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Phyllis Gould

Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project

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

Interviews conducted by
Brendan Furey
in 2002

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Audiofile 2

Went to welding school and got a job in the Oakland shipyards 1942—was one of the first women in her crew—her newfound independence cause marital problems, resulting in divorce—struggled to take care of her baby as a single working mother—Richmond became a big city almost overnight—difficult to get the right work clothes—important supplies went to the men on the front lines—re-married in ’44 and moved to Texas with her new husband—worked at a shipyard in Houston—remembers Richmond being very racially tolerant

Interview with Phyllis Gould
Interviewed by: Brendan Furey
Transcriber: Conor Casey
[Interview #1: October, 7, 2002]
[Begin Audio File PhyllisGould1 10-07-02]

1-00:00:00

Furey

Here we go. Okay. We're with Phyllis Gould in her home in Fairfax. Her beautiful home in Fairfax here.

1-00:00:10

Gould

[Laughing]

1-00:00:12

Furey

So, Mrs. Gould—I guess where we start out is kind of in a general family history. A little bit about your father's background, his family, your mother's background and then maybe how they met. Kind of a summary of that.

1-00:00:31

Gould

My father was in the Army. He was career Army. And my mother was from Des Moines, Iowa. And Dad, I guess was stationed near there, and Mom always, all her life loved to dance. So they had camp dances and that's where she met him. And she had a lot of boyfriends at the time and her sisters couldn't believe that she'd end up with him. Because he was a small man, he was 5 foot 6. The most he every weighed in his life was 135 pounds and I asked her one time and she said, "He made me laugh." So that's—[Laughing] they married and then he was stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, which was called "Camp Lewis" then, and that's where I was born. And then we went to Fort Douglas, Utah. He was ordered to the Philippines and Mom said, "No way." So he refused and was busted down to the lowest rank and sent back to Camp Lewis where my sister Marge was born. And from there, we went to Portland and I guess there was just an office there and from there to Eugene, where that's where I grew up. And it was just a two-man office: Dad and his commanding officer and he taught the ROTC classes at the University of Oregon. And at Armory, the rifle practice and—So in high school the only club I joined was the rifle club, because that's what I grew up around. And in fact, in our basement Dad set up a shooting thing with a big block of wood and one of those great big saw blades behind it and he taught my sister and I to shoot pistols.

1-00:03:16

Furey

Wow. Was that something common for young women to do?

1-00:03:23

Gould

No. [Laughing]

1-00:03:23

Furey
No?

1-00:03:23

Gould
No. [Laughing] Mom didn't like it, but we did.

1-00:03:29

Furey
Okay. So just backing up a little bit what year were you born in?

1-00:03:34

Gould
Nineteen twenty-one.

1-00:03:37

Furey
Nineteen twenty- one.

1-00:03:37

Gould
Uh-huh.

1-00:03:38

Furey
So you were growing up coming of into a teenage years during the Depression.

1-00:03:43

Gould
Yeah. And for six years we lived out in the country. Dad had bought this five acres and built a house and chicken houses and I think back now that I was so fortunate because I was the oldest and once I was out the door it was total freedom. Because what Mom didn't see, didn't exist. And so my sisters and I just roamed through the woods and—really free spirits. Went to a country school that had three rooms and in junior high, then—we had moved from there, lost the property and had to leave—and all of a sudden I'm in a big school. And it was the wrong time in my life to be jolted like that because they separated the boys from the girls, the lockers and restrooms were on different sides of the buildings and up to that point I hadn't paid any attention. You know? You just--

1-00:05:11

Furey
You were a kid.

1-00:05:11

Gould
Kids. And in the country school, when the boys started going barefoot to school, so did I. And got one pair of shoes a year, that was to start school. The rest of the time, I ran barefoot and free. But I've always had a good sense of direction and I'm not fearless but comfortable in the outdoors. So that was a good way to grow up, I think.

1-00:05:56

Furey

So how many siblings were you?

1-00:06:00

Gould

There were six of us.

1-00:06:02

Furey

What was the boy/girl ratio?

1-00:06:05

Gould

One boy.

1-00:06:06

Furey

One boy, wow.

1-00:06:07

Gould

And he was the baby for five years, so he was just spoiled rotten. Just absolute rotten. Mom just—I was supposed to look after him and if I did anything to him to keep him from getting' in trouble I was in trouble. I couldn't win no matter what. If he got in trouble, I was in trouble. If I touched him, I was in trouble. So--

1-00:06:40

Furey

Do you think that had to do with him being a boy?

1-00:06:42

Gould

Yeah—the only--

1-00:06:44

Furey

--getting special privileges because—

1-00:06:43

Gould

Oh yeah. Just spoiled. And because there were four of us girls ahead of him, Dad didn't pay a lot of attention to him because he always took me fishing with him. We'd go up into the Cascades, hiking to lakes and I'd paddle a—he had a portable boat and I'd paddle him around and he always fly fished. And so all of that outdoors stuff. He had a little pup tent and he'd take me with him and--So I had a wonderful, wonderful childhood.

1-00:07:38

Furey

It sounds like it. And at this point, what was your mother's role? Your father was a ROTC instructor as well as a recruiting officer? Or that was later.

1-00:07:48

Gould

He was the recruiting officer.

1-00:07:48

Furey

To get high school or college and high school age men to enlist?

1-00:07:55

Gould

Uh--it didn't work that way. I would go to his office as I got into my teens and help him with filing and stuff, and he showed me a map one time of the whole United States and he put a pin in it and he said there was one opening in the whole Army. So it wasn't that they were trying to get people. They just--he had—he was in charge of the reserve officers and they had to have meetings and all of this. So before the--and Dad was a reserve officer, although he was a sergeant. And—so before Pearl Harbor. The year before, I guess. He was called up on his reserve commission and went over to—I can't think of the name--it's at the mouth of the Columbia River.

1-00:09:14

Furey

Oh I know that town um--not Auburn. I know, I know. Astoria? Astoria.

1-00:09:22

Gould

It's near Astoria.

1-00:09:22

Furey

Oh near Astoria. Okay, well—

1-00:09:28

Gould

Yeah. And I don't know why I can't remember it, because I was up there this summer [laughing]. The year before that, I had gotten married. One time he told me that I absolutely could not get married until I was seventeen. And I had a boyfriend from the time I was fifteen we just went steady and it was always, "When we grow up, we'll get married." And since Dad set this seventeen, on my birthday I was sitting on the floor playing with my paper dolls--real grown up. [Laughing]

1-00:10:12

Furey

[Laughing]

1-00:10:12

Gould

--and my boyfriend showed up and he says, "Wanna get married tomorrow?" And I said, "Sure." And we did.

1-00:10:19

Furey

[Laughs]

1-00:10:19

Gould

[Laughing] And he worked at a sawmill. It was in the Depression then and so it was rare for somebody that young--he was nineteen--to have a job. And he earned thirty two and a half cents an hour. And we lived in a one-room--can't call it a house. [Laughing]

1-00:10:50

Furey

[Laughing] Cottage.

