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Oral History Interview with Lucille Kolkin
Brooklyn Navy Yard Oral History Collection, 1995.005.001
Interview conducted by Diane Esses on March 16, 1989
at the narrator's home in Long Island, New York

ESSES: Okay. So you said that you grew up in Borough Park and Bensonhurst, right?

KOLKIN: Right, essentially.

ESSES: Uh huh. What were you doing before the War?

KOLKIN: Before the War?

ESSES: Yeah, before the War broke out.

KOLKIN: Well, I was working for the Department of Welfare.

ESSES: Uh huh. Doing?

KOLKIN: As a clerk, making 840 dollars a year.

ESSES: Was that considered decent pay then?

KOLKIN: It wasn't terrible. But I won't say it was really good. But -- you know -- I enjoyed working there. There were a lot of young people, and it was exciting. Socially, politically, everything, you know.

ESSES: Mm hm. Where'd you go to high school?

KOLKIN: I went to Erasmus Hall High School.

ESSES: I hear that's a very special --

KOLKIN: Well, it was.

ESSES: It was a very special high school.

KOLKIN: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

ESSES: Did you consider it --

KOLKIN: Well, it was a little too sophisticated for me, I think.

ESSES: In what ways.

KOLKIN: Well, it was -- It was not my neighborhood school. I went there even though it was out of the neighborhood. My brother had gone there before me. I guess that's why I went. I think that the kids came from wealthier homes -- Wealthier. Wealthier is

not quite the word, but at least better to do than where I came from. And they seemed to be much more sophisticated socially, or with their clothes and stuff like that. And I felt a little --

ESSES: Left out?

KOLKIN: Yeah, I guess so. Yeah.

ESSES: Did you --

KOLKIN: But it was a good school.

ESSES: Yeah? Were you still learning Latin and Greek?

KOLKIN: Oh no. No.

ESSES: No.

KOLKIN: No. I had to take Latin in college, because I didn't have it in high school.

ESSES: What college did you go to?

KOLKIN: Hunter.

ESSES: Uh huh. And you graduated.

KOLKIN: Yeah.

ESSES: With -- What'd you study there?

KOLKIN: I took a pre-professional course in social work, they had at the time. But they don't have that anymore. They also had a pre-journalism course.

ESSES: Uh huh. What do you study for that? For future -- [inaudible]

KOLKIN: Oh, it was a lot of sociology, economics, um, political science. And you know, things about social legislation, and stuff like that.

ESSES: So what did you see yourself becoming?

KOLKIN: Oh, it was during the Depression. We didn't see ourselves becoming anything.

ESSES: Uh huh. But yet you went to college. That's kind of unusual.

KOLKIN: Well, yeah. Yeah. Well, as my mother said, if you don't have -- if you can't get a job, it's good to go to college anyway. You know, that -- She was anxious for me to go. Probably more anxious than I was. But, you know, I worked on Saturdays, and I had what they called an NYA job -- National Youth Administration. I got fifty cents an hour, and we worked thirty hours a month, so then I had fifteen dollars a month. And

that paid for car fare and some other expenses. And I did babysitting. And I had a Saturday job selling, for two dollars for the day. I hated that. Oh, I hated that job.

Yeah, that was awful. The others were okay. And uh, and that's how it was.

ESSES: Did you --

KOLKIN: I was not a good student, particularly. Ah, was not scholarly, I'm afraid.

ESSES: And when you imagined your future, let's say, what did you think? Did you think about yourself as a homemaker, as a -- did you see yourself having a career?

KOLKIN: I'm not sure I saw myself as either.

ESSES: Uh huh.

KOLKIN: Ah, I was not anxious to get married, and I didn't get married young. I mean, at least it wasn't young for then. I was twenty-five. I don't know about a career. I did take kindergarten teaching at the same time, because I could fill it in -- you know, into my program. And -- I really don't know what I saw as a future. I'm not even sure I thought of it that way.

