

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY  
NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARIE LATTARI  
FOR THE  
RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY  
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TRANSCRIPT BY  
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Kathryn Tracy Rizzi: This begins an oral history interview with Marie Lattari on November 8, 2021, with Kate Rizzi. We are in Denville, New Jersey. Thank you so much for doing this interview with me.

Marie Lattari: Okay.

KR: To start, can you please tell me where and when you were born?

ML: I was born in New York City on December 22, 1923.

KR: Let's talk about your family history first. What do you know about your family history, starting on your mother's side of the family?

ML: A little bit more on my mother's side than my father's. For some reason, I guess I talked to her more rather than question my father. They were both born in the Ukraine, and I think at the time that they were born, Ukraine might have been under--it never was a country of its own until later years--I'm not sure if it was Austria-Hungary at the time or if it was under Poland. It might have been under Poland. I'm not sure. [Editor's Note: From the 1500s to 1918, the land of Ukraine was occupied or partially occupied by several empires of Europe, including the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire. After World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire dissolved, and this briefly made Ukraine an independent nation. However, Ukraine quickly came under the control of the newly formed Soviet Union. In 1991, with the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union, Ukraine became independent.]

My mother was orphaned when she was nine, so she had to go and live with her aunt and she had to leave school. She was in third grade, and so she had to take care of her cousins and not go to school, whereas her sister was able to go to school. When my mother was sixteen, all by herself, she came to this country. She was sponsored by, I don't know if it was, a relative or a friend, but she stayed with them in the city and met my father here, I believe. She was sixteen when she came over. My father was eighteen. I never asked these questions of my mother, so I keep telling people now, "Question your parents. Question your grandparents." She established herself. She went to night school here. She learned English. She got married here, had her two children, myself and my brother, and she was a stay-at-home mom most of the time. Before she was married, I don't even know where she worked. I know she worked at the automat for a while. She worked as a housekeeper, I think, but otherwise, she was a stay-at-home mom.

KR: You said you know a little more about your mom than your father. Did your mom tell you stories about her life?

ML: Not too much, not too much. She told me just a little story, she told me about her sister, [who] was able to go to school. During the war, my [aunt]--well, I guess she's my aunt--she hid her son, so that the Russians wouldn't be able to get him, and because she hid her son, she was sent to Siberia. So, she stayed in Siberia. In the meantime, her son managed to make it to Canada, but he could never get her to join him in Canada until she reached sixty-five. Then, when she reached sixty-five, the Russians allowed her to come.

KR: She eventually made it to Canada.

ML: She made it to Canada, yes. I don't know if her son was married at the time he migrated to Canada. I believe he was. [I don't know] whether he had children or not. Somehow, he managed to go from the Ukraine through Poland and managed to get to [Canada]--I'm not too sure about their history. I know they're still up there in [Canada], but it was amazing what they had gone through.

KR: Do you know anything about your mom's journey to America when she immigrated?

ML: All I know is that she went by herself on the ship, and all she had was whatever clothes she had on her back and a bottle of vodka. [laughter] She came here. She's a remarkable woman.

KR: Yes, she sounds like a tough lady.

ML: Yes, she was remarkable.

KR: Yes. You talked about your aunt being imprisoned in Siberia.

ML: Well, she wasn't imprisoned. I guess she was working with something up in Siberia. As far as I know, she wasn't in prison.

KR: That is your aunt?

ML: It was my mother's sister.

KR: That was your mother's sister.

ML: Yes. I met her because they came down here to visit from Canada, and if I had seen her in the street, I would have thought it was my mother. They looked so much alike. But I think my mother resented her because she was able to go to school and my mother couldn't. They got in touch with each other after she had come to Canada, but my mother was never interested in seeing her or being close to her, although she was close with the family, the son and the family. Everyone had a story to tell during the war.

KR: What was your father's upbringing like?

ML: You know, I'm not sure. I think he had a sister that was in New Jersey somewhere, and he also had a brother. We were very close to them. They lived in the city also, and so we were back and forth constantly. He didn't talk much about his past. I don't know what he did. All I know is that he came to this country when he was eighteen, and he was a blacksmith. When he came here, he got a job with the IRT Company, railroad. He worked for them until he died. As far as his education goes, I have no idea. As I said, you should question your grandparents and your parents. [Editor's Note: Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT) was the private operator of New York City's subway system until the city purchased the system in 1940.]

KR: Definitely. I interviewed my grandfather, yes.

ML: Yes.

KR: It sounds like your father moved to America with his whole family.

ML: No, he was only eighteen.

KR: Okay. Were his siblings already in America?

ML: I think they were. I'm not sure if they were already here. I don't know when they came, who came first. My father's brother was a tailor and had his own business and was a tailor his whole life. Yes, we had an interesting life. [laughter]

KR: Do you know the story of how your parents met?

ML: No. I know that when my parents came here and all the while I was growing up, there was a section in Manhattan around Seventh Street, East Seventh Street, they kind of all congregated there. I know at the time, my mother had lived on Third Street, but when I was three years old, for some reason, she decided she wanted to move uptown, so we lived on 91st Street, although we were still going to the church on Seventh Street. All the people who lived around that area, they bought cemetery plots in the same place out on Long Island and everybody's buried there. We used to congregate there at the cemetery every Memorial Day. I can go there and see people that I had grown up with in that area. My parents were very close with their Ukrainian friends. They even had a social club of the Ukrainian people that lived in Manhattan and they were in existence for many years for all the time that I grew up. We used to go to the dances held at their meeting hall somewhere in Manhattan.

KR: Tell me a little bit about the neighborhood that you grew up in.

ML: Until I was sixteen, I grew up in Manhattan, on 91st Street. There was a school across the street. It's where I went to school until sixth grade and then 99th Street seventh and eighth grade and then Julia Richman High School in Manhattan. So, I stayed in Manhattan until I was sixteen, and then my family moved to the Bronx, which I wasn't happy about. But we grew up in Manhattan, and it was wonderful because you had everything in Manhattan. We had the parks, we had the museums, we had everything, everything.

KR: 91st Street, that is the East Side.

ML: That was the East Side, yes, yes.

KR: Yes.

ML: Yes, we were a couple of blocks from the river and a couple blocks from Central Park. I saw all the parades growing up, and it was just great.

KR: Is that technically the Yorkville section?

ML: Yes, yes.

KR: When you were growing up there, what was your neighborhood like in terms of class, religion, race and ethnicity?

