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Margaret Loverde

Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project

A Collaborative Project of the Regional Oral History Office,
The National Park Service, and the City of Richmond, California

Interviews conducted by
Esther Ehrlich
in 2003

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Interview with Margaret Loverde
Interviewed by: Esther Ehrlich
Transcriber: Brendan Furey
[Interview # 1 February 7, 2003]
[Begin Audio File Loverde1 02-07-03.wav]

1-00:00:00

Ehrlich:
Are you set?

1-00:00:05

Loverde:
I'll never be set.

1-00:00:11

Ehrlich:
Okay, so this is an interview with Margaret Gerrity Loverde, on February 7, 2003, at her home in Berkeley. So, let's start at the beginning. Where and when were you born?

1-00:00:26

Loverde:
I was born actually in Oakland, while my family lived in Berkeley. 11/16/26.

1-00:00:40

Ehrlich:
Who was in your family?

1-00:00:41

Loverde:
At that time, my father and my mother and an older brother.

1-00:00:44

Ehrlich:
Then who were your siblings, in your nuclear family as a child?

1-00:00:53

Loverde:
My older brother was Joseph, and I had a brother after me named John and two more sisters. There were five of us.

1-00:01:04

Ehrlich:
What were their names?

1-00:01:05

Loverde:
Kate and Mary.

1-00:01:06

Ehrlich:
What about grandparents? Did you know your grandparents?

1-00:01:08

Loverde:

I knew my maternal grandparents. They lived in Berkeley, and they were here for quite a few years. I did not know my father's parents at all.

1-00:01:27

Ehrlich:

Do you know where your grandparents were from on your mother's side?

1-00:01:31

Loverde:

The ancestors came from Halifax, Nova Scotia.

1-00:01:38

Ehrlich:

What about on your father's side?

1-00:01:38

Loverde:

Ireland.

1-00:01:40

Ehrlich:

Did you grow up with a connection to either of those places?

1-00:01:47

Loverde:

Well, just in my imagination. I've never been to either place.

1-00:01:56

Ehrlich:

You grew up in Berkeley. Did you live in the same home?

1-00:02:05

Loverde:

Not the same home all my childhood. I was in a rental place the first years, downtown Berkeley, Durant Avenue. I don't remember it. Then we lived right above the campus, on—oh, I don't remember the name of the street, but it was right near the stadium, actually. It was up some side streets above it.

1-00:02:32

Ehrlich:

Do you have good memories? What kinds of memories do you have of that home?

1-00:02:39

Loverde:

Very little. We were just there for a short time, too. That was just another rental. Then we moved to the house that I actually grew up in most of my childhood.

1-00:02:50

Ehrlich:

Where was that?

1-00:02:51

Loverde:

1184 Sterling, in the Berkeley hills, right below Grizzly Peak.

1-00:02:57

Ehrlich:

What was that neighborhood like?

1-00:02:59

Loverde:

Well, it was up at the top of the hills, and when our house was first built, at that time, there were very few other houses around there, and it's very built up right now, of course. It stayed in the family all these years, until my two sisters, who had owned it, sold it.

1-00:03:33

Ehrlich:

What kinds of memories do you have of childhood?

1-00:03:43

Loverde:

Happy ones, but we were very much close to home, and we did not have a lot of money. But we were a happy group.

1-00:03:56

Ehrlich:

What kind of work did your parents do?

1-00:04:00

Loverde:

My father was an artist and my mother had been an actress, but when the war problems arose, she wasn't able to continue on that because there wasn't enough work, and that's when she started working for the children's centers—

1-00:04:20

Ehrlich:

Which we'll talk about more later. Did you have a religious upbringing?

1-00:04:22

Loverde:

Oh, yes. Roman Catholic.

1-00:04:25

Ehrlich:

Can you tell me more about that?

1-00:04:34

Loverde:

Most of my early years in school were in the Catholic school. I started in St. Augustine's, from first grade on. I guess kindergarten was in a public school, in Hillside School in Berkeley, and then I went to St. Augustine's, which is on the border between Berkeley and Oakland. The present bishop was in the class below me.

1-00:05:05

Ehrlich:

Really, what's the present bishop's name?

1-00:05:09

Loverde:

John S. Cummins.

1-00:05:09

Ehrlich:

Did you know him?

1-00:05:11

Loverde:

Oh yeah. He's about to retire. Then, when my actual parish in Berkeley built a school, we moved—my family went into that school, at St. Mary Magdalen's.

1-00:05:33

Ehrlich:

Say that again. When your parish—your family moved in order to—?

1-00:05:43

Loverde:

No, when my parish, St. Mary Magdalen, built their school, we moved our schooling from St. Augustine's to St. Mary Magdalen's.

1-00:05:53

Ehrlich:

So that you could go to the parish school?

1-00:05:54

Loverde:

Yeah.

1-00:05:59

Ehrlich:

Did you attend church regularly?

1-00:06:06

Loverde:

Oh yeah, that's one of the things of the Catholic Church.

1-00:06:08

Ehrlich:

What was that experience like for you?

1-00:06:12

Loverde:

That was the way we did it. I'm thinking as a child at this point. It's very meaningful for me.

1-00:06:21

Ehrlich:

Did you have any connection or affiliation or experience with churches in Richmond?

1-00:06:31

Loverde:

I knew of them—the Catholic churches; St. Cornelius, St. David [of Wales]—but I never went there.

1-00:06:38

Ehrlich:

So, you just knew them by name?

1-00:06:38

Loverde:

Yeah.

1-00:06:42

Ehrlich:

How did you even know them by name? Did other people you know go there?

1-00:06:46

Loverde:

Yes, later years, though. It wasn't during the war. I don't even know if they existed during the war.

1-00:06:55

Ehrlich:

So, did you always go to private parochial school?

1-00:07:03

Loverde:

After I graduated from St. Mary Magdalen's, eighth grade, I did summer—my older brother had gone to St. Joseph [Notre Dame High School] in Alameda, but he also did some schooling at Berkeley High. I did also in summer school, but I actually went to Holy Names High School in Oakland, which was a girls school.

1-00:07:35

Ehrlich:

Was there ever any talk of you going to public high school?

1-00:07:41

Loverde:

Not that I remember, except summer school. My younger brother went to Berkeley High. It was a matter of funds.

1-00:07:55

Ehrlich:

Do you remember anything about hearing about the public schools becoming crowded during the wartime? Any stories from your brother, or concern on your parents' part?

1-00:08:06

Loverde:

No. I really don't. Possibly in Richmond, but I didn't know about that, and I don't think they did at that point.

1-00:08:18

Ehrlich:

So, your brother went to public school partly due to funding?

1-00:08:28

Loverde:

My older brother went to St. Joseph, in Alameda, as I mentioned. My younger brother only went to Berkeley High, and my two sisters also.

1-00:08:41

Ehrlich:

So, in terms of the beginnings of the war, I'm wondering if you have any memories of hearing that Richmond was going to be a major center for war-related work. Tell me what you remember.

1-00:08:57

Loverde:

I remember talk about the shipyards getting very busy, and I understand that they were working to build some—I don't remember what kind of ships, but to help the English, before we even got into the war. I remember that there was an influx of people from the middle part of our country: Oklahoma, Arkansas and some of those areas. I know that Richmond built up with a lot more people than they had ever had in the downtown part.

1-00:09:46

Ehrlich:

What do you remember of people's attitude towards the outsiders coming in? Do you remember what the talk was?

1-00:09:56

Loverde:

I think it wasn't very nice. I remember the terms Okies and Arkies, and at that point I was in high school and I didn't even know what it meant at first, and then I realized, but I didn't have a sense of it being a negative thing.

1-00:10:19

Ehrlich:

But it was?

