

Museum of History and Holocaust Education Legacy Series

Leona Foringer Interview

Conducted by James Newberry

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Transcribed by Alysa Matsunaga

Leona “Lee” Foringer was born on a Texan farm in 1919. She attended East Texas State Teachers College to become a teacher and taught a couple of classes. She married her first husband and moved to Long Beach, California, before World War II began. When her husband joined the Army Air Corps, she trained and worked as a riveter at Douglas Aircraft, building B-17s and B-19s. Foringer left Douglas Aircraft when she was eight months pregnant. After World War II, she became a buyer for women’s dress shops. She lives in Hoschton, Georgia, and is also a member of the American Rosie the Riveter Association.

Full Transcript

Interviewer: This is James Newberry and I’m here with Leona Foringer, uh, at Sturgis Library at Kennesaw State University, on Monday, December 5, 2016, a rainy day. And, uh, Ms. Foringer, do you agree to this interview?

Foringer: Yes, I do! [nods]

Interviewer: Well thank you very much. We’ll start at the beginning—.

Foringer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Could you please state your full name?

Foringer: Uh, Leona Foringer, and my middle name, everybody calls me Lee.

Interviewer: Okay, and what was your maiden name?

Foringer: Currin.

Interviewer: Okay.

Foringer: And I— of course, it’d be Leona C. Foringer, but I never used the “C”—.

Interviewer: Okay.

Foringer: I just use— It’s such a long name, [chuckles] Leona Foringer.

Interviewer: So, what is your birthday?

Foringer: June first, nineteen and nineteen.

Interviewer: Okay, and where were you born?

Foringer: In Hopkins County, Texas. In the country. [smiles and giggles]

Interviewer: What is Hopkins County close to?

Foringer: Uh, Cumby, Texas. That’s a little, uh— place in the road and that’s where I went to school and graduated. And, uh, that’s in between, uh— Dallas and Sulphur Springs, our—Texas—our Texicana, are— is between the two.

Interviewer: Okay, and what were your parent’s names?

Foringer: A— Clarence— my dad, and Velma, my mother.

Interviewer: Okay, did you have siblings?

Foringer: Yes, I did. I, uh, had, uh, two brothers, and uh, three sisters.

Interviewer: So, a pretty big family.

Foringer: Yes, five of us children.

Interviewer: Well, what did your parents do for a living?

Foringer: Well, uh, my dad was a farmer.

Interviewer: Okay, uh—.

Foringer: And we raised cattle and cotton mostly. [laughs] Just a real farmer. [laughs]

Interviewer: What sort of work did you do on the farm?

Foringer: Oh, well I did everything that— like, uh, haul cotton, pick cotton, and everything that went with— to help my dad out, all of us children did that, as long as we were at home, and then I— he sent me to college and I went a couple of years and then taught a couple of years. [laughs]

Interviewer: Well, how successful of a farmer was he?

Foringer: Pretty good, we had a good living. But not— way, way from being rich, we just made a good wee living. [laughs]

Interviewer: Well, was your family affected by the Depression?

Foringer: Oh, well, yeah, we didn't have anything— my dad didn't have much cotton that year to sell. Y'know, we had to depend on our crops for money.

Interviewer: So, I guess what you ate came out of the garden.

Foringer: Oh yes, yes. We just had everything to eat there, and more! [giggles]

Interviewer: So, tell me about your childhood. Do you have memories of— of—.

Foringer: Well I had a wonderful mother and dad and uh— I just had a very happy childhood, and my brother, that was two years younger than I, he had to go to war when he was twenty-one and he was killed. And, uh, so I— he and I were very close, and uh— I just, we just did everything together, y'know?

Interviewer: And did your family go to church?

Foringer: Oh well, occasionally, because my mother was a Baptist, my dad was a Presbyterian. [laughs] And I'm a Methodist! [laughs] But, uh— anyway, we didn't live close to a church, y'know. And uh— occasionally we'd go and uh— we would visit our relatives and we'd go to church with them, so— no special one.

Interviewer: Who were your friends?

Foringer: Who was my—?

Interviewer: Who— what sort of kids did you hang out with? Was it at school? Was it in the community?