ML: It was a German and Irish neighborhood. There was a public school and a Catholic school right across the street from where we lived, and most of the Irish neighborhood went to the Catholic school. The Germans, in that whole [section], on 86th Street, they had a lot of these *brauhaus* [brew houses] and the gyms that the Germans frequented. It was a good neighborhood, mostly Irish and German, so it was fine. When I grew up, we had what they would call gangs, I guess, when we were teenagers. The schoolyard across the street was open for the kids. Our block was mostly closed during the summer for summer activities. So, we had gangs, but we were a good gang, just hanging out really, so it was great.

KR: How did the Great Depression affect your family and your community?

ML: Well, we were lucky because my father worked for the city, so he was almost the last one to be let go. As I said, he was a blacksmith, so of course they needed blacksmiths to fix the rails. In fact, there was a big write-up in the paper--I wish I knew where it was--about the kind of work that he did. What was my train of thought now? I lost it. What was the question?

KR: You were talking about the Great Depression and your father.

ML: Oh, the depression, yes, okay. He was almost the last one to leave. Then, he got a job, I remember, as a dishwasher and he used to come home and soak his feet because he was so tired from standing up and washing dishes all day. But we managed. We didn't really have a problem during the depression, except I remember we'd go to Central Park. Central Park had what was called Hoover village, and they had these kind of homes that they built right on the park, the homeless ones. We used to go there and walk around and talk to them. My father was great for outdoors. We used to go sleigh riding and do things with him, the movies. He worked doing dishes, and then he was almost the first one to be called back after the depression, as things loosened up. [Editor's Note: A "Hoover village" refers to a shantytown or "Hooverville," a community consisting of makeshift homes constructed by the homeless during the Great Depression. The homeless communities were named for Herbert Hoover, who was president when the Great Depression began in 1929.]

Then, my mother was very good making out with the cooking and the shopping and whatever. My mother sewed. She sewed all my clothes until the day I was married. I remember one time she had a coat that was getting threadbare, and so she took all the seams apart and reversed everything and wore the coat from the other side. She was very good at sewing. As I said, she made all my clothes.

I remember my brother, during the depression, he would somehow get wood from I don't know where, and he would chop wood and put it into some kind of a bag, not a cloth bag, but some kind of bag and he would sell the wood to neighbors. People had wood stoves. That's what we had in our kitchen, a wood stove. My father, before he was let go from work, he used to come home on the train, carrying his bundle of wood for the day to start the fire--and coal, of course. We had coal delivered directly to the basement of our apartment building. We then used a coal scuttle to carry upstairs to the third floor our daily supply of coal. But we made it through the depression pretty well.

The only problem was, because I graduated from high school in January of 1940, I had just turned sixteen and trying to look for a job, it was impossible. It was so hard for me to get a job. I remember I finally got a job at a factory that made party hats. There was a whole bunch of girls that were in the same boat as I was. We'd go out for interviews, but in the meantime, we were making party hats to make a living. We did that, and then once the new year came, we were let go because they weren't making party hats after New Year's Eve. They didn't need the extra help that we provided.

Yes, it was hard, but I was young and I didn't feel it as much. We did pretty well. As I said, my mother made my clothes. My father fixed my shoes. He put soles on my shoes and heels on my shoes, so I didn't have to buy shoes. What else happened during the depression? That's about all. It was just my brother and I. We lived in an apartment with two bedrooms. My parents slept on a converted couch.

KR: Where did your parents stand politically?

ML: They were Democrats. I don't know much about what they did. He belonged to a union at work and was sort of private with them. They didn't discuss it much with us. So, I don't know too much about their political life.

KR: What did they think about President Roosevelt?

ML: Oh, everybody loved him, yes. Yes, they thought he was great.

KR: I am curious, when your father was out of work, did he take advantage of any New Deal programs?

ML: I don't know, I don't know.

KR: You talked about the Ukrainian social club that your family frequented.

ML: Yes.

KR: What sorts of Ukrainian traditions and cultural practices did your parents practice on a regular basis in your household when you were growing up?

ML: First of all, we talked Ukrainian, until we went to school, my brother and I. He was a year older than I, so he went first. As he learned English, so did I. By the time I went, I knew some English, but we talked Ukrainian at home. My parents talked Ukrainian, until they died, to each other. I lost the language because I didn't use it after my mother died, but she used to talk to me in Ukrainian. I'd answer her in English. But she spoke very good English, my father not as much. She went to night school. He didn't. He spoke English, he wrote English, but mostly they talked Ukrainian.

They were close to the church. We went to the church often; every Sunday, we went until we were twelve and then my parents gave up on us. Yes, we went to church and cooked Ukrainian foods. A lot of the people still contacted their family back in Europe. My parents didn't too much. Once they left, they stayed here, and they didn't contact anyone in Europe anymore. When my father died, after several years, my mother remarried another Ukrainian man, and he was still going to the Ukraine to visit friends, family, and my mother wouldn't go. It was like she cut her ties when she left. She had no more family left there really. Yes, she didn't have anyone here anymore, except her sister that went to Canada. My father, as I say, we were close to his brother.

KR: What would those family get-togethers be like when you were growing up?

ML: Oh, it was constantly back and forth. They had seven kids. They changed their religion. Instead of being Catholic, they became Pentecostal and they worked for the church or they lived on the church property, I think, also somewhere on Seventh Street or in that area. I think he was like a sexton at the church. So, they lived at the church somewhere. I'm not exactly sure where, what kind of a building; I don't remember that. Because they changed their religion, sometimes there was a little conflict, although we stayed [in contact]. We did go back and forth a lot. The kids always came to our house; we always came to their house. We'd get on a train, go. We had free transportation also on the trains because of my father working it. Sometimes, on a rainy day, my mother would take a book, and we'd go on a train. My brother and I would look out the window, and we'd go as far as the train would take us and then come back again. [laughter] We had a good childhood.

KR: What role did religion play in your childhood?

ML: Oh, a lot, yes. I had the fear of God in me; that's for sure. [laughter] Our church, we didn't have to go to confession as often. Easter time, we had to go to confession. So, we went to confession once a year and to communion, I think, once a year, but we did go to church every single Sunday. It was a long trip. We'd have to leave, I think the Mass was at ten o'clock, we'd have to leave early enough because we'd have to take the train. It was the L that we took down, the local L. It took us a while to get down there. We'd go to the church, and then we'd stay after church and talk and then go back home. That's why I said, by the time I was twelve or thirteen, I said, "I'm not going anymore," and that was it. I never went back again. I just go back and forth now just to look at it. Once in a while, I go down there, because my daughter lives in New York now. I would visit her a lot, and we'd go down to Seventh Street and get some pierogis. It was a good life for my parents. I did have another aunt and uncle also that I just remembered that lived

on 72nd Street and we were close to them. Yes, it was a good life. What else do you need to know about my life?

