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Inge Stone

Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front Oral History Project

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Interview conducted by  
Sam Redman  
in 2010

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Inge Stone

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Interview 1: October 27, 2010  
Begin Audiofile 1

Redman: My name is Sam Redman, and I'm here today with Inge Stone. Today is October 27, 2010. So Inge did I pronounce your name correctly?

1-00:00:20

Stone: Yes, you did.

Redman: Can you tell me where you were born?

1-00:00:24

Stone: I was born in Fillmore, New York.

Redman: In Fillmore, New York. Can you tell me a little bit about what that is like?

1-00:00:29

Stone: I don't know anything because my parents moved to California when I was two or three.

Redman: So you just spent a couple of years there?

1-00:00:38

Stone: Yeah.

Redman: Can you tell me a little bit about where your parents were born, and do you know how they met?

1-00:00:47

Stone: My parents were both born in Germany, Dad in northern Germany, Mother in southern Germany. My dad had been a Japanese prisoner of war during World War I. Because the Japanese gathered up all German citizens living, he happened to in China in the area that was near Japan. They gathered all German citizens and put them in prison. The reason he was there for five years because the war didn't last that long is because Germany was so broke they didn't have money to bring their soldiers back home. So, but he never spoke of this time as being an unhappy time. He always spoke of it as a big adventure. How come he met my mother, he made a friend in prisoner camp who happened to be engaged to Mom's sister, and so he went to visit this friend after the war in southern Germany, and that's how he met Mom.

Redman: Do you know how they came to the United States or when and why?

1-00:02:02

Stone: Dad came—in fact, I just saw it yesterday in some papers. Dad came here in 1921 or '22, I'm not sure now. Then he sent for my mom, and she came the following year. I think Dad arrived around Christmas 1922, and Mom arrived the following year. I'm not sure; I think it was in the summer.

Redman: So they moved to New York?

1-00:02:42

Stone: They were in New York just a short time. Dad's brother arranged for Mom to have a job as a housekeeper in Brooklyn, New York, because you had to have some proof of work or something. She worked there until Dad could have— Dad was on the West Coast near Portland, Oregon. In fact, it was a lumber town, I can't remember, near Portland.

So as soon as he could afford it he went across country to marry Mom. Then, when they had enough money to go back to the West Coast, they went. But in the meantime, after they got married, I came along first, and then my brother, and then finally got enough money to make it to the West Coast.

Redman: What were your parents' names?

1-00:03:34

Stone: Ann Miller and William Miller.

Redman: And your brother? You said you had one brother?

1-00:03:40

Stone: Oh, yeah. I had a brother. His name was Waldemar Miller. And he's missing.

Redman: Oh, really?

1-00:03:52

Stone: In the Korean War. He was a pilot. Never got a body or anything.

Redman: Can you tell me, stepping back then, how your parents arrived in California?

1-00:04:04

Stone: Well, they went by train to Portland, Oregon first. He just got temporary jobs up there, but nothing that lasted. So then they moved to Ferndale, California briefly. That is a well-known town because it was ancient homes; there's still a grave there that belonged to Dad's uncle, that family. The family never did find out how they ended up in Ferndale, California, that family. That's sort of a mystery. He moved there because his uncle was there, and he worked on their farm until he got a permanent job in Eureka, California, where I was raised as a kid.

Redman: Let's talk a little bit about what you remember about your childhood. Do you remember going to school?

1-00:04:56

Stone: Oh, yeah. I remember going to school all right because we were in the first grade, and I had mostly had been speaking German and knew very little English, but you pick it up when you want to make friends in school. So I

would always say, “Yah,” for yes, and the teacher would keep correcting me. She said, “It’s not yah; it’s yes.” That was my first memory of first grade.

Redman: Did I notice you’re left handed?

1-00:05:28

Stone: Yeah, I am.

Redman: So tell me a little bit about what it was like to be left handed in that era. Did your teacher correct you?

1-00:05:35

Stone: Yeah, in learning to write she did correct me because I went to use my left hand. She never did make me use my right hand, come to think of it. But my mother did. She acted like it was something to kind of be ashamed of or something. But finally the teacher said she shouldn’t do that because your nervous system is geared to your left arm. So she didn’t do it any more, but I had a funny thing to say regarding me being left handed. Mom always acted like it was sort of a shame to be left handed because you were different, so my first trip to Germany to meet my relatives, I’m sitting at the table, and my cousin says to her mother, “Look it, Mama, she’s left handed just like Grandma was, my mother’s mother. I don’t know why. I always remember that story because I was so surprised that Mom didn’t want me to be left handed.

