

1 **Interview of Linden N. Anderson on her long career in the American Red Cross including**
2 **service in WWII and the Korean and Vietnam wars**

3

4

5Ruth Stewart: Linden Norine Anderson is being interviewed today in San Antonio, Texas,
6 as a par-, part of the Women's Overseas Service League, uh, project. Today
7 is February 18, 2004, and the interviewer is Ruth Stewart. [0:19] Linden, tell
8 us a little bit to start with about your early life, about where you were born
9 and...

10

11Linden Anderson: Mm-hm.

12

13Ruth Stewart: ...how you were brought up and something about that.

14

15Linden Anderson: Alright. Uh, it's a long story, Ruth, because I was born on January 14, 1908,
16 which means that I am getting towards being a century old. I was born in the
17 little town of...

18

19Ruth Stewart: Congregations.

20

21Linden Anderson: ...east of Austin called Manor.

22

23Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

24

25Linden Anderson: And I was the last child in a family of 8 children. I was the youngest. And
26 we moved to Round Rock, Texas, which is a little town just north of Austin,
27 when I was 3 years old, and that's where I grew up until I was 18. In that
28 town, there were [inaudible 1:10]. It was a Swedish community for the most
29 part, and in that little town, the Swedish people had formed [Old 1:18]
30 Swedish Academy, and it was for high school. And it was farmed so that the
31 Swedish farmers' children from the whole area of Swedish settlements
32 around Austin and Round Rock and Manor would have a school where they
33 could come as a dormitory and stay there and [inaudible 1:38] the expenses.
34 And the different churches helped provide and keep the, uh, school going.

35

36 And that's where I graduated from high school. I don't g-, I went to high
37 school in the town of Round Rock, but I didn't graduate from there. And
38 then that little academy became a junior college, so I took a junior college
39 course just, uh, the freshman year, and I got a job teaching school in a little
40 town nearby called Pflugerville, and I taught there for 3 years. Growing up
41 in Round Rock was a real treat because we had a creek, a nice little creek
42 going through there where we could go swimming, and you know a lot of
43 people back in those days didn't have a place to swim, and we didn't have
44 manufactured pools. At that time, we went swimming in the river or

1 whatever. So we had a lot of fun. We had a nice park there where we had
2 events. It was quite a nice town. And culturally it was good because we had
3 good teachers in this little academy and good musicians who came there to
4 teach music and voice, piano and organ and so forth.

5
6Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

7
8Linden Anderson: So we all – everybody in my family graduated except my 2 w-, older sisters
9 graduated from that little school, and we all took music. We're all very
10 musical. Um, I was playing the piano by the time I was 5 years old, uh, and
11 we all did it. We learned to play by ear, and then we took lessons, and some
12 of my, uh, family members have become quite professional. I, I was not. I
13 didn't do classical. I just played the plain ol' piano, which was, uh, very
14 advantageous [to land a 3:34] job that I did later as a, as an employed
15 person. Well I've – it's a little hard to keep from backtracking here. But then
16 I taught – you got a little view of what I did in Round Rock. We were very
17 churched, [inaudible] [religion 3:51]. The whole – well the whole school,
18 the whole school revolved around church, and then we had the – in those
19 days everything we did revolved around church and school. That was our
20 social life. That was our cultural life. It was everything. And we used to g-,
21 get people that would come out from Austin and perform, you know,
22 violinists, [inaudible 4:15], things like that.

23
24Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

25
26Linden Anderson: So I, I grew up with some advantages. So I had heard about the town in New
27 Braunfels, which is closer to, uh, close to San Antonio from Austin, and I
28 had been there as a child one day on the excursion train that brought us to
29 that beautiful park in New Braunfels. I think I did that when I was about 6
30 years old. And our family packed up lunch and put it in a suitcase so we'd
31 have our lunch when we got there. I never did forget that park and that
32 water. I was so impressed by that beautiful clear water where you could see
33 the darn bottom no matter how deep it is. And so I applied for a job to teach
34 there. And you know what? I got the job without any problems whatever. So
35 I went there, and I went in 1929 when I was just 21 years old, and I taught
36 school there until 1939.

37
38Ruth Stewart: [5:19] 1929 to 19-...?

39
40Linden Anderson: Until 1939. And I had a very good time in that town because, uh, my, eh,
41 being able to sing and also play organ and piano, I, I got mixed up with all
42 those different musical groups in town. So I had a very happy way of life
43 both as to my teaching job and my social life and then volunteering of
44 course. I got in the habit of volunteering early on. I remember even as a kid

