

*Admiral Nimitz Historic Site-
National Museum of the Pacific War*

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

**Interview with
Rev. Dr. Thomas Bousman
Prisoner of War-Philippines**

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Rev. Dr. Thomas Bousman**

- Helen McDonald** This is Helen McDonald and today is April 28, 2001, and I'm interviewing the Rev. Dr. Thomas Bousman. He's from Palm Desert, CA and a former civilian prisoner-of-war. This interview is taking place in the George Bush Gallery here at the National Museum of the Pacific War. Would you like me to call you Tom?
- Thomas Bousman** Please.
- Helen McDonald** All right, Tom, thank you. Can you tell me where and when you were born?
- Thomas Bousman** I was born in Manila, Philippines in the St. Luke's Episcopal hospital in the old walled city, and that was Oct. 9, 1928.
- Helen McDonald** And your parents?
- Thomas Bousman** My parents were American missionaries in Hainan, China, that famous island now because of the spy plane, and they had gone out there in 1925 as Presbyterian missionaries to take the place of an American missionary who had been murdered by the Chinese communists the year before. Things were so unsettled then in China that after a year and a half, they were transferred to the Philippines and stayed there the rest of their lives. My dad was a Texan. My mother was the daughter of a Methodist minister in Ohio. They met at Yale Divinity School. They jokingly said that when they got married it was a toss up between the mission field and the stage. They went to the Orient and spent their lives working with Asians primarily Filipinos.
- Helen McDonald** What was your mother's name and her maiden name?
- Thomas Bousman** Yes. Her name was Nona Carol Stimmel. And my father born in Freeland, Texas, his birth certificate says. He said he was born in Goat Neck and that a gully washer took out the little hamlet at some point. He was Henry Hugh

Bousman. And he was one of 5 sons of a Thomas Bousman, my grandfather.

Helen McDonald

Do you know when he was born?

Thomas Bousman

Yes, he was born on February 18, 1894.

Helen McDonald

And your mother, when was she born?

Thomas Bousman

She was born on October 25, 1899 in Ohio.

Helen McDonald

Did you have siblings?

Thomas Bousman

Yes, I have a brother two years younger who was born in Ohio while they were back home on furlough in 1930, and then our sister was born 4 years later in Manila in the same hospital where I was born. That was November of 1934.

Helen McDonald

Your roots then in the Philippines are very strong.

Thomas Bousman

They definitely are. My parents did go back for one full term after the war taking my younger brother and sister with them so they could finish their schooling and then come back to the United States for college. Then our went back again in 1953, and my father died just a few weeks later. And our mother then stayed on for about a year and a half and was coming home to our sister's wedding when she died suddenly; so their ashes are both interred in the north cemetery in Manila. And they were still in their 50's, and I'm convinced that the war experience, and particularly the malnutrition, shortened their lives. But I'm proud that their remains are in the country they loved so much.

Helen McDonald

Would you share how they came to be in Manila?

Thomas Bousman

I mentioned that they had left China when the situation with the Chinese communists was so serious in 1927, and nearly all the missionaries and westerners left China in '27. Most Europeans left. So the Presbyterian missionaries were reassigned to different Asian countries until it was safe to return. After a year when it was safe to return, my Mom and Dad decided that they would really rather remain in the Philippines. They had been assigned to a little Protestant chapel, The Church Among the Palms, which was primarily to minister to faculty and students at the Agricultural College of the University of the Philippines at

Los Baños, and so that is where we children grew up, not knowing that years later we'd be in a Japanese prison camp a quarter of a mile from our home.

Helen McDonald

Tell me something about your early childhood memories.

Thomas Bousman

They were all very happy memories. I do recall being aware of the fact that we enjoyed living out in the country. When I started to public school, to kindergarten, I was the only American kid. I was very, very blond, a real Dutch towhead. And the fellow students there, the other kids, called me the "Old Man" because of the white hair, and I cried and went home and did not want to return on the second day. So, but that was still a happy memory. We loved it out there; those who have been to Los Baños know that Mt. Makiling the extinct volcano is a beautiful backdrop, and of course, we were just a mile or two from the lake. We enjoyed having the freedom to climb in the trees and gather the santol, and the guava trees provided that wonderful fruit, and to have papayas and bananas. When our servants who washed our clothing in our home would take their laundry to the creek to wash because water was scarce at times, we kids enjoyed going along with these dear Filipinos who worked for our parents, and we would play in the creek with the Filipinos the Tagalog word is "ilog"; and we just loved going with them and playing, and of course, they supervised us so we were safe. So that's part of the memory. I also became aware at an early age of the fact that my dad did much more than preach. He taught that they were always reaching out to others to see how they could help, and once a young fellow was electrocuted accidentally and dad put him in the back of this funny old precursor of a station wagon that probably was vintage 1930 and drove him into Manila but he died about half way. But I'm just remembering things where our parents were always helping others, and they loved the Philippines too, and so because they were happy out there in the country we were too.

Helen McDonald

It strikes me that their influence has obviously led you into your chosen field, your chosen profession as well.

Thomas Bousman

It definitely has. I'll be honest to say that like most missionaries' kids and most preachers' sons the last thing I wanted to be when I was growing up was to be a preacher. That was out. But God has a wonderful way of taking hold

of us, and I really feel that it was when we were rescued by the 11th airborne and taken across the lake around the front lines to safety that God got my attention, but it wasn't so much of a call to the ministry at that point as much as it was realizing that we could have all been dead a few hours earlier and we were alive . And so I said, "Well, Lord, you've given me this life back. It's yours. For whatever.

Helen McDonald Tell me about you were 12 when ...

Thomas Bousman I was just 13 when the war started.

Helen McDonald Tell me about your memories leading up to that because obviously the Philippines had been preparing for the Japanese.

Thomas Bousman I do remember that many of my American classmates and friends were going back to the States, especially families where there was any connection with the military.

Helen McDonald When did this start?

Thomas Bousman Let's say that last year before Pearl Harbor. So let's say through most of 1941. Especially it accelerated in the middle of '41. Families who were connected, suddenly they wouldn't be at school, or we'd hear that they were going back to the States. In addition, we began to realize that so many ships leaving for Japan were filled with Japanese civilians returning. Many of them were the dependents of families who'd come to work in the sugar plantations, maybe, or other agriculture down on the island of Mindanao. So we were aware that the Japanese were going. My parents took first aid courses. My dad's brother in Southern California wrote and said the storm clouds are gathering. Wouldn't it be wise if my mother came home with us kids. or if she was unwilling. that they would send us three kids home. They would take care of us until things were better. and my parents decided that they would rather we all be together as a family.

Helen McDonald You had an older ... All of your siblings were younger? Or you were the oldest?

Thomas Bousman I'm the oldest.

Helen McDonald

You're the oldest, OK. At any of that time did you feel a sense of responsibility towards your siblings?

Thomas Bousman

A little bit but that sense of responsibility didn't come until the war really broke out. And then there was concern our sister was 7-10 during those years and our brother was 11-14, and he and I were more like twins in a way though we're two years apart. But it was for that younger sister that we felt that concern. The day the Japanese came to intern us, she went into the bedroom and cried cause she was going to have to leave her cat.

Helen McDonald

When did you first learn about the Japanese attack?

Thomas Bousman

That morning at breakfast, and of course, all our days out there, you know, are a day ahead because of the international date line. That Monday morning the morning paper said that "Roosevelt Sends Note to the Emperor", and it looked very grim but it wasn't until after we'd left for school and actually were in school, that the word began to filter in, and anxious parents, Americans and Filipinos, came and took their children out of school right away because it was feared that Manila would be bombed within hours. So that's how we learned. However, we weren't taken out of class until it was over at 12:30. We walked home.

Helen McDonald

Did you hear, could you hear, any of the attack on the Philippines or was Los Baños part of that attack?

Thomas Bousman

No it was not originally. But we certainly did that night because Manila was bombed that night.

Helen McDonald

And you could hear that?

Thomas Bousman

Oh yes! There had been 2 air-raid false alarms, and we had left the house and gone over next door to a safer place. It was actually in the church under the steps. We figured that was safe. But about 3 a.m. the planes came again and they cut their motors and came in and glided over Nichols field and dropped their bombs, so we were awakened and really almost shaken out of our beds with this conflagration.

Helen McDonald

How far is Nichols Field and Manila from Los Baños.

Thomas Bousman Nichols Field is really at the edge of Manila and Los Baños is 45 miles away on the other side of this large lake Laguna de Bay..

Helen McDonald But this sound over the lake grew...

Thomas Bousman Yes, but of course at that time, we were not far from Nichols Field because you see we were in Manila when the war started.

Helen McDonald You were not in Los Baños?

Thomas Bousman No, because I should have added that after 9 years there, then our parents went down to Dunagett on the island of Negros to Silliman University where my dad was the college dean or chaplain. But then in '38 when we returned from furlough, my father was put in charge of the Ellenwood Milate Church in Manila, so then we had schooling there. So from '38 until the war began, we lived in Manila.
And that's when I came to know Liz and some of these other contemporaries that have helped put together these wonderful reunions.

Helen McDonald When did you start going to reunions?

Thomas Bousman We didn't go to our first one until 1980. Now I think that they didn't have the reunions right away. I don't believe.

Helen McDonald I don't think so either.

Thomas Bousman But the first one we heard of was on the 20th anniversary which would have been in 1965. And it was being held on a Saturday night in Los Angeles 65 miles away, and I had Sunday morning duties and the price per plate was pretty high and we had small kids, so we didn't go; but a few people who had been did come up to worship the next day, and we saw some of them So the first that we saw some of these friends, who had been in their early teens with us, was in San Mateo 1980, and then we have been to every one every five years since.

Helen McDonald Now after the Japanese bombed on the evening of Dec. 8 or the morning of Dec. 9th at what point did the Japanese come in and take you in to internment?

Thomas Bousman

All right, I can tell you this simply, that for about 8 days it was daily bombing, and we had dug trenches in our front yard in Manila. We were only a block from Taft Ave. the main drag and then a few blocks from Dewey Blvd. there at the bay. Dad after each bombing, my dad would take the car and go and get the wounded and take them to the hospitals. And a few times Mother would go along. After that for 8 or 10 days, we decided that we should go and refugee out to the country, so we went to Los Baños to the Church Among The Palms where there was a lovely chapel by the church and a student center and a house, a 2-story house, the mission house and other missionaries went out and gathered there with us. Christmas Day 1941 we were sitting down, this large group about 25 of us to Christmas Dinner, when we heard the bell ringing in the Catholic Church, and that was the signal that it was an air raid. So we went outside and got into the trenches we had dug. Two bombers came over and bombed the railroad station at Los Baños. Its' called College Station there. And then those who survived the bombing ran out into the adjacent coconut groves, and those two planes flew over and machine gunned these helpless civilians. So when the planes had left, my dad again took the car and a few other of the missionaries took their cars, and were taking the wounded up to the college infirmary, a very small little hospital; they came back, and they said that they needed those who knew first aid techniques to assist, and my mother went. Well, they weren't gone very long before we heard the roar of low planes again, and we went in this particular house. We went down in the lower part which was cement up to about 5 feet. There were 7 bombs that fell in that string. The first one fell right outside the infirmary. Mom and Dad had heard the planes. They'd run out and crawled into a culvert under the road. The last of those 7 bombs fell right outside our house (luckily in the lawn) so all it did was make a big crater, throw dirt and sod all over the place. Well, our parents then decided they needed to see what was happening to their kids so they left the hospital assistants there and came and when they saw what this crater had done, they were just speechless. The thing that I remember, after we staggered out and of course most of us were in tears because of the fright and our ears were ringing because of the sound, but we saw Filipino families carrying some possessions, and their children were running up to the foothills. They'd had it for that day. You see, this was the second time in just a few hours that

there'd been bombing right there. Then that was kind of a crucial point for decision making in that some of the missionaries decided they wanted to go up into the mountains and hide because they were convinced that the Japanese occupation would be brief and that they could stick it out up there on the lower slopes of Mt. Makiling. My dad had been in World War I in France, and he was more of a realist. He felt we should go into Manila and gather together with the international community and be prepared to be interned by higher authorities. He feared if we were caught out there by some drunk buck private that it might be very serious. So some went to the mountains, I think they waited a day or two, but we climbed into our 1937 two-door Ford, we five Bousmans and another family the Buchers who had once been in Hainan also; and Louise Bucher was pregnant with her fourth one, and she was about due within any day. I don't know how we all got in there. Then, dad's blackout lights on the Ford were too bright so he couldn't use them. And by now dusk had come, and then it was dark, so we crawled back into Manila almost in the dark, and along each little village, each barrio, as we reached those places, they'd come out and say, "Oh, a little plane is coming. Please get into the ditches", and a lot of those ditches were almost just open sewers. They were so full of everything that we were unwilling to get into the ditches. But then as we approached Manila, Nichols Field had been bombed repeatedly. It was all aflame, and so much of the south part of the city was burning. We had to detour, and so many landmarks were gone that we were really disoriented, but we finally got back to our home and discovered that four Filipino families in our congregation who'd lost their homes had moved into ours knowing that they would be welcome there. So we lay down in the living room and went to sleep because that had been one of the most exhausting days of our lives.

