

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

#276

ENID I. SLINZAK

HONOLULU, HAWAII

**INTERVIEWED ON
DECEMBER 8, 1998
BY JEFF PAPPAS**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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Jeff Pappas (JP): The following oral history interview was conducted by Jeff Pappas, for the National Park Service, USS *Arizona* Memorial, at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 8, 1998 at ten a.m. The person being interviewed is Enid Slinzak, who was actually in Honolulu at the time of December 7, 1941. For the record, Enid, would you please state your full name, your place and date of birth?

Enid Slinzak (ES): Enid Ilene Slinzak. And I was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Did you want the date?

JP: Oh yes.

ES: Mm-hm. August 21, 1922.

JP: Nineteen twenty-two. Tell me about growing up in Green Bay, about your family and your mother and father.

ES: Well that, I don't recall too much because when I was in the, let's see, about the second grade, we moved to California and we were in San Pedro for a while and then in San Bernardino. And then when I was sixteen, we moved to Honolulu.

JP: Was your dad in the service?

ES: No. He was in the ice cream business and he manufactured ice cream.

JP: What company did he work for?

ES: Dairyman's. And I'm trying to think of the name of the lady that he worked for and it escapes my mind right now. [*The lady he worked for was Jane Topping and the name of the ice cream plant was, I believe Polar Bear Ice Cream. Later Jane Topping sold out to Dairyman's.*]

JP: That's quite all right.

ES: But...

JP: Had your dad been in the ice cream business through most of your childhood?

ES: Yes. Mm-hm.

JP: Even in Wisconsin?

ES: Right, mm-hm.

JP: So, did he transfer to California with the same company?

ES: No. Mm-mm [no]. He was on his own. And...

(Taping stops, then resumes)

JP: Talking about your dad and the ice cream business, he had been in ice cream—was he in ice cream—did he drive a truck or was he an executive?

ES: No, he manufactured it.

JP: He manufactured ice cream.

ES: He had his own recipes.

JP: He had his own recipes?

ES: Mm-hm. Oh yes.

JP: Were those family recipes?

ES: No, this is something that he had. And he made extracts and things like that and he manufactured ice cream and that's it.

JP: Well, for the record, what's your dad's name?

ES: Philip James Hudson.

JP: Was he born in Wisconsin?

ES: Yes, he was, both he and my mother.

JP: And your mother's full name?

ES: Amanda Peeters.

JP: So you grew up in the ice cream business?

ES: Yes, well, my mother was a baker by trade and a cake decorator.

JP: Sounds like a very sweet...

ES: Yes.

JP: ...excuse the pun, childhood.

ES: Mm-hm, right.

JP: Oh, that's wonderful. Did you have any siblings?

ES: Well, I had my brother and my sister. My brother lives in California right now. My sister passed on years ago.

JP: Were you the middle child or the...

ES: No, I'm the oldest.

JP: The oldest child.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: Well, so you went basically from the, what they call the frozen tundra of Green Bay, Wisconsin, to sunny California at the age of sixteen (ES moved to California when she was in the second grade).

ES: Right.

JP: And then off to this lush paradise that they called Hawaii. And of course this was a territory then.

ES: Right. Mm-hm, yes, Territory of Hawaii.

JP: Before we get to Hawaii, tell me a little bit about Wisconsin and about being of school age, growing up there, where you went to school.

ES: Well, like I say, I don't recall that too much because we moved when I was very young to California. I know we drove to California and it took us almost a month.

JP: It took you a month to drive to California?

ES: Yes, right. I mean that was a long, long time ago.

JP: Do you remember kind of car you were in?

ES: It, no, I don't. It was a big car. I know that. (Laughs)

JP: Did your mother do any driving?

ES: No. Not at all. My dad did it all.

JP: Just your father.

ES: And the roads weren't very good, as you can well imagine.

JP: What do you remember about that trip?

ES: Oh, that we used to sing a lot of songs and there was just my sister and I at that time. And we'd stop to, you know, stay overnight in a motel and the accommodations weren't very [good]. I can remember that.

