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Leona Derheim

Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project

A Collaborative Project of the Regional Oral History Office,
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Interviews conducted by
Kathryn Stine
in 2002

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Interview with Leona Derheim
Interviewed by: Katherine Stine
Transcriber: Erik Fuehrer
[Interview #_1: November, 5, 2002]
[Begin Audio File Derheim 11-5-02

00:00:27

Stine:

So, I am here today with Leona Derheim, and it's November the fifth, it's Election Day and I am going to start out asking her some questions about her background and where she came from. So, if you could first just give me your full name.

00:00:25

Derheim:

Leona Mary Derheim.

00:00:26

Stine:

Alright, and when and where were you born?

00:00:27

Derheim:

In Berkeley, California on February 24th, 1920.

00:00:37

Stine:

Do you remember the hospital?

00:00:40

Derheim:

At home.

00:00:41

Stine:

Oh, okay.

00:00:41

Derheim:

At home. In South Berkeley.

00:00:46

Stine:

I know your parents--your father was from Oakland--

00:00:49

Derheim:

And my mother was from Iowa. She--her family had moved from Iowa in 1903, and they settled in Livermore, California. That's where she went to school, and I think she graduated from high school in Livermore, and then came to Oakland to work in a newspaper office. I guess that's where she met my father, or it could have been through friends.

00:01:12

Stine:

Was he working at the newspaper office as well?

00:01:14

Derheim:

No, no. I don't know just how they met. Never did find that out. But, in his last years of work he worked at a fence company in Oakland. He was a machinist, and had to take care of repairs to the machinery in the plant. As I say, he retired from that. It was a subsidiary of U.S. Steel in Oakland. He retired from there.

00:01:47

Stine:

Had his family been in the Bay Area for a long time?

00:01:56

Derheim:

His family had been in Oakland for--in fact, his ancestors way back, came over on the Mayflower so I found out through a cousin who investigated all these things way back, that I would be a twelfth generation Mayflower descendent. Not that it was important to me, but it was kind of interesting.

00:02:20

Stine:

That's fun to find out about.

00:02:17

Derheim:

She was so involved in it that she joined the Daughters of the Revolution and the Mayflower Descendants and things like that. And this gave me that much information anyway. But my grandfather, grand parents on my father's side came around the horn to California originally. Then he went back to Massachusetts to--I don't know where they were already married anyway, that's when my grandmother and he came out by train to Oakland. So, probably about the 1870's as far as I can tell.

00:02:58

Stine:

Do you know why--what it was about California that pulled them in?

00:03:03

Derheim:

I don't know, I really couldn't tell you that. Just happened to land here so that my mother's folks came to Livermore. So, that's how it all began.

00:03:17

Stine:

When you were growing up, it was in Berkeley?

00:03:21

Derheim:

Yes, in Berkeley. I went to the schools, elementary and Berkeley High, and graduated from Berkeley High, and then I went on a music scholarship to Holy Names College in Oakland, down by Lake Merritt. It was in those days, and then graduated from there in '40 and then '42 for a Bachelor in Music degree and Bachelor of Arts in 1940. So, and then it was right there at the beginning of World War II. My mother had wanted me to study to be a schoolteacher, and I did not want to do that at all. So it happened that the

father of the girl at the dance orchestra, he worked at the Southern Pacific Railroad too. He happened to say to me that they were desperate for people to come to work, because the fellows were beginning to be taken into the war effort in the service. So, I went over to apply for a job, just about exactly a month after my graduating recital at Holy Names, to apply for the job and went to work and then sixteen years later I got married. So, that was my working days.

00:04:43

Stine:

So, you worked sixteen years at Southern Pacific?

00:04:45

Derheim:

At Southern Pacific, uh huh.

00:04:47

Stine:

Okay, we will get back to that. I am going to jump back just a little bit to, I am curious about, in high school, I know you went on and got a Bachelors of Music, in high school did you participate in the band?

00:04:59

Derheim:

I played the violin in the orchestra and saxophone in the band.

00:05:02

Stine:

Okay, so you did both.

00:05:03

Derheim:

I actually started on the violin as far as music goes, and then I got to junior high school, and I said, "I would like to play some instrument that would be in a band, where I can go to football games." So, that's how I started on the saxophone in junior high. So, I have been playing it for a long time.

00:05:21

Stine:

When did you start on the violin?

00:05:22

Derheim:

I guess I was probably eight or nine when I started on the violin. Seven or eight probably. I don't really know, but I took private lessons at that time, and then through high school, and then more lessons with the teacher at Holy Names at the college. I played with the orchestra many, many years after I left college, and went back for playing their concerts until about 1984. I think that was the last time.

00:05:57

Stine:

Continuously, all the way--

00:05:59

Derheim:

Well, almost continuously, yes. And then I played the saxophone in the Oakland Municipal Band down at Lakeside Park, Lake Merritt for almost thirty years I think I did that. Then I retired from that in 1984 also. The violin kind of went by the way side because I didn't play with anybody after that. So I am so sorry

now that I didn't keep that up. Playing that by yourself isn't that much fun, where the saxophone was a much easier instrument to get back to and keep up. So, that explains that.

00:06:48

Stine:

When you first started playing violin, had your family been musical, or had there been friends that--

00:06:53

Derheim:

Oh, my mother was slightly musical, she played piano. My grandmother on her side, taught organ way, way back. So, that's probably where I got it. A little inherited that way I guess. My father was not musical, but he enjoyed music every night, very much the same way as my husband. He was not musical either, but they both were good listeners. So, it was--it made it worthwhile.

00:07:27

Stine:

And then, with both the sax and the violin in junior high and high school, did you ever have lessons outside of going to school, or do you have any teachers that you particularly remember as being?

00:07:39

Derheim:

Well, yes, especially the nun who taught me at Holy Names College. I had good memories of her, and she conducted the orchestra too. She was a favorite, and I still can remember my music instructors at junior high and at Berkeley High too. So I have good memories of both. All those years were fun, besides the rest of my education. But, I never did want to be a teacher, even as far as music went, I loved playing, but teaching was not my idea of enjoying what I was doing.

00:08:36

Stine:

What was it about teaching that put you off?

00:08:39

Derheim:

Even instruments, I didn't care about that. So, it was just as well that I guess that I went to work in an office for a while completely different than what I had been trained for, but I got along and I enjoyed it while I was doing it. It was very interesting, you know, during the war and then even after too and for those number of years after that I still stayed with it. Until I was married and then resigned.

00:09:09

Stine:

I am curious when you were at Holy Names and you got your Bachelor of Music, what kind of aspirations as a high school senior going into college did you have? What kind of--did you want to be a musician?

00:09:21

Derheim:

Well, I don't know what I would really--kind of hoped that I would play in a symphony some place, but I never did actually, except the college symphony, and then in a band too. I did realize that because I can still remember when my two brothers and I were young, my folks would drive down by Lake Merritt on a Sunday. We would go by the sign entering the park that said band concert every Sunday. And I said to myself, "I would someday like to do that." I got to realize that too, by playing about, as I say, almost thirty years with them. So, that was one of my aspirations I saw through.

00:10:07

Stine:

And the band playing, was that jazz music?

00:10:10

Derheim:

Well, it was about thirty-six or thirty-eight piece band, and we played everything, classical and show, music from musicals. And the whole range of music, and it was really hard, not easy things to play either. We would only have one hour of rehearsal before each Sunday's concert right there in the park. We would get the music ahead of time, and we could look through it, but as far as playing all together, just that one hour. So, the conductor had to just hit the high spots and hope that everything else went okay. It usually did. [laughs]

00:10:53

Stine:

And this is the Oakland Municipal Band? And when had you started with that?

00:10:59

Derheim:

Yeah. I think about 1956 or '57, I don't remember which year I started.

00:11:06

Stine:

But this is the one as a young girl that you would drive by?

00:11:11

Derheim:

Yeah, I yearned to be able to do that, and so I was able to realize that.

00:11:19

Stine:

And you said you have two brothers?

00:11:22

Derheim:

Yes, I had an older brother who has passed away, and a younger brother who is now living in Nevada, and we keep in touch every week. We are the only two in the family left. I have a niece and nephew, and great ones, but that's the extent of the family. And then on my husband's side, I have two nephews and a niece on that side. But my immediate family, just my brother and I.

00:12:02

Stine:

What do you remember about growing up in Berkeley? This was all in South Berkeley when you were--?

