

Interview with Eleanor Mae Cramer

**Aleutian World War II National Historic Area
Oral History Project**

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Interviewed and transcribed by Janis Kozlowski,
National Park Service, Anchorage, Alaska

This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with Mrs. Cramer was conducted via the telephone and recorded on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav, and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

The transcript has been lightly edited.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:00:00] Where did you work?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Lockheed, in Burbank.

Janis Kozlowski: What type of work did you do?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, it was on the airplanes, you know, the gas tanks and just general maintenance and things.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you install gas tanks?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No. I worked on a putty – a sealant – for gas tanks. It was a, you know...it was secret then. It was a medicine ... medicine ... some chemicals that they used to seal those gas tanks. Fred Caruso was the inventor of it. I worked with him at Lockheed.

Janis Kozlowski: So this made the tanks self sealing?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, and something else about it that was supposed to be very good for the gas. I just know that it was patented and was considered very good and the formula was kept secret for awhile.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh! So was that an aftermarket ... you know, after the airplane was put together then this new sealant came out and then you put it on after the airplane was all ... already assembled?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, I don't know about that because they had a spray thing where I worked, they sprayed stuff on the parts and things. But I don't know about, you know, the chemicals. They didn't tell us anything. They just did it and then we assembled.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, ok.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: It was, in other words, supposed to be secret.

Janis Kozlowski: So, so was it something that you had to agree not to say anything about?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, we were all told not to discuss our work and anything that they do there. That was policy. Don't talk about it.

Janis Kozlowski: No matter what role you had in the company.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I was just one of those general workers and we were instructed to keep things to ourselves.

Janis Kozlowski: What ... the sealant that you used for the gas tanks, do you know which airplanes those gas tanks went on?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, but I do know it was on the great big airplanes. They didn't particularly tell us which ones. But, I know they were ... it was one of the most important ones. They just didn't discuss that.

Janis Kozlowski: Un-hnn. Did you also work in other areas of the plant?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Mostly in the paint department and the chemistry lab.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. And that pretty well dealt with the sealant that you mentioned.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. So, how long did you work there?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I believe it must have been ... it was all during the ... you know, that time. I guess I worked there five years, but it was part of it--the beginning and the end.... My Mother and I both worked together in the same department. Of course, she's passed away now and can't tell about it. But we worked together and it was, oh, it was interesting and very.... Well, we were proud of what we did, what we were accomplishing and things. It was something good.

We had little pins. They gave us pins for doing certain things that we wore so many years, so many months and all that. That was ... it was something to be proud of and we were glad to go. Of course, we both went together and that made it interesting too, Mother and daughter.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:03:30] Was that the first job you ever had?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no, no! I used to wait tables and all that stuff when I was younger. [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, ok. So, what were your reasons for going to work at Lockheed?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, it was mostly because of the government, you know. We wanted to do what we could for the government and what they wanted. It was something to be proud of it. We were doing something for our country and we were proud of it. We were anxious to be part of the government and doing the right thing. It wasn't just a toy it was something worthwhile and something important.

Janis Kozlowski: Sure. Was it, uh.... Well, since they wanted you to work there did they make it fairly easy for women to work in the factory? Because it was pretty new that women were working in those types of jobs, right?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, but there wasn't any problem. They just interviewed you and they talked to you and then there was no problem. They were, of course, they were particular who they hired. If there was something unusual they wouldn't hire that person, but, no it was, it was a pleasant thing. We would go and get checked as we went in and checked as we went out to see we weren't carrying or doing anything we shouldn't. No, it was secretive and we didn't talk about it.

Janis Kozlowski: How old were you at the time?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, gee. [laughing] I'm not very old ... during that time. I'd have to stop and figure back. Now, was that in '45? [both laughing] I'm 86 now, so that's a long time ago. I was young, but not old either. I was just starting into the industry. So, I was...I don't know, because I'm just guessing now because I don't remember—25, 28? - somewhere in that range. I was young. [laughing]

I was proud, we had pins of the airplane--little pins of the P-38 and all that that you earned. I was very proud to be working there. It was...we had a good showing of the employees that were all good. We never had any problems.

Janis Kozlowski: And, so was the...? Do you think the factory was pretty well dominated by women workers at the time, then?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no. Oh no, it was mixed. It was very unusual for so many women but they had men as well as women, but mostly it was women where I worked.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:06:01] Were you married then?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I was married in ... [laughing] I've got to stop and think. [both laughing] Seems to me I wasn't married. I was married when I was 25 and now I'm 85 or 86 so it was quite a while ago. No, I wasn't married yet. I'm pretty sure because I remember my husband-to-be was new there and he wasn't working there but everybody there knew that I had a boyfriend.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, ok. And so ... he hadn't left for any war duty by that time?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: He worked in a ... he was in ... well, most of the time he was with the Air Corp. So he didn't go into Lockheed.

Janis Kozlowski: So, was he ... he was in the Air Corp, but he was stationed down near Burbank where you were?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, he was stationed near where I was living in Hollywood.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok, is that where ... how you met him then?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Um, no I met him at UCLA. I was going to college and he was in the Air Corp.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok, so, he was ... [interrupting] oh, I'm sorry.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: We had, you know, we were with different organizations. The Air Corp was part of our work. We ... it was kept quiet. No, I enjoyed working there and he was, he was a lot of fun but he didn't talk about his work. That was a no-no.

Janis Kozlowski: I guess that was kind of the way it was at that time.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Nobody was supposed to talk about where they were going, what they were doing.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, mainly that. One very close friend that couldn't even tell me what the product was that he was using or what he was doing because it was being investigated, I guess, as being ... well, sort of like patented. You couldn't talk about it.

Janis Kozlowski: Isn't it amazing that so many people were asked to keep secrets, and they did, it seems like?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes we did. We were very up to the rules and we were proud to keep them.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. Yeah, that was a remarkable thing about that ... about people at that time because it seems to have changed now.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes. We were ... and, of course, it was strictly ... they checked our purse and any unusual things that you were carrying or anything ... there was nothing allowed to go in or out that wasn't supposed to be there.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm. [0:08:40] So did you ... you decided you wanted to contribute to the war effort and then you ... did you choose Lockheed or did...?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I chose Lockheed because my Mother and I both liked it and we were ... had a bus, or a friend that drove right over there every day so we had a free ride over to Burbank and back. And it was pleasant, it was a lot of, you know, there were five in a car. We talked about everything and work ... but nothing that shouldn't be told or talked about.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm. And I ... there was rationing at the time probably even for gas, so that ride probably was a big factor?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yeah. We were careful because, you know, money was, you know, not the thing to throw away. We were very careful. And everybody pitched in. There were five of us in the car and we each paid our share.