ESSES: Uh huh. You mean you weren't really --

KOLKIN: No, I --

ESSES: -- conceptualizing --

KOLKIN: No, I don't think so. Yeah, it was during the Depression. It was, you know, you just got a job. You didn't think of a career. At least I didn't. Probably should have, but I didn't, particularly.

ESSES: And where -- So you were in the Welfare department when the War broke out.

KOLKIN: Right. Right, I went -- yeah. Let's see, I graduated in 1938, from college. And I was young, I wasn't twenty yet. And when did the War break -- and so -- and I -- When did the War break out? I started working in the Navy Yard in 1942.

ESSES: Uh huh. '41, wasn't it?

KOLKIN: Or '41. Maybe it was '41.

ESSES: No, no, no, that the war broke out.

KOLKIN: You mean '41 when the war broke out.

ESSES: Yeah.

KOLKIN: I think so. I think you're right. And I worked in the Navy Yard from '39 to '41. I didn't get the job right away. I was unemployed.

ESSES: What, you started there in '39?

KOLKIN: I think I started in the Department of Welfare in '39.

ESSES: Oh, I see. Uh huh.

KOLKIN: Yeah. And I think in the Navy Yard either '41 or '42.

ESSES: And when did you hear that women were being recruited?

KOLKIN: I don't even --

ESSES: Or how did you hear?

KOLKIN: I really don't remember. I don't know anybody else who took the exam.

ESSES: Really?

KOLKIN: Yeah, isn't that funny? How I happened to do it I'm not really sure. I was quite excited about the idea, I know, and -- My mother was opposed. Maybe that was part of the excitement, I don't know. But I really don't remember. I may have read it in the civil service paper, *The Leader* or something.

ESSES: What was your --

KOLKIN: And so I gave up my job. You know, which was a civil service job, and also for the City. Yeah, what was my what?

ESSES: Your mother's response? What did she say?

KOLKIN: Well, you know, Jewish people I guess don't do -- don't look up to work that is done with hands, particularly. And, um, I don't remember her saying that specifically. But here I had a job, and why was I giving that up. And, um, you know, it was so much more gentile. But, ah, you know, well I said I wanted to do it for the War effort and stuff. You know, it was accepted after a while.

ESSES: Mm hm. In your family.

KOLKIN: Yeah, in the family.

ESSES: And your father?

KOLKIN: He really didn't say much about it. He was not the dominant one in the household. And I don't remember his reaction. He worked in the Navy Yard later on. He was a painter and he worked there.

ESSES: Uh huh. And none of your friends were doing this?

KOLKIN: None of them, no.

ESSES: And how did they respond to you?

KOLKIN: Oh, everybody was excited, you know.

ESSES: Oh yeah.

KOLKIN: Yeah. Yeah.

ESSES: So, um -- So you were how old when you joined the Navy Yard?

KOLKIN: Trying to think. If it was '42, I was born in '18, so that would be what?

ESSES: Twenty-two?

KOLKIN: No. I was twenty-four?

ESSES: Twenty-four.

KOLKIN: I think I was twenty-three or -- I must have been about twenty-three. I have a feeling I was about twenty-three, because I became twenty-one while I was working in the Department of Welfare, and I wasn't there much longer than two years.

ESSES: Mm hm. And you were trained?

KOLKIN: After I got into the Navy Yard I was trained.

ESSES: Yeah, yeah.

KOLKIN: Yeah. I think we had five or six weeks of training as tack welders.

ESSES: What does that mean, as opposed to --

KOLKIN: Being a welder? Well, I mentioned it last night. It's like -- almost like an analogy with sewing something. You would baste it, you know. And you had to learn how to weld. I mean, I didn't become a crackerjack welder, but I could weld. You know. And then those who became welders stayed on, and those of us who chose not to went into the ship yard, you know, and started working in the ship fitting. Now some people became burners, and other things -- you know, other women. I don't -- it seems to me -- I don't remember becoming friendly with any of the others, and yet we -- I do

remember a burner there. Um, somehow most of my friends were welders. You know, that I can recall.