Redman: When did you visit, was that after the war or before the war that you visited your—

1-00:06:50

Stone: When I went to Germany you mean? Oh, we went, it was my gift for twenty-fifth anniversary with my husband. He liked it so much we went back I think four more times. But we didn’t always just stay in Germany. We’d visit them, and like one time we included England, another time we included Switzerland or Austria or Italy. Various European countries.

Redman: We’ll get back to that. Now, tell me about now do you have any other memories from elementary school from growing up. Did you have a favorite subject in school?

1-00:07:29

Stone: Yeah. When I was in the first grade or second grade, I don’t remember which, but my teacher, her name was Miss Candy. That was kind of funny because she was very strict and stern. She didn’t remind you of candy.

Redman: So her name did not match her personality.

1-00:07:48

Stone: She told my mother that she thought I had a talent for drawing, and strangely enough I’ve always had a hobby of drawing or oil painting.

Redman: Now, tell me a little bit about your time in high school. So you continued presume taking art classes, or—

1-00:08:06

Stone: Yeah, I did, but art classes in high school there's not that much to them. I never took formal—yes, I did once or twice take formal art lessons from teachers who just taught art, but it's just something I loved to do.

Redman: That's great. So now, tell me a little bit about how you found your first job at the Richmond shipyards.

1-00:08:30

Stone: Oh, my first job was in Richmond, California, and I worked for this firm in I think it was called Point Richmond at the end of Richmond. They made—what would you call them—ceramics, and you painted figurines and stuff. Part of my job was pouring all the molds. I don't know if that's how I should say it. I poured the plaster into these molds, and then we took them out, and then we painted them.

Redman: So this was for a private company.

1-00:09:04

Stone: Yeah, it was a Danish couple that ran it.

Redman: Do you remember about what year that was? Was it before the war?

1-00:09:11

Stone: That was, let's see, when was the war started 1941 or '42?

Redman: Yeah, late '41.

1-00:09:17

Stone: It was before the war started, when I was sixteen. When I got my first job.

Redman: Did your parents encourage you to go out and find—?

1-00:09:25

Stone: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Redman: Tell me a little bit about that time; there was economic strife; there were a lot of people without jobs, the Depression.

1-00:09:37

Stone: That was sort of the end of the Depression. Things were getting better then. By the time I got my job Dad was working as a brewer for Acme Brewery in San Francisco. Acme Brewery, I've got some little miniature things here from—was bought out by some Eastern, I don't know, a brewery in St. Louis or some other company eventually.

Redman: Budweiser, or—

1-00:10:03

Stone: But he was there for about twenty years. In San Francisco.

Redman: Then you eventually found work at the Richmond shipyards.

1-00:10:12

Stone: Through my mother.

Redman: Now, do you remember the start of the war? Do you remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

1-00:10:16

Stone: Oh, how well I remember that day. It was 6:00 a.m. in the morning, and newsboys were going up and down the street yelling, I'm not sure just what they said, it was either Japan had bombed us or we were at war or something like that. They were going up and down the streets all over with newspapers, and it was about 6:00 a.m. in the morning. We were wondering what all the commotion was about.

Redman: Did you live in Richmond at that time?

1-00:10:45

Stone: Yeah. We just lived there four years, and then when the war was over we moved back to San Francisco because Mom preferred San Francisco.

Redman: We'll get back to that in a minute. That seems interesting. So tell me what else you remember about the start of the war. Were people talking about it? They were reading these newspapers, and—

1-00:11:06

Stone: Oh, yeah. That was the big talk for a week or two, that we were at war. What I remember most about it is I never cared for meat. I was practically a vegetarian, I would say. Then when World War II started, they started rationing things, and meat was one of them. Had these coupons or something, I don't know exactly, and all of a sudden I started liking meat. My mother would say, "Wouldn't you know it? She never liked meat, and now that it's harder to get, now she likes meat." I remember that.

Redman: So there was a lot of change going on?

1-00:11:48

Stone: Oh, yeah. It was a different world.

Redman: You had to get used to the rationing. Okay, and how soon, oh go ahead.

1-00:11:51

Stone: Yeah, that's it.

Redman: How soon after the start of the war did your mom get a job at the shipyards? Do you recall how long that was?

