

SD: I was going to just ask you to go over the basic information you've given me, when we were talking, so can you tell me how you decided to get a job in the shipyards?

LS: Well, it was because my dad had put my name down, because they were going to try out girls working in the shipyards, and, they were going to start off with about, I forget now, if it was five or ten, of them, just to see how they would work, and if it did, then they were going to start to hire more. And I think that it went over very good, because it wasn't long before they started to hire more and more of them.

SD: Were, do you think, why were you favoured for a job in the shipyards?

LS: Like I say, I think it was because my dad worked there. And they wanted, relatives of applicants to be working there. Now, I don't know what the reason was, but, maybe it was just to keep an eye on them. To make sure that they wouldn't get hurt, or whatever. I really don't know.

SD: What had you been doing before you applied for a job there?

LS: School.

SD: What was your, what were your career intentions?

LS: University, and then I wanted to go ^{into some field} of medicine. And, there just ^{wasn't} any money there, because I know, I asked my father about it, and he said he just couldn't afford it, and so, then I accepted it, and, took a six ~~month~~, a business course at night, six months, and I took up shorthand, typing, junior business,

LS: (cont'd) junior bookkeeping, and, after ^{I'd} finished, this is when my father had put my name in, and after comparing the wages from both ends, I found that it would be a much better paying job, so I thought I'd try it. And, I found I liked it. It was easy, and I found it easy.

SD: When you thought about going into that kind of work, it's really different from office work or clerical work, what did you think it would be like before you went in?

LS: Well, I think all the the big machinery and, the shops and cranes and, what do you call those, cranes, they were a bit frightening. Because you're not used to it, but, it didn't take more ^(than) one or two days, to get used to it and know how to be careful or, or to work with it, so I blended in very easy.

SD: Were you afraid the work would be really difficult?

LS: No, I was, a fitter's helper, in the shop. And, I, the template would be down on the plate, and you'd mark off the templates, and, I found it very easy.

SD: What was the template?

LS: A template is like a wooden frame that you put down on a, steel, or a beam, and then you mark it off, so that it could be cut, or burned, or the rivet holes would be all marked, or whatever. And you just, ^{they're all} parts of the ship, I guess. Templates, like, you know, whatever you happen to be marking.

SD: So, what the fitter would do, is, would, he'd basically prepare the pieces to...

LS: Yes, and then the pieces would be sent to the burner, or the the, wherever it had to go, like where, if the plate was,

LS: (cont'd) say this long, and the, the, you had to cut a piece that was this long, it would all be marked off and after it was all cut and everything, then it would be taken, and I guess obviously fitted on to some part of the ship.

SD: When you came in, in the very beginning, were you given any kind of training?

LS: No, in fact, the man that I was helping, said that I had caught on so easy, in fact that he found that I was just as good as a man helper, if not better. And when I was offered another job out of the shop, I think about six or eight months later, they asked me if I wanted to go and learn to be a burner, and I thought no, I don't think I'd like that, all that smoke and, the fumes that come off of it, I didn't think that it would be healthy, so, then Mr. Martinni came and asked me personally if I wanted to go on the ships, and be a shipwright's helper, and that paid more, so I thought, "well, gee, I'll take that," because I found him very good, he was always sort of stepping me up, so the shipwright, his job was to lay the superstruc- to mark out the superstructure, on the top deck of these, ships, which would be the housing, and the the cabins, the cabin, you know the housing on the top deck? And his job was to lay it all out, and measure it, and mark it out, and when everything was brought up on a crane and set down, it would set right on those markings, you know what ship is and all that housing that's on top of the, top deck, and I helped him. And then, I guess, I must have been with him for about a year and a half,

SD: Can I just ask what exactly, what the helper did?

