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David Dibble

Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project

A Collaborative Project of the Regional Oral History Office,
The National Park Service, and the City of Richmond, California

Interviews conducted by
Jess Rigelhaupt
in 2008

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Interview #1: May 28, 2008
Begin Audio File 1 05-28-2008.mp3

Rigelhaupt: It's May 28, 2008. I'm in Oakland, California, doing an oral history interview with David Dibble. And this is tape one. And to start, if I could just ask you to say your full name and the year you were born.

01:00:00:22

Dibble: David Van Vlack Dibble. I was born February 5, 1928.

Rigelhaupt:

And where were you born?

01:00:00:34

Dibble: San Francisco. At the corner of Van Ness and Broadway. It's an old folks home there now, and it was the Dante Hospital at the time.

Rigelhaupt:

Did you live your early years, your childhood, in San Francisco?

01:00:01:10

Dibble: Very early years in San Francisco, then Woodside, where my family actually—my mother and father built a house when they were married, but we didn't move down there for a couple of years. My earliest memories in Woodside are around four or five years old.

Rigelhaupt:

What brought your parents to Woodside from San Francisco?

01:00:01:38

Dibble: Well, it was, I guess it was a stylish place to go. I guess it was my mother's family gave them a piece of property and they built a house right after they were married, and they sort of stayed in San Francisco a little bit before they moved down there.

Rigelhaupt:

And what part of San Francisco was your family living in when you were born? And you said you spent the early part of your life in—

01:00:02:20

Dibble: Well, it was pretty much Pacific Heights. My mother's family, oh, 2265 Broadway is where my grandmother lived there. And 2928 Steiner is where my Dibble grandparents lived.

Rigelhaupt:

And had your grandparents lived in San Francisco for a long time?

01:00:02:48

Dibble: Yeah. Yes, the first one came out was Thomas B. Bishop, who came out just before the railroad, in the late 1850s. The rest of them came the easy way, after 1869, with the railroad.

Rigelhaupt:

So your family has a long history in California.

01-00:03:17

Dibble: Yeah, yeah. Pretty long. Not long enough to be a member of the Society of Pioneers.

Rigelhaupt: Were there family stories about what California was like when your maybe great-grandparents got—I don't know if I'm going—

01-00:03:38

Dibble: No. In fact, my California ancestors didn't write about their experiences at all. One great-grandfather, Henry C. Dibble, wrote a novel that might have been somewhat autobiographical, but it was a novel. And then the others didn't write. I think it was my grandfather Dibble sort of—He was a lawyer. It was the kind of a thing that you don't put anything in writing unless you—[laughs] It'd be interesting; there aren't any letters. My first great grandfather, T.B. Bishop came out. It really would be interesting to have his shipboard experiences crossing the isthmus and getting the boat up to San Francisco, ship. But he never wrote anything about that. And his brother [Joseph Bishop], on the other hand, wrote rather extensively. But he stayed in New York. And he was secretary of the Panama Canal Commission under Teddy Roosevelt. He wrote a lot about that. He never mentions his brother, either. I always thought maybe he just thought, well, that brother of his just came out to California to make a lot of money and wasn't interested in the higher things of life.

Rigelhaupt: So your family was here for one of the more famous events in San Francisco, the '06 earthquake.

01-00:05:35

Dibble: Yes, now, they do remember that, vaguely. Because both of my parents were born in 1904. They were little kids. And they kind of remember going out to the Western Addition in a baby carriage or something like that. But it's hard to know whether those are memories or whether they're really stories that they were told about the earthquake by their parents. But they were definitely here for that.

Rigelhaupt: Did your grandparents describe what it was like?

01-00:06:27

Dibble: Not particularly, no. Not particularly. They say it was a big deal, but they didn't have any very good memories, not colorful memories or stories that would make good stories, they just remember it.

Rigelhaupt: Did you have extended family—aunts, uncles, cousins—living nearby?

01-00:07:02

Dibble: No. No, actually, very few ancestral cousins, so to speak. Actually, one died recently that was—I was the only person in the family who knew him because he somehow called me up because of my interest in genealogy, and we got a little bit interested in genealogy and talked about the family history a little bit.

But not very close relatives. Just my grandparents. Now, I remember my great-grandparents, but only vaguely, as really old people. So not a big extended family. I only have one first cousin, [Brenda Bishop Crane] who lives in Memphis, Tennessee. And I'm thinking of her recently, since she and Lester are having their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Rigelhaupt: What are some of your earliest memories of Woodside?

01-00:08:17

Dibble: Well, I remember it snowed one time. And I went out on the porch early in the morning, without any clothes on, and was amazed at the snow. I can just remember being out on the porch there in the snow and thinking, well, this is something interesting. It was a nice, comfortable kind of country place, I can remember. We had the creek running through the property, just behind us. And that went back and forth from almost dry to raging torrents, right after big rains in the winter and spring. And a couple of times I remember walking down the creek, and it was kind of rough, but getting as far as Menlo Park. I was a very adventurous child. I one time set off for Half Moon Bay to go swimming about that time. My brother, when he went to school down at—I guess it was in Menlo Park, I headed off down there one time, too. And I got about halfway down the Woodside grade, we called it then, and Johnny Falpiano, the fireman, came after me. But I'd been well instructed not to go with any strangers. So he had a time persuading me to come on out and go home.

Rigelhaupt: As a kid, you were going to try and walk from Woodside to Half Moon Bay

01-00:10:14

Dibble: Yeah, and Menlo Park. It's not terribly long, four or five miles.

Rigelhaupt: But you said one time you tried to go to Half Moon Bay.

01-00:10:23

Dibble: Yeah.

Rigelhaupt: You weren't going to try *that* on foot.

01-00:10:27

Dibble: Well, we tried it, we didn't get very far. I don't know whether you know the area at all. We got up about where the road turns off to Hudert Park. We got two or three miles. I forgot how we got picked up, and came home. But I was a great walker. I remember my father talked about how he rode his horse one time from San Francisco down to Santa Cruz. And I walked from San Francisco down to Woodside one time. Thirty miles along that—A very nice walk.

Rigelhaupt: Long walk.

01-00:11:17

Dibble: Yeah, a long walk. [laughs]

Rigelhaupt: In a day.

01-00:11:20

Dibble: In a day, yeah. Early morning until dusk.

Rigelhaupt: How old were you when you did that?

01-00:11:26

Dibble: Oh, I was older—not older, but in my late twenties.

Rigelhaupt: So that would be about the late fifties?

01-00:11:38

Dibble: Yeah, late fifties.

Rigelhaupt: Could you just—I'm trying to picture that walk and what you would've seen.

