

Lillian Terrill  
February 16, 1988

Mary Kasamatsu  
Interviewer

MK Okay, first could I just ask you to say your name and address for me so I can set your volume level here.

LT My name, well I don't use it but I'll use my nickname, but I'll give you my name. Lillian E. Terrill.

MK ~~What~~ you use your nickname?

LT I like my nickname. I don't like my first name because they Lil you and Lil to me is vulgar. There was Shanghai Lil, Clondite Lil, Diamond Lil, and I didn't like Lil so the boys gave me, one day they, I'd been out selling bonds and they said "We've been talking about you, we wouldn't call you your first name and calling Miss Terrill is to something, we don't like it. Could we chop off the later part of your name and call you Terri?" and they even called me Terri, they called me Terri Terrill and I liked it. And I like it, I don't like Lillian. It's a pretty name for somebody that, you know, but not for me.

MK So you would have liked it better if people had called you Lillian, but when they shortened...

LT But it was Lil, and that bothered me. Anyway.

MK That's interesting. I know a lot of people that have, ~~there is~~ <sup>various</sup> associations about their names and the names look perfectly normal and wonderful names but people don't like them for various reasons.

LT Yea.

MK Yea, I understand that. Okay, well let's start with just a little background about you. Where were you born? Are you a Burlington native?

LT Huh?

MK Are you from Burlington?

LT No, I was born in St. George by Lake Iroquois. The house is in St. George. The next house is in Hinesburg. The next house is in Williston and across the lake was Richmond. But it seems that, our land came up over and took the house so it was St. George.

MK Interesting.

LT We are right in the middle.

MK Were your parents farmers there?

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LT Huh?

MK Was your family a farm family there?

LT Yea.

MK You grew up on a farm?

LT Yea. Yes I did.

MK Did you like farm life?

LT I loved, I played with the animals instead of dolls. Yea, I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Some of the funniest things happened there that you wouldn't believe. My brother had a pair of oxen, they were twin bulls anyway. And we had a farm dog and you'd thought he owned the farm and he was pretty fierce at times. So didn't he bite the end of one of the tails off and here it was a stub. Well I was little, tiny. I wasn't supposed to go to the barn, but it bothered my brother. My mother used to buy Larkin products and she had some hair tonic and one night I sneaked up with a bottle of hair tonic and doused the end of that tail and do you know the hair came out wavy. Well, here he was with one straight tail and a wavy tail. Well, that bothered him, so I knew my job wasn't finished. So one night I sneaked up with some scissors and I cut off the hair of the other one and I doused that one. So he had a pair of oxen with wavy tails and I never told, I never dared. Oh, oh, I could tell you stories that happened. Mother used to dunk her hens if they wanted to set. I still don't know why she'd dunk them in the watering trough you see. I don't know, but anyway. Her pet hens started clucking so my younger brother and I decided we'd dunk her. Well I wanted to bring her out before he did, when he said let's be sure it takes, so when we took her, brought her out she was a dead weight. Oh, we both started to cry. And then he thought of something. The day before the teacher told us about artificial respiration. He said, "let's pump." He pumped one leg and I pumped the other and water came from both ends. Well, we didn't care. We pumped and bawled. Do you know what? She let out a squawk, we turned her over, she staggered, but she went off. Oh, we never dunked another hen. Oh, can you, what a picture that would be, wouldn't it?

MK Incredible. How old were you?

LT Oh, maybe six or seven.

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MK My goodness.

LT Really, I didn't mean to get onto to that, but...

MK That's a wonderful story though.

LT That isn't going in there?

MK It is, but I won't use it.

LT Okay. Now what else?

MK Okay, let's talk, these are wonderful, but you're right, I didn't mean to get you onto to those I guess. Let's see. Let's talk about, now you were a teacher?

LT Uh huh.

MK How did you choose teaching?

LT What?

MK How did you decide to be a teacher?