1-00:10:23

Loverde:

Yes, looking back on it, in later years, I realized that it was, because a lot of them hadn't been educated. They were very poor, and that's why they came out to where the work was.

1-00:10:35

Ehrlich:

What kinds of stereotypes can you remember people associating with Okies and Arkies?

1-00:10:41

Loverde:

Probably the lack of education and the poverty, and how that is obvious in the way they dress or act or whatever.

1-00:10:56

Ehrlich:

Do you remember any jokes? Were there jokes told about them that you can remember?

1-00:11:04

Loverde:

No, my family really worked against that sort of thing anyway. I don't really remember much about that.

1-00:11:14

Ehrlich:

Do you remember kids at school talking about them, or in your neighborhood?

1-00:11:20

Loverde:

There weren't a lot of children in my neighborhood when I was little because the houses were pretty sparse up there in the hills at that time. So, no, I don't remember that.

1-00:11:39

Ehrlich:

Do you remember any talk of African Americans coming from the South?

1-00:11:48

Loverde:

No. There again, racial considerations were dealt with in our family in a way that—we were taught not to be prejudiced, not to have different ways of looking at people. People were people. That's the way I remember from early days in my family.

1-00:12:24

Ehrlich:

Did you know people who worked in the shipyards?

1-00:12:28

Loverde:

No, except my father as an artist was asked to come and do drafting, as were other artists that he knew. My sister told me that—and I wasn't aware of this—my youngest sister mentioned that the artists in this area were all asked to be drafters, and they used to go together in the same car.

1-00:13:00

Ehrlich:

Do you know who asked them, how that connection was made?

1-00:13:07

Loveerde:

I asked my sister that, and she didn't know.

1-00:13:09

Ehrlich:

Any memories of how your father felt about working in the shipyards?

1-00:13:16

Loveerde:

He enjoyed it. I think my sister's comment was that he made a salary there, and it was the first one in a while, because he was an artist who was working as an artist and struggling as an artist, which is not very conducive to having a high income, as you can guess.

1-00:13:41

Ehrlich:

Do you have any memories of him talking about his job at the shipyards?

1-00:13:45

Loveerde:

Well, I remember him working on drawings at home.

1-00:13:50

Ehrlich:

What can you remember?

1-00:13:53

Loveerde:

Just material being laid out, and trying to return on the spot what they wanted him to do.

1-00:14:01

Ehrlich:

Do you know what it was he was helping design?

1-00:14:06

Loveerde:

They were parts of the ships, as I recall, but I was more interested in his artwork than I was in the drawings. At that point I was in high school, so I was busy studying myself.

1-00:14:24

Ehrlich:

Did you study hard in high school?

1-00:14:25

Loveerde:

Yeah.

1-00:14:30

Ehrlich:

Before you started working at the child care centers, were you familiar with Richmond? Can you talk a little bit about your experiences there, or lack of experience there?

1-00:14:42

Loverde:

Yeah. In talking to my cousin yesterday, she reminded me that Richmond—first of all, between Berkeley and Richmond was this vast area, which is now the El Cerrito Plaza, that was a dog racing place. Also, I recall that from the center of the university outward in a radius of three miles in all directions, no liquor could be sold. So, right at that El Cerrito or Albany line, there were a lot of bars. Richmond was pretty sparsely populated at that time, when the shipyards were going on. Then they quickly built a lot of temporary housing, I think. Some of them were made more permanent, but having driven through Richmond recently, in the downtown area, I realize that all of those places that I remember that were just temporary buildings are gone and there are much more substantial homes now.

1-00:16:05

Ehrlich:

What do you remember those temporary buildings looking like?

1-00:16:09

Loverde:

[laughs] Very blank. Not cracker boxes, because they were maybe the length of the block, and just little apartments right along. I haven't thought about that much, but that's basically all I remember. I was always driving through when I was going out there. It was quite a ways from my home in Berkeley, so I had to go by car most of the time. I don't think that there was transportation from Berkeley into Richmond except by car.

1-00:17:02

Ehrlich:

Once the war started, do you remember gas rationing?

1-00:17:06

Loverde:

I sure do.

1-00:17:02

Ehrlich:

Can you tell us a little bit about that for people who don't know anything about it?

1-00:17:15

Loverde:

I don't remember how they did it. I just know that there was not enough gasoline to just take rides as you wish. It was a matter of having to ration it yourself within the family.

1-00:17:38

Ehrlich:

Could you buy as much gasoline as you wanted?

1-00:17:46

Loverde:

No, you want a definition of rationing?

1-00:17:47

Ehrlich:

Yes, how it all worked.

1-00:17:53

Loverde:

I really don't know how it all worked. We've had rationing since then, so I tend to think about that more. It probably was done very differently. Rationing means that there isn't very much and that everybody has to be allotted a certain amount and no more. So you had to figure it out.

1-00:18:13

Ehrlich:

So, within your own family, how was it figured out?

1-00:18:18

Loverde:

My parents took care of that. I was not allowed to even learn how to drive until I was twenty-one.

1-00:18:28

Ehrlich:

That's one way to save gas.

1-00:18:30

Loverde:

It sure was.

1-00:18:31

Ehrlich:

So, when you went to the child care centers, your mother would drive. Is that right?

1-00:18:37

Loverde:

Yeah, basically either I would drive out with her or else someone that she knew that was going in that direction, I would go with them.

1-00:18:53

Ehrlich:

So, aside from seeing the not most attractive housing, what other memories do you have of what Richmond looked like?

1-00:19:02

Loverde:

I remember the Kaiser Permanente being started and then the building of certain buildings for the children's centers, like Maritime and Pullman. That was the first ones that I believe they built in '43. Kaiser Permanente Hospital was something that we got into right away because of my mother's work there. So, we started with Kaiser in the very beginning, and I'm still with it, but having been away for many years in the east.

1-00:19:51

Ehrlich:

Part of that health plan?

1-00:19:53

Loveerde:

Yeah.

1-00:19:56

Ehrlich:

I was thinking maybe we could talk a little bit about attitudes towards women and work at that time. Maybe we can start out by hearing a little bit about what your mother's involvement with the child care centers was.

1-00:20:15

Loveerde:

Well, my mother's involvement doesn't directly connect with attitudes about women working, I don't believe. I'm not sure what you mean by that term.

1-00:20:30

Ehrlich:

Well, why don't we start off with you saying a little bit about what your mother's role with the child care centers was.

1-00:20:40

Loveerde:

Okay, she started working with some child care programs in Berkeley that were set up that had nothing to do, I believe, with the war at that time, but just sort of a neighborhood thing. The person who became director of the child care centers in Richmond was an acquaintance of hers. She called her and told her since she's working with preschool at this point that it would be great if she could join the program in Richmond, so she moved out to Richmond.

1-00:21:20

Ehrlich:

What was this woman's name?

1-00:21:24

Loveerde:

Her name was Erla Boucher. She was director all those years during the war and past that. I forget when she retired. It was quite a few years later. She was a very good director.

1-00:21:43

Ehrlich:

Do you know why your mother was drawn to choosing to work at the child care centers in Richmond rather than staying put in Berkeley?

1-00:21:52

Loverde:

Because it was a much bigger program, I'm sure. You're asking me a lot of things that I'm just conjecturing on here. It was something that Erla Boucher had, I guess, talked enough about that she needed her, and she was talked into it. It was a good thing, because she was very important in the beginnings of the child care centers in Richmond.

1-00:22:30

Ehrlich:

Your mother was or Erla Boucher was?

1-00:22:31

Loverde:

Well, Erla Boucher, of course, but my mother became so also.

1-00:22:33

Ehrlich:

What was your mother's full name?

1-00:22:37

Loverde:

Dorothy Wetmore Gerrity.

