

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION  
NUMBER  
386

Interview with  
Mynila Billingsley  
October 13, 1977

Place of Interview: San Antonio, Texas  
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello  
Terms of Use: open  
Approved: Mynila Billingsley  
(Signature)  
Date: Oct. 13 - 1977

COPYRIGHT © 1977 THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF NORTH TEXAS STATE  
UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF DENTON

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Coordinator of the Oral History Collection or the University Archivist, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203.

Oral History Collection

Mynila Billingsley

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: San Antonio, Texas

Date: October 13, 1977

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mrs. Mynila Billingsley for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 13, 1977, in San Antonio, Texas. I'm interviewing Mrs. Billingsley in order to get her reminiscences and experiences and impressions while she was at Kaneohe Naval Air Station with her husband, Lieutenant Commander Oliver Billingsley, on December 7, 1941, during the Japanese attack there.

Now Mrs. Billingsley, to begin this interview, would you just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mrs. Billingsley: Well, I was born in Texas near a town called Menard, Texas. I was born on December 13, 1903. I lived there until I was about three years old, and I moved up near Brownwood, Texas, where I lived until I married.

Marcello: When did you get married?

Billingsley: I married on August 19, 1923.

Marcello: You might describe how you met your husband.

Billingsley: Well, my husband had graduated from Annapolis and had resigned and came home. His father died a few months before, and he had two sisters at home. He came home.

Marcello: When you say he resigned, he resigned from the Navy?

Billingsley: He resigned from the Naval Academy. He came home, and he went into the oil drilling business and came down to Brownwood. His home was near Waco, Texas. He came down to Brownwood where I met him in 1922.

Marcello: In our pre-interview conference, you mentioned that he did retain his reserve commission after he had resigned from the Academy.

Billingsley: He did.

Marcello: Well, describe the path by which he eventually got back in the Navy again and ultimately ended up at Kaneohe Naval Air Station.

Billingsley: Well, after his work in the oil business--he did a lot of drilling--he decided that that wasn't for him, so he went into administrative work. He was the administrator for a hospital and a clinic in Brownwood. We were living there at the time that he was called back to active duty along about 1937.

Marcello: What was the reason that they were recalling him to active duty in 1937? Do you recall?

Billingsley: Yes. I think they suspected that something was going to happen, because it was discussed a lot--I remember that. I remember everybody saying, "Well, it looks like we're going to get into something." So at first, he was called back, as I told you before, as camp commander of a CCC camp in Lucedale, Mississippi. From there we moved to Richton . . . for, I think, less than a year. These little towns were just over the border of Louisiana and Mississippi.

Marcello: Now are you saying that after he was activated in 1937, then he served in the CCC?

Billingsley: Yes, he did. You see, most of the time, they were using Army officers as camp commanders, but they were short of camp commanders, and they did call a few Navy officers in. Then we were transferred to Beaumont, Texas, and we were there for almost a year.

Marcello: Now was he still in the CCC at this time?

Billingsley: He was still with the CCC. In Beaumont, Texas, he was notified to report to Kaneohe Naval Air Station for active duty.

Marcello: Now all this time, were you accompanying him to these various CCC posts?

Billingsley: Yes, I was.

Marcello: What did you and your husband both think about his being recalled to active duty?

Billingsley: Well, he was very pleased. He was naturally a military man, and he was very happy. He had wanted to get back into the military all the time. He was very happy about it.

Marcello: Did you enjoy life in the CCC camps and so on?

Billingsley: Yes, we did. We had a wonderful time. We worked with the boys, and we had a real good time.

Marcello: Did you feel your husband was able to gain some very valuable experience in the CCC that perhaps later helped him in his Naval career?

Billingsley: I'm sure he did; I'm sure he did.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you received orders to report to Kaneohe Naval Air Station. What did you and your husband think about the idea of going to the Hawaiian Islands?

Billingsley: Well, amazingly enough (chuckle), at first, we didn't know where Kaneohe was, because it was a new Naval air station. It had just been activated, I think, on the 15th of March. When he was called in April . . . no, it was the 15th of February. I take that back. The station was activated on the 15th of February, I believe it was, and he arrived over

there in April. Even though he was a pretty good scholar, he came home, and he said, "I have my orders, but I don't know where I'm going." (chuckle) He said, "I've never heard of Kaneohe." So we went down to the library to find out exactly where we were going to be sent. Well, I didn't go with him at that time; I couldn't, because he didn't have but about two or three days to report. So I was left in Beaumont with a nine-year-old child.