JP: Do you remember visiting any of our national parks then?

ES: No, we were just bent on getting to California, so that's what we did.

JP: Is there any particular landscape that struck your fancy more than any others, driving from Wisconsin to California?

ES: No, because, like I say, I was very, very young at that time.

JP: Right, right.

ES: And so I really don't recall.

JP: So you went off to California and you stayed there until you were sixteen years old.

ES: Mm-hm, right.

JP: And you went to San Pedro and then later to San Bernardino?

ES: No, we came, when we first came to California, we were in San Pedro.

JP: Right.

ES: And then we moved to San Bernardino.

JP: Okay. Tell me about growing up there, about going to school.

ES: Mm-hm. Well, I know I walked three miles to get to school. And which no one thought anything of that at all. And I just, I left off to go to Honolulu when I was in the eleventh grade.

JP: What sorts of activities did you involve yourself in, in California, extracurricular activities? What were some of the favorite things that you did?

ES: I loved to dance.

JP: Ah.

ES: And I did a lot of dancing and I joined a jitterbug club when I was young and I just, I loved it. (Chuckles) We had a lot of fun.

JP: Tell me about then the dancing in California as a young woman. Was it a very active scene in California?

ES: Very active what?

JP: Dancing?

ES: Yes, mm-hm. The jitterbug, you know, how you, in fact all the girls wore big skirts with the big petticoats underneath. And we'd wear like one red sock and one green sock and we had the saddleback shoes and we really danced a lot.

JP: Did you regret leaving California?

ES: Yes. I did not want to go to Honolulu at all.

JP: Had you heard about Hawaii?

ES: No, mm-mm. My dad had gone over about a month before. And then we followed on the ship and that was quite a trip.

JP: I assume that it was a better business opportunity for your father.

ES: Yes, very much so.

JP: But you regretted leaving California.

ES: Yes. But then that changed when I met my husband. And...

JP: So you left California when you were sixteen years old.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: And that was what, 1938?

ES: Nineteen thirty-nine.

JP: Nineteen thirty-nine.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: And you went off to Honolulu.

ES: Right.

JP: Tell me about that experience, about taking a ship all the way to Hawaii.

ES: Well, I was seasick all the time, but when we got to Hawaii, my dad met us and he took us out to breakfast and I was introduced to papaya, and which we loved. And it was just beautiful. At that time, when the ships came into harbor, they had the Royal Hawaiian Band there and the music was just beautiful. And you could smell the flowers in the air and the leis were plentiful. In fact, they'd come out before the ship actually docked and they'd come on board with all [*those*] leis and it was quite a sight, very beautiful.

JP: Did your dad ever share with you stories about his business in Hawaii, about the ice cream business?

ES: No, not a great deal. My dad was a very personal man and he just, he kept things to himself mostly, a great deal.

JP: Now tell me about your mother at this time. Did she want to go to Honolulu? Had she ever made her opinions known to you about what she wanted to do?

ES: No, mm-mm. She just went along[,] but she enjoyed it. She loved Honolulu. And then they later moved to the Big Island and that she didn't care too much for. It, the rain was a lot. Well, it rains every day there. And quite hard and she didn't care too much for that.

JP: Well tell me a little bit about going to school in Hawaii, as a Mainlander.

ES: No, I went to work. I didn't want to finish school. I went to work. And I worked in my dad's ice cream plant and then later on, I went ahead and finished my high school and went to college.

JP: Was that after the war?

ES: Yes, mm-hm, after I was married and after I had children, so.

JP: Went back to school, finished your college degree.

ES: Mm-hm, right.

JP: Very good. That's very admirable. So now you're seventeen years old.

ES: Mm-hm, right.

JP: Tell me about meeting your husband.

ES: Well, I met my husband on a blind date. I didn't know anyone there and I had met this young lady and then she said, "Well, how about if we go out one night?"

So I said, "Sure."

And that's how I met my husband.

JP: Now, tell me a little bit about your husband at that time.