Foringer: Uh, yeah— I walked about three miles and then rode the bus— to school. And uh— it was about—mmm— I guess I— six miles from where I lived— the school was— but I rode the bus about three miles. And where the weather likes this— and worse— [laughs] with icicles hanging off me!
[laughs]

Film crew: [laughs]

Interviewer: So can you describe your home— your childhood home? The house where you grew up?

Foringer: Well, it was just a— y’know, a nice country home and, uh— we had uh— I guess four bedrooms. And uh, a very comfortable home, [slightly shakes head] nothing fancy, but just very comfortable. Like, you used to see a lot of the country homes there and usually, we lived in different uh— places and usually they were off the main road, up y’know where— and uh— but I had a wonderful childhood, happy.

Interviewer: Did you do much traveling, out of the county?

Foringer: Uh— not until I got married.

Interviewer: Okay, so where did you go to high school?

Foringer: Cumby, Texas.

Interviewer: And um— you graduated in?

Foringer: Thirty-seven.

Interviewer: So, you said that your father sent you to college, what college was that?

Foringer: Uh— East Texas State— Teachers college, it’s a— East Texas State College in Commerce, Texas.

Interviewer: And what were you gonna teach— train to do there?

Foringer: Uh— what did I do?

Interviewer: You went to school to be a teacher?

Foringer: Yeah, I was just going to be a teacher, I really didn’t know what I wanted to be, y’know. I was twenty and twenty-one and— so, I just wanted to have fun. [laughs]

Interviewer: Well what was having fun? Like—.

Foringer: Well— just going and boys, and— and I had a lot of friends, and we’d be at parties and things like that. Y’know, we walked everywhere, our— they’d ride horses, and uh— my dad was real strict, but uh— there were a lot of girls and boys that lived in the country, with their parents, of course, and uh— it was um— near a lot of places and uh— so it was fun. [laughs]

Interviewer: So, um— you trained to be a teacher, well tell me about teaching. Did you like it, were you good at it?

Foringer: No, I wasn’t a good teacher because I was too good to my kids, I didn’t want— I didn’t want to give ‘em bad grades. Whenever I see them frown, y’know, and um— make them sad, and I thought “Oh,

that's not for me". And I taught two years, and then I happened to go in a dress shop one day, finding uh— things for my daughters to, y'know, put in lay-away and to wear to school, the next year, and the— I said, "Oh, I would love to work here.", and uh— the uh— manager said, "Well, y'know, that's not a bad idea. You want to fill out an application?" [laughs] And I— so I got a job! I got— he called me the next week and that was my life then, I loved— y'know, dress shops and uh— fashion. [waves hand] That was me.

Interviewer: Well that's clear.

Foringer: [laughs]

Interviewer: So that was later on?

Foringer: Yes—.

Interviewer: That was after the war.

Foringer: Yeah, that continued.

Interviewer: Okay.

Foringer: And— but, in the war uh— as soon as we got married, uh— we moved to Long Beach, California. That's where my husband's uh— brother and his wife lived. And we moved to California, and we all had an apartment together, and then uh— of course a war broke out. They uh— we— the first week that we were in California, we were walking down what they call uh— pike, by the ocean, and uh— they announced on the radio— we had just bought a little radio the night before— and they announced about the y'know, Japanese [waves hand]. And uh— so then, um— my husband's uh— brother was captured by the Japanese and uh— so he was what they called a "For Health" y'know, his— he wasn't in the best of health and uh— they didn't take, y'know— they wouldn't have taken uh— boys that had any kind of uh— illness [motions around the throat], y'know like he had thyroid problems, but they took everybody. He was what they called a "For Health". So he said, "Well, his brother was captured in the Japanese prison camp" and he said, "I'm gonna go sign up." And even though he was "For Health" and uh— so they took him right on in— the Air Force is what— but he didn't— but he didn't leave the states. Y'know, cause he's still not able to really be in the service, but that's what he wanted to do, on account of his brother been captured.

Interviewer: Well, let's— let's go back, how did you meet your husband?

