let you know right away that you were in the army. We shipped out on an old train. It had three bunks high, and I don't think it had been vacuumed since World War I, and the windows hadn't been washed since World War I. We went to Seattle and got on—they hooked the cars on to a Northern Pacific. I don't know what line we took to Seattle—I don't remember, but we took the Northern Pacific across to some place and dropped down to Des Moines. When we went through the Dakotas why people would get on the trains with sandwiches and apples and cookies and anything you can think of. They did this 24 hours a day out of their own pockets. These people raised the money and did this to every troop train that came through which were a lot of them coming through—any of them that had troops on there, they got on, and we got all that stuff free. They were so nice. I would think that was North Dakota—from where the train probably goes, yes. Gee, they were great.

Baden: So you were on this train with male and female soldiers?

Sloan: It was all female that I saw. We had like three cars of WACS.

Baden: Are you in uniform now?

Sloan: No, we weren't in uniform. We played chess practically the whole way back. There wasn't much else to do. We kept trying to talk somebody into washing the windows so we could see where we were, but it never succeeded. I don't know that they were being blacked out. I think that they were just dirty. It was just dirt on them. We had pork three times a day or two times a day, or whenever we had meat it was pork. Some of the girls said they got sick from the pork, but it didn't bother me any. The meals weren't very inspiring on that train because they were feeding GIs, and we didn't have any choice—put it that way. They had a lot of people to feed, and they were feeding them as best they could. When we got down to Des Moines, there

was a great big room that we were in the first week with—I don't remember if it was double or triple bunks—this whole room. It was about a block square—just jammed. There must have been a thousand women in there, and some poor gal had head lice, and they washed her hair with—I guess—kerosene, and all the ones that were real close to her that had maybe been exposed got the same treatment. I was glad I wasn't close to her.

During that week, we started getting some orientation, and we got our uniforms. If you were small and skinny which I was at that time, you got size 20—or something like that—because they didn't have enough of the little ones. So you got great big ones, and they said, "some day you can trade down." I finally took seams in and made darts and stuff to where they didn't fall off. That was bad. They should have more of the right size. We learned to say "Ma'am" to women instead of "Sir." You don't salute when you are carrying a mop bucket and mop—things like that you learned during that week, hopefully. We had a G.I. night every Friday night, and we fell out—Friday or Saturday—for a formal parade which was judged by the commander of the base, whatever. We always got the worst—our company always got the last score, the lowest score, every week because we had one girl that when she marched, she bobbed at the wrong time. They tried holding her down but she was the tallest one in the whole bunch, and you could see her head bobbing—everybody else's is going down and hers went up. You got extra duties for that. So we got lots of extra duties. We were there for six weeks—seven weeks, I would guess. We had all the extra duties that could be loaded on us because this gal bobbed at the wrong time.

Basden: What were some of those?

Sloan: Well, just regular duties. On G.I. day, you got your shots, and you got to mow the lawn with a reel mower. They said it was good for you if you had shots to get out and push a mower. That kept your arm from being sore, they claimed. We had to scrub the barracks and extra duties I don't really remember. We just had to be confined. I don't think we could go to the PX—other people could or something. But we never got to go to the PX so I guess that was probably it. After you had gotten all your shots, you could go into town on Sunday, and some of us went in and climbed to the top of the Iowa State Capital—clear up to the dome. A couple of us took a plane ride around Des Moines in a Piper Cub—that was scary. Piper Cubs are scary. There just isn't very much plane to them. That is about all we did in town. We didn't go in enough to worry about—just a couple of trips in.

Basden: Was this a new post which had opened up during the war? Was this..

Sloan: Oh, no, I think Fort Des Moines was an old, old post. I would think it might have been around even in the Civil War. I don't know—it was old.

Basden: So it was Fort Des Moines?

Sloan: Yes.

Basden: Was it strictly a WAC post?

Sloan: No, there were—what do they call them?—Brig? A jail in the army? There were brigs there. There were women serving in the brigs. I guess they got to shovel coal—is what they did eight hours a day or so. I don't know what they did to get in the brig.

Basden: Stockade.

Sloan: Yes, stockade, whatever. I don't know what was on the base besides the WACS except I heard that they had the stockades, and that there were women who had messed up and were there serving time. I don't know if there were men services there. We didn't have any contact with them if there were. All we ever saw were women.

Basden: About how many were there would you guess?

Sloan: Oh, there were about 150 in a company. I would guess there were probably 20 companies there. So that would be what: 3500—or 3000 about. There were probably more than that there because that induction—that big building we stayed in every week another thousand went in there. So there were probably a lot we did not march with and didn't see. Basically, all we saw were our squad most of the time. I had a cute little squad leader. She had just got out of Basic, and they had made her an acting Corporal, and she was neat.

Basden: So this was not basic training for you?

Sloan: Yes, this was basic training. This little Corporal, when anybody was messing up and not getting along, she would help us short sheet their bed. The girl who bunked right above me, we short sheeted hers so short that she couldn't even get her toe in there. When it was G.I. night, she would sneak off and go some place. I think she went to a PX or a non-com club, or something—probably wasn't allowed to, but—and then she would come in, and lights out was at 10:00 and they went around with a flashlight to make sure you were in bed. And she would come in about one minute before 10:00 and then get into the covers with

all of her clothes on, and we fixed it so she could not do that so she got caught. She was a pain. She didn't do anything and moaned about it all the time while we were doing her work for her. There is always one like that. But this little Corporal was neat. They even short sheeted one girl's bed and put a broom in it. Now that's mean. I didn't help with that one. I helped out a bunch...

Basden: How does that work?

Sloan: Short sheet?

Basden: Yes.

Sloan: You make it look like the bed is normal, but you fold the sheets so that there's not much there. It depends on how badly you want somebody to feel about it, how much room you give them to get into. Now when they did the broom, they let her get in there--when she laid down: wham! In the back with the broom, you know. But they put that under the sheet. You have never short sheeted anybody?

Basden: Yes, I have. I just thought we needed to tell that.

Sloan: Okay. Well, we short sheeted that gal above me about an inch and one-half. There was no way she was going to get in there. That was not what we were trying to do. Life there was very, very G.I. I mean everything was hurry up and wait, hurry up and wait. When I shipped out from there, I was supposed to ship out--I was told I was going to go to a school and learn how to do arts and crafts instruction for psycho patients. It turned out that they didn't have a school like that when I got out of Basic, there was no such school as that so I knew better than to believe recruiting sergeants. When I signed up, they asked where I wanted to be stationed, and I said: I want to be stationed in Portland because I wanted to see the country. One of my friends signed up in California, and she said she wanted to stay in California--no, yeah--so she never got--I forget where she said--but anyway, she said the wrong thing. I said the right thing. I can't remember what she said now. Oh, she said she wanted to see the world, and they left her in California. That was it. And she was an aluminum spot welder. She had been in charge of the aluminum spot welding at Columbia, and was a real sharp gal. So what did they do, they made her a medical technician or something. I mean that all the repair places she could have worked and done what she knew, and they made her some sort of a clerk in a medical deal. So--anyway, she stayed in California which didn't make her very happy.

I shipped out to Nashville, Tennessee. My brother had been stationed at that Base at some point. He was a pilot and while he was taking pilot's training, at some point, he had been through there. I don't remember, but it was a great big base and they were closing it and shipping everybody out. They put me to work in the (I have trouble remembering the names). I was assigned to the classifications section, and there we had to update each person's record who was getting shipped out, and some of them hadn't been updated since they first joined the army.

Basden: So you didn't go to Advanced Training. You went straight out of Basic into a job?

Sloan: Yes. And I did a lot of liaison work with personnel because anybody we didn't have the proper records on, I had to go to personnel and get the information and bring it back, and there were about 15-16 of us working in there, I think.

Basden: What was the name of this post and about how many people were there?

Sloan: Oh, there were probably about 25,000 and I have no idea of what the name was anymore. Probably AFPDC--that's what most of them were called. Army/Air Force/Personnel Distribution Centers. At the time I was there, that is what a lot of them were named. That's what Lackland was called when I was down there. They were places where people were processed and well, down at Lackland, they did the physicals for all the guys who got out of prisoner of war camps that were in the Air Force, and they had a basic training center there and an officers' training center there--all sorts of stuff. A 40 ward base hospital and it took care of the personnel assigned there permanently, plus all these people who were moving through all the time. I imagine that was the name of it then, but I don't remember. I was too new to the Army and I wasn't there but about two or three months.

Basden: OK.

Sloan: We were in an old tar paper shack with a pot bellied stove with real poor coal that they used and every so often, this stove would sound like it exploded, and we would all have to leave because the room would be full of carbon monoxide. Anyway, that is the only way we got a break because there was no such thing as coffee breaks until that happened. They were spaced according to when the coal blew up, and they would have to air the office out for about an hour.

Basden: So what were your working hours like at this time when you first...

Sloan: I guess 8 to 5:30.

Basden: Five days a week?

Sloan: Mostly, yes except that three of us--the only three of us out of the 15 or 16 working there that knew how to type. So three of us went back every night and worked until nearly midnight retyping what the others had tried to do during the day. Then on New Year's Eve, they were supposed to load up all the paper--get it ready to ship--and the Major that was in charge gave us the day off--the three of us who had been doing all the typing. He gave us the day off, and the ones who didn't know how to type had to show up and pack all this stuff.

We shipped out for Plattsburgh, New York, and there were three different groups of WACs who went. The first group went up there to open a base. It had been an old World War--War of 1812 base, and then the Navy had been in there for awhile in World War II. It had been closed for about a year. Nobody was using it. So we went up to open it, and the first group was mostly the first sergeant, and some of those went up and got the power turned on and the water going and stuff like that. Then a big group of us went when I went--I went in the middle group. The ones who stayed to close up the base there at Nashville came up, and they got caught in a blizzard. Their car was set aside on a siding, and there wasn't a whole lot anybody could do for them. They scrounged food and scrounged a way to keep warm and whatever they could do for about five days before they could travel on. Things just weren't moving up in the Northeast. They were stranded someplace in New Jersey, I think.

End of Side One of Tape One

Sloan: It snowed about three inches in Nashville, and the GI who built the fires built the fire in the boiler of the mess hall too hot and caught the attic of the mess hall on fire. So they couldn't get the cooks to leave the mess hall. They said it was the first time they had been warm in five days, and they sat in there and ate their breakfast. But the rest of us had to go to a G.I. mess hall and make do with what the guys ate. They did get the fire out, and they eventually got that mess hall rebuilt, but it did a pretty fair job of burning that mess hall--the upper part of it.