Helen McDonald

I can well imagine.

Thomas Bousman

That was Christmas Day. And then we waited, and of course, the Filipino families left. They knew it would not be good for them or us, if the Japanese came and they were there. So then followed a very difficult period of waiting. MacArthur, as you know, declared Manila an open city, and they blew up everything they couldn't take to the Bataan Peninsula; then we had this gentle rain of oil for 3 or 4 days. Just a very little rain; it covered everything,

including the vegetables. So it was the 5th of Jan. that they came.

Helen McDonald

What type of preparations did you make during that time or that you're aware that your parents made?

Thomas Bousman

Yeah, we helped also make them. We knew that we were going to be interned. We hoped maybe they'd come and say "stay in your home", but we each had packed a suitcase, and I don't remember whether or not we had, we must have had a little bit of bedding. So when they came I was impressed. Some soldiers ... but a civilian who spoke excellent English and was very polite, and he said that he was very sorry that they needed to do this, but they were doing it for our own safety. They wanted us in a central place while the city was occupied, so that nothing would happen to us and that we were going to be taken away for 3 days, and we were to take food for 3 days and take some clothing, and he didn't want us to be bored so take reading material, and of course it was over 3 years later that we were. So we learned right away not to trust their time frame.

Helen McDonald

Three days turned into 3 years. Uh, had your parents done anything special about as far as putting together food or getting trying to get word to your family members in California or...

Thomas Bousman

At that point we knew it was ... In fact, I do recall that the day after Pearl Harbor, after the bombing that night, dad sent us to a photographer, and we got a passport picture Mother and we three kids. He somehow hoped he could get us out, and that we would need a current passport picture. That, of course, never happened for anyone.

Helen McDonald

Right. Were there any boats, that you were aware of, that left with passengers after the first attack?

Thomas Bousman

I'm not aware. But I do know that some British friends with whom we've kept in touch all these years, and we're going to see them in England next month, were on their way from Shanghai trying to get to London, and it was the mother and her 3 little kids, and they were on a Swedish ship and when the captain learned what had happened at Pearl Harbor, he dumped all his passengers and their luggage at pier 7, and he took off. Hoping to get to

Australia. He knew that if he was there he'd be bombed. So we've never heard whether or not he made it. So I don't think that any other Americans got out. After, you know, after that began. Because the bombing that came every noon and they would fly so high and these pathetic little guns on Corregidor would shoot, and we could see their puffs a thousand feet below the Japanese flying fortresses or whatever they called them.

Helen McDonald

What was the arrangement between the civilians and the military? Was it a fairly close? Did you go to school with military children?

Thomas Bousman

Yes, we had attended the Public School and that was for 2 reasons. Our parents felt that we needed to identify with the community but also they couldn't afford to send us to the American School which was more expensive, of course. But even those of us American kids who went to the Public School or to the American School had a lot of social activities together. And we were involved in the Junior Symphony. But we would see each other at the Elks Club or at the Army-Navy club. Different events.

Helen McDonald

I've seen photographs and that of Manila before the bombing and that, and it was such a beautiful, beautiful city. The Pearl of the Orient. What was your recollection of just sort of what you saw around you as a young child?

Thomas Bousman

Yes, it was a beautiful city, and the public buildings were all kind of patterned on those in America which are something like Greek architecture, you know. A mini-Parthenon façade. The Lunetta, the lovely park there by the Manila hotel and the Legaspi Landing where the first clipper landed, The Pan-American Clipper did. We all went to see that and we were quite young then, but I remember that landing, the first time that a sea plane would come all the way from the States, obviously with hops along the way. So I always thought that it was a beautiful city and we loved going down at sunset and walking along Dewey Boulevard watching the sun sink into the bay.

Helen McDonald

It must have been beautiful. Uh, when you arrived at Santo Tomas, when they came and took you to Santo Tomas do you recall what directions were given and what they gave you at that time, how they dealt with you as a family?

Thomas Bousman

It was not very well organized. I believe a few people had gone in on the 4th of Jan. We went in on the fifth. And I do have a 5-year diary that my parents had given me the year before. Well, what 12 year old wants to write in a diary? But I saved that and I would hide it when the Japanese were searching us, so I have it. And it helped, has helped me confirm these dates. And so we did go in on the fifth, and they just told us to go in to the main building there in Santo Tomas. Men in one part, and women in the other. So Dad and my brother and I went into one room, and our mother and sister were in another.

Helen McDonald

Did you have a room to yourselves or were you in ... ?

Thomas Bousman

Oh, No, no. Other people came in, and of course, that very first day, we went in late in the afternoon and we were taken in in trucks. Each day more people would come in and it would become more crowded.

Helen McDonald

I know that the Americans and allies formed their own committee, which to me, is one of the reasons that Santo Tomas and the Philippines, the story of internment there, is so different from those in Java and that. And can you tell me anything about that?

Thomas Bousman

Well, yes. Looking back on it, it's what one would expect, of mature, responsible Americans. We loved to get organized, and that second day I found myself in an interesting position where I was told by the Japanese "You are to be a messenger boy." So I sat outside the commandant's office and then they would come and give me a note and say go find this person. And in a way it was frightening in that I would go and find a gentleman who had been the head of the largest bank in Manila and he would come and this adult would just be shaking all over wondering what was going to happen to him. So then that of course gave me reflected fear. That went on for a while. And it's interesting there are of course so many books and one is what I call "faction". It's called the "Share of Honor" by Ralph Graves and he was the stepson of the High Commissioner and had gone home to America before the war. But in this he has created a wonderful story and he said that anyone in that historical novel is fictional. If there's any resemblance to anyone, it's just coincidental. But I feel that a lot of those individuals are composites so he has one boy who was a messenger boy in that. And so

there were a number of us who were messenger boys. It's very well written.

Helen McDonald

I'll look for it. I'm not familiar with it. When was it published?

Thomas Bousman

Oh, it's been out since 1989. It's in paperback.

Helen McDonald

What happened to those individuals, the banker, the ...

Thomas Bousman

They were questioned. It was later on that some of them had a very difficult time. And near the end of the war, they carried off a Mr. Larson and executed the wrong one. And all they said was so sorry. So with this recent thing of the Hainan Island, and you can imagine how involved we feel there in that my parents began their missionary work on that island. The Chinese kept waiting, you know, and they said it's the first time in history that a four-letter word has solved a diplomatic problem. And George W. Bush said very sorry and then they released our service personnel.

Helen McDonald

Isn't that something! Tell me how your meals and that went.

Thomas Bousman

The first few days, there was nothing except what we had taken in. Now on the first morning we went to the wrought iron fence and there was nothing to prevent friends and relatives out there from passing food through. So soon we saw that the Filipinos who worked for us had come bringing food and we said please go get the mattresses. So and I wish I had charted the progression of this thing but after a few days they began to separate the gate from where we were standing by the fence.

Helen McDonald

Why?

Thomas Bousman

That first day was so poignant because here the Filipino wives and their little kids on the outside and here were the American dads on this side and they were embracing through the fence, this wrought iron fence. And crying and it was hot. And just total disruption. I'll have a flashback of that just that'll bring tears to my eyes remembering how poignant it was. After a while, as you may know, they separated us farther and farther and finally they ended up with the line, where'd you'd go in the morning and leave something on an alphabetical table, you know, for

Bousmans and later the Bousman would go and pick it up at that table. So if these answers get too long, will you drop this off?

Helen McDonald

No.

Thomas Bousman

We had no food on the line for at least a week, where they began finally to prepare something there. And there, but what I'm remembering is that in 1941 there'd been a tremendous wheat harvest in Canada with a tremendous surplus and they sent all this cracked wheat on ships. And a lot of that food went to us, so that kept us going for a lot of the war – the cracked wheat--though it soon was full of weevils. And other “inhabitants” of the sacks and the bins. But I think I remember standing in line with our contemporaries trying to play games or to joke as we had our first few days there. Now I'm going to volunteer something about our story because I know you may not ask it, but it's important to have the whole story here. After only 11 days in camp the Japanese had what they called the “Religious Section” of the Japanese army. And they summoned the missionaries into one of the classrooms and the priests and the nuns and they said they had really come not to bring war but to liberate our Asian brothers from the tyranny of Western civilization. And we've come with goodness in our hearts and we want for all of you to go back and continue your wonderful philanthropic religious work. So we're letting you out of camp to go back. But we did not want to go out. The parents, the adults, didn't want to go out either because we had safety in numbers in there. We teenagers were just decimated at the thought, you know, we were against going out but they said you're going out. So then we were under house arrest out there for that middle part of the war. Dad could not go out onto the streets at all unless he wore an armband, red, that had a circle and inside was the Japanese character which either meant American or enemy alien or something. I still have it, by the way.

Helen McDonald

How wonderful.

Thomas Bousman

I'll donate it if you want.

Helen McDonald

Thank you, yes.

Thomas Bousman

Because I'm afraid, you know, it's getting more faded though I keep it in the dark. But that then was a very interesting and difficult time. And, you know, I think that it's important that what I'm about to tell you also be recorded about the internees. When we were all out, the Japanese called all of the men together. Of course the women didn't count. And they took some of the missionaries and priests and put them in one room and they took the others in another room and read a document in Japanese which was then translated and everyone in room A signed it. And everyone in room B said, "I would rather lose my life than to sign this traitorous document." So it's obvious the translation had been different. So those who hadn't signed it, went back into camp, were thrown back in. So my dad came back and at first they weren't aware of what had happened and here's where I don't have all the details. They shielded us from some of this. But I knew that as the day went on, there was growing tension with some of the other missionaries trying to figure out what to do. And all of those in the Presbyterian Mission had been in one room where they all agreed. Well, they could easily in good conscious as loyal Americans sign this document. But the others weren't. So I guess they felt they had to go and straighten this out, for several reasons. You know, for their own loyalty as Americans to our government. And their feeling for those on the other side who may have wondered why did those Bozos sign this wretched thing, we refused to sign. And that was the first time I heard my father break down. He was saying our morning prayer over the breakfast table and he began to choke and wept a bit. And he said he would rather lose his life than to sign the document as the other room had as those who had refused. Well, so when these men went back to the Japanese, they said, "Oh, never mind, it's not a problem." And these loyal Americans wanted to get it settled, but they were denied the opportunity to do that. So as I remember then during the war, there was still a bit of animosity. Those who hadn't signed thought the others were traitors. And whether they ever got it all straightened out, I don't know.

Helen McDonald

And what did, what was really on that document as well?

Thomas Bousman

I'm sure that probably there's a record of it somewhere. But that was something that made me realize right away one has to be so careful. Memories of that time of internment where we were under house arrest were that

gradually our teeny little community of teenagers began to grow because as some of the missionaries in other places who had hidden were caught, they were brought in. And usually they were put in Santo Tomas for a few weeks and then let out. So that was when Helen went down and well others from the Bicol Peninsula came and that made a lot of difference to have more teenagers in there with us. But it still wasn't a large group. Periodically, some of our friends in Santo Tomas would get a weekend pass and they could come out and be with us but that wasn't often and we had to work hard to get that to happen.

Helen McDonald

I recall in Liz Lautzinhauser's diary, that her very first response was she heard about someone who was getting ready to go to a camp going to an internment camp off somewhere other than Santo Tomas. She thought that was such a lark and they were going to have so much fun. She really wished she could go. And uh, did you ever have that feeling of oh, this is so cool or this is like going to camp.

Thomas Bousman

Well.

Helen McDonald

Children are so resilient.