LT Well, I always knew it. I started teaching when I was in the fourth grade. I went to a country school where there were eight grades. And one day, the teacher said to me why don't you take the first grade. I taught the first grade until I went to high school. That's right, I don't remember how I did it, but it must have been alright. So I knew, I always knew I was going to teach. I used to try to teach the animals but they didn't care for that. Anyway, yea I started teaching when I was about ten years old, because that's the fourth grade. Then I went out a year, I started school when I was seven. I couldn't walk the mile and a half. I had to wait until I was seven, but my brother taught me to read. I was out a year and a half with appendicitis and peritonitis. I was out a half year with pneumonia and do you know I was ready for high school at twelve. Well, I was frail and I couldn't do the things that the rest did, so all I could do was read or study. That's all and I did it all the time, and my brother used to hear me. Well, anyway, I started teaching when I was eighteen.

MK Did you go to, did you take a teacher training program?

LT Yea, then I took courses and I went to Columbia University. I specialized in psychology and after I got into Christian Science I dropped that business. And one day-I had remedial class and any boy or girl that wasn't

reading well was sent to me and I'd get them ready and send them back. I wasn't popular with the rest of the teachers. I wasn't trying to show them up, but I had to do it my way, see. So one day the superintendent came to me and he said, "I know you specialized in a very good college, but I had others that did. They can't do what you do. Is there any way you could tell me how you do it?" "Yes, there is," I said. "I've been studying Christian Science and we can't accept non-intelligence, so we keep trying where somebody else won't." I wasn't popular with the teachers at all, because I wasn't trying to show them up. It was my work and I loved it. I know one day the principal brought a boy to me, well, this is a girl. "Well, she said, "she can't do anything." She said, "I've applied for her to go to the," they called it "The New School" then for retarded, "let her cut pictures or draw or anything." I started working with her. Even the children started working with her. About two months time, I sent for the principal and told her to bring up that application for "The New School" and I built the girl up. "Now," I said, "you are going to read for Miss Carter, she'd love it. She would have read all day. She tore the application up, and she said "Only you could do this." I said, "Now wait a minute. Let's give credit where it's due, with God's help." Then there was another boy that wasn't talking right. I couldn't understand a word he said when I first. She invited me for dinner. But I said, "don't tell him I'm a teacher." Anyway, I tutored him. I told her not to tell anyone. So one day, oh there was a long time before I spoke about reading. I got him to read a story over and over. Now I said, his name was Bond. I said, "Bond, I want you to read this to the class." Oh his little face got red. The kids of course made fun of him. He said, "would you come with me?" No, I said, I guess I couldn't, but I'll be with you in thought. I said, "God and I will be right there." "Are you sure?" "Yes, I'm sure. Would you do it?" I said, "if you'll do it, there will be a prize the next time you come." Well, he got up and went to the teacher and he was shaking when he asked her if he could read to the class. She said, "you mean you want to?" He read. Why, the kids clapped and they-what they didn't do. She went and got, this is in second grade I think. She went and got the first grade teacher, and she went and got the principal. Well, of course Bond then could read oh, I built him up. So that night, the first grade teacher was supposed to be the best in the, well she thought in the world, but anyway in the state. So she called me. She said, "Have you been tutoring Bond Davis?" I said, "why do you ask?" I've learned that. That's a come back you know. It's protection too. She said, "I said only you could do it." I said, "Let's give credit where it's due, with God's help." It's such, it was

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such a satisfaction to reach those children. I even prayed about it and I loved every child I ever taught, Really.

MK You were teaching in a graded school?

LT Huh?

MK You were teaching in a graded school?

LT Uh huh.

MK How did you get to Burlington?

LT How did I get here?

MK Uh huh.

LT Well I taught the country. First it was Grand Isle. Then my mother was ill and I taught near home a couple years, and I applied.

MK When did you come to Burlington as a teacher?

LT When did I?

MK When, uh huh.

LT You mean the year?

MK Yes, if you can remember or roughly the year.

LT I don't remember. It doesn't matter.

MK Okay.

LT But anyway, I came in on probation you see. They tried me out, well I made it and I've stayed ever since. Then after I retired, I substituted and it was in the upper grades. But the discipline in there was something. It was in the hardest school in town. I felt so sorry for those kids, what they didn't have. And the teacher they had, she should not have been anymore a teacher than this chair. Oh, it was bad. I was the only one that Mr. Chicella (?) would call. He'd always apologize for calling. But I got along with them, but it wasn't easy. They were rude, oh, so rude and one boy, I said to him...

MK I just want to be sure that my car is okay.