Janis Kozlowski: So, do you remember ... do you remember ... do you have any memories of what it was like to live in Southern California during the war? You know, there was ... I know there were some things that happened there during that time that might have been frightening. Do you remember ... do any memories come to mind?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Only when my husband – my husband-to-be - was shipped up to the Aleutian Islands and then it was bad because he couldn't even talk to me if we visited or got together about what was going on up in the Aleutian Islands with the Army and everything – nothing. [He couldn't] discuss nothing, wasn't allowed to talk about. We were very patriotic too. We didn't try to break any rules.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you know he was going to Alaska? Or did he know?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, no. We didn't know where he was going.

Janis Kozlowski: You just knew he was going.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: We just knew he was going to be gone. We had no idea where he was gonna go or how long or anything. That was kept secret.

Janis Kozlowski: Then, did you exchange letters?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: We wrote back and forth after awhile were able to send letters but they were censored. They could be opened any time and looked at them to see what we were saying and what was coming in the mail.

Janis Kozlowski: So did you see evidence of that when his letters came?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I think one time I did see something – it said “inspected” or something on it. But normally they didn’t talk about it. But they did it. They didn’t discuss it.

Janis Kozlowski: I imagine the guys were pretty well versed in what they could and couldn’t say so they probably didn’t have to do a lot of censoring that way because they knew that they couldn’t say certain things.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. They were very, very, you know, careful of what they said, did or didn’t do. No, that was just the thing to do. It was like breaking the rules. You didn’t break any rules.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. So how long was your husband up in Alaska? Do you remember?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I don’t know, between three and five years. It seemed a long, long time to me because I was in love. [laughing] He wasn’t my husband then.

Janis Kozlowski: And you were young and time goes by pretty slow then.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, we couldn’t, you know, it seemed like a long time before we’d see each other but he was ... he was very devoted to his work too and he didn’t discuss anything. He’d come down and we’d talk but we didn’t say anything we shouldn’t have. We were very patriotic.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm. He didn’t have any breaks from his service in the Aleutians did he? Like, did he come back at all and visit and then have to go back there?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no, no, no. He was ... I think he was given a pass or two, once to come down to see me. But they were not too willing to let them wander around.

And besides the work he was doing I guess, was quite secretive too because he was a chemical engineer. You know, he'd been in that field, so they were careful.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm. [0:12:37] Plus, he was such a long way away and there wasn't a lot of transportation I imagine.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: That's true. And in those days you couldn't just drive here and there. You hitchhiked most of the time, far apart with gas. You didn't have the money to do that. We would get in cars and go together. I remember being in the road and hitchhiking with my husband—I wasn't married then [laughing]. We were hitchhiking a ride just because we needed to go somewhere that was important but we didn't have cars that we could just get in and go.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm. Well, let me see. Um, can I jump back to your Lockheed job?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Surely.

Janis Kozlowski: I wanted to ask you ... I'd seen some pictures of the Lockheed plant with camouflage netting over it being disguised as a community.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: What do you remember about that?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, I remember that they ... I remember that it was very secretive too because they were very strict about what you said, what you did, what you had in your purse, and what you were going to do and why and that we were told to be careful. We were told not to talk about it. That was part of the rules, not to discuss what ... and I worked in the Lockheed secretive place where they checked them very closely. I was in the chemical lab at one time where they were very, very strict. We were ... we weren't, you know, weren't really locked up or anything but they were very careful about what we said, what we did, where we went.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you work like a regular eight hour shift there?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, yes. Sometimes we worked a little over time but most of the time it was eight hours. We have had where we had to stay longer to get something done.

Janis Kozlowski: Did they have more than one shift?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, they did. They had a midnight shift, the late hour. They had a morning and then another one – there were three shifts and I was in the middle one. Not the early and not the late one.

Janis Kozlowski: And your Mother was working there the same shift?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, un-hnn. She worked in a different department though. But we'd see each other, you know. I was in one end and she was in another.

I was working with the parts that were being painted, sprayed, and turning them over in the trays as they came down. They were hung on a conveyor belt and they had huge trays with parts of the airplanes—things that we didn't know what they were. And you ... they would come down on a pulley -- like a big hanging down. And then we'd hurry, as quick as we can, had to turn them over because they were painting the other side. Then they went on a conveyor belt down to another part of the factory. But we really had to hurry because they had to be painted, sprayed, and turned and whatever they did with them.

They came on a ... I mean you could see [laughing] the great big trays coming down on the pulley, just hanging, suspending down – great big squares, I don't know how big to describe the squares that were holding these parts. But they were coming down on the conveyor belt. You could see them coming [laughing] and you'd take a deep breath and get moving. You didn't waste any time because they were on a controlled speed so that you knew that you had to hurry.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you have any idea how many of them you did a day?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no, because it was constant. We had a little ... just a short break in between but. No, I ... it was just ... we were glad to go home at night [laughing]. It was a long day, but it was ... and you were tired. You were very glad to do it too because you knew we were doing something good. It was just a ... and besides the money was good.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, it was?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, we got paid pretty good for what we did. I mean in that day. In those days it wasn't a lot of money but it was a good pay.

Janis Kozlowski: And did you still live with your parents then?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, no. My Mother and I had an apartment in Hollywood on Eleanor Avenue and we shared the expense together. No, my Father was in Bur ... out in the desert working with the government in their line of work. And we'd see him on weekends. My Dad and my Mother and I would get together on weekends and see each

other but the majority of the time it was just my Mother and I had the apartment in Hollywood on Eleanor Avenue.

Janis Kozlowski: It was named after you?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No. [both laughing] But we got tickled over it because we went to look for apartments and this one was a little short one in Hollywood and it was called Eleanor Avenue. I said, —That’s where we’ve got to live—Eleanor on Eleanor Avenue. [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Sure. Yeah, that....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: It was near the cemetery [laughing]. That dead ... our street dead ended into the cemetery in Hollywood.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, was your Dad then working in the desert on some war effort?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, he was out there.... Yes, it was a military, we don’t know what ... I mean, he didn’t discuss his work either. But he was out in the desert on government work and he’d come back because he was very intelligent. And then we’d see each other, or he’d come visit us on weekends when he could. But it was hard for him because it was out in Yocurn [unsure of town name] or in the arm ... or out in the desert. In those days it wasn’t easy just to drive and get gas and stuff to town. But we’d see him on weekends.