ES: Well, he came from Pennsylvania and he was in the—he lived in a coal mining town. And he got out of high school, graduated, and his dad had given him, had signed up for electrical schooling and his dad never took it, so he gave it to John. And John went to that school. And then later, and there was not much to do, so he joined the army, against his father's wishes. He didn't want him to, but he said, well, go ahead. He didn't think he'd stay in very long. And when he got in, they found out that he had gone to this school, so he got into teletype and he—later on, they were going to transfer him to Honolulu, but he went by way of Panama. And when he got there, then they sent him to Honolulu.

JP: And that's where you met him.

ES: And that's where I met him. Mm-hm.

JP: Tell me about the meeting.

ES: He was...

JP: I'm sorry, tell me about the blind date.

ES: (Chuckles) Well, I met him and we just drove around. There were some other couples in the car and we just drove around. So then he said, "How about a date tomorrow night?" And he said, "I'll take you dancing," 'cause I told him that I loved to dance. And he said, "Well?"

I said, "Sure."

Well, at that time, when you went out at night, everybody wore formals. Everything was very formal in Hawaii at that time. And so I had to go out and buy a long dress, a formal. And when he showed up, he looked like he stepped out of a bandbox. He had on a tux. And he brought me an orchid corsage.

JP: So he was in civilian clothing?

ES: Well, for, yes, mm-hm.

JP: For the dance.

ES: But then he'd wear his uniform a lot of the time. But that night he showed up and he looked so handsome. And we went to Lau Yee Chai's, which was quite a place at that time, a Chinese restaurant. And I couldn't get over it. I just—when I got home, I told my mother, I said, "He is rich! He put twenty dollars on the table to pay for our dinner."

And I didn't drink at all! He had a drink and he said, "What do you want?"

And I said, “Well, I don’t drink.”

And he said, “Well, you have to have something.”

And I said, “Well, I’ll just take 7-Up then.”

And then when he danced and he knew how to jitterbug.

JP: Oh!

ES: And that was it.

(Laughter)

ES: We had a ball that night. Then we just went together for almost two years before we got married.

JP: Well, tell me a little bit about, before we go on with that, which I will, tell me a little bit about the army or the military presence in Hawaii and how aware of that were you?

ES: Well, very much so because I would go out to the base and he was an enlisted man, at that time, a private. And he, you didn’t socialize with any of the officers or anything.

JP: You didn’t socialize with the officers?

ES: No, you weren’t—that was a taboo at that time. And anyway, he was doing teletypes and then later on he worked for all the airlines and the telephone company, repairing teletypes. And this was a side job that he had. Because as a private, he only made twenty dollars and seventy-five cents a month.

JP: What did your parents think about you dating a military man?

ES: Well, John came over to the house and he met them. In fact, he brought his car and asked my dad if he could repair his car. And he spread it out and my dad had him come in for dinner and we really got to know John. And he

talked a lot about his family, so that was all right with my mother and dad. Yeah.

JP: So your parents approved of John.

ES: Mm-hm, yeah.

JP: Very good. So tell me about your marriage now, your wedding.

ES: Well, that was something because at that time, you couldn't get married unless you had permission from your commanding officer. And my husband made corporal and then sergeant, and then he asked his colonel if he could get married. And then he went to school and became an officer. And he was second lieutenant. And that's when he asked me if I'd marry him. And because he couldn't get married before. And so...

JP: He couldn't get married before. Explain that.

ES: Mm-mm, no. They didn't allow that at that time.

JP: They didn't allow enlisted men to be married?

ES: Mm-mm, no. Mm-mm. So...

JP: So he had to become a lieutenant...

ES: Well, when he became an officer, then he asked, you know, he said he wanted to get married and his colonel said all right. So then we had a...

JP: Was that a formal agreement between your husband and the colonel? Was it a written paper that they needed to sign for that? Was just a verbal agreement?

ES: No.

JP: Or verbal communication?

ES: Well, you just didn't do it, that's all there is to it. Like now, you go and get married, you know, you don't need anyone's permission.

JP: But you had said that John had to ask his commanding [*officer*]...

ES: But at that time, oh yes, he had to have permission. But then when he became a lieutenant, well then I guess they figured he was, you know—I was very young at that time.

