

Catherine Gaultier

The Real Rosie the Riveter Project

Interview 25

Interview Conducted by

Kirsten Kelly

June 26, 2010

Nashville, Tennessee

For The

For the Tamiment Library, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives
Elmer Holmes Bobst Library
New York University

Interview: Catherine Gaultier

Interviewers: Kirsten Kelly

Date: June 26, 2010

Place: Nashville, Tennessee

Gaultier: I'm Catherine Gaultier.

Kelly: And how old?

Gaultier: And I'm 95 years old and then I was one of the- I worked. I was a Rosie the Riveter.

Kelly: And how old?

Gaultier: I'm 95 years old. And then I was one of the Rosie the Riveter.

Kelly: and where did you work as a Rosie?

Gaultier: I worked in Cleveland, Ohio. I worked for a Fisher Body and before that I was working at Sears making \$7 a week. While I was there three gentlemen came up to me and said, "Are you interested in going to be a riveter?" And I said, "I don't know. I'll have to ask Sears if they

could release me." And they went to him and said,
"certainly you can go." And that's how I got my job.

Kelly: And what did you make in Cleveland?

Gaultier: at that time I was making \$7 a week at Sears but
it was little over \$2 an hour but I don't remember exactly
how much but it wasn't very much. But but at that time, it
was a lot.

Kelly: So when you were a Rosie you made-

Gaultier: Little over \$2 an hour.

Kelly: Wow, really? So that was quiet a big difference from
Sears.

Gaultier: Oh yes, oh yes. So I was so excited about it and
I worked there pretty close to three years. And then well I
was there I had the three children and I had to work at at
during the day. Then at night my husband worked. He worked
to take care of the children. Then he went nights and I had
the reverse you know. And that's how I kept staying there.
And when I was going there at night when I went back to

work at night, I had to get up real early and get on the bus. Make three bus stops at that time because we didn't have the money, we didn't have the car. And uh so after I stayed until the war ended. And while we were there he said we're going outside to stay in the uh the park lot. They were going to have a visitor. So in the meantime, he comes an airplane. The b-29 we were all there. He comes out, he tips his wing, went all the way down, came back, tipped it. And everybody was- we were crying. Really crying, it was sad. And uh then about three weeks later, I think about three weeks, we lost our job because the war ended because they went to Iwo Jima. That's when they bombed that Iwo Jima.

03:14:10-----

Gaultier: And that was the end of our- my career. I had to go back to sears.

Kelly: What do you think you learned from being a Rosie?

Gauliter: When I went there to be a Rosie, I was so proud and so happy and my husband also thought it was just wonderful. And so it was just it was just like we were

playing it was nice. Everybody was so nice and gentle and uh I enjoyed it. I couldn't wait to go back to work. I didn't want to take care of the children.

Kelly: Do you- Do you have a favorite uh funny memory or a funny thing that happened while you were a Rosie?

Gaultier: The only thing- the men always made me do the dirty work. I had to get down to the bottom- (laughs). When they were bucking I had to be there to make sure they hit it right. And of course, had to be very careful and it had to be even you know. It was so- they were something else. They were on top and you'd do the bottom. But we had a good time. Everybody was so congenial. It was nice.

04:35:21-----

Kelly: What was the feeling like about the war at that time?

Gaultier: I was very upset about it you know. I didn't know how long it was going to last you know. And everybody there talked so much about death. And it was bad. It was- I knew a lot of friends who were going into the service to the w-

and I really felt bad. But it but it managed. We had to keep on going. So but it- everybody was worried about it. So when they bombed that and within one week it was all gone. No war. The war ended and I lost my job.

Kelly: Do you remember how you found out you lost your job? Do you remember?

Gaultier: Oh yea I remember when I lost the job.

Kelly: What happened? How did you find out that you couldn't-

Gaultier: Oh we were dismissed. They told us that we were all through. Everybody lost their job at that time. And then it was- even then I went back to Sears. So- for \$7 a week.

Kelly: You worked for three years you said? As a Rosie?

Gaultier: Yes.

Kelly: What did you do with the extra money that you were making? Do you remember?

Gaultier: Well we paid of our home. Yes. So we were so happy about that. You know, it was nice.

Kelly: Get a jump start?

Gaultier: Oh yes. It was sad it had to be that way but it did help us. So-

Kelly: And what did your husband do during the war?

Gaultier: He was- he worked for the railroad. He worked there for 43 years, same one. And that of course he didn't have to go to the service because it was a railroader that was important for them to move their materials around you know. So that's why he was there. And he took care of the children.

Kelly: A pretty modern husband at that time?

Gaultier: Oh yes yes so and uh, it was nice. I enjoyed every minute of it.

The End.