Janis Kozlowski: So, what did ... did he have that job before the war?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, no. He worked in Hyperion Chemistry Department.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you know what the name of the company was that he worked for in the desert?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Uh, no. No, I don’t remember it.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. What were your parents names?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, my Dad’s name was Albert Herzig and my Mother’s name was Gertrude Herzig. And she was ... her name before she married my Dad was Richmond.

Janis Kozlowski: Gertrude Richmond?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Um-hmm. And my Dad, his name was Herzig. We used to joke about it. They’d ask me what my name was and they’d say, —Oh, it’s Eleanor May or

she may not, her zigged when it should have zagged. My name was Herzig, Eleanor Herzig, Eleanor Mae Herzig. So, I mean, the name was ... oh, a lot of fun.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. [both laughing] Now, you ... did you say that you went to college?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yeah, I went to college. I went to UCLA.

Janis Kozlowski: And, was that before you started working at Lockheed?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no, no. That was after.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok, so did ... you didn't work at the Lockheed Plant after the war?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, I did work before the war. You know, just before the war came out I was working, I wasn't working, I was a student at UCLA in the Chemistry Department.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, ok. And then you ... did you quit school then and go over to work at Lockheed?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Uh, I didn't quit school. I think I had already finished my year or something and then I was out and then I went over there. I was ... I didn't graduate from there until after I went to UCLA and then went back again. I mean, I left UCLA and I went to work because I needed the money and they needed me, so.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you kind of postponed your college education in order to help with the war effort and work at Lockheed?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: And then you finished later.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. And I remember my Mother and I would, and the others that went to Lockheed, they stopped in Inglewood to pick my Mother and I up and then we --all five of us in the car—I don't remember the men's names but they ... the car was packed. There were five or six of us in the car. We'd go together and come home together but we weren't all in the same department.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm. What kind of clothes did you wear for that type of job that you had?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, sort of a ... not fancy [laughing]. They were sort of work clothes. You know, we looked decent, nothing expensive, but we worked in comfortable

clothes, I'd say. There was just nothing, no fancy dresses or anything. Just like every day things.

Janis Kozlowski: But you did wear dresses rather than pants?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, no, we wore both. I remember wearing them both, but most of them, I think most of the time we wore dresses – my Mother and I did. But you could wear either one. We had ... one part they had slacks. I think I wore ... part of mine was in the chem. lab so I didn't have to have anything special except, you know, my weighing clothes. You know, they were careful about what we had on. You couldn't just wear anything.

Janis Kozlowski: Is that because they wanted you to be covered up so the paints or chemicals wouldn't get on your skin?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, partly that. I know we were very careful because we didn't, you know, we didn't want to get into any trouble. But some of that ...

[0:21:48] Fred, the guy I worked with, he had this chemical and I mean it was patented stuff and it was very secretive. He couldn't even tell what he was using. We knew he was famous because he worked in the lab but we didn't know what he was doing, he was just very secretive. And I went down to take any information downstairs, or to get information, on what we were doing, it was ... I had to have identification. They had to know who I was, and why I was, and what I was doing, and why I was doing it.

Janis Kozlowski: It was a pretty big plant, wasn't it?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes. Yes, it was. They had two divisions; the A plant and the B plant. They were big operations.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you know how many people worked there?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no. I just know there were a lot—a lot of people.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. Well, I wanted to ask you again. I saw this picture of the Lockheed plant with camouflaging over it. Do you remember that?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes. They ... yes, because it was very secretive and the same with going in and out of the plant. They checked very thoroughly who's coming in, who's going out and what they had in their purse or bundles or anything and why.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you actually like drive under some netting or something? Or like a big roof thing to get to the plant?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, no. When we got near there and we went into a, you know, into the area, and it was more secretive then. But just to get there anybody could go by it wouldn't really pay much attention to it. No, it was kept ... in case of bombing or anything, they didn't advertise, [chuckling] they kept it quiet.

Janis Kozlowski: So, they didn't have, like, a big advertisement outside indicating what it was?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh no! No, no.

Janis Kozlowski: But do you remember camouflage over it?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, they had that because of bombing and stuff. They were secretive there. They didn't want the facilities to be noticed from the air or anything. No, it was a secret thing.

Janis Kozlowski: Those pictures made it look really impressive about how much camouflage netting and disguising that they did. I'd never seen anything like that before.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. They were very, very [laughing] ... we were not ready to get bombed either at that time. No, they were very good about that.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. Well, do you remember, um, any bomb scares or any scares about the Japanese coming on the California coast?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. I remember hearing those. Yes, that was because they were too far, not too far away, it was just up north there. Yes, they were very careful.

Then when my husband—before we were married—they took him up there—he was in the Air Corp then—and it was really, really ... we had no idea where he was going or why and he couldn't tell me and he couldn't – nothing, nothing. And then all the sudden I get a letter from—secretly has been opened already by the government and stamped before I could even read it. So, whatever he did or they did, it was opened and out in the open. There were no secrets went in the mail.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. Now, you didn't know that he was in Alaska but did you hear anything about Alaska and the war up there?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, but it was scary because, well, I heard, you know, a few rumors and I thought, "oh, I hope Mark—my husband-to-be—was going to be alright." And we didn't know where he was and we didn't know if the Russians were with him or going after him or what. We didn't know anything; they didn't want you to know anything.

Janis Kozlowski: So that was probably the scariest part for you was worrying about him?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, and then, you know, you just didn't know what was gonna happen. You were very, very careful. You didn't talk either, because you didn't know who was listening. No, it was very ... we talked amongst ourselves but other than that it was not discussed with anybody outside.

Janis Kozlowski: That's right, the phones were ...you had party lines, right? So anybody could pick up them up.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. That was another thing. You had to be careful about what you said.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you feel that maybe people were—not just your neighbors, but government people or others, were listening to your conversations?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, bad people, as well as the government.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, bad people, like maybe the Japanese from the submarines or something like that?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, somebody might be listening. But no, we knew that the phone lines were always taped or tapped. They could pick them up and hear what was going on. So they were very careful about what they were saying, what they were doing. They were very strict too, because you weren't supposed to say or talk about certain things at all.

Janis Kozlowski: Like, what types of things?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, what you're using, what are they making, what are they doing, where is it going and why. You know, it was just strictly, "do your part, do your job." And they would check to make sure that everything was done right. They were very careful about it because they didn't know what--we didn't know what was going on. But we do remember them [laughing] going through our purses and stuff and checking our clothing and our pockets when we went in and out.

Janis Kozlowski: Of the plant?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Um-hmm. You couldn't take anything in, you couldn't take anything out.

Janis Kozlowski: Were there other places around where you lived where that was done as well?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Not that I can remember, just where I was working and where I was at Lockheed.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. It made sense for them to do that there.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:27:35] And how did, how did people feel about the war down where you lived? Or how did you feel about it? What did you think?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: We were scared and we were worried about my boyfriend, you know, and what was gonna happen to him because you didn't know. We didn't know where he was going or where they put him or nothing—it was completely blocked. We had no idea what was going on. Everything was hush, hush. You didn't discuss anything, you didn't hear anything and you weren't told anything.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. Did it cross your mind that maybe that he was over in Europe or?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, we were scared all the time. We didn't know where he was going or what they were doing and if he was gonna be safe. And no, they didn't tell us and we would worry. We had no idea where he was or what was going on because they just weren't allowed to.

Janis Kozlowski: So there was new ... any news that you heard if it was bad you thought, "Oh, he might be over there."

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, we just didn't know. And fortunately he was kept in the Aleutian Islands but I didn't know that. We didn't have any idea, you know, that that was all and that was where he was. We didn't know until after everything was over that that's where he was. We knew where he went but we didn't know what happened after that. But that was it.

It was very ... you didn't know whether he was gonna be killed or not. It was scary. You just, you know, you'd hear the news and you'd wonder. It was a....

Janis Kozlowski: Did you have other family members ... I know your ... it sounds like your Father and your Mother and yourself you were all involved in the war effort. Did you have other family members also involved?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh yes. My brother [Norman] was in the service at the time. He was in service, so, I don't know. He didn't talk about it either. We didn't write letters or

anything like that--not between my brother and I. But we did know where each other was. I mean I didn't know where he was. He knew where he was but I didn't.

Janis Kozlowski: Where did he end up serving?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Uh, I don't ... it was in, the last I knew he was in our area, in Los Angeles, but not where we knew where he was--exactly where he was. We just knew that you could just write to him. It went to the government—his name and whatever they had, a code or something we had ... the Air Corp or something, whatever he was in.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, so that's how it worked. They just gave you like a...

Eleanor Mae Cramer: He was working with the anti aircraft. We knew that, that he was working ... my brother was working with the anti aircraft and my husband was working with the Air Corp. I don't know, something with the Air Corp. But they were in two different departments and, of course, my Mother and I were both in the paint department at Lockheed. She was in a different section.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. [0:30:30] Did your Mom keep working at the Lockheed plant after the war?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Uh, no. She gave up, but I stayed and I worked until I got married.

Janis Kozlowski: And then your Father came back after the war as well and worked closer to home?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, he came back to live with us, my Mother and I. He was out in the desert all the time and on weekends he could come and see my Mother and I. But that was ... nothing until after the war because we have our whole family together.

Janis Kozlowski: You were all split up, your brother was in one place, your Father in the desert and it was just you and your Mom together.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Now, do you.... I won't keep you too long because I know it's hard to talk for a long time but....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no, I'm ok. I'm not doing anything important. [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember, there was this speech by Roosevelt, The Arsenal of Democracy speech in 1940 where he talked about how everybody needed to contribute to the war effort....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh yes, oh yes, definitely and we were very true to it too. We really tried to do exactly what they wanted us to do because we were for our own government. We didn't want anything happening. We wanted it to be ... anything we could do for the government; we didn't want anything going wrong. No, we were not wanting anything to get out or leak out that shouldn't.

Janis Kozlowski: So that speech and posters and other things that they did for war bonds and that kind of thing was very influential at the time.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Because everybody wanted to do the right thing, right?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes. It was very much so. It was very strict.

Janis Kozlowski: And what about rationing. Do you remember anything about that?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh yes, yes I do. [laughing] And I remember the white oleo. We didn't get colored margarine or anything. We had this white oleo with this little colored pack of die. We would mix it up with our hands and make it orange-yellow. [both laughing]

And then there was the meat--there were certain kind of meat, it looked like dog food. It was in cans [laughing] and they gave it to us, you know, we were rationed out--certain things. And I remember that looks like the dog food, but it wasn't, it was special meat. But it was meat and it was special because you couldn't just go pick it up off the shelf.

Janis Kozlowski: So you ... is it true that you couldn't really buy like cuts of meat like you ... you bought this meat that they had in cans instead?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, it was rationed out. The meat that we got was all rationed. And it was cooked or canned and stuff like that. No, I don't remember ever being able to go to the store and being able to just pick up a steak or anything.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you ... did the stores actually have it set out and you just ... you didn't like shop the shelves, you just went in and got whatever you were entitled to?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: You couldn't just go to the shelf and pick up stuff. I remember you had to have ... you get certain things. You were allowed certain things and you could buy those. It was sort of, um, ... sort of secretive. Well, some they couldn't get and, you know, it was just really, you couldn't get everything. There were certain things you can't ... couldn't get. They didn't have them, you couldn't get them. No, we were ... sugar and stuff like that [laughing]. You know, of course, tobacco and stuff like that didn't bother us, but you were limited to certain things and certain amounts. I remember it was very careful what you could have.

Janis Kozlowski: So you must have had to learn to cook differently?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, you had to ... you couldn't just have anything you want. You could have so much of a certain ... you were very careful too because you didn't know when the next one was gonna come, you know. It was very ... well, limited.

Janis Kozlowski: So, were you hungry sometimes? Did you get kind of skinny during that period?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, we didn't put on any weight, I remember that. [both laughing] We had enough to eat. I know we were very careful, what we had and how much we could get. You'd go down to the rationing board and things and see how much you could get, and what you could get, and you had to sign for it. It was ... it was kept under control.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:35:04] What ... do you have any lasting memories of that war time that were really memorable things, things that you remember most about that time?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Scared! Fear! Oh, we were worried, we were feared, we were scared. The Russians are close and, I mean, would my brother come home safe? Would my husband-to-be be safe? Oh, no, we were in constant worry. Because, we had no way ... they didn't tell you, you couldn't find out. You would pray and hope that everything is alright and hoped that he'd get back and it would be alright and that everything is gonna be ok. And when are they gonna come? No, it was a worry and we were just scared to death.