LS: Well, like, he'd have to measure out, and I'd have to hold the tape, and then take a punch and a hammer, and then punch little holes all the way down this marks, so that, because you couldn't use chalk because they'd rub off, so you'd have to make all these little marks, with a punch and a hammer, and measure out, help him measure out things, mind you he was a , the one that was doing all the brain work, I just had to go behind and make sure that I punched it all out properly. And made no mistakes, because, you know, it had to be done right. And simple again, it was no problem at all. In fact, he told me the same thing, he says, "As far as having a boy helper or a woman helper," he says, "I wouldn't find any difference at all." So, I was with him for quite a while, I forget now all the time that's gone by now, a year I guess, when they came and asked, they were picking about ten or fifteen women to go on the carriers and it was a selection because, I think there was about six hundred sailors living in on these carriers, because they were living in the carrier, they were sleeping, eating and doing their drills, and whatever, and they were making a very tight selection on it because I guess they just wanted it decent, I don't even want to say decent girls, but they wanted girls that had very good morals, I guess, because you could get into trouble working with six hundred men on the ship every day, you know what I mean? So, don't put that on the tape, I'm trying to figure. point it out to you , so,

LS: (cont'd) that was the reason why they were picking them. And they asked me, if I wanted to go. That I was picked, but it was my choice. And on that, I was electrician's helper. And the money was better, so I thought, "well, it isn't very far from South Burrard, I think I'll try it." Now the reason for their, them putting all these little extras into these aircraft carriers was that the English had pneumatic signals on the carriers, which transmitted messages from end or back and forth across the ship. And the Americans wanted an electrical system put in in case the pneumatic signals got in a blowed, blowen up, out by a gun or something, and then they wouldn't have no way of transmitting messages. So they wanted the electrical transmission too. Where you could pick up a phone and talk, you know? You know what the pneumatic signals are like? Do you know what they are? They were like little cylinders about that long, and about that round, and put you message in there, and put a top on it, and you put it in this, like a pipe, and then shut the little door, and, push a button, and the air would shoot the cylinder to wherever it had to go, and then the other person, they'd open up the cylinder and get the message at the other end. So that was the reason why they were sending electricians and some helpers over to install these the electrical, ^atransmission sort of a thing where you could speak more, and not depend just on the pneumatic signals. And then I worked there, until all that was done, and then I went into the industry again, when the war work was over.

SD: So, the cylinders were just around eight inches, by two?

LS: Ya, See, you're young, but if you remember Eaton's, you know Sears, downtown?

SD: Ya.

LS: It used to be called Simpsons. They used to have them in the stores, for, if you went to a cashier, and you wanted to, and you paid for a purchase, and it was fifty dollars and they didn't have change, they'd put it in a little signal, and send it up to the head office and then the head office would open it, make the change and send back the proper change. So if, you're, you're not old enough to, I mean, you're too young to know that, but that's what they used to do in some of the stores. And it was sort of like, that's how they sent things, and it was pushed by air some type of air

*a really, if's a vacuum * propulsionishy suction (E.P.)

SD: That makes sense, OK, what year do you think it was that you went into the shipyards?

LS: About '41 I guess,

SD: So that really was right at the beginning?

LS: Ya

SD: And, the other women that you went in with, were, did you...

LS: Well, a girlfriend of mine, that went to school with me, she's in the States now, she married an American so she's been living in the States for about thirty-five years, I had mentioned to her that I was going to, that my father had put my name in and, I was going to, he was going to get me a job because like, there was a little waiting period there, and she said, I said, "well do you think would you like to come and try, I

LS: (cont'd) says, " maybe my dad will put your name down too. And so he did, and they called the both of us, so both of us worked always together. And, she went on the carriers too. We were picked, we were always picked, I don't know why, maybe it was because we were always very proper, and in those days it was a little different than today.

SD: And then, afterwards was there a big influx of women?

LS: Oh yes, after that, the really hired, like they were hiring them for passing rivets, and learning, they were being taught how to burn, and to weld, and to just about do anything, if they were, if it was possible. And it was shortly after that when they saw that it was really working well, I don't think two, three months went by , and I guess they must have talked to the different men that had girls helping them, and asked them what they thought. Must have been a very favourable report, because after that they really started to hire. And they were going to North Shore, there was a shipyards in the North Shore, two of them, I think, and so they found it very , it worked very well, so they really hired.

SD: How did you feel being one of the first, did you feel pressured?