And while we were at Nashville, something that I was totally amazed at: we had maid service. They had G.I.s whose wives, black G.I.s, whose wives would wash and iron a shirt for a dime and do your laundry and do your G.I. at your bunk, clean your floor and all that kind of junk for money. I had them iron a few shirts, but I didn't have enough money for that. But if you put your shoes out, the husbands would polish your shoes, including the bottom of your boots cause the bottom of your boots had to shine. If the CO couldn't see her reflection in the bottom of your boots, you were in trouble.

Basden: So you polished the soles of your boots?

Sloan: Yes. And they had to be upside down on your bed when she came around for a white glove inspection every Friday. I think it was Friday. You had to be standing there. At a white glove inspection you had to stand there at attention. The other inspections during the week we weren't there, and they weren't quite so fussy. The first sergeant, I think, did those, but the CO did it on the rest--on those white glove inspections.

Basden: So what was your barracks like?

Sloan: Two stories, just rows of bunks

Basden: Open bay?

Sloan: Yes. Open bay. You had a foot locker and a little teeny wall locker like the footlocker only taller, standing up--a place to hang your clothes. It was just bare bones.

Basden: Wall locker.

Sloan: Yes, wall locker. They weren't very fancy.

Basden: Were you double bunked?

Sloan: Not there. No, we were double bunked a lot of places. In Basic, we were double bunked; triple bunked when I was at Lexington, Virginia. We were in an old inn, pre-Revolution and the rooms were really small, and they had these jammed with triple bunks. You could just barely get between the bunks to get to yours they were so crowded. I guess back in the Revolutionary days, they didn't use very big beds, and so we had like 16 in one of these rooms that had been big enough for a cot before--just a cot, you know. We were really in there. It was different. We didn't have to spend much time in those rooms, luckily. We didn't have any room for footlockers in them or anything. I don't remember where our footlockers were. I suppose in another room because those beds were just too close together to have footlockers. We were in tar paper shacks at San Antonio for a long time--one story--and those are hot. It was 117 when I first showed up at San Antonio. Those tar paper shacks were--we

just had single bunks there, but they were hot. There was DDT on the floor about an inch thick to kill all the crickets and stuff like that. They didn't want any bugs around. The bugs were in various states of dying all the time. If any of us are allergic to DDT now, I wonder why—or any of those things. That was standard, and we finally got moved to a hospital barracks from the tar paper and they weren't tar paper, they at least had siding on them. They were a little bit cooler, but we still had the DDT. We had one footlocker that had food in it. On Sunday morning, we all chipped in and whatever we could get our hands on, and we had breakfast in the barracks. The CO asked if she could come to our breakfasts and we told her "no." We needed a little privacy from her. Our CO at that time was a lesbian, and I would guess about 30 some odd of the girls were lesbians, and we just tried not to mix. We got along fairly well.

Baden: So was there any army harassment of gays at that time?

Sloan: Not that I ever noticed. It was, well, the closest to harassment that I ever saw was we had one WAC, Terra Raye was her name, we called her Terror Raye. According to the MPs, she would take on anything—male, female or animal. I don't know if that is true or not. I was in a car wreck when I was in San Antonio, and I was in the next bunk in the hospital ward to Terra when she had her tonsils out. And she couldn't talk very well because her throat was sore. She was mad because her tonsils had been taken out which is another story which I will tell in a minute. That was the only time I was ever around her, but she tried to rape one of the straight girls who was quite a bit older, and the gal brought charges. This girl was a friend of mine that brought the charges against her. She was let off, but they said they were going to ship her to China to drive a truck, but I don't know where they shipped her, but they shipped her someplace finally. The reason Terra was getting her tonsils out she drove truck out of the motor pool, and she went into San Antonio to pick up supplies and stuff like that—so she was a pretty free soul. She had a lot of room, she could negotiate on time, and somebody wanted her to run an errand in San Antonio—one of the other WACs—and to cover for the time she put down that she went on sick call—she had to go over to sick call to at least sign in to do that, and while she was there, they got a hold of her and found out that her tonsils were bad. So they were taking her tonsils out, and she was so mad at this gal who wanted the favor done for her because she had her tonsils taken out when she didn't want them taken out, and she was cussing the whole time she was in this next bed to me. With this sore throat, it sounded like baby talk, the cussing. You wanted to laugh, but it hurt too much to laugh cause I had whiplash—is what I had. I didn't feel too much like laughing. Terra Raye was the only time I ever heard of anyone having any problem with a gay, and I am not too sure she was gay-- she was something else. She was a very different person.

The CO who was gay was a good CO. We had one CO down in San Antonio that had been a elementary teacher, I think it was, and she was terrible. She had everybody on report all the time. You weren't allowed out of the barracks after work ever, and they finally brought some lady lawyer who was a major, I believe, yes, a major, down, and this other one was shipped off some place. And this gal straightened out the company. I heard things from the MPs about why this was going on. I was working the kind of shift where what she did didn't bother me cause I was working in the hospital as a disc jockey to the hospital wards, and I worked from 8 in the morning until 10:00 at night most of the time. So when she told them they had to be there, except for working hours, I was working so I didn't have to pay much attention to it. But it was making everybody else's life pretty miserable. The MPs said that they caught her in a car with somebody, and her bra was hanging on the door handle. So you can kind of guess that she wanted all the men on base, which there were 20 something thousand of, to herself is what they said. So I don't know. She was a mess. She was one of these people a little power went to their head real fast, you know?

This major who came was really a sharp gal, and she was supposed to be discharged, and she stayed in longer just to get this straightened out. She stayed for about six months. And then they brought in somebody else that was OK. But this one that was such a mess had been a CO at Camp Davis, North Carolina when I was there, and then they shipped her to San Antonio. And she really—she wasn't great down at Camp Davis. She just got worse at San Antonio is all. She was very power mad. One time I crossed the street, didn't see her, and I was accused of crossing the street to avoid saluting her. I told her that was not the case, but if I had seen her, I would have. I didn't like her too well. She didn't like me any better that's all.

Baden: What was her grade?

Sloan: She was a either a first or second lieutenant. I would guess second.

Baden: And you were what?

Sloan: Well, later on, I was a private, I mean a sergeant. I was a buck private at that time probably. I got sergeant down at San Antonio. I worked for a fellow who had gotten a promotion from enlisted to second lieutenant?—what do they call them when they are—there is a grade that they get—I can't remember—it isn't either officer or enlisted. It's in between.

Baden: Warrant Officer?

Sloan: Warrant Officer. OK. I think he got to warrant officer overseas immediately during some battle and then he became a—I think he was a first lieutenant when I worked for him. He didn't want anybody working for him beneath the grade of staff sergeant. So every month, that's when I was working as a disc jockey, every month, I would find a typewriter some place and

write the necessary paper work for everybody who worked for him for promotion to staff sergeant. Long after he got out of the army, I got my promotion to sergeant. They said I had to be a good example now, and I said if that is what you are giving me a promotion for, you can keep it, but I still got to keep it. They didn't push that. Anyway, I never was in a position to give anybody orders. I was Ward Master of a contagion ward there at San Antonio and the position gave you the right to give orders. I guess, but it wouldn't have done you any good. Nobody paid any attention, I don't think. So I had more problems with patients. We had one patient who didn't have a whole lot wrong with him, but he was in the Section 8 ward, and he went to bed because he caught a cold, and they sent him over to this contagion ward, and we had polio and measles and mumps and scarlet fever, pneumonia, typhoid. Did we have typhoid? I don't think we had typhoid. We had so many different—we had one guy really bad with tuberculosis. He was being shipped to general hospital, and he was there for about two or three weeks while they were finding a place for him, I guess. Here we had this kid with this cold, and he was quite retarded, and he would want to come in the kitchen which couldn't be allowed, and he wanted to sit under the radio box in the middle of the ward where he could hear better. He would get exposed to all these germs so we couldn't have that. He was about the only I ever gave any orders to. I ordered him back to his room, and you had to physically make him do it. I wrote letters for him—he couldn't read or write, and he wanted letters written home. I would go in and write letters for him. But he really wasn't bright enough to be where he was. They were going to discharge him as soon as he got well enough from his cold or whatever. He was pretty retarded.

The army had a weird way of classifying people by IQ. If you couldn't read, you were 58 IQ—no matter how smart you were. I think that was the number. If you were a white guy from the south, you were probably a non-com, and you had had a fourth grade education at most. If you were black from the south, you had no—you were a buck private and probably illiterate. That was a big problem at that time-- was the illiteracy rate. There was a girl stationed down at Nashville when I was there from La Grande, Oregon. There was somebody else from there too, but this girl had been an elementary school teacher, and they put her in the library at the base, and she gave in her spare time, she gave literacy classes. She had been there for several years. She was older than I. She and I had been in the same Christian Endeavor and I knew her. But she had been teaching literacy to these G.I.s who wanted it as a volunteer for—I guess—about three years. It was a big problem. There were so many that couldn't read and write. Not all of them black, but I mean that if they had been to the 4th grade, you were probably a non-com if you are white so you know that there were a lot of white ones who couldn't read and write too. Back during World War II, the fellows who came out of the Appalachian Mountains, and these were mostly white, spoke old English, didn't understand modern language. They had been up there and so isolated for so long that it was the English that their grandparents, great grandparents had been speaking when they came over here, and it hadn't modernized along with everybody else. Have you run into that?

Basden: No.

Sloan: Yeah, that was in the news a lot, that part of the stuff. Anyway, where are we?

Basden: Well, you have got some people in New Jersey trying to get up to New York.

Sloan: Oh, OK. Well, they finally got up there when they were able to clean the railroads off, and we opened the base. At first we lived in a big fancy white wooden house with all sorts of trim and stuff and we found out—we were about one week in each of one of these—and these were officers' homes and our job was to clean them. We slept in them, and they were dirty because nobody had been in them for so long. And we cleaned them and then when they moved us to another one, and we cleaned it, and they moved us to another and we cleaned it, and they moved us to another one, and we cleaned that one. These were all around the parade ground. The hospital was on one side, the parade ground and the PX and the mess hall and the chapel and then the rest of it was officers homes. And when we finished all the officers' homes, they shipped us over to what had been non-com barracks from World War... from the French, from the War of 1812—I'll get the right war. The walls were stone, and they were like 18 inches, two feet thick, and the rooms were real little. A whole bunch of us lived in each of these little non-com apartments, and they were about a half mile from this parade circle. We about froze our faces just getting to the mess hall cause it was 36 below up there one night, but the wind blew all the time—Lake Champlain was frozen solid. They had bus service on it over to Vermont.