We listened to the news and we'd worry for our boyfriends and brother, are they safe? There was nothing. And then if you'd get a letter it had already been opened and censored. They stamped it so you knew it had been checked; opened up and checked. Nothing was allowed to do through that shouldn't go through.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you think that having gone through that period in your life where you were, I don't know if you could say deprived, but you were, you know, things were not as abundant as we're used to now. And being afraid for family members and loved ones, do you think that had a big effect on your life?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Your life was not your own. Oh, yes. It was such a relief when that happened. I mean when it was over with ... you could just breathe again. It seemed like you were under stress or worry and listening to every ... any article that you could get in the news. It was a constant. And you'd pray, and pray nothing would happen and they'd be alright. And you'd hear the news and you'd think, "I hope my boyfriend or my brother weren't in that." but you didn't know. You just didn't know, that's all.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you foresee the United States entering that war and was it a surprise to you when ... well, it was a surprise to everyone I guess when Pearl Harbor was attacked but ...

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: ... but did you think that the US would enter the war?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No. No, didn't think of anything like that. We just lived from time to time and hoped that nothing would happen. Then when it'd get close you'd think, "please hope that my brother or my boyfriend doesn't have to go, or they don't get him, or that he'd be alright when he comes back, or you know he wouldn't be sent over there or here." You had no idea what they were going to do with them. They didn't tell you. Well, they couldn't, I guess, they weren't supposed to. But it was a worry, of course, we thought ... you know, just didn't know.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember where you were when you heard that the war was over?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, I was in Hollywood on Eleanor Avenue in an apartment house with my Mother. Yes, it was something else. And my boyfriend at that time, that was a relief when I saw him again, that he was still alright. He'd come on weekends but then he was with the Air Corp and he was stationed at UCLA for quite awhile and that was something. I remember, I thought, at least he's there. No, then all of a sudden they all disappeared. That's it. They didn't tell you, they couldn't.

Janis Kozlowski: How soon after the war was over did you see him?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Immediately! [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, really? He got sent back to California?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: As soon as he could be released from the Air Corp he was over at my ... he went as soon as he was released, I mean he was home. No, they were very careful though, they wouldn't let anybody out, you know, until they were ready. But it was a thrill. Oh, gosh, just to see him come ... knowing, oh, it was something else! It was almost like unbelievable. A relief!

Janis Kozlowski: Did you know he was on his way or was a big surprise when he showed up?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I knew he was released but I didn't know when he was gonna get there, because the Army didn't tell us that. But then all of a sudden, here he comes!

[laughing] It was ... we knew he was released, we knew he was gonna come some time. It was really, you just couldn't hardly wait. Live from day to day and wonder.

Janis Kozlowski: Did ... So he went to UCLA and finished out his tour with the Army Air Forces there?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I was into the ... I was taking pre-med at UCLA, I was a student there and in the pre-medical department. Then he was in the Air Corp. The Air Corp was then stationed at UCLA. Their barracks and everything was all secretive.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, I see.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: They went to UCLA. I mean it was right there, they had their training and everything else on the field. We could look out and see them doing their exercises or whatever they did in the Air Corp. They were performing their duties.

Janis Kozlowski: All those cute young guys out there.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah, [both laughing] yes.

Janis Kozlowski: I didn't realize they had guys stationed there at UCLA.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh yes, yes. My boyfriend-to-be was there and oh, it was ... once in awhile he could sneak out and come over to Eleanor Avenue in Hollywood and stay for awhile. It was a thrill to see him.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:40:42] So, then did you say that when he got back after the war ended did he go back to that same base there at UCLA?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, as soon as he could get out, he was out. He went home! [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Was he completely out of the...?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, they had sent him down to Florida for part of something—I didn't know what for or anything, just that he was stationed down in Florida—something to do with the government of course. And then he got back up again and he came here but. They did take him away. We didn't know why or where—I mean the whole group, not just him. So, it was quite interesting and worrisome. We couldn't hardly wait to see him and he was allowed to write letters and then they would check them. We could see that they had opened them and stamped them that they'd been looked at.

Janis Kozlowski: So then when did he get out of the war and when did you get married?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Right away. [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: Both were right away?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. Was it '45, I think? I think it was the year '45, wasn't it? Not sure on the time anymore but no, we didn't get married right away but we were getting plans to get ready for being married. We had planned on getting married before he went but that didn't work out. So, first thing we did was look forward to getting married.

Janis Kozlowski: And then did you stay in the Southern California area?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yeah. I got married in the Hollywood Presbyterian Church and then after I stayed and lived in Hollywood in the apartment with my Mother. Then we got married my husband and I went on our ... well, we went back to Ohio to visit his relatives and stuff. Then we got married, of course.

Janis Kozlowski: Then, he didn't stay in the Army Air Corp, did he?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, no. He could hardly wait to get out. [both laughing] No, his main thing was to get out of the Army. Get out as soon as he could.

Janis Kozlowski: And what did he do then?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: He was a chemical ... he went into chemical engineering. So he was a chemist for what company? He worked with propellants, it was part of the Army I remember. It had to do with propellants and stuff that would blow things up. Because he was a chemist, he took up chemistry so he was needed in that line.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember what company he worked for?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Government. It was strictly the government.

Janis Kozlowski: Was it a civilian contractor?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, I think it was government.

Janis Kozlowski: It was actually government. Ok.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: It was government.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, just ... did you say that you started out in UCLA in chemistry also?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yeah. I signed up for Chemistry. Mine was mostly minor, you know. I could pick whatever I wanted to take but my main object ... my main subjects were chemistry and anything that had to do with that department.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, maybe that's partly why you two were attracted to each other, you were both chemists, it sounds like.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, we were both interested in the same thing, very much so. We understood each other, understood the different terms and things. It was really ... well, we were suited and we were both interested in everything, of course, naturally. It was nice.

Janis Kozlowski: And what was life like after the war?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Everything was shut down practically, you couldn't just go out to the store and get what you wanted and do everything you wanted to do. It was all under control, under control.

Janis Kozlowski: So the rationing continued after the war?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: For awhile, yes. But most of it we got what we wanted but it was unusual stuff, I mean, you know, like I said, the meat was in a can. We thought it was dog food but it was really good meat [laughing].

Janis Kozlowski: It might have been pretty close to it.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. [both laughing] It might have been even that.