1-00:12:02

Stone: It wasn't too long. It was '42 I think. I'm just guessing, could be '43.

Redman: But within the first year or two.

1-00:12:16

Stone: Yeah, shortly after the war started.

Redman: And do you remember how she found that work?

1-00:12:24

Stone: I think she knew somebody in the neighborhood that was working there. I'm not sure, because I was away from home then.

Redman: You were away from home? Can you tell me a little bit about—?

1-00:12:31

Stone: Well, I married my boyfriend, and we went to southern California, and he was drafted. That's how I got the job as what they call Rosie the Riveter. I put rivets in the wings of P-38 planes built by Lockheed Aircraft.

Redman: So your first job then for the war effort was in Burbank.

1-00:12:58

Stone: Burbank, yeah. It was Lockheed Aircraft, I know that.

Redman: I have several questions about Lockheed and the Lockheed Martin plant in Burbank. Did you tell me you were helping construct the P-38 Lightning?

1-00:13:15

Stone: Yeah, I was putting the rivets underneath the plane in the bottom part of the, wings of the plane, that was my portion.

Redman: Okay, so it was in particular the wings—

1-00:13:24

Stone: Yeah, right underneath. I remember crawling under there with a gun shooting those rivets, and then the inspector came, and if you didn't get the rivet just right, you have to take them out and redo it.

Redman: Tell me a little more about how the actual work was; so you went around with the riveting gun—

1-00:13:53

Stone: Yes. All the women had to have their hair tied up in a scarf. Somehow I didn't get the scarf on one evening, and I was working swing shift, and the—it was sort of like a gun that shot the rivets in got caught in my hair and pulled out a hunk of hair, and that's why we always had to have our hair tied up. I had it kind of tied a little loosely because it looked better than the other way. Vanity, and I learned my lesson.

Redman: So the job was a little dangerous, but was it—?

1-00:14:31

Stone: Not too dangerous, just if you were careless about tying up your hair.

Redman: Was it particularly strenuous; was it difficult physically?

1-00:14:40

Stone: Not too much except that your arms got tired from always holding them up in that position.

Redman: Do you recall like what dates you moved to Burbank and about how old you were, and about how old you were when you left?

1-00:15:00

Stone: I was eighteen when I moved to Burbank area, but I was only there six or seven months, and then I moved back to Richmond to live with Mom. She got me this job in the shipyards then.

Redman: So that would be about 1942, 1943 in Burbank?

1-00:15:21

Stone: Oh, not even, September '42, yeah, you're right. The end of '42 and the beginning of '43.

Redman: Did you get a feeling when you were building the P-38s for the entirety of the project, or did you feel pretty confined to riveting?

1-00:15:40

Stone: Just that one section, yeah.

Redman: Did you know other people in the plant that were, did you know other girls in the plant, or—?

1-00:15:47

Stone: Well, I got acquainted with a few after I went to work there.

Redman: So you made some friends?

1-00:15:50

Stone: Yeah, nothing close, though, come to think of it. I can't remember one friend there. Isn't that funny?

Redman: So do you think that was partly due to the fact that you were there just a short time?

1-00:15:59

Stone: I think so, yeah.

Redman: You said you were working the swing shift. What does that mean?

1-00:16:05

Stone: Swing shift, 4:00 to midnight, I think it was.

Redman:

That's pretty unusual time of the day to work, but a lot of people were working graveyard shifts and things like that, so were people in Burbank pretty used to that, or did it still feel pretty unusual to go off to work at four o'clock in the afternoon?

1-00:16:28

Stone: I never gave it any thought; I don't know.

Redman:

Do you recall any special events or visitors at the Burbank plant?

1-00:16:40

Stone: No, I don't. I don't have too much of a memory of that time.

Redman:

I've just got a couple of other questions about the Burbank plant. Were there any war bond promotions?

1-00:16:52

Stone: I don't recall.

Redman:

Do you feel like, what was the relationship with your male colleagues at the Burbank plant?

1-00:17:02

Stone: Oh, they were very helpful. But there were a lot of women working because so many men were in the war.

Redman:

So right away it felt like there were a lot of women at the plant?

1-00:17:12

Stone: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Redman:

Was there union activity at that particular plant?

1-00:17:19

Stone: No, there wasn't, come to think of it. Or I don't remember anything.