Marcello: Being such a new station, is it possible that Kaneohe didn't have quarters for dependents at that early stage?

Billingsley: They didn't have, no. So I didn't get to go until along in June, I think.

Marcello: And what year was that?

Billingsley: 1941.

Marcello: So you were there between five and six months before the war actually got started. At that time, how much thought did you and your husband give to the possibility of the country going to war? Was this something that was discussed very much?

Billingsley: At that particular time, it looked like it was inevitable, but we never gave a thought to Pearl Harbor being harmed.

Marcello: When you thought of the country going to war, would it be safe to say that you, perhaps, thought more in terms of

Europe rather than the Far East? Or was Japan considered a threat as early as June of '41?

Billingsley: I really couldn't say. I really don't recall. There was so much going on the Far East that we knew that something was probably going to happen. But as to where and what and how, we didn't know.

Marcello: Describe what Kaneohe Naval Air Station looked like from a physical standpoint when you arrived there in June of 1941.

Billingsley: Well, it was a beautiful little station. Of course, all the buildings were new; the quarters were all new. We had a new hospital, which was not fully staffed or equipped; we only had two nurses, but we seemed to have enough doctors. The housing was up on the point, and they were real pretty brick houses. But like you say, they didn't have enough housing for these people that were reporting there, and they didn't have housing for us. We lived down on the beach for about a month until finally the commanding officer said, "There is a little beach cottage down on the point. Would you like for us to redo that; convert it into housing for you two so you can move on the base?" We were very happy.

Marcello: Now this particular cottage was at the beach but still on the base itself.

Billingsley: On the base. Yes, it was. It was on the base, but it was down right on the water.



Marcello: How far would it have been from the main activity of the base itself?

Billingsley: Oh, it was about . . . it wasn't over a quarter of a mile. It was about a quarter of a mile, I guess.

Marcello: It must have been fairly nice to have a cottage along the beach in the Hawaiian Islands.

Billingsley: It was very nice, and they were kind enough to let me go over to Honolulu and pick out all the furniture. It was very nice. We'd get up in the morning and walk on the beach. And we could go swimming if you wanted to.

Marcello: I would gather that life in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy was rather pleasant there at Kaneohe Naval Air Station.

Billingsley: It was wonderful. It was not congested; it was very rural; it was beautiful. We could go out and buy fruit, flowers, or anything, you know, that we wanted to. It was very, very nice at that time.

Marcello: How were the beaches right there at Kaneohe?

Billingsley: Right at Kaneohe, they were pretty rough. But down at Lanakai, it was beautiful and also at Kailua. Kailua and Lanakai both had pretty beaches, and they were not but about two or three miles down off the bay.

Marcello: Now what particular line of work was your husband in there at Kaneohe?

- Billingsley: He set up the first ship's service department. The ship's service department had charge of the general store, which is now known as the base exchange. He had charge of all of the lunch counters, snack bars, the beer garden, the laundry--all of the facilities on the base like that. Most of his employees were civilians on the island. There were quite a few enlisted boys that worked with him, too. He had charge of the movies. At that time, we didn't have a chaplain, so after that, why, we did have services, but we had them in the auditorium.
- Marcello: What did you do to occupy yourself there at Kaneohe while he was engaged in his military duty?
- Billingsley: I didn't do anything (chuckle). Well, I had a child ten years old. She was ten in February before we went over there, and she was in school. So I really didn't do much until the 7th of December.
- Marcello: Why don't you describe what the social life was like for an officer and his wife during that pre-Pearl Harbor period. I gather there was quite a bit of entertaining.
- Billingsley: Well, there was, but most of it was on the base. We had a beautiful Officers' Club, and you could go up to the Officers' Club at night. But most of our entertaining was done right on the station.

Marcello: And I gather a lot of it was very formal, too, was it not, with long dresses and this sort of thing?

Billingsley: Yes, Saturday night was formal. It was very entertaining.

Marcello: Now many people like to assume that if the Japanese or any other enemy, for that matter, were ever going to attack the military facilities there in the Hawaiian Islands, the best time to have done so would have been on a Sunday morning. What many people imply is that Saturday nights were times of parties and heavy drinking and all this sort of thing, and that consequently the personnel would be in no shape to fight on a Sunday morning. How would you answer that assertion?