The day we moved over to the non-com barracks, one of the WACS who was from Washington, D.C. and had been married to somebody quite prominent, I was told, but she was an alcoholic, and they had divorced and she joined the army. She went into Plattsburgh and drank all day and got a taxi to take her back to the barracks-- to this officers' quarters where we had been staying and they dropped her off, and she sat on the steps waiting for somebody to unlock the door, and the MPs found her. She was pretty near frozen. She had been there for quite a few hours. She was in the hospital for quite a long time after that. She was not like this other one that was in there. They were in there at the same time—the one that had all the venereal diseases, but she was nothing like that. She was a drunk. Anyway, she was a pretty well educated person except for not knowing how to take care of herself.

We cleaned buildings—that was the job the WACS did when we first got up there. You were supposed to wash windows, and when you tried to put any water on anything that was going to freeze solid, why that's not a real great job. In this non-com barracks, there was a range—a stove, you know—so we decided to liberate some food. The mess hall was just terrible. They had so many people eating in this mess hall that they didn't have time to change the dish water all day long, and there was just grease

in these trays—just yech! So we decided to liberate some food. We went to the regular mess hall, and they didn't have much we could liberate. So we went to the hospital mess to see what we could liberate, and the guy in charge wanted to know what we were going to do with it, and we said, "well, cook it, of course." So he said: "if you know how to cook, I need cooks."

So I wound up being a diet cook where you make special diets for the patients which was a 12 ½ hour day job and most of the time seven days a week. I got off three weekends and went down to where the Olympics had been—Lake Placid. That was fun, but I would have liked to have gone down there more frequently. But. We had a civilian woman in charge of the mess hall—old gray haired witch. The guys that did the KP were the band—they were on permanent KP, and she was so mean to them. These guys would get a break in the afternoon between lunch and supper, and they had to practice their music then. And then that night, they played either in the officers' club or non-com's club or wherever they were assigned to play, and a good part of them were on dope. Just to keep the hours and work as hard as they were, they were using dope, but she was really mean to them. I felt sorry for them. The officer in charge was a captain—he was an old gray haired fellow— and whatever she did was fine with him as long as she left him alone. And she did. He didn't interfere with what she did.

We had some other civilians working in there. They were French-Canadians—two of them, two women. One of them carried a switch blade, and she had two kids, and she was always telling me where her husband was stationed—and she couldn't remember where she had told you last. So he would switch from the Pacific to European Theater overnight real fast. None of us figured she ever had a husband, but the other one was married and was a fairly nice person. One of the G.I.s was dating this one with a switch blade, and I told him that he should leave her alone, that she was bad news and that she carried the switch blade. He wanted to go on furlough to see his wife, and he was scared what she was going to do when she found out. He wanted me to talk to her. "You got yourself into that, buddy, I don't want any part of it!" I didn't want to get cut up for his peccadillos. The base up there had guys coming in from overseas to be evaluated medically and mentally to see if they were fit to go home on furlough—coming in from overseas. And the same sort of thing was going on down there at Lake Placid except those guys had passed some sort of a physical, and they were getting a week down there at the big fancy resort that they had built for the Olympics, but they were all army personnel—no air force down there. They had a real neat place—dog sledding, skiing, skating, bowling, theater, whatever down there at Lake Placid for those guys. But we didn't have anything for ours up there at Plattsburgh.

And there was a liquor store right across from the gate, and they weren't allowed to go over there and get any liquor, and most of them were there for about two weeks before they finished their tests. This chaplain was the only one who could get liquor. The MPs, if they thought anyone else had a bottle, they would work them over with their night sticks, good. But they couldn't hit the chaplain so he spent a good part of his time going over to get sacks full of liquor. He'd carry them as big as he could carry back for these guys who were not allowed off the base because they had just got back from overseas. He was probably the best thing on that base for these guys because a lot of them were not in great shape, you know, mentally, and they needed it—or thought they needed it. Anyway, that's where they wouldn't allow any gray ladies because this colonel in charge didn't like gray ladies. There was no theater there, there was nothing for entertainment for these fellows at all.

Plattsburgh had a Legion Club, and they would allow all of us in the Legion Club if you could get off the base, and that was all right. The taxis charged a quarter to take you to the Legion Club which was on the other side of town, and they didn't care how many people were in the taxi. I guess they had to be sitting down, but other than that, if you could cram them in, why the same quarter took them all. So we could afford to go over there once in awhile.

I went on furlough from Plattsburgh, back to Washington and Oregon, and when I got back—oh, the trains were something else—I had to stand up to Chicago, and in Chicago, I stood up for awhile, and then there was room to sit on the end of a suitcase. You stand a suitcase up and sit on an end of it, and about Salt Lake City, there was room—there were six of us sitting in a seat for four facing each other, but there were three in each seat so it wasn't really comfortable, but the trains were just jammed. Now if you were traveling on orders, you got a seat, but if you were traveling on furlough, you didn't. The railroads did give special rates for G.I.s on furlough. I think it cost me about 30 dollars round trip to go from New York to Oregon and Washington and back at that time which is relatively cheap.

Anyway, when I got back, all my clothes were dirty from having been on the train for five or six days so I—at Plattsburgh, everything froze. We had clothes lines out on the little back porches of these apartments, and you would wash something in the sink and then you'd take it out there and throw it over the line real quick and hope it hooked so that it would freeze on the line instead of being stiff straight up. If you couldn't put a pin on it, it would blow someplace, and you would have to go down and find it. Then when they got frozen enough, and some of the wind blew some of the ice out, why then you would take them inside to iron them dry. And that's what I was doing on V-E Day when they said to fall out for parade. I am standing there in a slip trying to iron something to put on, and I had been transferred while I was gone to North Carolina to Camp Davis. So when the first sergeant came in and told me that I had to fall out, I said: "I am not on your books, you can't tell me what to do." And it worked—I didn't know whether it would or not, but gad, she meant right now, and I didn't have a thing to wear. I wouldn't have minded going out to parade for V-E Day, but I was down at Times Square on VE-Day, and the train was —whoever made my ticket up was really messed up. They said that I had a three or four hour layover in New York City, and I didn't. So I missed the train I was supposed to catch because I went by what they said.

Baden: This was when you were on your way to...

Sloan: North Carolina. And it was V-E Day, and so I went out to the train station and asked a taxi driver if he would drive me down to Times Square and he said "well, I'd be real happy to but nobody can drive down to Times Square right now" It was so jammed with people. I hadn't even thought about that. Everybody in New York was in Times Square, I think. It was just wall to wall heads. So, anyway, he took me within three blocks or something, and I walked. I wanted to see what everything looked like with the lights turned on. All those big fancy signs, the cigarette sign that blew smoke rings, and that kind of stuff, I wanted to see them turned on cause they had been turned off all during the war.

I didn't tell you about black out. The place I worked there in Portland was blacked out--all the windows--there were windows all over the thing, and they were all painted black so no light would come through. Because we were afraid that the enemy could see, you know. Of course, Portland is, I think, 60 miles from the ocean so it would take some pretty good submarine to see us that far away. Anyway,...

Baden: You don't recall any air attacks or air scares back then?

Sloan: Well, the Japanese sent parachutes with incendiaries--not parachutes--balloons over to the coast, and I remember about those. A few of them started fires, I think. It wasn't a big deal, but they landed down in southern Oregon--some of them, I think.

Baden: Do you know where they were launched from and how they were launched? How the Japanese did this?

Sloan: No idea. I suppose they just hit the currents right and they would carry across. They were--I think they figured on them landing different places from where they did. I didn't remember a great deal of a problem.

Baden: Do you remember what these looked like?

Sloan: I never saw them. They would just tell you a little bit about them on the news. That would be about all. I remember when they rounded up all the Japanese and put them in the internment camps. There were a lot of rumors about these Japanese, but I don't think any of them were true--very few of them.

Baden: What were some of the rumors?

Sloan: They had short wave radios and were radioing everything to the Japanese. The only Japanese I had known were truck farmers out of La Grande. They would come in on a wagon and sell you vegetables, and they were certainly harmless. When I was a little kid, they were around. I don't remember seeing them when I got older--whether they had died out or moved, I didn't know. A lot of them, white people or so-called white people, got some pretty good bargains when they moved those Japanese. They sold for next to nothing. They didn't have any choices.

Baden: Sold their...

Sloan: Farms. Yeah. So I heard that they were letting the Italian prisoners of war run pretty loose in Seattle though. I didn't know any Italian prisoners of war, but they gave them passes to town, let them go to movies, and dances and stuff like that--I heard, I don't know. We had German prisoners of war working at Camp Davis as cooks and KPs. They got trucks to ride to work in and then home--back to the barracks, when the G.I.s didn't get that good. I think that the prisoners of war were treated better than the G.I.s at Camp Davis.

Baden: Where is this camp close to?

Sloan: Wilmington. It's between Wilmington and Camp LeJeune. There was a G.I. beach there which was the only decent thing there. It was maybe five miles out of camp, and they ran a bus service to the beach from the camp. We either worked morning and evening and went in the afternoon or worked all day and went in the evening. They ran it that way. It was a former anti-aircraft installation. This is what I heard when I was there: it had belonged to some senator--it was just a swamp--and they filled it in with a lot of sand--and it was still pretty swampy--and built this anti-aircraft thing. Then they made a convalescent hospital, and they brought malaria patients there, and they had anopheles mosquitos and that's the kind that passes malaria around. Real brainy! There I got to teach so-called psycho patients arts and crafts. That's the only place I got to do that. Well--yeah, that's the only place, I guess. I am trying to think: wasn't there another place... I was sitting at a--we had picnic tables to work on more or less in this ward, and I was sitting with my back sort of to one kid, helping another one, and one of the kids said: "would you come out on the porch with me a minute?" So I went out, and he said: "don't ever sit with your back to that kid. He tried to knife his roommate coming back from overseas." He was as psycho as the dickens. He was just a kid; he wasn't 20 yet, and he was making a grass skirt for his sister. I don't know--I just made sure I didn't turn my back to him. There was a pair of scissors there, and he was afraid he would stab me with those scissors. I never had any problem with the kid, but we didn't know what

somebody will do if they are disturbed.

We had a boy at San Antonio who ran the projector for the movies. He would preview them. He could order anything he wanted to. He had gotten in this one film. There was a lot of shooting in it, and he had invited a bunch of us in to see it. I don't remember what the film was about but there was a lot of shooting, and every time there was somebody shot, he would come out of his chair, and I was told that he was the only one of his group that survived the Battle of the Bulge. He was real young--maybe 19. He acted fine, except that every time there was a loud noise, he jumped out of his skin--pretty tough.

Down at San Antonio, I met a fellow who had come out of a German prison camp. I forget the number--Luthwaf, whatever they called it.

Basden: Stalag?

Sloan: Stalag! Three--I don't remember. That was the same one that my cousin's husband had been in, and I told him that my cousin's husband was alive, and he said that they had been told that he had been killed when he escaped. He had escaped from three prison camps--my cousin's husband had. They told the guys who were left behind when he escaped that he had been killed--that they had killed him, but he died two or three years ago over in El Paso. We had an awful lot of them out of those German prison camps that were at San Antonio, and they wanted them to be healthy enough to survive before they let them loose.