Thomas Bousman

Yes, right. The thing is we felt that we were being gyped because we weren't with our pre-war friends. Though we built life-long friendships with these others. Now some of those who had grown up down there on the Bicol Peninsula we hadn't really known very well. And at New Year's of this year, four of those managed to come and we gathered in Palm Desert and reminisced. Some of us hadn't seen each other since the war. We just had a wonderful time. You know, we're all in our early seventies now. But there was that sense of missing out on things. So that when the Japanese came and told us on July 8, 1944 that we were going to be re-interned, we kids were thrilled. And we guessed that we would go to Los Baños. But then came a period that was my first time and I hope my only time in life to go for about 48-56 hours without sleep. They came in the late afternoon and said trucks would arrive at 7 in the morning tomorrow morning. Be ready to go. Two suitcases, a bed and bedroll. And we knew that anything else we left in the house we would never see again. So the grapevine went out to our congregation and people, Filipinos came and they moved our piano into the church hoping that might save it. My mom gave the people so

many of our household treasurers that she wanted them to have. And they'd say that when the war was over we'll give it back. And she said no you are to keep it. It's yours. And dad did the same with his books. So we were ready the next morning and they came, big trucks, and the grapevine had obviously gone through that part of Manila because surrounding our house. You know, there were other houses but ours was the one away from, over by the church. We were on Indiana Street. And by the way, you know, the Japanese renamed all the streets with Japanese names during the war. And a circle of Filipino looters was around our house and of course, we knew, that they had, they were surviving, it was difficult to get things. Once or twice during the war when we were out under house arrest, I would awaken and find that my clothes I had left hanging on the bedpost were gone. Someone had reached in through the iron the bars with a long hook and had taken my shirt or something. So, we hadn't left too much in the house, but there was still quite a bit there. So as we went off, my dad and my mother, they waved to the looters and said good luck, you know. Take everything you can and we climbed into the truck, and we wished we could have seen a video of what happened when we drove off cause I'm sure they just rushed in there to ransack the place. We went into Santo Tomas. The Japanese dumped our luggage out in the field and then said every item had to be searched. So we opened the first suitcase and then we would have to go find a sentry, a Japanese soldier to come and go through it. They were checking it all. We soon discovered they didn't care. After a while you learn to take every avenue of, I won't say cheating, but you know, avoiding what you don't have to do. One, my mom was surprised, but I had found her calling cards that American women used back in the '30's, Mrs. Hugh Bousman. When we'd go to visit, we'd take the cards. And so I had dumped those in the suitcase and the Japanese soldier looking through that suitcase asked if he might take one. And we often wondered, if he was found dead somewhere, with my mom's calling card on his person. Well then that night it was terrible. They had us lie down on swali mats and that is the very rough split bamboo mat. It's not soft like the palm frond mats. And then every few hours they would have a roll call and they chose some wonderful priest who would do this roll call and he didn't know all of our names and my mother was Nona Bousman and each time he got to her he called her Nina Bowsman and we'd all giggle. And

then, you know, a few hours later the same thing and we would wait to hear Nina Bowsman. So none of us really slept and my diary says, I just happened to review it recently that we were awakened at two and by three we were in line for breakfast and at four we left in trucks to go the train station in the rain

Helen McDonald

4 a.m.

Thomas Bousman

And when we got on the train and started south, the Japanese soldier with a little bit of English said to my mother, "Do you know where you're going?" And she said, "We're going to Los Baños." And he said, "Oh no." And of course, we were. So we got to that train station where Christmas Day of '41, they'd been bombed.

Helen McDonald

There we go [TAPED TURNED OVER AND STARTED AGAIN]

Thomas Bousman

Al right, I respected Margaret Sams the first time I met her and talked to her at one of the reunions. She said, "It's kind of strange that some who were out of camp a lot of the time crossed over that and didn't. And said oh yes, they were in the prison camp the whole time. And so I always thought it was important to say. If people want the short form, I say yes, we were under the control of the Japanese for over 3 years. But we were only in Santo Tomas the first 11 days and that long period then we were under house arrest. And then the last year we were in Los Baños camp.

Helen McDonald

All right, so you did not go to Santo Tomas internment school.

Thomas Bousman

No, I did not.

Helen McDonald

And were you aware of what was going on within Santo Tomas as far as their form of government?

Thomas Bousman

Oh yes, we were.

Helen McDonald

Did you have communication back and forth?

Thomas Bousman

We did. Now as I've indicated, sometimes we'd have our friends come out and June Darras was one of our closest friends. She was a good friend of Liz Lautzinhauser also.

Though she went to the American school. But she and I had, you know, pulled each other's hair in the cradle when we were kids and she was just a few months older than I, and she'd been born in the same hospital. But she would come out periodically. We would do all the paperwork so she could come out of camp for a weekend with us. And like a sister to us. And then she would tell us what was going on in Santo Tomas.

Helen McDonald

Why don't we take a break.

Thomas Bousman

OK.

(BREAK)

Thomas Bousman

The school and this matter of education that we really would like to have been back in camp which surprises people. Because we didn't have the safety of numbers out there. There was a time of kind of reign of terror there out in the city in our part of town where there'd be these headless bodies found on the streets. Filipinos, you know, they'd find some Japanese they particularly hated and they'd kill him. So it was an uncertain time and we kids hardly ever left the mission property. We didn't have a walled-in compound as you might in China. But the property was there together and there was a large dormitory and as more missionaries were brought to us then we became crowded there. And when the McDonald family came and lived in our house, there were 5 of them and 5 of us. And we did a wonderful thing though. It was my mother's idea so we wouldn't get tired of each other. We took meals with those with whom we weren't living so this British lady and her little kids would come over. They lived a block away and she would come and have 3 meals a day with us. And the McDonald family ate somewhere else so we weren't in each other's faces just day and night.

Helen McDonald

That's so smart.

Thomas Bousman

And then they changed these assignments around. But the joy of having people whom we loved and respected teaching us many of them with doctorates in their fields, because Presbyterians require as do most major denominations, you know, that their clergy, their missionaries be very well prepared for what they're going to do. And the other thing that for me was such a boon was

that I was able to study piano and pipe organ. We had studied violin with Grace Nash who organized the junior symphony. And by the way, she lived in our house for some months. We learned that she was off in a convent with her two little boys who were so ill and my mom and dad sent word to her please come and live in our house. So she did. She had one bedroom and during that time she needed some piano accompanists for her pupils. And so she gave me a crash course in sight reading and began to become my piano instructor. Her bed was on the other side of a split bamboo wall from the piano. She had perfect pitch. So as I'm playing she'd call out, "Tom, that's B-flat." As a result I was very nervous all the time because it was like having a constant piano lesson with your teacher hovering over you every moment. By the way, we've kept in touch with her. In her wonderful book, she does mention those months that she lives with the Bousmans.

Helen McDonald

My goodness.

Thomas Bousman

And she and her husband went on one of the tours we led when we went back to Asia and to the Philippines.

Helen McDonald

What were some, who were some of your instructors and what were your classes?

Thomas Bousman

We had with us a woman who had been a missionary teacher in Venezuela at one point before she married this... California man who was a missionary. So she took over to organize the school, considered units that would be needed for a high school diploma, kept very careful records. And even when we went out of the Los Baños camp she had those with her in her little ditty bag. So that when we got to our relocation center at Muntinglupa after we had been rescued and that was where we were for 6 weeks before we were fit to come home. She prepared our school records on American Red Cross stationery; she borrowed a typewriter and she typed in all the courses we had and who the professors were and what our grades were. So I was able to go to Wooster high school in Wooster, Ohio and I had this document which they accepted. We also had other opportunities and some of them came that last period which was not quite a year at Los Baños where we had Spanish, 3rd year Spanish from a Castilian from Spain who was a little bit hard on us but it was so much better to talk with a real Spaniard. We took Gregg shorthand from a lady who

was one of the experts in Gregg and I do recall that I took to it easily I don't know why and I enjoyed it. Of course a lot of my stuff in my diary is in shorthand and now fifty years later I don't remember what those squiggles were.

Helen McDonald

Do you think someone who still reads Gregg shorthand would be able?

Thomas Bousman

Yes, and capable would be a key word. There would be nothing personal in there for I wouldn't, that I'd be embarrassed about reading. But I would hide things in that way in the diary. So at the time we felt we were being gyped because there were no lab courses available. We didn't have school sports. But when all is said and done, we realized what a rich education we had.

Helen McDonald

Were you able to communicate with your family in the United States?

Thomas Bousman

We sent occasionally the card, the postcard that was allowed by the Japanese. Where you were allowed 25 words and you couldn't talk about any military situations. None of those were ever received. I think they threw them in Manila Bay or, or ... started the morning fire with them. However, we did hear from our grandparents in Ohio. The letters were 2 or 3 years old when they came, but not 3, but some of them were a year and two. They did eventually reach us. But very few.

Helen McDonald

Then what about Red Cross boxes and that?

Thomas Bousman

That's another very sad story. I can't speak for Santo Tomas. I think they may have received more than we did in that 3 year period. But as I reviewed some diaries, I've been writing some stuff for this reunion we're having next February. So I have been reviewing my diary. And it seems like all these rumors, oh, the Red Crosses boxes are coming and they'll be here soon and I believe that only once in Los Baños camp there did we ever get anything.

Helen McDonald

Did you know a John Brush – John and Lois Brush?

Thomas Bousman

I only know his name because of the suitcase I saw here. Was he in Santo Tomas?

Helen McDonald

He was in Santo Tomas. He had been with an American corporation and they were first in Santo Tomas and then they were sent to Los Baños and he and his wife were in Los Baños at the end. That last period.

Thomas Bousman

That's another interesting thing about the Los Baños experience. When they took us out there on July 9, 1944, they separated us from the others who were there and we don't know why. Now it was all Catholic priests and nuns and Protestant missionaries and families. And we had to chuckle. You know, the wonderful American sense of humor that gets us through these things. They, the ones who'd been there quite a while, called us the Holy City. So we called them Hell's Half Acre. But we could see each other through the bamboo wall there and we sent illegal notes, you know, and risked getting in trouble by sending messages. But there was, I don't know, 3 months maybe of separation and then the wonderful day when the wall came down, the gate whatever, the fence. And then we could go. Now I do remember what we would do during that time. Often the water situation was so iffy that if we would go to the spigot, one spigot outside each barracks for 92 people, we'd go out and there was no water, we were allowed then to go and the sentry was there and we'd show the bucket and we'd go down. So we'd go all the way down to the spigot right outside Ralph and Grace Nash's cubicle, they had an end one. They'd see us. They would come out with their bucket. We would then turn the spigot so it would just dribble out and we would prolong and we'd pretend to be looking at the water and worrying about it and then we'd begin to exchange news. Grace Nash's third son, Roy, was conceived in our home when Ralph came out on a weekend pass from Santo Tomas. And then when it became evident she was feeling so rotten, that perhaps there was a baby on the way, she went back into camp. And years later in Chicago area, my mother came back, my parents came back from the Philippines in 1952, and I was asked to drive my mother to Evanston where the Nashes were living and my wife and I – we had been married already – and we took them out. But they made us wait outside and they went in to have a chocolate ice cream sundae. And we found out that they were settling a bet from 1942. And that was Grace was sure she was pregnant and my mother was sure she wasn't. And the bet was, so mom lost the bet.

Helen McDonald

And had to buy her the chocolate ...

Thomas Bousman

And had to buy... you know so, this is years later but they giggled because they had stuck a little paper parasols into the hot fudge sundae.

Helen McDonald

Oh, that's something. Now that brings me to another point too, and that's the shortage of food and I'm ... Evidently in the beginning there was ... food was a little more plentiful and I know with Liz they worked in the kitchen and that and they helped and they had their meals prepared for them and sent ... What were your experiences?

Thomas Bousman

It was fairly much the same in that I could generalize by saying that the Japanese gave us the food and said "Rots of Ruck." You know, "you cook it." And we were sure lucky. I don't know who those magicians were that worked in the kitchens there but considering what they had, they did a pretty good job with it. My mom was head of the vegetable chopping crew on certain days. I don't know how that happened. And also she couldn't figure out, but she was elected the head of, the monitor of our barracks. Every barracks had a representative that went into the camp, went to the camp counsel they would attend there. So occasionally there would be rumors that Nona Bousman had said we were going to have squash. But then we discovered that mom had said to us, "I'm going to go out and wash." You know, that's an example of how the rumors started. She hadn't said squash, but word ...oh no, Nona Bousman said squash. She's head of the vegetable chopping crew. I think that one thing, that I think helped change my mind about considering the possibility of maybe entering the ministry was when near the end the people in Los Baños camp came to the missionaries and said will you please dole out the food. You're the only ones left that we can trust to give equal portions to each internee.

Helen McDonald

Oh my goodness!