01-00:11:49

Dibble: Well, I can remember. I remember walking down—I lived on Telegraph Hill then. And then I remember walking down and getting a cup of coffee at Enrico's, which was at that time—he stayed open all night. And then I remember walking through the—well, Third Street, to the Bayshore. And there was a kind of a piece of highway down the Bayshore, through to San Bruno or South San Francisco. And I walked up to the Skyline, and then walked down what's called Cañada Road now, and then cut off there to our place in Woodside. It was a nice walk.

Rigelhaupt:

So staying about elementary school age or early elementary school, what was a typical day like for your parents?

01-00:13:07

Dibble: Well, my father commuted and he caught the 7:21 – We referred to the trains by the times in which they left the station. I forget which it was. It was something, the 7:21, or there was a particular train that was the fastest one from Redwood City to San Francisco. And Mother—Well, when I started school, it was kind of towards the end of the Depression. And Mother worked at the school a little bit, sort of. But she was mainly a housewife. But we did have two cars, so that usually Dad drove down to the station and Mother had a car to go back and forth if she needed to. And she drove us to school, mostly. And then I started driving very young, so I drove myself to school from the time I was about thirteen or fourteen on. You could get a drivers license when you were twelve. I think I got my drivers license when I was twelve. It was sort of this World War thing. I remember the start of the War, I was a pretty little kid. But my first big job, I worked down in Modesto at the Dryden Poultry Breeding Farm. Dryden was a friend of the family, down there. It was very nice; I made a dollar a day, and saved all the money and bought my first

car. And later on during the war, I was super-prosperous; we went up to a dollar an hour.

Rigelhaupt: What was your father doing for a living? You said he commuted.

01-00:15:17

Dibble: Oh, he was a insurance broker. He had started out as a stock broker, but he just started out with the crash of '29, and so he switched over to [the] insurance business. And he worked at that his whole life, and he did very well at it. He enjoyed it as sort of a profession. He would've liked to have been a lawyer, but he didn't get through law school because of the—Well, one of the things, when he was married he felt that he should support his wife, so he did that. Didn't finish college. He went on to—took a lot of extension courses and all. He was really a pretty well educated, literate man, but he didn't finish college. And he never wrote anything, either. I think I haven't got any things that he's written, letters, other than—anything longer than five or ten lines. Just a little—Usually sending money, but—[laughs]

Rigelhaupt: Did your parents talk to you about how the Depression affected the family when it started?

01-00:16:45

Dibble: Oh, I remember the Depression very, very well. I had some interesting adventures. The worst year of the Depression we spent on my grandparents' piece of property, a house up in the Napa Valley. And I remember distinctly picking fruit and taking it down in my little red wagon and trading with the Primes down there for milk and cream. It was a real Depression sort of little thing. Mr. Prime, actually, was instrumental in getting me one of my wartime jobs that was a better one, in Richmond, at the Standard Oil refinery. I don't remember whether he worked there or had worked there, but there was some kind of connection so I got that job. That was interesting. And what else? Well, there were other funny things about the Depression. Because people needed work and all, and we had a little money most of the Depression, so we had a lot of people working for us. For a period of time, we had a chauffeur that had his own cap and boots, and used to like to get dressed up and be a snazzy chauffeur. And we had cooks and maids and governesses for the children, or whatever we called them. A lot of funny things. Right around early in the war, we had a woman, Grace, who was a kind of a maid working for us; she had a good family from San Jose. And then one day my mother went out and found this unknown colored woman, Annie, was working, doing some things. And she said, "Who are you?" And she said, "I'm Grace's maid." Grace being the hired maid.

Rigelhaupt: And this was during the Depression?

01-00:19:25

Dibble: Yeah. Or just towards the end of the Depression, yeah. See, there was that period of time, it was—Everybody felt rich, until all of a sudden the bust and

everything, and then it was a poor time. But it really wasn't until about '32 and it kind of bottomed out. Then the prosperity of beginning the war started, and everybody did better. Or thought they were doing—more money. And it was the same way with jobs, you know? I think I started out at twenty-five cents an hour, and then finally ended up about a dollar an hour, and that was rich.

Rigelhaupt:

You said that your family had help and people working as chauffeurs or cleaning, because a lot of people needed jobs.

01-00:20:35

Dibble:

I think that was the reason. Yeah, right. In a way. I mean I didn't grow up in any way spoiled or anything. I always made my own bed, and I always worked the chores and a lot of things. But I think that was the reason. In the Depression, people were—at the worst of it, they were very happy to have a job in which they got room and board and whatever they were paid above that. It wasn't much. In the depth of the Depression, thirty to a hundred dollars a month was the wages.

Rigelhaupt:

Did your parents continue to have help around the house even after World War II got underway and the Depression ground down?

01-00:21:26

Dibble:

Well, you get back to the earlier times, yeah. They had what they called servants. That was that. And earlier on, they were—Well, they went through the whole thing that we had. Early in the Depression, too, we had a Filipino houseboy, who wore a little white jacket and was very spiffy. I forget what happened to him. There were stories about my mother's family had a wonderful Chinese coo, Tu. They never had warm mashed potatoes, because Tu always sculpted them into interesting shapes. And therefore, they got cold before they got eaten.

Rigelhaupt:

Did you go up to visit your grandparents in San Francisco often?

01-00:22:46

Dibble:

Lots, yes. We spent time with them, both my grandmother, and my grandfather and grandmother Dibble. My grandmother Bishop was kind of sad because she was divorced, back when it wasn't really done. And her husband left her for another woman as soon as he got his daughter safely married to my father and felt he could do that. So I never knew my grandfather Bishop at all well. And then I only knew his widow, who was the second wife, slightly. The house on Steiner Street was a nice house. That was the house my grandparents built right after the earthquake and fire. They built it in 1909 and lived there until my grandfather died there, and then my grandmother died there. So San Francisco was always very familiar. I remember the streetcars and the little streetcar that ran up and down from the Marina to Broadway, which was part electric and part cable car. And two lines of streetcars on Market Street, and Fillmore Street had a streetcar on it. And left over from the 1915 Exhibition,

the street corners had these wonderful sort of lights that went up from the corners to a light in the middle of the intersection, that were very colorful. And then I remember the whole Fillmore going from part of Pacific Heights to—it became kind of a Japan Town for a while. And then during the Second World War, colored people kind of were there. And then after that, there was a lot of redevelopment. Redevelopment, I remember, was sort of like throw all the people that were there out and we—They're usually empty for a long, long time. Things I remember. Oh, I had an uncle, [my father's brother, Milo] for instance, who worked on the Bay Bridge. But it seemed like the Bay Bridge went up very fast, because now it seems like the earthquake repair—I'll be over a hundred by the time it's finished.