KR: You mentioned pierogis.

ML: Yes.

KR: What dishes did your mom make when you were growing up, and did she pass recipes down to you?

ML: Some, yes. Pierogis, not that I make them. Stuffed cabbage, pierogis. Cabbage soup I didn't particularly like, so I never cooked that. [On] Easter, I still make the *paska*, the Easter bread. At Easter time, you cook the day before Easter, you do not cook on Easter, and so you make the fresh ham, kielbasa, the *paska*, butter. You take butter and cream cheese. What else did you take? Eggs and liver, pork liver, all that is cooked ahead of time. Then, you put it in a basket and you take it to church and you have it blessed on Saturday and go to confession. Then, on Sunday, you'd go to communion, and then you go home and eat. You don't cook on Sunday. Everything you had blessed you would eat on Sunday, that was Easter Sunday. Easter Sundays, we used to celebrate the Orthodox Easter Sunday, which was a week after, sometimes a week, sometimes at the same time, but it was the same calendar as--I'm not sure if it's the Julian calendar or the Gregorian calendar that we'd follow, but we'd follow that calendar all the time, until the churches finally changed. Some of the churches changed, the one on Seventh Street did too. I think they changed it to the same as the American Easter and holidays because people went to work. Instead of staying off on Christmas, they would have to work on January 7th, [which] was Christmas, so people couldn't take the time off on January 7th to celebrate Christmas. We'd celebrate on the 7th. [Editor's Note: *Paska*, which means Easter in Ukrainian, is an egg bread traditionally made for Easter. Eastern Orthodox churches base their liturgical calendar on the Julian calendar, and some use the revised Julian calendar, which was introduced in 1923. The Gregorian calendar is the standard calendar used in most of the world.]

I liked the Byzantine Rite that we celebrated in church. I liked the music. I liked the hymns, but I grew away from it. I married an Italian, which was the challenge of it. I was married in the church on Seventh Street. I don't think my mother-in-law ever thought I was officially married. [laughter] I followed the tradition. [Editor's Note: Byzantine Rite refers to the system of liturgical practices and discipline observed by the Eastern Orthodox Church and by the majority of Eastern Rite churches, which are in communion with Rome.]

All of the time [my children were] growing up, I had never ever met anyone that was Ukrainian. You don't meet too many people that are Ukrainian, especially if you moved away from the city. I think in the past ten years, I've all of a sudden met three people who are also Ukrainian and also celebrate the same customs as far as food.

KR: That must be nice to be reunited with other Ukrainians.



ML: Oh yes, yes. I ask questions about what kind of food. One of them, in fact, had even attended the Ukrainian church that's in Whippany. There's a big one there, and she said she went back to church just to see what it was like. I said, "Oh, I should do that," but I never did.

KR: Growing up in New York City, what are some things you remember that were really specific to somebody growing up in New York City?

ML: Broadway. Broadway, yes, yes. In fact, where I worked, I guess you'll get to that later, but I worked for the Army during the war. It was the Special Services Division. Shubert, you know the Shubert Theater? [Editor's Note: Special Services was a special unit of the United States military that provided entertainment to soldiers during World War II as a way to improve morale. The Shubert Theatre is a Broadway theater located at 225 West 44th Street in Manhattan, New York City. It is named for Sam S. Shubert, a theater owner and producer who was killed in a train accident at the age of twenty-six.]

KR: Yes, but tell me, for the record.

ML: Well, one of the Shuberts, I don't know how old he was at the time, he was a commissioned officer, and so we got tickets to the theaters during the war and so we'd do that constantly. It was so much fun. Even before I started working for the government, we used to go to the Broadway all the time, Times Square, all the time. We'd get on a train and go there; it was fun. We went to dances there, and we skated. We used to go skating somewhere around Times Square and we'd go on Friday night and you'd meet someone. You usually always met someone, and then that was your date for Saturday. It was fun growing up.

KR: I am curious, did you go to the World's Fair? [Editor's Note: The World's Fair was held in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Queens, New York City in 1939-1940 and 1964-1965.]

ML: Yes, I did. I went to all of them. I can't remember the dates of the first one now, but I was young. I can't remember how old I was, but I went to the World's Fair. Then, when I was living here [in New Jersey] and I was a Girl Scout leader, I took my Girl Scout troop and I'm thinking now how crazy I was. I went with my co-leader, and there was no other parent going with the troop. I said to the girls, I would say to them, "Okay, you have to have a partner. You have to stay together and every hour," I said, or every half hour, "You come back to this location and check in." Well, they all checked in, but I said, "Can you imagine if they didn't?" How crazy was I? [laughter] You would never do something like that these days, but I felt so comfortable in New York. I lived there all my life, and I felt so comfortable. I said, "Oh, sure, you can do this." My Girl Scouts were sixteen at the time, so they were responsible. [laughter]

KR: You told me what schools you went to.

ML: Yes.

KR: What was your education like?

ML: Well, unfortunately, when I graduated from eighth grade, we had no counseling. My parents, of course, they were immigrants, they were happy that I was going to school and life was good, and they had no way of counseling me on what to do. Nobody in my age group, nobody where I lived, nobody went to college. I had a relative also that lived upstairs in my apartment building. She became a secretary. I was so fascinated with her being a secretary. She knew shorthand and I thought, "Oh, that's what I'll do." So, I had no other guidance. When I was in eighth grade, there was no counseling, no guidance. So, I had just turned twelve and I went to high school, and I thought, "Well, I'm going to take a commercial course because I'm going to be a secretary." My IQ was high. I didn't know it until I had gone to high school, I had a high IQ.

When I finally graduated from eighth grade, my home [economics] class teacher, she was my art teacher also and she says to me, "Oh, you're going to ..." What was that school in New York?" It's a high school for brains in New York [Hunter College High School]. I can't think of the name. She says, "You're going there to high school." I said, "No, I'm going to Julie Richman to take a commercial course." She says, "Oh," and this was on the day I graduated. Talk to me beforehand, nobody did. So, I went to Julia Richman and took a commercial course. I didn't take any other courses. I didn't take any languages. I didn't take any math. I took bookkeeping. Now, kids have counseling, thank God for that, not that they know what they want to do sometimes, but they have counseling. I became secretary and then couldn't find a job. [laughter] I finally ended up as a secretary, which I loved doing. I really enjoyed that. One time, when we were in school, some person came into the classroom and was demonstrating the machines that they used for the court secretaries, court ...