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LT It's alright. I'm sure it's alright. Others park there. I said to him, I said, "We have to understand one another." I said, "I'm never rude to anyone. But no one is rude to me and gets away with it." He said, "If I can talk to my mother this way, I can talk to you." "No, I said, "you can't. You just can't." Oh, she didn't leave even the names of the children. Nothing. One day, one of the teachers gave me some math sheets so I, somebody passed them out and this girl, over age, picked up her math sheet, made of ball of it, threw it on the floor, jumped up and down on it and then said, "What are you going to do?" "Oh, I said, "nothing, but you are going to do something. You're going to leave this room for the day, for the day." She said, "Where do I go?" I said, "Where you usually go." Well, about an hour, a helping teacher brought her back. She's straightened out the paper and put the answers down. And in this very soothing voice she said, "I think Debbie's tried hard, and I think she's done quite well. I think she's ready to come back." I said, "Debbie you haven't told her our understanding have you?" She said, "What is it?" She said, "I'm out for the day." I said, "It still stands." Do you know if I had backed down I'd have lost control of the whole class. That little girl afterward tried to protect me. If somebody was acting up, she'd go and stand by their desk and said, "Want to see me after school?" Oh, they fought. It was near Valentines Day, I don't know where she got her money for a Valentine or a stamp, but she sent me one and it said "to the little lady" and they all said, "Miss Terrill's firm, but she's fair." So, well after, it was too much. I'd come home so exhausted from trying to, that I quit, and I've done all kinds of community work.

MK Let's talk about your experiences during World War II then. You were teaching, what school were you teaching at?

LT Wheeler.

MK Wheeler.

LT Well I was Assistant Director of the USO, at the Y. I was an aide to an FBI man. I was in charge of the rationing at the North End. I had eight people working for me. I had an assistant, but she got scared of the questions so I was there all day way into the evening. I was, can I brag a little?

MK Sure.

LT I was the only one who had a perfect record. I didn't lose a stamp. We had to be finger-printed, I don't know

what all. I got it in, I was the first one to get it in and so on. I wore the soles off a pair of shoes that I bought. I went back to the shoe store and showed them. They said, "Well, what do you expect for paper soles?" I called the rationing board for an emergency stamp, they refused. I said, "Look, I was doing your work." When June came, I got a call from the Rationing Board. "Miss Terrill, we are looking over your record." It was a perfect record. "We're wondering if you would help us on the Rationing Board this summer. You have a long vacation. We're wondering if you would help us?" Oh I said, "You've opened up something." I said, "Do you remember when I called you for a shoe stamp and you refused?" "We'll give you one." "No," I said, "I don't need it. I had the shoes tapped. No," I said, "I'm going to Bell Aircraft where I can earn some money. I haven't been able on my salary to buy one bond." Oh, our salaries were terrible. We'd get \$50 a year raise. Can you imagine that. \$50.00. Anyway, I went to Bell Aircraft, what a time. They were going to put me in a office. I said no. "Put me where I can earn the most money because I'm going to put it all into bonds." So they put me on the electrical line. I started in skinning wires and I went to the Red Cross room so many times. I used to hang outside the door. Oh, I cut my hands, oh, Phoebe, a mill girl. They were all mostly mill people. Louis Dowd? was mayor. He asked me what I was going to do that summer and I said, "Louis if I could only find some work." He said, "You come to Bell Aircraft," I said, "They are not supposed to take teachers." "Well," he said, "we don't have to tell them." He said, "You are going to earn some of that money." Weren't some of the parents on the line! Anyway...

MK You worked with the parents of some of your students?

LT Huh?

MK You worked with parents of some of your students?

LT Some of the students. Well anyway, oh, skinning wires. But before the summer was over, I was making up those electrical boxes. I don't know what they were for, but anyway, and they tried to make me an offer to give up teaching and stay, see. Well anyway, what an experience. Oh, what I heard there, really. Oh, really, it was bad. I heard, the line next to me, they were all men but one woman and they used to bet. There was one fellow, he was a handsome man from Brooklyn, New York. He was a high school teacher. I never heard such filthy, filthy talk in all my life. So one day I heard him, my back was turned toward him. I heard him say, "So you don't think I could