Billingsley: I don't think that was true--I'll be perfectly honest with you--because we were at the club on Saturday night, and we were awake Sunday morning about seven. Of course, people would go up there to drink and have a good time, but I don't think any of them were not able to have gotten up and done what was necessary on their jobs.

Marcello: Are you saying, in effect, that the code of being an "office and a gentleman" was rather rigidly maintained at that particular time?

Billingsley: I would say so, yes.

Marcello: When you and your husband got together with your friends, and especially as conditions between the United States and

Japan continued to deteriorate, did you ever talk very much about the possibility of the Japanese ever attacking the Hawaiian Islands?

Billingsley: No.

Marcello: I gather, then, you felt very safe and secure there.

Billingsley: Well, yes. I will say, as far as the two of us were concerned, we were thoroughly surprised.

Marcello: Did you ever give much thought to the possibility to any Fifth Columnist activity on the part of people of Japanese ancestry on the islands? Did this thought ever cross your mind in those pre-Pearl Harbor days?

Billingsley: Not mine. I guess I didn't give it too much thought. Well, all of it was new to me, and I don't think I entertained that thought.

Marcello: Now as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, did you, as a Navy wife, detect any changes taking place in the daily routine or activities on the base itself? Or did it seem as though it was business as usual right up until the time of the attack? Did you notice any changes?

Billingsley: Well, everyone seemed to be ready for an alert, and a lot of times we were confined to the station. Everybody seemed to be very conscious of the fact that something was going to happen.

Marcello: In other words, did the number of alerts increase as one gets closer and closer to December 7th?

Billingsley: I can't answer that for this reason: if it did, the officers knew about it, and they didn't discuss that too much with the families.

Marcello: I was wondering if these alerts would affect the families in any way.

Billingsley: Well, I don't think it did ours, because my husband wasn't the kind of person that would come home and discuss all this with me. You know, after all, it was a military matter. We really didn't discuss it too much.

Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us to those days immediately prior to the actual attack itself. What I want you to do at this stage is to talk about that weekend of December 7, 1941. Why don't we begin on that Friday. Would it be safe to assume that you were looking ahead to Christmas at that early date?

Billingsley: Yes, we were. We had our reservations to go to the other islands during the holidays. We had plans and had already made our reservations. As to Friday, I have no idea what happened that day, or Saturday either (chuckle). I do know that we were at the club on Saturday night.

Marcello: Was there anything out of the ordinary that you observed on that Saturday night when you were at the Officers' Club?

Billingsley: No.

Marcello: Do you recall what you did that night at the club?

Billingsley: We had dinner and danced, drinks, and we went home about midnight.

Marcello: Did it seem as though everything was breaking up there at the club around midnight or sometime in that vicinity?

Billingsley: As near as I can recall, it did.

Marcello: How crowded would the Officers' Club be on a Saturday night?

Billingsley: Oh, I would say there would be maybe fifty, sixty people there--the officers and their wives.

Marcello: Okay, so you went home that night around midnight, as you mentioned. I assume that you had a babysitter for your daughter, or was she old enough to stay there by herself? Do you recall?

Billingsley: I don't recall, really. I'm sure she wasn't by herself, but I really don't recall who she was with that night. I know she was at home.

Marcello: When you came home, did you more or less go straight to bed? Okay, I think this brings us into that morning of December 7 1941, and what I want you to do at this point is to describe to me in as much detail as you can remember the events on that day. I'll simply let you continue at this point.

Billingsley: Well, we were awakened about seven o'clock with a lot of noise and a lot of shooting.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. Did you normally sleep in a little bit later on a Sunday morning?

Billingsley: Yes, we did.

Marcello: Sunday was more or less a day of leisure for the personnel.

Billingsley: Yes. But we usually waked up about seven or eight, anyway. But this morning we were awakened by the noise. I said, "A lot of noise going on this morning." And he said, "Yes, I guess it's maneuvers or practice or something." I got out of bed and put my housecoat on and went out to pick up the newspaper. I came back, and I said, "There's smoke coming up from the hangars." Well, we were over on the side of the island that the point. . . I don't know whether Kaneohe has been described to you or not. There is what they call Lookout Point, and it's on a little hill. Lookout Point's here (gesture); our quarters were here (gesture), but I could see the smoke rising up.

Marcello: In other words, you actually couldn't see the barracks, because the point was between your cottage and the barracks.