1-00:10:50

Gould

His brother had built it with green lumber. So as it dried out—I could sweep across the floor and stuff just went through the cracks. Didn't even have doorknobs, just had a leather strap with a nail. The cheapest wood stove we could buy, so it was either too hot or not hot enough. And I had belonged to the 4 H Club—a cooking club--so I like to bake things. Well, I tried baking in that crazy stove and it didn't turn out too good. And in the mornings, I would have to start up the fire and make breakfast and my husband would sit there and sing “I Wish I Was Single Again.” [Laughing] And I'd cry and cry and make breakfast.

1-00:12:07

Furey

So--we'll get back to the marriage in just a second, but kind of earlier--maybe about the time when you were still living the country--around, I guess, ten or eleven years old. What was your mother's role in the family at this point? And maybe that possibly changed once you moved from the country--kind of rural or wilderness environment to a more kind of urban--I don't know if it was urban--but more of a town.

1-00:12:45

Gould

She was kept busy with a new baby every two years, no electricity, a pump outside the back door, and scrubbing clothes on a washboard. Just real—I don't know if you would say “primitive,” but I guess it was. And Dad had built these chicken houses and at one point we had two thousand laying hens. We had two thousand chickens. And he didn't get much money, you know, through the Army and so to supplement it, as kids we'd gather the eggs and then I know the jail bought them--because they'd come out and get the crates of eggs. I don't know who else he sold to, but if there was to be a dinner or something in town—and it was always last minute--he'd come home and say, “Well, we need thirty fryers” or something, so it was like a production line. He'd whack their heads off and we'd start picking. And sometime he'd volunteer Mom to help cook 'em, which she didn't always like. But yeah, it was a busy time for her.

1-00:14:31

Furey

But she was never involved in any—she'd never had a kind of a formal job, work experience—did she?

1-00:14:37

Gould

I guess she did as a teenager, because she talked about working for the telephone company and in a candy factory.

1-00:14:51

Furey

Huh. Interesting.

1-00:14:52

Gould

But no, she was a stay at home mom. And then--

1-00:15:01

Furey

But she had some experience working and—Was she independent before as she was working in a factory, was that before she got married?

1-00:15:11

Gould

Uh-huh. It was before she got married. And I think she was always, inside, an independent person. But that didn't all come out until later.

1-00:15:26

Furey

Yeah. I remember. [Laughing]

1-00:15:26

Gould

[Laughing] We always kind of treated her like a doormat, in one way. It was always—Dad was the important parent. And every night, when he'd come home from work, we'd run out to meet him, and Mom would be behind us and she'd start in: "Phyllis did this, and Marge did that and Marian did this and"—So he'd just line us up and spank us all. And there were days when I hadn't done anything wrong but it equaled out. And we never blamed him; we blamed her because she didn't handle it herself. What I was going to say, when I got married--he had a friend who lived in California, so we came down to visit and then that's how we eventually moved to California.

1-00:16:45

Furey

So was your father still angry? How did your parents—you were obviously in high school--were you in high school at that point? What was your education up to that point?

1-00:16:57

Gould

I had quit school.

1-00:16:59

Furey

So you went to junior high school--

1-00:17:00

Gould

I went to junior high and--

1-00:17:01

Furey

--and that experience was very difficult?

1-00:17:00

Gould

--and finished a sophomore and I knew that they couldn't force me to go to school once I was sixteen. So I went until my birthday in October and then for a while I'd go every morning and I wouldn't come home until I normally would until enough time had passed that finally I owned up that I wasn't going to school. But it was really--it was really hard. I had signed up for a sewing class and every day the teacher would say, "Have you brought your material?" And there was no money to buy it. And my boyfriend had been in school and then he'd graduated and I didn't know how to handle advances from boys. I had worked in the summer and--in the beanfields—and bought a dress that had a zipper down the front and it had a wooden pull on it. And some guy just pulled that zipper down and I didn't have a bra on. And that was about the end of my school. I just didn't know how to handle that.

1-00:18:37

Furey

So you were already--you felt a lot of pressure from--in school, when you were in class, from the other boys?

1-00:18:49

Gould

Yeah. And they didn't have counselors in school, then. And my mom said I had to take a college prep course, which there was no way I was going to be able to go to college. So she insisted I take algebra and the first week or so I sort of understood it and from that point on, I didn't. I just--it was just beyond me. So school was not a roaring success, in any way. Although, I have all my old report cards and in junior high I did really well.

1-00:19:43

Furey

Uh-huh. So you mentioned a little bit that you worked during those summers. What types of jobs did you have?

1-00:19:49

Gould

Oh just in the fields. Just beanfields mostly. And it would be a bunch of us would go and camp out and—One of the main things was the social part of it. There had to be a swimming hole nearby. And preferably the farmer should have a son. [Laughing]

1-00:20:16

Furey

[Laughing]

1-00:20:15

Gould

So it was pretty social.

1-00:20:20

Furey

But it was common for young women--

1-00:20:23

Gould

Yeah, yeah.

1-00:20:22

Furey

--to go to work in the fields to earn a little--

1-00:20:24

Gould

Uh huh.

1-00:20:24

Furey

--money.

1-00:20:27

Gould

And one year I worked in the hops and my dad said—my sister Marge and I--if we earned a dollar a day, he would match it and we could have bicycles. And I made 90-some cents one day, and that was the most and she didn't come anywhere near that, but at the end of--and then I was allergic to them, and I had to--I broke out and I had to quit. So at the end of it, Dad bought Marge a bicycle, anyway. And so I was pretty bitter about that, but he gave me a watch that some guy had pawned to him. So okay, I got to wear a wristwatch but the guy redeemed it! [Laughing] So I had to give it up. And I didn't have a bicycle, then, until I was working in the shipyards, and I bought one. And it was a men's bike--I had it three days--my younger sister Jean rode it, left it in the front yard [and] somebody stole it.

1-00:21:54

Furey

Oh--

1-00:21:51

Gould

[Laughing] So that was the extent of my bike ownership.

1-00:22:02

Furey

So could you explain a little bit more about how your life changed once you got married and what your role—in you said that you stayed at home while your husband sang “I Wish I Were Single Again.”

1-00:22:13

Gould

[Laughing]

1-00:22:15

Furey

So he was working in a mill at this time because you had gotten married and had your cottage and what was your daily routine like at that point, as a married woman?

1-00:22:26

Gould

Well as a teenager there were two other young wives in the camp. One was--I was seventeen--one was nineteen and one was twenty. It happened their husbands were bosses but I would go visit with them, but then I'd have to be home for lunch--get the fire going in the stove, and fix his lunch. So he tried to have pitchwood available so I could, you know, build a fast fire. And sometimes it was sapwood and all I got was smoke and then he'd have to go over to the cookhouse to eat and all the guys would razz him. Which they razed him a lot about. I'd go swimming with the kids and, you know, I wasn't grown up. Although I thought I was.