Thomas Bousman

And that said something to me and then as I... You know, I was 16 at the time we were rescued. And to see the ... most of those missionaries had sterling qualities and that when the chips were down they were there and they were calm and they were fair and they were caring. And to see others who kind of began to disintegrate or to cheat because we were trying to have our own little gardens and whatever

grasses and things we could at the end. We needed something to flavor with and so we grew our own little onions. Well, one night some fellow internee came and stole all our onions in our little onion patch, you know. That kind of discouraged us.

Helen McDonald

Well, it's disappointing and you would think rather than all of them they would leave some.

Thomas Bousman

Those things made us realize that there are certain values that are so important. And you know also, another thing, there was a young missionary couple and she Mrs. Brandaeur said to me one time near the end. She said, "Tom, you have so many keen interests in music and drama and creative writing and you keep saying you do not want to work in the church. She said, "You can use all of these gifts that God has given you in the ministry. Think about that." Now if my parents had told me that that would have ended it forever. Or if any other missionary had said that to me. But here was a young gifted woman that I really admired and she ... You know, I don't think that she's still living but I would like to have told her the influence that she had in that one statement that one day. Amazing.

Helen McDonald

What was your communication between Los Baños and Santo Tomas during that time?

Thomas Bousman

Virtually nil. Obviously, word was getting back and forth and if you've read ... have you read Margaret Sam's book yet?

Helen McDonald

I've only read bits and pieces of it when I was doing the exhibit.

Thomas Bousman

Her husband had part, his part of the hidden radio.

Helen McDonald

Right.

Thomas Bousman

And that, you know, they began when the Japanese would come in and search, you know, they'd say well, that was Margaret's sewing basket. And that's where they actually hid the radio and but whenever the Japanese would search they would take it out. So finally when they looked each time and it was just full of sewing items. So finally they quit looking in there and then that's where they hid their part of the radio. My dad... while we were under house

arrest... there were some of the missionaries who had parts of hidden radios they'd put together and some of the men went to some secret place and would listen to the Voice of America but did not even want their families to know ...

Helen McDonald

What they heard?

Thomas Bousman

... in case they were caught. Well no, where they were hearing it because they'd come back and report to us. But they thought in case they were caught and we might be tortured they didn't want us to know and to this day I don't know where I should find out. Anybody want to ask whose been longer living? So the thing you know, I'm jumping ahead, but we saw and heard the battle of Manila across the lake. And as you know, water helped transmit the sound. So we knew the battle of Manila was raging and then word went around that said they're eating American food in Santo Tomas tonight, February 3rd.

Helen McDonald

You know that gives me goose bumps.

Thomas Bousman

You say how can you be sure. He says you know our grapevine is so good and now that we've read the whole story about Santo Tomas and Los Baños we know that they were going in and out some of the men were because they had they knew how many yards apart the barracks were as they planned the parachute drop. The 11th airborne. They knew all of our names, you know. When we were rescued and taken from Mamatid, the beach, through the barrios and to Muntiglupa which had been the civil prison before the war. Why when we stepped off the trucks we were inside the safety of the confines of that large prison. As we stepped off there was a GI with a clipboard and we'd give our names and he'd check it off and hand us a Hershey bar. And so, at the end of the day, every name was checked off.

Helen McDonald

Now, there were Navy and Army nurses. I think primarily Navy nurses at that site.

Thomas Bousman

Yes, there's a picture of one of them who was in Los Baños.

Helen McDonald

Margaret Nash – Peggy.

Thomas Bousman

Yes, right.

Helen McDonald

I talked with her for many years. I've corresponded with her and we'd call her on the telephone. I just felt a very strong bond with her.

Thomas Bousman

Some of those Navy nurses were wonderful. And, you know, when I think about the fact that well Liz and I and our contemporaries were in our mid-teens and now we're in our seventies. You know, there are not too many left.

Helen McDonald

No there not. And we're late getting the stories and that. And a lot of it is because so little is known.

Thomas Bousman

That's true. And another thing, I don't know if you ever saw the movie, *The Empire of the Sun*, by the British fellow who was ... the little kid is left all alone all during the war. Well, the author went through an experience like that but he was never separated from his parents. But he admits his is a lot of fantasy and so forth. I saw him. He's just my age and I saw him interviewed. I think they had a one hour segment called "The Making of *The Empire of the Sun*, and he actually had a bit part in the early New Year's Eve party scene there. He took a small part. But this really grabbed me because I could relate to it completely. He said after that experience it took him 20 years to forget it and then it took 20 years to remember it and be ready to talk about it. Now I didn't have that deep a need. But we wanted to get on with our lives and still people would hear what it was about. We knew that we ought to tell them. And my mother had a gift for public speaking so she was in great demand, particularly in Ohio when we had come home. And word was out that we had been in this Japanese internment camp. So I often would go with her to her speaking engagements and would hear her tell it. Oh, I would often cry at part of it. But I think part of it was that I was 16 and she wanted to go with a companion on a train and sometimes we'd go and be different places or we would not go for overnight. But anyhow, they asked me at Wooster High School if I would address the student body of 1000 students and tell the story and I said Yes. I said I don't have notes. I'm just going to get up and tell it. By that time I was 17. And after it was over, my brother who was then a freshman there in high school, said well you gave our mother's speech. And I said Well, of course. You know, I'd heard it so often. But it was my speech too.

Helen McDonald

Yes, it was your story as well.

Thomas Bousman

So also my dear friend June Darras. She's no longer living but I mentioned her earlier. We'd grown up together. Her way of coping was to kind of ... she didn't want to remember it too much. Now we talked her into going to one reunion and she was thrilled to see her contemporaries there. But she kind of just felt that well I just put that behind me whereas others felt, I feel part of the healing for me came in talking about it. And the pattern that I received from my mother also was that she wanted when so much was being said about the Japanese atrocities in Asia which were all true and we didn't know half of how horrible they were and we experienced some in our own congregation there in the battle of Manila after the war. You know, when we got out of camp and found out what had happened. But mother said "I also wanted to tell about experiences of kindness of the Japanese. There were some so I had really included those in my story."

Helen McDonald

What were some of the acts of kindness?

Thomas Bousman

One I just described in my little account that I'm writing. Those first few days in Santo Tomas, there was totally disorganized and I have, and by the way, I have no idea when Liz and her family went in, on which day. But I was walking down near the front gate. There was an open field out there in front of the main building and I suddenly, or I was aware that a Japanese soldier and an American internee were playing where you throw the ball, baseball, up in the air then you whack it. And then the other person catches and throws it back. It was just a 2-man baseball game. I was aware it was going on but I was not paying attention. And then suddenly this Japanese guard gave a terrible yell and he threw down the bat and went running, yelling in Japanese. Well, I thought that poor American has seen his last day. Well what had happened was the American internee had been looking up to catch the ball and had run right into the flagpole and had knocked himself out and was lying on the ground and here, I couldn't believe it, this Japanese soldier had picked him up and was holding his head in his arms and was cradling him. He was cradling him and was patting his cheek and making these soothing little sounds. It was just unbelievable! This grotesque picture of opposites. That was one of my favorite examples which only came to mind recently. There'd be times when the Japanese would, I think in Los Baños, see an American

woman struggling with a heavy bundle and he would help her with it. In Grace Nash's book and in some of her other writings (she had some Reader's Digest publications) the Japanese soldier would come and ask her to play her violin and then she would find food later for her baby. You know, it came to her that she knew he'd left it. We had visited Japan as a family on our way back and forth in both '37 and '38. And we'd had a wonderful time and it was Spring and we'd gone to the Buddha at Kamakura and we'd seen the Japanese gardens. So mom and dad would say to us when we would be muttering about the Japanese and by the way our parents never allowed us to call them Japs. We had to say Japanese. They just said please don't do that. And so I think our parents spared us a great deal of emotional energy. Because some of the ex-internees have spent the last 50 years hating the Japanese. And it's a waste of energy and time. So I think we were spared that, but we certainly heartily disliked some of them. But on one occasion we were sort of muttering about the Japanese and our parents said... Look we were eating in our cubicle and they said now look out there. There was a cute little blonde American kids playing and the Japanese soldier/sentry was just standing there looking at them and he had tears in his eyes. He was that close and my dad said you know, I bet he's thinking about his children back in Japan. You know, he's another human being. He's not an animal. On another occasion we had two chapels, the Catholic chapel and the Protestant chapel. And my dad was chosen that Sunday to do the Communion meditation. And as we were sitting in the chapel, a Japanese guard who was the typical prototype, buckteethed, thick glasses, the saber too long dragging on the ground and he kept walking around outside and open windows and his boots echoing on the hard packed earth. And as dad was concluding his brief communion meditation, he said, "You know, you and I, meaning he and the congregation, wish the Asian brother would take his crew and go back to Japan. But remember, even though we dislike him and some of his hating, he's another human being and God created him and loves him just as much as He loves you and me." He said, "Unless you can forgive him then you better think twice before you come forward to receive the Holy Communion." And that really touched me because I loved my dad but I saw a depth in him that had always been there that I had not seen before. And so those were the kinds of things that I remember where there were many instances of kindness on the part of the Japanese or at

least decency and understanding. Or they would look the other way sometimes. Now on the other side I do remember that when we misbehaved or we didn't understand, they would often slap. That was the way that they generally did—they slapped. Well, I guess there was one sturdy American gal from South Dakota or someplace, and she didn't do it just right and this was in Santo Tomas. And the Japanese slapped her and she instinctively slapped him back. And then he slapped her and she slapped him back. And I guess somebody grabbed her elbow and said let's get out of here. You know, you're not going to win this one.

Helen McDonald

It's an amazing visual picture. What were ... did you have any experience with the medical facilities or that there? Or your parents? Because there was a ...

Thomas Bousman

There was an attempt at having one.

Helen McDonald

Right.

Thomas Bousman

I don't know if you ever heard of the name of Dr. Nance. But he was quite a character. And he was able somewhere to get sulfa. We did experience malnutrition boils. Some of us. They were terrible. And I had one here that would not come to a head. So the doctor had to lance it. But at the last, near those last days in Los Baños, dad had a whole nest of them in his armpit. They were just awful and somehow Dr. Nance got sulfa that helped heal those. And Dad felt he owed his life to Dana Nance.

Helen McDonald

I would imagine so because of being so close the lymph glands. Did any of your brothers or sisters need any medical treatment during that time?

Thomas Bousman

Luckily, we didn't. Of course, now while we were out during house arrest, we had some mission doctors there. Two. And they had access to limited supplies and, I think, once or twice they had take someone to a hospital in Manila for an appendectomy or something like that. But we were fortunate. However, I contracted the dengue fever twice in '43 and in '44. It's a cousin of malaria, but unlike malaria, once it burns itself out of your system, it doesn't reoccur unless you again are infected by a mosquito bite. So I had that and your fever goes so high. One name for it is the "bone-break fever" where you just feel your bones ache so much. So the second time I had that was really the

most serious near the end there in the Los Baños camp. And one of our good friends, Burton Fonger, had died in late '44 in the Los Baños camp. Malignant malaria; he was gone in 3 days. It was different from the other malaria. And that's when we teenagers stayed up for hours one night praying that he would be spared. And then when he wasn't cured, then that was one of my first experiences with unanswered prayer as I conceived it. And so I knew that Burton had died and I remember that there were times there when I wondered if I would live to see freedom. And I don't think it was a teenager being melodramatic. It was. But it was a very difficult time and I do recall that I was running a fever. I think it was not that dengue fever, it was about the 7th of Jan. 1945. And I awakened and heard what sounded like, almost like bees buzzing and realized that it was hundreds of people talking. And I was alone in our cubicle. It was 4 a.m. Well, that was the time that the Japanese left the Los Baños camp for one week. I don't know if you know this story ...

Helen McDonald

Right.

Thomas Bousman

The "Freedom Week." And they stayed outside. You know, they said, "Don't go out. We won't be here." Well, they thought that MacArthur was going to land near them, nearer us, you know, and then they'd surprise him. And so that was a very dramatic week. Because my parents had lived there nine years, they knew a lot of the faculty and some of those folks there were friends and some were members of the church. And they sneaked in to camp and brought us food and news. But we were all terribly, terribly nervous. We asked one dear lady not to stay too long. She crept in during the siesta time when it was fairly quiet. But we were afraid for her life and ours if the Japanese would suddenly come back. And then a week later, you know, they came back just as quietly and as quickly as they'd left. And then they had lost face and then it was really difficult. They really clamped down. So that last few months there in Los Baños was so difficult because the food supplies were running out and we were deprived of salt. And we heard the rumor that there was only enough food left in the storehouses to last until Feb. 19. And that was fact. That morning came and there was nothing. In the meantime, we had been supplementing our diet with all kinds of substitutes. We would try roots and grasses and leaves. We even tried slugs which we got in

the ditch. And they'd make us burn them open. First dad said he would try it. And he decided it was a psychosomatic reaction. So he asked mother to hide some slugs in the food. And we still got this burning heat flash thing. So it was, you know, the poison in those slugs.