KR: Stenographer?

ML: Yes, so, I was fascinated by that. I said, "Well, that's what I want to do," but I never did get the machine and never learned it. So, I never ended up doing that. Yes, I loved being a secretary here. I had great bosses, got along with each one of them, and it was great.

KR: In the mid to late 1930s, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party were coming to power in Germany.

ML: Right.

KR: There was a big German population in the Yorkville section. Do you remember any pro-German activities? Do you remember a German Bund?

ML: I vaguely remember them because, as I said, I went to the gym, the German gym, *Turnverein*, I think it was called. It reminded me of the acrobats today, where they have a man that's so strict with them and makes them do things, hang upside down. I wasn't meant for that. I did that for a while, but then I said I couldn't be an acrobat. I just couldn't. So, I don't know how long I stayed there, maybe a year, maybe two, I don't know, but I remember how strict they were. I remember, of course, all the Germans in that area talking about Hitler because they were all for him. These were friends of mine. As I grew older and after I moved to the Bronx, I met new

people, and my friends were German, and their parents, they were for the war. But I was too young to get involved in that. Most of them were good people, but they were just for Hitler, yes.

KR: Very shortly, we are going to be coming up to the eightieth anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941.

ML: Yes.

KR: What do you remember about December 7, 1941?

ML: I remember that I was on a train with friends of mine. We had newsboys in those days and I remember the newsboy carrying a bunch of papers, going through the cars and yelling, "Extra, extra, Pearl Harbor bombed." It was at that moment I knew we were going to war, and the first thing I think of was my brother was a year older than I was. It was horrible.

KR: Had you met your husband at that point?

ML: No, I didn't meet my husband until after the war, on a blind date.

KR: Tell me about your brother's experiences during World War II.

ML: Well, he was really fortunate. Of course, they had the draft, and he had to register for the draft. He had a good number, I guess, so he wasn't called to go to war until it was almost over. He was sent to Germany, and then he went to Czechoslovakia. He was there for the signing of the treaty at Czechoslovakia after that was finished. Then, they sent him to Japan, so he was with the occupying troops in Japan. He was in the Army three years between going to Germany, to Czechoslovakia, to Japan. He was very lucky. I remember for basic training, he went to Texas, and he came back with a Texas accent. [laughter] It was so funny. I think he was master sergeant when he left, I'm not sure, but he was a sergeant, a platoon sergeant. As I said, he was at the end of the war, so he was very lucky.

My husband, on the other hand, he was in the National Guard. At the age of nineteen, he was on maneuvers somewhere down [South]--not Georgia, Alabama I think--he was on maneuvers when Pearl Harbor happened, and he never came home after that. They sent him right to California. From there, he went to Hawaii, and he was in the Army for five years. It was a long time. I met him afterwards, on a blind date.

KR: What were the war years like for you?

ML: Well, I worked. I worked from early morning until late at night. I got this job. Let me see, when did I start working? In 1942, I started working for the Army. I worked until 1948, because I was six months pregnant and starting to show and I had to retire. They didn't let you work when you were pregnant. I had no desire to leave my job, but they said I couldn't stay. Eventually, the company moved to Texas, I heard. Would I have moved? I don't know.

KR: You worked for the Army Exchange Service in the Special Services Division.

ML: The PX [post exchange], the Army Exchange, they were originally in Washington. They had just moved to Manhattan, and I started working for them. I started to work as a secretary, but they needed something for the classified material that was coming in. They had a huge mailroom, but they couldn't mix the mail. They had to be separate. So, they needed to set up what they called the secret room, and they put me in charge of that. I set that up. I stayed in that section, and I had help, of course, because all the wires had to be paraphrased. Every piece of mail that came in had to go from hand to hand to hand. They had to keep track of every piece of paper that went through. I had people working for me doing that, during the height of the war. I stayed at that job at the height of the war. Then, when things started to calm down, a lot of mail was declassified. I said, "It's time to leave."

Then, I went back to do secretarial work, and I did that until I had to leave. It was just the PX and then the Special Services Division, which was the USO and all kinds of stuff. They moved up from Washington and then they joined with us. So, we became the Special Services Division, which was really the Army Exchange, [which] included PX and Special Services, entertainment, so we combined and became a larger organization. I stayed there, as I said, until I became pregnant and left. [Editor's Note: The United Service Organizations (USO) provides recreational and entertainment services to military personnel.]

KR: How did the opportunity come about in the first place for you to get that job?

ML: I was working as a secretary in a company that made hot chocolate, but that was in the Bronx and there was nothing there. I worked there, and I was trying to get into the city. I applied again to all the insurance companies, the telephone companies, and this and that. The telephone company said, "We don't have any openings in the office, but why don't you come in and start as an operator or something? Then, you get your foot in the door and then you can transfer as soon as they have [an opening]." I said, "Okay, let me try that." I went in, and they put me [as a] information operator, which was horrible, absolutely horrible. [laughter] I stayed there for a few months, and I said, "Oh, I don't know."

I started with the employment agencies again and the whole thing all over again, and this came up, this Army job, and I said, "Oh, Army, it's temporary." But I took the job, and that's how I went into that and left information in the dust. [laughter] Well, at information, first of all, we had crazy hours. We worked split hours. We worked four hours in the morning and four hours at night, or you worked a whole eight hours. They were always checking up on you. They were always coming along and they'd plug their headsets next to mine and they'd listen to see how I was doing and was I being polite to the people. Of course, I was polite. [laughter] I knew they were listening. [laughter] Jobs were still scarce. It was still the end of the depression. You still couldn't get a job. The Army job was great. The telephone company was on West 50th Street, so that was close enough to Manhattan, Broadway.

KR: Where was the Army installation?

ML: West 43rd. So, that was great too.

KR: Would you take the train down from the Bronx?

ML: Yes, I took the train down from the Bronx.

KR: You were living with your parents during the war.

ML: I lived with them until I got married. She was sewing clothes for me until the day I left. [laughter] Then, when I had children, she sewed for them.

KR: I am curious, did you wear civilian clothes working for Special Services?

ML: Yes, yes, we wore civilian clothes. Oh, yes, we had to dress as secretaries, stockings, silk stockings--no nylons--silk. Did you know that if we got a run in our stockings, we were able to sew it up ourselves? Did you know that?