1-00:23:32

Furey

So most mothers were not allowed to swim with their kids, is that what it was looked at is--

1-00:23:39

Gould

Well, most of them weren't interested in swimming with the kids. [Laughing] But I was still a kid. And there was the company store, and we had a script book—five dollars every two weeks and that--

1-00:23:58

Furey

[Laughing]

1-00:23:58

Gould

[Laughing]—covered his gloves, and--for work--smokes, which he smoked--um--

1-00:24:11

Furey

So you're in a lumber camp?

1-00:24:12

Gould

Uh-huh.

1-00:24:11

Furey

Out in the woods of what part of Oregon were you in?

1-00:24:17

Gould

It was east of Cottage Grove, up in the woods.

1-00:24:24

Furey

Cottage--is that--where is that in relation to Eugene?

1-00:24:26

Gould

It's south of Eugene.

1-00:24:28

Furey

South of Eugene.

1-00:24:28

Gould

Uh-huh.

1-00:24:29

Furey

And what years, roughly, was this?

1-00:24:32

Gould

That would be nineteen thirty-eight, nine--

1-00:24:35

Furey

Thirty-eight, when you were sixteen and seventeen?

1-00:24:35

Gould

Yeah.

1-00:24:37

Furey

Ah. Well it must have been beautiful out there before they cut all of the woods down--

1-00:24:44

Gould

Yeah.

1-00:24:44

Furey

Well, I imagine by that point they had cut a lot of the woods down, but--

1-00:24:46

Gould

Yeah, we saved money, even with his thirty-two and a half cents and hour. We saved enough money to buy a motorcycle. And I was kind of leery about that--I didn't know about the motorcycle thing. But we went for a trip on it over to the Oregon coast with another couple. And as we're starting back--there was a light, misty rain—and as we—oh, and we'd picked up a hitchhiker, of all things. So there was three of us on this thing. [Laughing] Come around a corner and it just--the bike just flipped. And I ended up still sitting on this hitchhiker's lap facing the

way we'd come from. And the only thing was there a deep cut in my boot, but I wasn't hurt. None of us were hurt. And I thought, "Okay", you know, "If you can fall off of this thing and not get killed, that's okay." So we saved more money and bought a brand new Harley-Davidson.

1-00:26:14

Furey

Hmm. Nineteen thirty-eight or thirty-nine?

1-00:26:16

Gould

Uh-huh.

1-00:26:16

Furey

Nice.

1-00:26:17

Gould

And got to take it out of the crate and--so by then we had moved into another place. It had been a chicken house but it was now a three bedroom house. So he cut a hole in the wall of one bedroom and put a ramp up and that's where our motorcycle lived. [Laughing]

1-00:26:48

Furey

Would you ever ride the motorcycle?

1-00:26:49

Gould

My legs weren't long enough. I could do it when he was behind me, but he turned me loose on it once and it was in town, in the neighborhoods--and so I was to ride it down to the corner, make a U-turn, and come back. Everything he'd told me went out--I was lost. I went around the corner, but I went up over the curb on each of the four corners and as I'm coming down the street I forgot how to stop it, so they had to catch me. [Laughing]

1-00:27:29

Furey

They had to catch you?

1-00:27:30

Gould

[Laughing] Yeah. And stop it.

1-00:27:32

Furey

Ah-haha.

1-00:27:36

Gould

And because it was so big and heavy, you know, it would have just fallen over. No, I did drive it though, after that, with him behind me, but uh—I didn't really learn to drive for years and years. Just—he was the man of the house. And he controlled everything. If he would give me a dollar, I

had to account for every penny. And so when he said--one time--we're living in California--every Sunday we went for a Sunday drive. And this one Sunday we had another couple with us and the guys in the front seat, they're talking about going to welding school and getting a job in the shipyard. And I pipe up and said, "That's what I want to do, too." And I don't think he believed me. He certainly didn't approve of it. And I did it. I went to the--not right away, but--I finally did it. I went to the employment office, I got my social security card, and I was told to go to Richmond High School to learn to weld. From four to eight in the morning.

1-00:29:18

Furey

Hmm. If we could back up just a little bit--how—can you talk a little bit about how—so he was working in the mill and that was the last job he had in Oregon before you came California?

1-00:29:29

Gould

Uh-huh.

1-00:29:30

Furey

How was that transition made? So you'd moved in from this small cottage into a bigger house and he was still working at the mill and—how did it go about?

1-00:29:41

Gould

Well, his best friend had moved to California and had become a roofer.

1-00:29:49

Furey

Could you just mention your husband's full name?

1-00:29:52

Gould

His name was Rupert Randall. And so we drove down over a weekend on the motorcycle to visit him and it was decided that we would move down and my husband could get a job and learn to be a roofer and make more money. So we went back up and shipped down things that we wanted to keep and just left.

1-00:30:30

Furey

So--it's about nineteen thirty-nine at this point?

1-00:30:32

Gould

Uh-huh.

1-00:30:35

Furey

And had he lost his job in Oregon?

1-00:30:41

Gould

No, he just gave it up. And I had said, "I will not have a baby while we live around his relatives." And his older sister lived in the sawmill camp, too. And she was always--she'd walk in and look in my cupboards or criticize this or that and—and "I'm not. I won't." And I didn't. But after we moved to California, I said, "Okay." So we had a son. So here I am, nineteen, got a baby. He was a good provider, but I guess that something inside where I had grown up with this total freedom and I didn't really have it. He'd go to the grocery store with me and if I put something in the basket he didn't approve of, it went back on the shelf. I wasn't allowed to have a can opener.

1-00:32:07

Furey

Why weren't you allowed to have a can opener?

1-00:32:06

Gould

I was supposed to learn to cook. [Laughing]

1-00:32:12

Furey

[Laughing]

1-00:32:19

Gould

I couldn't cheat! [Laughing] In the sawmill camp, I'd buy fifty pounds of potatoes. I learned how to cook potatoes just about any way that you could fix 'em.

1-00:32:37

Furey

So at this point—So you had your first baby and you were living in Richmond?

1-00:32:44

Gould

Then we bought the house in Richmond.

1-00:32:47

Furey

What part of Richmond were you living in at this point?

1-00:32:49

Gould

Uh--I got a Richmond map the other day and it's--it was Tulare Street, and it was just off San Pablo Boulevard on the northern side of Richmond. Just a little, four room, basic house at the time. Paid \$2,750 for it. [Laughing]

1-00:33:21

Furey

I wonder if that house is still going for that? If the offer still up now. So what were some of your impressions when you came to Richmond? What was the town like at that point, because at this point it was before the war? Maybe some industries were beginning to--

1-00:33:37

Gould

Were beginning—uh-huh--

1-00:33:37

Furey

And they were--

1-00:33:41

Gould

I don't have a lot of memories of it, but I know that—because I didn't drive, I could walk to downtown. Walk over to San Pablo Avenue. It was on the edge of Richmond, and—just a regular small town.

