

Primary Source: Wartime Wilmington, Through the Eyes of the Cape Fear ^[1]

This transcript is from an interview about World War II from the "World War II: Through the Eyes of the Cape Fear" project. These specific interviews tell us more about life at home and military life for people from the Cape Fear region of eastern North Carolina during World War II.

Interviewer:

What was happening in this Wilmington region? You were able to get to come visit on any break or something?

Cameron:

Yes, I'd come home at night and stay with my mother and father.

Interviewer:

So what was happening with the town of Wilmington?

Cameron:

Well the town of Wilmington was going through a metamorphose. All these soldiers were at Camp Davis and this was the only place they could go find any recreation or any restaurant or anything to eat and then Camp LeJeune was even a larger base and Jacksonville, North Carolina at that time was just a little hamlet sort of a town and so all those Marines would come to Wilmington. And then they had the shipyard operation underway and at one time they were over 25,000 people.

Interviewer:

Now had that started when you were just starting. Did you see that build up yet or was that a little later?

Cameron:

That started I think in 41, early '41. People flocked into Wilmington by the thousands.

Interviewer:

Sounds like it was very lively.

Cameron:

It was lively and crowded.

Interviewer:

Were the streets just filled with soldiers?

Cameron:

Yes, they had two [USO huts](#) built here. One of them is still standing there, but this was a military town. And they also had an Air Force base at our airport. You just couldn't understand how all these people could possibly fit it.

Interviewer:

Did your folks put any other people up besides you. There were lots of families that even took in soldiers, didn't they?

Cameron:

Well my father rented the beach house to officers from Camp Davis. They didn't take anybody into their house, but they did rent the house at the beach.

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