1 if they wanted [buy or 5:57] sell anything like cookies, [inaudible 5:59], or
2 whatever, I'd always do it. [throat clearing] I just, uh, I just [inaudible 6:05]
3 anything but said will you do it, and I said yeah, I'll do it. And I'm still kinda
4 the same way but not as much as I was – now the young – now that I'm 96
5 years old, naturally I've cut down on some things but not a whole lot. Well
6 where do we take it from here now, Ruth? About...
7
8Ruth Stewart: [6:27] You said you left New Braunfels' teaching role...
9
10Linden Anderson: Mm-hm.
11
12Ruth Stewart: ...in 1939?
13
14Linden Anderson: Mm-hm.
15
16Ruth Stewart: [6:32] Let's go back and tell me a little bit about the children you taught
17 during that period.
18
19Linden Anderson: Alright. Well let's back up to this too: In the meantime, all these years that I
20 had taught school in New Braunfels, I had gone to summer school at the
21 University of Texas in Austin, and finally in 1930, that's when I left New
22 Braunfels, I decided to just leave that job in spite of the Depression. I didn't
23 know if I'd ever get another job or not, but I borrowed money on my
24 insurance policy. I could stay at home with my sister without paying rent if
25 I'd help her take care of the – a baby that was coming along so she could do
26 her volunteer work. All worked out beautifully. So I stayed out that year,
27 and I got my degree. Well when I was...
28
29Ruth Stewart: [7:19] Your bachelor's degree?
30
31Linden Anderson: Bachelor's degree in...
32
33Ruth Stewart: [7:21] At the University of Texas?
34
35Linden Anderson: ...of Texas in education. And before I even took my final exam in January, I
36 had a job to teach school in the Rio Grande Valley in the town of Pharr, P-
37 H-A-R-R, Pharr, and I taught there until the second war started, until the
38 Second World War started, but in New Braunfels – I'll back up a little bit,
39 um, the children – at, at that time, the town had only 7,000 people in it.
40 Almost all of them were decendents of the original settlers that had come
41 there in 1845. So everybody in town was speaking German even then,
42 although they spoke very, very good English too. But anyway, the – some
43 kids started in first grade who had not even, uh, had the opportunity to learn
44 to speak English. But we didn't worry about any bilingual business. Didn't

1 hear about it. We just showed him a picture of a cat and the word under it,
2 and they learned it was cat, and before long, we didn't even realize those
3 children couldn't speak English because they were speaking it. You know
4 children are so quick. These dependents that lived overseas with their
5 military families, whatever country they were in, the small children learned
6 the language, uh, much easier than the parents.

7
8Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

9
10Linden Anderson: [Inaudible 8:49] fun to watch children. So but I mostly just taught in the
11 second and third grade. So when I was in Pharr, I taught only the second and
12 third grade down there. Then World War I – II came along, and everybody
13 quit everything they were doing for the war effort, it seemed like. So I, I left
14 Pharr, came back to New Braunfels and found a place to stay. We didn't
15 have apartments available in those days. We r-, we roomed and boarded in
16 people's houses. And I went back to the place where I had been before, and
17 I got a job as a civil service worker at Randolph Field for the war effort, and
18 I worked as a file clerk, and that job came easy too. It seemed like all my
19 jobs came very easy. I was, I was just very lucky. I never have been without
20 a job. So the ones I've described here are the only jobs I ever had 'til I
21 started what I'm gonna tell you about later.

22
23Ruth Stewart: Okay.

24
25Linden Anderson: So anyway, we're at this point where I was in New Braunfels, and one day I
26 was downtown and I saw a local girl that I had known, while I taught there,
27 in a gray seersucker uniform, and she had a little cross on her patch on her
28 sleeve, and I asked her, I said, "What are you doing?" and she said, uh, "I'm
29 working for the American Red Cross. I'm doing social work at the hospital
30 at Fort Sam Houston." In the meantime, her husband, to my knowledge, was
31 the first, one of the very first, eh, people served with men who died in that
32 Second World War. He was a pilot stationed at Clark field..

33
34Ruth Stewart: Hm.

35
36Linden Anderson: ...and she had already had a baby and had become a widow and, and was
37 working. And but she, she was a paid worker over there. And she said,
38 "Linden, you can sing, and you can play. You can do all those things. Why
39 don't you apply?" So I did. She gave me the Red Cross address in St. Louis,
40 and I applied, and they sent me papers. Of course, they did that to anybody
41 who applied. And those papers were mainly [fit for 11:16] for girls who
42 were going to run the Red Cross Club that they had. And they don't have
43 those anymore now because Special Services takes care of that part of the,
44 of the program for the service people. But anyway, uh, I – so I filled it out

1 and I thought oh, they won't take me because I, I haven't had any experience
2 in running a dining room or that kind of thing. So they wrote back and said
3 here's another set of things; you sound like you should be working in
4 hospitals. So I filled out that one.

5
6 And they wrote me back and said when can you come to St. Louis for an
7 interview? So I did as soon as I could. But I had to take a physical before I
8 could go up there. And went up there, stayed 1 night and a day, came right
9 on back on a train of course, and, uh, I was hired. And then I went home and
10 had to wait 'til I got a call. Then I got the call to go to, uh, Washington, DC,
11 to the American University. The American Red Cross had taken over a lot
12 of that American University property, gymnasium, classrooms, uh, athletic
13 field, because there were not very many students there. They had all –
14 everybody was in the service. [Inaudible 12:46]...

15
16Ruth Stewart: [12:46] What year was...

17
18Linden Anderson: ...they were from...

19
20Ruth Stewart: [12:48] What year was that?

21
22Linden Anderson: I went in 1943. And so I went there and stayed 6 weeks, and that's where we
23 were trained. They were training the social workers how to do the Red Cross
24 social work, which means taking care of, of, uh, service people's home
25 problems, and of course, that was a big part of our program. And then we
26 were training along with the doughnut dollies, the girls that took doughnuts
27 and coffee around to all the troops, and then we were also training with the
28 girls who were gonna do club work. We were all getting the same training.
29 So we had to do that for 6 weeks, and it was very strenuous, and a lot of us
30 girls by this time, I'm 33 years old, and a lot of the women who were in
31 there were also, and they were girls from all walks of life, but there were
32 some restrictions. Uh, we had to be college graduates. They had to be sure
33 that they were getting people who were capable and also educated, and, uh,
34 then ano-, there was another stipulation – they would not send a girl
35 overseas unless she was 23. They – I think – my own opinion is that they
36 wanted to be sure that somebody wasn't coming along just for the
37 adventure, that they meant business.