1-00:22:40

Ehrlich:

Do you remember how people felt—the attitudes—about women with children going to work?

1-00:22:53

Loverde:

Well, I think at that time there weren't that many women working, and women were basically in the home taking care of the children. The whole concept of child care wasn't really functioning fully at that time. Having listened recently to a tape of my mother's, the question was asked her about the program and how it was arranged, how the day went, and she said, "We had to work that out, because there was no model for it." Which I thought was interesting because I hadn't realized that until I heard that statement, actually.

1-00:23:40

Ehrlich:

So was your mother somewhat unusual in having worked outside of the home early on?

1-00:23:47

Loverde:

Probably, because she had an artist as a husband. She did a lot of radio work as an actress prior to that, and had been on stage. That paid, and it didn't when the war got going. A lot of the theaters were not functioning as they had been. The Works Progress Administration [WPA] was going full force then for artists as well as actors, and that figured in a lot with what my father was doing, too, I believe. The WPA program was, I think, what—now, thinking about it—brought him into the drafting experience. But also,

I think my mother's work in radio in San Francisco was also probably a WPA project, but I'm not sure. A lot of these things I'm just sort of—

1-00:24:58

Ehrlich:

That's fine.

1-00:25:01

Loverde:

—filling in as you're asking me.

1-00:25:04

Ehrlich:

Do you remember other people's attitudes about mothers going to work or women joining the workforce, either negative or positive?

1-00:25:17

Loverde:

Well, I think within the Catholic church and in my high school there was a feeling that it was not a good thing. The consideration wasn't made so much then about "how much money is your family having as an income?" as it is today. So it was a matter more of making the right choices, and being a mother in the home or wanting a little more money. It was looked at in a different way; the values were different then, I believe.

1-00:26:00

Ehrlich:

Can you say a little bit more about that?

1-00:26:01

Loverde:

Not a lot, but when I was a senior in high school, I was asked to take the side of it being a good thing for women to work during the war. I was very reticent about taking that side. It was a debate with another school, as I recall, but I was talked into it by a very convincing nun. So, I drew very heavily at that point on what I knew about the children's centers, because I realized that all these women had to work that had come from the poorer states. So, I was able to use that idea to back my stance in the debate. So, I felt good about it after it was over.

1-00:27:09

Ehrlich:

Did you win?

1-00:27:10

Loverde:

I don't think there was a winner or a loser at that point. I felt that I had done fine.

1-00:27:16

Ehrlich:

Can you remember any of the specific points that you made? Could you reconstruct any of your argument?

1-00:27:24

Loverde:

Goodness, I haven't really thought much about that, but, as I was saying, it was a good thing for women to work when so many of the soldiers—husbands—had gone off to war. There just wasn't that much money coming in, so a lot of women didn't have a choice. I think that was the point I made, too.

1-00:27:57

Ehrlich:

Where did patriotism fit into either side of the argument?

1-00:28:07

Loverde:

Maybe not so much. Maybe it was economic mostly, but I'm pulling at straws now. I really don't remember, except I think I was pointing out that they now have good child care programs for children with working parents or working mothers when there is maybe no one else in the home.

1-00:28:33

Ehrlich:

And the argument against women going to work, what was that argument?

1-00:28:44

Loverde:

I think it was a, probably, largely—I was going to say religious argument, but this was within the Catholic schools, this debate, and I think it was the idea that the woman should be with the children in the home. But when there is no money supporting that home, as I said, a lot of women didn't have much choice.

1-00:29:16

Ehrlich:

I know that Eleanor Roosevelt was a strong proponent of women working during the war. Do you remember how people felt about her views, either people in your family or yourself or anyone you knew?

1-00:29:35

Loverde:

You know, I didn't follow a lot of what she did until later. Many years later I studied more of her ideas. My family were very supportive of the Roosevelts and everything that Franklin Roosevelt had done. I remember the day he died. I was in the library of UC Berkeley, not the Bancroft, but the main one. I remember when he came to San Francisco, I went over with my brother and I was very young and we stood and waited for two hours for him to come by. He just went right on by, but I was so excited. It was the first important person that I had ever seen in person. Anyway, that's silly, but—

1-00:30:29

Ehrlich:

No, actually, that isn't; it's interesting. So, no specific memories of feelings about Eleanor Roosevelt?

1-00:30:39

Loveerde:

Not at that age. No, not until many years later.

1-00:30:46

Ehrlich:

Maybe now we could talk a little bit about your involvement in the child care centers? So, what was your involvement with the child care centers?

1-00:31:00

Loveerde:

I'm forgetting the dates that I started high school. It was, I think, the first year of high school that my mother started working out there. I was very interested in what was going on, because she liked to talk about it at night. I often would drive out with her if she was ever called in for a problem and had to go out—because she was responsible for many of the schools that she was working with at the time.

1-00:31:40

Ehrlich:

What year do you think that was?

1-00:31:43

Loveerde:

That was before Maritime [Child Development Center] and Pullman were built.

1-00:31:51

Ehrlich:

In the early forties?

1-00:31:56

Loveerde:

This is where I was trying to find out exactly when the children's centers started. The term "children's center" was used by the state after '45, but I keep saying that because that was used most often, but "child care program" was the same thing. I just wanted to put that in. Looking back on it, I think it was '41, '42—probably '42—after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. That was a date that we couldn't come up with: when my mother actually started out there and when Erla Boucher did.

1-00:32:47

They started with a few small schools, from what I understand, and then they realized that so many of the children had no one to care for them when their mothers were working, especially where the husband and father was off to the war. So, they would find children in cars. That was very early on, that children would be left in car while the mothers were working. The police would find them, and then bring them—try to find a place for them to be taken care of, and it was happening more and more often. That's when they came up with the idea of taking this Washington, old school—it was evidently a grammar school—and turning it into a twenty-four-hour program. I believe it was the only twenty-four-hour program. My mother was the head of that. We often went out like at night, when there was a problem. I would drive out with her for fun or to find out what was happening. That was the very beginning for me.

1-00:34:07

Ehrlich:

It was your experience at Washington when you were still in high school?

1-00:34:13

Loverde:

Yeah.

1-00:34:13

Ehrlich:

So, can you share memories of that time with us?

1-00:34:18

Loverde:

I don't know how deeply you want me to go into this, but I can tell you—

1-00:34:17

Ehrlich:

Any stories you have.

1-00:34:20

Loverde:

Well, I can sort of make descriptions rather than stories. When I say that, I'm talking about how the program was arranged. The shipyards had three shifts: the day shift, the swing shift, and the graveyard shift. It went from, I believe eight to four, and then four to midnight, and midnight to eight. So, this program was set up to accommodate the people who would work either the swing shift, basically, or the—I mean to also accommodate them—and the graveyard shift; the swing shift and the graveyard shift. They would have the children there—I think my mother was explaining on this tape that I remember, that if the parents were working either of the two night shifts, they could leave their child there for the double shift at night because the child would be sleepy. But, then when the police would bring children in from cars that had been locked into, it became a big problem, because what I understand is that they didn't have the facilities to take care of extra children, a lot of babies, so there was a lot of shuffling, difficulty at that time. A lot of the children were drugged to keep them asleep.

1-00:36:13

Ehrlich:

Did you actually see that yourself, or how do you know that the children were drugged?

1-00:36:21

Loverde:

Probably one of the summers that I worked during that period when I was in high school, I remember a child very definitely, very clearly, that I saw very shortly after she had been found. She evidently was drugged and left at home, and it was over a long period of time. She was rather tall, and I think she was about four, and she could hardly walk. She was sort of stumbling around.

1-00:36:56

Ehrlich:

Who brought her into the center?