JP: How old were you?

ES: Well, I was eighteen.

JP: Well, tell me about making wedding plans in Hawaii, what you did specifically.

ES: Well, I didn't do a whole lot. John managed the whole thing and because most of our friends were enlisted people, he asked his commanding officer if he could invite them to the wedding.

JP: He needed permission to invite enlisted...

ES: Right, because they didn't fraternize at all, the officers and enlisted people. That was, you just, you couldn't do that. And so his commanding officer said yes.

JP: So, of course the tradition that I'm, in my generation, know that the bride needs to—their parents, of course, support, financially support the wedding. Was that part of the custom in Hawaii, in a military wedding like that in 19—late 1930's, early 1940's?

ES: No. John handled all the plans and everything because we had the wedding at the chapel at Fort Kamehameha on the base there. And we were married on a Saturday night at seven o'clock at night.

JP: What was the date?

ES: October 11, 1941.

JP: Just two months before...

ES: The war.

JP: The attack.

ES: Right. And Patrick J. Ryan was the...

JP: Was he the chaplain?

ES: ...chaplain that married us. And he later became the chief of chaplains in Washington D.C.

JP: Very good.

ES: And we had, it was quite a formal wedding. And then they had the reception at Fort Shafter at the Officers' Roundhouse. And we had a band, twenty-six piece band from Schofield Barracks came and played. And...

JP: That must have been quite an event.

ES: It was. Mm-hm.

JP: Very proud event, right?

ES: Right. And John and I left the party at about ten o'clock at night.

JP: Did you have a...

ES: Ten or eleven.

JP: Continue, I'm sorry.

ES: But I understand the party went on 'til about five o'clock the next morning.

JP: And did they have anything like a bachelor party back then?

ES: Yes, they did have. He went to a—he had a bachelor party.

JP: He did.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: Did any of your relatives from the States-side come over to the island for the wedding?

ES: No, mm-mm, not at that time. That would have been quite a trip.

JP: So it was just your friends and your immediate family that attended...

ES: Right, mm-hm.

JP: ...the ceremony.

ES: Right.

JP: Very good. So this is now two months before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

ES: Right.

JP: Had John ever talked to you about his feelings about the probability of going to war?

ES: No. My dad was always predicting that, that there was going to be a war.

JP: Did your father and John talk about it from time to time?

ES: Not a great deal, because when John wanted to marry me, my dad did not approve of that too much.

JP: Your dad didn't?

ES: Yeah, he didn't want me to get married, period. I don't think he did.

JP: Why is that?

ES: Well, I was just his girl, that's all, and he didn't want me to, you know, get married. It's a lot different today with children and their parents, but he just, no, he said, "That's not a good idea," and so he wasn't very much in favor.

It took John about a good six months before he even got up the nerve enough to ask my dad if we could get married, so.

JP: So now you're together.

ES: Right.

JP: Did you honeymoon at that time? Was the...

ES: Yes, we did. We went to the Big Island. We were there for ten days and we stayed at the Kilauea Camp, rest camp. And we had...

JP: Is that a military...

ES: Yes, mm-hm. That's an R and R [*rest and recreation*] camp. And it's still in operation today.

JP: Was that a popular place to go to for newlyweds?

ES: No, I don't think so. I mean, people just went over there. It was about a mile from the volcano house and it's located right on the volcano, Kilauea.

JP: Have you ever been back?

ES: Yes, we've gone back, mm-hm.

JP: To that exact spot?

ES: Yes. Mm-hm. Right.

JP: So now you're together, you had gone on your honeymoon and war is now imminent.

ES: Well, we came back, we had no idea. We came back and we had rented—you could not find a place to rent at all. And so we rented a bedroom in somebody's home.

JP: So housing was very tight.

ES: Very.

JP: Was it expensive?

ES: Gee, that I don't remember.

JP: Well, who handled the finances?

ES: John did, my husband. And I was just, you know, eighteen at the time, so.

JP: Well, you said you had been working. After the wedding, did you continue to work?