Rigelhaupt: How did you get up from Woodside to San Francisco?

01-00:26:14

Dibble: Usually took the train.

Rigelhaupt: Could you describe that train ride?

01-00:26:20

Dibble: Yes, I can. It was Woodside, and then the next place was San Carlos, and Belmont, and Burlingame—or San Mateo, then Burlingame. But I do remember quite well that there was agricultural land between the towns. You'd see cows and horses and—it was definitely agricultural between the towns. And those trains were old. The cars were the same cars that they had during the First World War. They were dark green and they had kind of old fashioned seats. Some of them were cloth and some of them were sort of woven straw, and they'd move the seats back and forth for the different directions. Or once in a while, when there was a large group, people had them facing each other. In commuting time, I'd go out with my dad once in a while, where I'd play cards in groups. But they were definitely old fashioned cars. And of course, they were steam engines that, again, were from around between the turn of the century and the First World War. They were old fashioned steam engines. I remember them very well, the noise they made. Chug-chug-chug.

Rigelhaupt: What route did the train take? Was it more or less along where—

01-00:28:29

Dibble: It's the same line as it is now, exactly the same. In fact, I like to be a little bit of a tourist, so I've taken the Caltrain down to the end of the line, a little south of San Jose, a couple of times to see what it looks like. And of course, at Third and Townsend there was a very big deal terminal. It was a nice place. They had nice chairs and they had a first class restaurant, as well as a coffee shop and all this other—it was much more of a destination. And then from the train station, you could take the streetcar downtown. I often walked from Third and Townsend to Market and across Market to my dad's or my grandfather's office. I learned about those pawn shops and winos and all that stuff. One of

the things I always remember is that in most parts of California, the bums wore kind of tattered pants and a jacket or a sweater and this, that and the other thing. But the San Francisco bums always had a suit on of some sort, with a vest and maybe a greasy old necktie, but a necktie and a hat. Fully dressed for the city. And where do we go next?

Rigelhaupt: Well, do you remember rationing and limited butter and things like that?

01-00:30:45

Dibble: Yes, I do remember. I remember rationing very well because we were limited in butter, for instance. So that when I got my first apartment, after I started cooking for myself, I always had plenty of butter ever since that. And I remember the silly margarine things, you could only get it white, and then there was a little packet of yellow dye that you crushed and mixed it around to make it look butter colored. And all the rationing, I remember. You had stamps and we had little tokens, red and blue little plastic things that were for rationing. Because my father had to commute, he had a little stamp on the license thing. He got a little bit more gasoline than I could with my marvelous little car that I bought. And my old car, I fiddled around with it and lowered the compression so that it'd run on kerosene, if need be. But I do remember the rationing and all that. I remember the start of the war very well. And my brother and I were selling greens for our Boy Scout troop. And we were about a quarter of a mile from our house, down the road. And we went into the Duncan house to sell these greens and they said, "Have you heard about Pearl Harbor?" Ooh, we had not. So we packed up our little order books and headed on home and coming out on the radio, and heard all about it. And well, there was a thought that maybe we'd be invaded. So my brother and I prepared to defend the house with our twenty-twos, but that was not necessary, as it turned out. But yeah, I remember that so distinctly, being down there, calling on our neighbors to see if they wanted to buy some wreaths or garlands from the Boy Scouts.

Rigelhaupt: Well, I have a few more questions about Pearl Harbor, but staying in a time period when you were a little younger, did you have a favorite subject in school, through elementary school, middle school?

01-00:33:57

Dibble: Did what, now?

Rigelhaupt: Did you have a favorite subject in school?

01-00:34:00

Dibble: Oh, in elementary school?

Rigelhaupt: Yeah.

01-00:34:02

Dibble: No. No, elementary school was pretty easy for me. I got by easily.

Rigelhaupt: And you went to elementary school in Woodside?

01:00:34:14

Dibble: No, it was in Menlo Park. I went to a Catholic school, St. Joseph's School, but only half the students were Catholic, about. I had some friends who were Catholics and some were Episcopalians and Jewish people. There was a lot, I guess of those kind of—Sometimes I thought of it as being somewhat different groups in the school, because half the kids were somewhat identifiable as—in other words, were sort of Italian or Irish. And the Protestants were sort of old Americans, and the Jewish were, too. Didn't have the distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish that they make a big deal of now in sort of New York and Florida and all. It was the various—My family knew the Fleishackers and the Spreckles and the old Jewish families pretty well, and—

Rigelhaupt: Did that surprise you at all?

01:00:35:42

Dibble: What?

Rigelhaupt: That half the school, of your Catholic school, wasn't Catholic.

01:00:35:47

Dibble: No. The only Catholic school I ever went—No, it never surprised me at all. Well, of course, again, the population was much less, so there was—There was no Woodside School when I was little. The Woodside School was built right after the war, so my youngest sister went to the Woodside School. But there wasn't any Woodside School [when I was younger]. And I don't even remember where the closest public school was because I didn't go there. We went to this other school [St. Joseph's]. And most of my friends, family friends and all, went to this school. And it was just the school. Oh, I do remember—Wait a minute now. When did I—Oh, when I first went to school, there was a progressive school called the Peninsula School. And that wasn't a very serious school at all. I remember when I transferred, about the fourth grade, to the St. Joseph's School, and we had *real school*. I took great pleasure in diagramming sentences when I first learned to do that and all. But then pretty soon, St. Joseph's School was just school, and I went there until I went to the public high school in Redwood City, which was—Again, Redwood City was the only public high school until Palo Alto to the south and San Carlos to the north.

Rigelhaupt: Now, how do you remember the sense of the community response to the attack on Pearl Harbor? You said you learned from a neighbor, and then you and your brother went back to the house, ready to defend it. How did your neighborhood react?