00:12:06

Derheim:

It was south Berkeley, and I can just remember I was not one, having two brothers I had to play sports and I did more of that then playing with dolls evidently. Had no particular interest in dolls, but I loved sports.

00:12:21

Stine:

What kind of sports?

00:12:20

Derheim:

I can say sports and music were my loves. Well, they went to Berkeley schools too, and all graduated from Berkeley High. Then my brother, my older brother worked for many years at the Bank of America, and retired from there and since has passed away. My younger brother was in the service during the war, and then he did various jobs, bank and other things after too. Now, he is on his own and up in Nevada, so that's it. What else would you--?

00:13:18

Stine:

Once you were done with high school, and you had lived in Berkeley, was Holy Names the only school that you had applied to, or you wanted to stay in this area?

00:13:23

Derheim:

I had a chance to go to Mills or Holy Names and a person, a friend of my mother, in fact, I think he was superintendent of schools at the time in Oakland, but he had been a teacher or principal in Livermore, and my mother knew him through that. She had asked him his advice about it, and he said, "As long as I had a scholarship to go to Holy Names, it would be every bit as good for me as Mills College because they had a good music reputation, and that's what I was interested in. So, that's how I ended up at Holy Names.

00:14:02

Stine:

So, let's talk about the band a little bit. When you were in the band at the same time as being in college, and this is--

00:14:06

Derheim:

The municipal band played on Sundays, Sunday afternoon in the park at Lake Merritt during the summer only. At that time, we had about sixteen concerts I think. Started in the last part of June and played through Labor Day including Labor Day and the Fourth of July. So, it was about a total of about sixteen concerts, but the orchestra, I think Monday night was usually the rehearsal night and it didn't interfere with the band sometimes they had concerts on a Sunday evening, and that was just during the school terms, so it never interfered with the band. It kind of worked separately, and yet kind of fit together.

00:14:54

Stine:

So, there must have been other people that were doing both?

00:14:58

Derheim:

Yes, yes. People I knew in band played with the orchestra too. That was--

00:15:05

Stine:

What about the all girl band? How did that get started?

00:15:08

Derheim:

Well, that actually started probably my last year in high school. We had a little group of eight of us played in that together. That was kind of the nucleus of how the rest started, and it was eight to ten pieces most of the time. But when I had to drop out of the dance orchestra, in 1944 because I was working at the Southern Pacific six days a week. All of a sudden they took a night club job down in Oakland during the

war, sometime in 1944, and it was just too much for me to try to do both. So, I had to drop out. I did play a few casual jobs Friday or Saturday nights with them.

00:16:08

Stine:

Okay, just pick up here and there. So, I am curious how it all got started. Was it just classmates and people you knew already?

00:16:18

Derheim:

Well, yeah, like I said, the eight of us that played together at Berkeley High, and then the gradually when the one that led the band after all--

00:16:32

Stine:

And what was her name?

00:16:32

Derheim:

Her name was Marilyn Farauo at the time. She went to Albany High. So, in order for people to get girls together to play together, they called around to the high schools and did they have somebody that played a certain type of instrument that they needed, and that was how Marian, now a very good friend, started playing with them 1938. Marilyn had the band at the time, and that one there in the middle [points to picture] she needed another saxophone player. The original one had gone off to get married, so that's how Marian started in the orchestra. Then, of course, she got married in 1942 and was teaching school too, and got too busy to be able to play in the band so that was her reason for having to drop out. But I played a little longer than she did, until '44.

00:17:39

Stine:

Was there a manager, somebody that kind of--?

00:17:41

Derheim:

Yes, actually, Marilyn's father was actually managing. He hauled all--a lot of the instruments, her bass especially, and then the music stands and music which we would take to every job we played, you know, had to have music stands. And he did all that. Then got jobs for us, and really helped her a great deal. She couldn't have done it by herself.

00:18:09

Stine:

Yeah, so did he do a lot of the booking and that kind--?

00:18:15

Derheim:

Yeah, because he at the time was working fulltime at Southern Pacific himself, but he managed to help her on weekends with the band.

00:18:31

Stine:

What kind of music did you play? Was it mostly jazz music?

00:18:32

Derheim:

Popular, dance music. Yeah, that's what we did, and that's what we, Marian and I like to get together and play now. It's good music.

00:18:45

Stine:

Oh yeah.

00:18:45

Derheim:

We think anyway.

00:18:45

Stine:

Yeah. Who are some of the musicians and composers that you really admired at that time?

00:18:51

Derheim:

Oh, well, all the ones that, like Jerome Kern and Hoagy Carmichael, and hmmm, now you got me into thinking. I don't remember quite all of them. Anyway, the good dance music was out there, and that's what we still play, well we still play some of the fifties and sixties, but there are very few written now that are our kind that we enjoy playing.

00:19:32

Stine:

Were there any sax players in particular that were popular at the time that you kind of thought were influential?

00:19:44

Derheim:

Oh yeah, Guy Lombardo and Wayne King, sax players and the Dorseys that had bands themselves. Very much enjoyed them and Glenn Miller's band and things like that was really good music. So, we kind of, in a sense, tried to copy after that for the dances we played.

00:20:20

Stine:

Do you remember, did you have to audition to become a part of it? Or was it kind of word of mouth and you just showed up and if it worked, it worked.

00:20:27

Derheim:

Yeah. And I was, in fact, the way I got into the Oakland band. Some of the girls that I went to college with, after we graduated from college, would get together at one of their houses, one played piano and had another one that sang, and another one played violin, and I played the violin or saxophone at the time. We would entertain ourselves and, you know, a few of them might like to come, and she had gone to Tech High, the one where we played at her house. And under Mr. Trutner, who was the music teacher there. He directed the Oakland band at the time, and he and his wife happened to know my friend Nadine very well. They would come to her house for our little entertainments, you know, our getting together and playing. One night we were doing that, and he said to me, "Leona, have you ever thought about playing with the Oakland Municipal Band?" And I said, "Oh, yes I have." My one ambition. So, he said, "Come down, you know, and try out." I did, and that's what started my playing in the band. So that was kind of interesting, and went on for many years. After he retired, they hired a person who had been in the army

and navy bands both back in Washington D.C. Fred Rose was his name, and he was an excellent conductor also. He was very demanding. You played right, or else you heard about it. So, that was why it was all very good for me.

00:22:30

Stine:

It sounds like the war really had such an influence on musicians and the kind of music that was being played that carried out.

00:22:35

Derheim:

It did. It did. There was lots of music from the wartime that lived after. That's some--you know, a lot of the ones we play now even go back to then. It is interesting now that when we play, we look to see when that music was first published, first came out, and it is very interesting how old some of those are. And *that* was good music. [laughs]

00:23:08

Stine:

Do you remember, in the all girl band, when you toured, what were the kinds of places where you would play?

00:23:15

Derheim:

Well, that's what I said, we played at army camps and hospitals during the war time, and then we would play for clubs, dance hall, you know, different places. We went up to Sonora, Tuolumne, Jamestown and lots of places where we would drive up and play three or four hours for a dance and drive all the way back home. In those days the roads weren't freeways like we have now, so it was quite an operation. Marian and I both say, "How did we ever do that?" She was going to college, but I was finishing college too, and so was she, and to do that on weekends and get your homework done, it was kind of tough. So, but as we say, we were interested enough in it to enjoy it. And like she has often said, she made enough, three or four dollars for each job on a Friday or Saturday to pay for her months commute to San Francisco. In those days, it was six dollars round trips to San Francisco by commute for everyday of the month. So, you can imagine the difference in prices.

00:24:40

Stine:

Oh, yeah, that's incredible.

00:24:44

Derheim:

It is really. It is hard to think about. And now, when we play reunions or--well, we say we have a certain fee, but if they can't do it, then we will negotiate. Like when we play for a convalescent hospital or something like that, we rarely, not inexpensive, but we enjoy playing for them and they enjoy it so much listening. So, the difference in that and what we made in those days is incredible too. And yet, when we do play for places that can afford us, they say, "Well, that's not--you know, you are worth more." So, it is very hard to believe there has been that much of a change over our lifetime.

00:25:33

Stine:

Do you remember what you did with the extra money you made?