Billingsley: That's right. I couldn't see anything except the smoke that was rising up. So I came back in, and I said, "There's smoke rising up from the hangars." He said, "Oh, I guess they threw up a smoke screen down there on the base for practice."

Marcello: In other words, all this is taking place in a rather calm manner, that is, your conversation.

Billingsley: It is very calm, very calm. So we lay there and read the paper for a minute or two. Directly, I got up and went out and looked again, and I said, "Listen, if they threw up a smoke screen down there, it's out of control, because I can see blaze now."

Marcello: In other words, the flames were actually up over Lookout Point?

Billingsley: Yes.

Marcello: And how high was Lookout Point? You'd have to estimate this, of course.

Billingsley: Oh, I'd say it was about 200 feet maybe--just enough to obstruct the view.

Marcello: Consequently, you interpreted that blaze over there to be a rather significant one, if you could see it rising above Lookout Point.

Billingsley: Yes, I did. So he got up, and I said, "There's something happening down there, and we're missing it. Let's go see what it is." So we got in the car, and we drove across the station.

Marcello: Now is all this still proceeding in a rather leisurely manner?



Billingsley: Yes.

Marcello: Does he put on his uniform, or is he in civilian clothes?

Billingsley: He pulls on his khaki trousers and no shirt. I'm in a zipped-up housecoat. So we take the youngster, and we get into the car, and we drive across the station. These planes are in the air, and they're zipping around, and they're firing. We drove all the way across the station down to the hangar before it dawned on us that those were Jap aircraft.

Marcello: Now all this time, you were not molested by these Japanese planes.

Billingsley: Yes, there was one that did strafe at us, but they missed us.

Marcello: Now obviously, you did realize that they were "up to no good" at that point.

Billingsley: Finally, when we got down there and stopped and my husband got out of the car and looked up, why, there was a Navy boy who ran up and said, "Those are Japanese airplanes up there! Get your family back to their quarters!" So he turned around and took us back to the quarters and put us out.

Marcello: Now how was the ride back to the quarters?

Billingsley: A little faster than we went over (chuckle).

Marcello: Was it a harrowing experience going back to your quarters, or was it a rather straight road and so on and so forth?

Billingsley: Well, it was just a little winding road; it's just a little dirt road. It was a very quiet ride back.

Marcello: In other words, there was nothing said.

Billingsley: Not much (chuckle).

Marcello: Now you mentioned just awhile ago that when you were driving from the cottage over to the base that you did ultimately come under some strafing. Would you describe this?

Billingsley: Well, we did, but we still hadn't made up our mind whether they were practicing or whether it was maneuvers. I don't think it dawned on either one of us that it was an actual attack on the station.

Marcello: Now was this plane coming toward you when it strafed?

Billingsley: Came to the side of us.

Marcello: How close were the bullets hitting?

Billingsley: Oh, about as far as from here to that door over there (gesture).

Marcello: We're talking about twenty feet or something like that.

Billingsley: About twenty feet.

Marcello: Could you actually see the bullets kicking up the dirt and so on?

Billingsley: Yes. we could.

Marcello: And did the plane just make this one pass?

Billingsley: That was all.

Marcello: Okay, so he took you back to the base. What did he do and what did you do at that point?

Billingsley: Well, at that point, he put on his uniform, put on his shirt, and reported down to the station immediately and said for us to stay in the house. Well, we didn't stay in the house. We went out in the yard and watched the . . . by that time, it was close to 8:30 or nine o'clock, I suppose, and then the bombers came over.

Marcello: Did you actually see them?

Billingsley: Yes.

Marcello: Describe this particular incident.

Billingsley: I don't recall exactly how many there were, but they were very, very low. We stood in the front yard, and they dropped their bombs on the hangars.

Marcello: Could you see them actually drop the bombs?

Billingsley: Yes. They came slowly down, and they were very, very low. In fact, you could see the pilots. But, of course, I was far enough away that I couldn't, but you could if you'd been down at the hangar.

Marcello: But you actually could see the airplanes?

Billingsley: Oh, yes. I saw all the bombs fall.

Marcello: Now from where you were watching these airplanes, were you out in the open, or were you under trees or anything of that nature?

Billingsley: I was out in the open. I was standing out in the yard.

Marcello: Now could you see any of the damage that these planes were doing even though the barracks and so on were between you and Lookout Point?

Billingsley: No, I couldn't . . . not at that time.

