

MARIE MACK ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT

Interviewee: Marie Mack

Interviewer: Chris Kretz; Betty Mulligan (daughter), Bruce Mulligan (son-in-law), and Kristine Hanson (niece by marriage)

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ABSTRACT

Biography

Marie Mack was born in 1919 to the Petersen family, who lived in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. Marie's family started spending summers in Mount Sinai, on the North Shore of Long Island, in 1924. She married in 1941 and left work to care for her newborn daughter the following year. Her husband was drafted shortly afterwards and went on to serve in the Army Air Force in Australia during World War II. While he was stationed overseas, Marie moved back in with her parents and resumed working at New York Life Insurance. She also sold war bonds and served as an air raid warden. After the war, Marie left work to resume raising her family.

Summary

In this interview, Marie recounts the early days of her life in Brooklyn, as well as the summers her family spent on Long Island. She shares her experiences as a working woman during the war years as well, as well as her memories of patrolling the streets as an air raid warden and participating in war bond drives.

Keywords

woman, Brooklyn, Mount Sinai, New York, air raid warden, war bonds, New York Life Insurance, rationing, radio, Army Air Force

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00:32 – Born in Bushwick, Brooklyn in 1919

1:49 – Background of her father; lithographer and Spanish American War Veteran; siblings; education at P.S. 137 and Girls High School

2:59 – Favorite teachers at school

3:27 – First jobs; leaving work after marriage in 1941; daughter being born in 1942; returning to work in 1943

4:18 – Hearing about the bombing of Pearl Harbor at the dining room table

4:48 – Family spending summers in Mount Sinai starting in 1924

5:12 – Summer activities; Cedar Beach, hayrides, and dances

5:31 – Mount Sinai neighbors; two-room schoolhouse; Randall’s dairy farm

6:32 – Learning to drive on the beach

7:24 – Husband being drafted; his role as an MP in Australia

8:30 – Writing during the war, Vmail

9:24 – News about the war; radio, newspapers, and extras

10:02 – Movies and music; *Casablanca*, news reels, Glenn Miller, and Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey

10:36 – Rubber rationing

11:08 – Selling war bonds for New York Life Insurance Company

12:25 – Air raid patrol warden

13:23 – Moving back into parents’ house

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15:13 – Summers at Mount Sinai

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18:14 – Battles in the war; treatment of Japanese Americans

19:03 – V-E Day block party

20:12 – Cooking during the war

21:02 – Nights out with friends; the Copacabana in New York City

21:51 – Baseball fan

22:16 – Gold Star families

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33:00 – Life in Mount Sinai after the war
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STORY TRANSCRIPTS

Story 1: Serving As an Air Raid Warden

[12:24 – 13:20]

I had a block to patrol [during the] air raid drills. I had my helmet and my flashlight, and I patrolled the block. And if you saw any lights on in any house, you had to go up to the doorbell, ring the doorbell, and say, "Please put your lights out." It was a complete blackout. We used to have drills: blackout drills.

CK: How often would they do that?

I don't remember anymore. But there were several; there were several. You knew when there was one coming because then the sirens would go off.

CK: And what was Brooklyn like when there was a blackout?

Quiet. It was really very eerie quiet. [pauses] You could hear the—what do you call it on a ship? The whistles blowing.

CK: From the ships out in New York Harbor?

Yeah, you know, out in the Hudson River. In the city, you could hear that, just that sound.

Story 2: V-E Day Block Party

[19:02 – 19:44]

Yeah, that I remember. Because when that [V-E Day] happened, I was home from work already. And there was a big block party; the whole block. You know, like a city block. All of the food came out; all the beer came out. Everything came out of the house; everybody was in the street.

And the next day, I stayed home; I didn't go to work. And when I went back to work; say it was Tuesday. Because I didn't come to work, they docked my pay. [*laughs*] I lost my pay, my big pay. I was getting \$100 a month. [*laughs*]

Story 3: “I Have Three Things to Tell You”

[26:02 – 26:43]

I didn't want to meet him [my husband] at home because I had done things that he probably wouldn't have approved of while he was over there [stationed in Australia]. And I said, "I'll meet you over at"—I guess it was Penn Station. He was at Fort Dix [Army Base in New Jersey]. We took a cab home; I had money for the cab.

And I said, “I have three things to tell you. First of all, I'm working.” [*laughs*]. “Second of all, I got my driver's license. And third of all, I rented my grandmother's apartment on the top floor, so we have an apartment.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

Current 1

Marie Mack being interviewed in her home in Mount Sinai, New York (Photo Credit: Kristine Hanson)

Current 2

Narrator Marie Mack with interviewer Chris Kretz (Photo Credit: Kristine Hanson)

Artifact 1

Marie Mack with a portrait of her husband in Army Air Force uniform (Photo Credit: Kristine Hanson)

Artifact 2

A New York City Civil Defense pin (Photo Credit: Kristine Hanson)

Artifact 3

Marie Mack's World War II ration books (Photo Credit: Kristine Hanson)

Artifact 4

Stamps from Marie's wartime ration books (Photo Credit: Kristine Hanson)

Artifact 5

Marie's honorable discharge paper from the Blue Star Brigade (Photo Credit: Kristine Hanson)