We had a doctor down there that was doing nerve grafts--this was real new stuff--nerve grafts on people who had had limbs broken, and they hadn't been set right and stuff like that. I think probably a lot of those were out of Japanese prison camps. He was doing that kind of work. The reason I found that out--when I had the whiplash, they assigned me to him, and he was just totally disgusted having to waste time on somebody that was in a car wreck and had a sprained neck cause he was doing interesting stuff. I could tell he didn't want to be my doctor. He said so. "Why did they assign some dumb WAC to me?" That sort of thing. Anyway, we are down at Camp Davis, aren't we?

Basden: No, we are in New York City waiting for a train or trying to get to Times Square.

Sloan: Oh! Still back there! OK! I diverge a little.

Basden: That's all right. That's fine. Any time you diverge, it's something we want to get down anyway. Not a problem.

Sloan: OK. After I went down to Times Square and saw all the people and saw that everything was turned on again, why, I had been in Times Square on furlough out of Plattsburgh--I guess about seven days. Going on furlough there was neat. You lined up in the street next to Grand Central Station, and you signed up to go to a play or a movie or get a free meal or whatever they had, and there were lines there all the time of G.I.s. You could get three nights in a USO--Reed House was the WAC USO where they had--and it was a big mansion. The first time I stayed there, I was in the maid's room in the basement. The second time, I was in the master bedroom, and they had a lot of bunks in there--not just one bed. The bathroom was something unusual. It was all marble. The throne was actually a throne. You went up a couple of steps to get to it, and it was marble. It had a bathtub that was like you saw in the movies--kind of key hole type bathtub that the water would come up over your shoulders and instead of a plug, there was a pipe which went down in the drain, and the pipe was higher than the edge of the tub so it wasn't going to run over. I mean that it wouldn't drain out if you filled it real full. Boy, I mean, luxury! The Reed family had donated that to New York City and they had made a USO out of it for--I don't know what it is now--for the duration for the WACs.

Basden: Where was this in the city?

Sloan: I would think pretty close to Central Park. I don't really remember. It was right down town. There was a big room--oh, there was a huge library, beautiful! They didn't exactly encourage us to use it, but it was there. And there was a big room where they served meals--real reasonable there. It might have been some sort of a garden room. I don't know what they would have called it--sun room, whatever. It was all glass. It might have been a green house. I don't know--it was a cafeteria at that time. Anyway, I got to see Mary Martin in *South Pacific* free. I also got to go to a couple of off-Broadway shows where I think they locked the door to keep you in. They were awful. You never knew what you were going to get when you got in these lines. I got to go eat--I can't remember the name--it was one of these after theater snooty type restaurants, and they served...

Basden: Lindy's or Jack Dempsey's--one of those?

Sloan: Back during World War II, I don't--Jack Dempsey didn't have anything that I know of then. They served us chicken paprika which I had never eaten before. There were 12 of us at every lunch or dinner setting. They had all 12 of us sitting at the same table, and we all got chicken paprika, and we asked how the restaurant could afford to do that, and they said: "see those people over there?--All they have got is their water and menu, they have already paid for your meal. Don't worry about it."

End of Side 2 of Tape 1

Tape 2: Side 1:

Basden: OK, you are in New York City.

Sloan: OK. One of the things that I got a free ticket for--there was a Jewish, I don't know what--whether it was a synagogue or a community group or what--over in--I have to stop and think what part of New York. Where's the zoo in New York?

Basden: Bronx?

Sloan: Bronx. OK--out in the Bronx, they were giving dinners for any G.I. who wanted a dinner. I mean they had hundreds going there, and I went out on the subway, and there was this great big building, and it was down a half a flight of stairs into a semi-basement. This room was full of tables, and they were full of food. I never saw so much food in my life, and it was good. It was all home made food, and they wanted every G.I. in the country, I guess, to come because they had enough food for them all. This went on one whole weekend, I guess. From lining up down there by the train station out in the street, why you got in those lines, and you never knew what you were going to get, but you got something good, usually. The only bad things I ever got were those off Broadway plays where they had "has been" actresses and actors who could not--they were just plain hams and were terrible. That was one of the neat things about being in New York. And they limited the number of nights you could stay overnight in a place to three so it wasn't all people who were stationed right there that would get them all.

When you went into New York or Chicago or some place like that, WACs were issued--I think it was two pairs of nylons when they joined, and they were supposed to wear nylons every day and you know how long those things last. So if you were going into town, everybody gave you all the spare money they had, and you bought nylons for them, and most of the stores had limits--two pair a month or whatever you could buy, and if you were from out of town, and you were a G.I., they would let you buy all they had if you had enough money with you. I never had enough money to do that, but you would buy them for everybody. They would tell you what color and size they wanted, and you would buy for all of them. A few of them had a rule that you could only buy so many with each visit so they would tell you: go out that door and come in this one. Anyway, they were really, really nice in shops when you were from out of town like that. I bought I don't know how many dozens pairs of nylons for various people, but they never issued us another pair. They just didn't have them to do it with.

One of the things that you might be interested in is the color of the WAC's underwear. It was khaki--ugliest stuff you ever saw.

Basden: What was it made out of?

Sloan: Just normal rayon, I suppose--whatever they were making it out of at that time. We had long johns which were--they fell down about 8 inches below your knees. I fell into formation at Nashville, the first time I wore those, and you had to tuck them up and when we fell in, mine fell down so the girls in front of me just closed ranks, and I pulled them back up, tucked them in, and nobody knew the difference. Formations down at Camp Davis--it was really hot down there, and the sand--there was nothing but sand. Sand and mosquitos and horse flies and Venus fly traps, that's all that was down there. We had all these formations. There were so many guys who had come back from overseas that had awards coming, and they were being awarded this or that or the other that every week we fell out, and these would last forever because they would read all these citations out loud, and the people who were standing in the front ranks would have to stand, and the ones in the back would sit down and play cards and stuff like that. Good thing that they weren't taking movies of them at that time. They would have got in trouble. The WACs did not get by with that. The G.I.s did.

The sand was so bright in the sun there that I just had an awful time with my eyes, and the doctor prescribed dark glasses for me to wear when I was outside, including on parade. The WAC captain, she was the same one that got run off in San Antonio, was not going to have anybody in dark glasses in her formations so I got out of them. Boy! Sometimes it pays to be stupid, right? She wasn't real happy about that.

We had a hurricane when I was down at Camp Davis, and the wards were all hooked together with a hallway with sides, and there were little windows on each side up way high, and the rain was coming in one window and going right out the other. They were windows about 12 inches by 2 feet, and the rain was ...it would be a drip maybe that came down inside of that, but I mean

that we were inside the eye for about five hours, and nobody was really worried because I didn't care if the whole base left as long as we didn't wash out with it.

The wife of the guy in charge down at Camp Davis was upset because the theater on base had velvet curtains to open and close between the movies, and she didn't have velvet drapes in her house. So she had somebody cut up the drapes at the theater and make drapes for her house on base. She ran that base, and she was, well, we had a Red Cross bunch training in the next barracks to us, training to go overseas, Red Cross girls, and they could have guys in their barracks 24 hours a day. We weren't allowed to hold hands on base let alone have a guy in our barracks ever. So she was the one who made the rules but she couldn't make the rules for the Red Cross girls. Anyway, this Captain, the day we had this hurricane...

Basden: This was after V-E Day, right?

Sloan: No, Yes. This was after V-E Day--right after. The way the camp was built, they had built up the roads, and they had built up the sidewalks, and in between were great big ditches. Things weren't marked really well, but you could tell where the sidewalks were. There were only about, oh, I would guess maybe 14 or 15 inches of water on the middle of the road, but if you got off of it and got into one of these ditches, you would have drowned. I mean that there was a lot of water there. The road was higher than the sidewalks so we didn't dare walk on the sidewalks either. We were going to stay at work that night because it was so flooded, but this stupid CO we had called a company meeting that night and we had to wade back all the way to the company. It was about a half a mile at least--maybe a mile--down the middle of the roads. You just judged between--you could tell about where the buildings were that you were in the middle of the road, and if you stayed there, you were OK, but if you got off, you were going to drown. Anyway, she called this company meeting because there was something she wanted to say. It was of no importance, of course. That was the one who was so power mad. She was crazy.

The only thing really good about that place was the beach, and I think it was about where Top Sail Beach is now. I have been up that road several times, and I have never seen anything I really recognized. They probably rebuilt the highways since then. But Top Sail Beach is about the right distance--about 30 miles north of Wilmington.

Basden: How is it that the road was under water?

Sloan: This was on the base. The hurricane--a lot of rain.

Basden: Because of the hurricane?

Sloan: Yes, because of the hurricane. Oh, there was a lot of rain. I was down at the beach about three days--I guess it was--before the hurricane hit, and we were jumping waves and one of them came--I don't know whether I can describe it right--when you are jumping waves, if it is too tall, you jump into the wave, and part of the water is going away from you. I call that soft water. It doesn't kill you when you jump into it. Above that is the water coming toward you when the wave is too tall. Well, one wave came-- we were jumping into this water where the curl was going away from us and--coming up on the other side of the wave--and one of them came that must have been 20 foot high, and it was all coming towards us. It was just a wall of water coming. And so, the only thing--you couldn't jump into it or anything, and you couldn't outrun it. So I just got as limp as I could, and that thing carried me about a half a block down the beach. I never drank so much salt in my life--I didn't want to salt anything for a year after that. I walked back to where we were supposed to swim, and the MP was pounding in a sign--MPs were also lifeguards--the lifeguards were MPs. That was pretty standard through the services. They were pounding in a sign "No Swimming: Hurricane Coming." And that was the first wave from the hurricane that hit. It was a real storm. I don't know how much damage--but it did quite a bit, I guess, in Wilmington--it hit there too. We were in the eye about five hours, and it was kind of a funny blue light in there--calm as could be, you know, and then we get the other half of the hurricane afterwards. The base was totally under water, really--there wasn't anything sticking up except buildings.

Basden: Did any of the buildings get blown away or was there much damage?

Sloan: No.

Basden: Were these frame buildings?

Sloan: Yes. They were all frame. The whole place was just wooden buildings. The sidewalks were wood--all that was there was sand. They couldn't pour cement--it wouldn't do any good. So the sidewalks were wood, and well, the road was paved. I guess they could have paved the sidewalks if they paved the roads. There was a--I have trouble remembering what they called the buildings--recreation building, but I don't remember what they called it--where you could go and play cards or write letters and stuff like that on base, and this little theater--that theater was something else. Talk about being dive bombed. There were so many mosquitos in there that you could hit your hand on your leg and you could kill 12 at one time, and between you and the screen, you could see all these mosquitos going across all the time. Horse flies were terrible too. The mosquitos seemed to like to bite you where the horse flies had stung you. So that was fun. We had a lot of horse flies--great big things.