Helen McDonald

Shoot. What are your memories of those last, that last month?

Thomas Bousman

Well, in a way, almost quiet desperation. They finally gave us some unhusked rice those last few days. Well, one woman sat down and tried with a knife, you know, to take it off of each grain and somebody tried rough boards and we thought we're not going to make it if this is the way it's going to be. So I think that we were torn with the desperation of the situation and then this strong American hope. And of course, because the U.S. had controlled the skies since September, and occasionally they would fly over the camp very, very low and wave. We could, you know, we could see the American fliers. And I don't know whether some of these stories, you don't know whether it's fact or fiction. But some pilot dropped his goggles and it fell between two barracks and it said "Roll out the barrel." You know, we're coming or something like that. Some of these stories after a while get into this wonderful classification of mythic proportions. One doesn't know. And I'm aware also as I occasionally go back to my diary that sometimes I have allowed these memories to change. Nothing too basic, but may I give you one example.

Helen McDonald

Certainly.

Thomas Bousman

You may have heard that nearly everybody in the Los Baños camp saw the paratroopers drop because we were all outside for roll call that morning and so our whole family saw it. And they dropped them only 400 feet unbelievably low and unsafe almost because those older round parachutes ... But they didn't want to be hanging targets for very long so there were a 150 of them who dropped just like that [FINGERS SNAP]. You know, there they were and to hear 2000 people suddenly shout and sob. Then a shot rang out and then another and then we fell to the ground and crawled back into the barracks. Well, I had been saying for the last so many years, that we were looking out and that the sun was just coming up and that they were silhouetted against the sunrise. And that the lake

was kind of crimson. Well my sister was ten and recently as people began to talk about this, she has said Tom, I remember it as gray. And I said Well, maybe you got up earlier because she got up and her little job was to go and take the earthenware water jug which was neat because, you know, it would evaporate just a little bit and cool the water. She'd take it and fill it for the morning and then go out to roll call. And she said Tom, it was gray. Well, I said, No, it was so clear in my mind and I asked some of these people last January. Oh it was definitely the sunrise. Well then I began to think, you know, my sister may be right. And I remembered that at the beginning of the movie Apocalypse Now was filmed right there... You know, they filmed most of it in the Philippines not in Vietnam and that part of the beginning of that started those helicopters. And it was filmed right there in Laguna De Bay, there by Los Baños. This blood-red. I said "Have I transposed that?" So I called our brother in Hawaii and said (this was just a month ago) and said Now where, you know, what was it? He said Tom, I hate to tell you this but the sky was blue. You know, my sister says gray and I say ... But then he said Now think a minute. He said, the sun ... how's our tape....

Helen McDonald

It's going.

Thomas Bousman

It's going, OK. He said, remember that Mt. Makiling ... see here's the lake... here's the camp.... Here's Mt. Makiling. And he says Mt. Makiling is on the east. So how can you have a sunrise on the other side. So that's all I needed to realize that it was indeed dawn and gray and the sun was coming from that way and I had allowed that vivid thing from that American movie twenty-five years ago, to change the thing. So I need to be flexible if I'm wrong. 'Cause I do want the truth.

Helen McDonald

I understand.

Thomas Bousman

But it doesn't make it any less exciting because those paratroopers dropped and whenever I think of it I still get goose pimples at the miracle of that whole thing.

Helen McDonald

Give me a sort of step by step with what happened with the Japanese as well as with the paratroopers and with you.

Thomas Bousman OK. Then I do want to mention my cousin who was in the First Cav that rescued Santo Tomas. Don't let me forget that.

Helen McDonald Alright.

Thomas Bousman OK. We've learned, of course, at these reunions ... we've talked to some of the military. That we've talked to men who lay in the damp grass or the swamp outside Los Baños camp waiting for dawn. And the minute the paratroopers dropped that was the signal to kill the sentries. In the sentry boxes at the four corners of the camp fence

Helen McDonald And who was to do that?

Thomas Bousman These American army officers and the Filipino guerillas who had surrounded the camp in the night. So there were 253 Japanese in the garrison and the only time that they didn't have their guns by their sides was between 6:30 a.m. and 7 when they put their guns in their racks. And clad in sandals or "zoris" and loin cloths, they did their Taiso. The Japanese word for you know, the exercising. And that's when the men who planned the rescue said we must get there before 7. There was also this controversial matter about the rumor that they were going to have eradicated us. And the rumor was that it might have been the 25th, the 26th of February. And of course, this was the 23rd. And then the other challenge was that the men who were going to take off in these C-47's, there were nine planes, were having to take off from badly damaged Nichols Field which they'd retaken and it was full of potholes. And the pilots said can we leave and get you there at 8 because we'd like to see where we're taking off. And the answer was "no you've got to drop exactly at 7." So they took off in the dark on this airstrip full of potholes. So that was another variable. Well, when the shooting started the garrison some of them fled amongst the barracks and we don't know how many were killed. I have no statistics on that. But it was less than an hour before the shooting stopped. We had run into our barracks. We were lying down on the floor. We pulled our mattresses over our bodies but were of course peeking out to see what was going on. And my mother kept saying to, oh my dad's nickname was Jerry, Oh, Jerry do come and take more cover. And then I was peeking out and I saw one of these planes flying unbelievably low and here on the side in enormous red

letters, of red paint that was still wet you could tell, was the word rescue. And I said “Dad, they’re coming to rescue us.” He had not seen the plane at that second. He said, “Oh Tom, no, no, no. They’re just moving in, you see. And we’ll be here for some days until they solidify the military position.” Well of course, I was right. He didn’t see the plane. And we did look out and we saw Filipino guerrillas rushing and then they called and said you know, we’re here to take you out and the Japanese army is coming over Mt. Makiling. They’re not far away. We don’t have any time to waste and you must take only your personal papers and get to the edge of the camp. We’ve got to get you out. Please don’t try to take anything else. So we obeyed. And we ended up being one of the first two amtracks that started over that day from the camp. Of course, we did see people and just as we passed Ralph and Grace Nash’s barracks, they came out and we were all in this stream of humanity going out the gates. One other interesting factor that is in some of the books I think... people who have lost everything several times as we had were in a position where they were, we all had become hoarders and it was terrible to try to leave things we wanted. So it’s Maj. Burgess who later became an attorney in Sheridan, Wyoming, a 26 year old major who was in charge of this whole thing, saw that somewhere a fire had accidentally started and the internees were running out of there so he told the GI’s to set fire to the barracks so we’d get out faster. So that’s why they burned. I’ve heard it from his own mouth.

Helen McDonald

My Gosh! Is he still alive?

Thomas Bousman

I think so. The last I heard. He said Oh, I’m tired of coming to these reunions and telling this story. But it was not till that 1980 reunion in San Mateo that I finally began to really piece this whole thing together. So we were in an amphibious tractor and then the snipers. We didn’t know. That’s the important thing. We didn’t know it was after this. We just thought we were in a tractor and Dad said they’ll take us down to the beach and we’ll get in boats and we’ll go across because the front lines were still way ahead. We were too far behind them. They couldn’t break through. Then some snipers began shooting at the internees in the amtracks and we were told to get down in the bottom. But looking up I could see we were going out the main gate because here was the Filipino farmer in this

statue with this big caribou and I'd known that since my childhood. So I knew where we were. And then we went on down to the lake shore, and the next thing I knew we were swaying and we could see spray and we'd gone right out into the lake and that was the first we knew it was amphibious tractors. So that was really exciting.

END SIDE TWO

Helen McDonald

Were there other, you'd mentioned that there were, there was a death earlier on.

Thomas Bousman

Yeah, right, a young fellow, Burton Founger who was, his folks were missionaries. He was an only child, an only son and he was 19 when he died. Just in the last week before our rescue, two of our elderly folk, Philippine missionaries, two Presbyterians that I'd known since my infancy we had to bury and we 16 year olds were the pallbearers. And I don't know why we did this burial in the middle of the day. It was so hot, and I could see my father out there reading the service, and there were other missionaries that were sharing that. And so that really was depressing because at the time I thought of them as very old men, I'm sure. You know they were in their mid-sixties if that. It was just the malnutrition.

Helen McDonald

Do you know what it was like? Were there others that I know from Liz's diary that the numbers just started increasing. You know that was one of the regular things you hear is who died, how many died and ...

Thomas Bousman

I don't have those numbers, but it is fact that as the time got nearer the end that more people were dying, and I understand that some who lived to see freedom after Los Baños rescue died. They were too far-gone. But MacArthur himself told us, you know, there was not a loss of any American life that day in the Los Baños raid. No GI's; there were a few minor injuries. So he, MacArthur, named it "The Miracle of Los Baños." They gathered us together there. Of course, he was a great orator and showman. And because I've had touch with Eisenhower through the church I'm serving now, I like the fact that Eisenhower said ... I'm going to start with MacArthur because you know they were together out there in the Philippines before the war in the thirties. And MacArthur

said Eisenhower was the best clerk he ever had. And Eisenhower said I learned dramatics from MacArthur.

Helen McDonald

I've heard that. We had a.... I'll share that a little later. Now what happened with the Japanese during that time? During the time of the raid.

Thomas Bousman

All that I can say about that honestly is that some were killed and some escaped. And I have no idea about the percentages in that realm. One tragedy that is not mentioned very often is that the next town to Los Baños is Bay...b-a-y. But if, because every syllable is pronounced in Tagalog, it's Bai-e-e-e. And the Japanese came in there a day or two later and in retribution massacred most of the population of that small barrio. And so the locals blamed the U.S. for not protecting them. So that is something that is not mentioned often in fact.

Helen McDonald

Do you know how many there were?

Thomas Bousman

I do not. I don't know. But it was just a terrible massacre. And we've been back to the Philippines three times since the war and the first time was in '66 when I had the privilege of being on a preaching mission for two months and I got to go down to the Bicol peninsula where I'd never been as a child and was there by that lovely Mayon volcano. Then my wife came from California and we traveled some around the Philippines and the way the calendar worked out, because we were then going to take a long trip and return to California the long way going through Asia and Europe. Well the only day we could go out to Los Baños was Feb. 23rd – our rescue day, twenty-one years later. And we took the public bus to go out there. I wanted my wife to experience that. The bus driver asked us to sit in the long front seat with him and help pull the windshield in. And then people had piled stuff on top of the bus and half way down by Biñan the barrio there it fell off and some of it broke, the furniture. Crude furniture. And then everyone got out and it became a public debating society in voluble Tagalog and I didn't want to let them see that I was laughing. It was a wonderful day. I'm so glad my wife got to experience that. But we got out there to the place and found an American friend there at the college. I mean we introduced ourselves and we were instant friends. We had not known her before. She took us there to the open field and there was Baker Hall which had been the

headquarters. It was the gym of the college. And that's where the men who had volunteered to go out early and work. It's where they were housed. And then they were also there then as part of the camp. So it's still a gymnasium and on either side now of the main door are commemorative plaques. One's in English, and one in Tagalog. The Tagalog one is really much prettier. But my sister pointed out... (she went later) that on one side it says there were 2, 146 people rescued that day and the other one says 2, 145. These are things that make me giggle. But I was quite touched because I looked into the gym and here were young men playing basketball. And as a child, even when I was 4, I'd stand in that door and look in there at these Filipino athletes. So here they were and I realized, you know, that they'd been born since the war. They don't know anything about what went on but then on one side of the door was a memorial bouquet to the two Filipino ROTC cadets who had died in that rescue. So two Filipino guerrillas lost their lives in our rescue.

Helen McDonald

That's very touching.

Thomas Bousman

And then when we went back with our group, Grace Nash and Ralph were with us and a few others who had been interned there with us and we got our photos. And when Grace was having her book published she asked for my slide of the plaque and it's on the back cover of her book.

Helen McDonald

That's wonderful. Now when you started moving out you took your diary with you then.

Thomas Bousman

Yes, now I've always been teased about being a romantic in the sense of expecting wonderful things and I've seldom been disappointed. But I somehow had this feeling, you know, that someday, we might have a dramatic rescue and I ought to be ready so I had my running bag. I had stuff that I wanted to carry out and I did. I grabbed it.

Helen McDonald

And your parents, had they done anything like that?

