

## Violet Welch

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**Question:** Now you go by Vi but your full name is Violet?

**Answer:** Yeah. Violet, hm-hmm.

**Question:** And so how old were you when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor?

**Answer:** How old was I?

**Question:** Yeah.

**Answer:** I was 16, I think, wasn't it, '41, yeah.

**Question:** So you were in high school.

**Answer:** Yeah, hm-hmm.

**Question:** And do you remember when the radio -- when they announced that --

**Answer:** Yeah, kind of do remember it a little bit I think. But I did -- I don't know. It just seemed like it was such a shock, I guess, to everybody. That we -- I guess I didn't know quite how to handle it. You know, just hearing about it.

**Question:** Now you also ended up working in the shipyards?

**Answer:** Shipyard, hm-hmm.

**Question:** How did you end up doing that?

**Answer:** Oh, well, when I -- I didn't first work there after I graduated from high school. I worked at -- handling eggs at the Washington Co-op in Everett, and then I decided that was kind of hard work, you know, and I really wanted to get into office work. Because when we were in high school, I was in high school, why I was taking typing and shorthand and the teacher kept telling us to learn that really well because we were in war, or you know, he says you get good jobs when you get out if you don't go on to college. And so that's what I intended to do is try to get a job. So then I hired in at the shipyard and got a job, just a regular clerk job to begin with. And I -- I did that for awhile and then they moved me to the mailing and doing all the work orders and stuff on a ditto machine. And I did that for about a year, I guess. And then they were kind of laying people off, girls off, and combining jobs to one person because there wasn't as much work, I guess, I mean the work was kind of phasing out like on the ship building and the ship repair and all that. And then it was going -- they were doing more of the work down at Todd Shipyard in Seattle and so, anyway, then they gave me the job of mail girl and had a motor scooter and I delivered all the mail and work orders to the shops and to the ships until I -- until I -- well, in between that we were married in '47 so I worked a while longer until I couldn't work because I got pregnant, so I couldn't -- I didn't work any more after that then.

**Question:** You must have worked that falling out then, I take it?

**Answer:** Yeah, so --

**OCM:** (inaudible) this was after I came home in January '47.

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**Answer:** Yeah, we didn't get married right out of the Navy -- we waited a couple of years.

**OCM:** (inaudible)

**Question:** So right after you --

**OCM:** (inaudible) I was home in January

**Answer:** You were home in January from what?

**OCM:** The Navy.

**Answer:** From the Navy. Well you didn't stay in that long -- 40 --

**OCM:** I was home for Christmas in '46.

**Answer:** Oh, well, maybe it was that long then. Okay.

**Question:** Do you remember the rationing during the war?

**Answer:** Oh, yes, that's what I wrote about.

**Question:** How did that all --

**Answer:** The rationing? Oh, it began right quick like. You know, as soon as we found out that, like I think -- were you the one that told me or was it my brother when I talked to my brother about rationing. I think he said that they must have had a lot of stuff prepared beforehand or something, or things ready to go in case of there was a conflict of any kind, you know, something. And because we were all issued little stamp books, you know that you had to buy gasoline with and certain items, food, sugar, and butter, and meat, I guess, too. And things like that. And then nylons. Couldn't get any nylon hosiery for work or anything like that. But he didn't mention Cuba, but he sent me two pair of silk stockings from Cuba. It was -- either those two pair or you had to wear that makeup on your legs if you wanted to be dressed up, the women.

**Question:** Now somebody talked about -- so now how did that work?

**Answer:** Leg makeup. Well, it's just like -- almost like the creams that we use now on our face, much the same. They had different shades of that. It was messy really because you'd get your clothes -- it would rub off on your clothes, a certain amount of it.

**Question:** So it -- you didn't make a nylon pattern, you just painted the whole leg?

**Answer:** Oh, no, well, some of them probably put a seam up the back, I suppose but I just kind of -- I didn't wear it very often anyway, very much.

**Question:** It sounds pretty messy.

**Answer:** Yeah, it was.

**Question:** So how did this -- the ration stamps work? Was it like a food stamp or --

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**Answer:** Well, yeah, you paid with -- with a stamp, so much. And I think you were allowed eight gallons of gasoline a week. Except for farming. They got extra for their tractors and such as that.

**Question:** So eight gallons per family?

**Answer:** Well, per car. I don't know now. Maybe it was -- maybe it was?

**OCM:** Not really.

**Answer:** I don't think everybody got a book. Maybe it was that way, probably because there weren't that many cars in a family -- most families only had one car I think in those days anyway, you know, yeah.

**Question:** Boy you think of that today --

**Answer:** I know, I know.

**Question:** So what else did you jot down?

**Answer:** Well, I put on here that, well he mentioned the blackouts that we were told about that we -- and we were living on a farm near Lakewood. That's where he went to elementary school for awhile. That's the Lakewood north of Marysville --

**Question:** Right, versus the Lakewood down by --

**Answer:** Tacoma. And so we were living on that farm. At home, I was still at home there with the folks. My brother that was home. And he had gotten a farm, what do you call that now, --

**Question:** Deferment?

**Answer:** Yeah, deferment, for a few years. And then he decided all of his buddies were gone and he was getting lonesome so he signed up to be in the Army, but my dad really needed him. But then I guess he said, well, if you want to go, that's what you want to do. And it was a sad day for him. But he was -- and he did his thing in the Army and he was in the Battle of the Bulge in Germany and he came home okay. So let's see what else have I got.