1-00:36:59

Loverde:

The police. She stayed with the centers and I saw her, I believe, many months later, and she had improved dramatically. It was wonderful to see her. She wasn't able to talk very much either at that point. So, when I did see her later, she was able to converse much better and function physically. It was good. I understood that a lot of them who had been drugged did have problems later. Anyway, that was my main experience in that particular case.

1-00:37:58

Ehrlich:

Do you remember how other people responded to the fact that—or the assertion that—these children were drugged?

1-00:38:03

Loverde:

I don't know that it was widely known. I'm not sure. In high school I wasn't a newspaper reader. We had a radio, but I didn't listen to radio news at that point in my life. A lot of these things I realized about many years later. Actually, when I wrote a paper on it for a UC Extension course, where I explained a lot of what I'm telling you—I don't have a copy of that now, but I remember having done a lot of research for that to get this information down.

1-00:38:51

Ehrlich:

Do you know whether charges were pressed against the parents when they drugged their children?

1-00:38:54

Loverde:

I don't know. I wondered about that recently, but I think, considering the situation at the time, that they didn't concern themselves with that as much. It was just taking care of the moment, making it understood that this mustn't happen anymore. Perhaps they would be given a second chance. If the child turned up in this situation again, then there probably was trouble.

1-00:39:31

Ehrlich:

It sounds like providing the resource of having a twenty-four-hour center was offering the parents something that was a real alternative. What other memories of Washington school do you have?

1-00:39:51

Loverde:

I remember the old building, and I remember there was a play area outside, and the building was torn down as soon as they finished with this program—probably in, like, '46 or so—so it was not something that I saw past that. That was many years ago. But, I know that my mother's information said that there were three floors and that the children played in the main floor, and didn't use the second floor. No, the third floor and the first

floor were used, I believe is what it was. I don't know what the second floor was, but I think they slept on the third floor.

1-00:41:00

Ehrlich:

So how much time did you actually spend at Washington school?

1-00:41:04

Loverde:

Not a lot of time, but I heard a lot about it from my mother. I would ask her questions, and most of my time was at one of the more modern schools that were built after that.

1-00:41:19

Ehrlich:

Do you know anything about who the children were who went to Washington?

1-00:41:29

Loverde:

No, they were all children of the people who were working in the shipyards. I think a lot of them came from other places because they—I was just going to say that they probably wouldn't be working there, unless they came from outside the area to work there. But that's neither here nor there—I'm not sure.

1-00:42:06

Ehrlich:

I heard that there were problems at Washington School and it ended up closing. Do you have any sense what those problems were?

1-00:42:17

Loverde:

No, I never heard that, but I would think that there would be, or could be. They had to have a staff there at night, and it's possible that the night staff wasn't functioning fully and keeping track of everyone. I wouldn't know. I hesitate to make any comment about that.

1-00:42:54

Ehrlich:

You said that you would ask your mother questions and she would tell you. Are there any other issues that you remember her speaking about?

1-00:43:03

Loverde:

No frankly, I don't. They were just anecdotal at that point.

1-00:43:10

Ehrlich:

Do you remember any of those anecdotes?

1-00:43:13

Loverde:

I think I've told you most of the ones that I remember.

1-00:43:16

Ehrlich:

The drug-related issues?

1-00:43:16

Loverde:

Yeah.

1-00:43:23

Ehrlich:

So, before we explore your experiences at Maritime, which is where I think you spent the most time, do you have any distinct memories of any of the other centers?

1-00:43:40

Loverde:

No, not that were different from anything that I remember from Maritime.

1-00:43:45

Ehrlich:

So, you don't remember the other centers being distinctly different from Maritime?

1-00:43:51

Loverde:

No, they all functioned with the same rules. I can almost go through the day in my mind, as how it would go, depending on the age of the child.

1-00:44:11

Ehrlich:

Let's start out by getting a sense of when it was you worked at Maritime, and then that would be great to hear about the specifics of the day. Do you know when it was that you worked there?

1-00:44:23

Loverde:

Yeah, I believe it was '45.

1-00:44:29

Ehrlich:

You were no longer in high school. Is that right?

1-00:44:32

Loverde:

That's correct. I was just out of high school, and had started college at that time. I'm not sure exactly.

1-00:44:55

Ehrlich:

How long were you there at Maritime?

1-00:44:59

Loverde:

For a year.

1-00:44:59

Ehrlich:

What kind of training did you get? Do you remember?

1-00:45:02

Loverde:

Erla Boucher, from what I recall, had brought people in to train us during the sleep times of the children. We would take turns. Of course, one person would be in the room—and this is only my trying to figure it out—because there had to be someone with the children at all times, of course, even when they're sleeping. She would have instructors come, sometimes from the universities, and come right to the centers and give training for the programs. My mother mentioned that she got thirty units credit during that period of time in the very beginning, just from having taken courses in that period of time.

1-00:46:14

Ehrlich:

So, what do you remember from your own training?

1-00:46:19

Loverde:

A lot of my training came from UC Berkeley, from Extension courses that were set up for that.

1-00:46:28

Ehrlich:

So the courses were at UC Extension, but were specifically set up for people working in the child development centers?

1-00:46:37

Loverde:

They were specifically set up for the people who were working, but this was not connected with the director in Richmond. There were other centers that were being set up in other places in the Bay Area too, at that time, because they could see how handy and helpful it was for families.

1-00:47:07

Ehrlich:

So, when you said that Erla Boucher had people come actually to the center, do you remember that, while the children were napping? What kinds of things they talked about?

1-00:47:20

Loverde:

I do vaguely remember it, but not a lot of it, because I preferred to take the courses at UC Berkeley myself. But we are talking about different courses, of course. Anyway, no, I think you are counting on my memory in a way that I don't—this is not information that I retained particularly. There are some things that come back very clearly in my mind; not that particular thing.

1-00:48:07

Ehrlich:

I'm wondering how it was different working at the centers as a high school girl and then coming as a college student for a full year?

1-00:48:20

Loverde:

Well, by that time, I had taken some courses, so I knew a lot more about it. I read some books on my own. I mean, I was interested in it.

1-00:48:33

Ehrlich:

When you were in high school, were you paid or was it volunteer?

1-00:48:34

Loverde:

When I just went with my mother it was not paid, no. But when I functioned maybe for a full day to fill in, or something, I believe I was.

1-00:48:50

Ehrlich:

Do you remember what your pay was?

1-00:48:52

Loverde:

No.

1-00:48:50

Ehrlich:

Could you guess?

1-00:48:54

Loverde:

No, I really don't even want to try to guess, because I'm not really sure about that. Pay at that time did not mean a lot to me. I think the pay was good when I worked there for full time.

1-00:49:15

Ehrlich:

I remember also hearing that groups like the Girl Scouts and the Red Cross helped train high school girls to work in the centers. Do you have any memory of Girl Scouts or Red Cross or high school Victory Corps?

1-00:49:33

Loverde:

That must have been later. I don't know. I was not aware of that. I did not ever hear of that. That might have been within the Richmond schools. Richmond is another county, and a lot of things are designated to counties. I've always been in Alameda County myself, so it's a different thing.

1-00:50:02

Ehrlich:

So, for someone who has never been to Maritime, can you give us a sense—an impression—of what it felt like to be there?

1-00:50:08

Loverde:

I think it was very well built. I remember going in the front—the main desk right there, and then the hallway off to the right, which was parallel with the sidewalk. It was at a corner, and both Maritime and Pullman were at corners. The other hallway went down parallel to the other street—the cross street—so that the play yard would be in this area in the center. It was a very ample play area. Well, first of all, to stay in the building, there was an upstairs. Down the hall on the right were four different classrooms, but right at the bottom of the stairs was the director's office. No, it's changed. It's a director's office now, but it was a nurse's station and doctor's station: a place where, if children got sick during the day, they would be isolated. Then the director's office, I think, in one of the buildings was behind the main desk, down this other corridor. In each room was usually a different age group. In the yard that came out from those rooms—there were fences in between; you'd keep the age groups somewhat separate.