Janis Kozlowski: Trying to stretch it.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Then this butter that was white lard, looked like white lard. They give you these packages and then they'd give you a capsule that you had to put in a bowl and you'd kneed this colored yellow stuff to make it look like butter. [both laughing] Otherwise it looked like lard.

Janis Kozlowski: Did it ... how did it taste?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: We didn't ... it didn't bother us at all. Some of the canned meat, we felt we were eating dog food. It didn't taste good. I remember it wasn't anything exciting. It was, well, it was rations! And it was rationed products—what the government could allow, could give us.

Janis Kozlowski: We probably don't want to know what the recipe was for that meat in a can [both laughing]

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, I don't think so.

Janis Kozlowski: Or the oleo with the capsule either. [laughing]

Eleanor Mae Cramer: But we were ... you know, the funny part was we were very glad to have it. We were actually glad to have it. We didn't, you know, question it too much. We were just glad to have it.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:45:43] That must have had a big influence on how you looked at things in life having gone through that, because....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Most people didn't....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Day to day, one day and day two. You live for day to day. You didn't ... you got used to it and you knew everything was secretive. You knew what to expect. You knew that you just couldn't do anything that you want.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, can you think of any other memories you've had ... you have of the war time that you could tell me about?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh just the last time when the war was over, oh my gosh, everybody was celebrating and everybody was so happy. It was, oh gosh, it was like Christmas all over again. It was really something. Everybody was happy and just, oh gosh, just everybody was friendly. It was just a wonderful thing. There was excitement and everything. And the thankfulness and glad that they are, you know, we were glad that everything was alright, that they came home alive and they weren't injured. Oh it was a big relief. We had no idea, you know, but oh my lands, I'll never forget the ... when it mentioned, you know, the war's over, oh gosh, so relieved. We could breathe again. It was just ... everybody was happy, just so happy. No matter where you went everybody was happy because it was quite a strain. That was....

Janis Kozlowski: I can imagine every day worrying about people.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. And to see each other when we did get to see each other, oh my gosh, it was like heaven.

Janis Kozlowski: You got an extra can of that canned meat out, right? [both laughing]

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. I'll never forget that, and mixing that butter up. [both laughing] Those are two ... and you didn't have any luxuries. We never even thought

anything about anything else like pie, cake, or ice cream. We didn't even care about anything like that. We were just glad to have meat and potatoes and

Janis Kozlowski: Well, anything with sugar, right, you couldn't really ... didn't have a lot of that.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No. Just meat and potatoes and I don't remember much about the vegetables but I do remember the meat and potatoes. It was food and we were glad to have it too. We had to sign for a certain amount. Your rations, you had to ... you couldn't just go pick it up off the shelves and take it, you had to sign for it and get it and it'd be given to you. Just ... it was restricted by the government.

Janis Kozlowski: A very different time in this country's history.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes. [0:48:22] And at that time, you know, it was new to me and new to everybody else. We didn't have any idea what was going on because we hadn't -- it was our first experience with something like that so we naturally lived from day to day and hoped and prayed that everything would end pretty soon. We had no idea but oh, was it wonderful when it ended. Oh, everybody was so ... celebrating. It was really something.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I bet.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Happy. Oh, and even just to see my husband-to-be at that time, just to see him. It was just wonderful. Just like I couldn't believe it, he was, I guess.... We worried too because we never knew where he was. Whether he was overseas and being shot at or nothing because we had no way, you couldn't tell from the letters. We had no idea what happened. We knew the war was going on and when would we see each other and be all together. Then my brother too, they both were in different places wondering if they'd ever see each other. It was a tremendous strain not knowing, not knowing. That was the hardest part, not knowing.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you have neighbors or friends or family members that died in the war so that it hit close to home? So that it made it even more worrisome?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, we were lucky this time. I mean, it was just ... we were lucky that way. My husband-to-be had friends that were killed, you know, in the Air Corp. He had a lot of sorrow and things and it was sad for him. But no, I didn't know anybody personally that was taken or killed or hurt. Just I worried about him, that's all.

Janis Kozlowski: Did he talk much about his...?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, no, not a thing.

Janis Kozlowski: Even after the war was over, he still didn't?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No. He didn't have anything to say about it. He wanted to forget about it. He didn't want to hear about it. He didn't want anything to do about it. That was in the past. It was not a pleasant thing. He was, you know, he just didn't want to ... didn't want to discuss anything. He'd do a little, but not much.

Janis Kozlowski: So, it sounds like after you got married, you had at least one child because I know I've been talking to your son.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. We had James ... well, we had Mark and then James came afterward when Mark was gone. Marco and I, we had a happy life but, you know, worries. And his Mother was a widow and so she also was a sweetheart, but so worried over her son, over Mark, my husband to be—her boy.

Janis Kozlowski: Was he an only child?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, he had a twin sister and an older sister and brother. But, you know, his twin sister was also worried because they were very close. They were twins.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: [0:51:39] But then everything ... it was such a horrid thing that we were going through—not knowing and worrying and wondering, but when it ended it was, oh, it was just like heaven on earth. It was such a strange ... because every day you'd look at the mail, you'd wonder. Then you'd hear about these letters that you'd get that [someone had been] killed or died or something, from the government. And you'd pray that you didn't get one of those.

Janis Kozlowski: Right.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: It was an emotional time, very emotional.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you have any other memories of that time period either at the Lockheed plant or just about living, in general, that come to mind?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, just how strict they were about our going in and coming out, what we had in our purse and everything and what you could do, what you couldn't do. You couldn't ... I couldn't go ... in fact I was sent down on secretive things where I couldn't talk about it, couldn't tell anyone what I was doing. You just didn't discuss it, you couldn't. I don't know ... you know, to me....

I was put in charge of the getting the equipment for the chem. Lab. They'd send me down to the tool shop downstairs and they had a lot of fun, though, there [laughing]. They had

this terrible thing about a female plug and a male plug and it had to do with the measurements of the piping and stuff. And a female nipple, that's what they were using on the end of the things and I wanted a female nipple for this or that [laughing]. I mean, the terms and things, that's what they were called, you know. I'd say, I need a female nipple from them [laughing]. It became ... it could have been, it was ... it's funny now, at the time it was embarrassing to me, but ... because we didn't talk about nipples and things like that.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. It was kind of ... the plant was set up originally for men and using male terms, probably, right?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yes, yes. There weren't very many women where I was. In fact, I don't remember any except me.