KR: I do know that, but tell me about it.

ML: It was about this long [three inches], and it had a hook on the end, just a round hook. When you had a run in your stockings, you'd put it where the end of the run, you know the little loop of thread that sticks out, well, you'd hook that onto it and then it had a little thingamajig over it, so that as you pulled it up, each one, you know you pulled it up and you were knitting your own stocking. That's what we had to do because you couldn't buy stockings. We had to wear stockings with the seam in the back and the seam had to be straight. You had to make sure your seam was straight. Oh, yes, we had to dress, high heels all the time. No working on your computer at home in your pajamas. [laughter]

KR: That is true.

ML: Did you do that during the pandemic?

KR: I did, yes. [laughter] It has been hard transitioning back to wearing shoes.

ML: Oh, I'm sure. [laughter] My granddaughter lives in town now, and she got a job at home on the computer. She's working on the computer all day long, other than taking the dog for a walk at lunch time. She just sits there all day, and I say, "This is not the job for her." That's what she does, puts on pajamas or whatever, and that's the way she's going to work. She's remote, she says. She's not part of any office. She's remote.

KR: What do you remember about rationing during World War II?

ML: Not much. My mother handled everything. There were the ration cards for shoes and sugar and other things. As I said, my father fixed my shoes. I wore them forever. My mother did all the cooking. I didn't do any of the cooking. All I did was work. I worked long hours. Then, sometimes, we worked at night if a company didn't have enough help or didn't have enough to get any kind of material out, so we would pitch in. A bunch of us would go in at night and pitch in and help a company. Sometimes, we'd collate for hours, we did anything, mostly

office work we did just to help out the companies that didn't have the people to work, we'd do that. I didn't do any other volunteer work during the war because I had enough on my plate just working.

[I was] writing letters to the soldiers, sending care packages, although my mother did most of the care packages, but I helped out too with that, sending to my brother. We wrote an awful lot of letters because there was no other way of contacting the servicemen. There was just V-Mail. There was no phones, nothing, and so you didn't hear from them until the war was over. They never came home for leave. Once they were overseas, they stayed there. [Editor's Note: Victory Mail, or V-Mail, was a system used to save cargo space on ships and airplanes during World War II. It involved capturing written correspondence on microfilm at the place of origin and then sending that microfilm overseas, where it was developed for the recipient.]

My husband's unit, he was in field artillery. After he left Hawaii, they sent him to officer's training school in the States. Then, from there, they sent him to North Africa. From North Africa, he went to Anzio, from Anzio up through Italy to France. He had gotten sick in Africa, some kind of a lung disease. He never made it to Paris. Because he was sick, they sent him home on a hospital ship. I was going where with this? I've lost my train of thought. [Editor's Note: The United States and its allies invaded German-occupied North Africa on November 8, 1942, in Operation Torch. On January 22, 1944, Allied forces landed in Anzio, Italy to break through German forces that had caused a stalemate in the Italian campaign, which began in July of 1943.]

KR: You were talking about your husband. He got sick in North Africa and came home on a hospital ship.

ML: He came home on a hospital ship. He didn't come home, once he left officer training school and he went to North Africa. There was no way of calling home or getting leave to come home. You had to use V-Mail, that's what you had to do, so it was back and forth writing letters. I didn't know him at the time, but I had other people that I was writing to. Then, my brother would say, "Oh, I've got a roommate who wants someone to write letters to him." I said, "Okay," so I'd write to him, and other people had other buddies. So, you'd write letters constantly, send pictures, write letters. That's what kept them happy.

KR: For my grandmother, during World War II, her husband, my grandfather, was with the Marines, her brothers were with the Marines. Her father even was in North Africa, and he was an older man. He was working as an engineer for the Army in North Africa.

ML: Yes.

KR: The war affected everybody.

ML: Yes.

KR: What was that like in your community of people that you knew?

ML: The friends that I knew that I grew up with, I kept in touch with all of them, two of them didn't make it home. Two of them got killed. None of them got injured in any way, which was very fortunate. My brother was fine; he didn't get injured.

My husband, his unit, after the war was over, we met with them every year. We had a reunion every year with that group. They lost men in their unit. One of them came home in a wheelchair. Another one came home without a leg, and he went to the reunion. He had an artificial leg. We used to meet in Atlantic City because one of the men in his unit, his mother, they owned one of those housekeeping hotels in Atlantic City, and he owned the bar next door. So, we used to go there to Atlantic City every year for a reunion. This guy without a leg, he'd go to the beach without his artificial leg, just with his crutches, hopping to the beach, and then he'd go into the water and swim, come out again, put his leg on and party at night. They were artillery, so they weren't on the frontline. They went to Anzio, but they weren't the very front ones, the first ones that landed. My husband belonged to that group, but they didn't meet that often. But the artillery group, they met every year.

Actually, as they died, someone else took over for managing the plans for making the reunion because it was always the week after Labor Day, when prices were cheaper in Atlantic City. My husband was part of the guys that were organizing it, and then after he died and the other one died that was organizing, then the wives took over. We took over, my friend and I, we took over organizing it, getting in touch with all the ones that were left. We met until, I would say maybe five to eight years ago was the last time we had the reunion, because there weren't any more left. My friend and I, we're still alive. I've got boxes and boxes of pictures and letters from all the years that we met with the group and kept in touch. It was good that way. I'm bouncing from one thing to another.

KR: No, this is great. What are some of your other recollections of New York City during World War II?

ML: A lot of servicemen around. Yes, no matter where we went, we had servicemen, no matter what we did. I was always downtown because of where I worked. We'd bowl. We met people at the bowling alley. We skated. We went to dances all the time. Of course, that's when everybody was jitterbugging and lindy hopping. We'd do that.

I had a boyfriend during the war. I met him at one of the USO dances. He was in the Navy, and we started dating. His ship was berthed in Brooklyn. When they were out on whatever ships do, then he'd come back to Brooklyn and then he'd come up. I would see him when he came up. I was dating him for three years, pretty serious, I thought, and he met my family. I took him all over. Every place I went with the family or relatives, I dragged him with me. With my friends, when we went out any place swimming or anything, I took him with me. The day that the war was over, VE-Day, he came to Brooklyn, he called, he met me at work, and he told me he was married and he was going back home to Detroit, after three years of dating. You don't make any plans during the war. You don't say, "We're going to get married after the war," or, "We're going to live here," or, "We're going to live there." You don't make plans. You just take day to day. He said he was married and he left. [Editor's Note: Victory in Europe Day, or VE-Day, occurred on May 8, 1945. Germany surrendered to the Allies, thus ending World War II in Europe.]