Redman:

What I would like to do, I wanted to show you a picture that I found online of building P-38s at the Burbank plant, and I'm not sure exactly what year was that taken. Does that bring back some memories?

1-00:17:44

Stone: Yeah, I sat right under—

Redman:

Under the wings there.

1-00:17:47

Stone: Underneath the wing and shot the, not bullets, what do you call them, I can't even remember?

Redman: Rivets?

1-00:17:54

Stone: Rivets, that's it. Into the wings, and my section was underneath the, like under here.

Redman: So underneath the wing.

1-00:18:03

Stone: Of the P-38. Yeah, I don't know if they make them any more. I doubt it.

Redman: No.

1-00:18:13

Stone: I think it was just wartime.

Redman: So did you see any completed P-38s then? Were they, so they would come through to be—?

1-00:18:25

Stone: No, I never did see a completed one, come to think of it.

Redman: Really, so sometimes even at the shipyards you'd get to see a liberty ship that was completed?

1-00:18:29

Stone: Oh, yeah, we saw those, yeah, because every time there was a christening you'd see that particular ship in the harbor waiting to be christened, yeah.

Redman: Was there sort of a feeling of, at the end of the day, at the end of the work day at Burbank, how did you feel? Did you feel a sense of accomplishment, or any other sort of emotion, or—

1-00:18:51

Stone: I'll have to be honest. I was just thinking of the great money I was making. I've always been, I wouldn't say—what was, oh, frugal, so I was always saving part of it. All my life I always had to put a certain amount in savings, and I think that's from being a Depression kid, remembering what it was like.

Redman: Tell me about being eighteen years old and working at Lockheed Martin and making, do you remember, do you recall how much you were making?

1-00:19:25

Stone: Funny thing, I don't remember there, but it was probably close to \$40.

Redman: \$40 a month?

1-00:19:30

Stone: I'm guessing \$35 to \$40.

Redman: So that felt like a lot of money.

1-00:19:37

Stone: Big bucks.

Redman: And then your husband at the time had been drafted.

1-00:19:41

Stone: Yeah.

Redman: So you were in Burbank by yourself then for—

1-00:19:43

Stone: Yeah.

Redman: Is that partially why you chose to move back up to Richmond, because you were—?

1-00:19:51

Stone: He was gone overseas.

Redman: You had an apartment there that you left, or—?

1-00:20:00

Stone: I lived with one of his relatives.

Redman: You were saving quite a bit of money then of this \$40 or \$35 that could go into—

1-00:20:09

Stone: Yeah.

Redman: Did that give you a feeling of independence, or did you feel—?

1-00:20:19

Stone: It made me realize for the first time I wasn't so poor because I remembered, we were just little kids during the Depression. It was rough because my dad was out of work for a year. It was rough, but they were so proud, they wouldn't take help from anybody. Half the neighborhood was on welfare, and my dad and mom wouldn't take it.

Redman: I'm just going to check the time on this tape here and see how we're doing. It looks like we have time for, yeah, several more questions. So let's talk about Richmond. Do you remember how, did your mother call you or send you a letter or tell you to come up, or—?

1-00:21:03

Stone: I just moved back. I just wanted to go home. Then she got me the job at the shipyards. She was already working there then.

Redman: You said she was a steam fitter, is that right?

1-00:21:17

Stone: Steam fitters help, steam fitter is what they called the job that she had. I just read something here, what did they call it? She was a journeyman pipe fitter was her title there, journeyman pipe fitter.

Redman: Can you tell me a little bit about what that meant?

1-00:21:42

Stone: Yeah, like in this picture, Mom's holding something, and I'm holding something, oh, she's probably grinding to cutting pipes, as you cut them you also ground, what do you call it, the ridges in so they screw into other pipes and so forth. Then they were—when we made enough of those, then all the different parts for the, were taken down to the floor of the ship and put together in the engine room of the ship.

Redman: So it was in some ways the production of the pipes were set aside from the final production of the ship.

1-00:22:29

Stone: Yeah, oh, yeah. We went down to help a little, but the men did most of the work of putting it together in the bottom of the ship.

Redman: Tell me a little bit about what that actual work was like compared to—you riveted and then you—

1-00:22:48

Stone: Most of them were pretty hard work for women, I thought. Nowadays it wouldn't seem that way, but in those days women didn't do that kind of work. After the war it just became more common that women did some of the work that men did.

Redman: So what was it like to work with your mother?

1-00:23:13

Stone: Well, she was still always my mom, let's put it that way. "Do it this way, do it that way."

