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Mary Torres

Rosie the Riveter
WWII American Home Front Oral History Project

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Interview conducted by
Shanna Farrell
in 2016

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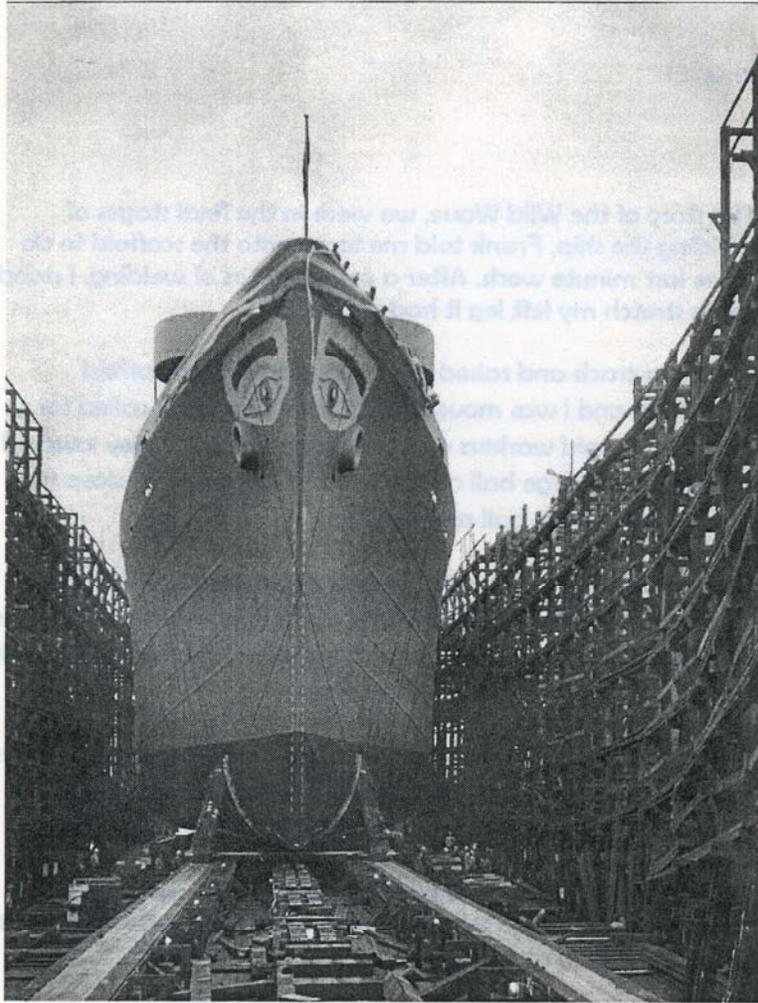
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Mary Torres, 2016



This is the way I looked in my welding clothes,
the leather kept me from getting burned.
I wore this outfit to work every day until
the end of the war in 1945.



We built many ships, but this one the
SS Kidd Wave, we got to see it launched
October 20, 1944, the clothes we wore are the
ones on the cover of my book. a week
later it headed for the war zone.



Sherchik family 1936 =

Michael - dad 21yrs

Julia - mom

George 19

Mike 17

John 15

Mary 13

Eddie 11

Agnes 9

This is the last family
picture taken in 1936 of
the Sherchik family

1944

The story of the Wild Wave, we were in the final stages of building the ship, Frank told me to go onto the scaffold to do some last minute work. After a couple hours of welding, I stood up to stretch my left leg it had a cramp.

I heard a crack and raised my hood, part of the scaffold separated and I was moved away from the ship. I called for help, Frank said workers were coming to fix it up they lowered a rope with a large ball on the bottom I was told to clasp my fingers around the ball and hold on.

I was scared if the rest of the boards separated I might drop. Frank said no, they could pull me up. Workers came with poles and hooks and moved the boards together, used wire to hold it all together as they nailed it together.

An hour later I was taken to the upper deck. A few weeks later we went to see our ship the U.S. Wild Wave being launched and ready to go to the war zone. It got to be a famous ship.

I saw the ship and all in a book about the bay area Shipyards, Moore's shipyards in Oakland California. I am so proud of what we did, working at Moore'

Mary Rosie

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Interview 1: January 4, 2016

01-00:00:00

Farrell: This is Shanna Farrell with Mary Torres on Monday, January 4, 2016. And this is an interview for the Rosie the Riveter Project. Mary, can you start by telling me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early life?

01-00:00:23

Torres: I was born in Donora, Pennsylvania. That's right outside of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. Nineteen twenty-three. At the time that I was in high school, I was a senior, and I was going to graduate in June. They had just taken our yearbook pictures for our yearbook. We had a few weeks off before we went back to school. In that time is when Pearl Harbor was bombed. The minute it was bombed everybody got so patriotic. We knew we were going to get in the war but we didn't know when. President Roosevelt kept reminding us that we know we're going to have to get in but we have to be patient. When we were bombed it was like a cloud had just gone over the whole country. I remember that day we all went to church and we spent most of the day in church praying. We were so worried. We had been worried all the time but we had figured we would be bombed because that's where Germany would have come, to the East Coast. But the West Coast got it.

01-00:01:55

Farrell: I want to back up a little bit and talk a little bit about your childhood. So you were born in Donora, Pennsylvania. Your parents are both from Russia. Can you tell me a little bit, what their names are, and a little bit about them?

01-00:02:13

Torres: My dad was named Michael Shevchik and at the age of sixteen, when he was a young man, he was getting ready to sign up with the Russian army. Because once they had seventeen they had to sign up. My dad did not want to sign up for World War I. He and his brother and several of the uncles went underground and they left Russia. So actually he was running away from a war. When I was a child and he was still with his old-fashioned ways. I remember we celebrated Russian Christmas. We went to Russian church. Everything was from the way they did it in Russia. So I respected that and I loved it. I loved all our religious holidays and all. But as I started getting a little older I wanted to get more American.

I went to Russian school for eight years. I went from the age of five on and I learned to speak. But I did it because of them. I didn't do it because I wanted to. But as I grew older and I was in high school the Depression was on and we were so poor. Actually the whole town was poor. The only industry we had in our town was the steel mill and that's where my dad worked. But he had been laid off. But now with the war and all he started working again. But my dad always carried the old-fashioned ways. So I had told him, I said, "I would like to help if I can, get a job, because I know America needs women." My dad says, "Not one of my girls are going to go," because I had a younger sister,

“do man’s work. That’s man’s work.” A couple of my older brothers, they did. One was in the Army and the other one was getting ready for the Navy. But that was okay with him. But not the girls. We were supposed to wait. How can we get married if there’s no young men? See, the draft was on. All the young men were going overseas. In fact, my senior class, there were three boys and all three of them were college, going to college as soon as they graduated. Now, that is a deferment. They were deferred. But everybody else had to sign-up. They can join and they can enlist in the Air Force or the Navy. So most of them decided they were going to enlist, so this way they can get in the branch they wanted to. So we had three boys.