take that damn school teacher out? Put your quarters in." We had to have our hair done up because of the work, so over he comes. He said "Terri, do you ever let your hair down?" I said, "Occasionally." I waited. I can't remember just how he said it. His name was Pat. "Pat," I said, "You've lost your quarter. I wouldn't be seen out with you. I've heard you talk and that's enough." Well his face turned oh all kinds. The next day he came over to apologize and I gave him a talk. I said, "I don't know what's happened to you, I don't care, How <sup>have</sup> you let yourself down like this? You're a handsome man. You're educated, why don't you act like it." And you know, we became good friends after. He said, "I'll think about it." I said, "Get back up where you belong." Well, anyway, I'll never forget Phoebe, bless her heart. A great big heavy french girl. She saw the inspector coming, and I hadn't skinned a good wire. I tried and I tried and she grabbed, she grabbed a bunch of wires and she said, "For god sake, Terri, give me those wires." And she skinned them see and there they were. The man came along. "Why," he said, "Have you improved!" "You know," I said, "I haven't." "What do you mean?" I said, "Phoebe did these." And he put his arm around me and he said, "well, keep trying. Keep trying." Well, after awhile, honest, the Red Cross people said, "Why don't you stay in here?" But anyway, I earned my first money and I bought bonds with everything. Yea, I worked, one summer I worked at a bank. Will I ever forget that. There was a little boy, a little Jewish boy came to me one day. He said, "Could you keep a secret?" "Well," I said, "I've been known to." He said, "We are getting a baby girl, Goldilocks." And he was as black. So awhile after, I found out that my niece was going to get a baby and I said, "You don't need to keep this secret. We're getting a baby." He said, "What?" "Oh," I said, "they haven't told me." He said, "You have to put your order in early." So I was verifying an account. All I did was work with an adding machine. One day his father came to the window and I heard him say, Miss Terrill's in the back. He lifted him up and in a shrill voice and it will always, "Miss Terrill, did you get your kid? When are you getting your kid?" Oh, he tried to shut him up. Well, later in the afternoon, it was Colonel Jackson was the President. He don't like, you know <sup>'member Lewis with the bushy eyebrows?</sup> anyway, his secretary came to me, she said, "Colonel Jackson wants to see you in his office. Oh boy, I thought, I bet I'm being fired. I don't know what I've done but, so I went in and he said, "Sit down." Well, I all but fell down you see. The side of his face twitched. He said Miss Terrill, "Did you get your kid?" ~~Well, the~~ <sup>(laughter)</sup> first night I was there, somebody, honest I could write a book. Somebody came and said, "Now you can't go home." I said, "Why can't I go home?" He said, "It doesn't balance, and



everybody stays." So I hollered "what's off", and so on and so forth. Listen, it wasn't fifteen minutes, I found the mistake and I jumped up and I yelled and I pounded. The whole group came tearing over. Boy, was I popular. From then on they said, "We won't worry as long as you're here." Oh really. I don't know why I get onto these tangents or-I love to laugh I guess but anyway, then I worked for the Compton Publishing Company and then the FBI man, I saved his life.

MK Oh!

LT One night-I used to work at the USO until midnight. I lived right around the corner on College, where the telephone office is now. And one night I came home, he lived upstairs, second, third floor and I thought I heard a moan. I listened, I heard a second moan, so up the stairs I went. The door was unlocked. I turned the light on. I said, "Captain Baer, what's the matter?" Twelve o'clock at night he asked me to go somewhere and find some epsom salts and make a poultice to put on the back of his head. I blistered my hands and finally I noticed he was beginning to be delirious, so I called the Fort, told them to come down just as fast as they could with a stretcher and a doctor. In a half hour they had him on the operating table and the doctors said had I waited a half hour, it would have been too late.

MK What was wrong with him?

LT It was a carbuncle on the base of his brain. Oh I learned a lot. And the way he tried me out. He used to come in and come down the stairs and wrap on the door and in he'd come. This time, I heard him coming down the stairs. It seemed to me that he walked differently. He wrapped on my door. I went to the door and he said, "May I come in?" I said, "well, you know you can." So he sat down. I thought now you're up to something and I'm not going to help you. He said, "you've taught here for some time." I said, "I've already told you that haven't I." "Well, you must know a lot of people?" "Well, shouldn't that be obvious?" "Well, what is your standing in this town?" "Well, I said if you are in doubt, there's the door." He said, "I had to find out if I could use you." I got up and opened the door. I said, "you leave now." Then he pulled back his coat and showed me his badge. He said, "Thank god, you didn't answer one question. You threw it back at me. You knew when I came down the stairs that I was up to something. How did you know?" And you know what, he wanted me to go in, he said I was psychic. He wanted me to go in and apply full time to do FBI work. He said, "It'll be dangerous, but you

