RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROL LEVIN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Chris Hillary: This begins an interview of Carol Levin at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey on April 1, 1998 with Chris Hillary and ...

Laura Micheletti: … Laura Micheletti.

CH: I would like to begin by asking a little bit about your parents. Could you tell us a little bit about what your mother and father did, where you grew up, and those kinds of things?

Carol Levin: Well, my mother was born in New York. My father arrived here when he was six months old. New York, that is. And we had a quiet life in a suburb of New York and nothing extraordinary about that. When the war came along, my brother was number fifty-eight, so he went into the Army early, in March of '41. And that's when I decided I was going to go into the WAAC. So my mother said, "My blessings. If I were a little bit [younger]," my mother was forty-five then, and she said, "if I were younger, I would go, too." So I had complete support from my family. I started out in Daytona Beach. I had my basic training there. And from there, I went to another place in Florida, Hendricks Field, which was about the middle of the state. It was very nice there. Far from every place, everybody. We were isolated, in the middle of the grassy area, that was about all. And from there, I went out to Des Moines. Then I went to Kearney, Nebraska, which was a fort from way back; it was an established base and ...

CH: Well, could I stop you there and just get you to tell me a little about what your father did, as far as work, and what your mother did, and then we'll ...

CL: Well, in those days, mothers didn't work. They stayed home and took care of the family. But she was active in volunteer organizations and we always had a comfortable home.

CH: What organizations did she ...

CL: Oh. Hadassah, mostly. You know, Hadassah. H-A-D-A-S-S-A-H.

CH: Okay.

CL: And during the war, she sold a lot of U.S. Savings Bonds. And that was with the, I don't remember the name of the organization, but she wore a uniform. I have pictures of her, of being congratulated for the large amount of bonds that she sold. Usually, it was in front of the local theater. And she was extremely busy with that. My father used to bring her a sandwich and a cup of something or other, because she didn't want to waste the time. And that was mostly what she did during the war. And my brother was stationed in New Orleans. My mother had surgery and went down there to recuperate, [to] New Orleans, [and it was] very hot and buggy, so her recuperation was better back in New York.

CH: And during the war, did your mother stay at home?

CL: Stayed at home.

CH: Was she in other organizations? Did she ...

CL: Yeah, well, she was in Hadassah. That was her main organization.

CH: Okay.

LM: Was your father in any organizations?

CH: No. He worked for New York City. He was the head of a department, vital statistics, births, deaths, marriage.

LM: Yeah.

CH: Oh, okay.

CL: And the office was very close to home. It was about, maybe a ten minute walk. So he used to come home for lunch. And my brother and I would come home from school and my mother and father would be there. So, as I say, it was a close family. And then, my brother was called up early, and that's when I decided I was going to go into service.

CH: Where did you go to high school?

CL: Jamaica. That's where I lived. I went to Jamaica High.

CH: And how was your experience in high school? Can you tell us a little about your impressions?

CL: Well, I was very young. I finished elementary school when I was not quite twelve. And most of the students were at least one year, and mostly two years, older than me, so I didn't have any real social life. I didn't go to any proms or anything like that, 'cause I was a bobby-soxer and they didn't have anything that went with grown-up activities. Then I went to college for two years and I dropped out. And I had a year of ...

CH: And that was at Brooklyn College?

CL: Yeah. Queens College didn't exist yet.

CH: Right.

CL: I went to ...

CH: Why did you drop out? What happened at college? You went there and ...

CL: Well, sometimes you get disillusioned. You drop out. I went to secretarial school and I got the highest mark in the history of Miss Dunbar's School. I had a job where I worked in the office

of the credit manager. I made a lot of friendships there, because most of the people working there were my age, so it was very social. And then, a year to the day after Pearl Harbor, I sent my application in to join the Women's Army Corps. At that time, it was the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. And a year later, let's see, that was December. I think by August, they dropped one A, and it was incorporated into the Army, so it became the Women's Army Corps. And, as I said before, I was stationed in several places in the States, and then I wanted to go overseas, because I felt I was just not accomplishing what I wanted, to end the war all by myself. I went to England, where I stayed for under a year and half, but it was wonderful. I met very hospitable people and, among the troops, I made some friendships with whom I'm still in touch. I came home October of '45. I went back to school for one semester. And foolishly, I read the newspaper to see which kinds of jobs were available. And I took a job and didn't go back to school. And I did for two years, during which time I got married and we moved out here. My husband was also in the Army. And the only job he could get, he worked here for Squibb, now Bristol-Myers Squibb. He worked for thirty-five years and he retired. I came to work at Rutgers in 1968 and I retired in '81 and I've been very busy since.

CH: Could you tell us a little bit about what went on at Daytona Beach in your training? What kind of training did you have and whether or not you liked it and ...

CL: Well, basic training for women is a lot different from basic training for men. We didn't use arms. We did marching and, what were the other things we did? We learned about supplies, how you order them, and we marched around a lot. Weekends, we're pretty much on our own. One weekend, our commanding officer took us down to the beach and that was very nice. It's a very small town, but it's pretty.

CH: In Daytona?

CL: Daytona, yes. The air is like perfume there. There's a river that runs along the side of it and has flowering trees and it was just lovely. And, as I say, from there I went to Hendricks Field, which is in Sebring, Florida. And then from there, I went to Des Moines.

CH: Right.

CL: And there was more marching around and learning about the different processes that you have in the Army, ordering supplies and food and that sort of thing.

CH: Did you just take classes or did you have like physical training as well?

CL: Yeah, we had some exercises. I remember, one of the teachers came from Alabama. And coming from New York, I don't like when people make remarks about New York. And she would do these jumping jacks. And we would do five this way and she would say "[Toin, toin]." And that was to go to the left.

CH: Right.

CL: And I couldn't believe the way she spoke, as New Yorkers are ridiculed about their speech, but in Georgia that's the way they speak. No R's. And so it was always a big joke among us. And we also had classes on the various activities within the Army for maintenance. You know, how to get laundry out and how to find out about supplies. And I really don't remember any others, but we did have other classes.

CH: Yeah.

LM: When you joined, it was the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and then it changed to the Women's Army Corps. What was the period of transition like?

CL: Immediate.

LM: I've read that it was somewhat chaotic.

CL: No.

LM: No?

CL: No. In August, we became Women's Army Corps. Those who had been in the WAAC who chose not to stay, left. As a matter-of-fact, just last night, I wrote to a friend whom I met that way. She decided to leave, but we kept up all these years. And she went to the South Pacific, it was pretty awful, with the American Red Cross, where they had rats as big as dogs. As a matter-of-fact, not too long ago, I sent her a couple of letters that she had written to me because I thought she'd like to have them. I've saved them all these years. But everything for us was the same. There was no difference. Maybe our insignia were different, I don't recall. But otherwise, the uniforms were the same, our activities were the same. Our pay was the same, which was very little. The only change was something in the books. But we had no change in our activities at all. The most interesting part of my stay in the army was in England.

CH: Yeah.

CL: I worked with very nice people. In my office, there was another girl, now you say young woman, and a young man who was engaged to a girl in Wilmington, Delaware, that's where he came from. So, for the holidays, we were gonna go out together. You know, have a dinner and, I don't know, they didn't have much else there. And this girl had a boyfriend in some army and this young man had a fiancée back home, so neither one wanted to do that, because they both felt they'd be disloyal to their friends. But in the office, we did things and, I know there was an orphanage in the nearby town, because we were always outside of town. And this orphanage had a lot of children in it. We all chipped in and bought little things for them. I was wrapping them and I was told that the general was coming around and we were not to get up. I was the only one in the office at the time that he came through, because you're doing a job. When he walked in, I got up anyhow and I saluted him. And he said, "Please, sergeant, sit down."
And he was just so sweet. So that was interesting.

CH: Had you ever been abroad before you went to England? Can you talk about the first time you went, going to a different country? Did you go by boat?

CL: Well, we were restricted, of course.

CH: Right.

CL: Yeah, we went on the *Queen Elizabeth*.

CH: Oh, really?

CL: It wasn't so great.

CH: Why not?

CL: The swimming pool had been filled in, and people lived there for the week or so that it took us to get across. We were two deep. Coming home, we were three deep. Coming home, it was the *Queen Mary* that we came home on. And we had only an hour or so to be on deck when we were going over. One time, when I was on deck, I noticed that the sun was in a different position from earlier in the day, and I hunted up the captain of the ship and I said to him, "Did we change course?" He said, "Yes. You don't have to publicize it, but we just ditched a couple of U-boats. So we changed our course."

CH: Was this on the way over or the way back?

CL: Way over.

CH: Way over, yeah.

CL: The way back was peace, by then.

CH: Right, no problem.

CL: So, nobody was aware of anything like that. Nobody would have the temerity to talk to the captain, but, I wanted to know, so, I asked.

CH: Yeah.

CL: People are people. His captain's bars or stripes or whatever didn't phase me at all.

CH: Were you in a convoy when you were going over or were you just ...

CL: Alone.

CH: Alone? Really? Were there other military personnel on the boat? Who else was onboard?

CL: Yeah, but I don't know who they were because we were bound in the hold.

CH: Yeah.

CL: And the higher rank you had, the higher up you were. So we had two meals a day, and it was crowded. As I say, we had an hour on deck a day and they had to change groups and you'd go back to your tight quarters.

CH: How was the food?

CL: Not memorable. When we came in, we came in to the Bay of Gourock, which is just outside of Glasgow. We got off the ship, we took the train up to Glasgow. And we were sitting in the railroad train and there were MPs walking up and down. And I saw that they were carrying radios, so I said, "What's happening? Why are we sitting here?" He said, "Well, they say that we've invaded Europe." And the troops that were on board our ship had to go first. So we didn't get off until the next day. Then they took us to Stone, which is in North England, where we stayed until we found out what our assignment was. I went to a place called Burtonwood, which was just about midway between Manchester and Liverpool. It was interesting. We had planes coming and going. The type of work on that base was repairing or changing the structure of the planes that came in. The planes were made over here and they shipped them across wherever they were going. In this case, it was to England. They shipped them over and then made up packets to adjust the planes to a newer style. They didn't finish that back in the States. As a matter-of-fact, they were working so hard, that every day there was something new developing with the planes. So that's what they did. I was a secretary to a lieutenant colonel and a colonel. And they would go around to the warehouses. Warehouses were these giant buildings. It was only a building, but it opened up so that the plane could go in and they were worked on in there. And that was the big job that we did. I didn't, but I would read the memos that were sent to us and I would respond. So that was interesting. And then I got to know some British people who were very, very cordial and hospitable. It was wonderful. My roommate and I got on very well and she was released from the Army because she was overage. I was in my twenties. She was past forty, so she left and I was alone in the room at that time.

CH: Could you describe where you lived, what was the set-up and ...

CL: Well, it was a one story metal building that had been built for munitions workers. About a mile down the road was a munitions works. So originally, they were living in these barracks. It was metal. There was a hallway down the middle and rooms off it. And the rooms had either one or two girls in them.

CH: And it was all women in there?

CL: All women, yeah. The men's barracks were a little distance away. We had heat only from the hot water pipes that came in. As a matter-of-fact, back in the States, we had what's known as Spaceheater Number One in the barracks. It was a big, pot-bellied stove and, I think, we used

coal. We didn't have to do it. There was somebody who came in and stuffed it with coal. It wasn't very warm.

CH: Yeah.

CL: And in England, it was even colder. But we had a sink and we had hot and cold water and we had two cabinets, one for each of us, where we kept our clothes and anything else, and we had these, the beds did not have mattresses. They had what were called "biscuits." They were about so big, made out of straw, and there were three to a bed. It was not comfortable. But we had clean linens every week, and we were taken care of. All soldiers were not taken care of as well as we were. I went away for the weekend. It was over January 1st, with somebody that I had met through my brother, who was in New Orleans. You know, you have relationships. My brother was in a port of embarkation. He was in New Orleans where the troops left for the South Pacific. And the young man was in there and they were talking and my brother said, "My sister is in England. By any chance, do you know anybody in England that she could look up?" So this man said, "Well, where is she?" And my brother said, "Well, I don't know where she is. That's confidential information." So this this fellow said, "Well, I was stationed between Manchester and Liverpool, and that's a big B-17 base." So my brother said, "Okay, what information do you have?" And he gave him the name and address of a British airman. So I wrote him a note and we got together, and I spent the weekend with him and his family in a lovely house. It was outside of Chester, which is right near Wales, the River Dee is between. The weekend was very nice. This boy was in the Air Force. His brother was in another branch of the British forces and the sister was in another branch of the forces. Everybody came home that weekend and his father, his parents were lovely people. His father took me outside in the morning and he said, "What kind of vegetables would you like?" I said, "Why?" He says, "I have them planted here. We can cut whatever we want." So it was fresh cut asparagus and other vegetables.

CH: Yeah.

CL: Incredible.

CH: A real treat.

CL: Yeah.

LM: What were the regulations concerning dating like?