Marcello: What thoughts are going through your mind? Do you recall?

Billingsley: Well, my thought was, "This is it! It's really happened!" (chuckle).

Marcello: Were you worrying about your husband?

Billingsley: Sure. But he came back . . . he went down . . . he was down there for about thirty or forty minutes, and he came back and said, "They need help at the hospital. Would you go down and help them?" I said, "Yes, I will."

In the meantime, Commander Post, who at that time was warrant officer, brought his wife and put her out at our cottage.

Marcello: Were there any other Navy wives who lived very close to where your cottage was?

Billingsley: No, No, there wasn't. So I left my daughter with Mrs. Post.

Marcello: Incidentally, how was your daughter taking all this?

Billingsley: Very calm.

Marcello: Well, was it just a curiosity so far as she was concerned?

Billingsley: Well, she was ten years old.

Marcello: I assume, therefore, that Mrs. Post did not accompany you over to the dispensary or the hospital.

Billingsley: No, she did not.

Marcello: How did you get over to the hospital?

Billingsley: My husband took me.

Marcello: I see. He was still there.

Billingsley: He came after me and took me over to the hospital.

Marcello: So what did you do then when you got over to the hospital?

Billingsley: Well, I walked in and asked them if there was anything that I could do, and Dr. Kellum said, "Yes." He said, "How do you feel about going in there where the boys are injured?" I said, "I can go in there if you need me." So he said, "Okay," As I said before, they only had two nurses. So they gave us some antiseptic, some pans, and . . . what they were doing when they were bringing the boys in, they took them into the emergency room first. They did what they could for them and then brought them on into the hospital proper. So there was another wife there, too, and I can't remember her name. There was one other wife.

Marcello: Were the two of you more or less cleaning up and so on and things of that nature, getting ready for the next patient?

Billingsley: Right. We tried to dress their wounds as best we could, and if they were injured too bad, we cut their shirts and their trousers off, you know. The doctor told us, "If you find some that's bleeding profusely or something like that, why, give us a call. We'll come in and see what we can do." So that's about all we did all day.

Marcello: Now had you had any previous training or any first aid or anything of that nature?

Billingsley: Yes, I had had a first aid course. That was all.

Marcello: What was the nature of the casualties that were coming in?

Billingsley: Well, most all of the casualties were from the bombs.

Marcello: In other words, they had shrapnel wounds and things of that nature.

Billingsley: Most all of them were shrapnel wounds, yes. The first patient that I walked in that morning was . . . and I did remember his name. . . it was something like Sherman. His hospital bed was rolled up; he was in a sort of half-sitting position smoking a cigarette; and he had one leg off between the knee and the thigh. That was the first patient that I saw that day.

Marcello: Now how were people acting there at the hospital? In other words, was there a lot of confusion or chaos, or were they acting in a rather professional manner?

Billingsley: They were acting in a rather professional manner. Of course, these kids were all young. There was really no complaining at all; it was very quiet. We had all the beds full eventually, and we had boys on mattresses that we had brought in and put on the floor. We used every available bed and every available mattress that we could find. There were no complaints.

Marcello: Did the hospital come under any attack at all?

Billingsley: No, it didn't.

Marcello: How long did you continue to do this sort of work?

Billingsley: Well, I stayed all day, and in the afternoon somebody came and said, "Your daughter and Mrs. Post have been evacuated from the station, so don't worry about her." I stayed all day Sunday; I stayed Monday night; and I stayed Tuesday.

Marcello: Were you too busy to worry about your husband during that period, or did you actually see him during that period?

Billingsley: I didn't see him. But I knew at that time that the attack was over, or at least I thought it was. No, I didn't worry too much about either one of them; I was too busy.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you worked all that Sunday and all that Monday. Did you remain there at the hospital, or were you allowed to go back to the cottage?

Billingsley: I stayed in the hospital.

Marcello: And during this time, you did not see your daughter, either.

Billingsley: No.

Marcello: Where had they been evacuated?

Billingsley: They were evacuated down on Lanakai to a friend's house. Then on Tuesday night, I went down to Lanakai where they were and spent the night. Then the next day, we came back to the station. In the meantime, they had taken our cottage more or less for a lookout point, so we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Post for a few days until they fixed up another cottage for us down close to the hospital.

Marcello: That day of the actual attack and while you were working in the hospital, did you have very much of an appetite?