can do it." Well, anyway, they wanted me, oh what other group to train girls, not the army, well anyway. I had my physical and I came out healthy, vigorous and so on. And what meant so much to me, that twelve years before that I had planned my funeral and suicide. I got a bug in the water in California and I was immune to the only cure and the doctor said he was going to try one more drug on me. If that didn't do it, it would mean another attack which would be my last one or if I became a carrier, they would isolate me like a leper. It was called sprue. It was brought over here during the war. Well anyway, the marines, they wanted me in the marines to train. So I told my superintendent that I was thinking about it. He said, "I hope they don't find anything serious with you when you have your physical but just enough to keep you out." Well this is what decided me. I wanted to go really. I thought it would be exciting and different. When we had an air raid drill, I didn't have a good place at school. I was right in front of a window. It was the first grade. A little Jewish boy came up to me, I'll never forget. He said, "Miss Terrill, are you afraid?" I knew I couldn't be. I said, "no." I used to wear suits. He took hold of the lapels in my jacket. His face is white as. He was so frightened. He said, "Are you afraid?" I said, "No, I'm not. And I'll never let anything happen to you. You go home this noon, and you tell your parents that I'd give my life for any one of you. You included." And the tears just streamed down his face. That decided me. I couldn't leave. Well, there was no one to take my place. Mr. Hunt said, "who's going to take care of these children?" There was no one to take my place. So I knew I had to stay. There's something there in a little case. Can you get it? Right there on that brown, yea. I'm kind of proud of this. Do you mind if I brag a little?

MK No, I don't mind a bit.

LT What?

MK Go right ahead.

LT I got these. Oh, I've worked all my life, I've done something. They call me the, what is it that people pick up things? I clothed most of the kids in my graded school. It was in the poor district, see.

MK Uh huh.

LT People gave me clothes and I still pick them up for battered women or there's a family in Bolton with nine kids. People still bring them. Adults or I send them

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down. The Methodist Church has a sale every Monday. Boy, I've sent most of my clothes down there and I pick up things for the Senior Citizens. I go there sometimes to eat. Well anyway.

MK Now these are citations that you received for selling war bonds?

LT Uh huh.

MK Ah, huh.

LT Yea, yea. Yea, I went out every single Sunday after church and Saturdays.

MK So you were really putting in a lot of volunteer time?

LT I did, yes I did. But I loved it. I really loved it. I'll never forget. We had, working at Bell, we had to wear slacks and ~~that's before~~ people wore slacks, see. We had to wear our badge. One day I used to have to get out of the car I rode in and go up street to get some food see. I'll never forget. I've forgotten who the lawyer was. He was a young lawyer from Waterbury, and I hated to go by him, see. He was talking to somebody. He said, "Just a minute." He said, "Miss Terrill, you don't need to drop your head because you got on a pair of slacks." He said, "That badge tells everything. You put your chin up." One day over at the USO, one of the women said, "Somebody said they saw Miss Terrill on the street with a pair of slacks. And I said, 'oh no, not Miss Terrill.'" I said, "oh, yes." I said, "You see I'm doing war work and if wearing a straw hat and a pair of beads only would save one boys life, I'd walk down Church Street like that. How about you? What are you doing to help? You better stop your criticizing and get to work." Yea, people...

MK Was that a spirit that a lot of people had at that time, that they would really put in a lot of extra hours and do whatever it took?

