

LUBY STEFANI Women Entering the Shipyards WWII 1.

They were hiring women for passing rivets and they were being taught how to burn and weld and to just about do anything. It was shortly after that when they saw that it was really working well. They must have talked to the different men that had girls helping them and asked them what they thought. Must have been a favourable report, because after that they really started to hire.

We were in the shop and not right out on the ships with men working all around you. In the shops it was only a few men--you're helping your fitter. There might have been five fitters over here and about six or seven over there. At the very end of the shop they had welding and buring--you rarely ever got down there. So that you weren't mixed into it too quickly. By the time I left the shop and went on the ships you were really used to working with men and it was nothing.

Women never got any putdown on us, 'cause everybody was working. That was the main thing--you were working. Previous to the war jobs were very hard to get.

Women were restricted from all the heavier jobs, like riveting, and stagehands which is putting up all that heavy staging around the ship. As far as welding, burningg, fitters--all that was open.

LUBY STEFANI: SHIPYARD WORK WWII

I went into the shipyards in about 1941. All the big machinery, the shops and cranes, 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 to work with it. I blended in very easy.

I was a fitter's helper in the shop. I found it very easy. A template is a wooden frame that you put down on steel plate or a beam. Then you mark it off, so that it could be cut, or burned, or the rivet holes would be all marked. They're all parts of the ship, whatever you happen to be marking. Then the pieces would be sent to the burner, or wherever it had to go. It would be fitted on some part of the ship.

The man I was helping said that I had caught on so easy that he found that I was just as good as a man helper, if not better. I was offered another job out of the shop, about six or eight months later. They asked me if I wanted to go and learn to be a burner. 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.

Then Mr. Martinni^{sp?} came and asked me personally if I wanted to go on the ships, to be a shipwright's helper. That paid more, so I thought, 'Gee, I'll take that.' I found him very good. He was always stepping me up.

The shipwright, his job was to mark out the superstructure on the top

deck of these ships--which would be the housing on the top deck and the cabin. His job was to lay it all out and measure it and mark it out. When everything was brought up on a crane and set down, it would set right on those markings. I helped him.

The helper would have to measure out. 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 mark, because you couldn't use chalk because they'd rub off. You'd have to make all these little marks with a punch and a hammer and help him measure out things. Mind you, he was the one that was doing all the brain work. I just had to go behind and make sure that I punched it out properly. And made no mistakes because it had to be done right. It was simple again, it was no problem at all. He told me the same thing. He says, 'As far as having a boy helper or a woman helper, I wouldn't find any difference at all.'

I was with him for quite a while. They were picking about ten or fifteen women to go on the carriers. It was a selection because, there were about six hundred sailors living in those carriers. They were sleeping, eating and doing their drills. They were making a very tight selection on it because they just wanted it decent. They wanted girls that had good morals, because you could get into trouble working with six hundred men on the ship every day, you know what I mean? They asked me if I wanted to go. That I was picked, but it was my choice.

On that, I was the electrician's helper. And the money was better. I thought, 'It isn't very far from South Burrard, I think I'll try it.'

The reason for them putting all these little extras into these aircraft carriers was that the English had pneumatic signals on the carriers, which transmitted messages from one end back and forth across the ship. The Americans wanted an electrical system put in, in case the pneumatic signals got blown out by a gun. Then they wouldn't have a way of transmitting messages.

Pneumatic signals were like little cylinders, about eight by two. You put a message in there and put a top on it and you put it in this pipe and then shut the little door and push a button. The air would shoot the cylinder to wherever it had to go. The other person would open up the cylinder and get the message at the other end. That was the reason they were sending electricians and some helpers over to install these electrical transmissions where you could phone and speak. I worked there until that was done and then I went into the industry again.

LUBY STEFANI MEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN WORKERS SHIPYARDS WWII

In the beginning we were in the shop, and not right out on the ships, with all the men working around you. In the shop it was only a few men. You're helping your fitter and there might have been five fitters over here and about six or seven over there. At the very end of the shop they had welding and burning, You rarely ever got down there. So that you weren't mixed into it too quickly. By the time I left the shop and went on the ships, by that time you were really used to working with men and it was nothing.

I always stuck ^{very} close to my fitter, or my shipwright. I just never found any problem to it and I didn't think any of the other girls did too.