Foringer: Well, on a blind date. [laughs] His brother was dating my girlfriend and uh— he said, "I have a brother I think you'd like." So I said, "Okay". [laughs] And a— anyway that's— uh believe it or not, uh— [laughs] he proposed to me when I was picking cotton! [laughs]

Film crew: [laughs]

Interviewer: Really? can you des—.

Foringer: His dad was sitting in the car, and he just got out of the car and came on down to the cotton patch and— and uh— here I was with this big bonnet on and my cotton sack and uh— I had no idea why he was out there. And uh— he wanted a date for that night, but uh— anyway, he told me then later that— that's what he was going to do and he decided to wait on the date to ask me to marry him. [throws back head and laughs]

Interviewer: So uh— what was his name?

Foringer: August— August Turner.

Interviewer: Okay.

Foringer: And—.

Interviewer: What kind of guy was he?

Foringer: Uh— well he was a nice— guy that— good looking. And— and uh— Carol's father. Uh— I had three children by him, a son and my two daughters. And my son died with heart attack. And uh— but uh— I have my two daughters left.

Interviewer: So, when was your wedding? To August Turner?

Foringer: When was what—?

Interviewer: Your wedding.

Foringer: Oh, my wedding was uh— [laughs] [points at her head] October, the fourth— in 1941.

Interviewer: Okay, was it a big wedding, a small wedding?

Foringer: [shakes head] No, it's just— we were married in a preacher's study. [laughs]

Interviewer: Do you remember what you wore?

Foringer: A blue dress. [laughs] I thought— I know it was a blue dress. Mmm-hmmm.

Interviewer: And were members of your family there?

Foringer: No, just my friend and his brother. [laughs]

Interviewer: So you said, after the wedding y'all moved to California?

Foringer: Yes, uh-huh, we— his brother lived there and his wife, so we uh— got— my dad had to help me buy a car. And so that's— it was a '36 uh— Ford. [laughs] And that's what we went in. Traveled in there, to get to California, that's where uh— my son was born and uh— [gestures to their right] Carol was born.

Interviewer: So, uh— why did y'all decide to go to California?

Foringer: Well, that's where uh— he had worked there in the Ford Motor Company. He was a mechanic.

Interviewer: And that's your husband or your brother-in-law?

Foringer: My husband.

Interviewer: Okay, and tell me about the apartment that you were sharing with— with your husband's brother.

Foringer: Well, it was a three bedroom apartment, believe it or not. And right on the ocean [makes a hand sweeping motion], in Long Beach, California, in the ocean front. And uh— [slightly shakes head] no big, nothing exciting. [laughs]

Interviewer: And um— tell me— you told me a little about it— but uh— tell me more about your memories of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Foringer: Well uh— all I know about that is that my brother-in-law was— y'know— captured and it was before the— the march of uh—.

Interviewer: Bataan.

Foringer: Yes. [nods] Before that, and uh— um [raises head up] really I don't remember too much about the war because uh— my husband y'know— [motions at the throat] had this thyroid problem and he didn't stay very long. He got out, discharged.

Interviewer: Okay, so what branch of military did he go into?

Foringer: Air Force.

Interviewer: Alright, was he posted on a base?

Foringer: Uh— well yeah, he didn't— he didn't leave Texas really. Uh— and he didn't— y'know because he was— his health. And they didn't see him anywhere. [shakes head]

Interviewer: Okay. Was he on a base in California?

Foringer: Uh— well, it was Texas. Yeah, Texas.

Interviewer: Okay—.

Foringer: El Paso, Texas.

Interviewer: And that was after the time you married him?

Foringer: Um— yes, it was after we got married.

Interviewer: Okay, so um— you were living in Texas after you got married?

Foringer: Uh— in California. Because that's where we were when the war broke out.

Interviewer: I see.

Foringer: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, um— you were living in California when uh— the war broke out—.

Foringer: Yes.

Interviewer: And um— at what point did you go try to get a job at a factory?