1-00:34:24

Furey

So then you have your child, and your husband is working as a roofer?

1-00:34:32

Gould

No, by then he was working in the shipyards as a welder.

1-00:34:39

Furey

Okay—and how did that--how did he transition to that line of work?

1-00:34:44

Gould

Well, after he said he thought he wanted to go to welding school, and found out he could make more money. At that point, I don't think patriotism had entered into it. Although, I can't remember the sequence of things too well, but I remember we were on a Sunday drive when the news of Pearl Harbor came over the radio. I remember that.

1-00:35:21

Furey

Do you remember where you were? What part of--where--

1-00:35:27

Gould

I remember exactly where I was. In Oakland, on East 14th Street, near the old Montgomery Ward's building.

1-00:35:37

Furey

And you heard it on the car radio? And what was going through your mind at that point?

1-00:35:43

Gould

It was--it was like disbelief, you know? How could anybody just attack us? And then--the sequence of things kind of gets out of whack. The guy he worked for as a roofer was a person that liked to do different things always trying something new. And they had discovered this restaurant in Chinatown. So we'd go, fairly often, over there, and it was a downstairs thing and

mostly Chinese people in there. But the more people in your group, the more different dishes you got, and so it was a dollar a dinner and this guy's wife would walk around and check people's plates out and if something looked interesting she'd ask what it was and then that's what we'd order. So one night, we had been there to dinner and then we were walking along in the shops and the air raid siren went off. And so, finally, this Chinese man said we had to go outside, and all the lights went out and we had parked along Grant Avenue--which at that time it was easy to park [laughing]—and my baby started crying. And so, I had a bottle in the car--so I'm feeling my way down the street, you know, and I feel along and I find what I think is our car—it wasn't locked up or anything, and feel around for the bottle--it's not there. Okay, wrong car [laughing]—down the block--finally found ours, got the bottle, and so--I don't know if this was-- I don't know what time it was. Well, my son was still pretty small. At some point my dad was transferred down to the Presidio, and then he was out at Pittsburg so he would come and visit. He would tell us if there were a lot of airplanes in a group he say, "Well, they're headed for Alaska." Or "They're headed here or there." And--

1-00:39:03

Furey

So it was very--there was a lot of fear building up. Do you remember prior to Pearl Harbor, what was the news about? There must have been a lot of concern. How did you receive information about what was going on? And then, also the industries were obviously mobilizing before Pearl Harbor.

1-00:39:25

Gould

Uh-huh.

1-00:39:25

Furey

Industries were coming to Richmond and changes were happening prior to Pearl Harbor. How did you receive information?

1-00:39:34

Gould

It would only come on the radio or newspapers or the newsreel in the theaters. That was the only sources. And at that age I wasn't overly interested and involved, you know? It was a day-to-day thing--just doing your thing or whatever, and uh—Some things would stand out, but not often. The fact that we had everything was rationed and you had to save all your fats and then turn them in at the butcher shop.

1-00:40:31

Furey

How did rationing work?

1-00:40:35

Gould

Rationing?

1-00:40:34

Furey

Yeah, I'm from such a different generation.

1-00:40:38

Gould

[Laughing] Well, when there were rumors that—they were going to ration sugar—I remember this. We bought a fifty-pound bag of sugar and hid it under the bed in case somebody came to get after us for hoarding. And the mice got in it and ruined it. So that was not a wise move. There was a feeling that whatever you did somebody was going to know about it. Even photographs--I have very few photographs taken during that time, and they're right in front of my house. You didn't dare take a camera anywhere else. They'd think you were a spy. And there were posters all over, you know? "Loose Lips Sink Ships."

1-00:41:45

Furey

Propaganda--

1-00:41:42

Gould

--and uh--

1-00:41:50

Furey

This is you referring after the war? A mean after Pearl Harbor--once we had declared war.

1-00:41:55

Gould

After Pearl Harbor, uh-huh. Yeah.

1-00:41:59

Furey

The other question about kind of pre-war Richmond is: what was the--I mean I guess kind of directly--what was the kind of racial make-up of Richmond? There was obviously a Japanese community, a Portuguese community, a small black community—What was your?

1-00:42:26

Gould

I was not aware of any of it. The only thing that I remember vividly was from Hayward, because we'd lived there before we moved to Richmond. And this man my husband worked for, when they took the Japanese away to the camps—he and his wife moved into a Japanese nursery. And we went there to so it. And I still want to cry every time I think about it, because here was all the nursery with the flowers, the little bonsai plants and their living quarters. And they had just left--their food was still there. I just—I couldn't imagine that happening.

1-00:43:36

Furey

So you felt upset by the fact that these people were force to leave--

1-00:43:42

Gould

Yes, I did.

1-00:43:44

Furey

And yet, your friend I mean--in a way he was kind of taking--possibly taking advantage of the opening house or was--was that just--was he renting it?

1-00:43:55

Gould

He was renting it--from the government.

1-00:43:57

Furey

From the government! So the government--was it Alien Land Act or something where the government seized--

1-00:44:06

Gould

Yeah--

1-00:44:06

Furey

--a lot of the land.

1-00:44:07

Gould

Uh-huh. And these people had a wonderful business there--they did all the funerals and things like that—and here were all the supplies the--you know, the wire frames for the different wreaths and the ribbons and--And you'd just have to walk away from that. There's a woman I swim with now who is Japanese and she said that her father was given two days to wind up all of their business and go to the camp and he said he wasn't. He told his family he's not going to the camp. So she was a child. He loaded his family into--there were two cars--and they started driving East and they got into Utah, I think she said, and they needed gas and they needed food. And he told the women to get behind the wheel of the car--of the two cars--and he and this other man were going to go up this driveway to this little store and he said, "If I don't come back, leave--in a hurry." And she said she remembered them coming back with the man that ran the store and they just welcomed 'em. And so she wasn't in the Bay Area during the war. They didn't come back until later.

1-00:45:58

Furey

But they were in--

1-00:45:59

Gould

They were in--they stayed in Utah.

1-00:46:02

Furey

Oh--they stayed in Utah, there.

1-00:46:04

Gould

Uh-huh. It's strange to look at Japanese people now and the impression we had during the war. The pictures. I don't see them as ugly, sinister, people now. But then, the picture we saw--that's what we saw.

1-00:46:30

Furey

Yeah, I watched the Rosie movie and there's this one kind of scene that pops out from it. You know, there are these propaganda commercials, essentially, that are telling women, you know "Go out and work. The more I work for making bullets, the better chance my husband will have in killing the Japs."

1-00:46:55

Gould

Uh-huh--

1-00:46:55

Furey

They're very--the wording of it was very--

1-00:47:01

Gould

Oh, yeah.

1-00:47:03

Furey

Racist--

1-00:47:04

Gould

Yeah.