LT Yea. Yea. Captain Baroni, bless his heart. I liked him so much. We used to be so careful. If I started out in the morning, he'd wait until I got up the street quite a ways before he'd start out to give me directions, or we'd meet way up by the other side of the school. Or if he'd go out in the night, he'd rap on my door and I'd hear him and that meant for me to take his mail and so on and so forth. And the policemen used to come to the back door to talk to me. Oh it was exciting. It really was. He didn't take me with him this night. Next door was, what

was the doctors name, a surgeon, Johnson I think. Just a  
driveway between the house. So he went there and rang the  
doorbell and the doctor came to the door. He said, "Have  
you got a maid here, a Japanese maid?" He said, "Yes, I'll  
call her." "No," he said, "don't you call her. Where's her  
room?" He opened the door, put the light on and she pulled  
out a dagger. He got her. You see I got him a lot of  
information that he couldn't get any other way. Head of  
the German Club and there was a minister, I'm sure he was  
a Nazi. Every time we met, we belonged to Cosmopolitan  
Club. Every time we met we fought. Later on he was shot  
in New York City. He was the Unitarian minister. Then  
there was another minister that had made remarks that  
didn't add up. I got him all sorts of information that he  
couldn't get easily. Boy, he was brilliant. Well, is all  
that on there?

MK It's on the tape, yes.

LT Oh no. I forgot. I forgot. Oh, I forgot. Why didn't  
you stop me?

MK Because they are interesting stories.

LT Oh god. Oh, you're a sweet girl. You are. But you don't  
have to do anything with that.

MK Well it's interesting to me because it happened you know  
before I was born, so I'm really interested in all of  
those times, but I wondered, you talked about an air raid  
drill when you were with the students.

LT Yea.

MK Were you ever, you must have been involved in blackouts  
then?

LT Yea.

MK Yea, what were those like?

LT Well, I was, what was I now with the blackout. I was  
something because I remember right next door to me was a  
doctor's office and I could see a light. It was Dr.  
Sampson, he was a dentist. I said, "Dr. Sampson you got to  
put that light out." He said, "I'm going to finish." I  
said, "I'll have to report you. I don't want to, but I'll  
have to." He said, "Go ahead, I've got to finish." Yea, it  
was spooky. Nothing ever happened. I had to walk up and  
down, see I lived on Main Street and it was a long street.

I've walked up and down that street, up and down, but he was the only one that I ever caught with the light.

MK Let me just flip the tape over. / You would, so you would sort of patrol the street or your territory when the blackout drill would be happening to be sure everybody did have their lights out?

LT Yea, he was the only one I ever had to speak to. He was a dentist.

MK Would they spring the drills? I mean would you know when a drill was coming?

LT Uh huh, yea. Oh really.

MK Did they happen at different times of night?

LT You never knew when it was going to happen. You see, that was the point. Half the time, I went to bed with my clothes on because when that thing came, I got out. Yea.

MK Who were you working for at that point? Was that for the Civil Defense or who ran the blackout drills? What agency, or was it the army or the...?

LT The army. Then I helped pick up money to build a USO. Boy, the money. They gave me Church Street, so I picked up a lot of money. In fact the man that came up to take charge of the money wanted to take me to New York City. I said, "what would I do there?" Oh heavenly day. There was one man that had a business, a tobacco business, and all he'd give me was \$2.00. I said, "I don't want it. I'm not going to take \$2.00 from you." And I said, "you know what, I'm going to tell you something. The boys are giving their lives for \$2.00. No," I said, "I'm not going to take this money from you, but I'm going to send somebody up here that will get some money from you or else," and I did. Oh, I was so furious at him. He had, I forgotten how many people he had working for him in that Tobacco Company. He was wealthy, so I was, I was furious. I was so furious. Yea, it built the USO. We did a lot in Burlington I felt. But it was that little boy and the fear in his eyes and the confidence in me made me give up the idea of leaving. I couldn't do it. Could you? Oh, I couldn't. I couldn't, I said, "I'll never leave you." Yea and this Colonel Jackson, the President of that bank had given me a marvelous recommend. So one day he came to me. He said, "why didn't you go through with it?" I said, "I couldn't leave the children." There was no one to take care of them. No, I couldn't leave them. Anyway.

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MK Now, you ran the rationing program?

LT Uh huh.

MK You ran the rationing program for the South End, <sup>or</sup> the North End, too?

LT Oh, did I. Did I. And you know this girl who was a teacher, if I came in the morning, she was supposed to come in the afternoon and I'd take over the evening. She got so afraid of the questions. So I had to be there all day long.

MK Oh, she didn't like people asking her questions?