Redman: So she had some prior training—

1-00:23:21

Stone: Oh, yeah. She had probably already worked there about a year before I came back home.

Redman: So in some sense she was the expert in having done that, but she was also your mother.

1-00:23:32

Stone: Yeah, a little different.

Redman: Tell me a little bit about what a typical day was like at the Richmond shipyard. Do you remember which shipyard it was, by the way?

1-00:23:45

Stone: There was the Richmond Shipyard Number 1 and Number 3, and I think it was Number 3. I'm almost sure it was Number 3. I get mixed up once in a while, but I'm pretty sure it was 3.

Redman: Great, and do you remember what a typical day was like?

1-00:24:04

Stone: Well, get up in the morning and, oh, there was a man originally from Texas, and we got a ride with him every morning. He'd come by and pick us up because oil and all that stuff was—I don't know if it was rationed or not, but anyway, you did everything to spare some of these things for war efforts. So most people got ride with somebody, or if they were the driver, would pick up two, three people. It just was common then.

Redman: So he was also working at the shipyards.

1-00:24:44

Stone: Oh, yeah.

Redman: And you would go in the morning with him.

1-00:24:50

Stone: Yeah, all I remember about him—he was such a real nice guy, a gentleman, and he was from Texas.

Redman: Then you'd arrive at work, and then you'd clock in?

1-00:25:00

Stone: Yeah, and then we'd start in with our work, and well that's it. I did mostly the grinding of the pipes, and I did go in the bottom of the ship several times, so they showed me how they put all the different pipes together.

Redman: So then can you compare and contrast a little bit about the experience of, in Burbank at the Lockheed Martin plant you would only see the underside of the wing.

1-00:25:28

Stone: Yeah, yeah.

Redman: Then at the Richmond shipyard you would get sometimes a glimpse of this larger ship.

1-00:25:36

Stone: The whole ship because they were always, even after they were built they were in dock until they were christened, and then they took off.

Redman: That must have been a little bit of a different experience to see sort of—

1-00:25:47

Stone: Yeah, it was, yeah.

Redman: Do you remember the city of Richmond at that time and how it was changing during the war?

1-00:26:03

Stone: Well, a lot of people were coming in from all over the United States, but it seemed like there was a big influx of people from Oklahoma and Texas for some reason, I don't know. They must have advertised there or something, I don't know. But there were a lot of people from Oklahoma and Texas.

Redman: You mentioned the gentleman from Texas.

1-00:26:26

Stone: Yeah.

Redman: Did people in your community have an opinion of the people who were moving in? I know some people described people as Arkies or Okies, people who were coming from—

1-00:26:38

Stone: Oh, yeah. People from Oklahoma were called Okies. I don't remember Arkies so much, but I remember Okies.

Redman: Was it pretty welcoming, or did you sort of think—?

1-00:26:54

Stone: Kind of hard to discuss that.

Redman: Okay. So, let's see, can you tell me a little bit about your experiences with the unions at the shipyards? You said your mother—

1-00:27:06

Stone: We all had to belong to a union, and my mother was made, what do they call it?

Redman: A shop steward?

1-00:27:12

Stone: Shoot. I got it in this article. Here is it, let's see. "Shipyard, first woman shop steward in Local," I can't make it out, 390 or 590.

Redman: So she was—

1-00:27:47

Stone: Steam fitters, and it was for steam fitters, plumbers and helpers.

Redman: So she was the first female shop steward of that particular—

1-00:27:56

Stone: Yeah, and she was so proud of that.

Redman: Do you remember sort of about her role as—?

1-00:28:04

Stone: She had to go to a meeting; I remember it was on Wednesday nights. It might have been every Wednesday or every other Wednesday in San Francisco; they had a meeting of all the shop stewards. I'd go with her sometimes.

Redman: Was there segregation at the time at either of the plants that you worked at, either the shipyard or at—?

1-00:28:33

Stone: By segregation, how do you mean? Do you mean black or white—?

Redman: Like racial segregation, yes.

1-00:28:38

Stone: Well, a lot of blacks moved to Richmond, and we didn't have very many blacks before. I remember that. But it didn't bother me or my family because my parents were very strict about—well, I'm trying to find the right word, that God created us all equal is the way I would put it, the way our church taught, yeah.

Redman: So you maybe noticed that the city was changing, but—

1-00:29:10

Stone: Oh, yeah, definitely. People were really moving in by the droves.