01-00:05:33

Farrell:

I have some questions about that but I want to ask about your mother. Can you tell me her name and about maybe how she was different than your dad?

01-00:05:44

Torres:

My mother, she was married at the age of fourteen and her name was Julia. She also was Russian. Komara was her last name as a single—but at the age of fourteen she come to this country. They also left Russia. She met my dad. My dad was fourteen years older than my mother, so he always treated her like a young girl. My mother was just exactly what my father wanted me to be. A mother, have a lot of children, cook, sew, and do everything, and that would be my life. But that wasn’t what I wanted to do.

01-00:06:28

Farrell:

Did your mother want that for you? Did she want you to get married and have a lot of children?

01-00:06:34

Torres:

My mother was a very quiet woman. Most of the talking was always done by my dad. My mother would caress us and love us and teach us prayers and all. My mother didn’t even know how to pay a bill. My dad did it all. See, he was the ruler and this was the way he felt the girls should be. Not me. I got a side job. I was working for JC Penney for twenty-five cents an hour and I’d been saving for my graduation. I felt I needed the ring, because in those days we got a ring. Our birthstone ring. That was one of the graduation—and a yearbook. I was saving for it. That’s why I had a little bit of money. I worked at JC Penney and I put all that money away. My folks kept asking me, “What are you doing with your money?” It was so little. I was always up in the attic. I had a hiding place nobody knew about and that’s where I put my money. That’s why I had the money when I read that article that California needed workers. I had to get as far away from my father as possible. That way he had no control over me. I loved him but I feared him. It was one of those things, that I respected him, I did what he told me to do, but I didn’t want to do a lot of the things.

01-00:08:20

Farrell:

Before we get there I want to talk a little bit about your siblings. So you have three brothers and a younger sister. Can you tell me about your memories of them?

01-00:08:31

Torres:

Oh, yes. I had three older brothers, a younger brother and my sister. We were all two years apart. [Section deleted by narrator during editing process.]

So, you see, I was so happy when I did leave. I think I was relieved when I was on the bus but I was scared because I had never left home and I felt, “Well, what’s better?” Staying there and being like that the rest of my life or trying for a new life? I wanted that new life. When I was on the bus all you do is think and you think, “Well, I had a home, I had everything. What am I going to come to? I’m going to go to a new land that I don’t know a thing about. I’m going to get a room with somebody I don’t know. Could be a man that molests me. I don’t know.” There was a lot of thoughts in my mind as I was on that bus. I was scared. I had nobody to confide in because it was me. I didn’t tell even my best girlfriends that I was leaving. I told nobody. That was my secret.

01-00:11:17

Farrell:

So moving across country takes a lot of courage and a spirit of adventure. In the book that you wrote you tell a lot of stories about your childhood of mischief.

01-00:11:32

Torres:

Oh, yes. I was always into trouble.

01-00:11:37

Farrell:

Can you tell me where that curiosity that led you to that, where did that stem from, and then did that have an effect on you? Was that something that you felt you needed when you got on the bus?

01-00:11:52

Torres:

My guardian angel I knew would help me, but I also knew that if there’s anything in the world that I’m capable of doing, I think I can do it. I was my father’s shadow. See, I was picking up from him all his traits. My aunt on the farm. You read about my aunt on the farm? I learned an awful lot from her. She was a talker. She taught me to cook and everything. We spent all our summers out on the farm. I think I learned more from my aunt than I did from my own mother. But she was like my dad. She was one of those tough Russian women. And, boy, I’m telling you, you didn’t get away with nothing with her. That was good because I was hungry for knowledge and I knew that someday I’m going to have to leave home. I knew it. I wasn’t going to be content to get married and have kids. Even when I went to high school the neighbors, had a little beauty shop next door, and there was five girls. They were all older than I was. In fact, I got all their clothes. I never had a new dress, ever. Even my graduation dress that I wore was a dress that was my

mother's. It was a beautiful dress. But it wasn't a new dress. The only dress that I remember that was a new dress from a store was my Holy Communion dress. Other than that everything was a hand-me-down five times, because each sister would hand it down. I would be the sixth one to get that dress. I was proud because they wore nice clothes. But they were hand-me-downs. The only thing I remember is my first paycheck I did go out and buy a dress.

01-00:13:59

Farrell:

Was it hard for you to find the job at JC Penney during that time?

01-00:14:09

Torres:

In the beauty shop one of the sisters worked at JC Penney. She was a cripple. She had a leg that was very bad and she worked in the office. She told them about me, that my dad was out of work. Well, everybody was out of work. But I was a good worker and she knew that I was a good worker. That's why JC Penney hired me. They thought they were doing good, twenty-five cents. Well, in those days it was pretty good money, but it was just part-time work.

01-00:14:42

Farrell:

Was your father supportive of you getting that job?

01-00:14:47

Torres:

Oh, no, he didn't mind that because I was working in yardage. See, it was still women's work because I had to learn to sew and everything. So he was okay. But they never asked me for any of the money that I made, they just asked me what I was doing with it. See, I couldn't wear makeup, nail polish. I couldn't buy anything that was fancy that would make me look better. My dad didn't want me to use. I don't remember my mother using much makeup either.

01-00:15:23

Farrell:

The war started when you were in high school. You had mentioned a few minutes ago about hearing Roosevelt's speech on the radio. Can you tell me some of your memories about when the war started?

01-00:15:39

Torres:

When I what?

01-00:15:40

Farrell:

Can you tell me about some of your memories when the war started?

01-00:15:44

Torres:

When it started? December the 7th on a Sunday. We all got patriotic. I was planning on doing something to get a war job and that's when in March I read that article. It was in March. When I bought the ticket for the bus, it was in March and I told them that I wasn't going to use it until the first Sunday of June. I figured I'd graduate on a Friday, Saturday I'd get all my clothes and everything, everything ready, and the minute my folks left for mass on Sunday morning, everything was ready. That minute they left I was going to go out the door and I was going to be on my way. I knew nobody would stop me because they took my younger sister and brother with them to church. My

older brothers, they couldn't care less, and my other brother was in the service. So I was on my own. I just grabbed my suitcase and a bag of sandwiches, wrote my folks a letter telling them I'm leaving home to get a job and I'd write in six months to tell them where I am and about my job. I headed with my ticket and my money for that bus depot. I walked down to it because it wasn't that far. Maybe about ten blocks. I took the local bus and we went into Pittsburgh. Boy, I knew I was on my way.

01-00:17:12

Farrell: So you mentioned the article a couple of times. Can you tell me about the article?