Foringer: Well uh— I, **all the short courses and my book [~15:48]** but uh— I was looking at the wanted ads, since my husband wanted to, y'know, [waves hand] join the Air Force. I decided, and my girlfriend, she had just graduated from high school, uh— we both wanted to work and do something. And I was reading in the paper, where they uh— needed uh— women, y'know to take the men's jobs that had to go. And uh— so she and I went down and applied. And uh— for Douglas Aircraft Company in Long Beach.

And uh— they signed us up, we had to go to six weeks of training as a riveter and uh—, I'm a member of the Rosie the Riveters! [laughs] And uh— and uh— we uh— changed like— she did the buck end and I did the riveting, and vice a versa. On the fuselages and different parts of the B-17s and the uh— B-19s.

Interviewer: Okay, so Douglas Aircraft was producing those two planes?

Foringer: Uh—.

Interviewer: The B-17s and—.

Foringer: Uh— yes, Douglas Aircraft.

Interviewer: So, how big was Douglas Aircraft?

Foringer: Uh— well to my summation, it was very large, one of the largest aircraft factory and uh—.

Interviewer: And did you have to have an ID card to get in?

Foringer: Oh yes, yes. Very strict. And I— and we had to know our social security number, every morning when we uh— went to work, we had to repeat our social security number. That's— that's when I learned mine. [laughs]

Interviewer: And who trained you?

Foringer: Well, the uh— I guess it's the people in— at the aircraft company. After, we went to six weeks of school, they had the instructor **sir [~18:01]** y'know for the aircraft, at different places, uh— I uh— worked on what they call the “fuselage” and uh— and the “jigs” y'know, you put uh— different parts of the plane, they called them “jigs” and uh— to work on the rivet and then after, they were uh— ready to place on the plane, we would get inside, I saw “we”— my friend and I— y'know we— they let us work together, and uh— whenever uh— I loved to rivet and she loved to do the buckling y'know— which is the— they had what they called a big bar— buckling— and you put that up against the rivet as it went through and that would flatten the uh— rivet. Inward, it would stay and of course we had inspectors that came by every day before we got off of work to— to make sure everything was right and y'know um— and so— it was fun though. I enjoyed it.

Interviewer: So, um— you said you were working with your friend—.

Foringer: Yes.

Interviewer: Were there other workers in your group?

Foringer: Oh yes. Yes, it was mostly women, y'know. And the boys were like seventeen years old. But we had fun, y'know. And— and uh— then whenever my husband uh— came home for— from uh— for leave, well uh— he was there for a month and uh— cause it was sick leave y'know, and uh— so, that's when I got pregnant with my son. And I worked until uh— I was uh— eight months pregnant and that's when I quit and uh— and the boys, they made money to buy my son a baby bed, and the girls gave me a shower, [laughs] for the other thing— gifts. And so it was really, y'know a neat place to work and everybody was so congenial.

Interviewer: Well, tell me, what did you wear when you were working?

Foringer: Well I, y'know I— most— all of the pictures I've seen, the women, they are in overalls. [shakes head] I didn't wear overalls. I just wore uh— guess that's when I started wearing pants. Y'know, because women haven't worn pants for a long, long time and uh— but uh— I guess that's how— and bandanas, I guess, I don't remember that much about it, y'know. Because I just go about the pictures.

Interviewer: Did you tie your hair back?

Foringer: Uh, well my— no. Uh— I just didn't think I looked good. [slaps knee, laughs]

Interviewer: You wanted to look good?

Foringer: [nods] They— they didn't really require that. Because it's according to what you were doing, y'know. And— but if you were a welder, you had to do a lot of things, protections and you would uh— what I did.

Interviewer: So what sort of riveting tool did you have?

Foringer: Uh— I had what they called a rivet gun, it uh— I don't know— it's kind of like, y'know, automatic uh— screwdriver. That kind of machine, and you'd hold on to it and uh— you had to be, y'know, strong. [laughs] And it'd shake you to pieces. [laughs] But uh— the buck end, y'know, the person that had the bar, it uh— it was easier to buck than to rivet.

Interviewer: So you were doing it at the same time?

Foringer: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: The bucking and the riveting?

Foringer: Yeah, because she, y'know, you have to be sure there's somebody on the other side to mash that uh— rivet where it would, y'know, you shoot the rivet in, and then the person on the other side, they have that bar ready to press it, and the rivet goes up against it, and that's what, y'know, uh— makes the uh— part that your riveting stay together.