LS: No, because we were in the shop, and not right out on the ships, with all the, men working all around you, In the shop, it was a little bit more , well, only a few men, like you're helping your fitter, and there might have been five fitters over here, and about six or seven over there and at the very end of the shop, they had welding and burning, which you rarely ever got down there. So that you weren't mixed

LS: (cont'd) into it, too quickly, so that by the time I left the shop, and went on the ships, by that time you were really used to working with men and everything else, and it was nothing. I always stuck very close to my fitter, or my ship, or the shipwright, and, the ship fitter like, and, I just never found any , problem to it at all. And I didn't think any of the other girls did too. I never heard of them saying anything.

SD: Did you, in the beginning period did you want a lot to be successful so other women ^{would} come in, was that something that...

LS: In that line of work? No, not really, my ambition was to go to school, and I, all my friends had either dropped out or quit in Grade 9, 10; I think I was the only one ^{that was} still going to school. And I deeply wanted to carry on, but in Grade 12, I'll tell you, I had one skirt and blouse I wore the whole year. And on graduation, I didn't even go, because, it required getting a dress, and shoes, and you know the whole thing , and there just wasn't any money. So, I just told the principal that I couldn't come because I was going to start a new job the next day and I didn't think I could go to the grad and stay up late and get up to work, because I wasn't about to tell him. But, my ambition was to go on to school. And as far as war work and things like that, then I got married after, when I was twenty-three, so, if I had gone into , my mother had died when I was ten, so, my father really wasn't there to sort of guide me, I was trying to figure this all out myself, but I think if I had a went into the office

LS: (cont'd) world, I do think I would have gone to the top, because I have that, within me, you know?

SD: Ambition.

LS: Ya, just like my oldest son, he went right through seven years of university and ranked right at the top, scholarships and everything, but not one time did I hear a complaint. He he's the type that would go over broken glass to get there, and I think I would have been the same. But as far as war work, I couldn't see myself wanting to succeed in that type of work, because it's a man's world. What are you going to do? Really. In our day, it was mostly the ^{office} in that you could sort of get anywhere with...

SD: So, did you tend to see doing this for the duration of the war and then...

LS: And it's a job, and it was paying well, and I was helping my dad, sort of, keep the house going, my brother had joined the navy, and, that's about all. It wasn't because, but I think if I had had a little guidance at home, more from my parents, I would have gone into the office world, because I did go on interviews and, I could have got in at, it was the stockbrokers on Dunsmuir and Granville there that needed a junior secretary. And, I was asked, I was favourably received there, I could have gotten that, I was interviewed at a bank at Cambie and Hastings as a junior bookkeeper, and, where else did I go? I could have got into that field. But, like, the money was very poor. And, I didn't, I picked that because it was better paying. But I think if I had gone into the other way, I would have, then my ambition would have

LS: (cont'd) carried on into that field.

SD: What, how old were you when you started to work in the shipyards?

LS: About eighteen, nineteen, eighteen.

SD: And did you get married while you were working in the shipyards?

LS: No, no, no, I met, my husband long after I had quit the shipyards. Although he's born and raised right here, about eight to ten blocks from here. At the time like, you know.

SD: When did you leave the shipyards, in what year?

LS: Oh, boy, I think it was after the carriers were finished. Now, I can't remember.

SD: What happened to the work. Did it start...

LS: Well, the carriers were finished, the all the extras they to put on them were done, I could have went back to ^{the} South Burrard after that was done, but, I had two, three girlfriends that were working just , here and there and everywhere and when I got a job at McGavin's Bakery, which was paying very well, in fact that was, I could have got, gone up the ladder there, because the, the forelady was going to train me to do wedding cake decoration and ^{then} when she was off to look after the floor, and then I told her not, that I was getting married, and I didn't want her to go to all that trouble to train me and find that she had wasted her time because I was leaving. But , she told me herself, I said to her, I says, "you know there's girls, women working here for twenty years and I've only been here two, could cause a lot of dissatisfaction because, they would have the seniority," but, she said I had

LS: (cont'd) ability, so ... and that paid good, I was making more than my husband at the time.