Basden: So they didn't fog you with DDT or pesticides?

Sloan: No. They didn't fog us with that. In fact, I don't remember it being in the barracks there. It might have been, I don't remember. I was only there a month.

Basden: Did you have mosquito nets and things like that?

Sloan: No--nothing like that.

Basden: How was it that you got--let's see, how long were you at Plattsburgh, New York?

Sloan: I was at Plattsburgh from New Year's or just after New Year's--just a couple of days--to--was VE Day in May or June?

Basden: I think it was in May--sometime.

Sloan: OK. That's when I was there. Then I was at Camp Davis until--I am trying to think: when did we drop the bomb on Hiroshima?

Basden: It was early August.

Sloan: August? OK. I had been at Wilmington, North Carolina--no, Lexington, Virginia, for almost a month at that point. So I wasn't at Camp Davis very long. When I had been there about a month, they asked me if I would like to go take Personnel Services School up at Lexington, Virginia, and it wasn't at Camp Davis, so I said "yes." I didn't know what I was getting into, but anything but where we were--it was not a great place.

Basden: So did you keep--I am wondering how you got moved around so much. Did you volunteer for each change of station or...

Sloan: No, I moved from Nashville to Plattsburgh as a part of a group. We all moved. Then I guess they figured there were too many at Plattsburgh, and they sent a bunch of us down to North Carolina, and then they asked me if I wanted to go to Lexington, and I said, "Any place but here. I don't care where it is." Then while I was in Lexington, they transferred a bunch from North Carolina to San Antonio, so while I was still at Lexington, I got orders to go to San Antonio from there.

Basden: So you were on temporary duty at Lexington at this school?

Sloan: Yes. And I shipped right straight from there to San Antonio. I didn't go back to Camp Davis. They dropped the bomb at Hiroshima just--well, I guess it was during the last week we were in Lexington. At Lexington, we used the buildings from Washington and Lee University as our campus. We slept in this old inn from pre-Revolution--downtown Lexington on the main drag there. But all the classes were out at this Washington and Lee University. That's a real interesting place. They have a--it's not a death mask cause it's the whole guy of Lee underneath the chapel there, and I guess he's buried in--they have a whole bunch of drawers there, and they have people buried in them, and I think he is buried in one of those. Strange. John Paul Jones is buried in a--I guess you'd call it a sarcophagus at Annapolis. Have you ever heard that story?

Basden: No.

Sloan: Well, somebody decided they wanted to bury him in this country, and he had died--he was working with the French, the Germans or somebody when he died over in Europe--and they found him--somebody put up a lot of money for a search, and they finally found his grave, and they had buried him in a--I guess it was a tin container--anyway, some kind of a container full of alcohol, and the only part of him that was rotten was his nose. He had floated up until the end of his nose had come off. Anyway, they took him back to Annapolis and buried him there, and they built this humongous thing. I don't know--I can't remember exactly what it looks like--it has something to do with a ship. I can't remember if there were dragons on it or what, but it is really wild. You know. It's in one of the buildings there at Annapolis--part of the museums. My son went there, and so we had several tours of Annapolis, but I don't remember that much about it. That was back in 76-75. But anyway, Lee was buried down there, and we got the full tour of that place. We had classes in the chapel when they needed a big enough space--we had classes there.

The first class we had wasn't in the chapel, it was in some upstairs place, and some psychiatrist was giving a lecture. He described just ordinary things about people. Do you have trouble sleeping ever? Do you ever wake up tired? Do you do this and do you do that? Just normal things that everybody does, and everybody raised their hand--yeah, they did that. He said: "those are all symptoms of psychoneurosis." He just wanted us to know what psychoneurosis was. It's just when it interferes with your daily life that it becomes a problem, because we were all supposed to be dealing with that.

The only practical thing I learned there was we learned that they had found out that putting somebody to bed for three days changes their physical being for the worst. That keeping people in bed, quiet, was not the thing to do. And so we learned exercises that you can do with a cast on or whatever—even if you are in traction, you can do exercises. They were pretty good exercises because I lost weight. We did them an hour every day, and we ate like horses, and I still lost weight. So they were pretty good exercises. The only problem was that the GIs got the mowed play fields, and we got the grass where they didn't mow around the edges, and I got chiggers—boy, I wasn't real crazy about that.

At this Washington and Lee, a year or two before, they had some real gung-ho type guy there, and he made them all march across the bridge to the playing fields. This river, which the bridge was across, was not too wide, but it was real steep there. There were trees down below the bridge—put it that way. He made them keep step going across the bridge, and the bridge collapsed, and they had to jump for trees. I don't know how many were killed—they were some killed. Jump for trees or whatever they could get to when this bridge collapsed under them, and they rebuilt the bridge, and we were ordered to break step across the bridge when we marched over there. Sometimes, some people don't have good brains.

I really enjoyed it down there at Lexington, but you hung clothes on the line, and they were just as wet after they had been out there for a day as when you put them out. Things couldn't dry—it was so damp there. Things all mildewed—that was a problem. Somebody stole my watch when I was swimming there, and they really got a great watch because it already had mold inside the crystal. So they didn't get much.

I got to meet a lot of interesting people. They were from all sorts of services. One of the most interesting was a former rabbi who had been, I suppose, the second in command in some synagogue in New York City, and he had lost his religion and quit being a rabbi. He was quite interesting. We had another fellow down at San Antonio who was an awful lot like him. I don't know whether he was—I think he was Jewish, I am not sure—but his folks would send him some of the best care packages you ever saw, and he was always good for a touch. They were always hitting him up for five or ten until pay day, you know. I don't know if they ever paid him back or not. I never hit him up for anything. He was in the Special Services Section that I was in. They sent him some of the most fantastic sausages you ever saw. He would have a desk full of stuff like that. He was from D.C., and he and his wife were working different shifts, and his grandfather had left him some apartment buildings. Anyway, he and his wife were working different shifts and they finally agreed to disagree and divorce, and he signed these buildings over to his father so his wife wouldn't get them, and his father wouldn't give them back. I don't know if he ever got them back or not, but last I heard—I guess his father was keeping him in sausages. Interesting.

Now, we had a ward boy there at San Antonio on the contagion ward. He was an Indian. His last name was Longbottom, and he was a drunk and he also stole. He would go in and steal stuff when a patient was so sick that they couldn't do anything about it. We had one who had malaria, and he watched this guy steal 20 dollars out of his billfold, and he couldn't stop him, and so they had a trial and they sentenced him. They took him off of our ward, and they put him in charge of pushing the Red Cross projector from ward to ward to show movies so he could steal from all the wards—not just that one. I thought that was real brainy.

We had a WAC at San Antonio that stole from everybody. Her friends, she stole money and shoes from; other people, she stole clothes off the line. And she claimed to be a kleptomaniac, but I don't believe it because after they—when I found out she had stolen a brassiere off the line, I told her—she tried to give it back, and I said that “I wouldn't put anything on my body that had ever touched yours and if you ever steal anything from me again, I am going to kill you.” And she never took anything of mine again so she wasn't really a kleptomaniac. I figured. She got the message. She left me alone. I don't know whether I would have tried, but I think I would have. I was really ticked off. But she sentenced her to 60 days confinement to the barracks, and that is where she was doing all the stealing. Military justice is real bright! They should have sentenced her to 60 days in San Antonio—she might have learned something. San Antonio was a pretty tough place at that time. The River Walk was off limits at 10:00 at night and didn't have all that neat stuff they have down there now. They found bodies floating in the river quite often.

Basden: What was it like?

Sloan: There was a VFW on the river. There was a restaurant—I think it was The Fig Tree—I am not sure, but there was a restaurant down there. I never ate in it. There were sidewalks along there. They weren't fixed up fancy like they are now at all. That was done later. That La Villita was there—that was brand new. They had a GI party for our bunch from the base at La Villita, and a Mexican band and stuff. I remember that—that was fun. We had another GI party in the Rathskeller at the Gunter Hotel. When I got there, it started like at 5 or 6.00 in the evening, something like that, daylight still, I was the only one there, and there was blood on the stairs and blood on the floor, and Gad, somebody really started a fight fast. Somebody had gotten a bloody nose, and they took him out to get it stopped because they were having trouble getting it stopped. They took him up the stairs, and that is where the blood came from. I found out later. Anyway, San Antonio was pretty rough. There was a GI and his wife going to one of the main movies there that is close to the river, but they weren't down on the river, they were up on the street, and a couple of guys stuck a knife in his back and her back, and they took her off and raped her—Sunday afternoon in broad daylight. People all over the place.

I had just come back from visiting my sister-in-law up in Cleburne, and I got off the bus at the bus station. I had about six blocks

to walk to where I caught the bus out to the base, and I started to cross the street right there by the bus depot, and some civilian came up and put his hand over my hand and the suitcase handle, and guys just converged on him—you know, GIs. They weren't going to let anyone mess with somebody in uniform if they saw it. They just converged on him. They took him one way, and a bunch of them took me to my bus stop. I don't know what they did to him. I didn't even care. I don't know what he was trying to pull—whether he wanted my suitcase or he was trying to do something to me. I don't know. He didn't get that far. About two seconds after he got a hold of my hand, they had him.

When I was being shipped from North Carolina to San Antonio, the train I was on was late getting into New Orleans, and the other train was about five hours ahead of that. So I had to wait until the next morning to get another train, and there was a USO on—I think it was Water Street or something—about two blocks from the train station. I started—it was night—oh, I'd say 8:00 at night, I started walking, started stepping off the curb by the train station, and the MP said "where do you think you're going?" I said "I'm going over there to that USO." You could see it—the lights from the street—I was so close, and he said: "No, you aren't. You are going to call a cab." And I said "I'm not going to spend money on a cab to go two blocks." And he said: "we send MPs in there in pairs in the day time, and we don't send them in there at night at all." Now, that was a tough part of town. I ran all over New York City by myself without problems, and Chicago, and stuff like that, but there are some places you just don't do that—and apparently, New Orleans is one of them.

When I got over to the USO, they were having a laundry strike, and of course, this is after the war. They didn't do much striking during the war—after the war, there were quite a few. They didn't have any lincens so you slept on a-- just a tick—you know, on the mattress, so well, anyway, I caught a train and got out of there.

I got into San Antonio about 1:30 or 2:00—something like that in the morning—3:00, I don't know. And I am standing there on the bottom step of the train, and a cricket lit on one arm and a—what was it-- praying mantis on the other, and I got back on the train, and some MP was watching me and he came over and said: "let me see your orders," and I said "well, they say San Antonio, but I'm going some place where they don't have any bugs." And he said: "oh, no, you aren't." So I had to get off. I sure didn't want to get off that train. I wasn't used to that kind of stuff, being raised up North. Where are we now?