Interviewer: I see. So, um— you said that some of the other workers were young men— boys.

Foringer: Yeah, yeah, seventeen years old. I worked with the boy that was seventeen, he was so sweet though. Peter Grass was his name. [laughs] I never would have figured. And uh—.

Interviewer: Were there older men?

Foringer: [shakes head] No, I guess they were either too ill, or— or in the service.

Interviewer; Uh, did you have any difficult interactions with men, working in the plant?

Foringer: [shakes head] No, no, in fact the boys always— said they enjoyed us women working there, and I worked in the uh— bolt and screw departments, and y'know, cause you had to learn what kind of bolts and everything, and so whenever needed something, they'd come up to the uh— little booth, y'know, and tell 'em then what they needed and uh— then they'd have to know what it was, so we had to learn the

names of all the bolts and what they looked like, so we'd be ready to, y'know, give them the material that they asked for. Because that's the only tough part about it, is remembering things like that. [laughs]

Interviewer: So when the fuselage came out to the area where you were going to work on it, did you have to go up on a platform—?

Foringer: No, we went inside the plane.

Interviewer: And how did they move it around the plant? How did they move the fuselage?

Foringer: Well uh— the planes usually were just stationary, y'know, they were that uh— for long been built, and then we'd get inside, y'know, and work on the fuselage while— when they were stationary, y'know, to finish up the uh— finishing part.

Interviewer: Did you ever get injured?

Foringer: [shakes head] No.

Interviewer: Okay, did you feel like you faced any danger on the job?

Foringer: No, it was fun, I didn't think anything about things like that, it was just, y'know, having a good time and uh— because everybody was so nice, y'know, you couldn't help but enjoy your work, and we uh— it was three of us girls, uh— my friend that did the riveting with me, had her own car, she got it for a graduation gift, and so that— we went back and forth in our apartments[~25:31] in her car.

Interviewer: And what hours did you work?

Foringer: Well, I was what they called “swing shift”, we had worked different shifts, y'know, sometimes it'd be days shifts, and uh— the swing shifts would go in, I think, three o' clock and work 'till seven, or something like— I don't— I don't remember the hours. But it was called “swing shift”, it was the evening, y'know, shift and uh— and the ones that had gone in in the morning, they were leaving and we'd come on to work.

Interviewer: Um, so you said you rode with your friend?

Foringer: Yeah. [nods]

Interviewer: Were there blackouts along the coast?

Foringer: Yes, yes, yes. And the most of it was when we were at home, and we had to darken our windows, and uh— be sure there was no lights on at all.

Interviewer: And how often did it happen?

Foringer: Not real often, but we, y'know, everybody, you couldn't see a light anywhere. Because it's all completely dark.

Interviewer: So, did you have breaks while you were at work?

Foringer: Oh yes, yes. And we made— [laughs] nickel an hour. [laughs] That was our raise. [laughs]

Interviewer: So, how much was your salary overall?

Foringer: Well, y'know what, it was uh— I really uh— don't remember. Um— I really don't remember.

Interviewer: It—.

Foringer: Because we teach in school, and made seventy-nine dollars a month. [laughs]

Interviewer: So, do you remember if it was more than that, less than that?

Foringer: It was less than— less than that, about the same, we were all so tickled to get a nickel a raise.

[laughs]

Interviewer: So it wasn't very much?

Foringer: No, no. [shakes head]

Interviewer: And what did you use the money for?

Foringer: Oh, well uh— since my husband was in the service, well I started our bank account, believe it or not. [laughs]

Interviewer: Did you?

Foringer: Yeah.

Interviewer: Where did you set up the bank account?

Foringer: In a— Texas, in a **loft[~27:52]** where my parents lived.

Interviewer: Okay, so was there a union in your factory?

Foringer: I— if there were— was, I didn't know about it. I wasn't that far along with it. [laughs]

Interviewer: Okay, so um—.

Foringer: I'm sure there was though.

Interviewer: Okay, you said— so your husband came on leave, and uh— you got pregnant and worked until your eighth month?