00:25:39

Derheim:

Yeah, I remember the first thing I bought with the money I earned was a camera. A little box camera, and I used my dance orchestra money to buy that. It was the first thing actually. Then, of course I was home and paid room and board with my folks what I could. And, of course, when I was going to work at the SP, I was able to help out there. Of course, the dance orchestra money, in those days, wasn't a whole lot, but it helped some. Then, of course, when I got a job, and that was a different thing too. Salaries in those days, four dollars and fifteen cents I think I started with a day. That's a whole lot different now too. Inflation, I guess, is the answer, but those were different times. But when you think about it, it is kind of interesting. So, as I said, we played over at Fort Mason. I just asked Marilyn, who was the leader in those days, and at Benicia, and at Mare Island and Oak Knoll Hospital, and at Army Camp Stoneman out on Highway 4 along where Highway 4 is out there, near where, what is it, the hospital in that direction. Anyway, between Pittsburg and Antioch is where Camp Stoneman is, and at Treasure Island.

00:27:15

Stine:

What was Treasure Island like?

00:27:18

Derheim:

Well, I can't remember too much about that, but I guess it was for entertaining the sailors out there, they had dances there. I can't remember exactly, it is not clear in my mind, but she says we did play there so I took her word for it. [laughs] She seems to remember all these little details which I don't.

00:27:41

Stine:

Are there any shows on tour that you remember particularly?

00:27:46

Derheim:

No, not really. Oh, we did go--we did play for, let's see, it probably was about in 1938 or '39 for an American Legion Convention in Winnemucca, Nevada.

00:28:02

Stine:

I have been to Winnemucca. It's in the middle of nowhere.

00:28:05

Derheim:

Yeah, I remember that, and I remember that one piece that I was so affected me or something was *Where or When*. We played that up there. I remember that one piece especially. And we went up there, it was quite a trip at that time too you know. Roads were not--no freeway between here and Nevada.

00:28:31

Stine:

How long did it take to get there?

00:28:31

Derheim:

I can't remember now, but we played, I think it was a three day convention, or whatever they had, and we played for them. One interesting things was, the drummers drums were--we were getting ready to come home I guess at the windup of the whole thing, and her drums were stolen, which was quite a thing to happen. But it was a good thing that it was over. Somehow or another, we had taken our instruments to

the cars to load up and somehow somebody wasn't watching what was going on, and the drums disappeared. It was a tragedy. But that's the one trip that I do have good memories of. Quite clear.

00:29:23

Stine:

Did you ever get to meet some of the people in the audience when you were performing?

00:29:27

Derheim:

Yes we did.

00:29:38

Stine:

Like, who would be in your typical audience?

00:29:38

Derheim:

Well,--

00:29:40

Stine:

I mean, obviously service people.

00:29:42

Derheim:

Well, we played for dances, we used to play in a little dance hall up in Berkeley once every week, I think, and sometimes we would have eight or ten people there. [laughs] That was quite intimate.

00:29:56

Stine:

Do you remember where that was?

00:29:57

Derheim:

It was just above College Avenue, I can't remember the cross street of where it was. Anyway, I can remember that pretty well, but other times, I remember we'd play over at some dances. It must have been during the war or right after the war over in San Francisco at a hall on Golden Gate Avenue. I remember kind of doing that. Cause I had a cousin, at the time, who was in the Navy and he happened to be in town at the time, and he came to that dance. So, those connections kind of make you remember.

00:30:04

Stine:

Right, yeah.

00:30:40

Derheim:

That's about it. What else can you think of?

00:30:45

Stine:

Were there any clubs that you would go to, not necessarily to play in, but you would go to on your own free time in Oakland or in Berkeley, Richmond?

00:30:48

Derheim:

No, not--well, my folks, my father belonged to a couple different lodges in Oakland. And when my brothers and I were young children, they'd take us with them, and we would sit in the anteroom and play cards while they were-- And then we got a little older and we could go in and play cards with the grown ups. And that's about one of the only things I remember going to when I was young. And then after I was married, my husband belonged to the Masons and the Eastern Star groups, and I realized that he would miss going to Eastern Star meetings, and I not being a member couldn't go. So, he wouldn't go without me, so I eventually joined that, and still am a member. Go to meetings as often as I can. I think that was about the only club that I ever joined, and then I go to Berkeley high alumni affairs. The ladies have a group now that has been going on for maybe six or seven years at least, I guess, and Marian and I have played for them for the luncheons several times. It's a group that's graduated from Berkeley High fifty years or more, and I am a sixty-six year alumni now. So, we have been playing for that and enjoying it. Otherwise, that's not really a club, but it is something.

00:32:46

Stine:

Organization. I am curious about, maybe dance halls or nightclubs that you would have gone to.

00:32:54

Derheim:

My husband and I used to go over to, let's see, what was the name of that club? 365 Club on Columbus Avenue after we were married.

00:33:02

Stine:

Oh, Bimbos.

00:33:06

Derheim:

Yeah. Yeah. We went to that. Quite often we would go to dinner and dancing, and other than that--.

00:33:14

Stine:

During the war, were there any in the East Bay that--?

00:33:17

Derheim:

No, like I was busy working everyday, and didn't go out for dances myself, other than what we played for ourselves. So, I did more playing for dances than actually dancing. [laughs]

00:33:37

Stine:

Do you remember outside of the places where you toured to, any of the local places where you would play? You mentioned that dance hall in Berkeley where you had a regular gig it sounds like.

00:33:49

Derheim:

Yeah, I think it was called Wilkins Hall, but it was--I can't remember the name of the street it was on, but it was just above College Avenue, and down toward--between I guess Dwight Way and Ashby, somewhere in there. And that was, you know, as I said, sometimes we would have a pretty good crowd, and then another time we would have eight or ten people maybe.

00:34:19

Stine:

The audiences that would come to see you perform, and come to dance, were they ethnically diverse or racially diverse or was it--?

00:34:29

Derheim:

You mean the people that came to dance?

00:34:29

Stine:

Yeah, the people that came to dance.

00:34:31

Derheim:

Most of them were pretty good dancers, I do remember, and it was good to play for people who really could dance and were good dancers. Otherwise, I didn't know much about them.

00:34:49

Stine:

Was it mostly white people or black people?

00:34:51

Derheim:

Oh, yes. In those days. In fact, when I went to school, there were only three or four blacks and we had some Asians, Japanese children in my school. After we got out of high school, I often wondered what happened to those because they were taken to the internment camps, so there never was anymore association with them, but even in south Berkeley, at the time, there were very few blacks. But they were all nice, good kids, and they were all more interested in sports, like they are now really. That hasn't changed. But the Asian and Japanese children were the very intelligent ones in the class, I can remember that.

00:35:54

Stine:

Were you friends with anyone that was of Japanese heritage?

00:35:53

Derheim:

Yeah, I was good friends with some of them, but as I say, lost all contact after that time, and I never knew whether they came back to Berkeley. Or--although, I did realize that one of the boys in my class, in junior high and Berkeley High too, he became an optometrist and I used to see the sign on the building down on Ashby Avenue in Berkeley. Eichi Tsuchida That was his name. I remembered.

00:36:25

Stine:

Did you ever stop in and visit?

00:36:25

Derheim:

No, I never did. Never did. I guess I should have.

00:36:31

Stine:

That's the neat thing about having been here so long, knowing people that are still around.

00:36:37

Derheim:

Well, I lived in--born in Berkeley, and I went to Oakland when my folks moved to Oakland, and back to Berkeley in an apartment, and then Oakland in an apartment, and then to Berkeley in a house when I got married, and now to Albany in a condominium. But it has always been in this East Bay territory. I love it around here, and I would never move away. I think it is kind of sad when--well, of course people do have children. That is quite a different story. The children like them to move where they are. But, not having had children, why I just stay right here because it is kind of hard to move from most of your friends, you know, and all. And I still have a lot of friends around here.

00:37:34

Stine:

I wonder if, just going back to the war years, if you have any impression of the kinds of big changes that happened in Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond, in the whole East Bay really with all these people coming in, you know for--

00:37:48

Derheim:

That's right. Like Richmond, especially. Like in Marian's case, you know, she has told me several times how the teachers had big classes and they just didn't have enough room for all of them because it was such an influx of people for the shipyards, and you had to take care of them. But, I was never involved in that because I didn't get into teaching, but well, there were lots of changes. When I went work in that period of time, I went on a train and ferryboat. There was no--yes, the bridges were, the Bay Bridge was open when I went to work at SP, but there still were a lot of changes. And then, of course, over the years, freeways and all. They grew up and extended and all that because the main road out of Oakland and Berkeley and this area was San Pablo Avenue. It was Highway 40, which went all the way East. No freeway. So, that's a big change, and otherwise, I can't remember a whole lot of things that, you know, changed drastically. Just kind of--

00:39:15

Stine:

Day to day, did it seem like, clearly with the war, you know, there was rationing and all these other things.