ESSES: How long was your training?

KOLKIN: I think about five or six weeks as a tack welder. Then I worked with a ship fitter. I was his helper, I was his tacker.

ESSES: He'd tell you not to --

KOLKIN: I was his tacker.

ESSES: Oh, I see.

KOLKIN: You see.

ESSES: Uh huh. Huh.

KOLKIN: And at one time they had asked me to teach there. You know, they -- you know, you had to have a certain amount of mathematics and stuff like that, you know. But I chose not to. I don't know why, but I chose to stay in the Yard.

ESSES: Mm hm. Did you enjoy the work?

KOLKIN: Well, I did and I didn't. I became thirty -- You know, it was exciting. The whole idea of it was exciting. The physical conditions were very rough, and I must say I wasn't crazy about the cold or the heat or the -- we stood on things that were very uncomfortable all day. I mean, there were ten hours a day. These -- they had a -- it was like a square. All of this is metal. And it had to be big enough to put in with a metal pin to hold work in place. And you stood on this, and it was very uneven, it was terrible on the feet. And my feet became very bad, and -- I just found in one of the letters I wrote at that time that -- I said that the chiropodist had said, you know, if I continue with this I would really just ruin my feet completely. And they were really pretty bad at the time. And I remember once or twice stealing away to soak my feet into something while I was working there. I just couldn't, I just couldn't stand it anymore, you know. It was just --

ESSES: Sounds like there were a lot of physical dangers.

KOLKIN: Yeah, it wasn't -- yeah, the dangers and the --

ESSES: Dangers and comforts --

KOLKIN: Right. Absolutely. It was very uncomfortable. And then -- yeah, you started very early in the morning. Or you quit very early in the morning, like 4 or 5 in the morning, so that -- You know, you had a lot of weather to contend with -- and um --

ESSES: How many hours a week did you work?

KOLKIN: Fifty-eight.

ESSES: Mm.

KOLKIN: Yeah, it was rough. It was very, very rough.

ESSES: And that's what was required?

KOLKIN: Yeah. Well, Al worked in the -- my husband worked in the machine shop. I mean, he had gone there before the War started. And he worked eight hours a day, but six days a week. So it depended on the shop you were in. But I think we were required to. I don't know if they had any Sabbath observers. I really -- I don't remember any --

ESSES: You're --

KOLKIN: No, I'm -- no. But everybody else -- you know, everybody seemed to be working fifty-eight hours, as far as I know.

ESSES: Do you remember anyone getting badly hurt?

KOLKIN: I guess I don't. I guess I don't.

ESSES: I saw some statistic in the --

KOLKIN: Really?

ESSES: -- in the film, *Rosie the Riveter* --

KOLKIN: Yeah, yeah.

ESSES: -- that they were like -- by 1944, there was something like 36,000 industry-related deaths.

KOLKIN: Oh, yeah.

ESSES: Something like that.

KOLKIN: Well, I'm sure that -- yeah. I'm sure that it was --

ESSES: Yeah, 37,000.

KOLKIN: Really.

ESSES: Mm hm.

KOLKIN: That's throughout the country.

ESSES: Mm hm.

KOLKIN: And how long a period of time?

ESSES: From when the War started till 1944.

KOLKIN: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I don't remember anything. It doesn't mean it didn't happen.

You know, it's a long time ago.

ESSES: Yeah, that's true.

KOLKIN: Not fifty years ago, but it's about forty-five anyway, yeah.

ESSES: Mm hm. Practically.

KOLKIN: Yeah. Well, practically -- it's more than forty-five.

ESSES: It was, say, practically fifty, yeah.

KOLKIN: Yeah, right.

ESSES: Did it feel strange to be doing work that was typically male?