Redman: Right. I've read that it was hard for people to find places to live.

1-00:29:20

Stone: That's true. Some people were—two families would move in one place and all that. Yeah, housing was hard to find. It just so it happened my parents owned a home in Richmond.

Redman: Did that sort of feel like a relief that you had a place and steady work?

1-00:29:38

Stone: We didn't notice it, but people who moved in and wanted to find rentals had a little rougher time, that's true.

Redman: I've also read that at the time in order to accommodate all of these people there were new movie theaters that were opening up and restaurants, and downtown Richmond was—

1-00:29:57

Stone: It started growing a little more. It was just sort a little, I shouldn't say this—

Redman: It was a little bit of a hick town before and that it felt more urban?

1-00:30:07

Stone: Yeah, right.

Redman: By the time, okay. So do you remember then you said you were making a lot more money then, and was that true again at the—?

1-00:30:20

Stone: Yeah, it was about the same amount of money both at the shipyards and at the airplane factory.

Redman: Then you were socking away some of this money because I've talked to some Rosies who said they would just take their money and then they would go out and blow it on whatever they wanted—

1-00:30:37

Stone: Well, I was raised differently. My parents taught me that you should have a little backup money, and I remembered the Depression so well because I remembered there was things I couldn't have. I saw other kids; I think the thing that was very upsetting is in many cases these welfare family, their kids were dressed better and everything than we were. My parents weren't on welfare, but they were just too proud. That's just the way they were.

Redman: Right, yeah. So then having the steady work at the shipyards must have felt like—

1-00:31:21

Stone: Oh, wonderful. Yeah, wonderful.

Redman: Tell me a little bit about your mother christening a ship.

1-00:31:35

Stone: Oh, yeah, they had this—at that time they called it war bonds. Now I don't know what they call—

Redman: Sure, war bonds, yeah.

1-00:31:43

Stone: At that time and now they're just called what kind of bonds?

Redman: Bonds, okay.

1-00:31:49

Stone: Anyway, I think I forgot how much they cost at the time, but when you cashed them in they were worth \$25. I'm just guessing we probably paid \$15, and that's what we got later on. I'm not sure any more. Anyway, they had this drive in the shipyards, and they said the one who won, who signed up for the most bonds or bought the most bonds, would have the honor of christening a ship, which was really something because up until then it was always celebrities. In fact, the week before they usually had christened a ship about once a week or once every two weeks, and a week or two before Mama christened a ship it was, I guess you'd call her a Princess from Holland who christened a ship. She later became Queen. But she was the Princess or whatever then, and she christened a ship, the one before Mama. It was usually celebrities.

And here Mom, that was really a wonderful thing for her. They picked us up in a limousine, big stuff. Naturally I was very impressed being so young, and they had this drive, and Mama bought \$1,500. She took all the cash she had saved, which was \$1,500. Sounds like nothing now, but then that was pretty good money. It just showed she was always saving, too. It was in our family, saving for the rainy day. Then she signed up for, \$125 did I say? Oh, here it is. It says she christened Yard 1's hull Number 2265. The name of the ship was the *James H. Breasted*, and it was done on February 10, 1944? It could have been 1945, I'm not sure. Anyway, she also signed up for a \$125 monthly deduction. She must have just kept enough to buy food.

Redman: So some of the money from her paycheck would be deducted and then automatically put into war bonds?

1-00:34:34

Stone: Yeah, she wasn't keeping much for herself. But she was always frugal, so I guess she could manage if anybody could, yeah.

Redman: So did your income then at the time, did it go to the family, or were you keeping that money to support yourself?

1-00:34:50

Stone: I had to pay room and board to Mom, and then the rest I put in the bank. You didn't need to buy many clothes or anything because you had to wear these overall-type things. You wouldn't want to wear good clothes doing that job.

Redman: I've heard from some other Rosies that at the end of the work day, most people would want to go, if they were going to go out say to a movie theater

or dinner or somewhere out, they would want to go home and change into—except, but then sometimes they would just go out—

1-00:35:27

Stone: But I was living with Mom, number one, and number two, I was married, so I didn't go out much.

Redman: You didn't really go out much, so most of your free time was spent at home.

1-00:35:34

Stone: Yeah, helping Mama clean house. Boy, she was particular.

Redman: Tell me a little bit about what that was like then, coming home and you would spend time at home with her and—

1-00:35:50

Stone: We watched—we didn't have TV in those days, listened to radio a lot.