Of course, I was heartbroken, but there were millions of cases like that with people. Either the guys, wherever they were stationed, they met some foreigners and got divorced, or I know a friend of mine, her husband was in Alaska and he got injured during whatever he was doing in Alaska and he ended up in the hospital and he fell in love with the nurse and he married her and divorced his wife. There were so many cases like that. "Dear John" letters, they were called. I'm sure you've heard of that. This was, "Dear Jane." [laughter]

Strangely enough--I met my husband on a blind date and I got married. After I got married, my mother called me and she said that the ex-boyfriend showed up at her door and he wanted to know where I was. He was on his way to Europe, off for a job, and he wanted to know where I was. My mother said, "She's married." [laughter] He was at a hotel in New York and he said, "Well, tell her I'm staying at this hotel." My mother told me. She said, "He's on his way to Europe, but he's at the hotel in New York for a while." I was so tempted just to tell him what he did, ruined my life, but, no, I didn't go. No, I just couldn't. I don't know what happened to him. Anyhow, that was the story of my love life during the war, one of many.

KR: What do you remember about security measures in New York City during the war?

ML: Nothing, absolutely nothing. I was telling a friend of mine, she lived in Staten Island in New York. She's younger than I am, so she was younger during the war. But she remembers the blackout curtains and she remembers the patrol, and I said, "I don't remember any of that." I said, "I'm sure we must've had blackout curtains, but I don't remember actually closing them at night. I don't remember the brown out." I said, "I don't remember anything about that part of the war," because my mother took care of everything. I just went to work and worked. I don't remember any of that stuff, but she remembered. I got up early in the morning, went to work, and came home tired, hungry. [Editor's Note: Ms. Lattari's telephone rings in the background.]

KR: Do you want me to pause?

ML: No, it's okay.

KR: Just a robocall. What does it mean to you to have been a civilian working for the Army during World War II?

ML: I felt I was doing my part, for one thing. As I said, I didn't do any other kind of volunteer work at the time because I figured that was hard work, long hours.

KR: What was it like running the secret room?

ML: That was very busy. It was extremely busy because there was so much paper work. You'd have to be very careful, everything has to be signed for, and it's not just one sheet of paper. When they wrote letters in those times, they wrote the main letter and they would have, I don't know what they call them, but you just kept writing, so you had the main letter and then every letter going back and forth was another copy. Everything was like seven copies. No errors, you



can't have an error because you can't erase. You weren't allowed to, so you had to be very careful how you typed it. It was a lot of work.

KR: What else sticks out in your mind working for the Army during the war?

ML: It was just a grind really, it was a grind, because you just kept at it all the time. It was office work, and I can't think of anything else to say about it.

KR: When the war ended, you had this horrible breakup happen at that time, when probably, for most other people, the end of the war was a good thing.

ML: What do you mean breakup?

KR: Your boyfriend at the time.

ML: Oh, yes.

KR: What were your experiences at the end of the war?

ML The thing is they had no place to live, that was the problem, after the war. I remember friends of mine were living in a Quonset hut. They got married, and they had a baby right away. They lived in a Quonset hut, and it's just this tin thing that's this shape and it's hot in there. You live there in the summer, there's no air conditioning, and they'd put them in the field somewhere. Every night, your neighbors would have the same problem, trying to make a living in the Quonset hut.

After I got married, it was hard to find an apartment. My husband would stay at the newsstand on a corner somewhere, and as soon as the local paper would come in, he'd grab the paper and look under the classified section to see what houses or what rooms were available. That's how we got our apartment. It was in the Bronx and there was an apartment for rent. It was the basement apartment. It was like this; it was a kitchen and a living room. That was it, and the bathroom was outside in the hall, in the basement. It was an Italian family's house. They lived on the main floor, and then another apartment above that they had someone living in, and then rented the basement room. That's where we stayed. That's where we lived for about a year, when I became pregnant.

Then, the people on the second floor moved out, and we got that apartment. Then, that was three bedrooms, so that was great. [laughter] Yes, that's how I got pregnant when we lived in the basement apartment. The door was flat with the driveway. I'm sure you still hear about the Blizzard of 1947. In December, there was a blizzard, and the snow was halfway up our door. We couldn't get out, so we were stuck in our apartment. My landlord, they were Italian, and they made their own wine. They brought us a jug of wine, and we were drinking wine and eating nuts, until we were able to get out of the apartment. That's how I got pregnant with my first child. [laughter] Yes, we were lucky when we moved to the second floor. It was nice then once we had the apartment because by that time, my baby was born and we had a room for her, so that

was good. [Editor's Note: The Blizzard of 1947 dropped over two feet of snow on the Northeast from December 25th to December 26th.]

KR: Tell me about your children and the years that they were born.

ML: Well, this one was born nine months after December. [laughter] Then, two years after that, I had my second child. A year after that, I had my third child, and then there was a break for three years, when I had my fourth child. Then, I had my fifth one four years after that. There's a ten-year span between my first and my last.

KR: Four girls?

ML: Four girls and then a boy. I loved having babies. I was a very good mother. [laughter] Nothing phased me. As much as I allowed my Girl Scouts to go on their own at the World's Fair, I let my kids go on their own also. As a result, they all moved away from me. Nobody lives close to me, so sad. [laughter] We're very close, my family and I, but I raised my kids to be independent. They all did well. The only one that didn't go well, my fourth one left home when she was eighteen and went to Arizona to be a hippie, I guess, but then she saw the light and became a nurse and did just as well as the others who went to college. When people moan and groan that their child doesn't want to go to college, I say, "Hey, they don't have to." My son also didn't go, and he became a mechanic and did very well also. It's not for everybody.

KR: We have been talking for over an hour. Do you want to take a break?

ML: I can use the restroom. [laughter]

KR: Great, let's break.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

ML: We're back on.

KR: Yes, we are back on.

ML: Okay, yes. What are we going to talk about?

KR: Your husband, Danny, and baseball.

ML: Yes. He always played baseball, from the time he was young, and he wanted to join the Giants because he lived in New York. He went to the Giants when they had tryouts for kids that wanted to play baseball. I don't know how old he was, maybe seventeen, eighteen, and they said to him, when he went to try out, they said, "Go home and gain some weight." [laughter] When he got to Hawaii, they had a baseball team there, and he joined that team. He played baseball out in Hawaii. I even have the baseball that when he left, when he went to go to officer's training school, he had all his teammates sign the baseball and I still have that baseball. He did play ball, yes. He always liked baseball, but he never gained the weight. Even when he came back after

the war, he was still skinny. [laughter] [Editor's Note: The New York Giants baseball franchise was established in 1883 and played at the Polo Grounds in Manhattan, New York City. In 1958, the franchise relocated to San Francisco, where the Giants remain today.]