Janis Kozlowski: Did they even have women's bathrooms in there? Or did they have to put those in?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, they just had ... they weren't separate bathrooms as I remember. I just remember just the toilet. I don't remember them saying "ladies" and "mens." If they did have them I don't remember that. I think they were just regular bathrooms. But, of course, they were probably separate, I don't remember that, but I think they probably were.

Janis Kozlowski: Because those plants were probably very male dominated before the war so they probably weren't set up for that at all.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, it was all strictly men. We were something that came in along with it all—women! [laughing] women! No, we were not the ... they were not, you know, compliant and everything, but they were not anything exceptionally wonderful. They put up with us, period. And they were glad to have our help.

I know they were ... I would be sent from second floor down to the tool shop, down the stairs to get equipment and things and they were very nice to me. But they did like to tease because I was young, I was a teenager ... not a teen, but I was young. And they'd tease me, things like, "give her a nipple, she needs it." [laughing] You know, it was funny. They did it on purpose to see if I'd blush and I would.

Janis Kozlowski: Sure. Sure.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Just to tease and it was really authentic, it was needed but they just did it to see if they could embarrass you. I remember, because I was at that age where you didn't talk about things like that.

Janis Kozlowski: Right, yeah.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Now, I'd just joke along with it. But in those days, [laughing] they'd make you blush, it made me blush. They knew it and they could ... they liked it, they did it. I remember them ... they would tease me. I got through it, but I remember it though very definitely how they liked it and they enjoyed it. And now I look back and think how funny it was.

Janis Kozlowski: That must have been kind of ... pretty eye opening for a young lady?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, it was, believe me. Things that ... we didn't talk about anything like that at home or with my Mother and Dad. It was completely, no-no. But [laughing]....

Janis Kozlowski: [0:55:48] You know, a lot of people say the war changed the country, you know, and in a lot of different ways. One of the things that, you know, there are books written about how women were in the work force after that and some men resented it after the war that they took jobs and so forth. It sounds like since you were going to college your intention probably was to work anyway even if the war hadn't...?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh yes, oh yeah. I had to earn a living. I had to earn my own money to go to college. Oh yes, I definitely had to work. I had to buy my own shoes. I made my own clothes. I couldn't just go out to the store and buy a dress, no, I had to make my own clothes. And I had to ... but I did have to buy my own shoes. I had to get the cheapest shoes I could get. But all my clothes I made myself except the underwear and [word unclear]. But, no, I remember, I couldn't just go to the store and pick up what I wanted. We were not allowed, well, I didn't have the money either at the time. It takes money.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you feel any resentment after the war when you wanted to work? Did you feel like...?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, I was looking forward to it. Because I was always treated nicely and rode, walked ... when my Mother and I went we walked down to catch the guy that was driving the car with five other men. We went and met them down at the corner and they'd pick us up and they'd drop us off on the way home. And they were very polite, very nice to us, you know. They didn't show any favoritism, but they were nice ... they treated us good.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you end up working later on?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh yes, I worked until I was married and ready to have a baby. I worked, yeah, I worked a long time.

Janis Kozlowski: But then after you had the kids did you continue to work?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: No, no. Then I didn't. I stayed with the baby. I had just the one. No, I didn't have to then. In fact, my husband rather I wouldn't because he didn't want to baby sit.

Janis Kozlowski: Sure, that was a different time.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: There weren't the male Mommies like there are now. [laughing]

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. It was.... And I had a very good husband. Of course, I wasn't married until after the war but he was a really good.... He had a sense of humor though, he was funny. He was a wonderful person. Of course, I'd say that anyway, but he was. He had a sense of humor.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:58:04] We ... I don't know if your son told you, but he sent us a bunch of pictures that he scanned – not the originals but some scanned images of your husband in the Aleutians. And he looked like a happy-go-lucky guy.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, he was. He had a sense of humor. Yes, he was a very well liked, he was. And he was really ... and he was smart, he was very good. But he wasn't a smart aleck. He wasn't a smart aleck, he was just great. He had a sense of humor.

Janis Kozlowski: That's part of the attraction, right?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. Yes. I liked him for that.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: He was a lot of fun to be with. We enjoyed each other, of course.

Janis Kozlowski: When did he die?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Let's see. 19 ... I'm trying to remember. [brief pause] I know we were together in 1954 but it seems ... I can't remember just what date he ... seems like it was '60 – I don't know. I have to stop and think now.

Janis Kozlowski: He....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: He's been gone 15 or 18 years now. I've been a widow for 15 or 18 years.

Janis Kozlowski: So, he was pretty young when he died.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, he was in his 60s. I think 60 something. I thought he'd live longer than that. In fact, I was shocked when he, you know, that he didn't live longer, because he was young to die. He had heart problems.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: It was a shock. So, I've been a widow for a long time. It was ... it happens. We go, when we go.

Janis Kozlowski: We don't know how long we've got. As they say, "there are no warranties or guarantees", right?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: That's true. That was true.

But I did have a happy marriage and, of course, my son loves ... my husband loved our son and we had fun with him. He was great, he was a good kid. You know, we had.... And we got along good. We didn't have any hard, rough arguments or anything. My husband was easy going and I wasn't a trouble maker. So we had a happy marriage.

We had a worrisome one because we didn't know what was gonna happen, if we'd have enough money for this, that and the other thing. It wasn't that we didn't have anything to worry about, we did. But we were careful. Those days you didn't have a lot and I didn't have, you know, they just didn't pay high. But my husband stayed with the government for quite a while after that – after the war – he still worked for the government.

Janis Kozlowski: [1:01:12] And then you stayed ... you both ... your whole family stayed in southern California?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. And my Mother and Dad bought a house in Englewood and then my Mother and I lived in Hollywood all during the war. Then we went back to Englewood where my Mother lived until my husband and I got married and we moved away, of course.

Janis Kozlowski: Where did you move to?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I think it was, well, part of the time we lived in Santa Monica in an apartment house. We had an apartment, we lived in an apartment.

And then I was trying to think back, now, my first home was mostly right here, I guess, where I am right now was our first home. I don't remember too much about it except I didn't have to worry about a place to stay because we bought this place and my husband was very easy to get along with.