38
39Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

40
41Linden Anderson: And I always thought that – I think some of the best recreation workers that
42 we had were the girls who had been teachers because they were used to
43 working with people and working with children. And, uh, I was, uh...

44

1 Ruth Stewart: Thinking creatively.

2

3 Linden Anderson: Uh-uh. More so than, than the women who had been businesswomen or had
4 been managers of, uh, departments and department stores. Some were
5 [inaudible 14:38], and some I might say [inaudible 14:41] they were sort of
6 prima donnas and, uh, but they – I don't know what they did because I don't
7 know whether they did well after we all separated or not. And then, uh, we
8 had to stay a very long time 'til we had – we got orders to go overseas. And
9 we didn't know where we were going, but we do know, did know that we
10 were issued uniforms. If you didn't get any winter form-, uniforms, you
11 knew you were going to the Far East. So I got winter uniforms, so I knew I
12 was going to England or North Africa or one of those places.

13

14 So then I had to go up to, uh, Mitchel Field over at – right before Christmas.
15 That's on Long Island. And there I had to stay during Christmas just for
16 training and work with the girls who were already trained and were already
17 running the program there. And here I am an old country girl from Texas, so
18 I was delighted to be that close to New York City, and one day I just got on
19 a train – I had a day off. We seldom got much time off all through my career
20 even to the end. Time off was, was not always available. But anyway, I just
21 went up by myself in my uniform, and I just looked over New York City,
22 had a good time. Then after we did that, we had to go back to Washington,
23 DC, where we were billeted, and we stayed there until we got orders to go to
24 Camp Kilmer, and that's in New Jersey, and that's – when I got there, that's
25 when I met the other 4 women that I was gonna be going with, and I got my
26 assignment to the 91st General Hospital.

27

28 Ruth Stewart: [16:35] Kildare, Camp Kildare?

29

30 Linden Anderson: Camp Kilner, K-I-L-N-E-R, Camp Kilner. That was a big stabling area. And
31 we were there several weeks, and while we were there, we went into New
32 York regularly because we weren't doing any work, but we were in training.
33 While we were there, we had to learn to march, do all the march steps so we
34 could train and do training and get on a boat and get off of a boat. We had to
35 go through a gas chamber. We had, had to climb the ropes up to get off and
36 on a ship if we had to. In other words, we had to do everything that the
37 military people did. And we were billeted right in – mixed in with the nurses
38 and the, uh, physical therapists and the dieticians that were part of the unit.
39 And 91st was a big hospital. I don't know how many personnel, over 500 I'm
40 sure because it took, it takes a lot of people. We joined them there. And
41 everything they did, we had to do with them. And there was no sleeping in
42 when the other girls – when the nurses had to go out and do [walking 17:47]
43 at 6:00 in the morning, the Red Cross girls got up.

44

1 We scrubbed latrines and, and swept the floors and did everything they did.
2 And we got to know the girls there well, and we were all – we melded
3 together very well, a lot of us did. And the girls in my, uh, unit, our boss
4 was a young woman, much younger than I was, from, from New York City,
5 and she was a trained social worker, had her degree in social work, and then
6 she had an assistant that had been trained to do it, uh, while we were on our
7 training in, uh, Washington, DC, and then another, eh, woman who was the
8 second recreation worker and then we had a secretary. There were 5 of us,
9 and we were all just 1, 1 group and 1 family, and you know, we got along
10 beautifully together. It's a good thing that, that we did. So we went into
11 Camp Kilmer, and then when we got word, we sailed in March, I believe, of
12 1944, and we went and – to Europe, and we landed in Glasgow, Scotland. Is
13 this the sort of thing you're after?
14

15Ruth Stewart: Sounds good.

16

17Linden Anderson: And then from Glasgow, we went to, uh, we Red Cross girls were ordered to
18 go to London, which was a big Red Cross headquarters in, in the ETO. The
19 hospital – we went to Llandudno, Wales. It's right on the ocean. It's L-L-A-
20 N-D-U-D-N-O. Uh, that's good enough, Llandudno. Anyway, we – that's
21 where we went, and we had to stay there 4 or 5 weeks waiting to take over
22 our hospital that was located in Oxford. But we girls stayed in London 'til
23 we got oriented and got more equipment and got more training, and then we
24 had to go back to Wales and join our hospital out there, and we stayed there
25 until we moved down to Oxford. And the Harvard University had put up a
26 hospital in Oxford. Actually, it was in a little suburb of Oxberg-, Oxford,
27 England, and there was one ward after the other. It wasn't a high-rise
28 hospital. It was all spread out everywhere. And then we had [ramps 20:31]
29 walking in front of all these different buildings, and that was covered, but it
30 wasn't closed in, and I think – and then we had a lot of Quonset huts. And
31 the Oxford University had furnished and built that, that complex, and they
32 had established it, but they had gone – that whole unit had gone to France,
33 and we moved into it. And that's where we, uh, worked in there for a year
34 and a half. We never moved 'til, 'til we went home. So anyway...
35

36Ruth Stewart: [21:03] But that was a hospital there?

37

38Linden Anderson: It was a hospital. It...

39

40Ruth Stewart: [21:06] Now that wasn't the 91st General...

41

42Linden Anderson: That...

43

44Ruth Stewart: ...[was it 21:09]?

1

2Linden Anderson: It became the 91st when we moved into it.

3

4Ruth Stewart: [21:11] It, it became that?

5

6Linden Anderson: I don't know what it had been referred when the h-, Harvard Unit had it. Of course, eh...

7

8
9Ruth Stewart: [21:19] And then what did you do with the patients or the – what was your role when you were working in that hospital?