00:39:24

Derheim:

Gasoline rationing, tire rationing, sugar, meat, hose, et cetera.

00:39:27

Stine:

Yeah, but in addition to that, I wonder if on a day-to-day basis if you ever experienced being in contact with new people from different places or--?

00:39:38

Derheim:

Yes, during the war. That was one of the things. The wartime helped change dramatically, sometime, you know, the girls would come into the office and work under me. They would come because their husbands were shipped out here, and they were living here for a while. Then, all of the sudden, the husband would get transferred somewhere else, and they would quit, and sometimes, people would come to work in the

morning and they would be gone by noon. So, there was a very definite change in the--and then gradually the fellas, who were all in the immediate department where I was, they were drafted into the army or navy, and it was mostly women after that. There were, you know, a few of the younger fellas, of course, that came in. After the war was over, there were more fellas that worked under me. I can remember, you know, a lot of different changes that way, but it was all, as I say, well worth it.

00:40:51

Stine:

Well, let's talk about your time at SP, Southern Pacific. When did you start working there? And how that-

-

00:40:56

Derheim:

It was in March of 1942. Right after the beginning of the war.

00:41:01

Stine:

Did you--how did you find out about the job?

00:41:09

Derheim:

As I say, from the orchestra leaders father who worked there. And asked me if I would like to come over, as long as I wasn't working--well he didn't realize that I didn't care about teaching anyway. But, my mother was very upset when I went to work at an office. "You ought to be a school teacher." "No, not me." So, then I was there until 1958.

00:41:33

Stine:

What did you start out doing there?

00:41:33

Derheim:

It was a messenger job, just the lowliest of jobs maybe overqualified. But it grew-- eventually advanced to file clerk and then to head file clerk and that was how I resigned in that one department.

00:41:48

Stine:

And what was the department you were in?

00:41:49

Derheim:

Transportation. That's why I say they handled freight and passenger trains all over the country and it was really interesting. And then I resigned and got married, and I kept myself busy more then helping my folks and my aunts who were not in the best of health, and so I kind of saw them through health-wise, and took care of their affairs and kept me pretty busy after that after I was supposedly retired. And taking care of the house as well.

00:42:30

Stine:

I wonder if you could maybe take me through just a typical day, starting out at SP, what that was like for you.

00:42:39

Derheim:

Hmm. At a typical day. Well, it depended on whether I went by ferry or car or train at different times.

00:42:45

Stine:

Did that change day-to-day or depending?

00:42:43

Derheim:

Depending. Like, well, I had a roommate on College Avenue just above Ashby, just above College Avenue. And sometimes we would get up a little late in the morning and then had to drive to work instead of depending on the train. And in those days the traffic was not like it is now either. I would hate to be driving everyday to work nowadays. That is one thing that I don't miss. But, as I say, days when we had lots of time, you know if we were starting out early, we would drive down to the ferry and take the ferry over.

00:43:30

Stine:

The one from Oakland?

00:43:30

Derheim:

Uh huh. Yeah, down at Seventh Street. We would go down Seventh Street and park somewhere along there and go to the ferry. And it came in right at the Ferry Building, and the SP Building was right within a block of there. The poor little SP Building which is just dwarfed now with all the high rises around there. It is hard to look and find it. But those are changing times. But, as I say, each day at work was a challenge and it was never a dull moment. And, as I say, I enjoyed it the whole time I was there, and made a lot of good friends that I have still from there. In fact, there are about fourteen, sixteen of us that get together every Christmas time, before Christmas for a brunch somewhere, and they are old friends from my working at the SP and that's a good thing.

00:44:42

Stine:

Well, it sounds like--how many people in your band were in the Pirateers? How many of them were working at SP?

00:44:50

Derheim:

Well, actually, actually, this girl here [points to picture] the trumpet player, she worked for me at SP, and the bandleaders sister worked for me at the SP, and one who played piano, her step-brother worked at the SP and I got to know him very well. It's kind of, you know, a good combination. There were several that, let's see, a couple others that worked in--that played in the dance orchestra at different times, came to work over there at the SP It was all meant to be, I guess.

00:45:43

Stine:

Once you had quit in 1944--quit playing in the band--

00:45:49

Derheim:

That's when I had to quit the dance band, yeah.

00:45:48

Stine:

Did they keep playing for several years after that?

00:45:53

Derheim:

Yeah, they did. I can't remember now how many years. And she, Marilyn had small combos that would go for different jobs that they got, but I can't remember how many years after that they did play, you know, for dances because I wasn't involved. But we are still very good friends, and as I say, five of us there still get together. When we started getting together for these luncheons every two months it all came about because Marian and her husband had their fiftieth anniversary, wedding anniversary, and we all were invited to that. And someone said, "Let's not wait another fifty years to get together." So, my husband and I having belonged to the country club, I said, "If you want to get together some time, I can invite them to the country club for luncheon, anytime they want." So, it started right after that, which is ten years ago now, and we have been getting to lunch and there's about, I guess about eight or nine of us started, and now we are down to five. But we are keeping up as long as we can.

00:47:07

Stine:

That's great. Now, when you worked at Southern Pacific, I know you'd said that's where you met your husband, can you tell me a little bit about how you met?

00:47:17

Derheim:

Well, I met him, I guess, from the time that I first started work over there. He was married at the time, but his first wife passed away. After that is when he asked me out and we decided to get married. That was in 1958. He was considerably older than I, but it didn't seem to matter. He was the type of person who was young acting, and he enjoyed golf. That's when I started playing golf, after we got married. That (golf) I enjoyed very much for, well, I still belong to the country club, but just as a social member. I have given up golf for--because I am enjoying my music much more now that I am back to it. We had belonged to the country club since 1960, so I have good memories from that too, and a lot of friends through that. So, as I say, you never can have too many friends. I found that out. But, it is important to have a couple of special ones, and Marian's one of them. So, what else can I tell you?

00:48:35

Stine:

Let's see. I think there are some things I will go back to in a little bit about the band, and we have been talking about the war, but I haven't quite asked you some of the questions I was thinking of. I was curious, we had talked a little bit about what had changed during the war, but do you remember Pearl Harbor? What were your feelings when that--?

00:49:02

Derheim:

Yes I do remember Pearl Harbor. My younger brother was always interested in baseball, sports, particularly baseball, and he played semi-pro baseball. Well, that Sunday morning my family were all over to Alameda watching his baseball game, and we came home, and I don't know whether it was on the radio in the car on the way home or how we found out, but anyway, that's what we were doing Pearl Harbor Day, I will always remember that. And, let's see, you said something else that brought something to mind. Oh and then I do--I was saying that Marian and I were talking about this kind of thing the other night. I said, "I remember the day the war was over and Market Street was quite a place because our office was right, you know, you could look out right down onto Market Street." I still remember that very vividly.

00:50:04

Stine:

What do you remember about that day? What were people doing?

00:50:12

Derheim:

Well, shouting, and you know, just crowds in the street. I can remember, it was just of celebration. That was--it was over, and people knew that their brothers and fathers and sisters and all would be coming home, you know, from the war and all. It was quite a day. I do remember that. It was a special day.

00:50:46

Stine:

What are some of the things, we just touched a little bit on rationing, I wonder how was that to you, and growing up during the Depression, if there was anything that kind of stuck with you from that time?

00:50:58

Derheim:

Well, I can remember, we had to--I didn't know, because of my father's job we got a little extra gas, but it wasn't very much. Just so many gallons a month I guess it was. And sugar was another thing that was rationed, and tires and cars. They don't make cars during the war, so there were no new cars around for those years and what else.

00:51:25

Stine:

I wonder if that made it hard to tour when you were touring with the band?

00:51:28

Derheim:

Well, we just had to do with the cars that we had at the time.

00:51:34

Stine:

Do you remember what kind of cars you had?

00:51:32

Derheim:

Oh yes, I remember every car I had.

00:51:39

Stine:

You do?

00:51:38

Derheim:

Oh, I do. First car I had was a little Chevrolet, a brown Chevrolet coupe. And then after that I had a--

00:51:46

Stine:

When were you able to buy your first car?

00:52:15

Derheim:

Well, Marian says, "You got a car every--so many years."