Baden: You traveled—every time you traveled, you traveled in uniform?

Sloan: Yes. You had to be in uniform clear up even after the war for quite awhile before they would let you wear civvies. At San Antonio, there was—well, they had a few rooms, and they had a restaurant, and he sold liquor after hours. I guess he was a bootlegger. There was a river that ran through there—I don't know whether it was the Medina(?) or some creek or what it was, but it was real slow moving. Somebody—it was a long way if you went through the gates to get around to this place, but somebody had cut the fence so you could walk the short way, and it wasn't very far from our barracks over there from the hospital over there, and if the MPs came in, and they saw them coming, they would put any GIs that didn't have passes in one of their rooms until the MPs left. I made myself a civilian outfit and was over there, and the MPs came in and they asked everybody in the place but me for orders—for passes—and they didn't ask me. Boy, I was glad because we were still supposed to be in uniform. I was just getting tired of uniform. But Basics would go over there, and Basics weren't allowed to leave the base, and they would let them into one of those rooms until the MPs left. But that was a great swimming hole until there was a dead cow in it, and every time we swam in there that cow would get bigger and bigger and bigger, and then it disappeared. It blew up and sank, but none of us ever got sick.

The owner was Irish, and her husband was Italian, and she served a huge plate of spaghetti for 40 cents. It was good. It was worth going over there to get a meal at that place. It wasn't anything fancy—the place wasn't, it was small. I suppose you would call tourist cabins—the rooms. They weren't like a motel is now, but anyway, I only bought one bottle of hooch over there. I bought a bottle of—or I was with somebody who did—a bottle of gin, and it was pine flavored—nastiest stuff I ever tasted in my life—ugh. I don't think I drank much. Ohh, it was awful stuff. That's all he had left.

One of the WACs was on the bus coming in from—the bus came in down by Kelly—you know where Kelly is compared to Lackland now?

Baden: Where is that?

Sloan: Kelly Field? Well, Lackland, I am not too sure I know. I sure didn't at that time. Lackland was 15 miles from San Antonio at that time. Now it is part of it. But Kelly was right next to it. There were no airplanes on Lackland, and the general in charge of Lackland had his plane over at Kelly. One time I flew from Dallas—or Love Field—down to San Antonio so I knew that he did have an airplane, but if you wanted to bum a ride after the war, they let you bum a ride if you were on furlough. I bummed a ride out of there several times. The first time I flew to San Bernardino and Los Angeles from there. But, anyway, the bus that went into San Antonio you caught down there at a gate real close to the Kelly Gate and this WAC—her last name was Libby(?)—I can't think of her first name—we called her Libby, she liked it better than her first name. She was overweight, quite a bit. She broke a leg and they put her on a diet when she was in the hospital. She was in the hospital the same time I had that whiplash and she would get me to push her down to the PX so that she could get a milk shake. They weren't giving her enough to see—like five peas and one quarter of a potato or something for a meal, and she couldn't handle that. She got me to push her down there while

she got a milk shake. But anyway, she was, after that, she had gotten out of the hospital, she was coming back from San Antonio and the MPs were working some kids over that they thought had liquor. I mean that they were beating them up with the night sticks good. And she tried to stop them from doing that, and they beat her up. I remember that. I don't think they broke anything on her, but she was one mad gal. She was quite a nice person, really, but she didn't think the MPs should be beating up on these guys like they were.

Baden: So what was the upshot of that incident?

Sloan: Nothing ever happened that I heard of. Nothing ever happened to the MPs for sure. Nothing happened to her except she was really mad. She wasn't hurt enough to have to go into the hospital again. And I don't know what happened to the guys. They finished beating up on them after they beat up on her. MPs were not our favorite people because of things like that.

Baden: What were some other things they would do?

Sloan: Well, that's all I know of. That sort of stuff. If they thought a guy might possibly have a bottle, they would work him over with a night stick, and if it broke, then they knew he had a bottle. The MPs and SPs, I mean the life guards were always MPs or if it was a naval station, it would be an SP. They didn't do a very good job there at San Antonio. They didn't stop rough housing and stuff like that. Some kid who decided that he wanted to meet me—I was standing in water about up to my shoulders. He grabbed me by the ankle, and the walls of the swimming pool sloped slightly inward to the bottom—anyway, he ran my head into the side of the pool and about knocked me out. I managed to get loose from him and go get the MP, and he didn't do anything about it. I just wouldn't go swimming there anymore. That's why we swam over there in the creek. I wouldn't go in a pool again when they allowed people to act like that.

There were a few things—now the MPs weren't doing this. I remember that one time we were going to the movies, a bunch of us, and we had to walk by a GI barracks and some guy was, at that time the term wasn't used “flashing,” but this guy was flashing on the little porch of the second story of the barracks—so that's the only time I remember anything like that ever happening. We had a GI come in the barracks when our barracks was attached to the hospital there at San Antonio. He claimed he was lost. Well, if we could have got our hands on him, he'd have been lost. He had no business walking in there. I mean it was pretty obvious that was not his place to be.

When I was working in the contagion ward there, I was a volunteer on that job. They needed somebody. They were having such an epidemic they needed somebody, and they asked if I would and I said “yes.” I had had no training for it. I wouldn't give shots. They wanted me to give shots, and I said “no way.” You send me to that four month school you are supposed to go to before you give shots, I'll give shots, but not just go in there to do it to some poor innocent person who has never done anything wrong, and I had never given a shot before, and I wouldn't do it.

Anyway, we had a bunch of people with spinal meningitis, and the surgery ward was clear at the other end of the hospital. The hospital was laid out two lines of 20 wards, and we were the first one in one of the lines, and the surgery ward was like number 17 or 18 in that line. So it was quite a long distance, and we had a bicycle assigned to our ward so if we needed to get something from surgery you could do it pretty fast. Well, somebody stole the bike, and this particular day, I had walked down and got a spinal kit—they called them—everything they needed to do a spinal tap with was in that kit, and when the doctor got it in this kid's back, the novocaine didn't work. There wasn't any novocaine in it. So they sent me for another one, and I ran the whole way down there and the whole way back. This kid was screaming, and the bike wasn't there. If the bike had been there, I'd have done it a lot faster, but I ran the whole way down there—it was about one-half mile down there, I guess, the way those wards were and ran all the way back and handed the doctor the kit and kept going. I couldn't stand listening to that kid scream. It was just really killing him. I don't know why the doctor didn't take it out. He had a reason—he thought it would injure him more to take it out and put it in again or what, but they were testing for the spinal meningitis.

The first one we had in there was a real young kid—he wasn't old enough to be in the army, and he was from some place up north, Ohio or some place up that way. His folks would have come down to see him, but they wouldn't let them in so they didn't come. They did call and ask. He was in pretty bad shape from it. His eyes wouldn't—he couldn't circle his eyes—they would go about a quarter, about half a circle like, you know, instead of going the full circle. When he went through the crisis—luckily he did that at night—but he was delirious and one morning I held his hand down—I held him by the upper arm and the wrist so he couldn't bend his elbow because they had a needle in there, and they didn't want him to hurt himself. They were putting in, well, I don't know what they had in that needle, but what they did: the doctor in charge of that ward was from Massachusetts—a real nice guy, slightly graying—I don't remember his name anymore. He was a captain. The major who was in charge of the medical part of the hospital—the two of them worked I guess three days during Christmas-New Year's holidays on this guy trying to figure out what to do. He was in pretty bad shape. They had diagnosed him with rheumatic fever. Nobody has it anymore. It was a misnomer, but anyway that time the treatment for it was bed rest for six months. And they had put him in a bed and left him alone for several days, and he was getting worse and the doctor in that ward figured out he did not have whatever it was—something fever. They sent him over there, and they did a spinal tap and found out that he had spinal meningitis so he was not treated right away. The doctors—this was experimental penicillin—it was brand new. They withdrew some of the spinal fluid and

put penicillin in. And they all got well. The others that had it after that were not in the hospital over a week or so. Now I have not heard of them using that treatment for spinal meningitis since then but that's what they did. It was either that or lose them. This kid, he was out of his head this day, and he went through the crisis that night.

End of Side 1 of Tape 2

Sloan: Then somebody came in and relieved me to go eat, and I had been holding his arms for so long that I couldn't even hold anything. I mean I couldn't hold a cup or a spoon or anything for quite awhile before I could hang on to something long enough to eat. He was a neat kid, but I don't know—he had been on furlough, and I never saw him again. They gave him a convalescent furlough. He looked like he had come out of a Japanese prison camp. He was just skin and bones, and he really had had it badly.

We had another one—he came in there with every stitch of clothes he had ever had issued. He was in basic, and they were on bivouac, and he came in with all these clothes on. I mean layers and layers of clothes, and we had to undress him before the doctor could examine him. He was a great big old football player type, and it took two of us about an hour to strip that guy because he was out of it. He was in there about ten days, I guess, total, and the morning he got out on furlough, that idiot let me give him a bed bath. I was so disgusted, I would have liked to have tripped him. He was—maybe he didn't know he was getting out, but I think he did. Most people wouldn't be that way, you know, but he was. We had three or five. I can't remember how many total, but one, that one, was the only one that was really sick, and they caught the others in time. Some of the WACs didn't want me to come back to the barracks because I might be passing spinal meningitis on to them, and the doctors said that if there that many cases, that four cases in a—I forget what—was considered an epidemic, and there were a lot of people running around who could pass it. I was less likely to pass it because we were taking more sanitary measures than just the general population so they let me come home to sleep. We washed our hands in tincture of green soap between each patient. We changed the robe which went clear to our ankles between each patient. We wore face masks with the patients and all that kind of stuff. The only thing I ever got—I got an infection in my ankle from taking care of a strep throat. I got a strep infection in my ankle. I must have gotten a little teeny scratch the doctor said. It was just below where that gown came to.

The only cross infection we had in the ward—we had all sorts of things, and we had to sort them out by bathrooms and everything, it was kind of hard. One kid that had the mumps was smart enough to know that the other patients weren't bright enough to play cards with, and he would sneak in and play cards with the measles patients at night. The ward boy at night was not watching them close enough, and he got the measles. But other than that we had no cross infections which we really tried not to. We had a big sign up beginning in the ward which said: It was a contagion ward, no admittance—I mean in great big letters. And one day, some major or colonel or something walks in and I said: "Sir, you will have to leave." And he said: "who do you think you are telling me what to do?" And I said, "have you looked at that sign over your head," and he did, and he left—real fast. I told him we had enough people in there already. We were just jammed with all sorts of illnesses.