01-00:38:30

Dibble:

Well, we weren't in a very close neighborhood. We didn't have close neighbors. I can remember there were some big estates, sort of, and we didn't have very close neighbors. So there wasn't a neighborhood response, actually. Woodside wasn't exactly a neighborhood at that time. And so I don't remember that. I remember everybody—or lots of my father's friends going into the military. My father was a little bit too old and had four kids, so he wasn't in it, but lots and lots of our friends were. And some of them got kind of big deals; they went in as colonels and that kind of thing. Well, then there was a draft, so I was just under the age that got drafted. In fact, I actually did get drafted at the very end of the war, or got a draft notice, but I got some stupid disease like measles or something, and they gave me a six month deferral—longer than I really needed—so that I didn't go into the service until the Korean War. My brother went into the service, my older brother [Oliver], and he went to lots of different places. He was in the—used to call it the Army Air Corps then. I remember he was in Texas and various places all over the middle west and east. When he finally got out, he got out up near West Point, in New York, and I went to meet him there. Took the train back east, and we got together, and he was out. But then we spent the summer on Cape Cod; it was kind of interesting. And so, I was just not in the age for the war. But I was a big kid. And during the war, like the Rosie the Riveter thing, there was a real labor shortage. So if you were big enough, you could get hired. I had two very unhealthy jobs. I worked for Johns Mansfield in Redwood City, in an asbestos factory. We were making asbestos shingles, or finishing them off. And we didn't wear masks or anything like that, just drilled the holes in them and stacked them up and did this stuff. And then I had another job where I worked for the American Tobacco Company warehouse. Was right off South Park in San Francisco. That's near Second Street, Second and Brannan, around there. There's a little South Park, which is kind of interesting, based on the idea of some of these parks in London. But working for the American Tobacco Company, I could get all the tobacco products I wanted cheap, and so I smoked pipes, cigars, a large variety of cigarettes. [laughs]

Rigelhaupt:

So you had both these jobs while you were a teenager.

01-00:42:57

Dibble:

Yeah.

Rigelhaupt:

And this was before you worked at Standard Oil in 1945.

01-00:43:01

Dibble:

Yeah. Well, Standard Oil was where I was working during—Well, I remember VJ Day. We got off early, and then there was sort of a celebration on Market Street and stuff. And it was a big deal, the war over at that time. And it was also kind of interesting, is that with that, there was the announcement of the atomic bomb and all. And there were quite a few working for Standard Oil there where my laboratory was, there were quite a few knowledgeable chemists and physicists who figured out how it was made

pretty fast, or what was involved. And so by the time we left at noon, we kind of knew what happened. I just went to San Francisco, and then I forgot how I met a friend who drove me down to Woodside. But when they talk about the other wars; that was definitely a big deal when the war was over, as far as people saying whoopee.

Rigelhaupt: I'll come back there in just a moment. So after Pearl Harbor, did your family have to do things like draw the curtains?

01-00:44:34

Dibble: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, we had that little period of drawing the curtains. We had a couple of the false alarm things. And my father was an air raid warden. And I remember we got a—I guess there was just one little blackout light for the car, that was attached to the front bumper, sort of. It was this little light that was a blackout light for the car, which the air raid wardens had. And then I remember I took a first aid course for the Civil Defense, with my father, and I got 100% at the final test, and he only got 98. And so it wasn't very good. Don't want to beat the old man on a test. [laughs]

Rigelhaupt: Could you describe what your father did as an air raid warden?

01-00:45:55

Dibble: No. No, I only remember he had a helmet with that air raid thing on it, and he had an armband. Some of these first false alarm things, he got a telephone call, went someplace. It was pretty much anticlimactic. We didn't have any air raids, so being an air raid warden was—But it was good patriotic thing to do.

Rigelhaupt: I know you were relatively young and a teenager, but if you can think back, was there a palpable sense that the Bay Area was under threat for attack, that the West Coast was the next stop from Hawaii?

01-00:46:55

Dibble: Oh, yeah. Oh, yes, there was definitely a feeling of that. And my mother's family had property in Santa Barbara, and our property was shelled by the Japanese. There was one submarine that came up and shot off a couple of rounds and hit our property in Santa Barbara. And then it was taken over, the property of the Corona del Mar Ranch. It was taken over for military purposes, and then later became the UC Santa Cruz.

Rigelhaupt: Santa Cruz or Santa Barbara?

01-00:47:55

Dibble: Excuse me! UC Santa Barbara. God! Yeah.

Rigelhaupt: So the property was just north of where downtown Santa Barbara is now.

01-00:48:06

Dibble: Yeah. Yeah. And the ranch, the original ranch there was called Dos Pueblos. Belonged to the Hollister family. And then my great-grandfather managed to get it from the Hollisters. And then the government got it from us.

Rigelhaupt: How do you think the potential for attack from Japan shaped your high school years and your teenage years?

01-00:48:47

Dibble: Oh, the idea that there was a potential for attack was only the first few months. Yeah. No, actually—The war, as far as I felt, we had the potential for attack, the outrages of the Philippines and Burma and Indonesia and all that, was pretty short-lived. And then we started winning the war with, I don't know, Midway and those various naval battles, and it always seemed to be going on inevitably to victory from then. And people my age—at least myself—I always *assumed* that I would be in the service. And a little bit fantasized about being a fighter pilot or a PT boat driver, and hoped I wouldn't be in a muddy foxhole. But I always had a kind of expectation of being in the war. And my father had not been in the war because he was too young for the First World War and two old for the Second World War. Neither one of my grandfathers had been in the First World War. We had a history of a very famous great-grandfather, Henry C. Dibble. He was from Indiana, and he was in the Civil War. Got his leg shot off at this part here and he went to—Got discharged in New Orleans, where he had some family. So he grew up in New Orleans, as—He wasn't a carpetbagger or a scallywag, he grew up kind of as a southerner, a New Orleans person, and somehow got his education and became a lawyer down there and a judge. And he was, for a while, superintendent of public instruction, and had a completely integrated New Orleans school system. No segregation at all. But then you know the history of reconstruction and everything. So he left in the early 1870s. 1870, '72, I forget. First he went to Arizona, and he worked for George Hearst [father of William Randolph Hearst] for a while. And then he came up to San Francisco and established his law practice in San Francisco, and practiced law until he died there.

Rigelhaupt: Could you tell me about the jobs you had—you said you started working very young—preceding your time at Standard Oil?