00:52:18

Stine:

Well, when you got your first car was it from money you had saved up at working at Southern Pacific?

00:52:25

Derheim:

Oh yes. And I guess my folks might have helped me a little bit, then I repaid them. Then the next car I got was a 1950 Lincoln car. Then I got a '52 Buick. That was pretty soon after. I don't know why I changed that one. Anyway, then I had that--no, '53 Buick it was. It was a coupe too, a two door car. And, then, when I was married in '58, my husband had a '53 Buick also, so we disposed of both of those and got a Lincoln at that time. Then we had a series of Lincoln's over the years, and then finally back to Ford Monarch or Mercury Monarch, I guess it was. Mercury Montego, and then back to Buicks I think. Yeah, back to Buicks. And then now I have and Oldsmobile, so it has been quite a series of cars. I like cars.

00:53:29

Stine:

Sounds like it. [laughs]

00:53:31

Derheim:

Marian said, "You got cars so often." I said, "Well, I don't know." The spirit moved us to do that. And that was kind of--the new car was always kind of nice.

00:53:48

Stine:

How old were you when you were able to purchase your first car?

00:53:51

Derheim:

47'. I was twenty-seven.

00:53:58

Stine:

Prior to that you had just been getting around on the, is it the key system that was--?

00:54:01

Derheim:

Well, I had those two cars, used cars before then.

00:54:04

Stine:

Oh, okay. So, you are talking about your first new car?

00:54:06

Derheim:

Yeah, because I had a car to drive to college in, back and forth because I lived in Berkeley then. The College was down on the lake when I first went, and when I graduated too it was down there. Then they moved up on the hill where they are now. Off of Mountain Boulevard, Highway 13 some time in 1960, I guess they moved up there. Anyway, I graduated from the old building where the Kaiser building actually is now. High-rise right there on that corner. It was quite a spot. Old, old building, but it was--and it was smaller of course too. And the classes were smaller in those days too.

00:55:03

Stine:

What was downtown Oakland like then? Was it bustling?

00:55:03

Derheim:

It was--yes. Very bustling in those days, and for several years afterward. But then, I don't know, it's the out lying shopping malls that just meant the downfall in Oakland I think.

00:55:23

Stine:

Yeah, the big department stores are out.

00:55:27

Derheim:

And then, you know, the really overpowering blacks in the area, I guess, probably had something to do with it because it got so it was not, you know, much fun to go to Oakland. In fact, I barely get down to Oakland anytime, maybe to go to the Paramount for a show or something like that once in a while, but I don't go shopping down there. Nothing to shop for. Nothing to shop for around here either because we don't have a department store. Makes it very bad. But, anyway, that's how times have changed. So, what else can we think about.

00:56:14

Stine:

Well, let's see. I think the tape is about to run out. So, I am going to just change tapes. We have about five minutes left, but I am going to go ahead and we can take a little break.

00:56:22

Derheim:

Okay.

00:56:46

Stine:

So, we had started to talk a little about rationing and gasoline. What are some of the other things that you remember?

00:56:54

Derheim:

And then I can remember something kind of strange. My brothers and I all graduated from Berkeley High. My older brother graduated in 1936 and, at that time, Berkeley High had an original old auditorium, and my folks were I think the only ones able to attend as it was so limited in seating, so I think my folks were the only ones in the family that could go to his graduation. When I graduated in 1936, he graduated in 1932 and I graduated in 1936. I graduated with such a large class from the Harmon Gym up at Cal.

00:57:32

Stine:

Oh, yeah.

00:57:33

Derheim:

I think most of the family could go to that because it was, you know, more room, but we had between 425 and 450 graduates in the class. Then, my younger brother graduated in December of 1941, and guess where, from the Oaks Theatre in Berkeley up on Solano Avenue because of the blackouts we were

experiencing every so often. Because of that, they had the graduation in the Oaks Theatre. So, we all graduated in different spots, but all from Berkeley High. Kind of unusual.

00:58:13

Stine:

Sounds like the high school must have been bursting at the seams at that point.

00:58:18

Derheim:

It really was. And then they had the new, I don't know just when the new auditorium was built there, but way after our time.

00:58:30

Stine:

Yeah, well what about the blackouts? Do you remember any other--?

00:58:35

Derheim:

Yeah, well, you just couldn't have any lights on. And then you'd have to--if you were out driving, you would have to drive with dim lights and that wasn't fun. I know my brother, my older brother lived out in Orinda at the time, and sometimes we would have to come back into Berkeley from Orinda with the lights dim.

00:58:59

Stine:

That's such a windy, kind of treacherous road I would imagine.

00:59:03

Derheim:

That's right. And they lived way up on the hill. It was hard to find your way down. But those were things that happened and were necessary to do. We didn't take any long trips that are for sure, during the wartime because of gas mainly.

00:59:25

Stine:

Do you remember any kind of rationing for clothes or shoes?

00:59:30

Derheim:

Well, silk, I think. You know, stockings. There was something about stockings. I guess nylons didn't come in until after that. I don't believe so. Anyway, silk stockings were quite a rarity as I recall. I think that's one of the things that was scarce. Otherwise, I don't know about clothing or remember too much about it because we got by somehow. What else is there about rationing? Also shoes.

01:00:06

Stine:

Well, with food maybe too. Do you remember having to be creative in what you could make?

01:00:14

Derheim:

Well, yeah. That's right, you did. Because, like sugar, you just could have so much sugar for a certain time then, so I guess there was not a lot of baking. Probably that was curtailed some. Otherwise, can't remember. That's just too far back.

01:00:38

Stine:

Oh, that's fine. So, you were living at home with your parents all the way through college?

01:00:44

Derheim:

Yes, uh huh. Until 1950, I think is when I moved to an apartment with my first roommate, and we were together about four years. She eloped, and then another friend from the SP, they were both friends from Southern Pacific, in the office. This second time, I moved to an apartment on Alcatraz Avenue in Oakland, just below Telegraph with this second friend, and then it was from there that I got married and moved out to a house in Berkeley. My husband had the house already, and that's when I moved there and that was in 1958. I was there until six years ago last month. I finally had it a big house was just too much for me. So, I decided that I that I was not going to leave the area, as I say, I love it too much. So, I found this, and I moved here in October of '96, six years ago. So, that was another big step I took, I guess, moving into an apartment with a friend, my father didn't care, but my mother said, "Why do you have to move out for?" "Well, I wanted to be a little independent." It was about time. So, that's how I moved from my parent's house, and as I say, she thought it was this terrible "What will our friends think?" I said, "They won't think anything I don't think because they know we get along, and have no problems at all." Anyway, she was just not for that, anymore than my going to work in an office instead of teaching. She had her own ideas about those things.

01:02:57

Stine:

Do you think she was a little more traditional?

01:03:00

Derheim:

I think so. She was kind of, well, I don't know about conservative, but well she got-- I think liked to depend on me a little bit. More than actually was necessary. My father was still around to help her with things, but she kind of liked the idea of having me under her thumb I guess. That's probably it.

01:03:33

Stine:

How did your parents feel about you being a musician?

01:03:37

Derheim:

Oh, they were all for that. They got me started in music, so they thought that was fine.

01:03:46

Stine:

How was that living at home and working late at night or being away?

01:03:58

Derheim:

Yeah, that didn't bother me. They always knew somebody was bringing me home if I didn't drive myself, you know, take my car to one of the jobs, they knew somebody would bring me. So, that was no problem because they enjoyed the music too.

01:04:15

Stine:

So, did they come to any of your dances, performances?

01:04:18

Derheim:

Oh, they would come to concerts, yeah, but my mother passed away many years ago, late sixties, and my father passed away only about a year after we were married in 1959, so they didn't get to come to too much of the music, although all my recitals at Holy Names and things like that, they would be there while I was at college. So, they were all for that.

01:04:51

Stine:

Yeah, and were they all for the all girl band?

01:04:55

Derheim:

Yes. In fact, my mother would go to the rehearsals with me-- the band rehearsals.

01:05:00

Stine:

How often would you rehearse with that band?

01:05:04

Derheim:

Once a week. Generally once a week. And then we would have the job on Friday and Saturday generally.

01:05:10

Stine:

So, all your weekends were kind of booked with--?

01:05:13

Derheim:

Hmm?

01:05:14

Stine:

Were most of your weekends through college booked with playing?