1-00:47:01

Furey

How did you react to that? It must have been just common in your--

1-00:47:08

Gould

It was. It was, you know? They were "The Japs" and we hated 'em. At the shipyards, I worked with a—on my crew was this young man who was half-German and half-black. And he had things written on his helmet about prejudice and things. And I had never grown up with any prejudice. There wasn't anybody to be prejudiced against, out in the country. And so I've always been glad of that. In fact, this young man--his name was Paul Von [Rausch]—and I think that's the only name I remember of all the people I worked with. And one time when somebody said, "Do you know he's black?" And I said, "Is he?" It had never occurred to me. It was just: "he was Paul." And so we got to be friends and when he was drafted, then we wrote back and forth for a while. And I've always been sorry that I didn't continue that. I tried to understand what he meant by "prejudice" against him. And he was from San Francisco—so it wasn't until a year or more later that the blacks began to come in large numbers when they sent trains back there to recruit people to work in the shipyards.

1-00:49:27

Furey

Okay, well we've got about ten minutes left on this side. Let's just--maybe for five or ten minutes continue to talk about kind of pre-war Richmond and other--just impressions you had when you first came to Richmond. What was your life like in the household when you--kind of right before you decided—what was going through your mind right before you decided you wanted to go to work? Before you had come up with the decision that “I'm gonna go to work and I'm gonna”—how was--were you enjoying your homemaking?

1-00:50:04

Gould

I never enjoyed it! [Laughing] And was a lousy cook! It was just like: “put in your day, take care of the baby, and wait for my husband to come home.” I couldn't go to the store; I couldn't do anything because he wouldn't give me any money. We would go, from Richmond, clear over to Oakland to get a hot dog near Lake Merritt because that was the best. And way out on East 14th or East 12th was a bakery that made pies. We'd go clear over there just to buy a pie! There wasn't a lot of traffic. When we moved to Richmond, our friends really stayed out in the Hayward area so it was going back and forth to visit. And I always just put in my time and then looked forward to the time when we could go visit and I don't really remember why we bought that house, because we didn't know anybody there. I guess it was because that he wanted to work in the shipyards.

1-00:51:56

Furey

And how were you--how were you doing with being married? Was it--did you feel that you were ready for it? Because you said that you were still young, how was it? I'd imagine--I mean, I just imagine myself being married at such a young age--it must have--

1-00:52:17

Gould

But that was a woman's expectations at that time. Especially going through the Depression. There was no thought of a career. I guess some girls, maybe, became teachers. Or nurses. But even so, it was--you get married and have children. That was our role. And some of us fit it well and some of us didn't. [Laughing]

1-00:53:02

Furey

And at this point--when had your? Your sister came down--

1-00:53:12

Gould

After I got the job.

1-00:53:14

Furey

Oh, after you got the job, okay.

1-00:53:15

Gould

Mm-hmm.

1-00:53:17

Furey

So at that point, you're the sole caregiver of your child and--

1-00:53:20

Gould

No! My husband was still there.

1-00:53:25

Furey

Oh no, but would your husband--how would your husband help at nighttime, say with taking care of the child--

1-00:53:30

Gould

Oh no!

1-00:53:31

Furey

--or with changing the diapers or anything?

1-00:53:32

Gould

No way! [Laughing]

1-00:53:35

Furey

No way?

1-00:53:36

Gould

[Laughing] No.

1-00:53:36

Furey

What would he do when he'd come home from work?

1-00:53:39

Gould

Work on his car. [Laughing]

1-00:53:44

Furey

[Laughing] You didn't still have the motorcycle?

1-00:53:49

Gould

No. No. We--but we went through a lot of cars. He always like vehicles so--whatever kind--so we were down to one and he'd just tinker on it--fool around on it. No--he wasn't much to do anything around the house.

1-00:54:25

Furey

Okay, well how 'bout we just take a little [break].

2-00:00:00

Furey

--to express how--how different things were.

2-00:00:04

Gould

And I always thought my mom, who was born in 1899, that she saw so many changes. Probably the most dramatic change period--although now with space and computers and all of that—but it's moving along in new ways that I'm totally lost.

2-00:00:34

Furey

Well, I would say, around that period, though--I'd say the automobile, you know, was by far the biggest change.

2-00:00:47

Gould

Mmm-hmm.

2-00:00:49

Furey

You know it really--it gave--I remember your sister telling—saying that one of the biggest things that happened to her in her life was when she got her--first got her car. Because then she had freedom and she could go wherever she went, so—

2-00:01:17

Gould

Well, all of us were late learning to drive.

2-00:01:35

Furey

When did you first get your license?

2-00:01:39

Gould

Oh, let's see--It was after the war. And we lived out in a place called [Herlong] it's between Susanville and Reno, out--It was an ammunition depot and I wanted to learn to drive so, okay. It was a stick-shift and my husband drew the diagram of how you, you know, where everything was and I go out there and I'm gonna drive this thing.

2-00:02:27

Furey

[Laughing]

2-00:02:27

Gould

Well, I put it in what was supposed to be reverse and it didn't do anything, so I asked the guy next door, I said, "Where's reverse on this thing?" [Laughing] So he told me and I drove down

the street and then I actually drove into Reno one day and--but I didn't sleep all the night before because I was trying to remember how I could get where I wanted to go without making a left turn. [Laughing]

2-00:03:00

Furey

[Laughing]

2-00:03:03

Gould

But even then, I didn't get my license then. It was even after that.

2-00:03:15

Furey

Kind of back to the basic chronology, where we're going--could you talk a little bit about more now about entering--your whole decision to become--to go to welding school and how that you had this conversation with your husband in the car, saying, "I want to do that too"--

2-00:03:40

Gould

Uh-huh.

2-00:03:41

Furey

And then where did it go from there? How many months--So your husband got a job in the shipyard--

2-00:03:46

Gould

Uh-huh. And I'm not sure just how long it was after that. But when I went to the welding school and they said, "Okay, you're ready. Go into Oakland and get your job." Because--

2-00:04:06

Furey

Well could you back up a little bit and talk about the school? How it was and how did you find out about the school?

2-00:04:11

Gould

I went to the employment office.

2-00:04:15

Furey

And they told you about the--

2-00:04:14

Gould

Uh-huh. And it was running twenty-four hours a day in four hour sections and mine was four to eight in the morning.

2-00:04:26

Furey

The class?

2-00:04:27

Gould

The class. So I think I went for two weeks and the hiring hall was in Oakland so I took the bus and went in there and they said, "You have to join the Boilermakers Union." So I went to the union hall and my memory of that place is all dark. [laughing] It was like it was a dark place and [there was] this big man that was dressed in dark clothes and he just said, "No. We don't take women or blacks." Only that's not the word he used. So I went home. The next day, I went again, same routine. The third day I didn't go to the boilermakers' hall. I went up to the window at the hiring hall and they said, "No," and I started to cry. As I'm walking back through this room there was a man at a desk and he said, "What's wrong?" and I told him. I don't know what he did but he says, "Go back up there." And I did and they gave me the job. ...then they hired five or six more women and a chaperone, because we were the first.