KOLKIN: Oh, of course. It was also romantic and exciting. You know, to wear pants and --

ESSES: Uh-huh. So you hadn't really worn pants in the --

KOLKIN: Oh no, we didn't wear -- I don't remember wearing -- you know, I wore shorts, I remember, during the summer, when I was in the country. You know, on vacation or something. I don't think we wore them on the streets at all, you know, shorts. And I don't think we wore long pants at all. You know. Even thinking of picnics we went on and stuff. I don't think we wore pants. I can't -- Even after my kids were born, I don't remember wearing pants. You know, when I started staying home. We didn't -- pants was a much later development, maybe thirty years, forty years, I don't know.

ESSES: So you went to work and then changed?

KOLKIN: Yeah.

ESSES: Or did you wear pants on the way there?

KOLKIN: Well, I was asking Ida that yesterday, and uh she -- we both thought that we wore skirts and stuff to work. I have a feeling that once in a while I did wear pants. I think so, but I'm not certain.

ESSES: So you really challenged, by your actions, a lot of stereotypes.

KOLKIN: Oh, sure.

ESSES: Wearing pants, doing that kind of work.

KOLKIN: Yeah, but that was exciting. Yeah, that was exciting. And I remember, I wore long underwear. So I can't imagine putting it on at the Yard all the time. You know, I may have worn pants at home in order to wear the long underwear. You know what I mean? So I'm not really certain that --

ESSES: Mm hm. They brought up last night the way that you were treated by men.

KOLKIN: Yeah. And you know, I was thinking more about that too. You know, we just assumed that we were mistreated very badly. I don't think it was as bad, okay, as --

ESSES: Well, how were you treated?

KOLKIN: -- as I'm being questioned. How was I treated? Okay. Well, we were ribbed, we were teased, we were -- you know.

ESSES: About what?

KOLKIN: Oh -- let me see. Well, I -- you know, I think of one incident, when I went out. My snapper had asked me to pick up some chewing tobacco for him when I went out for lunch.

ESSES: Snapper.

KOLKIN: Yeah. And so I -- you know, "Yeah, okay." He gave me some money and I went. And then as I was walking along with a couple of the other women or something, I had already bought -- I had bought it and I put it in my back pocket, you know. And somebody -- one of the young men, whom I didn't know, you know -- passed me and said, "Hm, you want a cigar? Or--" And I said, "No thanks, I have my own." And I pulled out the chewing tobacco. You know. I mean that kind of thing. In a way they were respectful. You know, it sounds funny. I mean, there was a lot of flirting going on. But you could accept it or not. I don't think they liked our being there, but they really weren't as bad as I just tended to think that they were. Because, you know, we hear so much about it now, and I say, "Oh, yeah." You know. but when I think about it really, going back, it really was not -- um -- you know -- um -- how else? We all went out for breakfast together at times. There were many romances that developed in the

Navy Yard.

ESSES: Did you go out with Al?

KOLKIN: Well, no, I didn't meet him in the Navy Yard. I met him outside the Navy Yard, and --

ESSES: From while you were working there, or --

KOLKIN: While I was working there, yeah. Yeah, but did I go out with anybody there?

Yeah, yeah. Not really the ones I was working with, but the ones I met at the Union. You know, at the CIO, not with the craft union, but the -- you know, the more exciting -- Union that accepted women, anyway. And I was trying to think about it after last night's meeting. I don't know how the Union started there. I don't remember that I was in on the ground floor. And yet it had to be new, you know. And, um, I became involved with the Union right away, and I was on the Grievance Committee. I don't know how it came into the Yard. You know, I don't know who the people were who brought it in and --

ESSES: What kind of grievances came up?

KOLKIN: It was pay. A lot of it. I think mostly it was pay.

ESSES: Inequitable pay? Or just low pay?

KOLKIN: Well, you remember Ida mentioned yesterday -- and I had forgotten this -- that they set up a new category -- what was it called? Mechanical trainee or something, I forget.

ESSES: Yeah, yeah, mechanics in training or something.

KOLKIN: Right, something like that. And they set up a wage scale for it. Now I always remembered that as fifty-eight cents an hour, but then I thought maybe I confused it with the number of hours we worked. That I know was fifty-eight. So it was either fifty-three or fifty-eight cents an hour that we were paid.