01-00:17:18

Torres: There was many listings of jobs that were available. It wasn't only California. It was Oregon, I mean, a lot. Your middle states had nothing. They had nothing. They had industry. I wanted to make sure that I was going to do something that I can help the war. It wasn't just to make money and get away from home. I wanted to be a worker for the war. In fact, I would have liked to have joined the WAVES or the WACs. That's another thing my dad said no. Men's work.

01-00:18:08

Farrell: Can you tell me about the WAVES and the WACs, what drew you to them, why you wanted to join?

01-00:18:15

Torres: The WACs?

01-00:18:16

Farrell: Yeah.

01-00:18:16

Torres: See, the WACs were a part of the Army. The WAVES were the Navy. I would have taken either one. What they would do, their work, is they would be suppliers and supply things. And they'd help with the nurses. Because they're not nurses but they would help. They would help the nurses. That's all they did. But they were shipped away from home and my dad wouldn't allow that. You weren't going to leave the house until you got married.

01-00:18:59

Farrell: When you were in high school your brother Mike got his draft card. Can you tell me about that happening?

01-00:19:06

Torres: Well, Mike, that's my second. See, my oldest brother was headstrong like I am. My younger brother, Mike, he was two years younger than my oldest one. He was one of these kind of young scared kids. It affected him to where, when he would talk to my father, his lip—all I remember is his lip would go like that, and his hands would go like this, and his feet. It was just a twitch. The service could not take him. When he went to the draft board, right as soon as

he graduated, he'd start and they automatically gave him a 4-F. So he did stay home and work with my folks and helped.

01-00:20:05

Farrell: At that point was your brother John in the Army?

01-00:20:09

Torres: He was in the Army.

01-00:20:10

Farrell: Do you remember when he joined the Army and can you tell me a little bit about that?

01-00:20:14

Torres: Well, as soon as he graduated he joined the Army, when he was eighteen. I couldn't tell you the year but he was eighteen. He had just graduated and a week later he was in the service.

01-00:20:28

Farrell: Had the war started yet?

01-00:20:28

Torres: Oh, yeah.

01-00:20:30

Farrell: Yeah, okay. Your brother Eddie was talking about joining the Navy. Did he end up—

01-00:20:36

Torres: He's my younger one.

01-00:20:37

Farrell: Your younger brother. Oh, okay. So he talked about joining the Navy. Did he indeed do that?

01-00:20:42

Torres: Oh, yeah. He stayed in for about two terms. And then he came out. And then, see, he didn't last too long. He died of a heart attack.

01-00:21:00

Farrell: Did you hear from them much when they were away, when they were in the service?

01-00:21:05

Torres: I don't remember. I didn't pay much attention to letters. I know that my brother, the one that was in the Army, he got a few promotions. He wasn't drinking. He was drinking maybe social but no heavy drinking. He was very intelligent. John was, I think, the smartest of all of us. He would have been good college material but we had no money for college. The rest of us were—go. Go.

01-00:21:53

Farrell:

Can you tell me about the day that you left and you got on the bus?

01-00:21:59

Torres:

The day that I left was a Sunday and it was the first Sunday of June and the weather was beautiful. But I was scared. I was scared. I grabbed that suitcase. I didn't pack too many clothes because if I packed too many they would know something was going on. So little at a time I'd put—but I was real scared and I kept thinking, "Am I doing the right thing?" And then, "Yes, I'm doing the right thing." I just wasn't going back off. That was it. I was going to be there in California whether I slept in the field, but I was going to be in California.

01-00:22:44

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit more about the bus ride? So you went to California via Pittsburgh and it took five days.

01-00:22:53

Torres:

I got to tell you something. We're going to backtrack this. I'm thinking about John. I think he went in before the war. He was drafted. See, we'd been drafting, the reason that I thought he went after the war. But he was drafted. They were being drafted years before the war. Roosevelt had them. So that's why he did go in. The war was not on but he was getting ready to go overseas if the war was on. He was stationed somewhere in Arizona for a while and then they shipped him over. So I wanted to clarify that, that the war was not on at the time John went in. He was the one I was closest to. We talked. But he was just two years older. The older ones didn't bother with me much. But I had good girlfriends that I confided in. I didn't even tell them that I was going to California. If something happened on that bus I would have been—nothing. Nobody would have known nothing because nobody ever knew where I was going or what I was doing. One day I was there, one day I wasn't.

01-00:24:29

Farrell:

How did that feel for you to not tell your parents, to not tell your friends?

01-00:24:34

Torres:

I cried a lot under that coat.

01-00:24:39

Farrell:

Can you tell me more about the bus ride?

01-00:24:42

Torres:

It was a very quiet one. Tell you the truth, I didn't know any of the people on the bus at all. But eventually we got to see the faces. When we got to McClellan Air Base and we got a job, all of us, and we all went to McClellan because that was a part of that. We would wave to each other because we recognized the faces but none of us recognized the names. But I had no friends for quite a while. I had nobody. In fact, I wasn't even talking to the landlady for maybe my first couple of months. I would come in a backdoor and go and go to sleep and go out and she'd never see me. Until finally one day she asked me to have a cup of tea with her and I sat. This was after a few

months that I'd been there. I had asked her, "Isn't there anything else that I can do to help win the war? Because I'm enjoying this job at McClellan but I would rather do something where I felt I was doing more." That's when she told me about the shipyards. She told me that there is two shipyards. Well, actually, there is more but two main ones. One was Kaiser and that one was in Richmond. They hired thousands and thousands and thousands. She made it look like gangs of people, and they were sleeping in the fields because they didn't have enough housing. Then she says, "Now, if you want to go to Oakland, that's a smaller shipyard, but they build a larger ship. If you do go to Moore's, you will be working on the ship and not in an assembly line. Richmond is almost all assembly line. I was happy for that because I wanted to build a ship. I felt like I was really going to help the war. And I did.

After my five days of training, and I had passed, because a lot of them didn't pass, they couldn't take the smoke, they couldn't take the sparks. Those heavy leathers were awful heavy. They didn't want to bother. They either went for an office job or the helper's job or something else other than welding. But I wanted to weld. I had learned as a child to knit and crochet and welding is your wrist. And, see, I have good wrists. The minute I touched that stinger I knew I could weld. I was a tacker. That's where you do a little bit at a time, holding two plates together. I knew I could weld. My dad always told me, "Anything a man can do, you can do." So anyway, I took to it and I loved it. In fact, when the war was nearing the end, I was the top welder on Moore's Shipyards. Yeah.

01-00:28:14

Farrell:

I want to back up a little bit. So the McClellan Air Base was in Sacramento. Can you tell me what some of your earlier memories of the air base or Sacramento was when you arrived?