2-00:06:58

Furey

Wow. So you were among the first--because that must have been in July 1942--can you remember what month it was? Because I know July '42 is when the Boilermakers Union was opened up.

2-00:07:14

Gould

Well, that must have been when it was. I knew it was '42.

2-00:07:18

Furey

So women went--did you protest anywhere did you--

2-00:07:22

Gould

No.

2-00:07:23

Furey

There was not protesting?

2-00:07:24

Gould

No. So they hired this chaperone and she escorted us everywhere we went. And we had to stay together at lunch and we had--you know, just to make sure that the men weren't going to do something crazy. And that didn't last too long because they were forced to hire other women. The men were being drafted and they had to--and they hadn't sent for people out of state yet. You know it was before the influx of people from the South. So they had to hire women. So I was assigned to a shipfitter and at Prefab, and we built the deckhouses. But out behind Prefab is where they got the big slabs of steel ready to bring onto the production line. And you had to weld little flanges on there for the crane to pick these things up. So that's what I was doing, was tacking. And I knew that I knew how to weld as well as these guys that were coming in as new

hires because we'd all been to either the same school or similar. So there was--um--I think about fifteen on our crew, and the lead man was a young man and he'd walk around and assign what we were to do on the shift and he'd always give the guys the vertical welds or horizontal welds and me tacking. So this one day I just thought, "Uh-uh." And I walked right behind him--every step he took I was in lock-step with him and every time he'd point to that and start to tell some guy to do it I'd say, "I can do it." And finally, he just said, "Well, do it!" He didn't think I could but I could. So that was the first step in really asserting myself. Not only by getting the job, but on the job. I was a good welder and I loved it. It was so satisfying. I had always done embroidery and you want your stitches all to [be] even and look nice. Well, it was the same with welding. As you overlapped each pass you wanted them to be the same--the spacing--and to look nice and be good, too. So eventually I became, I guess, a prima donna on the crew and I got to do pretty much what I wanted to do--in--you know--

2-00:11:26

Furey

So you were put in with other crews--with crews of men?

2-00:11:33

Gould

Yeah.

2-00:11:33

Furey

Or you weren't kept working with other women with a chaperone was--

2-00:11:39

Gould

No. Once the chaperone was gone, we were just part of a crew. And for a long time I was the only woman on the crew.

2-00:11:49

Furey

Wow. What was it like when you--do you remember your first time walking into it--which shipyard were you in, by the way?

2-00:11:56

Gould

It was Prefab.

2-00:11:58

Furey

You were in the Prefab.

2-00:11:57

Gould

Uh-huh.

2-00:11:59

Furey

The prefabrication plant. And what was it like--do you remember when you first entered the plant, like the experience you had?

2-00:12:05

Gould

[Laughing] I don't remember the first day. I don't remember going through the gate on the first day, but I remember being up on this kind of a balcony thing with the chaperone and kind of— [Laughing] You could look out over a lot of it and the noise and the smell and the--just the activity. But once I was down on the ground and--And then it's just a matter of you're doing whatever's in front of you. And at the same time, we're being hit with all of this propaganda. So people had asked about the building next to Prefab and I don't remember any of that and the Ford Building was just down the street and I had no idea that they made tanks there until this Rosie thing came up. You didn't ask questions and you just didn't—

2-00:13:31

Furey

Um-hmm. Now on the subject of propaganda--with the Rosie video--one of the things that really impressed me was this whole--some of these commercials they would have to get women to come into the work force. Now were you seeing those? When did those--when did you start to become—when did it start to become a positive image to be a woman working, and were you affected by those commercials at all?

2-00:14:01

Gould

No, because I was probably already working when those came out. And once I had my first paycheck--that was it. That was my money and that was big. [Laughing]

2-00:14:21

Furey

Do you remember when you opened up the letter or the--

2-00:14:24

Gould

I made ninety cents an hour. And then as I--and then you work so long and you got a raise and then it was a dollar twenty as a journeyman. And at that point--

2-00:14:45

Furey

Journeywoman.

2-00:14:46

Gould

Oh, yeah. At that point, my marriage started to fall apart because here's this proud man who expected to be the head of his household, take care of his family, and here I am. I'm doing the same work he's doing and I'm getting the same pay for it. And our last Christmas together he bought me a new set of dishes and pots and pans. [Laughing]

2-00:15:31

Furey

He's like, "I have money too!"

2-00:15:34

Gould

No! He wanted me to stay home and there was always pressure to quit. And I'd forgotten about that until I read some of my dad's--after my mom died. I got some of her things, and in there were letters from dad where he'd said, "Phyllis promised to quit on Sunday." And then the next letter was, "And she didn't." [Laughing] So there was a lot of pressure going on.

2-00:16:08

Furey

What was it about your husband that--what threatened him so much? What made him feel so insecure about you working? Was it being around other men? Was he afraid that you'd meet some other man or--Do you remember what kind of discussions you would have on the issue?

2-00:16:30

Gould

It was a matter of control, because he had total control of me before. I had none. [Laughing] Because I bought things that he wouldn't have allowed me to have--or discourage me. I bought fancy hats, and fancy underwear, and Frank Sinatra records and just--I was still just twenty years old. And he left. And what he did was then—

2-00:17:18

Furey

When was this? When did he leave, do you remember? How long had you been working by the time he left?

2-00:17:24

Gould

Probably less than a year.

2-00:17:26

Furey

Wow.

2-00:17:29

Gould

And he went to Pearl Harbor to do repair on the ships. So then, we divorced and I met somebody else and--

2-00:17:50

Furey

So you'd been married at that point for--

2-00:17:52

Gould

About three years.

2-00:17:56

Furey

Three years.

2-00:17:56

Gould

Yeah, four at the most. And probably if the war had not come along and I hadn't gone to work I would have stayed with him, not knowing any better. And been kind of a pale shadow of what I became. [Laughing]

2-00:18:28

Furey

How were you--did you feel any type of renewal or a sense of [phone rings]

2-00:18:37

Gould

Oh I meant to turn that thing off--[phone rings] It's on the side--thanks. Just turn it off. Thanks.

2-00:18:50

Furey

Did you feel any sense of--when you first started working did you feel a sense of freedom all of a sudden or--was it must've been hard work too--

2-00:18:59

Gould

No, I was hard physical work. No, I didn't have freedom because I had a baby. And that was always a challenge for someone to take care of him. So the family was still in Oregon and Marian came down to take care of him and then she finished her senior year in high school there and met somebody and got married and then the next one came down. [Laughing] So it was a steady parade of relatives and finally mom came with my youngest sister and by then I wanted to get on graveyard shift so we could take turns in the bed. You know, if I worked graveyard then--because mom got a job in the shipyard in the daytime that covered the babysitting and the sleeping arrangements. So that was the next big hurdle. They didn't want women on graveyard shift. And so the superintendent was really great. I was always whining at him about something or another. His office was kind of up on a balcony where he could look down and see what we were doing. So I'd go up there and I'd put in my plea for whatever so finally he gave in and said I could go on graveyard shift. Then I didn't go to the office anymore. So one night, I'm out on the outside about three stories up and here he comes, climbing up the scaffolding and he said, "I haven't seen you in the office." I said, "Well, I don't have anything to complain about." [Laughing] "I got what I want." So that worked out well. I liked that.