01-00:52:45

Dibble: Okay. The first jobs were around Woodside. Just regular teenage jobs. Mowing lawns and fooling around that—Then the first really interesting job was this job down in Modesto, on a chicken ranch. And I was interested in that because during my late teen ages—And oh, this also involved the war sort of thing, is I raised chickens and ducks and all kinds of stuff. And so I was really interested in this job at a chicken farm, a big chicken farm. And I worked hard. I drove a truck and lifted bales of hay, and worked hard and saved my money and bought a car. Then I had this other job in Redwood City at the asbestos place. And I can sort of remember the job. I remember [laughs]

getting these asbestos tiles and pulling the thing, drilling the holes in them. And that was one of the things. And then the other one was they came down with a thing and I was supposed to count a dozen and then flip one over; and it went onto the next guy and it got bailed up and that was the asbestos factory. I don't know. I also remember I got a red union book from the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. And then there was this job, it was another good paying one, and it was good work. We unloaded boxcars of cases of cigarettes that were about this wide and about that big. And it was very healthy [good exercise], unloading them, stacking them up and all. And then all kinds of smaller packages of fancy Egyptian cigarettes. And I forget. It was Roytan cigars. I forget what the—Oh, then all kinds of different pipe tobaccos, too. Fancy things. The asbestos factory job I had, it was in Redwood City. And my brother and I had the same job, or similar jobs. We drove back and forth. And then when I was in San Francisco at the tobacco company, I lived with my grandparents, the Dibbles, and took the streetcar down to wherever it was. I forget exactly the streetcar route I took. The E car or the D car or whatever it was that came closest to them. And the 22 car went the other way. But it was a good job; it paid a lot of money. I could do anything I wanted, as a teenager, with that money. So let's see. And all of a sudden, the jobs were easy to get. There wasn't any—Most of these jobs I got—Oh, wait a minute now. I don't know how I got the tobacco company job. But you didn't have to have family help to get a job or you didn't have to have special luck to get a job. And so those were the dollar an hour jobs. And as I said, I remember the—Well, this whole project is, sometime along the line, somebody said something about the Rosie the Riveter project. And I still have, someplace around here, my Standard Oil badge to get into the refinery.

Rigelhaupt: I'm just going to pause there to change the tapes.

01-00:57:37

Dibble: Okay.

[End Audio File 1]

Begin Audio File 2 05-28-2008.mp3

Rigelhaupt: Okay, I'm on tape number two with David Dibble. And I wonder if you could reflect back a little bit on some of these jobs that you had as a teenager during World War II. Do you think you were able to get some of the jobs because of the shortages in labor?

02-00:00:24

Dibble: Oh, yes. Oh, certainly. Yeah, it was the same deal as Rosie the Riveter. Women were hired for wherever they were needed, and teenagers were hired. Or children, even. I started quite young because I could drive, and I was five-eleven or getting close to six feet tall, husky kid. So any job—They filled in with teenagers. There was a shortage of men because they were in the army or

navy. It was a very easy time, and a kind of fun time to be growing up because there was a lot of freedom. And I had a lot of freedom because I was a big independent kid, so I'd go around wherever I wanted to and I used public transportation. Could have cheap cigarettes from the American Tobacco Company, I could smoke a pipe and smoke a cigar, smoke cigarettes and go around and act like I was a grownup without any problem. [laughs]

Rigelhaupt:

Could you tell me about how you began your work at Standard Oil?

02-00:02:22

Dibble:

No. All I can remember is I can remember I took the streetcar down to the East Bay Terminal, took the Key line across the bridge to Richmond, where the Standard Oil refinery was, was the end of the line. And I walked over and introduced myself and was introduced to whoever was going to be my boss. I remember the two main buildings that we worked in, sort of. One was a fairly new concrete building and the other one was an old brick building. I can't even remember what my boss's name was. I just did what I was told and I think we had those old fashioned machines where you punch the timecard. No, I guess I got a little bit more responsibility, and I knew the place better as time went on. One of the things we did was we went, got samples from these various big tanks. You'd go up on a ladder on the side of the tank and let down a cord with a little thing to take a sample, and then take a sample back to the laboratory. And some of the things were fairly heavy oils and stuff. And one of the main tests there was for viscosity. And then the lighter fuels were for evaporation point. I remember distinctly they resolved to get a sample of pentane, which is methane, ethane. Well, anyway. Pentane is five molecules. And its boiling point was just about ninety degrees of all things. It boiled in your hand. That was sort of fun. Probably wasn't terribly good for the skin, but it was kind of interesting to have something that boiled in your hand. I'd enjoyed chemistry and physics in high school and so I was sort of interested in what was going on. But it's really hard to say. Nothing dramatic happened, except the end of the war.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, before we get there, did you have a sense that the different products Standard Oil was making—in the sense that I've read that a lot of major corporations like Ford and General Motors shifted what they were producing, to support the war effort. So was Standard Oil producing different products, other than, say, gasoline and motor oil, to try and support the war effort?

02-00:06:19

Dibble:

Well, I guess so, though I don't really remember. But I know that at that period, towards the end of the war, were the big Pratt and Whitney gasoline engines and the big twelve cylinder in-line engines. And they used hundred octane aviation fuel. And automobiles had the same kind of stuff that they have today, except of course at that time, all the motor fuels—except I don't know what there was in aviation fuel—but they had tetraethyl lead added to them. And they had the white gasoline, which had no lead, and it was almost

phased out and was just used for things like Coleman lanterns and stuff. And then there was the yellow gasoline, it was the mid-grade, and red was the highest octane. I guess I learned at that time these octane readings. Octane is eight radicals that goes on from methane to ethane, pentane and the octane, which was a sort of a standard. It was just used as sort of a standard. That wasn't pure octane, it was usually a mixture of this, that and the other thing. And a lot of myths that still go on is that somehow that higher octane is better. People to this day, lots and lots of people put that premium gasoline in at twenty cents a gallon more without—It doesn't do anything to an ordinary engine. We had a variety of products from ordinary gasoline, aircraft hundred octane; there was a certain amount of kerosene, sort of, which became jet fuel; and then the various diesel products from the heavy diesels that was used in ships to the light diesel that was used in trucks.

Rigelhaupt: Do you know where the oil was coming from that you were refining there?

02-00:09:31

Dibble:

I didn't at that time, particularly, but I remember during the thirties and all, there was considerable California oil. And there was considerable Texas oil. But this isn't something I knew at that time or paid any attention to particularly at that time. Maybe I've learned it since. But a lot of it was California oil, I think.

Rigelhaupt: Well, do you remember how the oil actually got to the refinery there in Richmond?

02-00:10:10

Dibble:

Yeah, at that time it was already by pipes.

Rigelhaupt: And where did the pipes—How far did they go? Were they coming all the way to, say, Southern California and Bakersfield, where some oil was being pumped?

02-00:10:22

Dibble:

Yeah. Yeah. Or coming from middle and Southern California. Well, also, of course, this was during—During wartime, there was a certain amount of security. There was the idea that you didn't find out a lot of things unless you had some need to know. And I can remember lots of pipes coming in, pipes all over the place. But I wasn't a pipeline person. I don't know where they came from and where they went. They went around the refinery. It was a big refinery. Still is. It was a big place, many acres. I remember walking all over it; but also we had little trucks and stuff to transport us around if we were going to the far reaches.