LT Yea. Eight people walking from one to the other. That's how I wore out the soles. Then I helped with the oil rationing. That was here in the city. And I'll never forget this one couple. Very prominent people, wealthy people. And so she comes over to me and she said, "I told my husband I knew you'd be nice to us." I said, "What does that mean?" "Well," she said, "maybe you could," "Give you more than you're supposed to have?" "Yes." "No," I said, "the reason they've asked us to do this is because they know they can depend on us to be honest. It has nothing to do with personality. It has only to do with honesty." You know, to think, how many people came and tried to barter me down. I suppose they did it to the others too. To get more gas you see. They were rationing gas. "No," I said, "it has to be the way it is." It wasn't easy. At rationing, they'd ration the food while we teachers were teaching and when we'd get out, they'd be gone. And the stockings, at Abernathy's. I got down one time. I ran most of the way and here was a line. I thought oh maybe I should get some stockings and the woman ahead of me said, "If I get a pair now, it will make me nineteen pairs." Just as we got to the door, they closed. And I went inside. I knew the head man. And I burst into tears. I said, "I want you to look at my legs." I had two different kind of stockings on, two different. I said, "How would you like to look at these all day long?" Mr. Wright, "I said, "Mr. Wright, you're not being fair. You give these out when we teachers are in school and we get down here and then we don't get them. Now why can't you be fair with us and give them out when we can get some." He said, "Wait a minute." He went and got two pairs of stockings. He said, "You tell those teachers that need stockings to come to me." He said, "I didn't realize we weren't being fair." And if we got one thing, there were times I didn't have what I wanted to eat because it would be gone. It was hard with

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one person you know. Of course, where there was a family, that would be different.

MK I've heard that families made out better with the rationing books, yea.

LT Yea, I had a hard time.

MK Could you move a little closer to this again? Could you move back closer again? When you back away from it, it changes.

LT Wait.

MK Did people pretty much accept the rationing system or did a lot of people try to find a way around it, find a way to get more than they were entitled to?

LT They did, yea.

MK Did they?

LT Yea. Yea, but we had our books and that was it. I didn't know how to get around it. It was hard, it really was hard.

MK What kinds of things were rationed? Gas and oil and, but what kinds of foods were rationed?

LT Butter and I think meat. And I can't remember some of them, but I know butter and meat.

MK Sugar?

LT Yea, I can't remember. Coffee, I don't know about tea, but I know coffee. Yea, it was...

MK And you would get, well you would get a book every month. A book of coupons every month or how long did the...?

LT I think it was every month, yea. Yea. And nobody ever, I don't know whether people shared it or not, but nobody ever shared with me. And it was hard, it really was. But we had a lot to be grateful for because we weren't bombed. Was I happy when I bought my first bond. Oh boy, was I happy. When I went down to Bell Aircraft, he said, "I'm going to put you into office." I said, "Is that the best pay?" "Oh, no," he said, "to the lines." "Well," he said, "you don't want to get mixed in with mill people do you?" I said, "I'll mixed in with anyone if you'll help me get more salary." And they tried to get me to stay, but I didn't know how

long it was going to last. You always have to think of your pension that you are working toward, so I went to the superintendent and he said, "Don't do it." He said, "It might close anytime, and then, he said, "you're out." Oh, I never was mixed in with mill people before but oh really there was some fun. There was one girl, young girl, she was always begging if we carried our lunch, she begged part of our lunch. Oh, she was, she was a mess! And so one day, I said to Phoebe, "Did you hear what the hospital is offering?" She said, "What?" I said, "\$25.00 for a gallon of blood. Think of it. \$25.00!" She took off (laughing) and went and called the hospital. She didn't speak to Phoebe and me for, it was too good... (laughing) Oh, that Phoebe, bless her heart. She swore by no, I've never heard any... she'd swear with a smile on her face, but she was so good to me. She sort of took me under her arm. One man came to me once. He said, "I can't figure you out. You don't smoke. You don't drink. You don't swear or tell dirty stories, what in hell do you do to have a good time?" (Laughing) I said, "you'd be surprised." He said, "I know I would." (Laughing) Oh really, really. There were a lot of things to laugh about, but oh really. Oh I made one awful boner. I saw these things on the floor. I thought they were balloons. I said, "Do they have a party there every night?" Phoebe said, "What do you mean?" "Well," I said, "there is balloons all over the floor." Oh, she let out an oath. She said, "My god, Terri, those aren't balloons." Oh, I know, I was sort of a nit wit. I thought they were balloons. Oh god, really.