2-00:21:33

Furey

But at first your sister Marian took care of your child?

2-00:21:37

Gould

Uh-huh.

2-00:21:38

Furey

So she came down and--What would any of the women--What would the other women--First of all, were there other married women with children that you were working with?

2-00:21:53

Gould

I'm sure there were. And now I know about these daycare centers, I did not even know they existed. So I suppose I could have done that, you know, just taken him and dropped him off at the daycare on my way to work and then picked him up, but I didn't know about that. And after my mom had moved to her own place, I rented one bedroom to a couple who had a child the same age as mine. So she stayed home and took care of both of the babies. So it was a matter of you did what you had to do and make the best of it.

2-00:22:57

Furey

One thing that your sister talked about a lot was--kind of once the--right after the war started in Richmond, and these big lights she said, "Is that San Francisco or is that Richmond?" Because it looked really big and she said one of the things that she sensed was kind of this energy in the air. Like everything was twenty-four hours a day.

2-00:23:22

Gould

It was.

2-00:23:24

Furey

And you saw the change happen. Richmond basically becoming a city overnight. What was that like for you to witness that?

2-00:23:33

Gould

It was like a seething cauldron. What had been the main street downtown was suddenly just a mass of moving people of all kinds, eventually. And what people don't think about is all the young men going into the service but also doctors, dentists, were needed in the service. And I had a toothache that just wouldn't quit, so I went to a dentist. And I don't know where--I guess maybe he'd been retired and decided he'd go back to work--They pulled my tooth, no anesthetic, the nurse grabbed hold of my head and he put his knee in my chest and yanked it out. [Laughing]

2-00:24:50

Furey

Ah! [Laughing]

2-00:24:55

Gould

And people don't stop to think about that side of things.

2-00:25:04

Furey

You were saying--you just said just now how "there were people of all different kinds." Do you men there were people from the South coming, there were people from Nebraska, Iowa--

2-00:25:21

Gould

Oklahoma, Arkansas.

2-00:25:24

Furey

Not just black people. Black people are looked at--or African Americans are looked at as sort of the--not the only group, but they're one that's--

2-00:25:33

Gould

Well, no--

2-00:25:33

Furey

They were just only part of a wave that was coming.

2-00:25:36

Gould

Only part of a wave--

2-00:25:36

Furey

--there were lots of poor whites coming--

2-00:25:38

Gould

Oh, yeah.

2-00:25:38

Furey

--and people from all over the country, essentially. How was that? It must have interesting to see.

2-00:25:49

Gould

There was--

2-00:25:50

Furey

--because all the different accents and--

2-00:25:49

Gould

There was a girl on our crew. I think she was from Oklahoma or Arkansas and she--her brother worked there too. She wanted to go to a dance--because there were dances every night, just downtown Richmond. So I agreed I would meet her there. And she had washed her face but her neck was still black from the--[Laughing] And I danced with her brother and he did some kind of an Okie stomp and just stomped all over my feet so I didn't go back with her! [Laughing] But I remember that she hadn't bathed or anything; she just washed her face.

2-00:26:52

Furey

Were you able to shower at the--

2-00:26:57

Gould

No. You--you--

2-00:27:02

Furey

The men could shower.

2-00:27:02

Gould

I don't think so.

2-00:27:03

Furey

There were no showers so they would go home to shower?

2-00:27:06

Gould

Yeah.

2-00:27:06

Furey

Because I thought I saw a man's--

2-00:27:09

Gould

So we were a cruddy bunch.

2-00:27:11

Furey

And the clothes you wore were--they were men's clothes?

2-00:27:15

Gould

Men's clothes. Uh-huh.

2-00:27:17

Furey

How did that feel to get inside of it? It must have been the first—well, was it the first time that you had worn men's clothes or--

2-00:27:28

Gould

Probably--

2-00:27:27

Furey

--pants and—

2-00:27:27

Gould

Well, growing up as a kid I wore bib overalls and so that wasn't so strange but--wore sweatshirts and they weren't in colors. The only sweatshirts they were only gray. And men's jeans, even the boots were men's and they were rationed so you had to--

2-00:28:02

Furey

So all the good boots would go to the men on the front.

2-00:28:04

Gould

Uh-huh. Leather. Yeah, the leather. And so my little vanity thing was--I had blouses of different colors, you know, pink and blue and yellow, I guess, green--which I wore under the sweatshirt. And then I always had to have my hair in a bandanna, and I matched the bandanna color to the color of the collar that showed on the outside. And that was just--you know, says, "I'm a girl." [Laughing] There wasn't any of the fabrics that keep you warm now and on graveyard it got pretty cold. And I remember putting layers of newspaper between my socks to try and keep my feet warm. And originally the equipment I had to buy was the leather overalls and the leather jacket and these big gloves. And then, sometime I didn't wear the pants--they were heavy and hot. It depended on what kind of welding I was doing; I didn't always have to wear those. And then, like now, where people buy brand names? There was a company in Oakland that made gloves and that was the gloves to have. So that's where I got my gloves.

2-00:30:00

Furey

You're talking about welding gloves?

2-00:30:03

Gould

Uh-huh. [Laughing]

2-00:30:03

Furey

I thought you were maybe talking about--

2-00:30:09

Gould

No, welding gloves. [Laughing] But it was true; you didn't go to San Francisco unless you're dressed up.

2-00:30:17

Furey

So you'd come home and then you'd switch from kind of men's clothing. Did it affect the other types of clothes you bought? I mean--you obviously didn't start wearing men's clothing, but--What kind of impact did that have?

2-00:30:35

Gould

It was neat to dress up. It was neat to go over to the City and that's when they started making synthetic shoes. And you didn't have to have a coupon for those. So the first ones I bought were

red sandals with platform soles. I thought they were just the greatest! Nylons were almost impossible to come by. Marian painted her legs and drew the line up the back so they looked like socks, but I don't remember doing that. The skirts were just about knee-length--pretty basic. I bought a dress that was to go to dances. The skirt part of it was black. The top was almost a Hawaiian print in black and red and white, and it had kind of a cowl neck and then big shoulder pads and short sleeves, but short sleeves were to the elbow. And of course, there were no zippers so it was the button placket on the side. But the skirt had black fringe over the underskirt and I still have that dress. And a few years back I wore it to kind of a rock--I had some friends who were rock musicians and so I went to one of their gigs and I wore that. And I never got pinched and poked so much in my life! [Laughs] With that fringe skirt! So that was fun. I also have a pair of slacks--and the style was kind of--surprisingly, I would say kind of German. The waistband was wide and kind of scalloped with an embroidered flower on it and I had jumpers that had the same thing. They had flowers embroidered on it, kind of like those lederhosen or whatever they are that the Swiss wear, you know? I don't know why that was in style, but it was.