01:05:17

Derheim:

Mostly were. Yeah. So, it kept us pretty busy. But, as I say, my mother enjoyed it, and, you know, then she would visit with the other mothers at the band rehearsals so it was fun for her, I think.

01:05:36

Stine:

So, what was that like, being part of an all girl band? Did you feel like that was anything special?

01:05:44

Derheim:

Well, it was kind of special. It was really. People that we tell nowadays, you know, think "Well that was pretty-- that was kind of unusual," and it was. After I was out of it, she did have to have fellas for certain instruments at times, but I didn't play too much for them then. It was mostly; the whole time I was playing was mostly girls. It was, as I say, it was probably unusual.

01:06:20

Stine:

I think Marian, I got to hear some of her interview, and I think she had talked about there being a male singer.

01:06:26

Derheim:

Yeah, that was the one thing.

01:06:30

Stine:

That's when you were in the band?

01:06:31

Derheim:

That's was when they were in the band. There was a male singer. But he was, at that time he was the only fella. In fact, he was the one that the girl eloped with, and then Marion took her place. It was the singer in the band. That's kind of interesting.

01:06:51

Stine:

Yeah, yeah.

01:06:53

Derheim:

The one who married the singer. She lives in Las Vegas now. So, she is still around, but doesn't get together with us. And the girl that played piano at that time, lives in Virginia.

01:07:09

Stine:

So, I am curious, being an all girl band-- Well first, were there other all girl bands around that you knew of?

01:07:17

Derheim:

Not that we knew of. Not around here at least that we knew about. There was that-- I don't know if it was then or a little after that time, it was called Phil Spitalni Orchestra. I think that was a mostly girl orchestra back somewhere in the Midwest or back East I think. I guess it was a little after our time that they were active. And that was quite an orchestra.

01:07:51

Stine:

Did you ever feel being in this band that you got a lot of attention just because you were an all girl band?

01:07:58

Derheim:

Probably. Probably, yeah. People thought it was unusual I think. Getting back to musicians and bands that I enjoyed was Fred Waring was one of the ones, and he had the singers also, but he was a good musician that I appreciated and enjoyed hearing.

01:08:28

Stine:

Well, it looks to me like you guys had some pretty nice costumes or outfits that you --

01:08:33

Derheim:

Yeah we did have different outfits and--

01:08:36

Stine:

What other kinds of things did you wear? Do you remember?

01:08:38

Derheim:

Hmm?

01:08:39

Stine:

Do you remember some of the--?

01:08:41

Derheim:

Well, I think Marian remembers them better than I did really. This was just kind of a, the dark part I guess must have been black and the other was aqua blue or what's the other kind, not teal, but it was-- hmm, the top was some kind of blue. Some shade of blue I think. And I can't remember what other ones we wore. I really can't. I don't have any recollection of--

01:09:17

Stine:

Did it change from venue to venue, or show to show, or every year would you have?

01:09:22

Derheim:

No, we would use the same ones for quite a while, and then finally get a change. All get a change. As I say, I really don't have any remembrance of the rest of the costumes or whatever you call. I think Marian remembers them better than I do, and this girl who was the leader, Marilyn has a vivid memory of all kinds of things like that. She has just recently moved out to Rossmoor. She lost her husband also, and had a big house in Orinda. She moved to Rossmoor. She still remembers all these little details.

01:10:07

Stine:

Do you remember, when you were in the band, did you get any attention from men in the audience?

01:10:13

Derheim:

Well, sometimes. Sometimes we would. And as I say, the only one, this one that played the sax, she eloped with the singer.

01:10:32

Stine:

Did you have time for dating when you were in the band?

01:10:34

Derheim:

Some, yeah, but not a whole lot. In those days I didn't date a lot. Marian, her future husband dated a lot. In fact, I knew him before she did. He went to Berkeley High School the same time that I did. He was a year behind me at Berkeley High, and then Marian had a little group before she joined this group, and she

needed a drummer at one time. She probably told you that, or told her interviewer that whole story. And then he would go to the dances all the time with her. You know, pick her up and take her to all the dances where we would play, and helped with the leader's father getting the stands and all the stuff together. Then, they finally got married in 1942, about five years later. So, let's see, what else? I can't remember anything else, but once in a while something comes to.

01:11:42

Stine:

Well, let's see. Was it hard being a female musician at that time? Were you part of a union when you were playing in this band?

01:11:51

Derheim:

Yes, we did have to join the union, and then I did have to-- part of the time, during the dance orchestra days and when I played down at the park in Oakland, in the municipal band. I had to be in the union then too. So, I had been a union member for over forty years, in fact, had a lifetime membership until I retired I wasn't playing in the band anymore. I was supposed to have free membership after forty years in it. I think that was the term at that time. And then, all of the sudden, after I was not playing anymore in the band, they started an annual fee that I was supposed to pay. I said, "You aren't getting me any jobs," so, I just dropped out of the union. What we play for now, we just, we don't ever have any problem. It's just these little things that we play for.

01:12:44

Stine:

Right. Back then, is this the AFM, is that correct?

01:12:49

Derheim:

Yeah. American Federation of Musicians, Local Six. I do remember that much.

01:12:57

Stine:

Was that easy to join being a woman at that time?

01:13:01

Derheim:

Oh, it wasn't that hard. In fact, they insisted that we did because we were playing in these different places, and they pretty near forced us to join. Which, I guess, in the end turned out alright, but I got out when I could.

01:13:26

Stine:

Do you remember at all how this band was advertised? Do you remember fliers?

01:13:32

Derheim:

Well, I guess, I don't know, I guess probably word of mouth more than anything. And then we would play for something and then someone would hear us and we would be invited some place else. I don't know otherwise, and how her father got jobs for us otherwise, but he did most of that.

01:13:56

Stine:

Did you ever play with opening acts or other acts along with you?

01:14:01

Derheim:

No, not that I remember. I don't think so. It was just the band.

01:14:20

Stine:

Did you feel like people took your band seriously?

01:14:25

Derheim:

Well, I guess as serious as possible, and always seemed to enjoy the playing. So, I think it was successful.

01:14:44

Stine:

Let's see. Back-- you mentioned a lot of the artists that you were interested in.

01:14:54

Derheim:

Yeah, like those big band leaders, and then while I was still at Holy Names in the college orchestra, I did have the opportunity to play for the person who was conducting the San Francisco Symphony at the time, Pierre Monteaux, he was a Frenchman. The sister, the nun who was my violin teacher and conducted the orchestra at Holy Names had invited-- knew him, and invited him over to the college to listen to our orchestra. One time and it happened to be one time when I was playing a solo with the orchestra so that was kind of--

01:15:36

Stine:

Good timing.

01:15:37

Derheim:

Yeah, exciting. Something I will always remember. That was a high point. And, what else. I guess that was, of course that was with the college orchestra, classical. And--

01:16:00

Stine:

Did you feel a real distinction between playing violin in an orchestra and then saxophone in--?

01:16:04

Derheim:

Oh, quite a while we were playing some jobs. In fact, we played summer jobs up Clear Lake. Did Marian tell you about--or tell about that part? And I played a few pieces on the violin during that period, but it is different. Quite a bit different than playing the saxophone. Even now, I sometimes when she insists I get the violin out and try to play something, but the violin is something that if you put it down, and don't keep it up, it is hard to get back to it. I said, "I don't want you listening to my squeaks." She said, "I will listen to it. You just start playing again." But I haven't been doing too much of it. It is hard. Actually, it's a different type of music. In a way, it is harder to play than classical, you know the popular kind of music. It is harder to get used to the bowing, and you know, different things with a violin than on a sax. So, I haven't done too much of it lately.

01:17:18

Stine:

What is it about the sax that you like so much?

01:17:19

Derheim:

Well, it is just an easier instrument to play, and I love playing it. I really do. When we were in the dance orchestra, we had clarinet, alto and tenor sax, three instruments, but I have only the alto now that I play, and still enjoy. That's another interesting thing. When I first bought the alto sax that I have now, and have had since 1948 I believe is when I bought it.

01:17:51

Stine:

Oh, you still have it?

01:17:53

Derheim:

Yes, I do still have it. And, at that time, it is a French made Selmer, which is the best you could get, and I paid just under five hundred dollars for it. It's been about two or three years ago now that I had the whole thing repadded, not regilded or whatever you call it, re-finished, but just re-padded and adjusted and made like new, except for the finish. Cost me five hundred dollars. Yep, it's another big change.