1-00:52:19

Ehrlich:

Do you remember what the age groups were, roughly?

1-00:52:28

Loverde:

Yeah, I remember, I haven't finished describing the building, so I will get to that in a minute. I think that Maritime only went up to six-year-olds and maybe stopped at the end of kindergarten, and sometimes six-year-olds are in kindergarten, depending on what their training had been. So, for instance, they would have maybe five-and-a-half-year-olds, six-year-olds, in far room and in the next room it would be four-and-a-half to five-and-a-half. In the yard, those two rooms would play together. They didn't have to separate the yards quite as much as the actual rooms. Then, go four to three—some schools would—you know, each age level. A lot had to do with each child himself, too. Some were more mature than others. Upstairs used to be, at one time, a sleep area. I remember that distinctly, because for a very short period of time, they had babies up there. I think that the main rule was that a child had to be potty-trained or get out of diapers before they could come to the nursery school. Down the other corridor there were two rooms for children.

Each school was different and, I think, in those two rooms maybe the older—in Maritime, they were the older ones, I think, because the Nystrom School is beyond it. They had a play yard together, and that was the last play yard, so all this area outside was set very well. Right near the actual rooms were an area of sandboxes and gravel area, and a place where they could ride tricycles or whatever. Beyond that was a grassy area. So, it was a really nicely constructed and thought-out plan for the outdoor play area. Now, I'm trying to think now. You asked the question about the age group. I took care of them. I think I've got the building worked out pretty well, with the big area outside. It was bigger

than the area inside. I think they stopped using the upstairs for sleeping. I think that was in the beginning when they had so many extra children that they found, that had no care. I'm not sure about that. I wasn't in Maritime during the war when—it was just at the end of the war.

1-00:56:26

Ehrlich:

In '45?

1-00:56:27

Loverde:

Yeah. So I'm not clear about all that. I wish my mother was around. She could take care of all these questions very quickly.

1-00:56:34

Ehrlich:

No, we're interested in what you remember too, which is fine. Should we take a little break now?

[End Audio File Loverde1 02-06-03.wav]

[Begin Audio File Loverde2 02-06-03.wav]

2-00:00:09

Ehrlich:

So this is tape two of our interview with Margaret Loverde. You gave us a very nice description of the structure of the building and of the outside of Maritime. Can you describe what a classroom that you worked in looked like?

2-00:00:34

Loverde:

Okay, as you walk into the rooms, there were the cubbyholes right to the left, I think, in each room. There was a bathroom area on the right and washbasins.

2-00:00:50

Ehrlich:

What did that bathroom look like?

2-00:00:54

Loverde:

Well, little toilets along the wall, and a group of six also. That was it. It was very clean, cleaned regularly and supervised, and the cubbyhole area was around three sides of a square, and then the children each had their own cubby, so to speak. They put their coats in there and whatever they had in their hands. Then they'd come in. Then, into the room, there would be little tables in different places depending on how big the children were, how small. Everything was graded to size. Small chairs, of course. I'm trying to think. I think most everything that they ate—I'll get into that in a minute—was brought from the kitchen prepared, so there didn't have to be work done with preparing anything. There didn't have to be a kitchen area in the classrooms. Describing a room. They used areas that blocked off, so there would be a play corner. There might be a corner with music, a

phonograph player. They have so many new things now available, so it's hard to think of whether they are still using that or not. That would be a listening corner or a singing area—a music corner. They would have cots put away in a corner if the children were small enough. It was older children, I think. Once they were five or six, then they'd be going to school and coming back to play. Like morning kindergarten, they'd maybe have a little rest area in the afternoon, but possibly not. I don't know what it is now.

2-00:04:00

Ehrlich:

Can I ask a question? I'm wondering what was on the walls. Do you remember?

2-00:04:05

Loverde:

Oh, yeah, a lot of drawings and paintings of those children. Easels would stand in a corner where the art area was. The pictures would be everywhere. They'd be on windows, they'd be on cubbies, they'd be above the cubbies. It was always very decorated. Even on the windows that were leading to the outside, there would be paintings up on the windows. But, right at this point, I'm sort of describing what my classroom was, too, which was first grade for many years. We always put up the artwork of the children. Well, that's sort of a description of the room. There would be areas where there would be nothing so there could be dancing in a circle or story time. Library corner. That sort of thing.

2-00:05:11

Ehrlich:

Was there one age group that you worked with for the whole year that you were at Maritime?

2-00:05:21

Loverde:

Most of the time it was four—maybe three- and four-year-olds, but mostly four-year-olds, I think.

2-00:05:29

Ehrlich:

So, could you describe a typical day?

2-00:05:32

Loverde:

Sure. First of all, the schools in those days—and I don't know what it is now—but they were open from six a.m. to six p.m., and some children would be there as early as six.

2-00:05:51

Ehrlich:

What time did you arrive at work?

2-00:05:54

Loverde:

Changing shifts, but usually it was like nine to five, sometimes eight to four. The children that came early would have breakfast. During the war—we didn't talk about what they

would pay, but the federal government was paying for a lot of it. The families paid on a sliding scale, depending on what their income was and how many were in the family. So, everyone was different.

2-00:06:40

Ehrlich:

Do you know roughly what people paid, or can give us some sense of what it was—any idea?

2-00:06:50

Loverde:

Well, I have a lot of ideas; the thing is that it was very varied. So much of my experience was after that period, so I keep thinking of that as an answer. It was much more expensive later, of course. I really wasn't concerned with the money in the beginning, so I really don't know that. But I think what my mother said was that some children didn't pay anything—literally—until maybe they got a job. I mean during the war, because they needed people to work there.

2-00:07:40

Now, you asked for a typical day, I think most children would come between seven and nine. They'd all be there by nine usually. Breakfast would be over by eight, probably, or around eight. Of course, if the child was scheduled for breakfast, they'd pay a little more. There might be a story time after that or free play or art work, until it was warm enough or, depending on weather, time to go outside. I think most of the day of the four-year-old was an outside thing. An easel could be brought out right near the building so they were painting outside. The easels were very well constructed with two children working at the same time back to back, front to front, with the easel in between with the paints maybe in milk cartons right in front, and big brushes. They worked that way.

2-00:09:21

Maybe midmorning, depending on whether there was breakfast or not, there would be a juice time and maybe a cracker. At that point, they'd all be brought together. Maybe if they're outside and it's a great day to play outside, they could come up when they are ready for their juice. Then toward noon, they would have lunch, and the lunch would be a full meal. They were usually encouraged to, at least, take a bite of everything, but I think the rules in that regard were very different, depending on what school or what supervisor, whatever. But, I think a lot of children learned to eat well in the children's centers. I always felt that.

2-00:10:37

Then there was always a nap time, even for the four-year-olds, until they got into kindergarten, then it became a differing thing depending on what the day was for them. The cots would come out and tables pushed aside. Usually that would go for about two hours for rest, if not sleep. If they played well in the morning, they usually did fall asleep, even the four-year-olds. The rest of the afternoon, for a while anyway, would be outside play as soon as they woke up, unless it was raining. There would be story periods and there would be music periods and art periods and free play in the room even, if it was a cold day. They'd be brought in as the sun came down, as the weather got colder or whatever. It was all variable in terms of the way the day was going. If it was a classroom

that was filled with children whose parents would come around the same time—like probably existed when the day shift would get off at four—then they would be brought in and be pretty much ready to go home quickly at that time. And usually it works best with a story time, and maybe everything else ready to go.