SD: Did you keep working after you married?

LS: No, no, because I felt that, I had my first son and then thought, no way, I says, "I'm going to stay home and raise my children instead of having babysitters looking after them and bringing them up," that was my, I figured that if you're going to work, don't have children, if you're going to have children, stay home.

SD: How, when working at the shipyards, did ~~it~~ in any way affect the way that you saw yourself? Like were you proud of being able to do that kind of work, or...

LS: Not really, because, Sarah, no matter what, as I was young or growing up, no matter what I was being taught, I was a quick learner, I could pick it up like this, and I found everything quite easy, and , it was war work but it was, the Selective Service , when I went in those days they had a Selective Service instead of Manpower, what was the reason I went ^{there} for, now, I forget now , was in between, I had to, after I had been up South Burrard to go the carriers, I had to check in with Selective Service for some reason, they wanted me to go in the airforce. 'Cause they figured I had a lot of potential, and I could, go into some career in the air force, but my dad wouldn't hear of it, so ; in those days a little different today, Sarah. You just didn't go and do those things, like, you had to stay home and be home until you got married.

SD: So he had veto power.

LS: Ya, so, I guess I had some opportunities in those days, but, things, you just had to stay home if you were a girl, you had more opportunity if you were a boy. You had more freedom and , you could, like , I was in Grade 12 and I had to be home at nine o'clock. That's how it was in those days. And, never mind, go in the air force, or anything like that, so, But I don't regret it. I raised my boys, they're both professional boys today, and I think I did my job and they've come to that conclusion that if you have children, it's best to stay home and raise them. Because they could be a problem later on, because they don't know where they've been at; they've got this babysitter now, and another later, and another one later, so I don't regret it.

SD: Was the work physically difficult, did you find it...

LS: No, I didn't. No, 'cause I was always very athletic, In school, I was always in track and basketball and , very athletic, swimming, I was great in swimming, so that anything physical, I found easy, because I was athletic.

SD: Right, so it was like sort of carrying...

LS: Ya,

SD: Did other women, or girls find it physically hard, do you know?

LS: Well, the ones I always surrounded myself with found it easy, and they liked it. And, they wouldn't have left for another job because, it pleased them. And in those days, the money was very good, compared to what it had been before the war

LS: (cont'd) so, a lot of people went in because it was well paying, and because it was war, you know, it was a war effort,

SD: Was there a sense of patriotism?

LS: Yes, a lot of that.

SD: How did that come out on the job? ^{LS:} Well you were diligent and you did your work, and you didn't try and pretend to do it and, you never missed a day or anything, you had to be very sick or something if you missed a day. And you put yourself out one hundred percent, you just didn't fool, you know. That's how I did it anyhow. And I think most of them did.

SD: Was evidence of patriotism stronger amongst women, or was it pretty evenly...

LS: I think it was about even.

SD; What about absenteeism amongst women, did most women show up...

LS: Well, amongst the group that I was always with, because we had two three friends that we always stuck together with, very little, very, very little, I know I never missed anything. And I think it applied to all of them. I think they all, were pretty good in that respect.

SD: Did, working in the shipyards, in anyway change your lifestyle having that much money coming in, or...?

LS: Nope, not at all. Because I was helping my dad keep the house going and that, no, it didn't change anything.

SD: Was it shift work?

LS: Yes.

SD; How was that?

LS: Not bad. I didn't like it, it sort of varied the, the, time away, and then I got so that they kept me on days steady. I wasn't long on shift work where they wanted me to stay on days and so, but, I didn't mind shift work, even after I left the shipyards, we were at jobs where shift work and, I didn't mind it.

SD: Most of the women who worked in the shipyards, ^{who} you encountered, were they single women, or there married women there too?

LS: I would say they were mostly single. The majority were single.

SD: Was that a hiring policy in any way?

LS: You know, I can't remember. It could have been. Maybe the Union would know. But, it seems to me the majority were single. There might have been a few married ones, but, I don't think they would have made it a policy because if the married ones were working, their husbands were probably in the forces. I really don't remember, Sarah.