Baden: These were mostly people coming back from overseas?

Sloan: No. A lot of them were the Basics. All the ones, I think, who had spinal meningitis were Basics. We had an officer, I am not sure where he came from, who had—I can't think of the names of diseases we don't have anymore; oh, I can't think of it—anyway, he was there on New Year's, and he wanted to sit out there in the hall and drink whiskey. He and I went round and round and round. What was it he had? Anyway, he would have given it to everybody who walked down that hall so he demanded ice, and I took him ice so big he couldn't get it in a glass. He got ticked off at that. He could have all the ice he wanted, but he wasn't going to get it crushed, no way. I gave him a big chunk of ice though. What was it he had? I don't remember. This polio patient we had was a black fellow, and he was shipped in there with polio really badly—not polio, TB. The polio patients were not black. OK. TB. And the nurse—we had one really neat nurse there on that ward—she wanted to be the only one who went in his room, changed his linens, cleaned his bathroom, cleaned his room. All we were supposed to do was put his meal outside the door on a tray on a little table, and she would take it in. She said that there was no use more than one person being exposed to him. He was there for two or three weeks while they found a place for him in another hospital. I think he was pretty close to being terminal the way she talked about him. I just had a glimpse of him once—that was all.

But we had one nurse on that ward who wanted to be waited on hand and foot. All she did was sit and crochet. She ate meals on the ward which she wasn't supposed to do. The doctor in charge would like to get rid of her and get somebody who would do some work. She wouldn't do anything, but due to professional something or other, he couldn't turn her in. When I talked to him and this other nurse that was so good, I said "well, I don't have any professional whatever to worry about, and I have tomorrow off and I would be very happy to spend tomorrow turning her in," and I did, and she was shipped to Keesler Field, Mississippi—good place for her. That was considered the pits of the air force, Keesler Field.

We had a Japanese-American girl who was a half of a set of twins at San Antonio—real neat gal. Her other twin was assigned to the Keesler Field Air Force Band. That's what reminded me of her was Keesler Field. Anyway, one time, her sister got to come and visit her, but this Japanese American girl that was in our company, she was the nicest person. Well, I'm not sure she was Japanese-American. She was Japanese—maybe Dutch? I don't know. She was raised over on one of the islands. I think she was raised on one of the Dutch islands of the Pacific, and I'm not sure whether her father was Dutch or American. Her mother was

Japanese and some way or other they got over here. They went in the service. They were real nice people. I had another friend there. I can't remember that girl's name but Ronnie Kydist(?) who liked to drink--what is it? Chocolate? Not creme de menthe, but creme de cocoa. Is that chocolate tasting?

Basden: Brandy Alexander or something like that?

Sloan: Well, no, she drank it straight. It's creme de menthe. Yeah, that's chocolate smelling, isn't it and tasting?

Basden: Oh, I don't know.

Sloan: Crème de cocoa. She would lie on her bunk and sip that stuff because when she burped she tasted it again. She was a character. I had a friend at San Antonio that got raped and got pregnant.

Basden: How did that happen?

Sloan: She was an older woman from Denver, Colorado. Her brother was a lawyer up there, and she went out on a date with a fellow that she thought was nice, and he doped her and raped her and she got pregnant. She got discharged and took another name and went home to live with her brother. I heard from her once after that--after she had had the baby. She was a very talented woman. Her name was--you don't want her name or do you?

Basden: It is up to you.

Sloan: Glenevelyn Hubbard was her original name. She had made marionettes, puppets, and taken them to the hospitals and gave puppet shows as a volunteer for years before she joined the service. She was very talented, very artistic--real nice gal. I don't know whatever happened to the guy on that. I don't remember whether there was a trial for him or not.

Basden: Did you get much harassment as a WAC?

Sloan: Not that I couldn't handle. I don't remember except for that guy who was trying to flash when some of us were walking to the movies.

Basden: Did you get support from military authorities to help protect you?

Sloan: Well, now it depends. The fellow that I worked for in--I can't think of the word I am after--disc jockey job. We were living in tar paper shacks on the other side of the base, and it was probably five miles from the job because I worked in the hospital. The radio was hooked up to all 40 wards, and I played baseball games for them or songs they wanted, you know, that sort of thing. I didn't get off until 10 at night when they turned off the radio, and so he wanted me to have a safe way home and he ordered an ambulance to come at 10:00 every night and take me home. That was the only kind of transportation available. So that worked fine until somebody said the ambulances couldn't go across the road. There was a civilian road through the middle of the base. There was a gate on both sides, and so I was to get off the ambulance at the gate and go to the other gate and an MP would walk me home. Well, you had to watch which MP walked you home. So you could get harassed by the MPs that way. Then they finally transferred us over to the hospital.

The most harassment I heard about was Blacks. Just past the WAC tar paper shacks were a bunch of black tar paper shacks, and some of the GIs drowned one of those kids in their swimming pool. I don't know why, but they did it while we were there. So being black was not a good thing.

Basden: Do you know the circumstances of any of that?

Sloan: I don't know the circumstances. No. I heard that there was a staff sergeant, or thereabouts, that had a prostitute in one of the buildings that was a parade ground on that side of the Base. He was running a business there. I don't know--I heard of that. There were supposed to quite a few rapes over in that area. I don't know about them, but we heard about that kind of stuff.

I went--a bunch of us WACs went to the black chapel on church, uh on Base. The music was fantastic. The white chaplain, well, he broadcast on the radio too, and he was some sort of a southern Hell fire and brimstone type guy. I don't remember now. Anyway, he and I didn't get along worth a dime, but the sermons were just about like the articles of war or a VD lecture--real dry, boring. Anyway, this chaplain thought if the needle wasn't all the way over on the dial as far as it would go, the guys couldn't hear him on the ward, and if the needle were over that far, they just would simply turn off the speakers. It was just...so. He turned me into the officer I worked for for not cooperating. I didn't keep the needle up there, and of course, the officer ignored him because he knew that...anyway, he said that the WACs weren't doing what they were supposed to do. The WACs were supposed to get the boys to go to chapel, and we weren't doing that. I told him that if his sermons weren't like the articles of war or a VD lecture, maybe they would go to them. He didn't like that too well, but that was true. But a bunch of us went to the

Black chapel because their music was great, and their sermons were more inspiring—put it that way.

Baden: So the military was still segregated at that time?

Sloan: It was very segregated. They didn't seem to mind us going to chapel. We didn't butt in and try to run it or anything. There would be a bunch of us who would go together over there. I never went to the white chapel if I could help it because it was boring. Those guys got paid whether they wrote a sermon or not. They could give the same one every Sunday, and nobody would care.

Now my husband had a very good relationship with the chaplain in the South Pacific where he was. And that fellow was later the second in command down at the University Presbyterian Church down in Austin.

Baden: Did you meet your husband while you were in the service?

Sloan: No. I met him down at the University of Texas afterwards. No, I had no intention of getting married—even when I met him, I had no intention. I wanted to see more of the world yet, but you know how that happens. I was almost 24 when I got married which was pretty old for that day.

Baden: So how did your service come to an end? How did you leave San Antonio?

Sloan: OK. The First Sergeant called up and I had been in 21 ½ months, and she said that they had lowered the points you have to have to get out to 21. Do you want to get out? I said: of course. But they offered me going to Germany as a typist if I would stay in. I had been fighting being a typist all the time I was in. I was typing 85 wpm when we took the test, and I did it one finger at a time and tried to mess up as good as I could because you had to be able to type 30 wpm to be a typist, and I still passed the test. That's how bad you had to be. I didn't want to be a typist. My MOS was instructor, arts and crafts. They couldn't downgrade you without a hearing, and they didn't have any reason to give a hearing so they couldn't downgrade me and make me—they could assign me as a typist, but they couldn't make me change my MOS, and I would have to change my MOS to go overseas. And I wouldn't do that.

Baden: You didn't think that was a good enough opportunity to see more of the world?

Sloan: Not that way. No way. To see Germany at the end of the war? No. The part of the world I wanted to see was the United States—really, which I did see quite a bit of the United States. I saw—down there at Camp Davis, outside the camp—there were two liquor stores right across from the base, and then there were a bunch of little shacks that people lived in, and most of those were off limits to GIs—you got to figure what kind of houses they were, and they were really terrible looking places. I felt sorry for anybody living in those circumstances. They were really bad. I went through East St. Louis on a train, and there were people living in refrigerator cases right next to the track on the cinders from the track, and they would have, you know, there were rows of them. They would have a line hanging out with diapers between them. People living like that in places, you know, really bad. I was raised where nobody was that poor. So anyway, my husband wasn't. He was raised out at San Benito, and people were that poor down there. When he was a kid...

Baden: San ?

Sloan: San Benito, Texas, down near Harlingen. When he was a kid out at school at Santa Rosa, why the teacher kept a big cauldron of beans cooking out in the yard on a wood fire and that's what the kids had for lunch. That was before school lunches, but a lot of the kids wouldn't have had anything to eat at all if it hadn't been for that. Yeah, my husband was raised on chili petins (piquin?) which are really hot peppers because his mother couldn't afford jalapenos, and the chili petins (piquin?) grew in the fence rows. So they were free if you wanted to go pick them.

Baden: So you had your points, your 21 ½ points?

Sloan: I had my 21 ½ points, and there were four of us who went over to Fort Sam Houston for discharge. That was the discharge point, and we had to fill in papers and take a physical and all that kind of junk. Then we went back to the base for one night, and they gave us a party the next morning at breakfast in the barracks, and that was the only time I drank a tea royal—nastiest thing you ever tasted, worse than a coffee royal.

Baden: What is that? What is a tea royal?

Sloan: A cup of hot tea with liquor in it.

Baden: I see

Sloan: Terrible, terrible stuff. That was the first time I ever had cheesecake, and I didn't think that was much better, and somebody had brought peanuts and that was the only fit thing to eat at that breakfast. Of course, they were trying to be nice so we tried to be appreciative. What was I going.... I thought about something.

When I was down at Camp Davis, I got really sunburned. I fell asleep at the beach for about four hours, and I was one big blister. I was wearing a two piece bathing suit—one big blister, clear around the middle. My forehead was swollen up and everything else. I was really sunburned. In those circumstances, I didn't have any undies under my fatigues. It was just—I was too blistered to wear anything that fitting. And that was the morning they decided we should all take an overseas physical. Well, I had an overseas physical up at Plattsburgh about a month before so I managed to talk them out of me taking an overseas physical that day. Basically, you had to line up in your undies and go down these hallways and all that kind of junk, you know, and I didn't have anything on. So I didn't do it.

Basden: Was there any penalty if you became so sunburned you couldn't work or something like that? You had to miss duty because of sunburn?

Sloan: I didn't miss duty.