2-00:12:30

One thing I think that would be important to mention, and I think it was a very good thing: the children when they came in in the morning, they went right into the nursing area to be checked out for any rash or sore throat or anything at all, and they were not accepted until they were checked out.

2-00:12:57

Ehrlich:

That was every day?

2-00:13:00

Loverde:

Oh yeah, absolutely. It had to be, because certain illnesses would transfer so fast from one to another. And to teachers, too. So, I think that pretty much covers the day, except the children whose parents were working maybe another kind of job. They did take children, I think, that did not necessarily work in the shipyards, so that some parents would come at the last minute. Maybe they would do their shopping and come at the last minute. I think maybe around five, depending on how many were left after five, they [the children] often would come to a central spot near the front office. Maybe they would all be in one room, so that most of the teachers could move on. Of course, the Washington School—the twenty-four-hour situation—was very different. I might remark that in that twenty-four-hour school, no children were allowed to stay twenty-four-hours. They were not just allowed to leave them there. They didn't have facilities for bathing children or keeping clothes, that sort of thing.

2-00:14:37

Ehrlich:

Was there a limit to how long? Could they stay for two shifts?

2-00:14:41

Loverde:

If it was a day shift that the parent worked, they could stay one shift; if it was the swing shift or the graveyard, they could stay two—is my understanding. I think it was very well worked out. It probably didn't all happen the first day or month even, but I think it was well worked out finally.

2-00:15:09

Ehrlich:

So, in terms of the activities, I've heard there was a rotating staff that went from center to center. Do you remember an art specialist, a music specialist? Do you remember what kinds of programs they did with the children?

2-00:15:25

Loverde:

I don't know where you heard that, because let me just tell you that my mother, when the Washington School closed—and I think that was when the war stopped, I mean when the war was over—she became a field supervisor and she worked out what—she went from school to school, but I don't think in the beginning, during the war, that they had specialists. Maybe once in a while, but I never saw that. I know my mother did, but she was the person that saw that each classroom had an equal amount of playthings, toys, equipment, and that was her place. She would bring in new things for everyone, but it was always equal within the district.

2-00:16:36

Ehrlich:

So you don't remember an art teacher coming to do a special activity at that school and then moving on to the other schools.

2-00:16:45

Loverde:

No. I remember that in public schools, and later in the children's centers, but not in the beginning.

2-00:16:55

Ehrlich:

Not when you were at Maritime?

2-00:16:55

Loverde:

No. It could be that they had volunteers or parents, but I don't think people were hired to do that. But I may be wrong.

2-00:17:15

Ehrlich:

You described the children being well-fed. Do you remember what a typical breakfast was?

2-00:17:23

Loverde:

There was always some fruit, and there was always some cereal and maybe toast. I wasn't there usually for breakfast, but I remember seeing what was left on the plates, like some orange pieces or that sort of thing. There's a break in the afternoon too, by the way. After they wake up from nap they have another time to have a bite to eat, and sometimes it would be graham crackers with some orange slices or something. But it was always healthy food.

2-00:18:08

Ehrlich:

Do you remember what lunches typically were like?

2-00:18:14

Loverde:

Yeah, there was usually, I would say the kind of meal that maybe most parents would give their children at night. It was a full meal. Very good food, actually, as I recall. They had good cooks and they well seasoned everything so that children would like it. There would always be vegetables. There would always be some starch—what I used to call with my own children “filler food”—and maybe meat or fish. The reason I liked it and thought it was so good was that they did try everything that was healthy. They encouraged all the children to eat up, but at least take a bite or two. They always had dessert. Sometimes, if they wouldn’t cooperate with the beginning, they wouldn’t get the dessert. There was a lot of talk about whether that’s a good thing or not but, anyway, it was good. And always milk, of course.

2-00:19:47

Ehrlich:

Speaking of talking about what was and wasn’t good, do you remember there being sort of a philosophy towards child rearing and what that was, or towards education? Do you remember talk of that?

2-00:20:02

Loverde:

You mean in—

2-00:20:04

Ehrlich:

Say, Maritime where you worked the most.

2-00:20:09

Loverde:

Well, I think in most classrooms that I went into, there was always a little prayer before a meal, “God is great, God is good, let us thank him for this food.” There didn’t seem to be people saying, “I don’t want my children saying that,” in those days. They just went along with it. I think they were glad to have someone take care of them. It’s a little different now, I think. Anyway, there were a lot of rules that had to be followed in terms of what parents had to cooperate with in regard to their children. I remember there were a lot of controversies like dealing with behavior, and how to deal with it. There were situations where the parents would start slapping their children around in the classroom, and that was a no-no, of course. There were a lot of problems like that had to be dealt with. Basically that’s all I can say unless you have any particular thing that you want to—

2-00:21:40

Ehrlich:

No, I was curious too whether there was a philosophy among the teachers towards the best way to raise children, if you remember that.

2-00:21:56

Loverde:

I remember at that time, during the war, that there wasn’t a lot of time to talk among teachers of how to do that.

2-00:22:04

Ehrlich:

You had your hands full?

2-00:22:08

Loverde:

Well, I think everything came down from the top. There were rules. I think now, even people having children come into their homes, like friends of mine that have had children come into their homes, they have to have a certain amount of experience in rules, and things have to be taken care of before they are allowed to do that. But in those, days there wasn't a lot of that. The classes were all very large during the war, and I know that at the end of a day you were exhausted if you weren't sitting around all day—and you could hardly do that with that particular job.

2-00:23:13

Ehrlich:

Do you remember any more of the rules?

2-00:23:17

Loverde:

Now, rules for teachers, parents, or—?

2-00:23:22

Ehrlich:

Any.

2-00:23:23

Loverde:

Gosh, I haven't thought in this regard, because it is kind of universal. Let me think for a minute. Well, there are so many automatic, I mean, things that you would expect. Well, I mentioned—excuse me. I'm going to have a little water here.

[Video camera off until 2-00:33:57. Audio recording on. A portion deleted per Loverde's request.]

2-00:25:45

Loverde:

I'm trying to think of some rules that might be interesting.

2-00:25:49

Ehrlich:

Just because it gives us some sense of if child rearing has or hasn't changed.

2-00:25:55

Loverde:

No, I think most of the rules at that time would be the ones that are going now.

2-00:26:05

Ehrlich:

Even the thing you said I thought was really interesting, which I know is important, that everything—the truth is it was, to us, it all seems ordinary, but it was very revolutionary

at the time to have all the chairs small, to have it focused on the child. That was new. That was a new philosophy in child rearing, having it child-focused in that way. So that is what I was thinking about; whether you remember other things like that that reflected attitudes toward children. Some of it you already said, just by saying that you had small chairs and small tables.

2-00:26:46

Loverde:

You know, when I said that, I thought, why am I saying this, it's so obvious.

2-00:26:50

Ehrlich:

That was one of the most important things you said, because before that, that wasn't the philosophy. The philosophy wasn't to scale things, have it focused on the children. It was to have children accommodate themselves to the bigger world. So, the fact that you said that was really important, because it is true that everything was made little so that the children would feel comfortable and safe.

2-00:27:20

Loverde:

Whenever we'd talk to the children, we'd always get down on our knees or a small chair.

2-00:27:24

Ehrlich:

Can you say that on camera? That would be good thing to say, that you were encouraged to—

2-00:27:28

Loverde:

Aren't those things that go without saying?

2-00:27:30

Ehrlich:

No, it reflects an attitude towards relating with children. There have been times where children were expected to keep quiet. Rules towards how to interact with children change all the time.

2-00:32:26

Stine:

Okay, can I start? [Referring to turning the video camera on]

2-00:32:28

Loverde:

We stopped it at you asking me if there were other rules—

2-00:32:32

Ehrlich:

That you remember in the classroom. I can ask it again if you want.