Thomas Bousman

They had not. When we walked out, Dad was cooking the last of our private rice that morning that we'd hidden. Cooking the last. And it was in a kettle without a handle and he said. You know, he's a realist. He said we may have to walk miles today. You know we had no real concept of this rescue. We'd didn't even know we were

going to be met with tanks when we got to the edge there. Tractors. So he said we may have walk miles before we were fed by the Americans so he took the rice and everybody grabbed something and I don't remember but I had in that photo albums and some notebook and my diary. And I was wearing I was wearing the tattered red shirt patched and the khaki shorts that I'm going to give to the museum.

Helen McDonald

How wonderful!

Thomas Bousman

So the other thing was that we were laughing when we got across to the other side and we just stood there with our arms around each other in relief. And I don't know if you've heard accounts that that Nipa thatch burns blacker than anything in the world and so the whole camp went up in smoke except for the other buildings – the cement buildings. It was almost a precursor of the atom bomb cloud that overpowered that whole part of the end of the lake and there was that Makiling as a backdrop. And we said goodbye. You stay here alone Los Baños. There's that old song—Goodnight, sweetheart, I'm going home. Well to that tune we had written Bye Los Baños, I'm going home. Bye Los Baños, you stay here alone. But as we stood there on the beach safe with all these military and by the way they expected so many who would be unable to walk they had ambulances everywhere thinking that most of us could stagger into the trucks. But Mom said “Do you kids realize that everything that we own in this world right now is what we're wearing.” And all that my mother had left was a dress and underpants. Everything else had disintegrated.

Helen McDonald

Bless her heart!

Thomas Bousman

Yes, and my brother, my dad and I had no underwear. We had a shirt and khaki shorts.

Helen McDonald

That's amazing!

Thomas Bousman

But it's true, you know. We felt the richest because we were alive and we were in American hands. Wonderful.

Helen McDonald

That's Wonderful.

Thomas Bousman

There was one time there in that relocation center in Muntinglupa where some little contingent of Japanese broke into one of the side gates and came in and were shooting and we were in the mess tents and we overturned the tables and lay down under the benches. And we thought, you know, here we have survived for three years and now we're massacred here in this compound with all this protection. Another thing that I just remembered although everytime I've given this sharing, primarily to groups. I have that tape on every time I remember something else. There was a swimming pool there not a very big one and of course, no chlorine. But they kept putting fresh water in it. But we learned that some GI had gotten drunk and he'd dived into the shallow end and had died. And what we were told was that his family would receive the word that he was killed in action. They wouldn't hurt that badly with the facts that he'd gotten drunk and stupid and dived into the shallow.

Helen McDonald

What a terrible loss/waste.

Thomas Bousman

We did; we kids were bored. After all, we were there 6 weeks. And we got to visiting there. They had set up a military hospital there, a little one. So here were the GI's in their tents lying on their bunks and we'd go and visit with them. Who's from Ohio, you know? Or Who's from California? And so forth. And while in there one time we realized that Jean MacArthur, Mrs. Douglas MacArthur, was going from tent to tent encouraging the soldiers. So we met her.

Helen McDonald

How wonderful. Tell when you did get clothing and that for travel and how that came about.

Thomas Bousman

Yes, that took quite a while.

Helen McDonald

I'm sure the military wasn't prepared.

Thomas Bousman

They weren't. And we were so glad to have clothing given to us. Fortunately, we weren't ever cold of course. The food was so wonderful for us. Now we learned that the army went into Santo Tomas and they fed them and they were allowed to eat anything they wanted and as much as they wanted and some died. So having had that experience. By the way, you know, it was 20 days later. They were flying Feb. 3rd and we were the 23rd. So they gave us a

much more limited diet and quantity. And it was kind of a watered down corned beef soup with milk and some kind of bread. But my brother and I sneaked around and we knew other young people did too ... we sneaked around and went through the line again. It was very bland. But the diet was intended to have us gain a pound a day and I know we teenagers gained a pound and a half at least. But as we had discovered, see when we were under house arrest, some of the Filipinos who had survived Bataan. You know, Filipinos were on the Death March too and then were released. Some of them came who were from our church... our church families ... and as soon as they got food again it all went to their faces and their stomachs. And so that we all looked pregnant with moon faces. That's what happens after starvation. So we laughed about that.

Helen McDonald

There was a photo of Margaret Guillooley and you can see some evidence of that in her thin, thin legs and arms.

Thomas Bousman

Now was she in Leyte waiting to go home?

Helen McDonald

Yes she had been there about 30 days. So she had already. It says on the photo. Well tell me about the clothing.

Thomas Bousman

They began to issue the clothing for us to come home. And so they would be for being on the ship. So most of it was wool. However there was cottons. But my Mom went off and it was done alphabetically so being a "B" she came in with a gorgeous Navy nurses' coat with the brass buttons and one of our good friends was Miss West and she came back with an Army olive drab coat. So each time there'd be something like shoes and so forth she always got the dregs. And she went around saying if she ever got married she want to find a man whose name was Aaron A. Aaron. So she could get the alphabet. So that's what I remember. That gradually clothing was issued to us.

Helen McDonald

And was it from the ship?

Thomas Bousman

I don't think so. No. Where they were getting it I don't know because we then came home on the S.S. Eberly. And I'm assuming, I'm thinking of Liz, that she/they probably came home before we did. Most of the Santo Tomas people came sooner. But there were cases, I mentioned Helen MacDonald, her youngest brother George they realized had rheumatic fever and they put him right away

on a hospital ship and his family went with him. So they got home before we did. So I don't remember too much about the clothing.

Helen McDonald

What about the ship trip?

Thomas Bousman

Let me say one word before I mention that. And that Dad felt led to remain in Manila for a while and help with rebuilding in an area of Manila where for a square mile it was flattened and there stood our church. And my dad said well if I've ever had a message from God it's that I'm to stay here and help and he did. And it was to be for a few months and then it was a year before he got back home and we now laugh about that because my temporary retirement service in Palm Desert was to be 6 months and I'm making my 4th year. Though it's part time. The trip home we went out into Manila Bay in an LCI. We climbed up some ropes and they helped us get into their ship. There were 7,000 of us on there. Now of course, it was GI's and you know we weren't all internees but we had to mix and obviously men in one part of the ship and women in another, predominately males. There would be days when my brother and I could not find our mother and our sister. We then went down circuitously through the southern islands and around through the Surigao Straits around Mindinao and up into Leyte Gulf and waited there for some days to be part of the convoy. And everywhere you looked you saw ship after ship. You thought surely they'll run out but they ran out of horizon before they ran out of ships. And when 21 years later my wife and I were there, we landed at Tacloban briefly to change planes for Cebu. We looked out and I remembered what it had been like 21 years before. And there was one little fishing boat for contrast. We were there when Roosevelt died. We got the word which was April 12. We knew it on the 13th. So we went in a fairly large convoy to Ulithi and there again we waited a day or two with the ships that we couldn't even see little Ulithi wherever it was. But there we were. And then two destroyer escorts took us to Pearl Harbor. But along by the Marshall Islands we hit an extremely strong typhoon and we began to wonder whether or not the ship was going to make it. One recollection about that was by the way this was the SS Eberle, we'd all been allowed to get in line for the ship's store and for us teenage males, Vaseline hair oil. And everybody bought toiletries that we hadn't had for 3 years. And then we had no place to put it so we all on these

girders and beams, you know, we put all this stuff. Well when that awful typhoon hit, it all fell to the floor. But as Mom said later, she said in the middle of the night the ship would creak and groan and you'd hear all this stuff go rolling to one side and then the other. And the next morning broken bottles of hair oil and everything would be all over.

Helen McDonald

That's right, there weren't plastic bottles then.

Thomas Bousman

No. They kept that mess hall running most of the day because to feed 7000 souls, mouths, you had to keep the kitchen going, you know. So sometimes you'd get in line... and then... We kids ate as often we wanted. I think they must have closed it partly at night. But then with that awful storm I do remember that I was quite seasick but I felt after a couple of days ... it continued for days ... that I needed something. So I stood in this long line for close to an hour and just as I was getting to the place to take a tray some man came up and threw up on my feet. So I retreated to my bunk. But you know, it suddenly occurred to me one evening when they had actually closed the dining room, a gifted American harpist, a young man who had been drafted and was in the Navy, had played with Stowkowski. You know he was from big American city. He gave a concert one evening in the mess hall. I remember sitting there in the dining room..

Helen McDonald

How wonderful! Where did he get the harp?

Thomas Bousman

Well I guess they let him take his instrument with him. It was brilliant. Up on deck when the weather was good, there was enough of the military that they had their bands and a few good singers and they introduced us to the songs we missed from the last 3 or 4 years.

Helen McDonald

Were you issued shoes?

Thomas Bousman

Yes, we were.

Helen McDonald

What did you think about shoes?

Thomas Bousman

Well it took us a while to get used to them. We'd been wearing mostly those Philippine clogs, the Bakia, or just going barefoot. One thing I have thought about, a few years ago I did kind of a tape thing with a Dr. Carl

Eschbach, who'd been a missionary in Bano and he had been the head of the Baguio Camp, Camp John Hay, and I'm trying to remember. It was Camp Holmes I think it was called. And just at the very end, they moved him down into Bilibid. And so he was there in Bilibid, the old Bilibid, when they came in and rescued them. His family had come home because of a medical need for one of the three kids and they had not heard a word during the war. They were in Detroit. And his wife had been speaking at some church group in downtown Detroit and she went to a small theater that showed nothing but newsreels all day long and she went in and it showed the liberation of Manila and it showed the gates of Bilibid opening and here came MacArthur and her husband walking together. Carl Eschbach. He died only a year or two ago and the last time we were back in Ohio I got a tape recorder and got some of the information going and what he told me was this that when they finally landed in San Francisco, he and a Dr. Heflin from Silliman University were met by their wives who had come from the East Coast. And the reason wives got out into the bay there was that the Press Corps said they were going out to meet ... this was the first ship coming in, you know, with the returned internees. So the two women got on this little launch or whatever to go out there but they wouldn't let them on. They ended up going back. But then when they got there they were debriefed by FBI whoever. So the wives had to wait a long time. So Carl Eschbach said to the government when you're bringing the rest of them back why not meet them in Honolulu and do all this briefing on those 5 days between Hawaii and San Francisco and then they can get off. That's what they did.

Helen McDonald

How wonderful!

Thomas Bousman

Now we teenagers were not interrogated. Only the adults. And they were asked interesting questions. But one thing was that those adults were asked to sign something that they would not tell how they were rescued. And the only thing was that they got somewhere where they would might need to use the same kind of rescue in China if they had to go into China cause this was late. We left Manila April 9th and so this would have been late April. I think that we landed in San Pedro on the 1st of May. So it was futile to ask people to sign that they wouldn't tell because it had been in the New York Times. I never understood that particular part.

Helen McDonald That's ... we have a program coming up in a couple of weeks of Sino American Cooperative Organization that was so ... We'll be doing oral histories during that program as well. How did you get from... you landed in San Francisco?

Thomas Bousman We landed in San Pedro. In some ways it was a bitter disappointment because we had waited 3 years to sail into the bay under the Golden Gate Bridge.

Helen McDonald Exactly.

Thomas Bousman The United Nations was being chartered in San Francisco. No hotel rooms. Most of the other ships did go to San Francisco. The S.S. Eberle went to San Pedro. When, in early in the morning, you know how it can be so foggy in May in Southern California, you know we came into all this. And as we began to see the houses, I kept looking to see, well now where are the bombed out areas. Of course, there were none. It was just here in my head. I was used to looking everywhere and seeing destruction. And then as we got in to the dock, because we were the first ship to come into Southern California, word had gotten out and people were there and I don't know how many were relatives mostly just there to see us come in. And they were holding up the newspaper and when we finally got close enough, the headline letters were about 5 inches high "Hitler Dead". He'd been found in his bunker with Eva Braun.

Helen McDonald Wow!

Thomas Bousman Well we were home, you know by the time we got ready to get off and I don't think there was any paper processing as I remember. And again getting in line there, we were with Grace Nash and her violin and her baby and her family. We kids stopped as we got off the gang plant and kissed the dock. There were Red Cross folks there giving out donuts and coffee... we climbed on wonderful buses and were bused into the Elks Club in Los Angeles. And that's where one was to receive housing. Well, we began to see friends who had come to meet us and mostly former Philippine residents, and then all of a sudden my mother rushed in and she said "Here is your uncle." My Dad's brother was in the

military and he was there and he was going to take us to his home in Sunland, Tujunga. You know just ...

Helen McDonald

Right, was he the one who was at 1st Cav?