There was no animosity [from the men] that I saw [when we first came in]. Because as soon as they got eighteen or nineteen they were called up into the forces, unless they were not physically fit. So that they needed the women in there. The turnover of the men were quite rapid. Especially the young men. If they had dependents they weren't taken as quickly as the single ones.

I know a few women met the men who they eventually married. Like when I worked on the carriers. God, if you didn't have fifty invitations a day, you didn't have one. I never went out with one of them, because I just kept to my friends and people we knew and boys we knew. We didn't go out much. It's not like to-day, I tell you! You didn't do too much 'cause you weren't allowed to. Parents were very strict. But I imagine that there were quite a few that met and married while working together.

Everybody seemed very happy, there was always a happy atmosphere all the time. Maybe men enjoyed working with women---maybe it made the day more pleasant.

If you had to go to the tool room and they sent you for a wrench, 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. It was just a joke. They might have did it once or twice.

My friends in the shop, we'd all get together and eat our lunch. There was a lunchroom to go into for the girls and they had a canteen for the men--or you just sat right out in the open. It depended on the weather. Whoever you worked with, you all sat together for lunch.

LUBY STEFANI: WOMEN WORKED WELL WWII 1.

The women I always surrounded myself with found the work easy and they liked it. They wouldn't have left for another job because it pleased them. In those days, the money was very good, compared to what it had been before the war. A lot of people went in because it was well paying and because it was war. It was a war effort.

There was a lot of patriotism. You were diligent and you did your work. You didn't try to pretend to do it. You never missed a day. You had to be very sick if you missed a day. And you put yourself one hundred per cent--^{out} you just didn't fool. That's how I did it anyhow. And I think most of the women did. I know I never missed any days. It applied to all of them. No matter what job I had, I always made a point of doing my work well, to the best of my ability.

I was never afraid of heights, climbing all that staging up and down the ships, that's one thing that never bothered me at all. Being athletic.

LUBY STEFANI WOMEN AND FRIENDSHIP SHIPYARDS WWII 1.

A girlfriend of mine that went to school with me--I had mentioned to her that my father had put my name in and he was going to get me a job [in the shipyards]. There was a little waiting period and she said, "Do you think you would like to come and try?" Maybe my dad will put your name down too." So he did, and they called ^{the} both of us. So both of us **always** worked together. She went on the carriers too--we were always picked. I don't know why--maybe it was because we were always very proper. In those days it was a little different than to-day.

My other girlfriends worked about three months in the shipyards. Then one got burned with a rivet and it scared her and she went into working at a lunch counter. But we always stayed in our circle of friends. A lot of the girls that worked in the shipyards I ~~never~~ say any/more. I wasn't really in with them because you're scattered all over the place on those ships. I just had three girlfriends and we met at lunchtime and we walked home together or went to work in the morning. I don't know how the rest turned out.

LUBY STEFANI CONDITIONS IN SHIPYARDS WWII 1.

Shift work was not bad. Then I got so that they kept me on days steady. I didn't mind shiftwork-even after I left the shipyards where it was shift work.

Lay offs went by seniority and ability. They coupled the two. They would have favoured the men in those days a little bit more, 'cause it's only recently that there's been more equality. But I found them fair. For lay offs and promotions I found the union very fair and the management very fair. If they had a young boy helping or a girl, they would have been paid the same.

I found the work easy and good paying and it was healthy work. We were out in the open. I'm sure a lot of the women would have wanted to stay, but after the war all the shipyards just shut down because there wasn't work any more.

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

I was asked two or three times if I wanted to take up welding or burning. I just didn't think that that fumes from welding and burning would do a person any good. I just thought, "No, my health is more important."

LUBY STEFANI CONDITIONS IN THE SHIPYARDS WWII 2.

They were going to teach me burning--^{big steel}this plate would be on a long table and this burning machine was on a little track and you just set the burning machine up and it would burn along. You would stop it and set the machine again to follow any of the lines that you drew out. It's a template--the steel was all marked out and you just followed your marks. I could have picked that up in a hurry. But the first aid said that the fumes could bother a woman when she was ready to have children. 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 all that." Looking back, I don't think that I would done it in any case because of all that smoke and fumes⁻⁻⁻ you're breathing it steady. a

I was always in the shop, ot up on the top of the ship which was always covered with tarpaulins. But I didn't mind it--you were dressed for the waather. I don't thinkit bothered any of the girls.

