

## Rachel Bosebury Beck

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**Question:** What I'd like to do is, I'll come back and ask you a question that sets you up that if you have some valuable information, because I that's what we're talking about is the different rights that

**Answer:** You take for granted so many rights. You take for granted, and you don't care. They always have people, they always need someone on a school board, but nobody wants to volunteer to do it. And then they want to complain about how the schools are running, but they don't want to take the time to do it. You can't always let the other guy do it, because there's always gonna be someone who will be glad to take over, and glad to take your vote and this and that, and then one day you're gonna find yourself where you don't have any control over anything. You've got to be interested enough in your country and in the people that you are with, and it starts right in your small hometown school boards and your local politics, in your county politics, in your state and so on. You've got to be interested. If you're not interested, there will be people taking over and, I don't know who said it, but it was something like, Democracy will not end with a bang, but with a whimper, because people will have let it go 'cause they're not responsible. They're not voting and they don't give a damn. And as they've got, you know, they talk about Johnny Six-pack and the football game, it becomes more important than how your life is being run, and the only great thing about America is that no matter how rich Bill Gates is, no matter how poor Joe Schmo is, they only have one vote. The difference is Bill Gates will vote and Joe Schmo often doesn't, and that's what kids should learn. That it is awful, it is terrible. They don't know what it's like to live with somebody telling you what to do, when you have to get up, when you have to stand at attention, that you can't use the bathroom till they tell you to, nobody knows what that's like, unless you're in a penal system. I hope they're not, but you have got to care enough about your country to keep it free, and free from inside as well as outside. That makes a lot of difference.

**Question:** 'Cause you not only dealt with that, when to get up and when to go to bed, but the rules could change.

**Answer:** Oh, anytime they felt like it, and your Mom and Dad were powerless. Nobody could do anything about it, because you didn't have the guns, you didn't have, you didn't have a way to protect yourself, you didn't have a way to fight back, 'cause you were overrun, and you can be overrun really easy by giving up your right to vote, and not being interested in what's going on. And I think that's the greatest threat here is apathy of the people, will lose their democracy.

**Question:** Now your Mom came to the U.S.?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** And your Dad?

**Answer:** And my Dad, and my Dad well, see when we left England, we didn't know it was going to be for good. We thought we were going back. But then my mother liked it so much better here with her family members had come here, and my Dad kept missing England and I really didn't want to leave England. I loved England, even though actually after the war it was really terrible, and not bad, I mean people were wonderful in England, but you know they were bombed out. I don't know what Americans know, but they didn't, there wasn't a building. I mean, you got billeted with people, with whatever housing there was, and like for a while I

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had to live at my Aunt Alice's house at night because she had a bathtub that could be converted to a bed. And I'm being serious about England. England was really in bad shape, and then there were rations, because you had everybody coming back, not enough food, they were helping feed the Germans, you know, they had responsibilities in Germany, you know. And we needed to have a lot better nourishment, like I told you we were pretty malnourished from camp, so we came over here, but I always felt we were going back, but we didn't, so I became an American citizen.

**Question:** In fact, we're going to be interviewing a woman I think next week, a British woman, and she's going to talk a lot about, she was, and I can't remember the day, my history's not that good, but on the pre-interview she was talking about this blanket of planes coming in, and everything on fire.

**Answer:** She was in England during the war.

**Question:** Yes.

**Answer:** Oh, yeah. Well, I went, we lived in Coventry, when they finally found room for us, it was in an old abandoned called Baginton Airfield, it was an airfield, but at least we had rooms, you know, it was, people have no idea what it's like not to have anything. There's no housing, not because we're homeless. There just weren't any homes, you know, and so when we were in Baginton Fields, I went to school at Barr's Hill School in Coventry, and Coventry, I mean, most of it was bombed out. People lived in a lot of the buildings, a lot of the stores, a lot of things went on and, you know what a Quonset hut is, it looks like a big, you know half of a circle? A lot of things were housed in Quonset huts, then, and you were on rations, food rations and sweet rations and everything else, but

**Question:** See that's the important thing, because a lot of, again, our geocentric attitude. A lot of the American people think, oh, that only happened here. They forget that the war didn't even happen here.

**Answer:** Oh, no, they had some rationing here, I know they did, but I mean, the kind of rations you had would have fed a tribe somewhere else. They still had rationing quite a few years after in England. I remember that we got our coupon books and our ration books and you were allowed so much, so many pennies worth of meat or so many rations of meat, IF the butcher had it, you see. That was the other thing. And you learned to line up whenever anybody heard, oranges were in, you'd all line up, and maybe you'd get one orange, you know, for a week or something like that. You might be able to get an orange. And we'd sit and eat that orange like it was the most wonderful thing in the world, you know, and kids here can have all the oranges they wanted, and yeah. Americans, and I'm an American, but you take for granted all the good. People, they have to go overseas. You'd almost have to send kids overseas to see how other people live for them to appreciate what they've got here. I mean, they just take it for granted. I think the thing that bothered me the worst, and I was a waitress. I worked my way through college and different things, was to see people put their cigarettes out in steak and things. And food always thrown away. Or people might have the money for it, but they'd have these, I mean remember I've been starving for years, and they'd have all this food, and someone take a bite and they didn't like it and they'd toss it, or something, and I was thinking, Look how many people that would feed, you know. Even if you have the money, you shouldn't be throwing food away. It's to me a

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crime, and it shouldn't be taken for granted like it is. I think people are very lucky. In fact, most of the world's population, they work just to have enough food to eat, not to have clothes or TVs or anything, and they have to work so hard just to get enough food just to stay alive. And people don't think food, they don't think anything, they just go to the grocery store and get it. They don't have to worry. They don't have to have a coupon. They don't have to have a ration book. They don't have to be somebody's special friend to get something, and I think it's such a wonderful country, and I think they have so much here, it bothers me when people don't appreciate their own country.

**Question:** Do you know if being in the camp had an effect on your father over the rest of his life, I mean, I know your attitude.

**Answer:** My Dad? Um, yeah. I think so. He was pretty torn up about us doing without so much a lot. And he never had a chance to make up for it, because you see he was an accountant and a manger in Shanghai Water Works. When you came to this country as an immigrant, you weren't allowed to hold any job. Now this is back in '46, '47, and immigration laws were a lot stricter, and he wasn't allowed to have a job that America needed, and so the type of work he did was more governmental, and you had to be a citizen, and you had to have all this other stuff to be able to get a government job, and he didn't mind, but he started off at his age, he was at that time, 41, 42 when we first came here. He started unloading flour sacks at the Wharf in San Francisco. The only job he could get, you know, and so he learned longshoremen, and then he was a stevedore, and nothing that he used to do, because he didn't have the credentials or he, if you know anything about foreigners coming here, you be a doctor in some country, but you're not recognized as one here, and he had a hard time because, you know, we were all grown, and destitute, practically, when we first came here. We didn't have anything. And, um, to start off again at that age, and not having a read proper job that he was used to, it was kind of hard on him. My father died rather young. He didn't live with us, he didn't stay alive very long.

**Question:** That's the hardest thing for a lot of people who immigrated like that, because like you said, even though recognized in another country, to come and start all over, and then again, there becomes that attitude from international people that look at them differently and don't realize that

**Answer:** Yeah. He died at 59. He, well, he, I don't think he was ever really happy. He wanted to be with us, and he wanted to be in England, and he wanted to be both places at the same time, and he couldn't and his life was very different.

**Question:** Yeah. Thank you very much.

**Answer:** You're welcome.