2-00:33:46

Furey

It's kind of ironic.

2-00:33:47

Gould

Yeah. And I've always had a sweet tooth--my undoing. And this guy that--I didn't especially like him, and I thought he was lazy--he was burner. But he lived in San Francisco and he took the ferry over to work. I knew you could get candy bars on the ferry and you couldn't buy them in the stores, so I gave him some money and told him to get me some *Milky Way* candy bars and every night he'd say, "Oh. He forgot it." And finally he says, "Well, if you meet me over in the City," so I did. I took the bus and went over and he met me at the transportation center and I was a country girl, you know? The city was not my turf. So here he meets me and he's got this dark blue overcoat and a white scarf around his neck and he calls a cab to go about three blocks and that was just the beginning of the evening. We went to a Chinese bar, then we went to the [Sinaloa] Mexican Restaurant for dinner, then we went to another bar in Chinatown where they had a fan dancer, then we went to a movie. By then, I couldn't get back across the bay 'til, I think, six in the morning or something. So he says, "Okay, we'll take the streetcar. We'll ride it out to the beach and then walk over a couple of blocks and catch the other one back." And by then it will be time for me to catch my ride home.

2-00:36:04

Furey

It would be six o'clock in the morning?

2-00:36:04

Gould

Yeah, so here we go out to the--and get off of this street car and we're walking down the Great Highway in the middle of the--

2-00:36:15

Furey

So you took the streetcar that went out to the Cliff House?

2-00:36:16

Gould

Yeah. Walking down in the middle of the night the wind in blowing, the fog—And I've just got a light coat on. And freezing to death, so I thought, "That's the end of that." And he didn't have the candy bars! Still didn't get the candy bars! So he--I guess he was fascinated by me, I guess, because he was a San Francisco guy. He'd never met anybody like me before. [Laughing] And--so he was persistent and he became my second husband! [Laughing]

2-00:37:01

Furey

Wow! So he had a little plan.

2-00:37:03

Gould

[Laughing] Yeah, I guess!

2-00:37:04

Furey

Took you out to the cold beach!

2-00:37:07

Gould

[Laughing]

2-00:37:12

Furey

Wow. So this was, after how long had you been working at the shipyards by that time when you met him?

2-00:37:23

Gould

It must have been into '44 by then.

2-00:37:28

Furey

Okay.

2-00:37:30

Gould

And then--because he had asthma and the doctor told him he couldn't stay in the shipyards and there was a character that we kinda hung out with that was from Texas. So he said, "Okay, if we go to Texas, you can get a job." So away we go, pack up our belongings and--I had my little boy, and this "Tex", his lady has a little boy and we head off for Texas. We get over into Nevada and they worked in a mine to get some money to go farther. Tires were rationed. They went to the dump and they found this old tire that had been put together--I guess the sidewall had peeled off or something and it was stapled or fastened together with metal or something. We went clear to Texas on that tire. And then we get to Houston and we're out of money and he's sick. He's really got asthma. So I went to work at Todd-Houston Shipyard. And here we are on one side of Houston and it's way out on the other--sixty miles. And--

2-00:39:18

Furey

To commute.

2-00:39:19

Gould

Yeah. And so I got a ride with this guy that had other riders and he had a pick-up truck and he built a little shelter on the back and wooden benches so--And he liked to be there early. So about four o'clock in the morning he'd pick me up and we'd get there so early--because they only ran two shifts. Two ten-hour shifts. So there was a downtime in the night. And the only live things that were running around at the hour I got there were rats. The wharf rats? These great big wharf rats. So I'd crawl up on top of one of the toolboxes and wait 'til enough people came that the rats would disappear. But it was interesting that I got to work there for a while because they were building the same ships but the old way. And because I'd had experience with the pre-fab part where you can do things so much more efficient--

2-00:40:35

Furey

Yeah. You bring in bigger pieces?

2-00:40:39

Gould

And this--as I was hired on they had just laid the keel of a ship. So I worked on that until they launched it. And it was a lot of overhead welding, which we didn't do at Richmond, because on the deckhouses they built it where you were standing on the ceiling and welding the walls and then they would turn it over onto the next. So they did away with a lot of the overhead welding. But while I was there at Todd Houston, I became a Navy-certified welder. And there aren't a lot of *men* that were that.

2-00:41:27

Furey

Wow.

2-00:41:30

Gould

But it was a totally different experience where I didn't have to go get my welding rods. I had a helper that, if I was working up on the upper deck where it was hot, he'd set up a fan and—

2-00:41:51

Furey

This isn't because you're a woman; it's because you're more experienced?

2-00:41:53

Gould

Yeah.

2-00:41:55

Furey

Because you're a higher-ranking--

2-00:41:59

Gould

And the black people could not become journeymen. They could only be helpers. So it was so totally different and so strange to me to live there. As soon as the war was over, we came home.

2-00:42:21

Furey

How do you compare Richmond--would you say Richmond was more--or the Bay Area was more open to--obviously the new technology. The Kaiser shipyards were--

2-00:42:30

Gould

Uh-huh.

2-00:42:32

Furey

--were more, um, kind of cutting-edge. Was the attitude towards other--people of other groups, or also towards women, was that a little bit more open? Did you find it more open in Richmond?

2-00:42:46

Gould

Oh, definitely! Definitely! I never had any unpleasant experiences between races. And the only one that I remember, my sister, Jean, talking about was--and she was still in school--was like if there was at a game of some kind and there were black kids sitting behind her they might kick the bench or something. And I do know that they would walk four and five abreast so that you had to step into the street to go around them. But just little things like that and I could always understand that because it was like me and my husband where I had the same job and the same pay--they also had taken this giant step to being equal. Equal in the housing, equal in the job, and equal in pay.

2-00:43:59

Furey

Well ostensibly. [Laughing] I mean--on paper it was supposedly equal but there were lots of inequities and--

2-00:44:07

Gould

I guess there probably was, but nothing that I was aware of. One of the Rosies at one of our get-togethers told about getting mixed up in where she lived, because the projects were all--all the buildings were the same and the numbers would be the same, just the street name would be different. And she ended up in the wrong apartment. I think it was a white lady's apartment--and she was there when the woman came home and said, "What are you doing?" And she says, "I live here." And she says, "No, you don't!" [Laughing]

2-00:45:04

Furey

[Laughing]

2-00:45:03

Gould

"You live over on the next block!" [Laughing]

2-00:45:12

Furey

Um--well I think maybe we can close it out for today--

2-00:45:16

Gould

Okay.