10

11

12Linden Anderson: Alright. My role was to provide recreation for them. Uh, and one of the first things we did was to get British volunteers, women in there. So it was a 2-, 13
14 2,000-bed hospital, and we usually ran around 1,700 patients. And it
15 depended on what was going on in Europe whether we had a big insurge of
16 patients or whether we, uh, it, it would go down a little bit. Eh, we were
17 there – they had cleared out that hospital almost completely for us to move
18 into it. The only patients that were there were probably just ordinary
19 servicemen who had had appendectomies or had flu or pneumonia or
20 bronchitis or whatever.

21

22 And after we – but we had to take a little time to get moved in there and
23 settled in, and we Red Cross girls cleaned up after who - [to follow 22:27],
24 find out what was there, what, what equipment have we got on hand, and we
25 then have a big hall and at the end of that was a place that we could have a
26 craft shop, and at the other end of it, there was a library, well-equipped
27 [inaudible 22:42] these people had been there for a couple of years, and we
28 didn't have to start it. We, we inher-, inherited all those good things. And
29 that recreation hall was in the sort of middle, so the patients who were able
30 to walk were able to get there, and they were always under cover but not,
31 not out of the cold.

32

33Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

34

35Linden Anderson: But anyway, they, they used the hall a lot because it had a pool table in it
36 and, and a ping pong table and the craft shop where they could make things,
37 and mostly our – we, uh, the volunteers, the women, uh, British volunteers
38 are the ones that ran that. But my other recreation [staff and 23:25] the one
39 who was mostly responsible for the craft shop and the, uh, library. My thing
40 was to do the big parties, the [holiday 23:39] stuff because I played the
41 piano and I sang, and I was used to – well I've always sort of been into
42 drama and stuff. And so I had more, uh, of a bent toward activities like that
43 than Helen did, but she did her part. Well we all had to take turns at doing
44 the Bingo games and running the parties. We all, we, we both did all of it.

1 And we, eh, you might wonder what you're doing with recreation at a
2 military hospital, but remember that some of these guys were there for a
3 long time even overseas.
4

5Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
6

7Linden Anderson: And they're, they're worried. They're upset. They're blue. They're hungry for
8 home. So somebody's got to take care of that, and when you're working
9 with sick people, nurses and doctors don't have time to fool with people's
10 personal problems, so that's where our social workers came in.
11

12Ruth Stewart: [24:36] So you were really dealing as much as anything with morale then?
13

14Linden Anderson: Morale, uh-uh. I would say that was what we were there for, diversion and
15 co-, and morale. Well when we'd get in a whole bunch of patients, like 500
16 or 600 at a time, all of us girls had to help – have – give out the toilet
17 articles, and we could give out cigarettes in those days. You can't now,
18 [couldn't 24:58] a long time. And that was a lot of work, but the women
19 helped us good. Our volunteers came and did all that with us.
20

21Ruth Stewart: [25:05] And so the British women were volunteers?
22

23Linden Anderson: Yeah.
24

25Ruth Stewart: [25:08] They weren't paid?
26

27Linden Anderson: No. They were just volunteers. We had a smock that they wore that we
28 provided for them. And, uh, they would, they would help us. And they were
29 also good at helping with the crafts and the book cart and all that. And my,
30 my counterpart kinda took care of the volunteers more than I did.
31

32Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
33

34Linden Anderson: I was more into taking them on the off-post trips. See, we had a lot of
35 patients that are v-, that are ambulatory. They have their teeth wired. They,
36 they'd have their arm in a sling. They're not fit for duty. They're there to
37 either get well and go back to duty or not to get well and to be sent home.
38 And, and they were on crutches and wheelchairs. But we could get those
39 people on a bus that was made available to us. Our commanding officer
40 wanted those guys to get as much out of seeing England as they could. He
41 was a wonderful man, and he certainly was symptomatic towards our
42 program.
43

44Ruth Stewart: [26:10] Do you remember his name?

1
2Linden Anderson: Yeah. Dr. Lester Dyke, Colonel Lester...
3
4Ruth Stewart: [26:14] [Inaudible 26:14] Lester...?
5
6Linden Anderson: D-Y-K-E. He wrote a wonderful book about our, our hospital and called it
7 the *Oxford Angels*. It's a wonderful book. So we could have that bus any
8 time we wanted as long as we had it back in time for 6:00 to take what they
9 called the run to town for the staff going into town on, on that bus at 6:00
10 and come back on the 10:00 bus, so they could to movies...
11
12Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
13
14Linden Anderson: ...or have dates with British girls, whatever. But anyway, our off-base trips
15 were very time consuming because we'd be gone all day.
16
17Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
18
19Linden Anderson: And we took trips up and down the, uh, Thames River. Every week we
20 could take 10 patients on a trip down the river that the, eh, well they called it
21 the Women's, uh, [inaudible 27:14]. I don't know what the women called
22 [inaudible 27:18] – what they call it in England anymore. We'd call it the
23 women's club or something like that. But they were the women that did, did
24 stuff. And their club in Oxford would provide the money, and they helped us
25 get all kinds of tickets to shows or even symphony concerts in town. And we
26 were taking patients, it seemed like off base, off base. I did that 'til the day I
27 retired. I was taking patients that we got free tickets for...
28
29Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
30
31Linden Anderson: ...no matter whether I was stationed overseas or, or in, uh, in the uni-, uh, in
32 the United States. We still carried that program out. And even until I retired
33 and worked in hospitals in the continental United States, we were still doing
34 the same program, and it was still just as valuable. We'd take coffee carts
35 through. If we had celebrities, we had to escort them through and all the
36 USO people. Movie stars came. While I was in England, the Queen Mother,
37 she was a queen then, came to our hospital. I met her personally and talked
38 to her about 5 minutes. That was a very important time. We had people like
39 Glen Miller, eh, movie stars, well you name it. And that took a lot of our
40 time because, see, the military did not fool with that.
41
42Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
43