Foringer: Yes. [nods]

Interviewer: Okay, so um— were you— was it easy for you to work, being— being pregnant like that?

Foringer: It was what?

Interviewer: Was it easy for you to work while pregnant?

Foringer: I don't remember, but I guess it was, y'know because being inside, the uh— airplane and working inside, but it wasn't anything hard about it really.

Interviewer: Okay, and um— so— you said you left the job.

Foringer: Oh yes.

Interviewer: And tell me about leaving the job.

Foringer: Leaving?

Interviewer: You left because you were going to have a baby.

Foringer: Oh yeah. Well that was just about it, whenever they gave me the shower, and uh they wished me “good luck”, and all that, and then I never worked anymore.

Interviewer: Okay, so um— let's see here, I wanna get the timeline sort of straight. Uh— cause you talked about your husband going back to El Paso—.

Foringer: [nods]

Interviewer: So was this after you worked at the factory?

Foringer: [nods] Oh yes, yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so was— he was relocated then, back to Texas?

Foringer: Well, he was on— they were ready to dismiss him, [motions at the neck] because he had uh- get a uh— what do you call it— whenever you're unable to stay in the service?

Film crew: Discharge. [~29:47]

Foringer: What kind of discharge? [laughs] But he got a discharge from the service.

Interviewer: And that was in Texas.

Foringer: [nods] Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, did you live with him on a base in El Paso?

Foringer: [shakes head] No, no I lived in an apartment with his brother and his wife there in Long Beach.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, so you were—.

Foringer: And I was working at Douglas.

Interviewer: So your husband went to Texas by himself.

Foringer: [nods] Yes, yes, he was sent to El Paso.

Interviewer: I see. I see, okay. So uh— you had to live alone for a period of time, or live without your husband.

Foringer: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Foringer: Well, not really alone because I had his uh— brother and sister— well the brother worked at the shipyard and uh— his wife and I were very good friends. And uh— so, we all lived together and got along fine.

Interviewer: Did you get a ration book for the household?

Foringer: Oh yes. And uh— y'know that's whenever they had rations for gas, because I didn't have a car, [laughs] And I— I didn't learn how to drive until I was uh— had a— taught school a couple of years, my dad had me buy a car. [laughs]

Interviewer: Okay, so um— let me see here, um— so tell me about that brother-in-law who was a prisoner of war in Japan.

Foringer: Oh— .

Interviewer: How did you learn about that?

Foringer: Well, he— when he came home, after the war was over, he came and everybody— the relatives

my uh— husband, went to— I wanna say uh— San Francisco, wherever the ship came in, and all the prisoners of war were on the ship. He went up there to greet him. And then uh— he went back to Texas— that's where his family lived.

Interviewer: Well, what had he been through in Japan?

Foringer: What had he been through?

Interviewer: Yeah, as a prisoner of war.

Foringer: Well uh— I know he was a musician and uh— he sold— he gave his guitar to a Japanese to get something— I don't know if it were cigarettes or what is was, y'know. But uh— uh— just whatever they could get for y'know, relaxation or something. Well, they would promise these uh— Japanese guards, y'know, different things, like cigarettes if they wanted cigarettes, y'know they had to promise them different things, to get anything like that.

Interviewer: Was he healthy when he came home?

Foringer: No. [shakes head] No, he was a pretty large [motions up and down] guy when he went in, y'know, not a large large, just that pretty average uh— guy, he was six foot tall and, y'know, filled out real well, but he was just skin and bones when he came home. Yeah, he looked nothing like he looked when he went in.

Interviewer: So, your husband he— he was in the— the Air Corps— .

Foringer: [nods head] Yes.

Interviewer: And what did he do in the military?

Foringer: Well, he was a mechanic, on the planes.

Interviewer: Okay, so he was— he stayed in the United States— .

Foringer: Yes, oh yes, he never left Texas.

Interviewer: And he worked on plane engines?

Foringer: Yes. [nods]

Interviewer: Okay, and so, eventually he was discharged.

Foringer: Yes.

Interviewer: And um— what did y'all do after his discharge?