SD: I was going to ask you some questions about the union, how was the union, how was the union's attitudes towards women coming into the ship yard?

LS: Very good as far as I was aware of. And, no, I don't remember now, did they have women shop stewards? You know, I think they did.

SD: What union were you in?

LS: The Boilermakers' Union. It's up here on Charles and Nanaimo?

SD: Right. Were you in there, in that union from the beginning?

LS: Yes, right from the beginning.

SD: And did you have full union rights from the beginning?

LS: Yes, I think so.

SD: Some of the craft unions didn't allow women to vote and restricted them.

LS: No, I think that we had everything that anybody else, that the men had.

SD: And,

LS: Any grievances, and complaints, we could have gone to the shop steward freely and said anything we wanted to.

SD: How did you find out about the union?

LS: Well, it was when we were accepted for the job, then we had to , sign up for the union and all this, you know, it was all part of starting the job, and, having a physical that wasn't part of the union, I think that was just something we had to be done. And we went into the union. That way.

SD: And, I wondered about the kinds of jobs available to women in the yards, like were there any jobs that women could not do in the yards, were women restricted from apprenticeships, or...

LS: Well, I think it would^{be} all the heavier jobs. Like riveting, and stagehands, which are putting up all those heavy staging around the ship, just the heavier jobs, but as far as welding, burning, fitters, helpers, riveters, not riveters, that would be to heavy; catching the rivets, all that was open.

SD: How did you find out about opportunities in those kinds of jobs that were required more skill, would you be contacted by management, or...

LS: Well no, they contacted us, I was asked two, three times if I wanted to take any of those things up. And, I just didn't think that all those fumes from welding and burning would do a person any good, so I just thought, no, my health was a bit more important.

SD: Probably a wise decision.

LS: You're not kidding. Because in those days they didn't have the precautions they have today. So,

SD: Were there, there were women in those jobs?

LS: Yes, yep.

SD: What about seniority, did women have equal seniority with men, were you on the same seniority list?

LS: Un, you mean as far as being laid off, and things like that?

SD: Both working into more skilled jobs, and also lay offs.

LS: Oh, I think they would have favoured the men in those days a little bit more. I'm sure of it, because it's only recently that there's been more equality. But, they found that they fitted in very well, and they were able to do the work very well, and there was no problem in the work that they had for women, so.

SD: How about lay offs?

LS: It went with seniority and ability. They coupled the two.

SD: So, could that lead to discrimination in any way against women, were women laid off first, or..?

LS: Gee, how I don't know how the layoffs would have applied. As to preference, maybe they would have preferred men. I think in those days it would have, but they, I found them fair. And

LS: (cont'd) they always, it always based on seniority and ability together. For lay offs or promotions, or whatever, so I found the union very fair, and the management very fair; I had no, I don't remember ever having any problems or getting in a snit over anything, because everything seemed to be very fair.

SD: What about equal pay?

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1

TAPE 1
SIDE 2

LS: I don't how to answer that, because I don't know if a man that ^{was} burning and a woman that was burning ~~would~~ be getting the same ^{pay} or not, 'cause I wasn't doing that at the time; I was more of a helper, and, it seemed to me that if, they had a, young boy work, helping, or a girl, they would have been paid the same. But, I don't remember. If you talk to Marge; she probably will be able to tell you. Because her husband was a burner, and maybe he can remember back, if the pay was equal.

SD: What about the attitudes of men when you came into the shipyards, was there any ...

LS: No animosity at all, that I saw. Because as soon as they got eighteen or nineteen then they were called up into the forces, unless they were not physically fit. Then they'd be back, but otherwise they'd be into the wherever they picked, army, navy, or airforce, and then they'd be gone, so that they

LS: (cont'd) needed the women in there, I think. Because the turnover on the men were, slowly, I mean were quite rapid. Especially the young men. The older ones were not physically fit, well then, they kept working, or if they had families, and then they were sort of a not, how would you put it, if they had dependents they weren't taken as quickly as the single ones.

SD: And also it was a priority industry, right, so ^I imagine they would maintain some skilled workers there.