We didn't go on any expensive trips or vacations or anything because we didn't have the money. But we were ... we'd go on picnics and have fun that way. We'd go to museums and things that were free. We didn't go to very many movies because it cost money, but that was ... at that time.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, are there any other things that you had thought are important about that time period that I might not have asked you about?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: I'm trying to think. Just that I remember it was fun seeing somebody that you hadn't seen in a long time. We got along with each other, different people did. And they had different ideas and even the guys that rode in the car with my Mother and I they were, oh, just attentive and polite and treated us like ladies. It was ... we had good relationships where we worked and they were very good there too. I had very good luck with everything I did down there. I was treated well and treated like a lady. And I got what I had to get, I mean if I went down to get a part for somebody in the chem. Lab, I would get it and they would hurry, they would help me. They were very nice to me, they didn't show any resentment or anything. They were polite.

Janis Kozlowski: That's good. [1:03:51] You know, there's been some talk that at certain places that it was hard for women to work but it sounds like Lockheed was a good place to work.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, it was. Yes, there was no trouble there. And, like I said, they were very cooperative. They wanted to please you, they wanted to get what you wanted and, you know, they would go out of their way to make sure you got what they wanted and what you wanted. So, it was a pleasant experience. It was not where I hate to go to work. It was a place I had to go and that was that. I had to get it done. We wanted the money and we wanted to do it. It was not that we were forced to. It was just that we wanted to and we needed the money. It was a pleasant experience and it was good because everybody was nice. We didn't have any hard feelings or anybody being rude or hurt or anything. It was just a "have to do" thing.

And then I met Marco [laughing]. Marco was a character. He was at UCLA. He was the most fun of anything –the one I married, of course. He was a character, he had quite a sense of humor and he was just a lot of fun. I fell in love with him because of his personality.

And his Mother was a sweetheart. She was so nice, I loved her. She was a wonderful Mother-in-law. They treated me like I was a Queen of what – whatever. They lived in Ohio and I went back to visit them, my lands, you'd think I was Queen of Sheba or something. They were just really nice--Marco's girlfriend, Marco's lady friends here. That was a pleasant experience with my in-laws. I missed them all when they passed on.

My Mother and Father were very devoted to each other. It was sad though that my Dad was so much of the time out in the desert because he couldn't go home, only on weekends and that was hard on my Dad. You see, he was a family man. He looked forward to seeing us—seeing his Mother and his daughter. But, it was hard because he was lonely where he was working. He had to work and he had to be there and it was sad. But nothing he could do about it.

Janis Kozlowski: [1:06:17] Well, it sounds like all in all you had a pretty good life. You had a great family and....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, um-hmm. Yes, I had ... fortunately I had all ... everything was good. We didn't have any people dying or anything bad, you know, funerals or sicknesses or anything like that. Everything was normal, but hard to take, you know, some things we had to do without and get, and do what we didn't want to. But, no, it was not a bad time. It was ... normal.

We were glad when the war ended. Oh my lands, yes, that couldn't have been nicer. The excitement and the ... oh, it was really something. Everybody was so happy and celebrating and it was something else. I can still remember it, how wonderful it was and how happy everybody was and it was better than a Christmas, I'll tell you. Everybody was so polite and happy and nice.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, that's probably a memory that really stuck with you for your life.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes. Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Because that would be a ... kind of a defining moment.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes it was. And the man I was going with was such a character. He was quite a comedian too. He was a lot of fun. He went through a lot but he was a lot of fun too.

He was hired ... fortunately he was not shipped over where the fighting was and we worried about it because we didn't know until the war was over where he was. And we worried for fear he was going to be shot down but he was in the Aleutian Islands but we didn't know that.

It was hard on him especially getting out in the morning in the snow and standing at attention putting the flag up and it was wind and it was snow and it was raining and they're up in the Aleutian Islands and nobody around. But they all had to get up, the Army, you know. They all had to get up [laughing] to put the flag up regardless, whether anybody's there or not, it was horrid. My husband said, "geez, there we are standing in the snow putting the flag up and its freezing." In the Aleutian Islands – that was something else. [laughing]

And I guess they cooked a chicken in a paper bag. They learned how to cook this chicken in a paper bag. I don't know how they did it but he told me he was gonna cook me a chicken in a paper bag when he got home. [both laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: I never heard of them doing that kind of thing. I wonder how that worked?

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Well, I don't know. It worked out alright because he knew how to put a chicken in a bag and cook it. [both laughing] I never got the details on it but I do remember him [laughing] cooking a chicken in a bag. A bag in the chicken – that was funny. Yeah, we cooked in pots and pans but this was a chicken in a bag! [laughing]

Janis Kozlowski: That sounds pretty interesting.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: It was. It come out good.

Janis Kozlowski: I guess they were pretty ingenious up there trying to find different ways of ...

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Oh, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: ... getting some decent food to eat.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: [1:09:25] Oh, yes, they were ... I can't think ... they had a lot of.... My husband had a sense of humor like you wouldn't believe. What they couldn't think up, he would. Yeah, he had a terrific personality.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, the people in the Aleutians probably appreciated having him then, because ...

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: They needed that kind of person to....

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, he was treated well. He was liked well. His personality was wonderful. He wasn't a complainer or a groaner or ... he took life as it came.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: And he was smart too. He was a ... he had a doctorate degree in Chemical Engineering. He was an intelligent person. Of course, he didn't brag about anything. "Oh that's why, so what!" type of thing. Nothing was wonderful as far as he is concerned. That was to be, you know, he just had an easy personality. My life was wonderful.

Janis Kozlowski: Then these two smart parents, then you had this son who is a doctor too.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: So, must have gone down in the genes and he sounds like a smart man too.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes, they were very ... the whole family. Even my Father was, had ... you know, they didn't have colleges and things. Like, my Dad, had patented things that he had invented and stuff and in those days, you know, that was something new. He invented a lot of things. My Dad was very intelligent even though he didn't graduate. You know, in those days they didn't go to college. But I had a very intelligent Father.

And my Mother, she was just a wonderful sweetheart, full of fun, just a character. They always say, "Oh, you're just like..." My husband would say, "Oh, you're just like your Mother." And I'd say, "Yes and I'm proud of it, too!" [both laughing] She was a character, I loved her.

I had a happy life – hard, but happy. We did without, we made our clothes. We didn't think anything of it. We were used to it. It didn't mean anything. Now you look back at it, you look at it and you think, "oh, well, that was life." I never, you know, never dwelled on it – just thankful, thankful for what we had.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. You've seen a lot of changes in the world and in the country over those years.

Eleanor Mae Cramer: Yes.