Foringer: Hmmmm. Well, let's see, we went back to California, and my daughter Carol was born there, and then we— my dad wanted us to move back to Texas, so we did, and— and uh— he was still a mechanic and went and had our own business, y'know, a service station with it, so uh— we lived in Commerce, Texas and that's where my other daughter was born. And uh— so that's about it. [waves hand outwards and laughs]

Film Crew and Interviewer: [laughs]

Interviewer: Ready to wrap it up.

Foringer: [Laughs]

Interviewer: Uh— so, well I wanna ask you a couple of other things, um— do you remember the end of the war?

Foringer: Oh yes, we all went down the uh— Long Beach streets, y’know, everybody went crazy and uh— just it was just everybody hollerin’ and grabbing— boys were grabbing the girls, whether they were married or not, and then kissing them, I mean it really was a jolly time. Very fun.

Interviewer: Very exciting?

Foringer: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so your husband was a mechanic after the war, and you said you went to work in retail, right?

Foringer: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: In a retail clothing store?

Foringer: Oh yes, in a dress shops.

Interviewer: Right.

Foringer: Not department stores, but ladies’ boutiques.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Foringer: And I was a sales— in sales, and I was a manager, and I was a buyer, I just did it all. [waves hands] That’s all I did.

Interviewer: You ended up having three children.

Foringer: [nods] Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, and um— do you have a grandchildren?

Foringer: [nods] Yes.

Interviewer: And great— grandchildren?

Foringer: [nods] Yes. I have— let’s see— [laughs and puts hand on forehead] I got a— I have— three grandchildren, and uh— dry [~35:47] [laughs] how many great-grandchildren— three, four? I think four.

Film crew: Yeah, four, okay.

Interviewer: Okay, and how did you end up in Georgia?

Foringer: Well, uh— Carol and I, course, came together, she had lost her husband the year before my husband passed away, I was married, y’know, again. Foringer, [looks up] a wonderful, wonderful guy.

Interviewer: How did you meet him?

Foringer: Oh, on a blind date. [laughs] With a friend of his, they were tra— he was a pilot and they were training to be uh— pilots— captains on the 747. And I met him, on a blind date, and— that was it! [laughs]

Interviewer: And when was that?

Foringer: Well, boy.

Interviewer: Well, not the exact date, but just was that in the sixties, the seventies, the eighties?

Foringer: Seventies.

Interviewer: Okay. So that was after your first marriage?

Foringer: Oh yes. I divorced him.

Interviewer: Okay, I got it!

Film crew and Foringer: [laugh]

Foringer: [looks off-screen at Carol] Carol, don't mind, they wanted— my kids wanted me to divorce him anyways. [laughs]

Film crew: [indiscernible conversation]

Interviewer: So you, this fella, your second husband— Mr. Foringer— he was a pilot of— ?

Foringer: He was an American airline pilot.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, I see and— .

Foringer: And he was a captain and uh— and I just— he was one of the best men that ever lived.

[laughs] I don't care if I said [~37:35], but everybody else thought so! [laughs]

Interviewer: And you lived with him in Arizona?

Foringer: [nods] Yes, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, and uh— you and your daughter moved to Georgia.

Foringer: Yes, and whenever he passed away, my wonderful son had a heart attack, three months after my husband died. And uh— so uh— there was no— and Carol's husband, of course, had just passed away the year before, and my daughter and her husband here uh— said that it looked like we needed to come to Georgia, because they were the only relatives we had, y'know. Really close relatives. And uh— he was an ex-Marine and uh— well he was still in the Marines at the time, I think, but uh— anyway uh— they lived here and uh— so that's the reason we came and uh— and we're still here.

Interviewer: And so, Ms. Foringer, why do you think it's important to share your World War II story?

Foringer: Well um— my— the club that I belong to, they just thought it was a good idea for all of us to tell our stories and we'd have a book made up, and uh— so that's the reason, [points at themselves] I was one of the members and I told my little story, which wasn't very exciting. [laughs] But uh— I— everybody in our club had their own story and they were very interesting, in fact uh— we all signed each other's pictures in our book, and y'know read their stories. And uh— it was a nice club, they still have active clubs for the ones that are still living. [chuckles] And uh— .