Thomas Bousman

No, it was his son. His son Dick... Richard Tracy Bousman who later became an art director for Mod Squad and a whole lot of TV series. The last we'd seen him he was a scrawny teenager here in Southern California (and I said here and we're sitting in Texas). He had fought his way up through the South Pacific and was so thrilled to be in on the rescue of Santo Tomas. And he got in there and went to the roster and there were no Bousman names there. So he wrote home to his parents and said they're not here. I hope they're somewhere else and that they haven't died. So then there was no way you could get any other news and of course, what the rescue was the night of the 3rd wasn't it? He may have gone in on the 4th. And so after we were in Munlinglupa, Dad finally talked them into letting him go into Manila to see what was left of the Mission property. And he wanted to walk around and so all were in ruins here. People were coming and going and Filipinos trying to find each other. And the GI's and it was one of those classic experiences where these people were going this way and these two men met and passed and stopped and turned around and looked at each other and it was my Dad and his nephew.

Helen McDonald

Oh my word!

Thomas Bousman

And you know, because my dad was a skeleton and here the last he'd seen him he was a teenager and here was this battle-hardened seasoned soldier.

Helen McDonald

Big scrapping boy...

Thomas Bousman

Oh yeah, and hard-as-nails. So they wept and fell on each other's necks and I think the next day then Dick was able to come out with his military buddy and spend the day with us there. Knowing that we'd probably be home soon. So when we reached Los Angeles that evening then when we first landed in California, we were taken there. There was his Mom and his two younger sisters and we had all ... we had just seen him. You know, we had all this first hand news. So she then wrote to somebody. The aunt had talked about. .. Maybe she wrote to Dick the fact that well, our

clothing was pretty badly patched but it was clean and when this came back to us some years later, the letters, the mother said no their clothes were filthy. She was trying to be kind. Within a day or two, they were ...you know that the railroad transportation was so crowded (it's in the museum isn't it here there's a picture of them all sitting in the aisles). And they had begged our relatives not to try to come to meet us. They got the information from the War Department. So they put together some kind of a train and we went to Chicago. What's that, two nights on a Pullman. Screws kept falling out of this thing. They had pulled it off of some back side track, but we got there safely and then there just so happened my mother's brother had moved to Chicago during the War and they were there to meet us and it was VE Day that day. So we had all those things to celebrate it. Another brother of my Dad's lived there also. So we went first to their home and they had a wonderful dinner and we realized they had bought meat on the black market to be able to feed us.

Helen McDonald

Oh my goodness!

Thomas Bousman

In fact, our aunt, you know, confessed she had done black market stuff to get that. So then within a short time ... we were there about a week ... and then we took a train to Columbus, Ohio where my mother's parents were waiting. And when ... I was quite impressed ... Here was it looked like the Press had come ... all these people, maybe about 30 people there, all so excited to meet us. And so after a little while we were whisked into a car and taken to the suburb of Westerville, Ohio where my grandparents had retired. And I said to my Mother, "Who were all those people?" She said "They are all your relatives." Well my granddad was one of 9 or 10 children and they all had large families so these were all cousins and I had never met them.

Helen McDonald

Bless your heart.

Thomas Bousman

So that was exciting.

Helen McDonald

How did you hear about the bomb?

Thomas Bousman

I was in Dearborn, Michigan with the kids of this Dr. Carl Eschbach, I mentioned. We were so close...close friends. He was a different denomination. He was United Brethern.

A wonderful man and we had grown up with his kids. But they had of course, missed the war because they were in Dearborn, and we had been to the public swimming pool at Dearborn that Henry Ford had contributed to the community and as we were coming out from swimming a big black Lincoln had come around and this funny little old man was in the back and he rolled down the window and said, "Are you enjoying the pool?" And I said, "Yes." And Jim Eschbach said, "It's Henry Ford." So we walked away and were going off toward their house when some man they knew approached us and said they'd dropped this special new bomb in Hiroshima. So that's the first we knew. And that man said, "I hope it will be the end." And then, we went back to Columbus and we were there when VJ Day was announced. My mother was in college in 1918 when World War I ended and she had told us for years when everybody in Columbus went downtown to celebrate that Nov. 11, 1918.

Helen McDonald

Yes, it was.

Thomas Bousman

Right. And so relatives phoned and said they would come and get us in Westerville and drive us into downtown Columbus for what we knew would be this celebration ... And it wasn't. People threw a lot of paper out of the office windows but there weren't the crowds as there were in Times Square as we'd seen from the newsreels and the famous picture of the nurse being kissed by the sailor.

Helen McDonald

Right.

Thomas Bousman

So that was a little disappointing, but at least we had a feeling that it was over. But Dad was still in Manila. You know, so that took away some of the joy.

Helen McDonald

When did your father... well, you said it was over a year....

Thomas Bousman

We had left him on April 9th and it wasn't till April 1946 he finally got back to us in Ohio. I think he did stop to see his brothers cause there was one in San Francisco then and the one in LA and the one in Chicago. So he saw them on the way.

Helen McDonald

Did you ever do an interview with your father? Of course, he died early too.

Thomas Bousman

Well, no and in a sense my brother and sister may have more insights than I because then ... see mother had been home a year ... and then dad was home a year so we were two years in Ohio for schooling. Then our parents took my brother and sister back in '47. And I was in college. And then my brother returned in '49 to start college in the same school and then our sister came back in '52 to start in the same college. So they went back after the war and kind of would relive things and remember when this happened here and so forth. And then I do recall my mother saying that you know, adults would get into quite a fight, an argument about certain things that had happened during the war. "Well I recollect ... Yeah, Yeah." We all remembered things differently. As a minister I say when we look at the 4 gospels all these different accounts. It's a wonder they don't vary more.

Helen McDonald

That's right... it's like the scene of an accident.

Thomas Bousman

And we all remember it differently like whether there was sunrise at the rescue or not.

Helen McDonald

It's great.

Thomas Bousman

I feel clean though that I finally figured that one out.

Helen McDonald

What sort of impact do you feel your experiences have had on your life?

Thomas Bousman

One thing I feel is that we were in a way robbed of our youth. And I've heard others say that. We couldn't have a normal teenage experience. We didn't dare. We didn't have time to goof off and we couldn't destroy property and things that were ... not that teenagers always do that ... but I think that's part of the regret. I think that we came out with a degree of maturity we wouldn't have had if it hadn't been for that. I hope that we came out with more compassion and understanding and less of an inclination to judge. One thing that so moved me about Margaret Sam's story is that when it became known that she was pregnant out of wedlock, that some of the people she'd enjoyed being with shunned her and that she was surprised and grateful that it was some missionaries who gave her the most support. They didn't ... there was no standing in judgment ... no condemnation. They were there to love, ask no questions, and support. I'm as human as anybody

else and there are times when I regret those lost years but I feel that this woman who was the principal of our school kept saying “You know, here you have a chance to redeem the time. You can sit and whine and moan, or you can redeem the time. And I came out of that prison camp experience with the ability to play the piano and the organ, to sight read. In college, I became the accompanist for the Men’s Glee Club and got to go on these tours. Wonderful experiences that would have never come to me in any other way and we had instructions from some gifted artists that gave us an appreciation for art. So that I feel that we did redeem the time. And then we learned from our parents also. They realized that unless they kept busy, they were going to be sorely tested. It would just drive them nuts. So they began taking Spanish. Just to have something to do. And they both studied voice. They had sung in choral groups in their respective colleges. Dad went to Yale and Mom to Ohio State. But they were all kept busy. And I do remember one morning we were all kind of rushing around after breakfast and I asked Mom to sew a button on my shirt. She said she would do it if I would help her with her Spanish homework at the same time. So that it was neat to see the parents modeling for us, this is how you redeem the time. Also, Dad felt that he had to provide for his family. So when others kept saying we’re going to be out of here in 6 weeks, Dad was preparing a garden. And it wasn’t lettuce and carrots. It was the things mostly clipping of the sweet potato plant that we put in and we never had time to wait for the tuber to develop under the ground, it was like a spinach that we would eat and that had helped us. And other kinds of vegetables. He said, “Well, you know, Tom, there’s this verse in the New Testament, you know. A man who will not take care of his family just about the worst thing.” I later learned where that was in the Bible. Then he talked about Captain John Smith at Jamestown Colony. Those who won’t work aren’t going to eat. So with those kinds of things were there. Another enriching time was all those, oh that last few months when we were so tired and so hungry. As you know in Manila what is 12 degrees north of the equator, the days and nights are just about equally as long. So by 6:00 or 6:30 p.m., of course we had the meal at 4:00, it got dark and I think they had rules about how long the lights could be on. I don’t know if it was for blackout purposes or energy crisis, but we’d get in bed and we’d just lie there. We weren’t ready to go to sleep. So we’d kind of talk and maybe we’d sing.

We couldn't do too much because like all of us in that group we were in one big barracks even though we had partitions we could hear everything going on in the other cubicles. But Mom and Dad learned some things about each other that they hadn't known. That in WWI he was in a camp in Ohio which was not far from where she was living at that time. They'd had that touch in the past and he told us more about his early life on that ranch in Farmington, New Mexico and what/how difficult it was. What it was like.

Helen McDonald

I can only imagine what it was like that time....in the early 1900's.

Thomas Bousman

Yes, it was difficult. So thatI guess one thing I regret is that just when I in a sense, just when I became a man, my Dad died. And they left me in college and when they returned, my wife and I had been married two years and our first baby was on the way. And then our folks were in New York for that year of furlough and I finished seminary in Chicago and we came out to California. And they came out. They were there for my ordination to the ministry and my father gave me the charge.

Helen McDonald

Oh, how wonderful!

Thomas Bousman

And that was just about his last time to be in the pulpit cause then he died in Manila just a few weeks later. And our first baby was born the day before the ordination so my wife missed it. But Mom was there and my sister and my brother was off in the Marine Corps. He did have military service. He was not required to as I was 16, no I had turned 17 then in October of '45. Yes. And was worried about whether I would be drafted. Of course, the war was over, but the draft continued as you know. And I think on the last day of December '45, they slid a bill through Congress that any youth who had been interned by the Axis had already served their country enough and they were exempt from the draft. So I had that.

Helen McDonald

Every once in a while our country really shines.

Thomas Bousman

Right now, you're aware that there's this Center for Internees at William Wright and I hear from Gil Harold. He must send his stuff to everyone of us. So I am trying to decide whether the money or the apology is what I want the

most. And I don't think we're going to get either. I can live happily without it.

Helen McDonald

I understand.

Thomas Bousman

At this point, it's not that important. What I do like to have on the record is that when I got to college, one of my roommates was Minoru Motusuki from San Francisco. Min Motusuki. He was born in San Francisco. He was a birthright American citizen, but he was interned. His father was a wealthy importer in San Francisco who had to liquidate everything within 24 hours and died soon after the internment. So Min and I had some good talks and he was going to go into YMCA work and he ended up going to seminary. Then he was a year behind me though we were classmates. He is also now a retired Presbyterian pastor and they've been going back to Japan a lot to teach English because his California born wife is an Isei also. And her sister was Pat Susuki who had a career in Broadway. So it was good for me and we were back a year ago at Wooster College for our 50th college reunion and Min and I were there. We were talking to the President and I don't mind having this on the tape. We had one wonderful long weekend there and we were talking with the President with whom I'd had touch from Pomona College with my late brother-in-law. And Min Motusuki said, "You know, that was really a challenge in 1946, because so many GI's all came back and the colleges were all oversubscribed." He said you know, Bousman and I here had to sleep in the same bed. And the College President was so shocked, and it took me a minute to remember a second, and I said "Yes, you know, not only were we in the same bed but one of us was always on top of the other one." He said, "What!" "Yes, double beds, bunk beds." I always said he was relieved. That was funny.

Helen McDonald

I can well imagine. What ... I asked you about the impact that it had on your life. Is there probably a message that you would like to have/share from that time that you feel it is important to leave with future generations?

Thomas Bousman

Oh yes. And I'm trying to think how to make this succinct. I'm convinced that far too much of the history of humanity is a long story of people trying to overpower each other or to get even. I'm really concerned about the rise of tribalism in our world today. So many that have been put together

perhaps against their will, are all wanting to break apart and there has to be a degree to which we give some things so that we can live together in peace. And I'm convinced that until we human beings can break the cycle of violence we're not going to have peace in this world. I happen to have done a great deal of study about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. And because I have mixed parentage, my last name is Dutch, but my mother's last name was German. I'm Scotch-Irish-English and Swiss and I know how the British and the Irish hate each other and I'm descended from wonderful people I'm sure, as well as thieves and robbers in the past on both sides. That until we realize that we're going to have to stop this cycle of violence and that we cannot always take revenge for everything this world is going to continue to see conflict and we've been given a wonderful world and we're stewards. I really feel we are all stewards of what God have given us on this planet. And we mustn't pollute our world and we mustn't feel we have the right to all the kinds of things we think we have become accustomed. There are going to have to be changes. So I guess that would be what I want to say. And that we're meant to live together in peace and harmony. But until we can consider the feelings and the rights of others, it's not going to happen.