ES: No. Mm-mm. And he, we got, we were in this house and on December 6, my mother and dad said, "Why don't you move in with us?"

JP: On December 6?

ES: Yes. Mm-hm. And we moved in with them on that night, and the four of us, my mother and dad and John and I, we went downtown to do some Christmas shopping. And the town was packed. And if they had come at that time, that would've been something.

JP: This was a very busy Saturday night in Honolulu.

ES: Yeah, it really was, 'cause there you had to do things ahead of time because everything had to be shipped off the island, out of the island, back to the States.

JP: So now you had moved in with your family.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: And...

ES: And the next morning, you could hear, you know, we were asleep, but you could hear guns in that.

JP: So you were with John that morning.

ES: Yeah, we were in bed. And the neighbor called my mother and dad. My dad was up, 'cause he always would walk to the plant, his plant, which was about three miles away. He'd walk to the plant and check out things on Sunday morning. He said, "Oh, that's just the soldiers practicing with their BB guns."

And the neighbor called us and they said, "Turn on your radio."

Well then my mother came in and she woke us up. And she said, "We're being attacked by the Japanese."

So John got up and he left. I didn't see or hear from him for three days. And we went into immediate blackout. They told everybody to turn their radios on full blast and to stay in the house. We were not to go out of the house.

JP: What was your first reaction when you realized that this was, the Japanese were now bombing Pearl Harbor?

ES: Well, it was just shock. It really was. You couldn't believe it. And then we heard, we had a porch, a front porch, and my dad had gone down to his plant to see what had happened. And my mother and my brother and sister and I went out on the front porch 'cause we could hear planes and we actually saw—they called it a dogfight, where these planes were shooting at each other. And we were all just frightened, you know. We ran in the house and they told us that there would be no lights [*on that night*]. If they saw anyone that had a light on, they'd shoot it out or shoot anyone. And they came out on the radio with all kinds of stories.

JP: Well, tell me about some of those stories. What are some of the most vivid recollections that you have of that day?

ES: They said that there were people landing in parachutes, with blue suits on. You know, “Stay in your house. Keep your radio on,” and that’s all they did.

And at night, that night, we just hung things up. We had to get blue denim and put ‘em on the windows, because you couldn’t have any lights showing at all. And then they had, you weren’t allowed out on the street after ten o’clock at night. And if so, then you had to have a permit. And your headlights, you painted your headlights blue...

JP: Tell me about...

ES: ...and that way it wouldn’t show the glare.

JP: How did your mother and father react to this? Did they talk to you at all? Did you sit with the family and talk about what had happened?

ES: Yeah, we just said, well, it was a terrible thing. And well my dad kept predicting that it was going to happen, ‘cause he said we kept shipping all our iron ore and stuff over to Japan. And he said, “We keep sending them all this stuff and then tell them, ‘Now, don’t fight.’”

JP: So when was the next time you heard from John? You said it was three days after.

ES: Yeah, mm-hm.

JP: Tell me about that.

ES: Well, he called and then finally he came home, but just for a little while and then he was back at the fort. And later he went to Saipan.

JP: And how long—now we’re at war.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: And of course the war wouldn't end until 1945.

ES: Yeah, right.

JP: You're keeping house now. You've been married now for a couple of months.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: You're a young bride.

ES: Yeah, and I got pregnant right away.

JP: Were you pregnant—did you know you were pregnant that morning, on December 7?

ES: No, mm-mm.

JP: Okay.

ES: And then I was pregnant and our daughter was born. And then I became pregnant again and then that's when John was sent to Saipan.

JP: Now tell me about your pregnancy and raising a family during the war. Had there been any support system that was provided for you by the military?

ES: Well the only thing was that they sent all the wives back to the States, and they were going to send me back. And John said, "Well, this is her home. She lives here."

Oh, they told me that I should get a job and...

JP: They told you, you should get a job?

ES: Right, and that way then they wouldn't have to send me back to the States. So I went to work at...

JP: Well, where would you go back to the States? Your home now is Hawaii?

ES: I don't know! I don't know. But that's, you know, the military or they say something and that's it. So...