Redman: Since your husband was away at war, were you thinking about him a lot? Were you—?

1-00:36:02

Stone: Oh, naturally.

Redman: Yeah, and so listening to radio programs and—

1-00:36:06

Stone: The war and what not, wondering where they were because you never knew. All the letters you got were censored. They couldn't show where the letter came from or anything like that.

Redman: Let's conclude with talking a little bit about your life after the war, as the war came to an end. Do you remember what the end of the war was like?

1-00:36:28

Stone: It was sort of a letdown. I had a hard time finding a job. Because all of a sudden all these women were out of work and the wages were back to \$15 a week or so. It was kind of rough adjusting.

Redman: So wages had been much higher.

1-00:36:48

Stone: Yeah. It was an adjustment for the first year. I finally got a job at Southern Pacific as a file clerk because I only had a high school education.

Redman: Did any of your previous work experience—it sounds pretty different going from the heavy manual labor to then being a file clerk.

1-00:37:09

Stone: Yeah, totally different, yeah.

- Redman: So it didn't necessarily help you.
- 1-00:37:16  
Stone: No, it was strictly work for men, and when the men came home from the service they got the jobs again. The women were out.
- Redman: Did that make you feel a particular way? Did you have some resentment—?
- 1-00:37:25  
Stone: Not really, because we knew it was going to happen. We knew that when the war was over, our war time jobs would be over, so—
- Redman: So you at the time you considered it a war time job.
- 1-00:37:38  
Stone: Yeah, we knew that, yeah.
- Redman: I'd like to just ask a couple more questions. Now, I've noticed you have a Rosie the Riveter here and a Rosie the Riveter sticker.
- 1-00:37:52  
Stone: Oh, yeah.
- Redman: The question is, I'd love for you to comment on since the war time sort of image of Rosie the Riveter, since then the images meant a lot of things. It's on T-shirts, it's on posters, it's on stickers.
- 1-00:38:06  
Stone: I know.
- Redman: Can you comment a little bit about what you think the Rosie the Riveter image means in—?
- 1-00:38:13  
Stone: I've never thought much about it. It was just within the last ten, fifteen years now that I'm getting older, and old people they always say, reminisce about the past. It's true, because I'm doing the same thing. All of a sudden I've got more interest in what these Rosie the Riveter signs are. They didn't appeal to me at first, and all of a sudden I've got all these things showing Rosie the Riveter. But you think—I remember my dad used to talk about his youth so much, and now I'm doing the same thing. So all the things I've kind of questioned about my parents, I'm doing the same thing.
- Redman: You said at first the image didn't really appeal to you. Was there one reason or another you just didn't care for it, or—?
- 1-00:39:04  
Stone: I guess I was tired of it or something, I don't know. I don't know why really.
- Redman: It didn't seem special to you when you—

1-00:39:09

Stone: No. No, just the last few years all of a sudden I realized it was a different time and different life.

Redman: We went to the Richmond Home Front Festival, and I'm curious what you think about how Rosies are being remembered today, how your work is being commemorated and—

1-00:39:34

Stone: I think they're doing a pretty good job. We never expected this. I've wanted to go [to the festival] every year, but for some reason I couldn't. This year I did go—my daughter took me—and it was wonderful. All of a sudden it brought back so many memories that I sort of had forgotten about or not thought about much. It was a great day. I was so happy that day, and I kept wondering why. I think I was just remembering, and then when my daughter saw that picture. They had just a few pictures from newspapers, and there was that one where I was in the group picture. She said, "Oh, there's Mama."

Redman: So that makes you feel good.

1-00:40:22

Stone: Yeah.

Redman: It helps you remember some of those things. That's great. So I'd like to just ask, is there anything else? Today we've talked about your early childhood and your time at Burbank at the Lockheed Martin plant and the Richmond shipyards. I'd like to ask if there's anything else you'd like to share. Do you have any other memories of that time that—?

1-00:40:43

Stone: No, not particularly. It seemed like we were working all the time. But it was sad at times.

Redman: Why is that?