Helen McDonald

I think you're right.

Thomas Bousman

I could obviously work on that paragraph for many weeks and refine it, but just coming off the top of my head. That's what I feel.

Helen McDonald

I appreciate that.

Thomas Bousman

And obviously as a minister of the Gospel then I could go on and give some spiritual dimensions and I don't know if that is appropriate here for this statement or not but ...

Helen McDonald

I would say so because that certainly is very much a part of your life.

Thomas Bousman

I'm grateful that thousands of years ago that some people with the message of the Christian Gospel came to my pagan ancestors in Europe and I'm proud to be directly to be directly descended from John and Priscilla Alden on the Mayflower and my wife is too. We're kind of 17th cousins, you know. We're not ... But because I am descended also

from people who left Europe to come to America for religious freedom and I recognize that they sometimes tease the Pilgrims that they came so they could worship in freedom and make everybody else worship the same way. That while I have this heritage and my parents met at Yale Divinity School and felt the call to serve overseas. And they did and they went first to China and then to the Philippines to try not to be role model but try to be arrows to point others to the one God that we Christians know in Jesus Christ. But because I've done enough study and have traveled enough around the world, I realize that those of other religions are looking at the same God from a different angle or through a different window. Now I recognize that some of my Christian brothers and sisters would not be happy with my last statement. I believe that God's revelation is all religions. Because I'm a Christian I believe that God's truth is in all religions but that we see God's character and his love most clearly defined in Jesus Christ. And in that sacrificial death of his only Son on the cross. And rather than telling other people that if they don't believe in Jesus that they're lost forever, I'd rather say let's come and reason together and I'd like for you to know about my Christ. And I would like to learn about how you see the almighty. And only God alone is going to decide who is part of his chosen number. So that's what I would like to say as far that goes.

Helen McDonald

I appreciate that. One of the things that I've noticed as you've been speaking, you have a such a happy countenance about you. And it's one of the things that I've noticed with veterans and those who have been in ...sure there's conflict. That humor is very important and sometimes humor comes through at very awkward times and I would imagine that having a good humor was important for your own survival. It sounds like within your family you had that also.

Thomas Bousman

And I think in a sense it almost overdeveloped. And I've been told that I have a Texas cackle and my Dad had it. So maybe I inherited it. It may be learned. But yes, the humor got us through so often when nothing else would. Now I'm thinking I told you that when we first went to Los Baños there was the Holy City and Hell's Half Acre. And I'm trying to think how many hundred there would have been in that number of priests and nuns and missionaries. And by the way, before the ecumenical movement that started in

the sixties, you know, when we Catholics and Protestants decided we were brothers and not adversaries. It was a good experience back in the mid-forties to have to share all that together and we came to love and respect especially those Jesuit priests and the Maryknoll sisters who were all professional women in their own right. We had to chop vegetables with them you know and we learned a lot from them. That this long sentence and paragraph is ending up with the fact that we were having a program one night. We were separated from Hell's Half Acre as we called them by a bamboo fence through which we could not see and we put together a program and we had some gifted soloists and Grace Nash didn't play her violin. She was on the other side. Somebody did something. And the from other side somebody yelled and said, "Well you wouldn't have been singing if you'd been in this Goddamn place for so many years." And it shocked us and we decided yes we would be singing. But I think they were angry and maybe jealous. I do know that there's no way that I can understand what Liz went through being in there the whole time. So I'm going to say that right now. Or Bill Phillips, one of my best friends and he later married Helen Thomas. And we were classmates. I think they're about the only couple I know where those who were interned together ended up getting married. I cannot say I know what it was like to be in that whole time. But we didn't have a picnic in our house arrest experience either. And so we had a little bit more privacy of course. So I have to be honest and say our experience I would say was not as strenuous as theirs. I'm trying to think of some other words I could use.

Helen McDonald

It was different.

Thomas Bousman

It was different.

Helen McDonald

And which was one of the reasons why this interview has been so valuable to hear that other perspective that you know, we don't always hear.

Thomas Bousman

And there was a loneliness there wanting to be with the others. And I don't mind putting this on tape because I think I told this to Liz when I first saw her in 1980. We went into this room and people were gathering and putting their possessions down on the tables and a cute redhead came up to me and said, "Hi, Tom." And I said, "Who are you?" And she said, "I'm Betty Bloom." No excuse me,

no, no, no. I got the wrong one. Betty White. And I couldn't believe it! And then this very attractive white-haired lady came, gray-haired lady came up to me and said, "Hi Tom." And I said, And she said, "I'm Liz Lotzenheiser." And I said, "Liz, when we were 13, I had such a crush on you, I couldn't sleep at night.

Helen McDonald

She was gorgeous.

Thomas Bousman

Oh, she's a gorgeous lady! So there was that thing we were separated from some of these very attractive schoolmates and Betty Blue was one of the gals, you know. And I'm a little bit older, I get some of these names mixed-up. But it was intriguing to me that one woman had chosen to color her hair and Liz had chose to be natural as I. But then the minute I looked in her face, you know, now of course that's 1980. What is that now, 20 years ago. I said, Of course it's you Liz. That it was just neat.

Helen McDonald

She's a remarkable woman. But I see that same humor and good naturedness in her that I see in you and I just think it's so admirable. It's something to be emulated.

Thomas Bousman

It was a gift we got from our parents and the people around us. But I think sometimes people feel my sense of humor is overdeveloped. Well, like telling the college president you know. But and it's been a great gift in the ministry. Because no one ever sleeps through my sermons.

Helen McDonald

I'll bet.

Thomas Bousman

Well, now that's a bit egotistical to say that but they never know what's going to happen next. And I surprise them with appropriate off-beat humor and they never know what's going to happen when I go into the pulpit. I have a wonderful sermon. I think it's wonderful. God Has No Umbrellas. And it's the idea that sometimes we think we can buy insurance from pain or suffering or death. And there are not umbrellas. Rain is going to fall on all of us and it's going to hit our heads. And when I first did that it was very intense and quite deep and maybe even too much of my preaching had prison camp illustrations in it. But I got so that I had about 5 beat-up old umbrellas that I would hold up to use and one of them I'd bought in Macau. When we were in Hong Kong we took a one-day trip to Macau and a typhoon hit just as we got there. I bought it for 2

bucks. Well, it's one where you push the button and it opens up. But now the thing's so old that you push the button and it shoots off and separates and then what happened, I did this in the Palm Desert Presbyterian Church 3 services in a row and God Bless me, in that upside down position it becomes kind of a cup and then like an inverted parachute goes down to the ground if I do it right. But three services... Sometimes it just goes plop, and it's just a dud. But 3 times it shot out and opened up and went down and people wanted to know where I'd bought that and could they get one like it. Well, there's the humor in that.

Helen McDonald

That's great. Well, is there anything that I didn't ask that you think I should ask?

Thomas Bousman

I don't think so. I think I've told you way too much more than you've asked for. But it's helped me as it always does to try to get this in perspective and to clear the record as far as the sunrise. And to say this that I would not trade that experience for anything. I would not trade that experience for anything but I wouldn't want to go through it again. One other thing, just to mention about my family. We were blessed with four kids. We had two girls first, and then 2 boys. And the first 3 were very close and we planned them that way and we were crazy. And then the second boy came 5 years after the first boy, the 3rd child, and when he, the third child Rick, was 16 years old he was killed in a freak hiking accident. That was in 1973. And that then proved to be the greatest challenge of our lives. It made the whole internment experience seem much smaller, you know, in contrast. And even the death of my parents, again, and yet again the resources somehow were there and we relied on the spiritual strength that was available to us if we tapped that source to get through that experience. I was offended when people would say Well because you're a pastor and you have all your theology in a nice little box and you don't have any questions or anything, it must not be near as difficult for a minister to lose a son as a farmer. I said Please don't say that. And my wife and I haven't done it yet, but we keep saying that we want to write a little pamphlet on things not to say when someone loses a child whether it's a few months or when a 60 year old grieves because his 40 year old son has died. We don't expect to see the death of our children. The day we're married we assume that one of the spouses will die first. We expect to see the death of our parents and our siblings. But yet to

lose a kid and a child of promise is just one of the most difficult challenges and so we went through that. And 10 years ago, in 1991, I went into deep clinical depression. It was the worst thing I've experienced. And it took me a year...of course, it ended up with therapy and medication. Took me year before I could write a 7-page letter to my own siblings, to Min Motusuki, to a few close college or seminary classmates and most of the/our immediate family, our MD's or PhD's or the people-helping profession. Because it took me that long to have the emotional energy to write about what I'd been through. And I guess the thing that surprise me was, you know, we went through the Depression, we went through the internment years where at times we didn't know if we'd come out alive or not, I experienced Mom and Dad dying early. I survived the death of our son; we came out of that on the right side, the sunny side of that Valley of the shadow of death. And then why this thing would happen and I have some clues of a number of things that I think all came together at the wrong time. But to read that letter gives me an idea of what I went through and how I began to realize that I was coming out on the right side of it. And I think when my own surgeon said, "Tom, if we can't pull you out of this, can you retire right now." And I said, "Well yes, of course, I could. But I had several goals and one was to get a full pension and the other was to complete 40 years of service to that same church where I had been. And I don't know whether that Doctor Dan did that on purpose to jolt me. I don't think he did. But it really frightened me. Because I think he's so honest and he was beginning to wonder what we could do. So when I wrote that letter I was beginning to come out of it and could see. The only thing I can say about that is that because I have been through that, I feel I have been able to minister to people who are in depression in ways that I never could have if I hadn't been in depression. So to go back to our son's death when people would say you know God let your son die so that you'd be a better minister, I said I can't buy that. That makes a devil, a fiend out of the Almighty. But what I am willing to tie into is because we'd experienced the death of a son, then maybe I can be more sympathetic and can be a better pastor to people who have experienced the death of children. That I can buy. So when people would say to us God needed another teenager in heaven and your teenager was so wonderful that heaven is better than before. I said I can't buy that either. If he needed another teenager, why'd he

take mine? So that people just showered us lovingly in misguided ways with terrible platitudes. And yet in our pamphlet, yet we're too busy doing other things.

Helen McDonald

I think you're right. I think it is something that needs to be done. I can imagine nothing worse quite frankly. To me it would be the ultimate loss.

Thomas Bousman

I do think that because after my parents died I had struggled with my understanding of the will of God. What is the will of God? And then I didn't have to fight that battle when our son was killed. I had, I almost left the ministry. I just had been ordained by my father and there was a prayer group a chain literally around the world because they had just been in a big missionary conference in Europe and then you know. I knew that because he was going to go to a new work in Indonesia. They couldn't get anybody else to do it. He was willing to leave the Philippines for his last 5 years of ministry and be in Indonesia. And God let him die. And I seriously considered right at the beginning forgetting the ministry and going into teaching or doing something else. And it was my senior pastor in that book of Lesley Weatherhead called "The Will of God" that helped so much. Because people would say to us when our son was killed you know that was the will of God. I said well now let's be careful here. Then it gave me a chance to teach them a little bit. I see God's will as his circumstantial will, his permissive will. And there are several different facets that you can give to God's will, but the other one is His ideal intention. And it was not God's ideal intention that our son Rick be killed. But he fell and God is not going to around the world changing the laws of gravity so that was his permissive will, his circumstantial will. And if you can get your brain fixed on those concepts, then you can begin to have peace. Here you're having a lecture from this retired pastor, but I guess it's part of the whole bit. The internment thing, it all comes into this whole thing. And I remember once that someone came to our community, and she had been in Santo Tomas. And she came and joined our church there in Santo Paula and she'd been in Santo Tomas. And some of the people said Oh Boy, now we're going to hear about Santo Tomas all over again because somebody else ... Her name was Mary Hazelwood. She's no longer living but she was a lovely lady.

Helen McDonald

Many of the names are names that I'm familiar with over a period of time having read the roster of the families so many times. I think what we'll do is conclude this and I would like to walk through these two areas with you if I may.

Thomas Bousman

Sure. All right, let's do it.

Helen McDonald

Thank you so much.

Thomas Bousman

Now, it's not going to be inconvenient

END OF TAPE

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