KR: What did your husband do for his career?

ML: He worked for RCA. The same thing, when he came home after the war, he had trouble getting a job also. Of course, all the servicemen were back home. I don't know where it was that he went to find out what he was qualified for. Being that he was an officer, he went to OCS, he was qualified for an executive-type job, but he was working for his father at the time. His father was a builder, and he didn't like doing that kind of work because his father was sending him out to get people out of houses. He was evicting people. Houses that he bought, he wanted to rebuild, and so my husband had the job of evicting people. He didn't like that too much, so he was looking for something else to do. I said, "Well, apply for a job somewhere, anywhere." He applied, and he got a job at RCA.

In the meantime, he was going to City College at night. He applied for the job and he started in the shipping department. He ended up being a branch manager of traffic and shipping and warehousing, and it was great. He worked at RCA until he retired. He retired at fifty-nine, and then he died when he was sixty-nine because of whatever he caught in North Africa. It ended up being a type of asthma. Then, he got cancer in his lungs, and at sixty-nine, he died. He retired at fifty-nine, so we had ten good years together before he died.

Anyhow, he worked for RCA, and he worked in Manhattan. The two of us would be going to work. Then, he became manager, and his company built a warehouse and also a recording studio, not a recording studio, but where they made the records, in Rockaway. They had two buildings. He was in the warehouse in shipping and he was managing that. What else was I going to tell you about that?

KR: He was working in Rockaway.

ML: He was working in Rockaway, which was a lot better than working in the city, but we had to move to Jersey when we had our second and third children. We lived in the Bronx for four years and then moved to New Rochelle, New York. We were in New Rochelle for three years, when we had to move here. We had just bought this old house. We were remodeling it. I had three kids. We were working to get the house fixed up, and then we had to move. I was pregnant again with my fourth one. We had to move. I came to Rockaway to look for a place to live, and I went through Main Street in Rockaway. I said, "Oh, my God, they don't even have a movie theater here. Where am I going?" [laughter] We couldn't find where to live here, so we went to Hackettstown and rented in Hackettstown for a while.

He was working for RCA, and that was great too because this was during the Elvis Presley era and Frank Sinatra, so we had records all over the house. He used to bring the kids any record they wanted; they could've had it without even buying it. We got to see a lot of concerts, because he would get tickets to concerts. We would go to concerts, but he loved that job. That was it.

KR: I am curious, your husband went to City College ...

ML: He went to City College.

KR: Did he go on the GI Bill?

ML: No, no, he didn't. He just started it after he came back. When he started working down at RCA, he was going to City College at night, and he was going there for the time that we stayed there, three years. Then, we had to move, and once we were here, he didn't get to college anymore because they kept him working twelve hours, setting up the office here. Yes, that was the end of his college career.

KR: Were you able to take advantage of any other veterans' benefits, such as the VA mortgage?

ML: I can't remember what mortgage we had, but, yes, of course I still take advantage of it because I'm an auxiliary Army member still. I have access to the PX right on Picatinny. I don't use it anymore, but, yes, I still have my Army ID. When I used to fly, I used to use that ID to show at the airport, and they would say, "Thank you for your service." I said, "Yes, I did serve. I was a civilian. I served as a civilian, but I served." [laughter] Yes, I'm still part of it. I'm still a member of--what do they call it?--the North Jersey Officer's Association. I'm not active actually, but I do get mail from them and it helps me to keep tabs on what I still have to do as far as renewing something or other, or new laws. I still get paid from the Army because my husband, when he was getting his retirement pay, I was getting my spouse benefit that he was paying for. So, I'm still getting a payment from them, which helps. I still consider myself part of the Army, one way or another. What else do you need to know? I need some prompting. [laughter]  
[Editor's Note: Picatinny Arsenal is a military research facility located in Morris County, New Jersey.]

KR: You have lived in Denville for a long time.

ML: Yes, sixty years.

KR: How have you seen this community change over the years?

ML: Well, the river still floods occasionally. The community is still great. It's still a small town, and they do a great job with keeping it clean and keeping it nice. We have a nice neighborhood here. Nobody wants to move. The guy across the street, they moved here when they were first married. They have two kids now and they didn't want to move, so they put oodles of money into their house to remodel it. It took them a whole year, but they're still here because they love it here. Everybody loves it here. We really like the community. I don't get too involved in it anymore. I worked until I was eighty-eight, part time mostly, and I still volunteer a lot. I took up braille. At the age of seventy-five, I learned braille, and I was transcribing braille for the schoolkids until I was eighty-five. I kept busy. I still do a lot of activities. I still golf. I still bowl, when I can walk. But I never went back to school; no, that was it.

KR: What led you to take up learning braille?

ML: Well, I was looking for something to do. I was volunteering at the hospital. I was volunteering at the hospital, but I was looking for something more to do. There was an ad in the paper that the Red Cross was teaching braille, and I said, "Oh, okay," so I decided to do that. It was a year's course, and I loved it. After I qualified to be an official transcriber, I was transcribing books for schoolkids through the Red Cross. They would give me the books and I would transcribe it into braille, put it on a disk, send it back to the Red Cross, and they would send me another book. I was doing that, back and forth, for ten years. I felt that was a great achievement for me, one of the things that I was proud of after I had retired. It was the Perkins Braille machine that I learned on, and it was a very noisy machine. It had six keys, I think, and very noisy. You had to really pound it to make the dots on braille paper. I remember, we had to submit a manuscript to the Library of Congress to qualify for it, to become a transcriber. We had to [transcribe] I don't know how many pages of a book into thirty-four pages of braille on this machine. We couldn't do it any other way; we had to do it on this machine, which was so noisy.