01:18:32

Stine:

Yeah, five hundred dollars.

01:18:34

Derheim:

And a brand new one costs almost five thousand. So, that's one hundred percent inflation. And, you know, that's changing times.

01:18:49

Stine:

Five hundred dollars in 1948, that's pretty--

01:18:52

Derheim:

That's a lot of money then. It really was a lot. Because, well, I was only getting probably five something a day at work. Salaries didn't go up very often in those days, and to save up to get the instrument was an accomplishment. But I wanted the best and got the best. And it still sounds very good to me. Not my playing so much, but the tone of it and all is still very good.

01:19:32

Stine:

Yeah, it sounds like it on the recording we were listening to.

01:19:37

Derheim:

So, it was worth while, and I don't want to-- I am very happy, something that makes me very happy now is that one of my little great nephews is starting on the clarinet now. So, I said, "Awe, somebody in the family is going to get musical. I think he will probably get my saxophone eventually. If he keeps his interest up, and he seems to be, he is only eleven, but just like -- just this last summer he's gotten in. He started on the recorder. And now he has changed his-- he has a clarinet, and he is doing okay. Marian and I have gone to hear the group they live up in Windsor, up above Santa Rosa, and the last time we were up there he played a few little simple pieces, you know, even on the clarinet, and he has only been started on it since September, I think. So, that makes me very happy.

01:20:36

Stine:

A lot of potential there.

01:20:38

Derheim:

He told me that they are going to have a little recital in November and then January and February, I think. So, I got the dates, I said, "We will be up there for your recitals." Gotta have some backing. Need to know that I am happy for him.

01:20:57

Stine:

Yeah, yeah. Keep it going.

01:21:00

Derheim:

Because, for a while, I didn't think any of them were going to get interested in music and I was kind of sad about that. But this is good.

01:21:10

Stine:

Now, playing the saxophone, what-- could you talk a little about the performative aspect of that. I know the saxophone is usually kind of a main soloing instrument a lot of times in jazz bands, dance bands, swing bands. Was that something that you really enjoyed doing? Soloing?

01:21:31

Derheim:

Yeah, I did. I did--a couple of different times. Once when the park band had a concert over in Marin. I was able to-- I had the pleasure of doing a sax solo on the theme from *Love Story*, if you know what that is. Anyway, I did it down at the park and I did it over there. That was kind of fun, and an honor to have been asked to do it. So, --

01:22:09

Stine:

And back when you were performing in the late thirties and forties--

01:22:08

Derheim:

Back then, well, we played as the three together, you know had third part harmony, and played. And that was good. We had two altos and a tenor. So, Marian and I were the altos and then this other girl was the tenor sax player mainly, you know, but we could--Marian and I could change to clarinets too, and have all three clarinets, depending on the orchestra arrangements.

01:22:43

Stine:

So, you would switch back and forth.

01:22:44

Derheim:

Yeah. Clarinet, clarinet to sax. So, there's lots of little things, you know, that are kind of interesting. But then I got rid of my clarinet. I guess I still had my clarinet until just before I moved from my house down here, but the tenor sax I got rid of a long time ago. I didn't have anymore use for that when I wasn't playing in the orchestra so, in the dance orchestra, so I had no use for another instrument. So, that's it.

01:23:20

Stine:

I guess I am curious now, is there anything else that you remember from the war years that you think that I haven't touched on?

01:23:34

Derheim:

Haven't covered?

01:23:32

Stine:

And do you remember, I asked about your aspirations at the end of high school, and what you kind of envisioned what you were going to be when you grew up kind of.

01:23:49

Derheim:

Another thing I kind of had a dream to do is play in an orchestra on a cruise ship, but I never got to do that. That was another aspiration I had, but that never did come through. So far I have gone on a cruise. We went to Alaska a couple of years ago and that was good. I enjoyed the entertainment on that. They had a good band on that. In fact, I took my mouth piece along, and I thought, well they usually have an amateur night on that type of thing, and I asked about it, but the musicians didn't particularly want their instruments used because there was no way to carry a saxophone around. So, I didn't get to do that. So, we ended up not going to the entertainment on amateur night. Said, "Okay, if I can't play, we won't go." [laughs] But, that's the only time I got to see what that would have been like.

01:25:00

Stine:

Yeah, very close.

01:25:02

Derheim:

Hmm Hmm. Yeah, it's close.

01:25:06

Stine:

So, thinking about your aspirations for your life, you know, thinking as an eighteen year old, and then going through having played in a band, and playing in the municipal band, and then going through the war, I guess going through the war is kind of uncertain when it is going to end. You don't know what your life is going to be like, and I was wondering where you were then, what you were thinking about in terms of aspirations.

01:25:30

Derheim:

No, we didn't. No, I mean, there was no way to think about that much. Just day to day and getting along. And then, of course, after that time, when I played in both the college symphony and the Oakland Band, I thoroughly enjoyed all that. Besides just ordinary daily living. As long as I had something to do with music I was fine. So, we have had quite interesting lives I think. During these eighty plus years.

01:26:14

Stine:

Yeah, well it's great that you are still playing. I think that's amazing.

01:26:16

Derheim:

Well, that's what--when we play for this convalescent hospital down there, it's sad to say, but many people in there are younger than we are, and we are still playing. I thank my lucky stars that we are able to. We are fortunate.

01:26:39

Stine:

We had talked, I think we had talked before we were on tape about the formation of the trio that you are in now. If you just want to talk about when that started?

01:26:46

Derheim:

Well, Marian and I started this playing together, we got together after we started going to luncheons, you know, and we said, "Why don't--I didn't realize that she played piano so well." All these years I didn't know that, which is a shame because we should have been getting together before. We would always correspond at Christmas time, but as far as--she had her family, and I was married and going a different way. But, as I say, we still corresponded at least at Christmas, but it wasn't until this anniversary that they had, that we realized that we should be doing more than that. And then, when I found out that she played piano so well, and we could practice together, we started doing that, and then since her daughter's partner, and they live down in Carmel, it is far for them to come, she found out that he played guitar, and suggested why doesn't he bring his guitar sometime and play along with us. And that's how we started. Now, whenever they come up, like they were up last weekend, and we practiced about an hour. I hadn't been able to play my sax for a whole month in October because I had this second cataract surgery, and the doctor said--eye doctor said, "No saxophone playing for a month after this is done." So, in September, April, when I had the first one, left eye done, she said--we had a couple of little jobs we were going to play, and I said, "Alright to play the saxophone?" And she said, "No, no, no, no. You can't do that for a month." So, this second one I had to go through the same waiting to play, but last week the month was up so we started practicing again. And when they were here with her, last Friday and Saturday, we practiced about an hour together after-- late evening on Friday evening. So, now we will be able to do more of it. We've got to practice. We have to keep our, keep your lip up, and she has to keep her--well she can, she says in fact that every time she goes by the piano almost, she has to sit down and play. We're just hooked on music.

01:29:04

Stine:

Sounds like it.

01:29:11

Derheim:

To put it bluntly. What else can I think of? I don't know. I think you have drawn a lot out of me so far. More than I anticipated.

01:29:27

Stine:

Well, it is quite an experience. Well, we did already talk about Southern Pacific, but we could maybe go back a little bit, and I am kind of curious about how your job changed at the end of the war. Your job, it sounds like you were very much--

01:29:46

Derheim:

I was still in the same department, and well, it wasn't so much military anymore. Of course, that was over with, after a certain length of time, but there was still work to be done, and I was still in that same office until I resigned to be married.

01:30:09

Stine:

And what did--I don't think we caught this--what had your husband been doing at Southern Pacific.

01:30:11

Derheim:

He worked in that office. In fact, he started in the same kind of job as a messenger in that same department when he was only fifteen years old. He had to fudge a year on his age to get the job to go to work, but it was necessary, you know, he had to help out in his family, and so he had worked there for forty-nine years when he retired. So, and it happened that it was in the same department that I started in.

01:30:43

Stine:

So, did you both work together like literally in the same space?

01:30:50

Derheim:

Yeah, in the same department. In fact, that was one reason why I quit. I would have had to transfer to a different department if I still wanted to work for the railroad. So, he said, "If you don't want to keep working you don't have to." So, I said, "Okay, I'll resign." And I had plenty to do. As I say, helping my own folks, and my father's family. He had maiden aunts that needed help, you know, in their last days, so that is kind of how my days were spent for quite a while.

01:31:26

Stine:

Sounds like your family was very close.