1-00:40:54

Stone: Well, you thought of all the men overseas fighting for, and let's face it, were in the war all the time. Of course, not many people probably share my viewpoint, but I'm so anti-war. Especially after I lost my brother, because I remember him the night before he left for Korea. Half of his classmates at Randall Air Force Base where he got his training and everything, half his classmates were lost in Korea. Because the Korean War broke out within a few weeks of the time he graduated, became a pilot and got his first wings. I remember he came home on a leave and just in time for my husband and I to get married. He was on that picture, our wedding picture, and he says, "Well, the Korean War just broke out." Right after he graduated as a pilot, then two years later he was gone. I guess what hurt the most is we didn't even have a grave to go to. We kept hoping he'd return as a POW. He wasn't, but the fellow that was shot down with him was.

I had a nice chat with him, and Mom had gone to the ship that was filled with POWs returning home from Korea, and Lieutenant {Kanner?} was on that ship, that was the one that was shot down with my brother. They even had a picture in the San Francisco Examiner showing my mother talking to him. By coincidence we were living in LA then. By coincidence his wife just lived a few miles from us. We went to see her before there was a POW exchange. Then later on we invited Lieutenant Kanner for dinner. We had a nice chat, and he says to me, “Don’t expect your brother back. I think he’s gone.”

Redman: Gone.

1-00:43:26

Stone: But he says, “You know, I have to tell you. I couldn’t tell your mother that. I just let her hope that he might be POW.” So I told Mom, and I just explained he just didn’t have the heart to tell her. Then we accepted that he was gone. That was a rough time. My dad, you couldn’t even mention my brother’s name, and he would start crying. It was awful.

Redman: That’s very tough.

1-00:43:58

Stone: War is an awful thing, and like all these wars now, I just feel that way maybe because I lost my brother, but I just think we’d keep our nose out of other countries’ business.

Redman: So you think in light of your own experiences, you have a very complicated view of war and what it means to fight and—

1-00:44:21

Stone: I know that probably there are times we have to fight, but I think some of these wars are unnecessary. I think we should just—but you know, like this one fellow told me who served over there, he said—

Redman: From over in Korea?

1-00:44:35

Stone: No, he said, “If you check back, most wars are fought because of need for oil.” When you think of it, the countries we’re fighting now, it’s oil. Terrible.

Redman: I’d like to thank you for sitting down with me today and sharing some of your memories.

1-00:44:57

Stone: I hope I didn’t get carried away too much.

Redman: Oh, no. This is fantastic.

1-00:45:02

Stone: Very sentimental.

Redman: So looking at some of these pictures of yourself as an eighteen or nineteen-year old girl, what does that make you feel? Do you feel—?

1-00:45:11

Stone: Boy, I sure got old in a hurry! When you're growing up as a teenager between the ages of seventeen to twenty-one was the longest time in my life because I wanted to be twenty-one. Then after twenty-one it was thirty, and then the last twenty years zipped, they just went like that.

The slowest time in the life is when you're raising your kids. You think it's never going to stop. Then all of a sudden they're gone, and you're grandparents. Then your life slips away so fast.

Redman: Well, it seems like you have some wonderful memories, and I want to say thank you for sharing them with me today.

1-00:45:49

Stone: Oh, you're welcome. [looks at photo] See, this was 1944; I have the date there when my mom christened the ship. Mama always got so stiff when she knew somebody was taking her picture. She'd go—

Redman: Straighten up.

1-00:46:10

Stone: Yeah, and her smile would be so stiff.

Redman: Tell me about these—you had explained that these images appeared in the shipyard newspaper.

1-00:46:20

Stone: Yeah.

Redman: I was just asking you what that was. I was curious what—

1-00:46:24

Stone: They had a shipyard newspaper. I don't know if it came out once a month or once a week, and they always had news articles like this about different things happening in the shipyards.

Redman: So they would maybe show you, because in this image it shows that you're mother and daughter, as a team.

1-00:46:47

Stone: Just something newsworthy, I guess what they were looking for, and, of course, whoever christened a ship was in every time.

Redman: Did that give you sort of a—in flipping through that—give you sort of a sense of who was working on the ship or what the various components were?

1-00:47:00

Stone: No. I didn't work on the ship too much. I did mostly work in the shop preparing stuff for the pipes and what not.

Redman: Then the pipes would be brought into where the main ship was assembled.

1-00:47:16

Stone: Yeah, and then we'd go to the bottom of the ship. I only went to the bottom of the ship a few times.

Redman: To sort of see where—

1-00:47:23

Stone: Yeah, and they showed us what these different pipes, what they were doing, how they were connected. But when we were threading the pipes and what not, we didn't know what they were for.

[End of Interview]