1Linden Anderson: Eh, it was up to us to get 'em met at the plane. It was up to us to get 'em to
2 the base or wherever, and it was up to us to take care of, take them through
3 the hospital. Some of 'em would be sick, and we'd have to see that they saw
4 a doctor and they'd want to know where the PX or where could we go, and
5 I'd take 'em to the mess hall. So you can see we had – we were needed
6 because, eh, eh, a nurse doesn't have time to fool with that. And if we were
7 gonna have a photographer come and take patients' pictures, we had to work
8 up that ahead of time and find out which patients we thought would be the
9 most representative for picture taking, and we'd have to get their written
10 consent and then we'd have to be sure that the nurses had 'em all cleaned up,
11 so they'd look good in their robes and pajamas and that their bedside table
12 looked decent. [throat clearing] It might take a whole day to tend to just, just
13 a program like that. [throat clearing] Excuse me. So I don't know. Why
14 don't you ask me some questions because I cannot think of everything in a
15 hurry?
16

17Ruth Stewart: Well this has been very, very interesting to hear about all the variety of
18 things that you were involved with then. [30:02] What did you personally
19 gain from it, from doing this work with the Red Cross and [the] [inaudible
20 30:09]...
21

22Linden Anderson: Oh, I take pride in myself that I was able to do that and not ever get too tired
23 at it or tired of it. [throat clearing] I just loved those guys. And I, I'm a, sort
24 of a corny Texan, and so I, I was kinda corny with them too, [chuckle] but it
25 made them feel at home with me, you know.
26

27Ruth Stewart: There were more country boys in the service than anything else.
28

29Linden Anderson: Oh, and that's why our program was accepted so well. They were used to
30 hayrides. They were used to, uh, box suppers and things like that, country
31 life.
32

33Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
34

35Linden Anderson: They didn't have no aspiration for anything much beyond what they already
36 knew.
37

38Ruth Stewart: Yeah.
39

40Linden Anderson: They were wonderful guys...
41

42Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
43

1Linden Anderson: ...and, of course, they were young. They were away from home. And one of
2 the most valuable, uh, entertainments we had was a local dancing teacher.
3 [throat clearing] She and I became wonderful friends. And she would bring
4 her dancing kids out there, and somebody said you don't want to bring kids
5 to the hospital do you? I said well let's try it. And she was bringing the 2 and
6 3-year-old kids that were taking ballet and then the other kids, you know,
7 older, dancing kids. She brought the best program. And the patients just
8 loved it. See, we all had children back home, little toddlers. They left all of
9 that. And it was such a part, a big – they, they'd throw 'em candy on the
10 stage and gum and things. See, the British didn't have any of that, and so
11 boy, honey, did we ever share our rations with the-, with those, uh, English
12 people.
13

14Ruth Stewart: [Inaudible 32:03].

15

16Linden Anderson: And those kids would go home with pockets full of candy. They'd throw it
17 up on the stage. I was real proud. We have – well sometimes we even got
18 our show-, own shows up with some of those guys. I remember Gene
19 Krupa's brother was a patient when he was an ambulatory, and we got up a
20 stage show while he was there. We didn't even have any music. We just all
21 played by ear. And I played the piano, and, and of course, Special Services,
22 uh, would provide the, uh, instruments. We provided ukuleles and, uh, radio
23 and, uh, um, guitars. Those were the things. But Red Cross did send us all
24 the latest songs, hit songs and things, but, but for the most part, we couldn't
25 – we wouldn't be able to play that kind of stuff. We just played things like,
26 uh, *I'll Be Comin' Around the Mountain*, you know *Corn*.

27

28Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

29

30Linden Anderson: And so we didn't have to have music for that. We could just do that.

31

32Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.

33

34Linden Anderson: So once in a while, all through the years, I'd do a little of that.

35

36Ruth Stewart: Linden, you did some wonderful things obviously for these young people
37 that were over there in your 91st Hosp-, 91st General Hospital.

38

39Linden Anderson: Mm-hm.

40

41Ruth Stewart: [33:22] How was your life? What did you do along with your other Red
42 Cross friends that were there? How did you live? What was your recreation?

43

1Linden Anderson: O-, okay. Well we lived in a nice building along with the nurses. [coughing]
2 We worked so much at night, and we worked 10 and 12 hours many days,
3 and we usually worked maybe 2 weeks, and then we'd have maybe 3 days
4 off if we could plan it that way and if there wasn't something special that we
5 just needed to be there. We were very flexible 'cause we didn't have any
6 families to go see and – or come to see us. So we would take advantage and
7 go to – into Oxford and go to shows, but mainly run down to London, but
8 we were not supposed to go to London because of the air raids, but we went
9 anyway. Maybe you ought not put that in there. But we went.

10

11Ruth Stewart: I think, I think that's [inaudible 34:20].

12

13Linden Anderson: But we would go. We'd, we'd take our chances. We didn't, we didn't
14 overdo it, but we took our chances and went. And when we were there, uh,
15 we would sightsee as much as we possibly could, and then through places
16 where I took the patients, all through the Oxford colleges and to Sulgrave
17 Manor, a place that George Washington's ancestors were from. We took 'em
18 there regularly. So I got to see that along with the patients. We went up to
19 Windsor Castle. I saw that. And we went up to, uh, where they have the, uh,
20 regatta. Uh, all the sudden I can't remember the name, you know, of the
21 town where they have the regatta, eh, the boat races every year.