**Question:** Did you have -- were they doing air raid drills and things like that at your school? Air raid drills?

**Answer:** Oh, air raid drills, oh, yeah. We had some of those to go through.

**Question:** So how -- what did that involve? How did they?

**Answer:** Oh, well, we would just have to line up out in the halls and then -- and march out of the school. I think, where did we go? I can't remember if we went into a shelter? That I can't remember. I think it was much like a fire drill, you know. But I do remember them talking go to now and at home about preparing yourself like finding a shelter place in your -- within your house or barn or whatever you have, you know, and gave you all of the things that you should have, you know, on hand. Much like they're doing now with the year 2000. It's about the same.

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**Question:** It's kind of funny when you think about it.

**Answer:** Yeah, prepare -- have food on hand, water on hand, and all of that, yeah. And I think this was too when the USO, the United Service Organization, came into effect. And they had a -- they had a real nice place, a hall, for the boys and the military people to go to in Everett. But I never volunteered for that. My parents never would like us to go out dancing and stuff like that so we didn't get to do that but I -- I thought that was a really a good thing for them because they did -- they did a lot of good service for the boys and the girls going in the service. And then I wrote, oh, we as a family always enjoyed singing together, at the piano. My sister that was in age next to me, she loved to play the piano, and we had an old upright. And during the war, well, at that time why all these war songs that they were singing on the Hit Parade and everything, we bought a lot of sheet music. I don't know what happened to it, but we used to sing those songs. And my dad, he always liked to sing the hymns and some of the other songs, too, but he learned just about all those songs that we'd sing. He'd sing with us.

**Question:** Do you remember some of the songs?

**Answer:** I wrote a few of them down here. What did I write? Let's see, where did I write that? Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition, and the White Cliffs of Dover, and Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else But Me, and When the Lights Go On All Over The World Again, that one.

**Question:** Wow.

**Answer:** Yeah. And what was that other one -- oh, Coming In on a Wing and a Prayer. Oh, there were so many more that I can't remember. But we sang a lot of them. There was that sailor song that my sister and I sang at a PTA meeting in Lakewood at one time. It went on and on and on. I can't remember the wording of that. Anyway we sang it. And then I've got here, it wasn't too unusual to invite soldiers or sailors to our farm for a Sunday chicken dinner. Because, well, my sister, I don't know how she would meet -- well, I think it was because she would come and pick me up at the shipyard in a Model A Ford and there would be guys standing out there and maybe want a ride into town or something, off the ship, and maybe we'd give them a ride, I don't know if it was just one or whatever, if we could do it. Didn't have room, it was just a single -- single seat car. But we all -- I met quite a few fellows on the ship and stuff, they would talk to me and so I would ask them if they would like to come out to a farm, you know. And just for a relaxing time or whatever, for a Sunday dinner. We'd always invite them to church though first and so then they would come home with us. And they would, they enjoyed it. You know, that was a real Sunday get together.

**Question:** You probably had a lot of really homesick -- and so that was their connection to home.

**Answer:** Yeah, hm-hmm, right. And then another thing too I wrote down here was during that time, the highway had signs posted, but I don't know how they had them -- had it written. It said something like Give a Soldier a Lift, or something like that. You know, instead of hitchhiking. I mean, you should stop your car and pick them up and take them, you know, if there was a place that they needed to go or whatever. Of course you couldn't do that nowadays.

**Question:** No.

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**Answer:** You know. But in those days we gals would even do it. We'd pick them up. If we were going home, going back and forth to work, yeah.

**Question:** See them in uniform and --

**Answer:** Yeah. Hm-hmm. Anybody that was in uniform, we'd stop and pick them up and take them.

**Question:** Wow, what a different world.

**Answer:** Yeah, that's -- that's what I can't get over even now, you know, that we did it, but we did. Yeah.

Oh, just before I left the shipyard, then why the supervisor, the -- I was delivering mail to this office, and he gave me this gift. And so I guess I must have opened it up there or something. And it was a green, a real bright green pullover sweater, a wool sweater, and it was written, with white words, "hubba-hubba". (laughs) I think I still have that sweater in my cedar chest. I'm not sure because it's been packed away so long. But I had to wear it on my last few days down there. Those fellows.

**Question:** Again, how much the world has changed.

**Answer:** Yeah, right. So I don't know if you've got any questions that I can answer. That's about all that I --

**Question:** Knowing the war was going on and being close to the coast, was there a fear --

**Answer:** Oh, yeah, we were -- we thought of that a lot. Because the water all surrounding us, and not far from water, anyplace, really, yeah.

**Question:** Cause that's when I talked to, oh boy, the day's going to become a blur. One woman I talked to today was from -- oh, it was Dolores Godfrey. She was from Iowa. And in the middle of Iowa they didn't have any fear. So the war was really a separate thing for them.

**Answer:** Yeah, yeah, I suppose, hm-hmm.

**Question:** Because if the Japanese are going to come to Iowa, they're going to know long before they get there that they're on their way. We're the Washington coast -- it's a little different, you know, it would be.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Well, that's interesting. That does give me another perspective of the home front and what was going on here. So I assume by the time you graduated from high school that there were very few young men around. That a lot of them were gone off into the service?

**Answer:** Well, yeah, well, yeah, they were all in uniform, practically all of them, yeah. That's true.

**Question:** I know my mom, a number of years ago, she had a reunion, and she said I was so worried because there were these men that came back but really, I mean they graduated with their class but not really -- they had been gone for three or four years.

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Answer: Yeah.