MK Were they in packages or?

LT They'd been used see, they were, oh boy. Really. I was the nit wit of the place and I knew it. Well, I kept working.

MK Did you go back there after the first summer? Did you work there...?

LT No, I didn't go back. Next summer was when I think I went into bank. I don't know who appointed me. I don't know. But anyway.

MK Now when you were at Bell Aircraft, were there a lot of women working there?

LT Yes, oh yes. Yea. And some resented me being on line because I guess it was the best line. There was one woman on there and she wanted her daughter on there and they didn't want the daughter on there and so she kept complaining about the damn school teacher. So one day I



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got a slip and I didn't know what the slip was for and Phoebe said, "Hide that slip, Terri, hide it." I said, "What is it?" She said, "It's a raise." And I'd only been there a short time. But she saw it. She went to the office. They said, "If you come here and complain again about the damn school teacher, we'll fire you. If we want to give her a raise, we'll give her one and we won't ask your permission." So she quit. She left me alone for awhile. I didn't know what it was, but poor Phoebe. Oh, I loved Phoebe before I left.

MK Did you ever keep in touch with her or with any of the other people?

LT No, I never knew where she went to. I couldn't remember her last name. Oh, she was about this wide. Well she looked after me really. She was sweet, but oh the language, the language and I'd say things and they'd turn it into something else. Oh, I know one thing, I was, I had to tighten some screws see and I didn't know there was another meaning to, a filthy meaning to screw. I didn't know that, see. So the Mayor Dow(?) came along and said "What's happening?" and I said, "Louis, these screws," I said, "I never want to see another screw as long as I live!" And oh, somebody picked it up. Oh, all day long, they came by me and "how are the screws?" Oh, I didn't know there was a filthy meaning to it. So I'm sort of a nit wit really, but I earned the money. That's all I wanted. I earned the money.

MK And you put all of those extra earnings into bonds?

LT Every bit of it. Boy, it was the first pull I ever used. The Mayor took me down and introduced me to the head ones and said, "We'll put you in an office." I said, "Is that where I'd make the most money?" "No," he said, "on a line, but you couldn't, could you manage with mill people?" I said, "I could if I could buy some bonds. I'd manage with anything." I felt guilty because our salaries were terrible. Really.

MK What did teachers make then?

LT Uh?

MK How much did teachers make in those days?

LT Oh, maybe \$1,150 or something. Oh, and a \$50 raise for the year. Yea, but anyway I kept going.

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MK As you look back on all of those experiences you had, what do you think they taught you? What was the most valuable thing you came away with?

LT What?

MK I said, what was the most valuable thing to you in terms of your experiences during World War II? What do you think was the most important thing?

LT That I was able to give service to my country. That's all I had in mind. That's really what I had in mind. And I was so grateful for my healing because I'd been given up by the doctors see. And I was little then. I only weighed 100 pounds. You know what, can I say something personal? They said I was pretty. They did. And I didn't know it. It would have given me something had I known it, because I was an orphan. It would have given me confidence or self-assurance or something to hold onto. I'm sorry I didn't know it.<sup>But</sup> I did with what I had. Yea, it was, yea.

MK Well, thank you. I really enjoyed hearing about all of these experiences.

LT Oh, we laughed didn't we.

MK We sure did. Oh.

LT Did you notice my Lincoln pictures?

MK Yes.

LT Want to know something? He's an ancestor of mine.

MK Really?

LT And at one time, we had a letter in the house and it was stolen and I have more and more about that letter, not because it was valuable but when I was little, we had a book, a child's book of Lincoln and one of Jesus. And one night my brother, my older brother took me to bed and I started to cry. I told him I was afraid to go sleep. My grandmother used to talk about sinners. We don't call them sinners today. I told him I was a sinner. He said, "What have you done?" I said, "Well, I know I love Lincoln more than Jesus." You see I related to him pulling the pig out of the water and putting the bird back. I'll never forget. He looked away a minute. He said, "Well, don't you know why you love Lincoln so?" He said, "Because he's so much like Jesus." I got the family picture, and I've got a

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room, I should have it ready, but I've got it for storage. It's filled with Lincoln pictures and books. I shouldn't have talked so much. I've forgot.