CL: Well, you couldn't, somebody who was a noncom like me, could not date, was not permitted to date, an officer. Officers had a lot of freedom that we didn't have. They could date civilians and, for the most part, we, in the Army, didn't think much of the civilians that they dated. So you know, if they'd been anything, they'd have been in the service too. So, one time, I met a girl through somebody I met over there. She was with the WRENS, that's the Royal Navy Women's Service. And we went into the Red Cross club in the town that we were [in]. And as we were going up the steps, it was an old brownstone that had been converted to a service club, Trixie and I were walking up the stairs and there was a civilian woman, elderly, who sat at a desk

at the entrance and she says, (she didn't know just what the stripes met and she said), "Oh, please come down." So we came down. And she said, "Your friend is not allowed in here." So I said, "Why not?" I said "She's a member of the armed forces of very close allies of ours." "No, no. We're not permitted to have them. Only American troops." I said, "And what about the civilian girls that come in?" She had no answer. Trixie and I went upstairs. That was one time. Another time I was with a boy, man in the RAF, and she put up some objection to that. And I just walked through. Something like that doesn't phase me at all. So about six months later, that was way in the beginning, when I went to Burtonwood, they built this one-story brick house. It was for our entertainment. They had ping-pong and you could buy food. They had giant strawberries, the likes of which I had never seen here. Now we do have them. And I went there with this RAF boy that I knew and we were stopped and I said, "Who are all those girls over there? They're not in any kind of uniform." And the guard said, "Yes, that's right." And I said, " Well, I think it's wrong. My friend has been in the RAF since he's eighteen and you're not letting me in?" So I got him in. I spoke to the woman in charge. She was a Red Cross worker and her job was administering this recreation place. Later, I found out that she was going out with a U.S. sergeant. Now, that's also banned. Anyhow, I wrote a letter, and I gave it to her and I said, "Please send that to your boss back in Washington. I would like this corrected." Well, about a week later, she sees me come in with my RAF friend and she said, "Guess what, Sergeant? It's okay." So all you have to do is open your mouth and try to correct things that you think are wrong. So I accomplished that. I started to say before, my work was that of a secretary, which I was before and I was after, in civilian life. And once, there was a clearance in France, where there were roads that were okay for the armed forces to go through. Not as an army, but as individuals. One of the men in my office was a warrant officer, a senior warrant officer, and he wanted to go to France to inspect the situation with planes, and he was going over with the lieutenant colonel for whom I worked in the office, and he wanted me to go with them. My commander would not let me go. She said it was too dangerous. She told the one who applied, the officer. I said, "If it's too dangerous for me, it's also too dangerous for you." I mean, I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to go. When the war was all over, we had planes that were attached to our office, and so the colonel said, "We're going to send you over to Paris to see what it looks like." We were there for three days. There were four girls the first time and three girls the second time. Of course, it was a small plane, reconnaissance or something. So we saw the Eiffel Tower, and Champs Elysees, and then we came back to the post. And by that time the war was over.

CH: Well, how did Paris look? I mean, it had been ...

CL: It was a beautiful city.

CH: It was in good shape even ...

CL: Oh, yeah.

CH: Despite all the ...

CL: I don't believe that Paris was ever bombed. When I was in Birmingham in England, there

was a lot of destruction. I went up there with somebody, and the enormous holes twice as big as this. Birmingham had been hit very badly. Paris, I did not see any damage. It was beautiful. The plane passed over the Versailles Palace, and it was nice. And then, in October, we went home. And I could have had, a week before I left England, I could have had a job with the American Embassy. I had spoken to the personnel sergeant and I said, after, I had been to the American Embassy with a boy from home. He was trying to get some information. He asked me to go with him and I looked at that place. I had never been in an embassy before and I said, "Oh, what a place to work." When I came back to my billet, I spoke to this girl who's the personnel sergeant, and I said, "Is there any chance that there would be a vacancy in there? I would love to be transferred." So she said, "No, that's never open." So I said, "All right, keep it in mind." And the day that I left London, I was all packed and ready to go back to Stone, which was our exit post, where they changed our clothes. Most of our clothes had to be turned back in and they would give you other things. That day, my duffel bag was standing next to my bed and she came to my room and said, "If you want to go to the American Embassy, there's an opening." Unfortunately, I didn't say yes. I said, "Oh, I miss New York so. I was away for two and a half years." And I came back to a city that wasn't what I left it.

CH: Oh, yeah?

CL: New York was totally different. So, I came home anyhow, because I didn't know it had changed.

CH: You talked about the bombing that you saw. Were you ever present during an attack?

CL: Well, this time that I mentioned, I was in Chester with this family. When I left, Saturday morning, early, the girls on the bus going into town were saying, "Did you hear that noise last night?" So I said, "I didn't hear it. What was it?" She said, "I think there was bombing." I didn't see anything. And then when I came back Sunday night, one of the boys I knew was guarding the entrance to our base and he had a fixed bayonet on his rifle and I said to him, "What happened this weekend? Why are you carrying …" Whenever they did guard duty, they didn't carry guns. He said, "Oh, I guess you've been away." I said, "Yeah." He said, "There was an attempt to find this place." But we were very low. There was always a little fog over it. Not much, but enough so we couldn't be seen. So, by that time, I think they had already captured three German prisoners of war who had stolen American uniforms and a plane and they were looking for us, because we were servicing all these planes. It would have been to their advantage to destroy them. Well, they didn't see us and they were captured. But I didn't know anything about it then. Because I wasn't there. I was transferred to London and that was my last base before I came home. And it was not in the middle of London, it was outside Bushy Park which is near one of the places that a former king had his castle and all that. But it was very quiet and bucolic there. The cows used to walk along and stick their noses into the window. It was very unusual. I was with an outfit called U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. The man for whom I worked was a colonel who had been to Germany at the end of the war, investigating what the Germans had left. They had offices six stories underground. IG Farben had plants underground, and a lot of these things. And I just discovered I had a piece of stationary from there that I brought home. And I wrote a letter on it to this friend of mine who went with the Red Cross

when she dropped out of the WAAC. They had great protection for themselves and that's what this strategic bombing survey was all about. They went to see what was left of the German troops and their installations. So that was very interesting, writing all that stuff. I never went over, but it would have been interesting, after the war. Some of the girls in my company did go over. But that was when I said I was going to go back to the States. Some said they would stay in, and they were transferred to Germany, to apartment houses. And there were two girls, three girls to an apartment. And they worked there. I was not in touch with them, so I don't know how long they lasted or what kind of work they did. That was that.

LM: When you were in England, what kind of social activities did you participate in?

CL: Well, they had, just trying to think of the name of the street, very famous name. That's why I can't remember it. Oxford Street. See, there's Oxford Circle, which is like Broadway and 42nd Street in New York. It's this big circle. There was a statue of Cupid, except it was taken down during the war. It was just this cover over where Cupid had been standing. And there were service clubs all over the place. There was one, where Adele Astaire used to write letters for soldiers who didn't know English too well. They were taken from farms, where education wasn't compulsory. I never saw Adele Astaire, but that was one place, they ran dances and that sort of thing. On Oxford Street, there was a beautiful, beautiful home that was converted to the Balfour Club, named for Lord Balfour. And there was a piano. And the first time I was there, I heard this beautiful, beautiful piano music. One of the soldiers knew how to play. He may have been famous, I never really met him. And he was playing the piano with either Tchaikovsky or Mussorgsky, really good music. And they had this enormous room that had been a ball room. It was lined with mirrors, and they had Friday night services for Jewish troops. And they had dinner, on a reduced basis, but they had dinner on Friday night. There was a chaplain from the British Army who oversaw things. And that's where I met a lot of people, two of whom I'm still corresponding with. Three [that] I'm still corresponding with. One girl was from London, one girl was from Johannesburg, and one boy was from Toronto. And the club managed to find things to do, like a boat ride up the Thames, that sort of thing. It was very pleasant. One time, we visited a local hospital, where the young soldiers had come back. Some had been maimed badly, some had not been. And I discovered a boy from Jamaica. He was about nineteen. We just would go from bed to bed and talk to them and he told me he came from Jamaica. I said, "So do I. Where are you from?" So, we exchanged addresses. [He] gave me his, I don't think he had a father, he spoke only of his mother, and he told us where she was. So when I got back to the States, my mother and I walked down there. His mother had a dry goods store on the main street in Jamaica. And I never heard from him again, but his mother, of course, felt better when I told her that he looked good, he was not shot up, that I could tell. But he looked very good. I mean, I can't go into the details of the war, because they didn't affect me personally as a war. It was just as a place where I worked, and I was doing what I could for the war effort.

CH: How about the hospital? I mean, can you talk a little about that?

CL: Well, it was a hospital. There were beds lined up. Some of the boys were very badly shot up. And they were so profuse in their thanks that we had come to visit them. We felt better when we left, because we gave them a little cheer, they didn't have to just look at each other. We

just spoke to them, asked them where they came from and that sort of thing. And we went every single week. We had a bus from our billet [that] would take us to the hospital and then pick us up at ten o'clock at night. And that was toward the end of the war, when they were coming back to England. A cousin of mine was with the 82nd Airborne. He was an officer and was in the southern part of France that they invaded; he was very badly hurt. And we had been in touch. I went down to see him, and, I shouldn't say this, but I will. He tried to arrange for me to stay for the weekend with the U.S. nurses, the Nursing Corps. But I was only a staff sergeant and they were officers, so they would not let me stay with them. But the Red Cross invited me to stay with them. It was in the same building, the same facilities, and the Red Cross girls said, "Oh, by all means you can stay. Lieutenant Bramson is your cousin? By all means."

CH: So what were your impressions? You just gave a story, but what was it like between the different ranks and the different realms of the service? Was that a very strong bond?

CL: Well, from officers to enlisted personnel, there was a barrier.

CH: Right.

CL: Some violated it. Some did not. But that was supposed to be, they loved the word "discipline." That was to maintain discipline. I never saw any officer that I wanted to date and I didn't bother. I had plenty of dates from the noncoms. They were wonderful to us. I'll go back to our first post in Florida. We were the first WACs to come to that base. When we came in, the boys were all lined up. They knew we were coming and they wanted to know what they could do for us. We had one desire, and that was for clotheslines. Those clotheslines went up so fast, it was wonderful. We all did our laundry. They were always trying to help us. There was one boy that was like a big brother to me. He was about five years my junior, and whenever I went to a dance in town, the towns usually held some kind of dance, I don't remember anything else, and I always knew that if I went into town alone, Larry would always bring me home. I could always rely on him. Bob Hope came over a couple of times, and all his jokes were aimed at the men. He could certainly see us there, which doesn't make me feel too kindly toward him. But all the jokes were on the risqué side. But they were jokes for men. There was nothing for us at all.

CH: So, you didn't find Bob Hope funny?

CL: No, I thought he was very offensive.

CH: Oh, okay.

LM: You mentioned that there were different religious services that could be attended. Did you attend any of the services.

CL: Every week. Every week. I do at home, and I did there. I saw no reason to stop. They had facilities. There wasn't a Jewish chaplain, but the Christian chaplain knew what to do and he was very helpful. Oddly enough, one soldier that I met in the States, I met again in London. He was filling in there, too. I can still remember his name, Carroll Miller. And since my name is Carol,

I expect a boy not to called Carol. But he was.

CH: So did religion also play a strong role in your family? When you were at home, was it a very ...

CL: Yes. If the snow was six inches high, my mother, father, brother and I were at services. We've always gone, and it's the same with us here.

LM: Did you keep a kosher household?

CL: Yes

LM: Were you able to keep kosher in the military?

CL: No. No, but that's incorporated in the law, too. During wartime, it's not expected that you can do what you can do in peacetime. I know [that] when I spent Rosh Hashanah, no, it was Passover, that's coming up now, I spent with a family in Manchester, and they gave me stuff to take back to camp so that I could have matzah and a couple of things. They were wonderful. The hospitality on the part of the British was outstanding. Of course, a lot of girls got husbands that way, too. And they were there, so it was there for them. But the people that I met always extended hospitality. One place I went in Manchester was a little town outside, but it was really considered part of Manchester. They sent one of their kids to somebody else so I could have her room when I stayed there for the weekend, which I thought was extremely considerate. I was able to get a suntan there. The sun doesn't shine too often in England.

CH: I can't imagine.

CL: That weekend was the Fourth of July weekend. They had this beautiful big yard with Lombardy poplars all around. Must have been a half an acre. And they had, do you know what cove lighting is?

LM: No.

CL: Well, against the wall, there's this thing that comes out and there's a light behind it. Not like this. But you know, it's like so. And the tubular lights are behind it. And these people in Manchester had that. And I said, "If I ever have a home of my own, I'm gonna have that."

CH: Did you eventually get it?

CL: I did. Two sides of the living room.

CH: What was a typical weekend like in England? You said that people were very hospitable, so would you be out with them? Were you required to stay at the base? Were you working on the weekends or were you given free time?

CL: No, no. I had free time. We sort of rotated, when you could go, who could go. And, I had spoken to them, they asked me if I was free that weekend and I said, "Yes." So, I came out. Just being in a home was a big change. You know, when in England, we're only two people to a room. In the States, you have a big room and all these beds lined up. There, it was beautiful home, nice meals, and a garden to sit out in. They had some kind of club, I can't remember what it was called, and a girl I met took me there, a country club sort of, you know. There wasn't too much activity during the war but they had it. And then, another time, when I was in London, I was taken to dinner, there was a movie at that time called *The Seventh Veil*. It may have had re-runs and ... there were scenes taken in that restaurant in the film.

----------END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE----------

CL: ... Service personnel would come, and they had music and not much else, but it was very nice. You know, anything away from a base was a change. So, that's what they had. But it was really home hospitality that I enjoyed, and I think the other people did, as well. I know my roommate met somebody down the street from us. You know, we were out of town, but there was still some houses along the way and she used to go there whenever she had time off. The people, she said, "It's just like my relatives. They were always doing something nice for me." Just spending time in somebody's home was nice. When I was still in the States, of course, I read *Stars and Stripes*, and the other magazine. One was a newspaper, the *Stars and Stripes* was a weekly, I think. At any rate, there was a letter in the newspaper from a boy in the South Pacific and he was griping, that's a choice word that's used in the Army a lot. And he said, "Oh, these, these girls in service had to give up all their pretty underwear and all that, while we're out in the South Pacific." And he says, "And I have a cousin who's in the WAC and all she talks about is the parties she goes to." So, I wrote and it got into the paper. I have it home. And I said to him, "She was trying to bolster your feelings. Did you want her to tell about the times it was so cold, we'd sleep with our clothes on?" and other things that I listed.

CH: What were the other hardships that you listed?

CL: You know, I don't remember now. To tell you the truth. I should have brought my book with me.

CH: That's okay.

CL: But you know, this is what we expected of an army. It wasn't going to be all kinds of wonderful things happening. I came to expect it. That was all. I had nice clothes at home. My uniform wasn't so pretty. I look terrible in brown. And that was the color of it. As you see, I don't wear brown. But, as I say, I wasn't too happy with the color of the uniform. So what? Everybody wore it. We all looked alike. Some were taller. Some were shorter. It really didn't matter. And I knew that someday I would wear clothes again. And one time, when I stayed with these friends of mine, outside of the town, Newton-le-Willows, very picturesque. It was a very sweet little town, about the size of Highland Park, but bigger, bigger houses and bigger grounds. When I went there, I went in civvy clothes, which was not allowed, but that's all right. I wasn't anyplace where anybody could see me. I was in the house. And we went out into the backyard

and the backyard, as I say, was half an acre at least. It was just so beautiful. And at night, we'd sit in front of the fire and talk and she always managed to have other people there. One time, she had a naval officer. One time she had a duchess from the south of England. So we would just talk about our lives and what was going on, and politics. It was, it was something that I never had expected and I never had anything like it since. I was friends with them until, some people don't like to write letters. I do. And one of their daughters, they have two daughters, one of them was going to McGill University, years later, of course. And she came to New York to see us, which was nice. Their parents came to see us when my son was about two. So that was [in the] early 1950s. They came over for a visit. And just seeing them, just being with people, I think was the best part. The fact that we were cold sometimes, that we didn't like the food, so what?

LM: About your uniform, I had a question. I know it was a lot colder in England than New York. Did your uniforms change when you went to England or did you get a new set of warmer uniforms?

CL: Well, we had so-called wool uniforms. I don't how woolish it was. We had two sets of uniforms in the States. We had cottons for this kind of weather, and then we had the wool ones for the winter. In England, we had only winter, only the woolen ones. And that Fourth of July weekend, when I got sunburnt, it was very warm and we didn't have the summer uniforms. So, it didn't matter. When I came home, oh, and then, before we came home, we got new uniforms. Eisenhower's design. You know, the Eisenhower jacket? Do you know anything about that? You've ever seen pictures? You have? Yeah, I liked that. That was pretty. I have some pictures of that. And when I got home, I had it dyed dark green. Unfortunately, it shrank, and I did not. So I got rid of it after a while. It was a shame. It was pretty.

LM: Was there a shoe shortage in England, with the uniforms? I heard something about that one.

CL: Well, the uniforms came from the States, not from England.

LM: Yeah, I mean, when you arrived in England, I heard that there was a shoe shortage.

CL: Among whom?

LM: That they were short on ...

CL: Civilians?

LM: Among the WACs. Among the American WACs.

CL: No.

LM: Oh, okay.

CL: When I first entered in March of '43, they were short of uniforms, everything. I think I did

not get shoes. That was in Florida. But they didn't have uniforms for me. And then, we had a picture taken when we finished our basic training and I borrowed a shirt from somebody who had a shirt, but when we finally left basic, we were completely fitted out. I was wearing a beautiful pale green bubble print dress, marching outside on the sand. Looked a little ridiculous, you know. We didn't get shoes until later. I was wearing, what do you call those shoes, saddle shoes, white with the brown saddle. That, with my bubble print dress. And then we did get shoes, and at the end of our five week basic, we got uniforms. Those uniforms were different. The skirts and the jackets were different colors and they were so unusual. The jacket was sort of a yellowish-green. It was darker than that towel. It was a warm green. And the skirt was a different shade of green. But before we went overseas, they took them away from us and we all had to wear these ugly brown things. But it was only the people who came in early that got these two-tone uniforms. That's why we didn't want to give them up. We had no choice. They were attractive.

CH: So, it sounds like you got a lot out of meeting different people from different places.

CL: [Yes].

CH: Was that just one of the experiences you really enjoyed?

CL: Yeah. That and the fact that I helped to win the war.

CH: Yeah.

CL: And you know, all those letters had to get out with reports of what we needed for this plane, of the new things that were invented in this country to be put onto the planes. And the ones in the warehouse would send requests in and my boss would go check it out and then he'd write a letter and say, "Well, tomorrow you're going to get X-Y-Z." So, I felt that I did my part. We would have liked more work. One of our complaints was that we weren't kept busy enough. But that's the way it is. If you're busy, you're busy. No place to go, anyhow. You might as well stay and do it. So, I thought it was a wonderful experience.

LM: How would you characterize your leaders, your officers, in terms of their competency?

CL: Well, my WAAC commanding officer in Florida was not very good. And after I left Burtonwood, I was told, because I kept in touch, I was told that she was taken out. We did not have good feelings toward her. The executive officer was a wonderful woman but the commanding officer was not. She was a Barnard graduate, so that pushed her to the top, but her leadership capabilities, we thought, were missing. The woman who was next in command was a wonderful woman. We loved her. She was always there if we had questions, if we had tears. She was there. So some officers are good. Some officers are not good. Life is like that.

CH: Is there anything else specifically that your commanding officer did or didn't do that …

CL: Yeah, she used to get drunk regularly. That was not a role model that we were going to

follow. Because I never saw any drinking among girls. So, to have your commanding officer do that just made us think less of her. I was in the field one day, the barracks were in a field. It was outside of town and, you realize I'm jumping from one town to another. Some places, we were near houses in England. But in the States, it was outside of the city and we had this big field that we had to walk across to get to our jobs. And I was in the field and I saw my commanding officer being carried by two male officers. I was very disillusioned. But then, on the other hand, the executive officer was so wonderful, we all thought she should have been the commanding officer. But it's like people anywhere, some are capable, some are not. Some do the right thing, some don't. So, for the most part, I think that my officers were good. I remember one when I was in basic. She was just great. When I asked for time off to go to services on Friday night, one of my sister soldiers complained. So the officer in charge said (Friday night was scrub night and we were all assigned chores.) She mentioned my name and she said, "Did all her chores. It was checked and everything is fine and she is free to go to services. And that's where she's going. She's not going out on a party." This girl never spoke to me for the rest of the time that we were in basic. Which was fine with me because I had nothing to say to her. But she was the only one who objected. And my top sergeant, as a matter-of-fact, I have a cartoon that I cut out of the *Herald Tribune*, which unfortunately is dead. After the war, you know, there were lots of cartoons, and you see this beautiful girl in a big hat going up to a top sergeant and she's scratching her face and she says, "I've been waiting all this time to do that." I wrote in to the cartoonist, and I said that I thought it was in very poor taste. I said, "Every top sergeant that I had was kind and considerate and looking for the welfare of the troops under her." That was in the paper, too. What's true is true. You don't put in a nasty cartoon like that.

CH: Right.

CL: Because it wasn't like that. We all had our jobs to do and the ones who were higher up tried to help those who were not higher up.

CH: So you felt there was a good dynamic amongst the fellow …

CL: I think so, yeah. I mean, we weren't friends with her because we were privates and she was a six-striper. But if you needed help, you went to her and said, "I don't know …" whatever it was. And she said, "Well, I'll check it out and I'll see what I can do." She didn't say, "Go away, don't bother me." She was good about it. And wherever I went, I found that. It was the rare one who was unpleasant and unfriendly. For the most part, I saved all of my letters. My mother saved all of my letters. And, I have them and I re-live the experiences.

CH: So you wrote home a lot?

CL: Everyday.

LM: Did your family write to you?

CL: Yeah. Sometimes, I would get thirty letters at a time.

CH: And so who else were you writing to, or was it because the mail ...

CL: Oh, all of the people that I knew.

CH: … was backed up.

CL: No, not necessarily. It [would] sometimes, I'd get three letters from my mother and from my brother and then from my friends. I was working before I went into service, so a lot of the people that I knew were also in service. I got letters from them. And this was not only when we had free mailing, but before that, too, I used to write. You know, when you're far from home, everybody's homesick. And this is the only way to counter it, to be in touch with people you know. So I kept up with everybody at home. All my relatives wrote to me. They were so proud that they had a "soldier girl" in the family.

LM: You mentioned that the cartoon presented a somewhat negative image of the WACS.

CL: Oh, yeah.

LM: How did you feel about the public's perception of women in the Army during World War II? What did you think of that?

CL: Well, whatever I saw was positive, and that's why that [cartoon] was so negative, as you said. It really did not suit the circumstances, at all. I don't know anybody who would have done that to a sergeant, because it was uncalled for. She never did anything that would warrant that kind of action. As far as I can remember, as I told you, this friend of mine, whose fiftieth wedding anniversary we went to a couple of months ago, was in the next bed to me. She always looked out for me. I always looked out for her. The one on the other side wasn't as close, but it was the same thing. We were all in the Army together. We gave up our jobs, we gave up our homes, because we wanted to see the war over. So we all helped each other. Mary and I were as close as two sisters. I have no sister, she did. But you know, if I wanted to pick somebody to be my sister, it would be she. And we always looked out for each other. When one of us was on KP, and you'd finish your chores about three in the morning, we'd always get some fruit to take back. I always shared it with her. So our relationship was very fine. And it was same thing when I was in England. It was a much smaller contingent. I met a girl when we were still in the States, in Fort Oglethorpe, before we went overseas, and I met her in London. She was two buildings down. I kept up with her for a while. Then I think she moved to Florida and I stopped hearing from her. But we wanted to be together, you know. She came from someplace in North Jersey and I was still living in New York. But we did get together. And then after I was married, we went out there, she had a little girl that we went to see. You know, it was like one big happy family. Whether the men had the same kind of relationship, I don't know. I know my brother corresponded with several people. As a matter-of-fact, his dentist was somebody that he had met in the Army. So it was the kind of thing that, it's a war that should bring you together and not tear you apart, as that cartoon did. Awful.

LM: So the women were very close in the Army?

CL: I think, for the most part, yeah. There was one group that came in when I was stationed out west in Kearney, Nebraska. About fifteen girls, women, ‘cause some were not as young, came in together. They were all schoolteachers, and they came from different parts of the country, but the Army seemed to want schoolteachers. I don't know. They didn't teach in the Army. There was one from New Orleans, Thibbidau her name was. I can't remember her first name but we always called her Tibby. Then there was another one from Texas. She was a big husky woman. She was an older one. Then there was another one whose name I don't remember. But, also a teacher. My mother sent, oh, that was another thing, we always shared packages. My mother sent me a big honey cake and she always put a little liquor in it that's supposed to burn off with the heat, anyhow. But I think her hand slipped and it was a terrific cake. And I cut it all up and Alice, this woman who was a teacher from out west someplace, had a piece, and she was dancing around with her fingers like this. We were hysterical. I wrote home and I said, "Mom, what did you put into that cake?" because Alice was really having a great time. But we always had these little parties. If somebody got a package, everybody knew it right away and everybody was invited in to share.

CH: So what would you do? You would eat the contents together and ...

CL: Yeah, yeah. We, well, we had this space heater and we'd heat some water on it. Somebody always managed to find a pot to heat water and we'd have a little party with whatever came in. So we shared as much as we could.

LM: So what was morale like among the women? Would you characterize it as good or ...

CL: Well, I would say [yes] for the most part. Some people couldn't take the separation from their families. But I thought that was rare. Most of them that I came in contact with had an education, so they had their books that they read. We usually had a library available. And we'd go out together. There were dances in town from time to time. There was a bus from camp that would take us into the town. So we'd always fill it up with all the people. "You're going into town tonight? Let's go." So we'd have a full bus. The one thing I didn't like was in Florida, when we took a bus into town and we were told, "Don't try to change the customs of where you are." In my company, we were from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut, we were all northern New Yorkers, more or less. And we go to Florida, I hope it's different today, but there was a great deal of prejudice. And I remember going in, there weren't many places to go in Hendricks Field. It was in the middle of the town, I think, they had a restaurant. That was our big going out. We took the bus and all the troops were lined up. There was one black soldier. He was the neatest of everybody that was there. His uniform was pressed with the lines in the slacks. He was just so clean and neat looking. And the driver, who was not so clean and neat looking, said, "You, Shine, you wait ‘till everybody gets on." I wanted to have a fight with him. The boy I was with said, "Carol, please. You know what we were told." But it made me very unhappy. This boy was in the Army. The guy driving the bus was not in the Army and he had the gall to use language and manner like that to this soldier.

CH: Were there any other instances where you saw prejudice, whether it be against blacks, or

against women, or against ...

CL: That was it.

CH: Or anti-Semitism.

CL: That was, well, this woman that I said, in basic training, when I wanted to take off Friday nights to go to services. She just made some remark, offensive, and she was put in her place and she never said another word.

CH: She made an anti-Semitic remark?

CL: Yeah. The woman in the next bed to me, in basic, was the wife of a lieutenant colonel and she said, "You want to go to services? I'll scrub your area. I'll take your chores." I said, "Thank you, no. I appreciate your offer, but I can get it done in time." We didn't have that much to do. You had to scrub your area, which was not much. A little bit on each side of your bed. We had a little closet to put our underwear in and a rack to put [in] our second uniform. And then, one of us always pulled, if not more, maybe two, we pulled latrine duty. So you had to scrub the johns and you'd scrub the sink and wash the floor. No big deal. And I said to her, "I can get all that done in half an hour." Plenty of time. We got back from work about, it wasn't work, it was classes, we got back around five o'clock. I didn't have to go to services until eight. It was about a ten minute bus trip. So I had ample time to shower and get into clean clothes and go. But this one girl, I can still see her, said, "Why should she be able to get off the time?" And she was told, "Because she is going to get all her chores done before she goes." And that was the only instance that I ever came across. For the most part, there was no problem at all. I hope it was like that on other bases. I have no way of knowing. But I was in several places. I was in one, two, three, four, five, six, I was at six bases here and overseas. I never encountered anything except that woman. Everybody tried to be helpful.

LM: Did you ever meet any black women in the Army?

CL: Yeah. They were in separate units and I would say hello. That was the only connection that I had because I didn't know them. They were in mail units, M-A-I-L, so they would get the mail through to us. But we had very little direct contact with them. And now, it's an integrated army. But at that time, I thought it was so terrible. They had the worst location. They had the worst jobs. And I thought it was terribly unfair. It was their war, too. And ultimately, thank goodness, they did change it.

CH: What was your neighborhood like when you grew up? Was it ...

CL: It was a mixed neighborhood.

CH: It was?

CL: Yeah, if you know anything about geography in New York, Jamaica was the largest,

probably is now, too, the largest community in the borough of Queens. Queens is the largest borough in the city of New York. And on our block, there were twenty-three houses. It had been a farm and it was converted to six room houses. And they were mixed. They were Catholic and Protestant and Jewish. Some had children, some did not. Some had grown children. It was very mixed. And the ones who were our age, my brother and I played with, and the older ones, we didn't have anything in common with. But I know, we had friends, as I think of it, who used to come into our house all the time. And, of course, my mother always said, "You can bring your friends here. This is where they belong." One time, we had a Chinese kid. There was a black boy who used to walk me home from school with his violin case. His parents were teachers, he told me. He didn't come to my house. He just used to walk me home. But we had about five or six kids, some were Jewish, some were not, who used to come to our house all the time. No problem. And as a matter-of-fact, my brother kept up with them 'till he died. And I didn't, because I was living here and they were living there. They never left Jamaica. My brother used to see them. And he was a lawyer, so sometimes he did some legal work for them.

LM: In terms of discrimination in the Army, I know that homosexuality is not accepted. What was it like then? I mean ...

CL: Well ...

LM: Was it an issue?

CL: I found out the hard way, that one of my officers was a lesbian. I never had any direct problem with that. But a girl that I knew, who was at the base that this woman was also stationed before she became an officer, told me that Lieutenant whatever-her-name-was was caught in bed with another girl. And why she wasn't removed from the Army, because that was the rule at that time, I don't know. But she was not very pleasant. I mean, I could never warm up to her, not knowing that there was anything different about her, but somebody told me about it. And then there was another girl, one of our level, I don't know if she was a corporal or sergeant, I don't recall, who also had been found in bed by the Charge of Quarters. But I never had any personal contacts with any of them. So I had no problem

LM: Was pregnancy an issue?

CL: I knew of one girl who got pregnant. And then, an officer I knew, but she was married. And she had seen her husband and he had a leave. He was stationed in Europe and she was in England and they got together and she was going back on the same boat with me. I wanted to go back to London to see somebody, so I went to her and I said, "Lieutenant, I have a friend in London who's getting married." And I enlarged on it a little bit, I said, "And I'm supposed to be part of the wedding party." I mean, most of it was true. I was not part of the wedding party, but I wanted to go back and I knew that she would be touched by that. She wrote out a pass for me for the two days. It was good.

CH: And what were you going back for?

CL: To go to somebody's wedding. That's why I said most of it was true. I wasn't part of the wedding party. I was going with somebody, and it was his friend, another Canadian boy, who was marrying an English girl. The two of them were in uniform. It was a very brief ceremony. And very touching, 'cause everybody there was in uniform, and I wanted to get back there. Being up in Stone was no fun. So she gave me that pass for two days. It was good.

LM: What was discipline like? Was it fair or ...

CL: I didn't notice anything much about discipline. We just acted normally and, I have no recollection of any kind of infractions of the rules. We all wanted to get on and get the war over with, and we had bed check at various times, depending upon where we were. But I think midnight was bed check, and if somebody was missing, then the CQ, Charge of Quarters, would report it to the office and I don't know what happened. I was always in on time so, you know, it didn't hit me personally. But we did have people checking the grounds to make sure there were no shenanigans. But we were watched to make sure that we were okay, not that we were going to do something wrong, but that something might happen to us. Maybe I sound like Pollyanna. But I really felt that it was a very fair Army.

LM: Could you describe a typical day of yours.

CL: I would get up and shower. Sometimes the water was hot, sometimes it was cold. That was one of our big problems. We didn't have enough hot water for laundry. And we'd just, you know, rub-a-dub. And get dressed, go down to the mess hall, which was about a block away, if you could relate the Army post to here. We'd have breakfast, come back and get on the, well, depending where I was, some places, we had to take a bus to where the office was, that's when I was in England. In the States, our offices were fairly near where we lived. When I was out West, in Kearney, the winter was terrible. We'd walk across the fields, empty fields, and the snow and the wind would blow. A lot of kids got sick. And I found out about elixir turpin hydrate which some people used to get a high. But it tasted awful to me, put me to sleep. I know I was in the office one time and suddenly, I was asleep, and I realized I had this terrible cold. Some of the kids wound up in the hospital. But they looked after us. We had all the help you could get. They had doctors and they had dentists and they had whatever facilities anybody would have. So they took care of us.

LM: So the medical facilities were good?

CL: Oh, yeah. I remember going to the dentist. Well, we had to go to the dentist twice a year and I went to the dentist and he said, "You know, I don't like the way that looks up there." So I said, "Well, can you fix it?" And he said, "Yes. I don't know how long it will last." Well, I now have a bridge with two missing teeth as a result of that. So I said, "You know, I have the feeling the reason that my teeth are like this is that I'm not getting enough vitamin C." That was in the afternoon, 'cause I had taken time off from work to go see the dentist. The next day, and every meal after that, you know these number ten cans, orange juice, grapefruit juice, grape juice, every meal had that on the table. So, he listened. He took care of it. That was the only bad part. I lost these two teeth.

CH: In your typical day, what kinds of things did you do when you were in your room? Would you ever like play cards or would you just talk or were there any kind of little social things that went on on a daily basis?

CL: Well, we'd talk. We'd talk about what we did before we came in. We would read, because we had letters to read and write. We had the magazine, which I've forgotten the name of now. *Yank Magazine*, and then the newspaper that came out everyday. I tried to read that everyday because it would keep us up on where the war was going. In the office, I had a big map, bigger than this space and I used pins to show wherever our army was going, and where the Russian army was, and where the German army was. So I used to keep that up in the office, among other things. But, in our rooms, if the weather was poor, we'd stay in, but we didn't stay in much. That's why I say, we had letters to read and write, we had reading, we had a library of sorts and I liked to read. And that's what we would do. And I told you, we'd visit the hospital, that's when we were overseas. We'd visit the hospital, and the kids were coming back from overseas, from Europe. And the days went by for, well, my total overseas was a year and four months and a couple of weeks. I used to know the days, too. But I let that go.

LM: In terms of both being a secretary and being in England, did you decide this is what you wanted to do or were you just assigned to do these things and to do them in England?

CL: Oh, well, I wanted to go to England because I had never been there and I used to read English books when I was a kid. So that was one of my dreams, to get to England. We've been back a couple of times. But when I applied to the Army, I had to put down my credentials, and I was a secretary in private life. So I was interviewed and when I was assigned, I was assigned to somebody who needed a secretary.

LM: Okay.

CL: That's what I did all the time I was in the Army. It was interesting.

CH: What types of things did other women do?

CL: Truck drivers. Just trying to think of what my roommate did, some type of clerical job, I'm not certain. Some of them worked on airplanes, mechanical jobs.

CH: So they were mechanics?

CL: Yes. They were taught in the Army how to be mechanics. There were cooks and bakers. In England, we didn't have that. We had British help. In the States, we had cooks and bakers. There was a regular school for cooks and bakers, and when they came out, they were assigned to various posts. What else did they do? I know, one time, we were sorting mail because they didn't know what they were gonna do with us. It was between assignments and there were technical jobs like tracking planes, I can't remember exactly, oh, there were phone operators. One of my Army friends was a phone operator and she was transferred to France while Germany

was still there. And they lived out of helmets with water. They didn't get to take baths and showers as we did. For them, life was very rough. Mary Solt, S-O-L-T, she was great and she came back to London when she was on furlough, to look me up and to see London, too. When we went over together, we met in Fort Oglethorpe. We went over and she was transferred to a different place from me, but then she came back and told us what she had seen in Paris. When I went to Paris, everything was nice and quiet, the war was over, but when she was there, they were dodging bullets aplenty. She said the living conditions were very bad. But she was a phone operator and that was the lifeline, to say what's going on where, and there were several women who were in communications, as they called it. I can't remember all the different kinds of jobs, but I know one girl was killed in England. She was a truck driver and she hit a cement post. Metuchen has them, after all these years, they still have them, they come to a point and they're cement and they're along the street. They were in one of the areas that we were settled in. She was driving, and I don't know how it happened, but she hit that and she was knocked out, they didn't have seatbelts and she was killed. It was terrible. But whatever kind of job there was, the girls had them.

CH: You mentioned that sometimes there was a lull, that they couldn't keep you busy. So what kind of impression did that give you about efficiency and how did that make you feel and what were some of the reasons, you think, that they didn't have enough work for you?

CL: Well, in a war, as in other things, business doesn't continue at the same pace, so if the fighting had slowed down a little bit, I guess they didn't have need for what was going on when the war was going more rapidly. And when I was overseas, though, in fact, I was kept busy most of the time. It was in the States, it wasn't.

CH: During training?

CL: Yeah.

CH: Did you feel that training prepared you for what you were going to be doing ...

CL: Well, I was a secretary. I didn't get any training in the Army to teach me how to be a secretary. They did have courses, but I wasn't sent to one. That was for people who didn't have training in the States. I went to a very good secretarial school and I guess the Army felt that I didn't need any additional training for that. If I wanted some other kind of job, I guess I could have asked for it. But it was a variety of jobs and I had what I was trained to do. I would not have wanted to be a cook or a baker. I do that in my own time at home. But I enjoyed being a secretary because I knew what was going on. You know, I would always see that. And it was a different way of writing. They had what they called indorsements, I-N-D, not E-N-D. Indorsements. When you start out, you write a letter, from, to, and you have your message and there were several copies. I don't remember any more, how many. When it reaches the person who's getting it, he gets an original, the one I'm sending out, plus at least two copies. When he sends that message, he puts his indorsement on it and he replies to what my colonel had written. Then, if he wants to send it back to us, he would put "First Indorsement" on it. That was his reply to the original letter. And this can go back and forth half a dozen times, up until six

indorsements, but you always have your carbon copies, so you have the whole thing, all the time. You have the whole story together. I found that was very interesting, as it was a different way of doing things from civilian life. Saves on paper, too, because you had everything consolidated on one page or two pages, depending on how long the correspondence was. So, that was very interesting. I think the most interesting part was meeting people that I never would have met. And the geography. You know the story in the *New Yorker* magazine, a New Yorker's idea of America. Did you ever see that?

CH: No, I'm not familiar with that.

CL: Oh, classic. The whole *New Yorker* magazine cover shows the outline of the US, and from the Atlantic to three-quarters, at least, across, it's New York. The rest of the country is in this little isolated spot. I learned that it wasn't so. There are other states besides New York, 'cause I passed through them. It was a great education. It was fascinating, really.

CH: What parts of the country did you see and what were you impressions of them?

CL: When I first went in, we left New York, traveled by railroad to Florida, to Daytona Beach. Twenty-four hours. I didn't sleep much. I wanted to see what I was missing. And it was sad, because you passed these little cracker barrels that passed for houses, especially in the Carolinas. It was awful. I know it's changed today, but it was awful. And then, you'd come to Daytona Beach and they had stores, supermarkets, not as big as today, but they had stores just like back in New York, but the town is a lot smaller. And then when I went out to Nebraska, [I] passed through Kansas and Missouri, Missouri and Kansas, and I saw [that] the country is really big. It isn't all New York. So, that was interesting. I liked that. Most of us in my basic class, I guess you'd call it, wanted to go to California. We were waiting there with baited breath to get our assignments and there were one or two girls who went to a very large base in California. I don't remember the name anymore, and I went to Florida. But I managed. I wasn't too thrilled with Florida, but I tell you, Sebring was nothing, but Daytona Beach was gorgeous. I would like to get back there to see what it looks like today. There's a place that I went to in England when the war, when V-E Day was over and I was able to get a pass for a week. I went down to Torquay. If you ever get a chance to go to England, go to Torquay. It's in the southern part, on the water, and it smells like flowers, just like Florida, when I was stationed in Daytona Beach. It's just like a make-believe town. They still had blackout curtains up, 'cause May 7th, I believe, was V-E Day, so they hadn't taken all these things off yet, because they still had V-J Day going on in the other end of the world. You know the song "Red Sails in the Sunset"? They still play that once in a while. That came out of Torquay. And when I looked out at the water, I saw these sailboats with red sails.

CH: Oh, really?

CL: It was just lovely. There was an officers club on the top of the mount there, the hill, and there were steps cut out of stone.

----------END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE----------

CH: So, but you were allowed to go to the Officers Club ...

CL: Only that one instance, because the war was just over.

CH: Oh, okay.

CL: And it was opened up to every person in uniform, the only time. Now, when I went to Scotland for a week, I had signed up for a bed and breakfast, so when I was in the Red Cross there, 'cause they took care of things like that, I was getting my assignment from this woman. It was walking distance, and I see this guy coming along, he was a twin. I knew his twin brother better than I knew him, so, of course, I said his brother's name. And as soon as the words were out he said, "No, I'm Alex." I said, "Oh, of course. I know it's Alex." Alex was taller than Bob. You never know whom you're going to meet when you travel around like that. We took the train across from Edinburgh to Glasgow. And Edinburgh's a beautiful city. They tell you it's the most beautiful city in the world, but it really isn't. It's very lovely. We went across to Glasgow, and then it was time to take the return trip. Of course, it was getting late and we weren't allowed to be out after dark. The war was still on then. But, you know, you look out of the train and you see what the surroundings are. But Edinburgh was very beautiful. They have a memorial to Walter Scott, Sir Walter Scott. There's a big clock, about so big, a flower clock with flowers in the background and the hands of the clock have flowers on them. They have some in this country, too, now. The weather was beastly. And somebody invited me to a party. Because they had a Red Cross Club, you'd go there, you'd see other people in uniform, "How would you like to go to a party tonight?" "Fine." You know, you did. And Princes Street is the main street. There were just shops. And it was very peaceful there. You didn't see many uniforms in Scotland. I thought they were all in England or abroad.

LM: At the end of the war, civilian women were coming over and wearing a similar uniform to the WACs?

CL: No. Not to my knowledge.

LM: Oh, okay, I thought ...

CL: No, during the war, there were a lot of civilians hanging around, you know. And I have very uncomplimentary things about them, so I won't say anything. Particularly since they didn't allow us to bring our own allies into the various clubs. But civilian girls used to hang around, even where they weren't supposed to. They never wore our uniforms. What we had to give up when we left were our sweaters, pieces of our equipment, our clothing equipment, that didn't show. Not our overcoats or our suits, but underwear, we had to turn in practically all of it. I don't know to whom or why. We earned it. I don't know why we couldn't keep it. And I loved my overcoat. It was very tailored and it was warm. That was the important thing.

There was a civilian in one of my offices. And she had never met any Americans, aside from the men. I was the first American she had met. And I was the first Jewish person she met. She said

she had gone to a party, and she comes back to me, "I'd gone to a party and there were all kinds of soldiers there, even Jewish ones." So I said, "What do you mean by that?" Because she didn't know what I was yet. She was new in the office. I don't know what they needed her for. We had enough troops there. She said, "Well, you know, he was Jewish." I said, "Well? What about it?" She didn't have any answer. All she knew was that he was Jewish. So I said, "Would it surprise you to learn that so am I? "Oh, you are?" I said, "Yes." I said, "We're people like other people. We just believe in a different kind of religion." "Oh." She was nice to me after that. She was nice to me before that. But that conversation sort of irked me. I said, "You know, that Jewish boy was wearing the same uniform as the other people at that party that you attended." I said, "He gave up something when he went into the Army, just as the others did." I said, "What do you expect him to be?" Well, she really didn't know. But it was obviously inbred, somehow. You know, the fear of the unknown or something. And after that, she learned. I'm glad I was able to tell her. But it was a very shocking thing for me to hear her say that.

CH: So, I guess you didn't experience that kind of ...

CL: No.

CH: … Situation at home or before that. Was that the first time you had that kind of a situation?

CL: Where she lived, Newton-le-Willows, I had friends. It's a very small town, probably about as big as Highland Park. And she didn't mix with everybody there. She didn't know that my friends were Jewish, 'cause she'd never met them. She'd have no occasion to meet these people. So the only ones she knew were the ones on her street, probably. And unfortunately, there are some people who make up stories because they have nothing better to do with their time. But I guess she found out that she was mistaken. And she probably apologized, "Oh, I didn't mean you." And that's the famous apology. So I said, "You can mean me, because I'm Jewish." And she was fine after that. We got on very well. I just never could understand why she was there in the first place. There were enough of us in the office that we didn't need a civilian too. As a matter-of-fact, we called them "feather merchants."

CH: Why's that?

CL: I don't know. There was a book called *The Feather Merchants*, which I think I finally got rid of when we moved from an eight room house to a small apartment. Max Shulman was a humorist-writer. And I don't know how he used that term, whether the civilian workers got the name from his book or vice versa. I really don't know. The book was very funny, that's why I kept it for so many years. And we called them feather merchants because they were light, I guess. They didn't have any heavy jobs to do. They just filled in. In the meantime they had a cushy job because they worked in the Army and had an opportunity to meet a lot of men.

CH: So, it sounds like you have a certain attitude toward the civilians. Are you trying to say ...

CL: Right.

CH: ... that they were there to meet the men? Is that why they were there?

CL: Yes. That's what most of them thought.

CH: Most of them thought, as in the ...

CL: Our.

CH: Your.

CL: Most of the girls in uniform resented the civilian girls, and I have a friend, the one that I said left the WAAC to go into the Red Cross, wrote me a letter when she was stationed in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. She was working in the office and there was a civilian in the office, too. And she said that this girl did very little work. She said her job mainly seemed to be to flirt with the officers. I kept that letter, until maybe six months ago, when I mailed it to her. I said, "You probably don't remember you sent me this letter, but I kept it." And, oh, she was very happy to get it, 'cause she remembered the incident. And you know, the jobs were there. There was a women's army. Why did they bring in civilians? There was no reason for it. We came in. We gave up everything that we had. Some had more, some had less, but I had a comfortable house. I had a fairly decent job. But I gave it up because I thought it would help the war effort. Why did these girls do it? Because they wanted to meet the officers. We weren't allowed to meet the officers. I mean, we could meet them. We couldn't go out with them. They could go out with them.

CH: Did you want to?

CL: I said, I never found one that I wanted to go out with. But other people did. No, we didn't like feather merchants. But fortunately, we didn't have too much contact with them.

CH: You talked a bit about the few parties that you'd go to, whether they be, you know, in Daytona or in London. Could you maybe describe the scene at those parties? What ... kind of parties were they? What went on?

CL: Well, in London, we had the Balfour Club. We had this man who could play piano like an angel. So we'd sit and listen to him. Mostly, we talked. Everybody came from another place. There was my friend from London, my friend from South Africa, the boys came from a variety of places. We went boating up the Thames. It was a kind of entertainment.

CH: Was there dancing or drinking?

CL: Well, there must have been, but I can't remember. To me, it wasn't such a big deal to go to a dance. They had dances at the hospital when we went to see the injured soldiers. Of course, most of them were injured, so they would just sit around and listen to the music. But for the most part, our spare time was not running around. There would be, well, this boy that I said I felt was like an older brother for me even though he was considerably younger. There was a dance in

town. The town put it on. And there was music. They may have had refreshments, I don't know. But just getting away from camp, you know, it was a different atmosphere and meeting other people. It was pleasant. And then, try to get home. Sometimes the MPs took us home, 'cause they'd always be around. Sometimes the MPs would pick us up at the railroad station. They were always very obliging. I remember I came in from someplace at five in the morning, and I was wondering, "I can't walk the distance to camp," because it was about five miles out. And suddenly, a pair of MPs came along in a jeep and I said, "Can I get a ride out to camp?" "Yeah. Hop in, Sergeant."

CH: So ...

CL: It was very good.

CH: Were you in past your hours then or were you ...

CL: No.

CH: It was a weekend?

CL: It was five o'clock in the morning. I had a pass that went until eight in the morning. I had taken a bus or a train, I don't remember where I was, but I came back earlier than buses were running.

CH: Oh, okay.

CL: So, I got back in time to shower and change my clothes, have breakfast and go to work. It happened a couple of times. I remember in England that happened when I came back from Birmingham. I took the bus back from Birmingham. We were less restricted there. And somebody met me and I still had a day left on my pass. So we spent the day and I got back into my routine of getting ready to go to work early the next day. I hope I've given you some information that you've never had before.

LM: Definitely.

CL: Yeah?

LM: Your husband was in the military also. Did you meet him ...

CL: I met him ...

LM: While you were in the army?

CL: No, I met him later.

LM: You met him later?

CL: After. Let's see. We got married in '47, August. I met him the previous September. September of '46. So, we were both home from the Army about a year, at that time. I met him through relatives, who knew him and knew me. So we were fixed up, as the saying goes.

LM: Where had he been stationed?

CL: In France.

LM: Oh.

CL: And he knew French, because he was good in languages and he had taken French in high school and college, so he got on very well. My French left me. I was in Paris for three days. [I] couldn't think of how to say a "silk scarf." The girl I was with had been stationed in Paris and she couldn't think of it. So finally, I asked somebody, "How do you say silk?" I don't even remember who it was. And she said, "*Soie*." "Oh, yeah. And how do you say scarf?" That she didn't know. I wanted to buy it for my mother and I probably have it home now. Probably one of the things that I can't remember is where I bought it, and now, my memory is refreshed. The weather was bad. There were three the first time and the second batch had bad weather, so we were able to stay another day until the rain stopped. It was interesting. Well, I could take or leave Paris. But it was good to say, "Oh, I've been to Paris." I was in the Champs Elysees. They had the Arc of Triumph there. I walked around a little bit. They had giant policemen there, close to seven feet tall, and they all smelled from garlic.

CH: They were seven feet tall?

CL: Yeah, giants, the ones that I saw. Police. Because I walked up to this one. I wanted to send a package. I bought this silk scarf. I wanted to send it to my mother. I said "*Voy le post office*?" So he bends down to me, and I was only five-four in those days, now I'm five-three. And he's bending down from this great height and he said, "*Pardon*?" I said, "Letters?" And he directed me. It was right around the corner from where we were. And we went on the train. Oh, they're beautiful trains. Velvet cushions. But everybody smelled of garlic. Guess that keeps them healthy. Supposed to be a very good vegetable.

CH: I don't know.

LM: Were you sad to leave England at all?

CL: Yes. I cried all the way home. I did not want to leave England.

CH: Can you describe going home? I mean, a lot of people have memories of going back in the boats and then eventually being discharged or being welcomed back. And how was that for you?

CL: All right, I can tell you that. That's vivid. If I cry, you'll forgive me. We took the *Queen Mary* coming home and we had three deckers, triple deckers, so it was not very comfortable.

And I don't remember how long it took, but we came back to New York and there were Salvation Army people who had doughnuts and some kind of soft drink for us, marshmallows, things you couldn't get in the Army at that time. And then we went up along the Hudson. It was October, October 20, and all the trees were a magnificent color. There's a camp up there. I don't remember the name of it and, toward the end of October, you have a harvest moon, which is a big orange moon, and I was sitting on the steps of the barracks, looking at that moon and thinking, "I should not be here." But I was there. I couldn't change it and I was there. Oh, that's when we got rid of our winter uniforms and we got, I don't know, we got rid of something and I picked up a suitcase from some place to put in what little I had. I called home and I said, "I expect to be home tomorrow night." We got tickets for the train. We went to Grand Central Station, or Penn Station, and I took the subway back to my house. Of course, my mother and father were there. My brother was still in Saipan. And it must have been about five, six o'clock at night. I didn't have my keys. I just rang my bell and my mother came to the door. We were talking and my father went to sleep. My mother and I talked until the next morning. I wasn't the least bit tired. And I didn't want to be home.

CH: You were sad to be home?

CL: Yeah, 'cause I wanted to be in London. So, first couple of days, it took me a little while. Tried on my clothes, most of them didn't fit. And I kept my uniform on because that did fit. I did keep one uniform. That's what it was. We had two uniforms and I had to turn in one. And I went to New York and that's when I saw *The Seventh Veil*. It's a psychological drama. It was beautiful, magnificent music. I was wandering around Broadway, which I knew very well because I had worked on Broadway before I went in the Army. And there weren't too many people in uniform. And people looked at me differently because everybody else was, practically everybody else was in civvies, and I was wearing a uniform. Came home and I had to get a whole new outfit 'cause I couldn't wear a uniform forever. And that was October. I didn't do anything. I decided I was gonna go back to college and finish. I was there for the second semester, from January until May.

CH: This is in Queens or ...

CL: Yeah, Queens College. It was a ten minute bus ride from [home]. And I took, I don't know, three or four courses, and then, I knew that I had to have a certain English teacher, 'cause I was an English major, and I didn't want to have him and he's the only one who taught the course. One of the girls that I was friendly with told me that this man made all kinds of derogatory remarks about the WAC. I had to put him straight. So when I got out of one class, I went over to where his class was held and he was just coming in from wherever and I said, "I understand that you had some remarks to make about the women in the Army Corps." He said, "Yes." I said, "Well, I'm one of them. And I think that you don't know what you're talking about." I said, "Did you ever know any WAC?" And he said, "No." So I said, "Then what are you talking about?" And he says, "Excuse me, but I have a class to go to." I said, "So have I, but I'm taking time out to let you know that what you're talking about doesn't make any sense." And I left him. That was one of the reasons I didn't go back to school, but mainly, I saw the ad in the newspaper and I thought, "Oh, this should be an interesting job." And I took it. And it was not a smart move, but then, a

short time after that, I met my husband and that took care of that. So, there were people who were prejudiced, regardless of what the prejudice is, whether they know what they're talking about, it doesn't matter. But there are people who are bigoted and prejudiced, and he was one of them. I don't know what the basis was for what he had to say. But I was certainly not going to be one of his students. However, I got my degree in Rutgers, many years later.

CH: Right.

CL: 1978.

CH: Just asking you a couple of other things about the war ...

CL: Go right ahead.

CH: What was your attitude towards your role in the war versus the male role in the war?

CL: Well ...

CH: Were you happy with what you were doing or did you feel that you ...

CL: Yeah. Well, you know, a lot of people outside the Army thought that every soldier was on the front. Every soldier was not on the front. I don't know what the percentage was, but in my office, there were soldiers who were working in an office just as I was. You have to have the support troops for the people who are in actual battle. And the people that I met were very earnest in their work. They wanted to get the war over and get back to their real life. And we didn't have women soldiers who were soldiers, as we know them. We had, well, I told you, a variety of jobs. Mine was an office job, because that's what I was trained to do and I didn't ask to do anything else. So, I think that the men, maybe, weren't protected enough. Maybe the enemy was too strong. I don't know, but we lost too many people. And it's a shame. But so far as the role that we played, I think that every girl that I knew went in because she had a father in service, a brother in service, a boyfriend in service. I had a boyfriend in service and I had my brother in service. But mainly, I wanted our world safe for democracy as the ...

CH: Really?

CL: … As the books say. So I was trying to do what I could. That was all.

LM: You had a boyfriend in service while you were also in the service?

CL: Yeah, he went in first.

LM: Okay. Did you keep in touch with him ...

CL: While I was in service. Not since.

LM: Oh.

CL: He met somebody. That was all right.

CH: You mentioned where you were on V-E Day. Do you remember where you were on V-J Day?

CL: Yeah, I was in London. I have pictures of that, too, from the newspaper. Somebody came around, I don't know who it was, and woke us all. We were living in these beautiful buildings in London, of which there were many. My billet was the home of Lord van Sittart. It was a beautiful brownstone, magnificent. And there were about, I don't know, maybe ten or twelve girls living there. There were four of us in the apartment. It was a bedroom with built-in cabinets, and we shared the bathroom with the others on the floor. All along the main street where we were were troops. Some of the men had come back from the Continent, but mostly it was we, living in these houses, and somebody came along and said, "We won! V-J Day is here. Come on out." And all you did was throw on a robe, even though it was September. In London, it's cold most of the time. So, this huge mob is outside, at five o'clock in the morning, it was dark, and they're shooting off fireworks, the likes of which I have never seen. There was an American flag a mile wide, one of the fireworks!

CH: Wow.

CL: I mean, you see fireworks here for Fourth of July. It's nothing. I don't know who put these fireworks together, but they were magnificent. They showed things. You know, pictures of buildings, of people. How they did it, I don't know. And we were marching along and we'd come to, I don't know, one of the big squares, they have a lot of squares in London. It's a great place if you have the time and the money.

CH: I'm hoping to go next spring.

CL: Oh. It's a great city. And, so we're all marching down there and singing and talking and everything. That was V-J Day. And that was September 8th. They were talking about it from August 1st on, but it didn't really take place until September 8th.

CH: Yeah.

CL: And then, shortly thereafter I went home.

CH: And how about Pearl Harbor? Do you remember where you were?

CL: Yes, I remember that. I was home. We were in the kitchen having dinner. It was two o'clock in the afternoon. My brother was already in service. He was in Fort Belvoir, Virginia. And we had the radio on. My father and my brother were sports fans; my brother wasn't home, my father had the radio on in the next room and we heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Of course, the first thing we said was, "What's going to happen with Will?" Well, he was on

bivouac then. The whole company was out in the field someplace and they didn't know about it ‘till they got back to camp. And they were supposed to go overseas immediately. But his outfit did not go overseas immediately. He was transferred to New Orleans where he was training men to go overseas. And then ultimately, he went to Saipan, where he was for, I don't know, six months or so. No, more. No, he was in Belvoir, then he went to OCS, then he went to New Orleans. He stayed in New Orleans for some time, because it was a port of embarkation. He was training troops to go overseas, that's what it was. And after they all went, then he went to Saipan. So we were not very happy with that news, I can tell you. I can just see us sitting at the table in the kitchen. It was a big kitchen, about twice the size of this room, and we heard the news coming in from inside, ‘cause we had music on and we thought there was going to be a ballgame on soon. Instead of the ballgame, we heard, "Pearl Harbor's been bombed."

CH: What ball game was going to come on? Do you remember?

CL: No. I'm not that much of fan. I used to like to go to ballgames but I don't remember who or what.

LM: After you were married and had children, did you continue to work while you were raising your children?

CL: No. I went back to work later.

LM: Later.

CL: I worked for, I think a year or a year and a half after I was married. Then I had my two children two years apart. I stayed home until my son was in college and my daughter was a senior in high school, because tuition for two kids at the same time doesn't compare with today, of course, but then it was expensive, especially for us. So I went back to work and a friend of mine was working here and she said, "Why are you looking so far away? Why don't you just go to Rutgers? You can get a job there." And I got a job immediately. So I worked here until September of 1981.

CH: So you started in 1968, you said?

CL: Yeah, I don't remember when.

CH: Because I was curious to know what your impressions were during the ...

CL: '68, I started.

CH: Oh, so were you here during ...

CL: June '68.

CH: … The teach-ins and all the ...

CL: Oh, yeah.

CH: What were your memories of that era?

CL: It was unpleasant. And one of the boys, I remember him hanging out of Old Queens. Worked for us as a work-study student. And he didn't do much work and he didn't do much studying. And he was very wasteful and then he became, you know, a hot shot with the student uprising. I remember seeing him hanging out of Old Queens and I thought, "What is he doing up there?" I don't know what they were looking for. But anyhow, we stopped having him work in the office, and then a couple of months later he came back and he wanted to talk to my boss to see if he could come back as a work study. And the other woman in the office said, "Well, you could talk to Carol. She knows what the boss is doing." So he says, "No, I don't want to talk to her," because he knew how I felt about him. So he waited. He didn't come back, 'cause I spoke to the, I'm thinking colonel. Actually, he was a colonel in the army. He was in the South Pacific. Ultimately, he was the dean, but at that time, he wasn't. He was the head of the department, and I told him how this kid used to goof-off all the time. I said, "I don't know what you're having him here for. There are much more worthy students who need the work to pay their bills." So I said, "This kid was not doing anything." So he says, "Okay, when he comes back, tell him I said he's not to come back." We got rid of him. He was terrible. But it was very uncomfortable for us to see the way some of the kids acted. It was only a few. They didn't have too much. It wasn't like at Columbia. That was awful.

CH: Do you feel that the war really tore apart the campus or that it was just part of the college ...

CL: Yeah, the war was over by then. I mean, this was in '68. Yeah, that's when I started here. I don't know what was going on here during the war, 'cause I was elsewhere occupied.

CH: Yeah. Well, what was the job? Just to kind of to go through your work history. What was the job that you took when you came back from London and you saw the ad in the paper and you left school? What job was that?

CL: Oh, it was for, also secretarial. It was in Standard Brands. The man I went to work for was a wonderful man. He knew I hadn't been typing for at least six months. He says, "You can write anything you want when I don't have anything for you to do." So I brought in my letters, my Army letters, and I started to copy them. I showed them to him. He says, "Oh, that's very interesting." He had not been in the Army. And he was very helpful. Made me comfortable and adjust to civilian life. And it was nice there. I enjoyed working up on Madison Avenue and 57th, nice part of the city. And I worked there for a year. When I got married, I continued to work for another year. Then I decided it was time for me to have a baby. So, that's when I quit. And, as I say, I didn't go back to work until my daughter was in high school and my son was in college.

CH: And how was that transition from the military to the civilian life?

CL: It was okay. I had no objection. Once I got used to the idea that I wasn't going to go back to

London, then I adjusted easily. And, as I said, New York was not the same New York that I left. The upper part with 57th and Madison, that was nice. But Broadway and 42nd Street, that was not for me. I rarely went into New York after that. Just to go to work and come home. My husband worked out here, and it used to take me less time to get to work than it took him. Because I would take the train, we were living in Metuchen then. I would walk to the train, which took me about five minutes. The train dropped me off at 42nd Street. I took the subway up to 57th. So it was nothing at all. He used to get a ride from somebody, from Metuchen through Highland Park into Squibb, which was practically in North Brunswick. And I used to make it faster.

LM: What did your husband do there?

CL: He's a microbiologist. He was the head of his section. He tried to get a job in New York, but there was very little available. And then somebody he knew, knew about this job. You know, networking is a wonderful thing. So he came out, and this man was very nice, understood that my husband had been in the Army [for] four and a half years, but he did have the proper education for it. Matter-of-fact, when he was in the Army, he worked in whatever unit it is that does blood testing and that sort of thing. So he kept up his skills and he went to work at Squibb.

CH: What were your impressions of Rutgers? You came back as a student and went to University College? Is that right?

CL: I didn't come back as a student. When I was working here, my boss said to me, "Why don't you finish your degree?" So that was '68, ‘cause I remember going to somebody's wedding. I was supposed to start on a Wednesday and I said, "I can't start on Wednesday. I'm going to a wedding tonight." It poured, so I started Thursday morning. It was in June. I had a temporary job in [the] philosophy [department] ‘cause the secretary was going on vacation. It was an eight day job. She came back. I went to personnel and I got the job with community services. And I worked there for a number of years. And then the opening came in the Office of the Dean of Continuing Education. And I got it, so I was his secretary.

CH: And how long did it take you to finish up classes? And what were your impressions of the students? Because you were a little bit older.

CL: Well, I was probably the oldest of the students. But all the students in University College are real students. They don't fool around. They work during the day and they want to get a degree. And they're all very diligent. I learned things that I could have lived without, ‘cause I wasn't interested in sociology. That was the first course I took. And the next course I took, I went to the registrar and I said, "I didn't like sociology. Give me something else." So we figured, well, "Your kind of work in community services, you're probably very good for business and that sort of thing." "Okay." So I took a management course. I didn't like that either. Then I decided [that] I was going to decide what I was going to have. And I said, "I'm an English major. Don't give me that stuff. I want English." So they had to go through my records, and they found that, of the two years of English that I had before, from Brooklyn College, and I didn't take

English at Queens, ‘cause I was there one semester and that was all, I said, "I would like to see what my previous credits will give me." Well, it seems that the two years that I had gave me six months' credit. But they gave me blanket credit for the other three terms. I said, "That's all right." And I took three more courses, which I loved. I had wonderful teachers. I learned a lot. I took eighteen credits in Hebraic Studies, which I loved, and what else did I take? I think that's all I took, ‘cause everything else I had taken before. I got the education, I got the diploma for my mother. Unfortunately, she died a week before I graduated. But she knew it. I called her and she was in Florida. I said, "I was just told that everything is going through and I will graduate at the end of the May." So she was pleased. But she couldn't make the trip, unfortunately. My brother came and, I guess, my kids were here, but I'm not sure. They must have been. But it was a matter of satisfaction for my mother. She said, "Here, your brother's a lawyer and you have two and a half years toward your degree. Why don't you finish?" So, you know Dave Cayer? He used to be vice-president here. I worked with him. And he used to get at me every single day, "Carol, when are you gonna go back? Finish your degree." So I did. He pushed me. I'm glad he did, because I really didn't care. But then my mother kept saying, "Get your degree." So I got my degree.

LM: What are the biggest differences, in your mind, between the time when you first attended college ...

CL: Oh, way back when?

LM: Yeah, way back when.

CL: Well, going to a city school is different from going here, because this isn't really a city school. It's away from town. I went on a subway everyday to go to classes. And it's not what I [expected]. You know, there are girls' books that you read that tell you about [how] Marjorie Dean goes to college and she lives in this lovely bucolic area. That's not where I went. Brooklyn College was in the heart of downtown Brooklyn, where, you know, there are all kinds of businesses. I went to class in one of the skyscrapers of downtown Brooklyn, must have been twenty-some odd stories. That's not what I wanted in college. And here, I went after a full day's work, keeping up my house. I stopped being active in organizations. It took me seven and a half years to get my degree. It was a hard pull. And a lot of the people in my classes had the same experience. They felt they wanted the education they would get, the degree would help them in their careers, and there was no fooling around at all. You came to class and you did your assignments. So, it was a different kind of college life. But now when you fill out forms, you put your husband's name down and his education, you put your name down, you put your education. College graduates, all through the family. Wonderful. My son has a master's, my daughter has three bachelor's degrees.

CH: So do you feel it helped your career or did it help you to ...

CL: No. Didn't help me one bit. I enjoyed being on campus, though. When I came up here today, I felt so good. I love the way the buildings look, when there are new buildings that I hadn't seen before. And then Scott Hall, I see, has a new addition. And I like to go along College

Avenue.

LM: You mentioned that your mother was very proud that you were going to get your degree. When you originally went to college, was your family supportive of you going to college?

CL: Oh, yes.

LM: Were they anticipating you going?

CL: Oh, yes. My mother came from a large family. There were nine children. My mother, I thought, was the brightest. But, you see, in those days, it was the boys who went to school. She had one brother who was very bright. My mother had to leave high school and go to work so that her brother could become a lawyer. My mother was much more suited to be a lawyer than he was. I mean, he was a good lawyer. He made a lot of money and had a nice family. But my mother should have had it, too. And I guess, you know, parents frequently project their wishes for their children. And I guess that's what it was. My mother wanted to see me with a degree and go on, be something. I was once going to be a French teacher, and I was going to be a Home Economics teacher. None of that happened, but I don't care. I got the education, which I enjoyed, and I think it widened my world, but it wasn't the same as the kids that I know. They go out to Michigan or Indiana. You know, it's different kind of life. I didn't have that. I got it out of books instead. You know, this one went to this little college in Maine and this one went to … Okay, I'll live vicariously.

CH: How do you feel about the way World War II was portrayed in film and literature? And either the war itself or the role that women had in the war.

CL: Well, I remember *Private Benjamin*, which I thought was a farce. I kept saying to my husband, "This is not my army." Did you see *Private Benjamin*?

CH: I didn't. [I] missed it.

CL: Don't see it.

CH: Don't see it? Well, what did *Private Benjamin* misrepresent?

CL: Well, she goes from one bed to another bed. She's a little tramp. I'm sorry, I could not go along with that. It was very funny, but as an ex-WAC, I did not like that. I thought it was terrible. That's the only story that I can remember in which a WAC was portrayed. And it was not true. I mean, after all, I was in almost two and a half years. I met a lot of women. I can't remember anybody being like that. Except this one girl who was very sweet and quiet and somebody must have raped her, because it wasn't like her. She came from Idaho.

CH: Do you feel that the women's role in the war has been underrepresented, perhaps?

CL: Well, I think we didn't get the, I don't like to say, publicity. We didn't get the recognition

that we should have. And I'm glad that they have the women's memorial in Washington, which I haven't seen yet, because I'm told that it's a beautiful, beautiful, building, in tribute to all the women in service. I have a friend who was in the Marines. I have another friend who was in the Navy. And they came back to nice normal lives. As a matter-of-fact, the one who was in the Navy, died a couple of years ago. We're friends with her husband. And then, the other one lost her husband and she's alone. And they felt that they went in to do what you have to do. The one who was in the Navy is half a twin. Her twin stayed home and she went into the Navy. I never found out what she did in the Navy, but when she came out she got a job here, a very good job, at Rutgers.

----------END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO----------

CL: "I've waiting for twenty-three and a half months to do this to you." False, false. Nobody that I know, and I know many, ever had that attitude. Not true. Writers make up things. Maybe they think it's good for their careers, but when it's not true, it shouldn't be done. I can't see it. My friend, whose fiftieth anniversary we went to in March, married a young man from Scotland. She got a job as a secretary, that's what she was, in a bank, and she was going along fine and then, they had, in her church, they had services on Sunday night, as we in our synagogue have Saturday night. And she wrote to me, "This young man appeared, suddenly. He'd just arrived from Scotland." So I wrote back and I said, "Is he nice?" He zoomed in on her. I mean, he looked around and he liked the way Mary looked. Of course, he had good reason to think that because she was nice. And so I wrote back and I said, "If he's nice, he's better than the guy that you've been trying to get to commit himself." And Stanley didn't know that, and, at this party, he told about when he came here, he was in the Navy for six years with the British troops. He was all over the world. And when he came home, it was a different world, just as I found, but he found it even worse at his hometown. And he decided he was going to try America. He had never been here before.

CH: What were some of the particulars? You mentioned that New York was different. Was it a physical change or was it an emotional difference? What was it ?

CL: It was physical. It was dirty. It was overcrowded. I didn't feel comfortable in New York. I would think nothing of getting on a train at midnight and going back to Jamaica. I certainly wouldn't do it today. My daughter went to school, both my kids went to school in New York, and I always warned them, "Get off the subway before it's dark. And never go alone if you can help it." Well, my son lived on campus. He went to Yeshiva University, where they had dormitories. But from time to time, one of his fellow students was [assaulted]. He was alone. He was going into the subway near the college, and somebody appeared and cut a swastika into his forehead. Yeah, it was nice. So, I said to my son, "Never go alone and don't go into the subway after dark." This was not dark. It was in the afternoon. This boy was alone. So, New York wasn't like that before. I worked in New York. I used to go to things in New York. I used to see shows, movies, other things. Never hesitated. I'd get on the train, I'd fall asleep, nobody bothered me. I lived at the last stop. And the motorman would come in, "You're in the last stop, miss. You want to go home?" So I said, "Oh, yeah." My brother would meet me at the train, so I wouldn't have to walk the four blocks alone at night. But the train was nothing. So, New York

had changed. Different people had come in. They came in from all over the country, and maybe from outside the country, and they weren't the same as the people that I knew. And, do you ever go into the bus terminal on 41st Street and 8th?

CH: I usually take the train to the subway. I've never taken the bus or gone the bus route.

CL: I've taken the bus. It's scary. I don't go into New York if I can help it. And it wasn't as bad as that when I came home, but it was bad. So, I wasn't too happy. But in a couple of years, I got married and moved away. That took care of that, 'cause when we got married, we moved out here immediately.

CH: To Highland Park?

CL: No, to Metuchen for a year, and then to Highland Park. We've lived in Highland Park ever since.

CH: So, getting married changed a lot of things in your life, and it seems it made them better?

CL: Well, it did. I moved out of New York, for one thing, which is the way I wanted. And my daughter worked in the Bronx. She's a nurse. She worked in Albert Einstein Medical Center, and there were three buildings, about twenty-two stories high, so there were a lot of people there. And then you'd walk across a big promenade to the hospital that's just across the street. But the apartments are set back, so it's a good block and a half from the apartment to the [hospital]. When she'd be on eleven to seven shift, that's dark outside, eleven p.m., and I said to her, "Do you have any kind of accompanier who takes you from your house to the hospital?" She said, "No." I said, "Is it safe?" She said, "Yes. Nobody bothers us." She said, "There are people in the neighborhood," she wasn't specific, "There are people in the neighborhood that look around, patrol the streets, very innocuously." And she never had an incident in the ten years she worked there. Now she's in New Rochelle, so it's a slightly elevated area from the Bronx. Now, to look at it, we used to go up to see her there in the Bronx. It was quiet. There's a residential section with brick houses, but still, it's the middle of the night, you're alone and you have that block and a half to walk. Now she takes her car from where she lives to where she works, two miles away, and she's there. And she's out of work at five, so she doesn't have any of that. But Manhattan really was terribly changed, I thought, in the two and a half years I was away, because the war does that. And, while I loved London very much, London is very different today, too.

CH: You said you went back. What did you do?

CL: Oh, my husband and I went on a trip and we tried to find the people that we knew before, but we couldn't. Made a few phone calls, got no place. But my friend was there. We went out to dinner. She took us back to her house and that was nice. But there are sleazy people on the street, much like New York. Though somehow, they come to the surface. But there are wonderful parks and museums and I saw, well, during the war, I saw shows with big names which wouldn't mean anything to you, because they've been gone a long time now. But culturally, London is great, just as parts of New York are. And Washington D.C. In

Washington, I wouldn't go out at night, either. But there are good places. It was just such a shock, though, when I came back to New York, and Broadway was so awful. It was dirty, filthy. It had strange looking people who didn't look normal. The fact that they didn't come from New York, originally, isn't what bothered me. It's just that they looked at you funny. I know, I went to a convention on 54th Street in a big hotel. And I wanted to walk along 7th Avenue, I guess. I didn't want to walk on 8th, but 7th Avenue. I wanted to walk downtown to the bus station and take a bus home. There were two cops, you don't see them often singly, they walk in pairs. I walked over and I said, "Can you point me in the right direction to the bus terminal? I've been away a few years and I don't remember where anything is." So he says, "Lady, you don't want to walk there." I said, "Yes, I do. This is my town. I don't live here anymore, but I love New York. At least, I used to." So he says, "There's the bus. Take the bus downtown." I said, "No, I'm walking." So I started to walk, and I have very good peripheral vision. I see a man walking alongside of me. Kept my head straight ahead. This man walked all the way to the bus terminal next to me. Never said a word. And I was dressed up. I got to the bus terminal. I had my ticket very much in my hand, because I bought a round-trip. And I got in and I lost him there, thank goodness. But my heart was thumping. You could hear it like this. And I never encountered that before, because I had worked in New York, I stayed in New York late. I never saw that before. So, it rather spoiled it for me.

CH: What were your impressions of the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and even the Gulf War, as a person who served?

CL: I don't know if you'll like what I'll say.

CH: That's okay.

CL: I felt that we never should have been in them.

CH: All three of them?

CL: All three.

CH: And how come?

CL: Well, it didn't do anything for us. A war has to do you some good in order [for you] to be in it. And I didn't think we had anything to do with those wars, particularly that last one. We lost almost a hundred-thirty men and women, for what? You see our friends that we helped, right? They're friends, aren't they? Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, they're not our friends. We shouldn't have to lose anybody for them. They wouldn't do it for us. They didn't do it in the war. I'm against it.

CH: And how about the roles of women in those respective wars?

CL: Well, they died along with the men who died, and, the ones who lived, according to what I read, some of them have infections and diseases that they picked up over there. They weren't treated properly by the host countries over there. I don't know why we had to be there.

CH: Do you mean the soldiers in general or just the women?

CL: No, the men and the women. I mean, they were terrible. This kid of nineteen who had a birthday, and his mother sent him a cross for a birthday present. The Saudis took it away from him. What was it their business what this boy was getting as a gift from home? Thought we had no place there. They're not interested in us. We had to protect the oil? Find other means of keeping oil.

CH: So you talked a lot about this really, but is there anything else you might want to comment on about how World War II affected gender roles for women?

CL: Well, in those days, there was one woman, who wasn't well known until much later, who was a pilot. I can't remember who she was. May have been Jacqueline Cochran, I don't remember. But women weren't given the opportunity to do things, just as my commanding officer didn't want me to go over to Paris with my two officers. I don't know why she had to be so protective with me. If it wasn't safe for them, it wasn't safe for me. It didn't matter. I mean, we were, my base, was attacked. Fortunately, we weren't harmed. But the man who was the guard at the munitions works, which they were really aiming for, was killed. He was the only, I don't like *only*, he was the one who was killed by these German prisoners. And it was a terrible thing. But we were protected like anybody else. Our office in London was bombed and several people were killed but there were no women in that office, there were only men. And there was a terrible catastrophe. But I think, now, the women have much more opportunity to get ahead, no matter what kind of job it is. They may have a "glass ceiling," but I heard women the other day, when I went to a seminar, that women are doing very well in their own businesses. There are opportunities. Women can do things if they want to.

CH: That weren't there.

CL: Yeah, that weren't there before.

LM: How do you think your life would have been different had you not served in World War II?

CL: I don't know. I never thought of it. I think I would have been very uncomfortable staying home, particularly because the two people closest to me were in the Army. I know that my brother was in New Orleans for quite a while before he went to Saipan. And that wasn't the safest place to be either. But you know, life has its hazards. But I think that we should all have an opportunity to do what we want to do and you just try to take care of yourself.

CH: You went to a bunch of different schools. Did anything strike you about the particular schools or the differences or the similarities?

CL: No. I went to Brooklyn College. I had to go by train. I went to Queens College, I went by bus. I drove to Rutgers. You know, it kept going up. But, no, I can't see any difference. You have a curriculum that you follow and some classes I liked, some classes I didn't like.

CH: Any professors at Rutgers stand out, who made a deep impression on you or you really enjoyed, or really didn't like, perhaps?

CL: The teacher I had most of the time was Professor Leon Feldman. And that was in Hebraic Studies and that's what I was interested in. So I had to work. There was a wide range of subjects, and I really enjoyed that. There was one English teacher, well, all my English teachers were good, I thought, but there was one who was particularly good. She worked for, what's that thing in Princeton that, the organization in Princeton that gives the qualifying tests? Three initials?

CH: ETS.

CL: Yeah. She worked for them and I learned a great deal from her, even though I had to repeat, well, I wasn't repeating, I just had to take more English courses, because three of the ones that I had in Brooklyn didn't agree with the ones that were in the curriculum here. And she taught us a lot. She taught me a lot. You know, about how to plan. She liked my work. That helped, too. But I really enjoyed listening to her say what had to be done, how you plotted your compositions, that sort of thing. There was another English teacher I liked, too. Can't remember her name. I can't remember any of their names, only Leon Feldman ‘cause I had him for many classes.

LM: You went to college during the Depression?

CL: Oh, yeah.

LM: What was that like?

CL: It wasn't good. No, and the city university wasn't the city university. It was only a college. You had City College of New York, Brooklyn College, and later, Queens College. They were all colleges, small things. And everybody was poor then, and it was free. There were no charges at all. And we were very glad to be able to get into school. You had to have requirements, and if your grades weren't good enough, you didn't get in. I got in. And I had a wide range of subjects. I remember there was an art history course that I missed. I missed a couple of sessions because our holidays came along and the teacher didn't make provision for that. But that was interesting. I found out about a lot of artists that I would not have known otherwise, and there were other subjects that I took that were good. I guess I enjoyed it. Of course, the hour's trip one way and an hour's trip the other way weren't so wonderful.

LM: So you lived with your family at this time?

CL: Sure, I was fifteen years old.

CH: How did the Depression affect your family? Did your father continue to work?

CL: My father worked for the New York City Health Department, so his job was assured. My

mother didn't work. Our mortgage had to be paid for. And it was rough. So, my mother scrimped, and she bought things where she knew the store had the best prices. My mother made all my clothes, all her clothes. As a matter-of-fact, I make most of my clothes. What I'm wearing today, I made. That's the way I was brought up. You make your own clothes. You want to buy them, buy them. But I enjoy making my own clothes, and it was tight. I didn't feel we missed anything, we always had plenty of food. And going to college by subway was not how I planned it, but I met some nice people there. I was invited to join a sorority, which I turned down. I thought it was elitist. I probably didn't think of the word at that time, though. And we used to have a group that met in a restaurant and the restaurant owner knew that we were bringing our own lunch. We'd get a drink there. So it was either coffee or tea or chocolate or something like that, and we opened up all our packages. It was fine. We were friendly together. Some of the girls that I knew from high school were going to Brooklyn at that time. I met new boys there, but nobody that I was involved with at all. It was just going to school. It was like high school, only it was not close to home, the way high school was. So, I can't really see any difference, 'cause I didn't take any subjects that needed physics. As a matter-of-fact, I had physics in college, now that I think of it. I had chemistry when I went to Queens. I had physics when I went to Brooklyn. But otherwise, it's more courses you take, that's all. I can't distinguish one kind of school from another.

LM: Well, when you first entered college, what did you want to be, in terms of career aspirations?

CL: I was going to be a French teacher. I was the top student in the high school French class. And then, I found out that there were others who knew more French than I did. So I switched to Spanish and, I can't remember, now, what it was [that] I was going to be. But when I went to Queens, I guess I decided I was going to be a home economics major and I loved that and I still do. When I went to Queens, I took a home ec course, which I liked very much, and all these kids who had never had any experience with cooking or how to wash dishes, all that was part of the course. And here, I'd been doing it for years. So I was sort of the big sister or the mother to some of them. And it was fun. I liked that, except for that English teacher that kept me from going on into English because he was there. But the other courses I took were interesting. I took math. I learned calculus. I thought calculus was a tough subject 'till I took it. It was easy. I like math very much. What else did I have there? I don't know. Math and English, I can remember. The courses were courses, that's all. It's that much more I had in my head than I had before. It was nice.

CH: Did you join any organizations after the war that you stayed involved with?

CL: Well, I've been in Hadassah since I was fourteen. So that, of course, I continued, 'cause it's very important. To build hospitals and schools, I think, is an important job. So I continued with that. I'm somewhat active in my synagogue with the sisterhood, which is, again, education. I guess I should have been a teacher, but I wasn't. People ask me, "Were you ever a teacher?".

CH: Oh, yeah?

CL: The only teaching I ever did, aside from what I did with my kids, was with the people who never get beyond first grade, teaching them how to read and write, with the Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex. I did that for three years and it's not an easy job. Much easier to teach little kids. I do that with my grandchildren, and my older granddaughter, who's eight, lives in Israel. She's trilingual and she attends special English classes for children with English-speaking parents. She got a hundred in her English test about two weeks ago, and what did my son tell me? She got a hundred on the math test this week. So that's always very gratifying. When we were there in September, I didn't help her with her homework. I watched how she did it. And it's a different kind of teaching. Not the way I learned, but if she learns how, that's all that matters. So I just watched as she did it and I said, "Well, that's very good," and "What's this word?" and she told me. I'm waiting for her to write to me now. My birthday was two weeks ago, and she, my son and daughter-in-law, and her little sister sent me a beautiful birthday card. Half of it was in English and half in Hebrew. My daughter, who's fluent, translated the Hebrew, which was fine. And my son said, "Look at the back, because Miri put something." She had a three-layer cake and then she had a string with dingle-dangles hanging from it and she wrote, "Happy Birthday Grandmother." I thought that was so cute. And then the eight-year-old also wrote her little sister's name because her little sister was asleep at the time. So it was very sweet. But I said to my son when I spoke to him on Sunday, "Why doesn't Estie write us a letter? She knows how to. She's eight years old. She should certainly be able to write a letter." He said, "I'll ask her." So, when we call, the kids are usually asleep, but they know to whom to speak English, to whom to speak Hebrew and to whom to speak French. Their mother is from Marseilles, and from the day they were born, she has spoken to them only in French. So that's really their best language. My son, not being home all day, talks to them in English, and then, of course, they learn Hebrew in school. Sometimes, they mix up the French and Hebrew and it is so funny because I'll say, "Which language are you using now?" and they'll start to giggle and tell me, "It's a mixture of Hebrew and French."

CH: Do you have any other strong memories of Rutgers from the time that you spent here?

CL: Well, I do have one. You know there are Arab students here. I don't know if they're still here, but when I was here, [they were]. And they were working with a certain department, part of our division, learning English and American history, and American culture. I was going to the swimming pool, the one on College Avenue, during lunch period. And one day, I'm walking along and I see these male students lying on the grass next to Scott Hall. They're having their lunch. Fine. When I came back a half an hour later, they weren't there anymore, but their lunch was. So I mentioned it to the woman in charge of that department and she called the boys in and said, "Where did you have your lunch?" "Oh, there." "And what did you do with the paper?" "Oh, we left it there." She said, "Your maidservants are not with you here and you're not going to have any. You'd better get out there and pick up that stuff and never do it again." They never did it again. That was one incident. Another time, they were getting the *New York Times* everyday. This was all part of their tuition. And they're telling her, she's the head of the department, they're telling her [that] they want to see every show on Broadway, if there's anything in the paper they don't understand, they want her to translate or interpret. And she said, "You know, you're in a different country now." She put them in their place. I hope she taught them something. But the world was at their footsteps, they thought. You know, if they dropped

something, that's where it stayed. They couldn't have that here. And that's what I remember, very clearly, because it was part of our division, and we had other, smaller groups that weren't so privileged as these kids with their silk pants and their shirts open to here. I think they received an education from that course they took here. And I didn't like it one bit, but I was glad when I heard that they were told how they should behave. I don't know about the Arab students today. Are they a group? Are they individuals? Do you know?

CH: We haven't had any kind of incident along those lines.

CL: No, I don't know if they're just part of the student body or what.

CH: Right.

CL: This was a group. They used to get checks from some place in Texas. That was the home office and they got their expenses paid from there. There was this one group. They were not integrated into the regular student body.

CH: As far as I know, all things that I see, everyone's pretty much in the same boat, for the most part. There's a couple.

CL: It's a student body, period. Right?

LM: Yeah.

CH: Yeah. There are some minor exceptions, but ...

CL: Well, then I guess it's changing. All right, then changes have taken place, which is good. But they were bossing her around and she was not one to take it. They had no right to do it. I don't know who they thought she was and who they were, that they could tell her what to do. But she put them straight.

CH: Well, is there anything that we haven't asked that you would like to tell us or that you think we should have asked?

CL: I don't know, I've plumbed my memories about my experiences. Don't forget, it's over fifty years ago. It's a long way back. I got out of the army in '45. October '45. Long time ago, you know. Some of it's still vivid, some I haven't told you, because I'm not planning to. Personal stuff I keep personal because that's what I do. But I have pictures.

CH: Are there any stories that you wanted to tell but you didn't get a chance to tell?

CL: No. One thing, yes. I like this story. Just trying to think of the name of the town. It's at the seashore. Instead of sand, they have rocks. Do you know Jones Beach in Long Island?

CH: I've heard of it, because they have concerts there but I've never been there.

CL: Yeah, right. Well, I don't know what it's like today, but I grew up on Jones Beach. We used to go out every Saturday and Sunday. During the summer, of course, as soon as school let out in June, during the week we'd go several times. It was so immaculate. It was wonderful. White sand. And when you [went], you could bring your lunch and you sat at a table, and before the crumbs fell on the table, somebody would wipe them away. It was immaculate. It was lovely. Brighton in England was something like that. They had channel gardens with beautiful flowers and rocks in between, and instead of sand, they had these white rocks. Fortunately, somebody had brought along a blanket, so it was not as uncomfortable. We had two girls from London, my friend from South Africa and I, the four of us in different uniforms. The two wearing WREN uniforms, it's navy with a little round hat. I was in o.d., olive drab. My friend from South Africa was an officer, so her olive drab was a slightly different shade. We took the train down to Brighton. You know what the British trains are like? They're not like in the cities. I mean, I read about it in books. They're about a little wider than this, and there are two benches and you sit on that side and you sit on this side, so you face people. And the four of us were facing each other, and we're talking and joking. The other seats were occupied by British civilians. Toward the end of the trip, I don't remember that we stopped anywhere from London to Brighton. I think we went straight through. One of the men got up courage. Now, I could see he was fidgeting and he wanted to say something. He finally did. He said, "I think it's so wonderful, that you girls, in different uniforms, get on so well together." And we were so pleased. I thought it would be nice if the world did that. Even then, in my twenties, I could say that. But we did. In this Balfour Club, where we used to go, people came from different countries, you know, allies. There was one young man that I went out with, came from Poland, and he was part of a Jewish brigade in England. So, it wasn't he who played the piano, but who played the piano? It was somebody else, used to play Chopin and, oh, I loved to listen to it. So we'd see different uniforms. There was a large group from Canada, large group from the U.S., British, South African, Australian. You know, we'd see all these people, and we all got along together. It was our war, we had to get along together. We didn't have any choice. And I just thought it was very perceptive of him, this man on the train, that we were wearing different uniforms, but we were kidding and talking and everything and it was great. I love that story. I can just see us sitting there. We had a wonderful day then. All got sunburned. There was another day that the sun shone there, but Brighton shines more than London. And then, Saint Anne's by the Sea, that's in the north. Can't remember the city, the big city near it. No big city near it except London. But I was visiting friends there. There're these two little girls who are about eight and ten, (and one of them, years later, came over to McGill to get her degree) and we went out in a boat. I was with another family who had two little girls. And here I am, twenty-five, something like that, and I'm with the little girls. I'm one of the little girls with them. And it was such a good feeling, you know. I wasn't the Yank in her uniform, of course, I wore my uniform. But they accepted me as the Yank soldier and I was one of them. And I just felt so comfortable with them. Someplace, I have those pictures, too. But I have boxes, 'cause I say, we moved from an eight room house to a four room apartment so I have boxes of pictures that I really should put into albums. But we were out there on a lake and I was with these four kids. It was great. That was the good side. The bad side, as I say, we never talked about, the lack of heat, sometimes crummy food. You live through that.

CH: But the last thing, you've said that you're doing a lot of things now. So what have you been doing?

CL: Well, I have a fairly large correspondence. Will somebody answer that? Do you ...

CH: There's the answering machine. It's all set. It's the answering machine.

CL: Oh? It sounds like your phone.

CH: That's Elise.

CL: Now, my husband didn't feel so wonderful this morning. I was out to lunch with one of the women that I worked with here. She works in purchasing now. First time I've seen her in months. So we went out to lunch. And when I came home, I was planning to come here directly, but I …

CH: Just ignore it.

CL: … We were, yeah, we were finished with lunch a lot earlier than I thought, so I went home and my husband told me he didn't feel good. He felt dizzy, but he was all right then. That's why I was hoping it was not he. But he took some new medication and he thought that that might have covered it. And I said to him, "You know, it always says in all the magazine articles, before you try something new, check with your doctor and your pharmacist." And he thinks it was something new that my daughter had suggested. She reads all the natural foods articles in the nurses' guides and she usually comes up with something very good. But this medication that he took today, I think was not good. And when I came in, I walked into the bedroom to pick up something, and I see that the bed is unmade. And I said to him, "Why were you lying down before? Are you all right?" And he told me that he had this very strange feeling, so I felt a little funny about leaving, but he seemed to be better at that time. So, never take new medication without getting somebody's approval. Oh, I can't think of everything else.

CH: Okay, well, thank you very much

LM: Thank you very much.

CL: You're welcome. I hope it helps with your information quest.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

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