Rigelhaupt: Well, part of the reason I ask is I was simply curious if ships were already bringing in oil, in the sense when you go across the San Rafael Bridge now, you can see where the ships dock there and come into—

02-00:11:44

Dibble: [over Rigelhaupt] Yes, there was. That dock goes back to the time of the war. There was a Richmond Oil dock there that—It wasn't part of what I was doing. Later on, I had a very interesting job as the purser with American President Lines. And I remember we used to take on fuel from those docks. It's interesting. But I think most of the Standard Oil refineries in Richmond and the two down in Southern California were local oil, mostly. So of course, you know about the second Standard Oil refinery in Southern California, which was El Segundo. And it's become quite an interesting town, an important aviation town. But just Spanish for the second. Never heard of the other one being called El Primero, but maybe it was.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, did you have any sense that any of the work at the Standard Oil refinery was dangerous to the workers?

02-00:13:40

Dibble: No. Now, that is of course, it was definitely my feeling, my time, that wartime thing, there was far less consideration of danger. In other words, there were hard hats, but they weren't absolutely necessary all the time, much less than now. There were safety goggles, but not as many jobs required them as do now. And there just wasn't that feeling. There wasn't a feeling of danger nearly the way there is now, and it hadn't become any—Now, an interesting thing I do remember is when Port Chicago blew. We could hear it and feel it in Woodside. And that was a big event. But I wasn't particularly interested in the Civil Rights aspects of the thing and the fact that it was mostly colored navy personnel which were hurt and in danger. And there was all the whole story since then, but it wasn't then. But it was one of the biggest explosions ever. And we could actually feel it and hear it, and were aware of it for a week or so afterward. But there were degrees of danger. Loading and unloading ammunition wasn't as dangerous as going up Iwo Jima or Battle of the Bulge. These were more dangerous.

Rigelhaupt:

Did you ever see any of your coworkers be injured at the asbestos—

02-00:16:19

Dibble: No. No. And again, there was not concern about exposure to lead. There wasn't concern about exposure to these chemicals nearly as much. People, as I say, well, that's interesting, it boils in my hand. It wasn't, oh, that's interesting, it boils in my very protective glove. And we'd wear face masks and if we wanted to sniff a little of this to see what it was or how it was, you just, oh yeah, that's what it smells like. [laughs]

Rigelhaupt:

You mentioned you were a member of the ILWU for a short time.

02-00:17:27

Dibble: Yeah. That was the Warehouseman's Union at Johns Mansfield's factory in Redwood City.

Rigelhaupt: And do you remember learning much about that union?

02-00:17:43

Dibble: Well, I remember it was a pain in the ass because it was just automatic, so they took—It was still a very good paying job, but they took a certain amount out. And then they had a union meeting once a week, and they took a little fine if you didn't go. That was part of the whole thing of when the labor union thing kind of went over from a movement to an established bureaucracy. So I don't know whether you—Do you have to pay union dues?

Rigelhaupt: I don't in the current job I'm at at Berkeley, no. I have in other jobs.

02-00:18:41

Dibble: But if you did, whoever you are, the instructional assistants or the research assistants and all were taken into a union, which is there. There's a union you could be taken into. And if you were, you just pay. And then when you go on strikes—My wife was a teacher for a long time, and still—She's now a junior administrator. But all these different strikes, you just lost your money; paid your dues and you never get it back. And yet they claim to win. And of course, with Standard Oil, it's interesting. We were part of the Rockefeller monopoly. And if you were in the union of oil workers or whatever union it was, you could feel you were getting your due from the Rockefellers. But now everything's so changed, the union thing is that—Chevron, you could say, is a black and women owned company. Just ordinary stockholders, and the people have—if you have a school pension fund, one of their investments might be in Chevron. So if you're a black school teacher, a woman black school teacher, then you're an owner of Chevron. And Chevron is a women and black owned company. See, history is much—you guys have more fun. I was a economics major. And economics was called the dismal science. And so I could always look at economics as the dismal science.

Rigelhaupt: Well, I want to shift a little bit, about how you remember some of the social life changing in the Bay Area. Certainly, from everything I've read, there were just hundreds of thousands of people moving to the Bay Area during the war for jobs, mostly. And I'm wondering if you could describe how that affected life in housing and in social life.

02-00:21:45

Dibble: No, I can't. There were just other people. I do recall from the late thirties, there were very few black people in the Bay Area. And then with the buildup to the war, starting in the late thirties through the war, more and more black people came. But I didn't know many of them. It just wasn't something—Anyhow, in a way, my social life was very much about people who were like myself, whose—our grandparents were friends and—it was never—I don't recall anything. Except you did notice that the Fillmore District definitely changed. And the shipyards, Richmond and Oakland and all, a lot of colored people, where there had been far fewer before. And of course, the racial thing is so complicated and arbitrary, in that the Chinese were our great buddies,

our fellow heroes, and the Japanese were the terrible—The only thing that's different, really, in retrospect, remember the movies, they always gave the Japanese moustaches and the Chinese didn't have moustaches. And the same with the Filipinos. They were sort of heroes, because the Japanese were sort of out of it. But I don't know, it didn't seem really very relevant. One of the things I like as a recollection much later is when I did work in Hawaii for a while. And they said, "Oh, where did you learn to use chopsticks?" Well, I learned to use chopsticks from my grandmother.

Rigelhaupt: Well, speaking of Japanese and Japanese Americans and what happened during World War II, what do you remember about the internment of Japanese Americans and how that made the news and what you saw?

02-00:24:45

Dibble: Oh, the Japanese exclusion?

Rigelhaupt:

Yeah.

02-00:24:47

Dibble: Oh. It made the news and then it left the news. And really, those are such complicated and subtle deals because there is a whole body of thought that makes the Japanese into victims. The Japanese I knew and knew well were not victims. Probably the closest friend I had from the early fifties until he died a few years ago was a Japanese [Juichi Kamikawa] who had gone into the army from camp, and then he'd gone to Europe, and then he'd gone out the Far East, and then he'd come back and gone to college on the GI Bill. And he was a fine artist and became a professional appraiser. Juichi was a great friend of mine. But he never felt that he was a victim. Did that little painting up there on the wall—the one with the sort of silverish frame. That was when I was a victim. I had duty over the weekend when that party was given, and so he went to the party and then did that little painting [of the party] and gave it to me. Well, again, the Japanese. A very good friend of mine who just died recently was a kid in the Southern Philippines and was captured by the Japanese and imprisoned there, and then went up on kind of a Hell ship to Manila, and then was in Santo Tomas. But he never was bitter at all about that, had interesting stories about it. But there's no doubt that that whole war was subject to revision. And I don't know how—I have, in recent times, felt that a great deal of the—there was a bitter revenge element to the whole Second World War. That people who use that kind of language such as those "little yellow bellied bastards" bombed Pearl Harbor; how dare they? We got even and then we bombed Tokyo shortly—in the middle of the war, and then finally at the end. And then there's a revision that instead of—it was a great victory. And Standard Oil in Richmond, well, we won the war. And then afterwards, we became more concerned about genetic damage and this and that, and the atomic bomb and all were sometimes thought of as terrible things. There's some people who insist upon racism. What I read and what I remember, I think we would've been very happy to drop a atomic bomb on

Berlin and end the European war sooner. A lot of people called the Japanese all kinds of names. They were also called the {Hun and the Bosch?} and this, that and the other thing.