22

23Ruth Stewart: Boat races.

24

25Linden Anderson: I just don't know why I can't recall the name. And we took 'em on picnics
26 and the mess hall would fixed up a lunch. So I got a lot of my sightseeing
27 through this – working with the patients. And then we had quite a bit of
28 [interplay 35:21] with, with our volunteers. They would invite us to their
29 homes. And one volunteer was young. She was quite well-fixed, and they
30 had a car and how they got gas I don't know, [throat clearing] but every,
31 every so often, she'd – they'd come and get me and take me places with
32 them. Her father was an [Aquarian 35:46] boot dealer in London, but they
33 moved to Oxford to get out of the bombing, just like they moved – all the
34 blind people had to be moved out of London, and we had a whole bunch of
35 that. One of our best entertainers was a blind man. He played a marvelous
36 piano, and he and Alec Tem-, Templeton were, were good friends. They
37 both did the same thing. You could, you could tell George to do a piano
38 concerto on, uh, *Johnny Comes Marching Home*, and he'd just sit right there
39 and play it. And he'd come down and play a lot. He was one of my best
40 friends. Uh, but I'd have to go get him in a jeep, see that he got back. We,
41 we had to arrange for transportation.

42

43 We had to do all of this. Everything connected with our program, we did it.
44 But the army [would would have no idea 36:37] how they cooperated with

1 us. Well all – I, I, I [had that 36:44] even to the day I resigned. I mean that I
2 retired. Wonderful cooperation with the staff. So my social life there, we
3 had a lot of fun at our officers' club. W-, they'd be a dance almost every
4 Friday night. Eh, most – a lot of 'em would be on duty, but you may not be
5 on duty the next time they had one. And mainly we just had an awful lot of
6 fun with each other, just all of us were billeted in one place, and, uh, we saw
7 each other. But everybody was busy, you know? So I would say that I had a
8 good social life. And a lot of girls, a lot of nurses met their future husbands,
9 but it wasn't for – so easy for me because, see, I was – by this time, I'm 35
10 years old. The men are all married. So there weren't very many available
11 men, so I didn't have the opportunity to try to find somebody. But s-, a lot of
12 our young Red Cross girls did, uh, marry and stayed married. A lot of
13 [inaudible 37:54].
14

15 And I've kept up with the 91st General. To this day, we have 1 man who
16 sends around a newsletter, and I have been to [3 38:04] reunions that we
17 had. But the reunions were getting so small, and by this time, it was mostly,
18 uh, the men and their wives coming, and I would say 500 or 600 people. But
19 the first reunions were very well attended, but I, I was overseas most of that
20 time, so I attended only after I got older and came back to the States to
21 work. But I have worked in, uh, [inaudible] [health 38:40] and places I've
22 worked.
23

24Ruth Stewart: You...

25

26Linden Anderson: I'm sorry. You have another question first.

27

28Ruth Stewart: [28:45] Then you were in England then until when?

29

30Linden Anderson: Uh, yeah, we came back in 19, uh, 45.

31

32Ruth Stewart: [38:58] After the war was over?

33

34Linden Anderson: Uh-huh. And we, eh, see after the war was over, then we started getting the
35 POWs. So the war was over in May, something like that, and...

36

37Ruth Stewart: In Europe.

38

39Linden Anderson: ...and so then we were getting all these POWs. Most of them were walking.
40 By the time we had gotten them, they had already been through a few
41 stages, and they were sent to us to finish up and send them home.
42

42

43Ruth Stewart: [39:23] But that was in England, [correct 39:24]?

44

1Linden Anderson: That was in e-, uh-huh. So, eh, the war was over in May, and we operated
2 there 'til we moved out in, uh, September or October of, uh, 1945. But
3 things were quieter, but we still had to take care of our own sick.
4

5Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
6

7Linden Anderson: You know? And all the other – of course, everybody was beginning to move
8 out, but we still had troops there, so they had – we had to keep up, but the
9 whole group, then that – the 91st moved to Germany, and I didn't go with
10 them. I came home. Some of us came home. I joined another hospital just,
11 just for the purpose of coming back home. So I came home in November of
12 '45.
13

14Ruth Stewart: [40:12] And did you stay in the Red Cross?
15

16Linden Anderson: No. Went home and got out of the Red Cross because all of us were being
17 let out, and I went to Houston and got a job and started teaching school to a
18 school in Houston. And I didn't like it. Uh, kids were naughty. Their fathers
19 had been gone. Their mothers had all been working. It was a – that's [that
20 world 40:37], you know, and it was – teaching was very difficult. So I quit
21 teaching [chuckle] again, and I went out to San Francisco to see my sister
22 whose husband was in the military, and I got another job out there and was
23 the same ol' file clerk as the other jobs, and I hadn't done that but 6 weeks
24 'til I got a letter from the Red Cross will you come back.
25

26Ruth Stewart: Oh.
27

28Linden Anderson: Then found out that we are not through. We've got to start manning these
29 hospitals in the States and manning these hospitals where we're doing the
30 occupation. So we wanta send you to the Far East. So I got on a train
31 [laughter] and went back to Washington, DC, and got re-uniformed. I'd
32 given all my uniforms away. Got re-uniformed and had a little more training
33 for what we were gonna do, and by 19 – [or was it 41:45] – '46, I was in, in
34 Korea, and I stayed there 2 years, and then I stayed in Japan a year, and then
35 I got sent home, and then I got sent back, eh, and I went into the Korean
36 war. I was in Korea during the war, but I was the only worker there. I did all
37 of it. I had to do the social work. I didn't have time for recreation there. I
38 had to, eh, I didn't even have a secretary. And what we had all done all
39 through the years was write letters for patients. It was absolutely endless.
40 And after a big influx of patients, our social worker, the gal who was the
41 head of our unit, would say girls, we've all got to write letters, so we'd just
42 let the recreation sit for a few days so we could do the personal, help them
43 with their letter writing. And then I came back and went to Fort Sill,
44 Oklahoma.