2-00:32:38

Loveerde:

No, because I don't know where to go with that, unless you have an idea.

2-00:32:44

Ehrlich:

Okay, you had said something about—I mean, the original question had been about asking about the philosophy in the classroom. You had said that you always got down low to talk to the children. Maybe you could say that so we get that on camera. I'll just ask you about that.

2-00:33:05

Loveerde:

That may not have been a rule.

2-00:33:05

Ehrlich:

It doesn't matter if it was a rule or not. I won't frame it as a rule. I'll just say that—

2-00:33:14

Loveerde:

Okay, but I was thinking to bring that in, if I could find just one more rule, I could put that in.

2-00:33:23

Ehrlich:

It's okay, you don't have to. It all just flows. It will flow naturally. You don't need to practice it. If you don't think of another, that's fine.

2-00:33:33

Loveerde:

Well, as I say, I will think of a hundred of them tonight probably.

2-00:33:37

Stine:

That always happens.

2-00:33:39

Ehrlich:

Yeah, that's the way it works.

2-00:33:41

Loveerde:

But, as I said, I don't think of them as rules. I was thinking of rules the parents—like in this school you have to have them in by this time, you know, that kind of thing, when I mentioned that.

2-00:33:57

Ehrlich:

We're on now. So, I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about any interactions you remember having with parents, or your sense of who the parents were.

2-00:34:16

Loveerde:

I didn't have a lot of interactions with parents myself personally, because the head teacher was always there, and I was just helping, or one of the other teachers in the room. A lot of the parents didn't seem to have an understanding of the reaction within their own children, depending on their attitude. If they came in belligerent or hard on their child in front of other children in that setting, you could see that their son or daughter was very disturbed by that, very humiliated possibly. A lot of the parents didn't really have the capacity to understand the effect on the child and how that could be carried on in their life, especially if it was repeated. So, I think a lot of effort was spent to try and get them to behave with their own children at least in our school, when they came there.

2-00:35:40

Ehrlich:

When you say the parents, were these parents mostly people who had come from other parts of the country?

2-00:35:45

Loveerde:

I think so, most of them, yeah.

2-00:35:48

Ehrlich:

Where do you think they were from?

2-00:35:51

Loveerde:

Well, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of them were from the middle part of the country where they were having—I guess it was a Dust Bowl sort of situation, and a lot of them were very poor.

2-00:36:02

Ehrlich:

Do you think that some of them then maybe had some different attitudes towards child rearing than some of the teachers?

2-00:36:11

Loveerde:

Oh, absolutely. Any family that was having trouble with poverty probably didn't focus on the effect that they would have on their children. It just is a given, I think, that they just tried to survive. Let's put it that way.

2-00:36:43

Ehrlich:

Do you have any memories of distinct conflicts that happened in the classroom between parents and teachers or times that teachers would need to resolve issues with parents?

2-00:36:55

Loveerde:

Yes, I've seen problems, but I wasn't always involved within it, the problems themselves.

2-00:37:08

Ehrlich:

Could you give us a sense of the types of problems you might see?

2-00:37:14

Loverde:

Well, I think a lot of them was their manner with their own children, as I mentioned, or demanding things of their children that were really far out. We were there as an audience to see the way they were talking to their children and what they wanted from them. A lot of times that would cause a rift between a teacher, or the head teacher, and the parent. I think, basically, the school was very good for the parents in terms of what they learned in regard to children.

2-00:38:20

Ehrlich:

I'm wondering whether there are particular staff people from Maritime that you remember?

2-00:38:27

Loverde:

Yeah.

2-00:38:27

Ehrlich:

Who do you remember?

2-00:38:29

Loverde:

Are you speaking of names or descriptions?

2-00:38:31

Ehrlich:

Sure, names if you remember names.

2-00:38:33

Loverde:

Mary Hall is one. She was a teacher and became a director later or a supervisor or whatever they want to call it. I've been trying to find her, actually. I understand she lives in San Francisco, but I haven't been able to locate her. She was very gentle. In my early memory, I enjoyed working with her. There were a lot of different teachers that I thought were really great. I try to forget ones that I maybe don't like as well.

2-00:39:27

Ehrlich:

Do you think the teachers, by and large, were happy working at Maritime?

2-00:39:33

Loverde:

Oh yeah, I think so. I think when a job is that involved and physically active, that they wouldn't stay if they didn't like it. I don't think I remember anyone ever there, that

worked there, that didn't want to be there. I just don't have the memory of that sort of thing.

2-00:40:09

Ehrlich:

What about the racial background of the staff?

2-00:40:15

Loverde:

I think it was very mixed.

2-00:40:17

Ehrlich:

Mixed, meaning?

2-00:40:38

Loverde:

Mixed, different races. Diversity. Good diversity. Balanced.

2-00:40:25

Ehrlich:

What races do you remember being there?

2-00:40:31

Loverde:

Well, in those days it was mostly black and white. I remember we had a lot of African American women working.

2-00:40:39

Ehrlich:

Teachers?

2-00:40:39

Loverde:

Yeah.

2-00:40:39

Ehrlich:

So the teachers were African American and white?

2-00:40:44

Loverde:

Yeah.

2-00:40:43

Ehrlich:

Do you remember in terms of proportions of numbers? Was it mostly white and some African American or was it balanced? Do you have a memory of that?

2-00:40:55

Loverde:

I think it was very balanced, but that's just my way of thinking. I actually worked later in San Francisco in a school that was all black. I was the only white person. I think it was one of the original—I think after the shipyards were built in Richmond that they built some in San Francisco too, and it was one of them.

2-00:41:31

Ehrlich:

Do you remember at Maritime if there were any Asian teachers?

2-00:41:34

Loverde:

You know, I didn't think of them separately at that time. I don't remember that.

2-00:41:44

Ehrlich:

Or Hispanic?

2-00:41:47

Loverde:

I don't think at that time Hispanic were mentioned or suggested that they were Hispanic. I think the only way—I mean, I'm always kind of amused by that, because you don't know a Hispanic person by looking at them. Maybe you have a name, and the name might be the husband's name. Who knows? I didn't ever think about that.

2-00:42:23

Ehrlich:

When you think back on the children, what racial backgrounds were the children?

2-00:42:24

Loverde:

They were very diverse, too. I think when there was a big influx from Oklahoma and Arkansas, I think those were actually mostly white in the beginning. Within the schools, they were very mixed.

2-00:42:51

Ehrlich:

In your experience in the classroom at Maritime, the year that you were there, what do you remember of who the children were in terms of race?

2-00:42:57

Loverde:

Yeah, I think they were definitely mixed at that time.

2-00:43:03

Ehrlich:

Mixed means?

2-00:43:04

Loveerde:

White and black. As I said, they didn't have differentiations beyond that, at that time. Maybe the staff did, the office help or something, but not within the classroom, not within the groups.

2-00:43:27

Ehrlich:

Do you remember any Japanese children?

2-00:43:27

Loveerde:

I remember there being children of all kinds, but—when I was teaching in Albany as a school teacher, I had to work it all out, exactly what their background was. I was always surprised to find, when I went through the list. I know that the little girl that I spoke of being drugged, I think she might have been Asian. I think of her, because she was very strong on my mind at a time. I was thinking that she might be Asian.

2-00:44:15

Ehrlich:

I was wondering if there were any other individual children that you still remember.

2-00:44:23

Loveerde:

Again, I say actually my time in Richmond was much shorter than my time in San Francisco and my time in Berkeley—

2-00:44:30

Ehrlich:

I was thinking of that year at Maritime.

2-00:44:33

Loveerde:

—and then my teaching years in Albany, which are twenty. So, I don't really remember.