Rigelhaupt: But with internment, do you recall any discussion with your family?

02-00:29:12

Dibble: No.

Rigelhaupt: So it was pretty widely accepted that the government has issued this order and evacuation's going to take place.

02-00:29:20

Dibble: Right, and President Roosevelt did have a great deal of prestige. There were certain Republicans who always referred to "that man" as all kinds of villainous names; this wasn't one of the things that they talked about. They talked mainly about things in the earlier thirties, what that terrible Roosevelt had done. And he was definitely—he was accepted by the Republicans as well as the Democrats as a kind of a hero of the Second World War. And people just accepted it. There were certain rumors that went around that some Japanese cook or houseboy or something had been out with a flashlight during an air raid or something. But it was all kind of just accepted, and it wasn't our problem. And in many respects, it wasn't their problem. It broke up a lot of small agricultural communities that weren't going anywhere, and spread the Japanese around to the whole United States, especially in academia and all. Certainly, the Japanese Americans are a highly educated elite today. And if they'd all stayed in Watsonville, they might not be.

Rigelhaupt: Well, thinking back, actually, a little earlier than this time period, one of the things I've read about is that there was a lot of migration to California by whites from Oklahoma and Arkansas in particular. And the terms Okies and Arkies were not necessarily terms of endearment. And I'm wondering what you remember about that. Did you have experiences in school?

02-00:32:05

Dibble: No, because it wasn't exactly here. It was more in the Central Valley and all. But certainly, Okie was a pejorative term. And Arkie not so much because it wasn't so common. The people from Arkansas got mixed in with the people from Oklahoma. You know about the Mountain Meadows massacre. The people that were massacred by the Mormons were from Arkansas, but the Mormons that were shooting them said, "Well, Missouri, Arkansas, what's the difference? You guys are coming in trying to take Utah from us."

Rigelhaupt: And did you experience any of that, interactions with new migrants from Oklahoma or Arkansas when you were working in Modesto?

02-00:33:15

Dibble: No. No, I was enjoying making money and feeling grown up, and I didn't see much about that. There was somewhat of a distinction between the established Californians, and the newcomers from the middle west or Okies and whatever were kind of looked on as sort of hillbillies kind of things. And there was, of course, again, a distinction between the Spanish speaking—And then there wasn't a distinction always between Spanish speaking people who today would be very proud to be Indians. Others weren't. There are kind of class distinctions that kind of were there, but they weren't a big deal. And then, oh, middle western academics weren't looked down upon. I guess University of Oklahoma wasn't quite as soigné as Harvard. But still, a PhD's a PhD.

Rigelhaupt:

Did you have a sense that that time period around World War II marked a transition, in the sense that—from my understanding, up until about World War II, ethnicity mattered a lot more, in the sense that if you were Italian American or Irish American or German American, that those distinctions played a bigger part in the social life and neighborhoods you lived in, but that World War II marked a transition, where some of those ethnic lines became less important. And I'm wondering—

02-00:35:51

Dibble: Italian American was never fancy unless you were a Giannini or a Ghirardelli [or Latini]. They were a big deal. And Irish. Again, it wasn't fancy to be Irish, but if you happened to be Jimmy Flood, it was okay to be Irish. I do remember sort of vaguely in grammar school, some of the kids called themselves Irish and some called themselves Italian. And then they wanted to call me or us English, but without much reason. We didn't feel—we weren't Anglophones or terribly interested in Elizabethan history or anything. But no. But the Second World War being a transition, here those things were far less important. I have friends from Detroit who still make the distinction between Polish and German ancestry and stuff, but we didn't have that. In fact, a lot of the Catholics were German Catholics. For some reason, the Irish and Italian Catholics didn't want to believe that. German Catholics.

Rigelhaupt:

I wonder if you could talk a little bit about what it was like learning about the war, in the sense that if you think about the current war and Vietnam, television played such a role in how we learned about what was going on in the war. And thinking back to World War II, obviously, television wasn't available. The newsreels were there.

02-00:38:21

Dibble: We had the newsreels, and the radio was the big deal. And the newspapers, but they weren't nearly as immediate. And I do remember the newsreels being definitely kind of—I was at the age where I went to the movies quite often. And in San Francisco, we used to sometimes go up and stay with one or the other of the grandparents and get some money to go to the movies, and we'd often go to two double features or whatever. I remember *The March of Time* and the newsreels as being very kind of exciting. Big explosions and

bombardments and all. But it was much less immediate than—I don't remember television being, right after the war, a very immediate thing, either. The Vietnamese war was a very big thing and got people riled up. Now it's sort of like it's all the same thing. Turn on the evening news tonight. You'll see shots, they could've been from 2001, 2002, 2003. All you see, there's the smoke and then there's a big red flash, and there's more smoke, and then there's an overturned vehicle and then a burning tire. It's all the same, in a way. And so my feeling is now it's lost its impact a lot. By and large, the papers and the commentators assume people don't know any history. Like it's kind of a big deal to be a Son or Daughter of the American Revolution. You don't hear an awful lot about the veterans of the War of 1812. Because winning the war wasn't a big deal, I don't know. Just sort of most of the people that fought the war of 1812 had also fought in the Revolutionary War. So it wasn't a big deal. Again, who do you blame these things on? Is General Westmoreland a victim? And we talk about the Vietnamese War veterans who had wounds and mental things and all, and they returned to not a great deal of popularity. The generals, I don't know. The generals, it doesn't seem to matter. Is Colin Powell a victim of the war in Iraq? You say support our troops, you mean support David Petraeus? Certainly, well, people that are against the war say, "Oh, no. Our troops are different than General Petraeus." So no, it all merges into wonderful philosophical, historical ideas.

Rigelhaupt:

But it does sound different, not being able to see the graphic images of the horrors of war that were brought into our living rooms during the Vietnam War.