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 youbroke your finger, or burnt yourself or broke a leg. I don't remember anything happening amongst people I knew. I know I was never hurt. A believe me, I did a lot of climbing all over those boats. You get sothat you're always nimble and you know what you're doing.

LUBY STEFANI WOMEN AND UNION: SHIPYARDS 1.

When we were accepted for the job we had to sign up for the Boilermakers' Union. In the Boilermakers' Union. Any grievances and complaints, we could have gone to the shop steward freely and said anything we wanted to.

When we were accepted for the job we had to sign up for the union

Being young, you go to union meetings and they don't seem to have the importance that they would if they were older. We went to meetings and we all listened very dutifully and agreed with everything that our members told us was good for us, and that was it. When you get older you understand more about everything, so your attitude might have been a little different. We were well looked after by the union and the management was very fair.

LUBY STEFANI Employment Alternatives WWII 1.

My ambition was to go to school. All my friends had either dropped out or quit in Grade Nine, Ten. I was the only one that was still going to school. I deeply wanted to carry on, but in Grade Twelve, I'll tell you, I only had one skirt and blouse that I wore the whole year. On graduation I didn't even go because it required getting a dress and a shoes and there just wasn't any money. I told the

principal that I couldn't come because I was going to start a new job the next day--I didn't think that I could go to the grad and stay up late and get up to go to work--because I wasn't going to tell him! But my ambition was to go to school.

I was a quick learner. I found everything quite easy. After I had been up to South Burrard I had to check in with Selective Service for some reason. They wanted me to go into the airforce 'cause they figured I had a lot of potential. I could go into some career in the airforce. My dad wouldn't hear of it. In those days it was a little different. You just didn't go and do those things. You had to stay home and be home until you married, if you were a girl. You had more opportunity if you were a boy. You had more freedom. I was in Grade Twelve and had to be home at nine o'clock, never mind go into the airforce! I don't regret it. I raised my boys and they're both

professionals to-day. I did my job. They've come to that conclusion that if you have children, it's best to stay home and raise them.

[Towards the end] the carriers were finished. I could have gone back to South Burrard yards after that was done. But I had two

girlfriends who were working here, there and everywhere, so I got a job at McGavin's Bakery, which was paying very well. I could have gone up the ladder at the bakery because the forelady was going to train me to do wedding cake decorations. I told her not to, 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.

I got married after the war when I was twenty-three. My mother had died when I was ten, my father really wasn't there to guide me. I was trying to figure this all out myself. If I had had a little guidance at home from my parents I would have gone into the office world. I did go on interviews and I was favourably received. But, the money was very poor. I think that if I had went into that world I would have gone to the top, because I had that within me.

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. In our day, it was mostly in the office that you could go anywhere. War work was a job and it was paying well and I was helping my dad keep the house going. My brother had joined the navy. I was about eighteen when I started to work in the yards.

LUBY STEFANI

NAME	pg.	PLACE	pg.	DATE	pg.
WWII					
WOMEN ENTERING SHIPYARDS					
SHIPYARD WORK	* MR MARTINI * South Burrard Shipyards pg 2. * Americans pg. 3.		8	1941	1.
MEN'S ATTITUDES					
TOWARDS WOMEN	WKRS.				
WOMEN WORKED WELL					
WOMEN AND FRIENDSHIP					
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LUBY STEFANI NOTES

Women Entering the Shipyards

pg. 1. footnotes years of entry and process, cross reference with Buster Foster
note regulation re: women and heavy jobs

Shipyard Work

pg. 1. sp. of Mr. Martini?
note on process of women working on ships and on size of yard and variety
of tasks might put her in perspective

Men's Attitude Towards Women Shipyard workers

pg. 1. photo of shops would be good here.
pg. 1. some cross references re: sexual harassment. and jokes (pg. 2)

Women Worked Well

pg. 1. notes on women and absenteeism and on performance

Women and Friendship

pg. 1. note on hiring process

Conditions in Shipyards

pg. 1 notes on Day offs and cross reference to others (Rankin)
pg. 2. maybe a note on industrial health and safety in this industry over theirs.

Women and Unions

pg. 1. Needs a note on women in Boilermakers, moles

Employment Alternatives

pg. 1. Some note on the drop in women real wages after the WWII