Basden: But I mean did they have...

Sloan: No, not that I know of.

Basden: OK.

Sloan: I didn't mean to go to sleep. No, there was no penalty that I know of for anything like that. But you didn't miss duty. When I had the strep ankle from getting an infection at San Antonio, the doctor I worked for said "oh, you need to be, take this, whatever it was, probably sulpha, and stay off that foot for three days. Keep it up in the air." And then he said "you work for me, don't you?" And I said "yeah," and he said "go back to work." We were just too short handed to spare anybody that was all.

We cooked the breakfast and—yeah, just the breakfast on the ward for all the guys. We'd have 40 people in there and so every morning, I cooked—I went down to the mess hall and got enough eggs—two eggs per person—two slices of bread, orange juice. You could get flour and stuff like that. I think they kept those on the ward and milk and take it back up there. You took it on a cart, and you'd try to get some extra eggs because they were using cold storage eggs and at least four of them would be various stages of rotten—maybe more. So you would try to get at least a half dozen extra eggs so you could feed everybody and take them back up there, and I would fix waffles, not waffles, didn't have a waffle iron, pancakes one day, french toast the next, and scrambled eggs and bacon and toast. Anyway, we got bacon every time—two slices per guy, and I would cook that and serve it on the ward. Then the other meals, we took the cart down and brought the meals back from the mess hall. They were cooked in the hospital mess. We didn't have anything to say about what was cooked there. But every day, if you are locked up in a ward for a month—and some of those guys were—eggs every single breakfast and that's all. Most of them, the wards, they just got scrambled eggs. They didn't bother with anything else. I tried to rotate it—at least going to get something different every third day. You know, each one would be a little bit different. Tried to cook them something decent. And I got real upset with one of the ward people one time. I opened an egg that was green and stinking, and we had a thing like a toilet, only it was bigger, bigger plumbing, to put stuff in to flush it, and I gave them this egg to put in there, and they put it in a waste basket that had a wooden bottom to it right next to it, hmmm. Real smart. We got to smell that for a long time. Anyway, some of the girls who worked on those wards weren't too smart.

What we did on those wards was when they brought in a patient, we had to have sterilized everything in the room, wipe it down with alcohol, and then we undressed the patient and put him into a gown and hung their clothes in a closet that everybody's was hung in, and it was locked and that's how this kid who stole stuff, he could get in the locked room. He had a key to it, and he would go in and go through their pockets. Anything they had, he wanted, he took. And he wasn't above going into their room and doing it, like he did to that one fellow with malaria. Then we had to bathe the patients if the doctors said they needed a bed bath, couldn't shower. They had a shower there, but if they could shower, they did their own, but if they couldn't, we did it. We bed them, took their vital signs, if you had been to this school you could give shots. I wouldn't give shots because I hadn't been and didn't want to experiment on anybody. That was basically what we did. The ward boy, this Longbottom, he was supposed to do the cleaning. He was supposed to mop the ward. Usually, he didn't; usually we did. He was worse than useless, besides stealing. What else do you want to know?

Basden: Well, OK, you have taken the physical to get out of the service now. And you go over to, and you have a party.

Sloan: Oh, OK, what did we do next? Well, my friend and I, Eleanor Dahlberg, from Iowa and I got on a train and got as far as El Paso, and we got off and we went up to see Carlsbad. We were on a tour bus up there. That was neat because in those days, they took 40 people in walking down, and then going out the elevator in the morning, and 40 people went down the elevator and walked out. They had two geologists with them, each bunch, and that's all that were in there. It wasn't like it is now where there

are thousands going through. They didn't have it paved, and you got to get close enough to the formations to look at them and all that kind of stuff. Totally different thing--all day to do this. You went in in the morning and came out at night. Then you watched the bat flight. That was fun.

That was at the time we decided, while we were in El Paso, that we didn't want to leave Texas; we wanted to go to the University of Texas. I was planning to go to the University of Oregon and hating the idea. I didn't like the University of Oregon, don't like the town it is in, don't like the climate there, and it is too close to my family so I really didn't want to go home to stay. So the two of us went to San Francisco, well, I guess we went to L.A. first and San Francisco and Portland, and then we went up to my home town, La Grande. There were so many people in my uncle's house at that time--they had come home from the service, and it was jammed full so he put us up in a hotel.

Then she went on to Iowa on the bus, and I came back to Austin and worked for the Highway Department for two months, I guess, until school started. Got a 125, I think it was 125 dollars, maybe I got 130; anyway, I got a five dollars more a month than the permanent people because I didn't get paid for holidays or vacations. I read tapes they have out on the highway to count the number of axles that go over and you subtract one number from the other--so how many axles went over in an hour and then you multiply it by some factor that will tell them how many vehicles. They have to figure out how many three axle vehicles went over and stuff like that. The most boring job in the whole world--absolutely a job that would drive you to drink. The only break from that I got was that, oh, I did learn to use a comptometer there.

Baden: What is that?

Sloan: The old fashioned, hand done, adding machine to add, multiply, divide. You put the numbers in and push the right factor and then cranked it. They are great things for teaching multiplication, division--they should have them in all the schools because the kids could see what really happens. At least at one grade they should have those.

The secretary went on vacation, and the guys who went out and collected these tapes out of the little machines they had--I guess it is a camera that took a picture every hour of what was on the wheel that turned when this counter went over--they were living hand to mouth, and they couldn't wait until she came back to turn in expense reports. And she was going to be gone for two weeks so I had to type all their expense reports. I was the only one in the office who knew how to type. And she had one of these brand new typewriters that every time you breathed on it, it would make a whole row of ssssss, instead of one and stuff. I hated that machine she had, and our school secretary, when I was teaching in Centralia, Washington, let's see that was in 1946, and I started teaching in 69 at that school, she had one of those typewriters and every time it broke down, and they brought her another one while they fixed that, I'd tell her: "stand at the door with a shot gun and shoot them if they bring that old one back." I mean that was awful to have anyone working on a machine like that--just terrible.

Baden: So you worked there for a couple of months?

Sloan: Couple of months...

Baden: Waiting for school to start?

Sloan: Yeah, waiting for school to start.

Baden: Did you get the GI Bill?

Sloan: Yeah, sure did.

Baden: What was that? How much was that?

Sloan: 65, uh 65 dollars a month.

Baden: Plus tuition and books?

Sloan: Yeah, yeah, and of course, the University of Texas declared that all veterans were out of state students. Let's see, I think in-state students, it was either 25 or 50 a year tuition. It was 600 for out of state, which was the max the GI bill would pay. So they got it all. There was approximately 17,000 GIs there.

Baden: So whether they were from Texas or not, they paid out of state?

Sloan: They paid out of state, yes.

Baden: A grateful nation!

Sloan: Oh, yes! The University of Texas: a grateful nation. We couldn't find—in order to register at the University of Texas in 1946, you had to have a room. That was the first qualification—some place. And you had hopefully to have been to high school. I was already a sophomore, half way through sophomore year. That wasn't a problem, but getting a room was.

Eleanor and I found a room in South Austin with a lady and her husband. He wasn't supposed to be there. He worked at the farm for retarded people or something, and he wasn't supposed to be there, but he was. He drank. And he would be home; he wasn't the problem. She was. He would be home in bed, supposed to be sobering up and he had a bunch of kids, about four of them. None of them lived there, but they would bring him a bottle and he would... and each one of them hid it in a different place so he would stay drunk. She was one of the worst people I have ever known. She prowled our room. I had a bottle in one drawer under my undies, and she told me there wasn't to be any liquor in the house. I suppose because he might find it. Well, I knew where his bottles were hidden. I didn't tell her where they were, but I knew where they were. She would feed him on a tray. She would come in with a match and run the roaches off of those dishes and feed him on those dishes again. We were supposed to have kitchen privileges, and it was just awful. We couldn't break the lease thing according to the University's rules except that one of her sons who was about the age we were, pretty young—there was a door from the front porch into our bedroom and a door from our bedroom to the hall that went to the bathroom. There was another door into the living room from that same porch. Well, we were in bed on a Sunday morning, real early, and this dumb boy, I guess he had a key, he walks through our room to go to the bathroom, and we broke the lease right then. We went to the Dean of Women and complained, and we got out of the lease there.

Eleanor had met Mary McWright who was the one in charge of selling the classified ads at the, what do you call the paper, at UT, now I can't remember. I can't remember the name of the student paper there. Well, anyway, she was—she had had this paid position for quite a while, and she was real good. Anyway, Eleanor had made friends with Mary McWright, and Mary lived with her mother, and they had a two bedroom house, I guess, up in Hyde Park, not too far from where the Hyde Park Baptist is now—it wasn't there then. The grandmother worked at the school for retarded girls. She came home, I guess she got two days off every two weeks or something like that—or maybe they had three bedrooms, that might be—anyway, grandma came and stayed every couple of weeks for a weekend, and there were no men allowed period. They didn't want any of them. Mrs. McWright had lost her husband years before and she worked as house keeper at the Austin Hotel—one of the hotels down there. She was in charge of the house keeping. She was in charge of all the maids and stuff like that. One time, Mary had been out the night before, and Mary would drive her mother to work and then park up at the school and—yeah—she'd get out and go to work—and Mrs. McWright was chewing me out for being out drinking the night before and I had been home studying. Boy, I didn't know what was going on but I kept my mouth closed. When we got down to the hotel and Mary let her mother out, she said: "thank you, Anne." I didn't know she had been out, but apparently that was the deal. "Thank you, Anne." She said I couldn't have stood it this morning if she was chewing on me.

Basden: So you became a teacher?

Sloan: Not right away. Eventually.

Basden: What kind of a degree did you get?

Sloan: I got a degree in Economics with a minor in Government and a minor in History. I was planning on going to DC and getting into the State Department or something. Only I met Jim and didn't do that.

Basden: Where did you meet him?

Sloan: At the University. The second year I was there, my roommate, Eleanor, met a girl named Jane Herridge who had been in the Navy. Her—Jim was her cousin?—The grandmothers were sisters, it would be a second cousin, wouldn't it? Second cousin. Her second cousin had just been divorced, and she thought he needed to meet some nice girls and he was coming to school. Anyway, Jane's momma invited us, Eleanor and I, over for dinner, and invited Jim and his two friends from San Benito for dinner, and her kids were all there. That's where I met Jim, and then Jane asked me if I would find him a nice girl, and after we had gotten engaged, she said: "I didn't mean you." But, anyway. I did introduce Jim to some nice girls, but he wasn't interested.

Basden: OK. Well, we certainly appreciate you taking the time to talk to us today about what was an interesting home front military service. When we get it transcribed, I will get a copy to you so that you can have a look at it and make any corrections you want to. We will make it available to people who study these things. We really appreciate it. Thank you, Anne.