02-00:42:57

Dibble:

Yes, I think that's true. Though I believe lots and lots of people were very, very aware of the horrors of the Civil War. Andersonville Prison. And the horrors of the Civil War were the beginning of photography, and a still photograph can make the Civil War—you had the horrors of that. Now, with the verbal descriptions of the horrors of the Revolutionary War are less. And then people have different ones. There's like how New York was isolated and a lot of people were starving and cold and miserable in New York during that period of time. But they were mostly nasty British, so it's okay. [laughs] Or British sympathizers. No, I think television is—I think the impact is like it's come and it's losing its impact. I don't pay much attention to the television all the time. It's not worse because of television, it's worse because it's damn foolishness.

Rigelhaupt:

You mentioned that you were working at Standard Oil and some of the chemists and physicists you were working with figured out what happened in Nagasaki and Hiroshima rather quickly. But could you say a little bit more about how you remember hearing about the atomic bomb being dropped for the first time?

02-00:45:06

Dibble:

Well, as I say, we heard about it at work in the morning. And it was, wow. And it really was a big, big deal. I forget now exactly how we knew it was the end of the war, but we did. Yeah, we knew it was the end of the war. I can't remember whether we found out on the radio. And I don't know whether the commentators just said it was the end of the war; I don't know who actually said it was the end of the war. But we knew it was. And then I remember being very interesting in that we started talking about—Well, we had a couple of hours work before we were let off at noon, talking about this, that and the other thing. And some of the educated engineers were aware of atomic theory and kind of how it could happen that you would take a mass and put them together, and there'd be a critical mass and they'd reinforce each other and blow up. No, I can't be more specific than that.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, I'm wondering if you can try and reflect backwards on what it was like hearing about the effects of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the about 100,000 people, I think, killed in each city, in comparison to the firebombing in Tokyo, where nearly the same number of people were killed. But was it a bigger deal in Hiroshima and Nagasaki because a new weapon had been used? Even though the amount of human suffering—

02-00:47:35

Dibble:

I think it was, in a sense. The raids over Tokyo and all, from the very beginning—Well, the very beginning one, it was a sort of self-satisfaction of, boy, we got even for Pearl Harbor, boy. Jimmy Doolittle and all. And then the raids, say from—well, during 1945 were not so big. We knew we had the war won. Once we started across the Pacific, there was no question that we had the war won. And we were killing them and they were killing us. And the idea was to keep on doing what we were doing until it was over. I can't remember any—Let's see, how this all happened—Like I can't remember a big April raid over Tokyo; there must've been one. But I can't remember specifically. The atomic bomb was definitely something different. There was no question about it being different. And entirely different than anything before because the rockets red glare and firebombs were way back when. I forget when they first started shooting big balls of burning tar at sailing ships, but being firebombed was something that happened back then. And Indians fired arrows with burning pitch and stuff at the settlements. Firebombing and explosives go way back. And so we didn't—it wasn't the impression. Definitely, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and especially Hiroshima, have a special effect. The mushroom cloud is a symbol of something that—Well, I think like these guys said they kind of talked about having it kind of figured out. Still, to most people, it's still a great mystery. Now, when I was a kid, we had chemistry sets and we made things that went bang. But nobody was making any atomic reactions.

Rigelhaupt:

How do you remember learning about the holocaust?

02-00:51:24

Dibble: I don't remember the television so well, but I do remember the army moving into Germany. Came across these camps, and they were horrified with it. And the whole holocaust, again, gets to be such a complicated thing, in that there's the holocaust in Germany, but what about all the Jews the Russians killed? And just as badly. And what about the Poles, the Czechs, the Lithuanians? It's just one of those—And then if you reflect on long term history, was it worth the slaughter of Baghdad. I forget when, but it was one of the big things where a city was—The center of Mesopotamia was wiped out by the Mongol hordes.

Rigelhaupt:

But in thinking back, was it hard to believe that that kind of genocide had taken place? Was it shocking? Or was there a sense that—

02-00:53:03

Dibble: Oh, of course, it was terribly shocking because we had nothing—Well, we had little to compare it with. The shots of the death camps and all were reminiscent of the worst shots of Civil War prisons. So it was shocking to see a ninety-five pound man. Or a ninety-five pound woman, and naked, and just sort of—It was all very, very awful. And then it had all its repercussions. So now you can't talk about it today, you have to sort of genuflect and say, true, it was the worst thing that ever happened. And it certainly was.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, how did the Bay Area begin to change after the war ended?

02-00:54:39

Dibble: Not so much after the war. Well, there's certain things. Like during the war, there was an austerity program. And for instance, during the war, men didn't wear white tie and tails for parties, and after the war they did. And kind of big deal social life kind of was revived in the society pages of the newspapers, and there was a sort of—And I thought it was the Bay Area, I guess all over there was—All of a sudden, you could have all the butter and all the meat you wanted, all the gasoline. And the end of rationing, certainly. There was that austerity situation, which was definitely the home front, and we were supposed to be contributing to the war. Now it's the troops are supposed to be doing it and the generals are doing it, but we're not doing it. The young Bush girl's wedding in Texas was not a restrained affair because of the war. It was as fancy as they could put it on, Texas style.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, how do you think some of the things you learned in working as part of—I mean, Standard Oil wasn't necessarily part of the war industries, but certainly, doing its part to support the war effort—and working during World War II shaped some of your future experiences in life and directions that you took?

02-00:56:58

Dibble: Let me see now. I guess the Standard Oil job was the only job that I felt was working in the war effort. But it gave me a lot of confidence that I could make a living and do well just by working. No fear of hard times or anything were

ever part of my experience after the war. The war got rid of any of that. Leftovers, earlier childhood and the Depression, of having a few years of feeling things were hard times. Those good times were here again after the war. And a part of it's just growing up. Go around and do what you want and enjoy life. If you go to college and then go to graduate school, just—It was definitely a big, big change, big deal.

Rigelhaupt: Well, those are largely the questions I had prepared. And the way I like to end is to ask you, one, is there anything you'd like to add? Or two, is there anything that I should've asked that I didn't?

02-00:58:41

Dibble: No. No, I think we covered it pretty well. And I'm kind of curious. I'm really curious to see the transcript when it comes, if it comes.

Rigelhaupt: It will come.

02-00:58:54

Dibble: And then I like the idea. I wish my grandfather had a similar thing to say after the First World War. Because it would've certainly been interesting to have that history. And then of course, I do notice that these things pile up so that it's a little bit like wanting some real information about something and getting handed the telephone book, and there's all the facts right there. [laughs] Yeah, this has been very interesting. And I'm going to look up Henry Wilkins' oral history, if I can find it.

Rigelhaupt: Okay. All right, well, I will stop there. Thank you very much.

02-00:59:59

Dibble: Well, thank you. And keep in touch, Jess.

Rigelhaupt: Absolutely.

[End of Interview]