JP: Was that ever explained to you why the wives left the islands?

ES: Well, they didn't think it was safe there in Hawaii, so they sent 'em back to the States.

JP: Your parents, of course, must be very concerned at this moment, that their daughter is going to be sent back to the States...

ES: Right, uh-huh.

JP: ...without an explanation.

ES: So then, well then John talked to the, you know, he said, "Her family lives here. This is her home."

So they suggested that I get a job with the military. So then I went to work at Fort Shafter as a telephone censor. And that was an experience.

JP: Well tell me about that.

ES: Because they didn't have anything set up, really. And they put headphones on you and you were listening to two conversations at one time.

JP: I think we're going to stop here for a few moments.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: We're going to pick up with a new tape.

END OF TAPE #31

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ES: ...a station hospital. And when I was going to have my second child, John was in Saipan and I had to call a friend from Pearl Harbor and he came, he and his wife came out. We got permission. This was at four o'clock in the morning. And it started raining and we got permission and we went through the blackout, to the college, and I went up this ramp to the second floor in the rain, bump, bump, bump, in this college, [*a station hospital, set up by the military.*] And that's where she was born. And then later, they were sending men back from Saipan. If you had so many points, then you were allowed to come back.

JP: Okay.

ES: So John told me, "Pack up, we're going to the States."

He was going to be stationed at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

JP: Okay, before we get to Fort Monmouth, let's talk about letter writing communications with your husband. Of course at this time, he's overseas, and did you correspond regularly?

ES: Daily.

JP: Daily. Have you kept those letters?

ES: Some of them, yes. Mm-hm. And in all the moving—we've done a lot of moving in the military. He was in the army for twenty years, so we did a lot of moving and some of our stuff was lost. And...

JP: So now you're raising children during the war.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: Your children had been born. Did you have just two children? Do you have more than two children?

ES: No, I had a son. He was born in New Jersey, [*Fort Monmouth*].

JP: And was that during the war or after the war?

ES: After the war.

JP: After the war, okay. So now you're a mother, a single mother, raising—not a single mother, but you're married, but your husband is essentially involved in the war effort, and you're raising these children by yourself with the help of your family...

ES: Mm-hm, right.

JP: ...your mother and father. You did get that job and now are you, you're living with your mother and father.

ES: Right, mm-hm.

JP: Tell me about that relationship, the dynamics of raising small children with your parents.

ES: Oh, we had a wonderful time and my mother and dad were great. In fact, we had—there was a basement and that's where the washing machine was. And it was like open house. My dad would have any military men, navy men, whatever. They'd come to the house for any time they wanted something to eat, if they wanted to wash clothes, whatever, they could. And we had a lot of people coming and going.

JP: Tell me a little, the extent of the communication between you and your husband and the content of those letters. What did you write about?

ES: Well, I just told him about everything, every day, and then of course you had to be careful because mail was censored at that time.

JP: Did you know that, at that time?

ES: Yes, uh-huh.

JP: You knew that...

ES: You knew that too. And we just, you know, you talk about the weather or if he went fishing, or whatever.

JP: Let's say hypothetically if the letters hadn't been censored, what would you have written about?

ES: Probably nothing much different than what we did write about. We were very much in love and it just, we kept in close contact. And every now and then somebody that was coming through would stop by the house or call and I'd try and send him things that way.

JP: Do you remember any specific letter that your husband had written to you at that time?

ES: No, they were all great.

JP: What would he typically write about?

ES: Well, like I say, he just say, well, he had this for dinner and he, you know, went fishing or—you couldn't, because there was nothing much you could say. He'd say he missed you and you know. And I'd wait for letters. I'd wait every day and sometimes I'd get a letter and sometimes they'd come in bunches or, you know, you just, it wasn't regularly.

JP: Mm-hm.

ES: But then, when you'd get them all, you'd just really enjoy them.

JP: So now you're raising your small children and you're working for the military.

ES: No, off and on.

JP: Off and on.

ES: Mm-hm, right, because of my pregnancy.

JP: Right.

ES: But I worked out at Fort DeRussy. I was a chief telephone operator at that time.