Billingsley: No. As I remember, I had some cream of tomato soup (chuckle) That's all I ate that day.

Marcello: What were some of the rumors going around in the aftermath of the attack? I'm sure that base must have been one big rumor mill, including the hospital.

Billingsley: Well, we were so busy at the hospital that there wasn't much rumors going on. Once in awhile, I'd get a report that, "Your family's all right. Your husband's all right. Your child's all right." But really we didn't have . . . I don't remember any rumors at the hospital.

Marcello: Did you ever hear anything about Japanese having landed on the island or anything of that nature?



Billingsley: Yes, I think there was a rumor to that effect. We were told what to do and what not to do in case this happened. But that rumor, I think, did start.

Marcello: I recall from my research that during that night several cars were actually moved out onto the airstrip, the idea being that if Japanese planes did come in, they couldn't land on the airstrip with all these cars out there. But evidently, during the night, two airplanes off the Enterprise did actually fly in and did land on the airstrip in spite of the fact that those cars were there. I was wondering if, perhaps, your car happened to be one of those that was on the airstrip that night.

Billingsley: No, ours wasn't. If that actually happened, I don't know about it. Our car was not one of them.

Marcello: I gather there were a lot of trigger-happy servicemen around that night, too. Could you hear sporadic gunfire and things of that nature?

Billingsley: No, I didn't. I don't recall any.

Marcello: When was the next time that you did see your husband, that is, after the attack itself?

Billingsley: I saw him on Tuesday or Wednesday, I think it was. When I came back on the station on Wednesday, I saw him.

Marcello: Did he tell you anything about the disaster that had occurred, either at Kaneohe or at the other military facilities and

so on? Did you talk very much about what had gone on?

Billingsley: No, he stayed . . . as I recall, he stayed up there at night. I think they had a place for him to sleep, and he stayed there at night. I didn't see him but once in awhile for about a week until we got settled back into another little cottage they had down there. So then after that, I went to work at the ship's service store, and I worked there until I came home.

Marcello: I assume all the civilians were ultimately evacuated off the island--all the dependents.

Billingsley: They were, and then they let them come back.

Marcello: Were you evacuated?

Billingsley: No, I went out on Tuesday night. . . went off the station on Tuesday night.

Marcello: But you never had to leave the islands at all.

Billingsley: Oh, no. We were given choices. I remember they passed around a questionnaire. "Do you want immediate transportation out?" "You're not in a hurry to go." "Do you want to be deferred as long as possible?" I said I wanted to be deferred as long as possible, so they let me stay there until the 14th of March. From about December 9th, I worked in the ship's service store until I came home.

Marcello: When did you come home?

Billingsley: Came home the 14th of March.

Marcello: 1942?

Billingsley: 1942. They finally came and said, "Well, you've gotta go." I said, "Okay." I guess I could have stayed if it hadn't been for the daughter, but we didn't have any schools, and we were living in a blackout. She'd been out of school from January until March, and I thought, "Well, the best thing for me to do is to go home and put her in school."

Marcello: You brought up something here, and maybe I'll pursue it a little bit further. There were blackout conditions from the night of December 7th on. Describe what life was like under blackout conditions.

Billingsley: Well, the window panes were all painted black. We couldn't open not even a crack of the windows. We usually tried to go home and have our dinner before the time to turn the lights on. We lived that way for three months. I didn't go up to Honolulu, I don't think, but about twice from the first of January until I came home.

Marcello: Had you previously been going up to Honolulu on a more or less regular basis?

Billingsley: Not too often. We had everything on the base that we really needed or wanted in the way of . . . of course, we had our commissary and everything. We didn't go to Honolulu too much.

Marcello: How far was Honolulu from Kaneohe?

Billingsley: At that time, you know, we didn't have the tunnel. We had to go over the Pali, and I would say it was about twenty-five miles.

Marcello: And a fairly hard drive, I guess.

Billingsley: Yes, it was a winding mountain drive. Beautiful drive, beautiful view.

Marcello: Well, Mrs. Billingsley, I have no further questions relative to the attack. Is there anything else that you think we need to talk about? I have plenty of tape, so if you feel that we haven't discussed, why, feel free to do so.

Billingsley: I can't think of anything else.

Marcello: Okay, well, I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk with me. You've said a lot of very interesting and, I think, important things. I'm sure that scholars are going to find this valuable when they use it to write about Pearl Harbor.

Billingsley: Thank you very much.