Interviewer: And when did you join the the Rosie the Riveter Association?

Foringer: Oh, when did I join? Well, let's see, uh— it was in the late seventies, I guess.

Interviewer: Why did you join?

Foringer: Oh, well I thought it would be nice, y'know, because the other ladies were also the— in the— they worked in the ship yards, in anything to do with the man's job, that they took over during the war. We were all just called "Rosie the Riveters", and I just happened to be a riveter! But they had— y'know— they had "Paula Sand", "Trud Rogers" [~40:23], all— all those in my book, there's all these Georgia's [~40:31] — these women and the things that they did, and they're very interesting— [leans forward] a lot more interesting than mine. [laughs]

Interviewer: What, do you feel like yours was a significant contribution to the war effort?

Foringer: Uh— the what?

Interviewer: Do you feel like you made a significant contribution to the war effort?

Foringer: Well, I think so, that's what I uh— enjoyed doing it and that's why they need it, y'know. Because they— they had to have somebody to take the men's jobs. And uh— so, that's what we did. [Break in the interview] [~41:02]

Interviewer: So, Ms. Foringer, can you tell me about your brother, Ray?

Foringer: Well, he did not want to go to the war. And he worked on my dad's farm, too, and he was twenty-one years old, and a wonderful, good looking guy. And uh— uh— he had a girlfriend, I always chose his girlfriends, if I didn't like them, I didn't want them to go with him. [laughs] But, anyway, she kept egging him to marry before he had to go to service, cause they knew he was gonna be drafted, y'know, he didn't sign up and uh— he wasn't working in any kind of uh— y'know, ship yards or anything like that where— he didn't have family, of course. And um— so no excuses to keep him out of service, so he was drafted. And uh— I was living in California at the time, and uh— the uh— three days before he was killed, he and a friend— a buddy of his had come down from Fort Ord, where they were going to be getting on the ship and our plane, and going to Okinawa. And uh— and they uh— came down to have dinner with us before they had to go back to Fort Ord. And uh— I'll never will forget, he and his buddy were working— walking in front of my husband and me, and uh— I said, "Ray, honey," I said, "I think you're such a handsome guy, but don't let it go to your head!", I'll never forget that! [slaps knee] And uh— so anyway, uh— they went off to Fort Ord, shipped out the next day, to Okinawa. That was the last I ever saw of him. He was killed the third day he was on Okinawa. Sad, sad.

Interviewer: So how did that affect your family?

Foringer: Well, my mother and dad, of course they didn't— they took it very hard. And he had just married, and uh— she pretended she took it real hard, I guess she did, but she married within six months after he was killed and that really hurt my dad. And uh— but anyway uh— .

Interviewer: How did you learn the news of his death?

Foringer: How did I use what?

Interviewer: How did you learn the news of his death at Okinawa?

Foringer: Oh uh— with the telegram first, I got it before she did, y’know, she was living with us while he was in service, my husband and me, and um— so I saw these two soldiers coming up to the door and I said, “Oh no.” Because I had dreamed, believed this or not, I had dreamed the night before that my brother had come home and uh— we lived, y’know, there by the ocean and he had gone out on this bridge— uh— pier and jumped in the water, he said, “I don’t wanna be here, if I’m not a whole person.” Well, he was— I got the news the next day. He was in the field hospital for shrapnel wounds and uh— he didn’t— he had gone out to save a buddy, and he was killed while he was dragging his buddy back. That’s, y’know, somebody had written [~44:59] my uh— sister-in-law and told her about what happened to him, y’know. For young [~45:09] to be killed, so uh— she just really took it hard and— but, y’know, I didn’t feel so for some reason, it just to me was a pretence, but I— I suffered for many, many months. I cried, y’know. He and I were just, lot of people thought we were husband and wife, we were just always together, y’know, and there’s two years difference in our age. And uh— I love my brother— he would play dolls with me and I would play with— cars with him. [laughs] We were— just did everything together.

Interviewer: Well, thank you so much for sharing that story with us.

Foringer: Well, thank you. [laughs]