1
2Ruth Stewart: [42:53] When you were in Korea, what was it like to live there?
3
4Linden Anderson: Well I was there 3 years, 2 years during the, uh, occupation [inaudible
5 43:02] cold.
6
7Ruth Stewart: Oh, so...
8
9Linden Anderson: It was rough. Yeah. Uh, there wasn't electricity. We didn't have any heat in
10 our billet, and it was 0 weather. The hospital was cold. The – I was in Seoul.
11 The hospital was a converted 7 or 8 story department store. And it was a
12 challenge there because, uh, it was cold. It was miserable. We didn't have
13 any running water, no flush toilets. Uh, we had to use a pan with water
14 every time. But we did have maids to clean our rooms and did our washing.
15 We had no beauty shop. We looked awful. My hair looked just terrible.
16 [chuckle] But there that's when we had fun though, more dating and more
17 partying and – on your time off. A little better – a little more time for social
18 life because we could schedule our time off a little better. But we ran the
19 same program, crafts, off-base trips, parties, Bingo, lounge activities and
20 had an awful lot of little coffee hours for 'em, and the whole staff would
21 come by on those mornings we had coffee hour, and our – we had
22 dependents that would supply homemade cookies through the years.
23
24Ruth Stewart: [44:40] So then you went to Japan after Seoul?
25
26Linden Anderson: Eh, well, yeah. I finished off – I finished...
27
28Ruth Stewart: [44:48] Or did you just go there to [inaudible 49:49]?
29
30Linden Anderson: I stayed in Korea 2 years.
31
32Ruth Stewart: Uh-huh.
33
34Linden Anderson: That – no. Let's not get this mixed up. We were through with the war,
35 Korean War.
36
37Ruth Stewart: Okay.
38
39Linden Anderson: And then I went back to Japan, and then I came home and that's when I
40 went to Fort Sill. This is hard to keep track of, eh, without backtracking.
41 [laughter]
42
43Ruth Stewart: [45:12] Japan was just for you to come home? It wasn't a station?
44

1Linden Anderson: No. I stayed a year.
2
3Ruth Stewart: Oh. [45:19] From year...
4
5Linden Anderson: Um...
6
7Ruth Stewart: ...1948 to...?
8
9Linden Anderson: Oh. Oh. I don't know. Let's see [inaudible 45:24].
10
11Ruth Stewart: Okay.
12
13 Linden Anderson: No. By this time, eh, at that time I think I came home in '53. It's a little bit
14 hard for me to – I'm getting so mixed up on when I was there and when I
15 wasn't. I came back home from Japan the second time in 1953. [throat
16 clearing] And that's when I went to Fort Sill and stayed 4 years. Same
17 program, same activities. We had a small staff there, just 3.
18
19Ruth Stewart: [46:16] And that's where you retired?
20
21Linden Anderson: No.
22
23Ruth Stewart: [46:19] No?
24
25Linden Anderson: No. Then from Fort Sill, I went to, eh, Tripoli, Libya for a year to an air
26 base there. So 1 year. And then...
27
28Ruth Stewart: [46:39] Do you remember what year that was?
29
30Linden Anderson: Eh, '57.
31
32Ruth Stewart: [46:44] You went there in '57?
33
34Linden Anderson: Uh-huh, in 1957. And then I went to Germany in 1958.
35
36Ruth Stewart: [46:58] So you really got around?
37
38Linden Anderson: Yeah. And then I came – when I left Germany, I went to Wichita Falls,
39 Sheppard Air Force Base in, uh, '61 I guess. And then they sent me back to,
40 uh, Korea in fif-, 1966.
41
42Ruth Stewart: [47:31] Third time in Korea?
43
44Linden Anderson: Uh-huh. And then, uh, just for a year, then to Japan for 2 years.

1
2Ruth Stewart: [47:42] Again?
3
4Linden Anderson: Uh-huh. And then home to the naval air station in Corpus Christi, Texas.
5 And all this time I'm still doing the same thing that I did but just different
6 people. Of course, in Japan, we were in the Vietnam War those last 2 years
7 in Japan, and we had a terrific amount of work there. We had 3 evac
8 hospitals to cover plus the, the regular hospital for Tachikawa Air Base. And
9 one of them was 5 or 6 miles away over horrible, heavy, heavy Japanese
10 traffic. You would have to go over there. And, oh, we got – I think one day,
11 gosh, 300 or 400 patients. I never will forget that day. It was snowing. Oh, it
12 was awful to get all those patients. We worked hard in Japan. I didn't go to
13 Vietnam. But [we were 49:00] getting patients from down there. And our –
14 we were getting patients strictly for the purpose of sending them back home.
15 And we had 3 different hospitals that we were using for that purpose, but
16 some of them were too sick, and we had to keep them in one of the evac
17 hospitals. One had to be incorporated into the [inaudible 49:23]. And some
18 were too sick. Some of them might even have died there.
19
20Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
21
22Linden Anderson: But most of the patients that we got then came to us for the purpose of
23 getting sent home.
24
25Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
26
27Linden Anderson: And we had American volunteers. We had about 100 women d-, dependents
28 that did our volunteer work. They rubbed the backs. They cleaned the beds.
29 They fed the patients. We didn't have time much to do anything but take
30 care of those volunteers. But at the same time, over at that regular hospital,
31 we had a lot of recreation going, the usual.
32
33Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
34
35Linden Anderson: But we had a bigger staff there. I think there were about 7 of us on the staff
36 then. We had 3 social workers and 4 [inaudible 50:14] workers and a local
37 [hired 50:16] secretary. So we had more people. So – but by this time, I'm
38 already 60 years old, you know, so my social life was – didn't have much.
39 The main thing was going everywhere when you have time off, going to
40 Tokyo, going to see the sites...
41
42Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
43
44Linden Anderson: ...mainly.