01-00:28:27

Torres:

Oh, my. I had to take a bus to get to the base because I was living in North Sacramento. I had to take a bus. Because I had never seen a plane up close. I saw few. Because in those days there was not many. When I saw McClellan Air Base I thought it was on fire. It was just beautiful. All those planes. They put me in the rubber warehouse where I was inventorying. I was inventorying the tires and the gaskets. I was not a good student but I was a good inventory clerk. I found boxes of gaskets and things that people that had been inventorying before I was inventorying, that they wrote them off as being lost. My boss, Mr. Ramsey, after I'd worked just two months, he comes over to me and he says, "Mary, do you know how much you have saved the Air Force?" I says, "I don't know. What do you mean that I've saved?" He says, "All those boxes, you went up to the ladder and you counted all those boxes," because the gal that was below taking all the figures that I was giving, they couldn't believe because they'd have X amount and then when I'd go in there and find boxes that are full of dust and shake the dust off, I'd get a new number and I'd put it down. Here they had to add to all this. He said, "You have saved the Air

Force many thousands of dollars." When I finally decided after four months to leave, Mr. Ramsey comes over to me and he says, "I'm going to give you a letter of recommendation and I'm going to tell you that if you ever want a job, if you've tired of the shipyards, come on. Even after the peacetime. You want a job, come up to McClellan. If we're still hiring, you're on." I've kept that letter for quite a while. I lost it somewhere in the traveling. But I always was a good worker. I still am. I'm still working at my age, ninety-two.

01-00:30:59

Farrell:

I had read that you needed to stretch your money because you only got paid once a month. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

01-00:31:09

Torres:

Oh, you want to hear about that story. Oh, my gosh. Well, the first few days I went to a little restaurant that didn't charge too much and I ordered the cheapest thing on the menu, whether I liked it or not. Sometimes it would be Mexican food and I hate Mexican food. But I had to stretch my money. I only had maybe fifteen dollars to last me. But I knew that I would be paid at the end of the week. Not only that, I had to pay bus fare. So I was going to the restaurant for the first week and using the bus. And then, when we found out that they pay once a month, every one of us—like I say, the ones that we used to wave to, they were the same way. Oh, my God. They too were running short of money. By the end of the third week, no money. I walked from North Sacramento to McClellan Air Base. Two miles. Over two miles. I'd walk after work. So did the others. We would gang up and we'd all just go as a team. When we got our first paycheck, it was the funniest thing. We all ordered steaks. We were competing with each other. We all ordered steaks. When they delivered them, they had a crew on the side with a mop and a bucket and we couldn't figure—they were going to close early or something. No. We took one bite of that food and it all came up because we had been eating oranges and saltines crackers and it was eating away at our stomachs. If we had done that for six months we wouldn't have had a stomach. But anyway, the waitresses all come by and they had bags for us. They said, "Take your steaks home because in the middle of the night you'll be able to eat them and you'll be fine." So they were all waiting for us to throw up. It was quite a thing.

Up to then I was still managing as well as I could, as cheap as I could. I'd get the cheapest thing I could get. I'd get saltines because I was always told, even as a child, saltine crackers are good. Crackers are good for the stomach. But nobody ever told me that a lot of salt would be bad for me. In fact, if you go to my pantry, there's two boxes of saltines at all times. I figure if we have an earthquake or something, I'm going to be eating saltine crackers.

01-00:34:14

Farrell:

Can you tell me about your decision to leave Sacramento and to go to Oakland?

01-00:34:21

Torres: The what?

01-00:34:22

Farrell: Can you tell me about when you left Sacramento and went to Oakland?

01-00:34:26

Torres: June, July, August, September. I would say at the end of September is when I left, when she told me about the shipyard and I took the bus, took the local bus. I got down to Oakland and I decided right then I'm going to stay and work here. I didn't know where I was going to stay. As soon as I signed up the girl ahead of me, she had signed up before me, we both had signed up for welding, and she stood off to the side and she comes over to me and she says, "Mary?" I said, "Yeah?" I didn't know her or nothing. But she heard him say my name. She says, "Mary, where are you going to stay?" I says, "I hadn't even thought about it. But I guess I would have probably gone back to the bus depot and see if they had a bulletin board with names." She says, "Well, she says, her husband was just shipped out to go and fight and that she had an apartment near Lake Merritt and if I wanted to she would take me in as a roomer and we'd share all the expenses. I had a room even before I left to go back to get my clothes. I told her, "Oh, yes." She said, "When you come tomorrow," she said, "bring your suitcase and everything and we'll take the trolley from here," to her new apartment near Lake Merritt where her apartment was. That is when I wrote the letter and told my folks. I told my dad, "You know where I am? I'm in California. I'm building ships. I'm going to build ships. The steel that you're making in the steel mill is the steel we're using for those ships." My mother, she wrote back because my dad wouldn't write. She wrote back and said my dad took that letter to the church and they all prayed for me. So my dad wasn't mad at me.

01-00:36:48

Farrell: What was it like the first time that you heard back from your parents after you sent that letter?

01-00:36:55

Torres: Well, it wasn't until, I think, after the war. I never left. I never went anywhere. I worked six days a week. I don't think I went until Frank and I had gotten married. My boss. I don't think we went for a couple of years. When we did get back there my folks were kind of leery, what kind of a man that I would marry that's so much older than me, because Frank was also older than me. When they met him they just loved him. Well, they would come every summer. We would send them a ticket to come to California and spend the whole summer with us. Frank was a good man. Little man but he was a good man.

01-00:37:59

Farrell: Did your parents ever come out?

01-00:38:09

Torres:

Oh, yes. Oh, they couldn't wait to come. Oh. The whole time they were here we'd take them around. We took them to Disneyland and everything.

01-00:38:21

Farrell:

When you moved from Sacramento to Oakland you were living near Lake Merritt. Can you tell me what you remember about Lake Merritt from that time?

01-00:38:32

Torres:

I remember that big building, the convention building or something. But, see, I didn't have time to look around. I was so busy six days a week working, one day doing my laundry and all. I didn't have time for any of that. But I do remember is there was an awful lot of sailors. They'd come home on leave because they'd let them, and the ships did come back and forth. There was always a lot of sailors and they'd be whistling at us. I couldn't be bothered because I was too busy working.

01-00:39:11

Farrell:

So you went to welding school for one week. Do you remember anything about welding school?

01-00:39:19

Torres:

Oh, I remember everything. Everything. First thing they did was they lent us these heavy leathers. The gloves went way up to here. I thought, "Oh, my God." But we were just tacking, so it was just a little bit of welding and then a little bit more. First thing you learn is to scrape a little bit and then you start up. I took to it real fast. It was no problem. I knew I'd make a good welder. Those five days, I was waiting for it to hurry up and get over because I was bored.

01-00:40:02

Farrell:

I did read that on your first day you burned a hole in the steel.