JP: Okay.

ES: And I worked until I was about eight months pregnant.

JP: Tell me about working that switchboard, the mechanics of working a switchboard in the 1940s.

ES: Yeah, that was an old-fashioned. If they'd call in and ask, like, for 748, you'd find the 700 block.

JP: Okay.

ES: And then you'd pull it and you could dial the last two digits, or whatever. And everything was done by these cords. And then you'd ring by pulling the button back. That would ring the phones.

JP: Now of course, after the attack, attitudes had changed. During the war, living in Hawaii, did you feel relatively safe living in Hawaii?

ES: Yes, mm-hm. I mean, we didn't think about it. You just went ahead. They issued everyone a gas mask and they had these big iron plates that they hung on the telephone poles, like a gong. And if there was ever a gas attack, then somebody would ring this gong. Oh and then they had sirens too. And I recall one time, during the, they did come and drop some bombs, but they just landed in an empty field, so. But that was something because—and then for like Robbin, our first child, they issued what they call a bunny mask, for a baby. And it was just a piece of denim, about like that, and it had two little white ears on it and they had a window in it. And you're supposed to put your child in there and then you pumped it. There's a pump on it, to get, so the child would have air.

JP: Did you ever keep one of those?

ES: Oh yes. My sister wouldn't go to the bathroom without her gas mask.

JP: Do you still have one of those?

ES: No, mm-mm.

JP: Okay.

ES: No.

JP: Well, since we don't have much more time, let's go and skip a few years. And let's continue the story after the war.

ES: Well, too, as I started to say, when John had so many points, he was going to come back and he told me to pack up everything and we were going to go. All the packers came and they packed up everything and I was ready to leave on the ship, and he called—or he didn't call, he just said he couldn't come, 'cause they needed him there, even though he had points he could have given away. So he stayed, but I had to go on. And I got on the *Matsonia*, which they had turned it into a—I guess the Marines had charge of that ship, and that was an experience because we were, I was down in the hull with my five-month old baby...

JP: Yeah.

ES: ...and my three-year-old daughter, and on my way to Pennsylvania. And I had to go down into the ship's galley to make formula for my baby and I was seasick all the time. I lost so much weight, it was unbelievable, on that trip. And every day, we had to go up on the top deck for fire drill and we were on that ship for five days.

JP: Were there any other mothers like you?

ES: Oh yes. Mm-hm. In fact, the cabin I had, there was another woman with a very small baby. I guess her baby was about a month old. And then there was another lady with a little girl, with a little brat. (Laughs) [*I could have*] cheerfully choked her. But anyway, there [*were*] seven of us in this tiny little cabin. And that was something else. And fortunately, I had a girlfriend

that was on board ship also. And when I'd get up on deck and she'd give me a hand every now and then. But, oh.

And then when we got to San Francisco, the Red Cross met us. And they put us up in a bachelor hotel. And then you couldn't get a cab or anything. I walked all over San Francisco trying to get our tickets and what have you. They had been arranged but you had to go down and take care of these things.

JP: Now, tell me about your financial support at this time. How were you being paid? Where your money came from?

ES: Well, my husband would, had so much allotted from his paycheck and it was sent to me through the mail all the time.

JP: Had your parents helped you out at all?

ES: Oh yes. Mm-hm, sure.

JP: So they chipped in and helped support...

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: ...the family. Okay.

ES: And then so I was on my way to Pennsylvania to meet my husband's family, whom I'd never met any of them. And I was on a train for, oh, about three days. And they had the train had the sleepers. And I was with a bunch of Australian war brides. And that was interesting.

JP: Australian war brides that were in the States?

ES: The whole car. And then my baby got sick on the train and I needed a doctor. And the conductor said, no, there wasn't one. So then I...

JP: Were those Australian women married to American servicemen?

ES: Yes, mm-hm.

JP: And they were shipped from Australia to the United States?

ES: Yeah, mm-hm.

JP: Did you ever make friends with...

ES: No, I had a three-year-old and a five-month old baby and my baby was sick.