1
2Ruth Stewart: [50:44] So then when did you retire from the Red Cross?
3
4Linden Anderson: I retired from naval air station in Corpus Christi in 1973.
5
6Ruth Stewart: [50:58] With the Red Cross do you get benefits with them...
7
8Linden Anderson: Yes.
9
10Ruth Stewart: ...when you retire? Is that...
11
12Linden Anderson: I get Red Cross, I get Red Cross retirement and along with Social Security.
13
14Ruth Stewart: [51:16] And does that provide for healthcare?
15
16Linden Anderson: Yeah. I had benefits through that like dental and, and, um, medication,
17 drugs.
18
19Ruth Stewart: Okay. [51:31] So this is a supplement to...
20
21Linden Anderson: Yeah.
22
23Ruth Stewart: ... Medicare then?
24
25Linden Anderson: Yeah.
26
27Ruth Stewart: [51:34] Was it intended that way or if you were [inaudible 51:35]?
28
29Linden Anderson: No. I – No. I pay for it, of course, you know.
30
31Ruth Stewart: Yeah.
32
33Linden Anderson: But through Red Cross...
34
35Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
36
37Linden Anderson: ...not through – of course, I get Medicare...
38
39Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
40
41Linden Anderson: ...through my Social Security.
42
43Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
44

1Linden Anderson: But I get the dental and the drug program.
2
3Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
4
5Linden Anderson: It gets, uh, they take that out of my salary each month.
6
7Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm. [51:54] So now you're retired back in New Braunfels?
8
9Linden Anderson: Mm-hm. Yeah. I...
10
11Ruth Stewart: [51:57] Things come full circle don't they?
12
13Linden Anderson: Uh-huh. I decided to move back there because I knew everybody.
14
15Ruth Stewart: [52:05] And when did you – did you go back there in '73, right away?
16
17Linden Anderson: Uh-huh. And I've lived there since. But my next of kin live in Austin. But by
18 this time, I'm the only one left in the family, and I'm depending on my niece,
19 you know, to take care of me in my old age, [chuckle] and they're hoping I
20 don't get too much old-...
21
22Ruth Stewart: [52:27] You're gonna get old?
23
24Linden Anderson: They're hoping I don't get too much older.
25
26Ruth Stewart: [laughter] So okay then. [52:34] You retired there and you still lead a very
27 active life from here?
28
29Linden Anderson: Yes. I've done a lot of volunteer work. But not Red Cross. But don't put that
30 in there. You know?
31
32Ruth Stewart: [laughter] Okay.
33
34Linden Anderson: I decided to do – almost all of us need something...
35
36Ruth Stewart: [52:48] You [need 52:48] something different?
37
38Linden Anderson: Yeah. Something different.
39
40Ruth Stewart: [52:51] And you've gotten a lot of awards for that in New Braunfels?
41
42Linden Anderson: Yeah. They've been awfully good to me. The Chamber of Commerce, I
43 don't know where it came from, but it's all in, in this...
44

1Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
2
3Linden Anderson: ...mess if you want to look at stuff.
4
5Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm. Yeah. Well we will [want that 53:11]. Yeah. Well this has been
6 very, very interesting. [53:15] Do you have anything that you'd like to say
7 about your overall life with the Red Cross?
8
9Linden Anderson: Well I'd like to say that I've stayed single, but I've had a very rewarding life
10 being single, and I've never felt, uh, any concern about, uh, being single
11 because I, I've been so happy, and I've been so fulfilled in the type of work
12 that I've been doing that that's filled my life to the fullest.
13
14Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Well we certainly appreciate your taking time [inaudible
15 53:50] to get this story down for us and for the history of women, which is
16 important to go to the Library of Congress. Women's history, as you know,
17 sometimes hasn't gotten its full attention, so.
18
19Linden Anderson: That's right.
20
21Ruth Stewart: We do appreciate that. Yeah.
22
23Linden Anderson: That's – I think so, and I think, eh, it's time that we are, uh, coming to the
24 front, and I hope that some people will start writing books about the civilian
25 women's effort, especially in the Second World War, the women who
26 worked in factories...
27
28Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
29
30Linden Anderson: ...and who gave up good jobs...
31
32Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
33
34Linden Anderson: ...uh, to do government things to be helpful, to – like to fold parachutes and
35 things like that. Uh, I hope that sooner or later they will get some. And I
36 think it's good now that we have a few people like Tom Brokaw...
37
38Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
39
40Linden Anderson: ...who are writing about the *Greatest Generation*...
41
42Ruth Stewart: Mm-hm.
43
44Linden Anderson: ...group of people.

1

2Ruth Stewart: Well thank you very, very much.

3

4

5/lo