01:31:29

Derheim:

Yeah, they were. Yeah. My father's family. My mother only had one sister so it was not--I couldn't help much there, but I did have--and was glad that I was able to help them. They had nobody else. There always has to be somebody in the family that does those things, and of course Marian and I both saw our husbands through too. And that was something that we were supposed to do, and were glad that we were able. Now, we are on our own and into music again.

01:32:18

Stine:

That's good.

01:32:23

Derheim:

Back to basics you might say.

01:32:23

Stine:

Well, this is kind of a little bit off subject, and kind of back to when you were talking about your cars. I am curious just about the kind of music that you listened to from that time period, all the way up to now? You said you really like the dance music?

01:32:39

Derheim:

Yeah, well I like classical; I like to listen to classical music too. And I used to like to go to the symphony once in a while, but mainly now, it's what we play that I listen to, and we don't get tired of listening to ourselves it seems like. We put a CD on, or I mean a tape on in the car and drive some place, and it passes the time very nicely. So, that's--

01:33:12

Stine:

And in terms of popular music from the forties, the fifties, the sixties?

01:33:17

Derheim:

Yeah, that's what we listened to. Play and listen to.

01:33:23

Stine:

Great, well is there anything else that you were thinking of that I didn't get to?

01:33:32

Derheim:

I can't think of any--I can't think of anything-- I should have asked you if you would have liked a cup of coffee or tea.

01:33:40

Stine:

Oh, that's fine.

01:33:42

Derheim:

I was very remiss.

01:33:47

Stine:

Oh no. But if you think of anything, you can always call, and we can talk again. Yeah, very easily.

01:33:54

Derheim:

Not really, I don't think. Well, one strange thing in my lifetime. I had always lived with my parents, and then I lived with these two friends from work in the apartments, and did nothing about decorating or anything like that or furnishings, you know, and then when I got married, I moved into my husband's house, which was all furnished and decorated and everything. This is the first time in my life that I ever was able to have a hand in my own picking out furniture or decorating or anything like that. It was Marion's son who helped me with all this doing; you know what I did here. When I moved in it was so plain, and he helped me with picking out paintings and doing work for me. Picking out carpeting, and linoleum, and all that sort of thing, which I had never done before, which is kind of unusual to almost be eighty years old before you have a chance to do that.

01:35:07

Stine:

Had to start from scratch.

01:35:09

Derheim:

Yeah, start from scratch. Yeah. So, that's kind of an interesting sideline.

01:35:17

Stine:

Yeah, when you were living with roommates, you didn't have a chance to do so much in apartments?

01:35:21

Derheim:

No, they were furnished apartments, so I didn't have much chance to do anything like that, so I didn't.

01:35:33

Stine:

That's just one other thing that made me think of. What was it like being a single woman living on your own in the city?

01:35:44

Derheim:

Well, actually, I wasn't alone really. First, I was with my parents, and then I was with these two roommates and then married. That was the first time I was alone, I tell you, after my husband passed away because I had always been living with someone. And that was different.

01:36:02

Stine:

I guess I meant more living as a woman--

01:36:04

Derheim:

Independent. Well, we were independent, actually, but at least you had company of a sort and we shared expenses, and that was a good way to do it and to be out on my own actually from my parents, which was different. And then, as I say, my first time I was actually by myself was when my husband passed away.

01:36:38

Stine:

Yeah, with your roommates did you share cooking?

01:36:39

Derheim:

Yeah, we shared cooking. Uh huh. I can't really remember, but we went out to eat a lot I guess too rather than come home from work and start. Actually, when we were in the apartments, I think we went out quite a bit too. And I remember--

01:36:58

Stine:

What kind of things would you do going out?

01:37:00

Derheim:

Well, going to a show or doing something like that together. I can remember one thing with the second roommate, on Monday nights when the stores were open in San Francisco, we would take off from work and go uptown shopping and then come home late, and after working all day and then walking around shopping, I can remember the minute we would get inside the door, we would take our shoes off, and climb up the--we lived on the third floor and there was no elevator in the apartment house. So, we would climb upstairs with our shoes off, and relieve ourselves of that anyway. It was kind of fun on Monday nights to do that, so it was a little diversion. But, that's, you know, being independent, on your own, it's really quite different. Nobody is saying you have to do this, you have to do that, or anything. You are just kind of your own boss, and it's kind of nice.

01:38:05

Stine:

Yeah, yeah.

01:38:07

Derheim:

So, that's my story.

01:38:10

Stine:

Great, well, thank you so much for sharing.

01:38:13

Derheim:

Well, it's been nice meeting you, and you are patient.

01:38:21

Stine:

Well, now that we have--now that we've talked quite a bit. Maybe we can just go through the photos with the camera at least. Here, I just stopped this so I can take it off the thing. I loved living alone because--

01:38:38

Derheim:

Probably shouldn't have this card in here. One of the times we played on the Red Oak, on the ship, you know, they wanted an enlargement of both of the pictures I guess they did. So, they took them to this Richmond Blueprint.

01:39:00

Stine:

So, had you guys played on the Red Oak with your combo? This is recently?

01:39:05

Derheim:

Uh huh. Yeah.

01:39:04

Stine:

That's pretty fun.

01:39:07

Derheim:

And then we played down in the warehouse where they have dinners. The museum and the Red Oak group--we played for dances for that too. And a couple of the times we played for that, different dinner dances that they had, they also had invited the orchestra from the Hornet over in Alameda, and that's a bunch of elderly men play in that. And we would take turns. They would play for a while, and then we would play for a while for the dancing. So, that was fun.

01:40:12

Stine:

Maybe I will get a picture of your CD too.

01:40:16

Derheim:

Okay, sure. Just help yourself to that. That picture isn't the greatest, but it was taken, I think, when we played down at the Red Oak dinners. Marian's daughter, who is handicapped, you know, and she has little control of her hands. And she took that picture.

01:41:03

Stine:

It looks good. When you guys played at the Red Oak, did you have a chance to meet anybody who had worked in the shipyards, or had you ever?

01:41:15

Derheim:

Well, they had some people there that had, and one of the women who came and danced, had been a USO queen or whatever you call it at the time during the war.

01:41:31

Stine:

What was that all about? I didn't--

01:41:34

Derheim:

USO.

01:41:34

Stine:

Well, the USO queen.

01:41:36

Derheim:

Well, she was a good dancer, I guess, and they had--I think that's what they said that she had been at that time. Anyway, then there were, of course, some veterans who would come to those things, you know, and they were able to dance still. So, it was--it has been a lot of fun since I have been interested in that with museum and the Red Oak restoration. So, it is something kind of worth while, and I hope one of these days, they can get it operating for tours on the bay, you know, like that Jeremiah O'Brien that one is restored over in San Francisco. So, maybe, we might get to see it.

01:42:28

Stine:

You can play for their first voyage.

01:42:33

Derheim:

Yeah, right. No, they--when we played this thank you for the Congressman George Miller getting, working so hard, getting the Red Oak, you know, to Richmond, and his part in that. We needed a piano up on the deck to play, and they hoisted it up with a, whatever you call it, a boom, or whatever they use on the ships from the dock.

01:43:03

Stine:

Oh wow, like with pulleys. Wow.

01:43:09

Derheim:

Yeah, so we could have a piano to play, which is pretty good. Otherwise, we played our CDs, you know, on their. So, it's still--I say, every once in a while something kind of fun happens.

01:43:25

Stine:

Yeah, have you ever come across someone who remembers seeing you from back then.

01:43:30

Derheim:

Well, Marion has a friend from her school days who came up to Clear Lake when we played up there during the summer, when we were playing there. That's about the only one I can think of who heard us then. She's still a good friend of Marian's, and I am friendly with her too. So, that's about it.

01:43:57

Stine:

Great, well thank you so much Leona. Good.

01:44:08

Derheim:

Thank you, as I said, for your being patient with me, and asking a few things I knew a little bit about.

01:44:17

Stine:

Well, now like I said, if you remember anything else, you can just call the Richmond office.

01:44:26

Derheim:

Well, aside from the country club. I still enjoy playing bridge with the friends up there. I don't play anymore golf. I could once in a while, but I haven't for a couple of years now.

01:44:37

Stine:

Yeah, you are out of practice a little.

01:44:40

Derheim:

Yeah, kind of out of practice, but still have my golf clubs, but one of these days I might go to a driving range or something and try it out. See if I have lost it.

[End of interview]