I was going to Florida with a friend of mine for two weeks on the train, the auto train. We would drive down to Washington and we'd pick up the auto train and go. I was at the braille class and I said, "I have to keep up with my braille." I had to do some work on it, so I'd take this braille machine. When we got to Washington, there was a snowstorm. My son said to me, he called me the day before. We were supposed to leave on Saturday, he called me on Friday. He said, "If you're going to go to Washington, you'd better go now because there's going to be a snowstorm. Go Friday, so you can catch your train on Saturday." We went, and I had to take my machine with me because I had to do my homework on the machine. We got to the hotel, and we were snowed in there for three days because, stupidly, we didn't know. Well, our car got there, and we got to Washington, "Fine, we'll get on the train," but the train couldn't go either because the tracks were frozen and had snow on them and the train couldn't go. It was snowbound also. For three days, we stayed in this hotel, and I was practicing. This poor friend of mine, I'm banging the keys, it was so noisy. I'm doing my homework, banging on the keys, and she's in the same room with me going crazy. [laughter] But I did my homework, I passed the homework, I got it done. I took the machine with me because I had to do it for the whole week down in Florida. I did pass it, so that was good.

Now, I'm losing my eyesight, and I don't know how much longer I'll be able to drive or read. I said, "Well, at least I have my braille. I still remember that." But the funny thing, I could read the braille back with my eyes, but I couldn't read with my fingers. I guess you have to get trained to do that. That was my life.

KR: I want to ask you about something specific when you were raising your kids. We are going through the COVID-19 pandemic right now. When you were raising your kids, it was polio. What do you remember about polio?

ML: I remember getting the shots finally, like the pandemic here, getting the vaccination. Why people don't get it? I don't understand. Yes, I remember it very well because I remember my mother being very careful with us, who we went with, who we saw, because it was prevalent.

You could see people coming down with it, but I was young though at the time, very young. I'm trying to think when they had the vaccine for that.

KR: It would have been in the early 1950s.

ML: Yes. Did I have my kids by then? I did. We had a guy in town that had polio. Yes, I just remember being careful. I remember my mother being careful with us when we were young, but I didn't come in contact with anyone growing up in my neighborhood at all in New York, not at all. The only one I remember is I moved out here, and I remember he had polio. Then, I found out later that my daughter's live-in, he had polio as a child. Otherwise, it didn't affect me in any way. I suppose when you live in the city there's so many people that you don't really know too much about your neighbors. I didn't know anyone.

KR: What have things been like for you during the COVID-19 pandemic?

ML: First of all, my daughter has cancer. It's called multiple myeloma, and her immune system is very low. She went through a lot. She's the one that lives in New York now. She's in remission. She's fine, but she has to be so careful. She can't be near anybody that's sick, so it's very hard now. I didn't see her through the whole pandemic. I couldn't even go and see her when she was in the hospital. First of all, she went into the hospital for the chemo, and then she went into the hospital, she had a stem cell transplant. She had that, so she was in the hospital for that. She had chemo again, and I couldn't go in to see her. I couldn't go into the hospital. She was in the hospital for twenty-five days with the transplant, and I don't know how long, about a month or so, with the first chemo. But it was hard because I couldn't go in and then I didn't see her. Then, she wouldn't come out here until we all had our shots, and even then, we had to be outside. She's still very careful. She still can't get near us at all. Unfortunately, I have a couple of sons-in-law that will not get shots. So, I can't have them here when she's coming, or if the kids haven't had their shots, she won't come here. Even Thanksgiving, I can't figure out what to do for Thanksgiving. Should I invite my granddaughter? She's had her shots, but does my daughter want to be with my granddaughter? I don't know.

My daughter doesn't have any children. It's just her and her husband, and he has to be very careful too. He has to be careful. They haven't been out to eat since the pandemic. They either order in or they cook. She has to be very careful. She lives in a building where there's seventy tenants, so she has to be very careful of being in contact with them. She doesn't know who's had shots and who has not. She wears a mask every place she goes. It's been hard because of her.

The others, of course, I don't see anyone, because they don't live close by, except my son's kids live close by. Well, my son, he got his shot. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to come here, but his wife won't get it. What do you do with that? I can't have them here. You have to sit outside in the nice weather, but you can't now. Everybody has their problems. I have a large family, yes. My grandkids, the ones that live close--my son's three kids live close--they were reluctant to get their shots at first. I said, "Get your shots. Don't come here without your shots." They're getting them finally, but I already had my booster. My daughter has her booster, so she can come here. She got hers before I did. Yes, she has to go to the hospital every month to get tested, test her immune system. Everybody else is doing fine.

KR: I have reached the end of my questions. What did we miss? What did we skip over?

ML: I don't know. I told you about my brother being in the war, my son-in-law. Fortunately, my son did not have to go to any war. I had somehow talked to my granddaughter, my granddaughter is thirty-five now, and I was talking to her one time about the war. I said something about the draft, and she says, "What's the draft?" I said, "What do you mean? You don't know what the draft is." She says, "No, I never heard of it." I said, "Well, all the men, once they reach the age of eighteen, they had to register for the draft. They get a number, and when they need someone to go to war, if your number is called, you have to go." She said, "What do you mean you have to go?" She had no idea what a draft was. I've been questioning other people of that age group. Do you know that the kids in this day and age do not know about the draft during World War II? They have no idea. What do they teach them in school? Isn't that an interesting point?

KR: Yes. Were you worried about your son with Vietnam, or was he born late enough to not be affected by the draft?

ML: He was okay by a few years. He was okay. I know he registered for the draft, but he was not called. I have a tenant upstairs, and he was drafted. He had a low number, and when he knew that he was going to be drafted, he decided to join, to enlist instead, because he said he'd get a better deal. So, he enlisted in the Air Force and he got drafted to go to Vietnam. He was in the Air Force, and he was fixing the radios on the planes as they came in to make sure the planes had their radio working so when they went out again, they had contact. That was his job, but he was at a base. He didn't go flying in the planes. He didn't go shooting anybody in Vietnam. He did well doing that. But I knew other people who were drafted and went to Vietnam and had to fight. But thirty-five-year-olds couldn't understand them having to go to war. Other than that, I can't think of anything else that I've left out. I think I've told you my whole life, whether you wanted to hear it or not. [laughter]

KR: I did want to hear it. [laughter]

ML: I can't think of anything else. I've been going through things, papers, because I wasn't sure exactly, I couldn't understand in the first place why you were interested in interviewing me because I thought I didn't have a very interesting life. I thought you were just interested in war years itself.

KR: Is there anything you would like to add?

ML: No, I don't think so.

KR: All right. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me.

ML: Oh, well, thank you for making me feel at ease. [laughter] I'm glad I did it, because I know Chip was very anxious for me to do this, whether you use it or not.

KR: Your interview will become a part of the Rutgers Oral History Archives.

ML: Good, good.

KR: Thank you so much. I am going to stop the recording.

ML: Okay, good.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

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