JP: You were plenty busy.

ES: Yes, I sure was. And that was an experience. And I got to Chicago and one of the kids that had come to my mother and dad's house to wash his clothes and he got several meals there and what have you, he said, "Well, when you go, be sure and call my mother and dad when you get to Chicago," which I did. And they came down and met me and took us over to their house, 'cause I had quite a wait. And that was something.

Then they took, when I was supposed to leave, they took me to the train station. And then they weren't allowed. Everything was so secure, and I just stood there and waited and waited for the trains. And finally it came.

JP: Raising two children along this whole journey.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: So you made it to Pennsylvania and you stayed with your husband's family?

ES: Yes, mm-hm.

JP: And when did your husband join you?

ES: It was several months later. He joined me in New Jersey because my sister had married a navy man and he was a submarine man. And so she moved to New Jersey because he was going to be docked there. And he would come in, you know, occasionally. He was allowed to come in.

JP: Now you must have been a very curious person to these people back stateside. You had been born and raised in Wisconsin and moved to California, ultimately went to Hawaii. You had seen Pearl Harbor. You had been there. You married a serviceman, who's now serving in the Pacific theater. You're now back in the United States with two children. Tell me about John's family. Were they curious about what you had done, what you had seen?

ES: Yes.

JP: Did you talk a lot about Pearl Harbor?

ES: Some, not a great deal. I mean, they were just, they were coal miners. It was a coal-mining town. And very down-to-earth, lovable people. Just wonderful.

JP: So they were just going about their daily chore.

ES: Right. John's father worked in the coal mine and during the war, he worked two shifts. I think that's finally what killed him, 'cause he worked so hard. And of course meat and everything was rationed.

JP: Now, what did you do? Now you're raising two children in a really unfamiliar environment. You first had to get somewhat accustomed, comfortable with the family. And you had to continue your domestic life. What did you do? What were some of your responsibilities and duties?

ES: Well, John had, his sister was living with them also because her husband was overseas. He was in Europe. John's brother was in Europe. And so it was just Mom and Pap and his sister. And she was pregnant at the time and she had her child when her husband was over in Europe. And then I had the two children. And then she had, John had another sister that lived in Portage, Pennsylvania, and she would come to visit. And you just worked, cleaned house and just, you didn't work out, it was just...

JP: You worked in the home.

ES: Yeah, right.

JP: So you were a homemaker...

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: ...essentially, raising two children. By this time, of course, your children are getting, they're getting older. They were getting a bit bigger. And you were their teacher. You taught them. Did you read to your children? Tell me about the relationship you had with your two kids.

ES: Mm-hm, I sure did.

JP: Tell me about that. What did you do?

ES: Well, (chuckles) then when we moved to New Jersey and I just, I took, with the two children and then my sister was there. And that was something you couldn't—it was so hard to find a place to live there. Everything, it seemed, was so overcrowded. And we just got an apartment and the rent was horribly expensive. That was in Asbury Park. And the rent, they think nothing of asking \$600 during their peak season.

JP: This is during the war!

ES: Yes.

JP: And you're a mother, wife of a serviceman.

ES: Right.

JP: Hadn't they made any concessions for that situation?

ES: No, mm-mm. If they did, I wasn't aware of it. And you just struggled and did the best you could and that's what we did.

JP: Did you pay much attention to the war effort in both Europe and in the Pacific at that time? Or were you just simply too busy raising children?

ES: That's right. And just trying to get by.

JP: How often would letters now come from your husband? Were they still as frequent as they were when...

ES: No, because I kept thinking he was going to come back and of course he did too. And then finally he did.

JP: And he came back.

ES: Mm-hm.

JP: And this is 1942, 1943?

ES: Forty-four, I would say. Well, yeah, about '43, '44. Mm-hm.

JP: Enid, I think for now we're going to end the interview, but I would like to continue this, because we still have so much more to talk about. Perhaps sometime today, or maybe in the near future, we can sit and chat about after the war, the conclusion of the war and then raising children with your husband. That's something I would really like to talk about. Thank you for your time.

ES: Okay. You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW