

The Baltimore Rosies: Disc One, Introductions

The Real Rosie The Riveter Project

Interview 5

Interview Conducted by

Anne de Mare & Kirsten Kelly

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Baltimore, Maryland

For The

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Henninger: Hello, I'm Grace Penner Henninger, and I came to work at the Martins in nineteen, uh, forty-four, October the seventeenth. I trained to be a Rosie the Riveter in one of these buildings here. I don't know which one, but at that time they weren't connected together. So it was probably the one in the middle; Number Two, I guess that would be it. And, um, I'd never had a gun in my hand, uh, the... the... uh, driver of the rivet, and I never had... I knew... didn't know what bucking meant. But I soon found out.

And so, uh, uh, uh, one of the guards were teasing me because I'm from North Carolina. Well, the reason I came up was my aunt Nina, uh, Miller worked at Martins for a couple years before I came up and, uh, she worked in B Building on the fff... uh, inspector as a, uh, floor of the PBM. Well, it so happened after I'd finished my training, the two weeks training, I was put in the department in B Building and it was called the B step of the PBM, and that's the part that sits down in the water, the tail end of the thing. (Laughs)

And so, uh, there... I was in a group of about ten or fourteen men at that time, and I was the only lady working there. They respected my very much because I didn't cuss, I didn't like some of the other ladies, and they really respected me and I appreciated that. So I learned to do the jobs of about six of the men that left to go to war. And uh, uh, so it was, uh, I learned to do, uh, rivet, uh, frozen rivets that went into the tail section and, uh, uh, it was just a wonderful experience.

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Ledbetter: I'm Nellie Ruth Ledbetter. I worked at the Martin Company for twenty-seven years. I loved every minute of it, I did just about everything that she mentioned. The last job that I did was on a experimental space station. And, uh, you had to put a white shoe, uh, cap over your shoe and over your head; if you had dandruff in your hair, you wasn't allowed in the room. It was very interesting and I, uh, enjoyed it.

00:2:57:12-----

Nichols: My name is Mary Dunnum Nichols. I, uh, I worked at Martins from June of 1943 until the war was over. Uh, and then I went to the University of Maryland. So, and I was a... I did drafting work. I changed the drawings from which the blueprints were made for the B26.

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Stemler: My name is Rita Appell Stemler and I worked for the, uh, engi... engineering personnel director. I was a secretary. It was very interesting work because we were involved with lots of, um, of recruiting and, uh, um, we... we had some incidents where, unfortunately, some of our engineers we had to escort out because they had made recent trips to Germany. (Laughs) But, uh, it... it... it was rather... rather perturbing to see the men in the black suits come and... and... and, eh, inform us of this, uh, incident.

De Mare: Wow.

00:04:10:05-----

Johnston: Uh, my name is Idilia Spence Johnston and I worked at Ohio Crankshaft in Cleveland, Ohio. And I was

the assistant comptroller making up the reports for the board meetings every week, biweekly and Monthly.

00:04:27:26-----

Simon: My name is Loretta Tuling Simon and I worked at Martins in 1942 and '43. And, um, I first went in working at, um, with my boss in filing his file work. And I got bored and asked to go into assembly and I went and had training on the job with assembly work, working on the tail end of the plane. And it was very, very interesting. I learned a lot. I would go back and do it again.

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Arnold: My name is Elsie Godwin Arnold and I worked at Glenn L. Martin for two years.

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Podolsky: Uh, Alice, uh, Whitmer Podolsky and I worked at the Glenn L. Martins from nineteen forty-one, I think, until forty-three.

00:05:25:01-----

Brawner: Okay, my name is Rita Brawner and I worked, uh, 1942 at the training school. They had a training school down here by Plant Two for young men in the service, and when they left they were issued, uh, uh, parachutes and boots. And it was just a small detachment; there was about ten barracks where they lived, and there were only about ten girls that worked in permanent party. And I typed up, um, payroll roster and I also worked in the Quarter Master's office where I typed up requisitions for the different, uh, uh, outfits that the men were issued before they left.

And when I left there, then I worked at Martins, uh, Personnel, and I worked there for three years. So... of course that was a lot hiring duties in personnel. And it was a lot different then; I mean, everything was camouflaged here. And at the beginning of the war, Essex was a very small town. That's where I lived. And then suddenly there were more than sixty-two thousand people here from all over the country to work at Martins. They didn't have any place for them to live, and they put up temporary houses and Victory Villa and Arrow Acres to... and there were a lot of people that opened their homes at Essex

for boarders to come in and work. So, that's about all I can think of off the top of my head.

De Mare: Wonderful.

00:06:56:15-----

De Shaw: I'm Mary De Shaw, and I was, uh, the first group of women that worked... started at Martins. I riveted. I worked in C Building and final assembly on the planes... fleet ships that came back from the service. Very interesting work; I loved it.

00:07:16:05-----

Johnson: I'm Violet Federoff Johnson and I worked at Martins, uh, from 1942 to 1945. Very interesting; I'm proud of the fact that I worked there. Thanks.

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Yingling: My name is Rose Fodorsky Yingling I worked at Glenn L. Martins for five years.

00:07:33:12-----

King: Hello, good morning. I'm Susan Taylor King. I attended the National Defense School in 1942 when I finished high school, and I worked at Eastern Aircraft from 1942 through 1943 before I returned to school.

00:07:50:00-----

Brunner: Therada Carter Brunner. I worked at Glenn L. Martin's Number Two Plant. The second shift. Get, uh, uh... my first job. And I did it at night, you know, catch the bus and come down. And when I first seen the parking lot with all the camouflage, I... "Oh, my." You know, it was so different. And that... I just worked for about a couple of years. That's it.

00:08:12:10-----

Greene: Okay, I'm Vera Green, no, Vera Golya Green and during the war my nickname was 'Red Screen' because I did have natural long red hair, so I... when I married, I became Red Screen. But I worked at Eastern Aircraft and I worked from 1941 until the end of the war, forty-five.

00:08:32:22-----

Bartholomey: I'm Leona Schissler Bartholomey, and I worked at Martins for just seven months, but I changed over when my husband was going overseas to be with him for a while. So they gave me a leave, and when I came back I went to work for Eastern Aircraft. And I worked to the end of the war.