01-00:40:06

Torres:

Oh. Well, that was after. See, that's when Frank, he came by. The whole group of us that were all learning to tack, he comes up and he says, "I'm going to take fifteen for my crew," and then his leaderman—because Frank was the foreman. Then the leaderman would each take theirs, until all ninety, because there was ninety of us waiting. The first one he picked was me. Later on he told me the reason he picked me is that he could see that my welding was as good as the welders. Tacking, learning to tack. He says, "I'm going to pick a crew of fifteen." I was the first one. We all were put aside with him. Then each one was issued out. As they were issued out we all walked in a group down. Each way—a way is where each ship is moored. They would drop off one of the leaderman and his crew. Then the next one. The ship maybe is about three-fourths of the way done. Then the next one maybe half. All the way down. The very last one was a flat piece of steel with a keel, the bottom part. I stood on that piece of steel and I looked at him, I says, "I don't want to

work with you. I don't want to work here. I want to work over there. Look at that ship. I want to work there." He said, "Young lady, in a few weeks this ship, this piece of steel, is going to be as big as that." I said, "You mean to tell me I'm going to start from the bottom up?" He says, "Yeah." So I says, "Okay, I'll work for you." He says, "Okay, show me what you can do." So they brought two pieces of steel and then he told me, he says, "Now, you tack it." So the minute I hit the steel with my rod it wasn't moving. It went through and I melted a hole. "What the heck?" I lifted my hood and there was a hole about that big. I says, "What happened? Am I fired before I'm hired?" My boss starts laughing. He says, "No." He says, "Didn't they teach you to set the machine?" I said, "What do you mean set the machine?" He says, "That machine is turned up full blast. The minute it hit you couldn't scrape. You went right through and you burnt that big hole." And scared me. Oh, I was so scared. He says, "Okay, let's forget about this." They brought two more pieces of steel. "Put them together." He says, "Now do it." Perfect. He scraped it off, he says, "Okay."

01-00:43:20

Farrell:

Was that your friend Jose who helped you patch that hole?

01-00:43:23

Torres:

Jose was the helper. Each of us had a helper. Each one of us tackers had a helper, where they would pull the cable, because it's a long, real heavy cable, and they would tell us where to go. They would stick by us and pull as we went along. So then once we'd get started pretty well, if we had quite a bit, they can go and they can help another welder or tacker or anybody needed any more help. But Jose was the one that was issued to me for always. He stayed with me until I got to be a welder. He even stayed with me as a welder for a while because I was in such demand doing the bigger parts that he was helping me move that cable all over.

01-00:44:16

Farrell:

How long did it take for you and him to develop a good teamwork?

01-00:44:22

Torres:

Not long.

01-00:44:23

Farrell:

Not long.

01-00:44:23

Torres:

I learn fast. And Jose was an older man. He'd been working at the shipyards already for a while. He wasn't a new helper. So he knew what was going on.

01-00:44:38

Farrell:

What were some of the things that you learned from him?

01-00:44:41

Torres:

From Jose? Well, he was a Mexican man. I knew that he had a heart because he would always say, "Mary, you go to the restroom now." I never had to go

to the restroom. I've never had a problem with my kidneys. But he'd always say, "Mary, you go to the restroom now. Take a breather." I wanted to work. I wanted to hurry-up and work. I wanted to get that war over with. But he was the one that kept telling me to go instead of me saying, "I have to go," just as an excuse, or to have a cigarette. I didn't smoke or anything. But I wanted to work.

01-00:45:23

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about workplace safety? I know that you had the uniforms but before you were talking about the smoke and the sparks. Did you feel safe at work?

01-00:45:39

Torres:

Oh, yeah. The only thing that scared me is when the ship started building up to go because we had the hold that was open, because ours was a cargo ship. They bring great big boxes of things and packs and bullets and all and tanks and even cars and jeeps and all. So they had this big, oh, it's huge, middle part. So around the sides is where all the things would be stored. They'd drop it. They'd drop it. But we had ladders that we had to climb from the bottom up and we had to climb those ladders. There would be Jose at the top pulling my stinger up. That was scary. I was scared of ladders. I don't know if I was scared of heights but I never looked down until when I was almost killed on that ship.

01-00:46:46

Farrell:

Can you tell me about that?

01-00:46:47

Torres:

That scaffold? Oh, this was years after, a couple of years of work. That's when I was getting to be a top welder. Our ship was just about as ready to go out to the outfitting docks. They'd go down the ways and they'd go to the outfitting docks. That's where they'd put the motor in, all the electrical would go in and everything. We'd put the shell and the partitions and then they would put the hammocks for some of the soldiers and all. Because we had to have soldiers also helping us. What was the question?

01-00:47:33

Farrell:

The accident on the ship that you got in.

01-00:47:35

Torres:

Oh, oh. We were going to have an inspection the following week. The inspectors were going to come and inspect that ship to make sure it was worthy to go to the outfitting docks. Some of the welding, especially on the outside, some of the weldings, if a welder got tired they would rush the job and it would be called a thin weld. It was almost too thin. Any motion can crack it. So anyway, they had to have a light behind it and if you see a light through that then they knew that it had to have more welding on it. It was specialized welding and that's what I was doing. There was a peak. This is the front part of the ship. See, right here. The scaffold starts about here. This is

the ship. This is your peak right here, where it comes together like that. Well, your scaffold, see how it's pulled back? Okay. It's pulled back. This is a launching. That's why it's pulled back. But when it's not a launching, when it's where we build the ship, that scaffold is right up to the ship. Okay. I was on that scaffold and I was welding for maybe about two hours. My legs started to cramp on me so I stood up. As I stood up I kind of went like this, "ugh," you know, to get up, because with all those leather, they were heavy. I heard a crack. My hood was down and I thought, "What happened?" So I lifted up my hood. Well, this is your ship here. This is your thing right up to it, your scaffold. What happened is when I did that, this part of the scaffold moved like this. This part was still attached all the way through. But the part that I was right here on, I was out in midair. I looked and I thought the ship was quite a ways. I couldn't reach it. So I start yelling for the welders nearby, because there was other welders who were almost doing the same thing. I told them, "Tell Frank that I've got a problem." So in the meantime, I guess Frank had heard commotion. He looked over the side of the ship and he saw what was happening. He says, "Mary, we're sending a rope down," and it was a large rope about this big. He says, "At the end of it is a ball." So I'm looking up at him, I can see, because I wasn't too far from the top, and I could see what he was saying. "Get your fingers like this," and he kept going like this, "and tie them around the rope and hold on for dear life." The ball is down here. So you hold above the ball." Even if the scaffold breaks we can pull you up or we can drop you to the bottom. You will not die. You will not fall. But don't let go of the rope." I started crying. I was scared. But I'm still on wood. I'm still standing on wood but I'm way away from the ship. I thought, "Oh, I'm going to die." I automatically start looking down, which anybody would look down, and Frank said, "Don't look down. Look up. Keep looking at me. There's workers who are coming. They're going to help you." I says, "Well, okay. Tell them to hurry." But they couldn't hurry too much because they were from below. They'd run to where I was above them with a long rod. They had a long rod with a hook, like a clamp. The ones on the bottom were reaching up for my piece of scaffold where it's out to bring it over to the other end and secure it. The ones from on the scaffold that were here, even with me, they had the rod and they were pulling also. Finally they got it back to where it was straightened out and they used wire to wire it up. Then you could walk on it. Then they couldn't use it for a few hours until they nailed it down. But I couldn't even walk. I was so scared. They each grabbed me under the arm and they drug me to the stairs and up to the top and there was Frank with tears in his eyes. Poor old Frank. So anyway, he told me, he says, "You better go on to the restroom." I says, "Well, okay." He said, "And wash your face," because with smoke and all—and I'd been crying and I must have looked a sight. So anyway, when I got back we talked a little bit and he asked me if I should just go on home, he would put another welder. I said, "No way. I'm going back down on that scaffold," I said, "because it's wired up good now. If I have a job to do I'm going to complete it." And I did. I went back and completed the job.

01-00:53:38

Farrell:

What was it like for you to return to work after that happened?

01-00:53:42

Torres:

Nothing. But I'm going to tell you something about that accident. It wasn't an accident. Also Frank told me, he was so glad. He said, "Mary, I'm so glad that nothing happened and you didn't get hurt or anything," he says, "because I have a clean record and I didn't want my record to be broken." I was so mad at him when he told me that. What was I going to tell him about that that was not important? Well, I finished the job.

01-00:54:22

Farrell:

Going back to work and returning to work immediately.

01-00:54:24

Torres:

Going back to work. Right. Oh, oh. Well, then, a few weeks later that's when Frank came by in a beat-up old truck and he got the fifteen of us crew members onto that truck. And he says, "We're going to take a breath for about two hours." "What are we going to do for two hours?" He says, "You'll see." We drove down to the outfitting dock. There was our ship right there. Our ship was waiting for us. The minute we spotted it we knew it was our ship. They were going to launch it. There was a lot of music. I think it was the Andrews sisters who were singing because there was a lot of singing going on. Then this right here is when it's going down the ways. Do you know that all the years after Frank and I got married, right up until about six months ago, not even six, maybe four months ago—[telephone ringing] hold on.

01-00:55:42

Farrell:

You were talking about only—

01-00:55:44

Torres:

Oh, oh. This thing. We never said a word all our married life about that accident. Oh, we were going to go to the outfitting docks. Oh, that's where we were. Yeah. Okay, there was a lot of singing and a lot of, oh, gees, speeches upon speeches. Do you know that I didn't know I was a Rosie. This is present time. But you see what I put on the front of my book? That was in my heart all those years. But this story I had forgotten completely until one of the church people brought me this book. This is a book that's being sold all over. And it's *Shipyards: World War II*. I start thumbing through it and I went to the table of contents. Guess what I saw. More shipyards and there's our ship, right here. We watched it being launched and it went off to war. It was one of the best ships there. And this is the history of the ship in this book. And Frank and I built it. That book is something, isn't it? You know what I did? I had forgotten that story. And I go out talking to so many places and telling my story. That night when I opened that book and read that, I went to bed, all night long that story came right back to me. I asked my doctor what happened and the doctor said something in my mind made me forget it because it was so severe. There's the story.

01-00:58:04

Farrell: And now it's a part of your book.

01-00:58:10

Torres: It's going to go in my book and you're going to get a copy of it. See? I've inserted it in the book. I'm now almost close to a thousand books being sold. So it's doing well. My doctor said, "You may also be getting other things coming back. Something's going to trigger it and then it'll come back. Until something triggers it, it'll never come back." I didn't believe in that but I do now because it happened to me.

01-00:59:00

Farrell: Was there anything else that you remembered that you didn't—

01-00:59:02

Torres: No, no. Well, I remember anything else. It wasn't hard. It wasn't hard at all. No problems. But this was a problem. It was life and death. And poor Frank. He's gone. Now, if he was here wouldn't he be proud? Because he was my boss. He was the reason that I was as good of a welder and all.

01-00:59:35

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about him and when you worked together in the shipyard?

01-00:59:42

Torres: I met Frank after five days. A little man. Well, you can see he was not much taller than me. An older man. He had a Rudolph Valentino mustache, high-pitched voice, and when he took off his hat he was bald. My man that I wanted to marry had to be about six-foot tall, a lot of hair, a deep voice. The Robert Taylor type. He was anything but that. Then he would ask me out. And I would always refuse. "I'm tired. I'm washing my hair." Then after a while I just came right out and told him, "Frank, you're not what I want in a man so stop wasting my time and your time." Well, poor Frank started dating a couple of the other Rosies. Not Rosies. They weren't Rosies at the time. The welders. I was glad because I didn't have to fool with him. That's when he even painted my hood. Always coming around asking me out and I didn't want to go out with him.

01-01:01:16

Farrell: What was it that eventually changed your mind?

01-01:01:18

Torres: I think the ship. I don't know. I think. Maybe I grew up. I don't know. With everything that was going on at the time, I might have been so lonely that I did want a man. I don't know. I couldn't tell you. But all I know is that all of a sudden I learned to love him. We were married sixty-two years when he passed away. Then those were the few years in between before I wrote my book. I had so many stories and so many things we'd done after. I had a lifetime of stories. When my dad was a young boy at twelve, my dad was a storyteller. He went with a band of gypsies all through Russia for one whole

year. He never went to school. But he went with a band of gypsies telling his story, making money. I'm the only one of the kids that am a storyteller. You can hand me anything and I'll make a story out of it. That was my dad. That's what he used to do with us in the evenings when the snow was on and we couldn't go outside or when we'd be doing the dishes or our chores. My dad would dream up a story. I could dream up a story on anything, I don't care what it is. I can build it up. I have no fear of people. I have no fear of nothing. I guess I learned not to fear things anymore.

01-01:03:14
Farrell:

Yeah, after that bus ride.

01-01:03:16
Torres:

Yeah. My guardian angel, she's right there, I'll tell you.

01-01:03:20
Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about some of the other women that you worked with in the shipyards?

01-01:03:25
Torres:

I couldn't tell you. All I knew is just one, Jeannie. The one that I signed up with, she wasn't very good so she was put with one of the other leaderman. But she's the only one that I had much dealing with. Then that Jeannie is the one that Frank used to take out and she would come and kind of mimic me. "Well, he's taking me to the movies," or whatever. I was glad because that way he left me alone. But he shaved off his mustache. But once I did get to love him, you know. Things like that happen. Like in the house here we have a step. I would always make sure that Frank was on the top step and I was below him so I'm looking up to him.

01-01:04:20
Farrell:

Was he or were you ever in the union?

01-01:04:26
Torres:

Union? Oh, yes, we were automatically in a union, right away.

01-01:04:30
Farrell:

Did you ever go to union meetings?

01-01:04:32
Torres:

No. I don't think he ever went to the meetings either, even though he was a foreman. He was in a different type but same boilermakers. We were both in it.

01-01:04:45
Farrell:

What do you remember about towards the end of the war? Do you have memories from—?

01-01:04:53

Torres:

Yes. They had been talking about the bomb quite a few months before and that's when Roosevelt died. We wondered if it would ever come true. Harry Truman went in and he had it. That's who did it. But Roosevelt kept saying, "We have a bomb. We have a secret weapon." We were all so happy. We didn't know what it was. Then when they finally did drop it, it was so fierce that we wondered, "Oh, my God. Look how many people it killed." But it had to be done. Let me tell you something else. Of all of the wars that we have been in, there's only two wars that have had a peace treaty signed: World War I and World War II. World War II had two of them signed. We signed one and then we signed it with Japan. There's never been a signature on a treaty since. We have been in so many wars, that they are not wars. I don't want to get into politics. I'm proud that we did sign our treaties.

01-01:06:17

Farrell:

What do you remember about the end of the war?

01-01:06:22

Torres:

Oh, God. Everybody was doing this. "V" for victory sign with our fingers. I don't care where you went. I don't care who it was. Everybody was doing this. Victory. VJ-Day against Japan. Oh, that was the best. Then that sailor kissing that gal. That was one of the big newspaper articles. When you think back, it was very scary and yet you thought it would never end. It did end. When it did we did have peace. These wars that we're doing we never have peace. Yet the countries seem to take care of themselves. But I don't think you could have done it as long as Hitler was alive because he had too much of a hold on people. He had to have died.

01-01:07:35

Farrell:

So towards the end of the war some of the shipyards were closing and people were getting laid off. Can you tell me a little bit about what you remember about that and when you left the shipyard?

01-01:07:47

Torres:

Well, they laid all the women off at Moore's almost immediately. But they held me on for a little longer because I was training some of the boys coming back to work in the shipyards and to be welders. We were no longer building ships, we were repairing them. See, all these ships coming back had to be repaired. The ones that were repairable. If they were too badly damaged they just tore them apart. I can't tell you any more about it than that.

01-01:08:29

Farrell:

After the war ended, you had started a family. Were you staying at home and raising your family?

01-01:08:36

Torres:

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. As soon as they laid me off I didn't go back to work for quite a few years. I was a housewife and taking care of the two boys. I start studying the stock market and I start studying things like that. Then I ask

Frank if we couldn't invest a little bit in the stock market. He says, "You're crazy. It just crashed not too long ago." I says, "Well, the war ended and they're going to start building like crazy and they're going to need cement. I want to buy some cement stock." You read it. We held onto the stock for quite a while and it split and it split and it split. Then we had enough to put our investment in that bowling alley.

01-01:09:33

Farrell:

After the war ended what was Frank doing? Was he still working in the shipyard?

01-01:09:38

Torres:

Frank stayed with the shipyards for the rest of his career and work. He went from shipyard to ship—Moore's closed down. There was Willamette, there was Todd's, there were so many other shipyards that he went to. But he never had to leave the area. We still lived in San Leandro.

01-01:10:00

Farrell:

Fast forwarding a little bit, you are now involved with the Rosie the Riveter Museum in Richmond. Can you tell me how you got involved with them?

01-01:10:16

Torres:

Well, some friends of my son, my oldest son, they are on the committee for the Richmond Homefront Trust and they knew that Frank and I both had been working in the shipyards. By then Frank had already died. This was 2012. They invited Frank and his wife Pam, and they asked to bring me to the banquet. We were at the table with this couple that my son knew. I couldn't believe it. There was these Rosies, there was five of them sitting up there and they were talking to them. I thought, "My God, they worked in the shipyards and all." Didn't dawn on me for a minute, until Elizabeth Tucker came up and she said, "I want to hand out some extra diplomas." Then she handed me a diploma. "You know you're a Rosie?" I said, "What?" "You're a Rosie." From that day to this I wanted to volunteer. I don't care where you put me. I want to volunteer. Because, see, Frank was gone. I've never had a man since. I don't want a man. I have a family that I love. I also loved the shipyard. I loved the war. It was bad but I loved that war. It will be with me until the day I die. Everything I do now, everything I do is for first my family, next my church, next the Rosie.

01-01:12:17

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about your involvement with them now and some of the things that you're doing?

01-01:12:25

Torres:

Well, all I do is go once every other week and I spent, oh, about four hours there is all. And I take BART. I drive to BART and take BART and they have one of the rangers pick me up. I put in four hours. There's no obligation or anything that I can't go anywhere. I do everything I want to do. I go out and I talk to many, many organizations, many veterans. I go to the place. In fact, I

have some of them here. I want to show you my very precious one. This is from Moffett Field. I was asked to go speak in their amphitheater, which holds about 500 people. And I did. I gave my speech. They told me to talk for an hour. At the end of the hour I mentioned that I had to cut short because my hour was up. And the commanding general, he stood up and he said, "Young lady, you talk as long as you want. It's all yours. Afterwards," he says, "we're going to give you a tour." They handed me this award right here signed by the commanding general. And then after we had lunch together, then they gave us a tour of the NASA research center out there. They had Apollo 13 on display. But no pictures were allowed out of there and there was no outsiders allowed. The 500 people that were there were all military people. They came and picked me up and took me there and all, because I couldn't have gotten in the gates without them. At the end, when I finished my speech, I got a standing ovation and Angie said, "It's never been done, a standing ovation." So I was kind of proud of that. I guess they liked my story and everything that I told.

01-01:15:21
Farrell:

So when you do talks like that and when you go to schools and when you talk to people that come visit, what are some of the things that you, what you say?

01-01:15:29
Torres:

When I go to the schools, I go to a lot of them, but I try the middle class, middle class children and the seniors, because these are the ones that are dropping out of school. When I go to talk to them I tell them just a little bit about the Rosies and then I come right down to their level, because I go to the classrooms. I don't go to the auditorium. I like to go to the classrooms where I'm one-on-one and I can look them in the eye and I can talk to them like I'm talking to each one individual. I tell them, I says, "A lot of you are not going to be able to go to college because in the first place you couldn't afford it, and second place, you might not be mentally able to go to college." I says, "Now, don't laugh about that," I says, "because I never went to college. I know I could never have passed in college. I'm just not that way. I have other things I can do." I says, "You, too, can have other things. You've got two hands and you've got a mouth, and you've got a mind. Get your diploma." Then I ask them, I say, "Do you know what your three main documents are in life at your age?" They all started looking at me like what do you mean. I says, "A document. Don't you know what a document is?" A lot of them didn't know. I said, "Well, let's start out. You were born." "Oh, yeah. Well, that's a birth certificate." I says, "Yeah, that's number one document. How about your second document?" They thought for a minute. "Well, I don't know. Let's see. Maybe social security or something?" I says, "That's one of them. What else?" They couldn't think. I says, "Your diploma. Without your diploma you are nothing. You're not going to work anywhere outside of maybe some of these fast food places or you might be digging ditches or something like that. But you will not make it. But if you want, use a little imagination, make sure you have your diploma, number one, because that's number one. Get your diploma. Once you graduate, take that diploma, find a small plant or a place

that's just opening up and go in and ask them, 'Do you have a job opening? I'll work hard for you. I'll do whatever I can. Then maybe you can introduce me to a big company and tell them that I'm a good worker and I will work.' I said, "Do you know, that if I was a boss, and I had an opening and I had two people come in for the same job and one of the people came in and says, 'I'm a college graduate. I have this diploma, I have that diploma. I need the job.' The other one would come in and say, 'I have a diploma. I will work hard for you and I will stay with you and I'll do what I can to help build this company,' do you know who I would hire? The one with the diploma because the college graduate would, sooner or later, after six months, be looking for another job somewhere with more money or a better job. But this young person here that has a diploma and will work hard, eventually get another good job because this guy that hired him, which would be me, I would, if I knew another person in business, I'd say, 'You know, I got a young man or a young woman that has a lot of talent. Do you think you can give him a job?' I says, "Then I'd let you go and you can go to work for them and I would once more be waiting for somebody to come in with a diploma and say, 'I got a diploma. I will work hard.'" I says, "So you see, there's a reason that you have tools and you have tools." All these kids come up to me. This is proof that it's working. I went out to Brentwood and I talked to a class out there. This is what I got I got back. I got three cards. Thank you. Three different classes. Thank you card. Thank you. Second class. This is one teacher, three classes. Every one of them graduated, even the ones with the hoods that were down over their heads, they graduated. There's proof that it can be done.

01-01:21:35

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about what it's been like for you to volunteer at the park and work with some of the other Rosies?

01-01:21:45

Torres:

What about them?

01-01:21:47

Farrell:

Can you tell me what that's been like to volunteer with the park?

01-01:21:49

Torres:

Oh, it's nice. I'm going to tell you the very honest truth. I'm glad I'm by myself because the other Rosies, they're good Rosies, they have good stories, but there's too many at the same time. They can only give one-liners. They are allowed five minutes because each one of them want to tell their story. They're dedicated and they work hard and they deserve it. They are Rosies. But when I go to the park on my day, I'm not told that I only have five minutes. I can talk like you or I can just sit with two people maybe that are there and the other ones are watching a movie and I can tell them the rest of my stories, more of them. That's why I'm asked to go out, because I can carry on a long conversation. I can talk from five minutes, which when I am with the Rosies, there are times when I go with them, I give a five-minute one. But when I'm on my own I can go five, ten, fifteen, twenty, half-hour, forty-

minutes, one-hour, two hours. I can do it for three hours and still not repeat anything. My mind is still so clear and I'm so dedicated to the fact that I am a Rosie. I know I'm a Rosie. There's no getting around it.

01-01:23:27

Farrell: What do you hope that future generations remember about you and your generation?

01-01:23:35

Torres: I'm going to show you something. There is a little girl, a young girl twelve years old. That's the reason I left this here. You see what this is? I got this for Christmas. All the Rosies got one World War II cannon. Rudolph. She did this herself. She built this. She wants to be just like me she said. From now on this is going to be on my table.

01-01:24:15

Farrell: What are some of the other things you hope that people learn from your generation?

01-01:24:22

Torres: From my generation? I'm going to tell you, the one thing that I'm so glad about. Governor Brown, that he came to our park, yeah, and signed a fair pay. Okay. There he is shaking my hand. [laughter] Governor Brown. He shook each of the Rosies' hand. When he asked a question about what we thought of him coming down with his staff, because no outsiders were allowed to go there, and I told him, "What took you so long? We Rosies got paid the same amount of money as the men and it took seventy years for you guys." And you know what his reply was? "Our government works pretty slow, doesn't it?" [laughter] So anyways, I think we Rosies did leave a lot of marks on it and I think as long as we're still alive to tell about it, I think we're going to leave a mark on a lot of people. I have a young girl, Erin from Wisconsin, I got a letter. She sent it to the Rosie place. Because she had come to the park, her and her mother. She wants to be just like a Rosie. She joined the rally over there in Wisconsin even, just as a Rosie, and she's about seventeen years old. So it's leaving its mark little by little.

01-01:26:04

Farrell: Yeah, it's inspiring.

01-01:26:05

Torres: If we can leave our mark here and there—word of mouth is your best advertisement.

01-01:26:17

Farrell: Is there anything else that you want to add?

01-01:26:21

Torres: About what?

01-01:26:22

Farrell: In general.

01-01:26:22

Torres: In general? Well, I know I'm on thin ice but I hope I'll be here for quite a while to do a lot of speaking because I love to speak and I tell the truth. I do not lie. If I do happen to make a mistake I will always backtrack, as you noticed with my brother. What I say is the truth. There's no use lying about it because if you lie, one lie leads to another.

01-01:26:53

Farrell: That's true.

01-01:26:54

Torres: But everything that I've said here has actually happened.

01-01:27:01

Farrell: Well, thank you so much.

01-01:27:02

Torres: I don't know what the future brings but I've got all kind of plaques. This is the one from the Vietnam. I went and talked, you know the Vietnam War. They presented me with this plaque. So whoever wants me to go and talk, I go. I don't charge. In fact, now that I'm working in the Rosie place, I still have time for one-day a week to go and do my ladies that I had in the beauty shop for fifty years. I now go to their homes. I have a portable dryer and everything. I go to their homes and I do their hair and I open their pill bottles and I water their lawns and I start their dinner or whatever, and then I shake their hands and say, "Thank you for letting me do your hair. It's free for the ones that cannot afford to pay. It's on the house today." This is my payback for all that was given to me and that's what I'm going to do until I can't do it no more. But I think I'll be here for a while.

01-01:28:25

Farrell: Well, thank you so much.

01-01:28:28

Torres: Oh, you're welcome. It's been fun.

01-01:28:30

Farrell: Good.

01-01:28:30

Torres: Oh, two o'clock.

[End of Interview]