2-00:44:41

Ehrlich:

I'm going back to a question about staff. I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about Erla Boucher. What do you remember of her?

2-00:45:03

Loveerde:

I remember in the beginning she was kind of up on a pedestal because she was the director. She was always very efficient and very friendly to me. I saw her shortly before she died, actually. I went with my mother, who was good friends with her, to her home. She was always a fine person. My mother spoke of her too, on the tape, and she said that—she was talking about the fact that Erla Boucher had brought all the teachers to the schools to train the teachers, and my mother was commenting on what a wonderful thing that was, because I think the payment for the teacher was taken care of by the school, the program. It was kind of a gift to all the teachers to make things work better. I thought that was a brilliant thought. I just never heard of that. I hadn't remembered it, actually, except

it began to work in my mind as something I remember hearing about when I was there maybe for a summer and maybe got into a little bit, or something. But I hadn't heard the whole story about how this was a regular thing and she kept bringing people in. I think she was a very good person to have started it all. I think she stayed with that program long into the state-controlled years.

2-00:46:54

Ehrlich:

Did you remember a woman named Catherine Landreth?

2-00:46:55

Loverde:

Yes.

2-00:46:57

Ehrlich:

And who was she?

2-00:46:59

Loverde:

I don't remember who she was, but my mother spoke of her all the time. It's a very common name, Catherine Landreth. I just can't figure who she was, I mean, what position she had.

2-00:47:24

Ehrlich:

I know that she did various things, but one thing I know is that she was a supervisor of student interns. I was wondering whether maybe you had any training with her.

2-00:47:35

Loverde:

I don't think so, I think she must have come later, or maybe earlier. I don't think I ran into her in her position. I think I ran into her only socially. I don't know.

2-00:47:54

Ehrlich:

I was also wondering whether if you had any contact with the superintendent of the schools, Walter Helms. Do you remember his name or him being talked about or attitudes towards him?

2-00:48:07

Loverde:

I remember his name; I never had contact. We were connected to the schools insofar that some of our children in the kindergarten group and the extended day care—which I haven't even mentioned here; that's kind of a program for older children that took place alongside this other. I think probably Walter Helms had to deal with the connection between the children in the school that went to the grade schools, like at Maritime and Nystrom, which is right next door.

2-00:48:57

Ehrlich:

Did you have experience with the extended day care?

2-00:49:01

Loverde:

I did later; not during the war, but I did later.

2-00:49:10

Ehrlich:

Is there anything else about Maritime that we haven't talked about that you think is important to record?

2-00:49:15

Loverde:

Well, my talk about Maritime I think is universal with all the schools, first of all, I'll say. I know that the basic way of dealing with children was sent out to all the schools. I think anything I said about Maritime in terms of working with the children or even the schedule—the schedule was the same in all of the schools, I believe. I don't have anything more to say on that, I don't believe.

2-00:50:09

Ehrlich:

Maybe we could talk a little bit about Richmond after the war.

2-00:50:11

Loverde:

Okay.

2-00:50:16

Ehrlich:

Do you remember when the war ended?

2-00:50:14

Loverde:

Forty-five?

2-00:50:13

Ehrlich:

No, what I meant was, do you have memories of hearing that the war was ending?

2-00:50:27

Loverde:

Yeah. That meant a lot to all of us, of course, but you are talking about Richmond. When I was out there in '45, we were dealing with the same program that we had been dealing with, and I don't think all the shipyards suddenly stopped, but I don't really remember that exactly. When the federal funding stopped and the state took over the payments, I don't think anything changed there either, right away. I know that my mother got involved in better pay for teachers and would go up to Sacramento on a regular basis, lobbying for the schools.

2-00:51:36

Ehrlich:

Do you remember anything about protests due to a plan to cut federal funding for child care?

2-00:51:57

Loverde:

At what point?

2-00:51:57

Ehrlich:

Once the war ended. Was your mother involved in—the lobbying that she did was specifically for better pay? Do you remember her being involved in a movement to continue federal funding so that the centers wouldn't close?

2-00:52:13

Loverde:

Probably, I really don't know the transition there. I just know that she had said that when the federal program stopped that the state took over, but maybe they had to fight for it. I really don't know. I was back in college, living a different sort of life. I just know that I was aware of her lobbying efforts after that, a couple of years later. It could well be that they had to fight for keeping the schools open and turning it over to the state, and maybe the state was saying no at first, and maybe the federal funds were needed to carry through for the transition. I'm not sure.

2-00:53:21

Ehrlich:

Any other memories specific to after the war?

2-00:53:29

Loverde:

No, many years later in the seventies, I came back to California after being in the east, in Chicago, with a family. I put my oldest son in the Maritime nursery at that time. It seemed to be functioning in the same good way that it had before.

2-00:54:08

Ehrlich:

Did you remember any differences?

2-00:54:06

Loverde:

No, I don't, because I don't think I had them there very long. I think it was just to fill in for the summer or something before school started. I don't really remember the situation around that.

2-00:54:24

Ehrlich:

Another question that I'm wondering about is: I've heard that fathers on the G.I. Bill after the war became involved in the centers. Do you have any memory of men being involved in the centers, fathers?

2-00:54:46

Loverde:

I don't have a memory of it, but I would imagine—when you say involved, you mean more than a parent group or something? Volunteering?

2-00:54:56

Ehrlich:

I'm not exactly sure actually what the involvement was, and I wondered if you knew anything about it.

2-00:55:06

Loverde:

No, but a lot of fathers would come in and pick up their children. I know that would happen. It wasn't just mothers, even in the beginning. I never differentiated between mothers or fathers before. Are you?

2-00:55:29

Ehrlich:

No, that's a good answer. Aside from putting your son in the center for a little while in the seventies, have you or anyone in your family been involved in Richmond in any way, since your experience in the centers?

2-00:55:51

Loverde:

No, not since then, because at that point, I started working for the Albany schools and working on my teaching credentials so I could teach first grade.

2-00:56:07

Ehrlich:

What kind of credential, or did you need a credential for the year you taught when you were in college?

2-00:56:12

Loverde:

I had a child care permit. I think I mentioned to you that I had thrown that away because I got another one later to supercede it. I don't know the date I got that, but I know that I got it because of the courses I took whenever they were available. It was during the forties, maybe it was after the war, but it allowed me to teach in the San Francisco schools as well as the Berkeley and, I think, Oakland too, actually. Different times, maybe short periods of time.

2-00:57:08

Ehrlich:

I know that other high school girls also volunteered at the child development centers. Do you have any memories of any high school boys volunteering or being involved teaching?

2-00:57:21

Loveerde:

No, and I don't have any memory of any high school girls either. They probably would come after school and play with the children in the yard or something like that. That's good. That gives them a good background.

2-00:57:40

Ehrlich:

So, anything else that we've not discussed about anything during the war years—anything we've left out; your experiences at the centers—that you want to add in now?

2-00:57:49

Loveerde:

No, but I'll mention some that I remember. There was a center named Canal, and I believe it was near Point Richmond, which is where the Washington School was. There was a Peres, which may have been towards San Pablo. I'm not sure. This is just off the top of my head. There was Stege and Fairmount, which actually was in El Cerrito, so that may have been after the war, I'm not sure. I know my mother said that when the war ended there were fourteen centers. I can't pull up more than seven names, so I'm a little confused what those other seven were. That's all I can say about that.

2-00:59:07

Ehrlich:

Okay. I'm done, I think. Let me just make sure there's nothing I've forgotten to ask. It would be nice to have your mom included. What were you going to say?

2-00:59:24

Loveerde:

I was just going to mention that if you wanted to remember that.

2-00:59:25

Ehrlich:

Yeah, I do.