LS: Well my husband was called up and he worked in the shipyards from fourteen. And, did they give him an extra six or eight months-and then he went into the army. If were single, I think that they, didn't give you as much priority as if you were married with dependents, and then they gave you a little more time.

SD: Did a lot of the women who worked there, were they wives of men who worked in the shipyards? If they were married...

LS: I don't remember, ^{now} I think they would be, no I don't think they were wives of people who worked there, it would be more, if they were married I think their husbands probably were in the forces. But I don't think there was as many married women as all that.

SD: Did the men talk at all about the atmosphere having changed because women had come into the shipyards?

LS: Not that I remember, everything seemed to be..in fact every time when I ^{had} left the shop to go to the ships, he hated to see me go, because he said that he hoped the next helper was

LS: (cont'd) as efficient as I was, so I was always complimented on the way up, but , they all seemed to be pleased.

SD: Well, the stuff I've read suggests that women were really skilled at that kind of work, and took it very seriously,

LS: I know we all did, and no matter what job I had, I always made a point of doing my work well, as well as I could, to the best of my ability.

SD: Could you tell me a little bit about any union involvement you had while you were there, even going to meetings,

LS: Well, being young, you go to meetings and they don't seem to have the importance that they would if you were older, you know what I mean? We went to meetings and we all listened very dutifully and , agreed with everything that our membership told us to , was good for us and that was it. But when you get older, you sort of , understand more about everything, so your attitude might have been a little different. But everything, we never had any problems in that direction at all, everything , we were well looked after by the union and the management was very fair.

SD: When you say "well looked after," what do you mean by that?

LS: Well they made sure that we were all, we got all our, whatever we had coming to us, proper restrooms, good working conditions, proper, the best, the safety at the time that was there, and, any complaints were always followed up if there was any, no I found them very good, the union and the management. There would seem to be no friction there in those

LS: (cont'd) days, maybe because of the war.

SD: Were there production committees ~~union~~-management committees?

LS: Gee, I don't remember that part, there could have been.

SD: And, were there complaints that you had, or other women who worked there had around the working conditions?

LS: No, except, just to make sure that because they had ~~top~~ in restrooms ~~separate~~, and all this, and all that was done by management. And at that, it was all done properly, there was, didn't, I don't remember ever hearing any complaints.

SD: How about dress codes, what did you have to wear?

LS: We had to wear coveralls. Because they were the safest. You know, you'd put your ~~clothes~~ underneath, and pull the coveralls and zip them right ~~up~~ to here, and then make sure so that no sparks or anything could fall inside and burn you, you know the sparks from welding, or burning, or rivets or anything, and then gloves, 'cause the sleeves would come and gloves, and if you were on the ship you had to wear hard hats and glasses, so you'd get nothing in your eyes, and, if you went between decks, you always stuck some cotton in your ear or something for the noise. Because now they have better safety, but they were fairly good.

SD: What about, were there areas in the ship that ^{were} particularly dirty or wet that you had to work in?

LS: Not that I had to. Some of the girls might have, down between decks, or something, but I was always on the top. And, in the shop; no, I can't say personally that I had any problems.

SD: Did you have to deal with being afraid of heights ^{at} all?

LS: No, I never was afraid of heights.

SD: It would help

LS: 'Cause I know it was, climbing all that staging up and down the ships, but that's like I say, one thing that never bothered me at all. Being athletic, I think.

SD: Was there any kind of social...

LS: There must have been. A lot of social, like the dance once every once and a while or a get together, but, I never attended them.

SD: In terms of the union, do you remember any of the big debates that were going on at the time? While you were in there?

LS: No, I don't.

SD: More like day to day union activity, shop stewards being available, occasional meetings...

LS: Yes, and I think they got along fairly good because of war, and you didn't want to stop anything, and everybody bent and it worked very well.

SD: Do you remember, any women who were particularly active within?

LS: No, I don't remember any women, wanting to get into the actual unions.

SD: Did a lot of the women who worked there, did they meet men there that they eventually married?

LS: More than likely, because I know a few did. But, I kept myself very much, like when I worked on the carriers, God, you know if you didn't have fifty invitations a day, you didn't have one, and I never went out with one of them, because, I just

- LS: (cont'd) kept to my friends and people we knew, and boys we knew and, we didn't go out much. It's not like today, Sarah, I'll tell you! You just didn't do too much, 'cause you weren't allowed to, parents were very strict, and, So, like I say, I didn't go out with any, anybody, but I imagine there was quite a few that met and married while working together.
- SD: Do you remember any discussions amongst women around wanting to keep jobs in the shipyards, or to just stay in the labour force after the war?
- LS: There could have been. Because it was, well, I found the work easy, and it was good paying, and it was healthy work, *we were* out in the open, and ^{I'm} sure lots of them would have wanted to stay, but then, after the war all the shipyards just shut down, because, there wasn't the work there any more.
- SD: Was there anxiety amongst the women about what they'd do after the war?
- LS: Not that I saw.
- SD: There was no fear of a depression, or anything like ~~that~~?
- LS: No, Were there women with children working in the yards who talked about problems with shift work, or child care, or anything?
- LS: No, I don't remember anybody that I associated with having ^{ing} children, they were all single. There could have been, but I can't see, there could have been, I guess, but none that I knew.
- SD: Did you come from a family that was particularly pro-union?
- LS: No.

SD: Was it a conflict at all becoming a member of a trade union?

LS: No.

SD: That ^{felt} comfortable?

LS: Oh yes,

SD: What kind of attitudes were there, not so much in the shipyards, but within the community towards women who were working in those kinds of jobs, did you get support from people, questions?

LS: Well, never got any put down on us, no, not that I know of, 'cause everybody was working, that was the main thing, you were working.

SD: So most people...

LS: See, previous to the war jobs were very hard to get, and, I don't remember everybody, anybody, feeling put down because of working in the shipyards at all, I know I never felt it.

SD: Is there anything else you think is important to mention?

LS: No, not really.

SD: Alright, at the height of women being in the South Burrard yards, how many women were there about? Do you remember?

LS: Oh, there was quite a few; I couldn't tell you exact numbers, but there was quite a few, so it got so that it was, it looked about, maybe not even, but, and everybody was happy, everybody seemed, a happy atmosphere with it all. Yes, very. Maybe men enjoyed working with women, I don't know, maybe it made the day more pleasant.

SD: Did people joke around on the job a lot, or...

LS: Well, I was always with my shipwright up on the top decks, but

- LS: (cont'd) everybody seemed very happy, there was a very happy atmosphere, all the time, that I always seem to feel, no matter where I went, with my, with my ship there.
- SD: A woman I interviewed described when she came into the yards that the guys kind of used to play a lot of practical jokes, and they kind of tested her in some ways, did that happen to you at all?
- LS: If you had to go to the tool room to get a, say they sent you for a wrench or ^(sumpin') something, well, they maybe, they might have did it once or twice, and they'd say, now make sure you get a left-handed wrench, well, there's no such a thing, but you'd foolishly ask the man in the tool room for a left-handed wrench, and then he'd laugh, and then say it's, it was just a joke, but nothing great. Just something I guess, just for a little bit of a joke or whatever, nothing great though.
- SD: Did people socialize on lunch hours, or after?
- LS: Well, possibly they did, because, if my friends in the shop, we'd all get together and eat our lunch, there was a lunch room there too, to go into, for the girls, and I guess they had a lunch room, a canteen for the men, or you just sat right out in the open, it depended on the weather, I guess. But, I guess they did, whoever you worked with, you all sat together, you know for lunch, or in the canteen.
- SD: Were there lay offs during different seasons during the year?
- LS: No, it was pretty steady. Because the work was always there. And it's , they needed help, or somebody went because of a

LS: (cont'd) reason, there was always somebody replaced all the time.

SD: Was it, hard to work in the rain?

LS: Well, I was always in the shop, or up in the top of the ship which was always covered with tarpaulin or something, but, you get used to it, I didn't mind it, you were dressed for the weather. And, it just didn't bother me any, I don't think it bothered any of the girls, 'cause you dressed for it.

SD: Were there many accidents,

LS: I guess there would be. I remember a man falling off the top of one of the ships, off the staging, and I'm sure he died. But, there had to be accidents, just like any job, maybe broke your finger, or burnt yourself, or pulled a, broke a leg, or something, but I don't remember anything great hap- anything happening amongst people I knew. Like anybody getting, hurt, I know I never was hurt. And believe me, I did a lot of climbing all over those boats. You get so that you're always nimble and you know what you're doing.

SD: After the war did have any, after you were married, did you have any involvement with union activity after that, or . . .

LS: Not really, my husband's been in the Boiler makers' though, since fourteen, and, so, I've always believed in the unions, believe me. Because you always knew you had somebody to stand up for you. If you needed them. So, I was always a very, a person who always believed in unions. So,

SD: Was there, a contact between women who had worked in the

SD: (cont'd) shipyards after the war?

LS: Well, my girlfriend went, she got married and she lives in Seattle, and, when she's here we see each other once in a while, and , no, ya, my other girlfriends, worked, well they worked about three months in the shipyards, and then one got burnt with a rivet, and scared her and she went into working at a lunch counter or something, but, we always stayed in our circle of friends, and a lot of the girls that worked in the shipyards, I never saw any more, but I wasn't really in with them because, it, you're scattered all over the place in those, on those ships and I just had two, three girlfriends and we just met at lunchtime and we walked home together or went to work in the morning, I don't know how the rest turned out.

SD: Do you know if there was a lot of turnover amongst the women?

LS: I don't think so. I don't know.

SD: Most of them could hack it, they'd be OK?

LS: ya,

SD:

LS: Well, the burning, they were going to teach me, it was like the plate would be on a long table, like this big steel plate, and this burning machine was on a little track, and ^{RUN} on this track, and you just set the burning machine up and it would burn along, and you would stop it and set the machine again to follow any of the lines that you drew out, because you'd have to , it's like a template, the steel was all marked out and you just followed your marks, I could have picked that

LS: (cont'd) up in a hurry, but , I don't know who told me, was it the first aid, or someone said that the fumes could bother a woman, as far as when it came to when she was ready to have children or something, you know; now whether there's any truth in that, or not, I don't know. But I thought to myself, no way. I'm not going to have to worry about that. But, looking back, I don't think I would have done it in any case because all that smoke and all that fumes, you're breathing it steady, I'm sure it wouldn't have done you any good. (?) in those days. So I don't regret it. But , I was asked. And I don't know how many, there wasn't that many asked, I turned it down for health reasons, I didn't think it was healthy enough. When it was...

SD: During the depression,

LS: During the depression, well, we always ate well, my family, and we always had a good home. But, there was no money extra, you know, any extra money for candies, ^{or} shows, or like that, but I remember, always eating well; I'm healthy to this day, I must have ate well. And, having a good home, but not too many clothes, usually you didn't have much of a choice if you wanted to get dressed up and ^{you} maybe had one dress or something,

SD: I guess your dad worked steady if he was in the shipyards?

LS: Ya, he worked because he was past the age of going into the forces; he was in the First World War, and he was on a pension because he was in France, for four years, three

LS: (cont'd) and a half years out of the four, right in Vimy when they had the Armistice, in fact he's in the Archives of the Vancouver City Hall, I think he held the flag here, ^(what) that they brought over from France for November the 11th, and it had a big hole in the flag that they brought right from France. And he was an acting sargeant, instructing sargeant of some kind, and he joined up here, in Whitehorse, and went, six months he was in France, and, so he couldn't have been called up anyhow, because his chest was sort of damaged from mustard gas, in those days. So,

SD: But, he was he able to work during the thirties, like he kept a job..

LS: Off and on ; not very well, because due to that poisoning, that mustard gas, he didn't get a cold, he got pneumonia, because your chest, it did something to your lungs, that mustard gas, and, but he got a small pension, and whether he was able to pick up a few dollars here and there and everywhere, to supplement it, but I remember living well, eating good, and having a good home. Always a nice home, better than most of my friends, put it that way.

END OF SIDE TWO
END OF TAPE