ESSES: Mm hm. So you brought up the grievance of this lower pay because --

KOLKIN: Yeah. Well, I wasn't the only one, I was part of a committee.

ESSES: Right, the committee. Uh huh.

KOLKIN: You know, yeah. I guess I was a women's representative on that committee. I

mean, the others were men, I think.

ESSES: And what happened when the committee brought up that issue?

KOLKIN: I wish I remembered the details, but I hardly do. You know, well, we were treated -- you know, or they didn't say, "Ha ha!" you know. They didn't -- And they did get it, you know, I mean, when they were rated as professionals -- you know, as professional craftsmen -- we did get the same rate as the men. Which was a dollar, fourteen an hour.

ESSES: Well how long were you in the CATS and considered the CATS in training?

KOLKIN: Yeah. I don't know. Everybody was different. Everybody was different.

ESSES: But you're saying eventually the women were moved up to the other categories?

KOLKIN: Well, right, right.

ESSES: The highest category? [inaudible]

KOLKIN: I think so. I didn't work there long. I was only there two years. Ida was there four years. I left.

ESSES: Uh-huh. What category were you moved up to by the end?

KOLKIN: I was at a dollar, fourteen. I was a third class. I don't know whether she was second class or first class. My husband was a first class. But I think I may have made as much money as he, even though I was getting less money at the time, because I worked so many more hours.

ESSES: Oh.

KOLKIN: Yeah. Oh, and the shifts were so crazy, you know, eight-hour shifts -- they had eight-hour shifts, the machine shop, and we had ten-hour shifts. So, you know, they cross and came and you know. He'd be on nights, I'd be on half-days, half-nights. It was crazy. You know -- uh --

ESSES: So you met your husband where?

KOLKIN: I met him in the country. Because I was so exhausted from working I took a sick and vacation. Very quickly after the first, I just couldn't get myself back to this work. And I happened to meet him on vacation.

ESSES: Huh, that's a coincidence.

KOLKIN: Yes. And we were married three months later.

ESSES: Oh. Where'd you go on vacation?

KOLKIN: It doesn't exist anymore. It's the Aliban Acres. I don't know whether it's -- it's up in the mountains somewhere. I don't know just where.

ESSES: So you were saying about teasing. But I want to hear more about what kind of -- what you were teased for.

KOLKIN: Yeah, there was some -- I'm having trouble. I'm having trouble thinking about that.

ESSES: I know we ask a lot of questions that are somewhat detailed.

KOLKIN: Yeah, I know. I know. And it's an interesting question. You know, I myself am interested in it. And I'd be interested in hearing what other women have to say about that. Um. Well, I remember I learned how to use a hammer. You know, I would go like this hammer. I had to learn how to swing it. You know, things like that. Well, as I mentioned yesterday, when my immediate sup-- the guy I was tacking for, was telling me about all these different things, I thought I was being teased. You know, at that time they had told me about calling the toilet a "head."

ESSES: And what else -- what are the things you said. What was that term?

KOLKIN: About the tools that we used.

ESSES: Yeah. Yeah.

KOLKIN: You know, the tit punch, and the prick punch, and the --

ESSES: Oh my god.

KOLKIN: -- half-round bastard file. Those are the ones that I sort of remember. I'm sure there were many more. And you know, nobody ever asked for a hammer, they asked for a fuckin' hammer. You know, it's --

ESSES: Did you begin to speak that way?

KOLKIN: A little bit.

ESSES: Or did the women begin to speak that way?

KOLKIN: Yeah, I guess we -- we sort of -- Well, like I said, it was part of the freedom that we kind of -- those of us who liked it, who enjoyed that kind of idea of the freedom I

suppose did some. But not much. I don't think we did it very much. But I think I did it more than my husband did, you know. But not much, I suppose, but --

ESSES: That's an interesting idea, that you were suddenly more free in some way.

KOLKIN: Yeah. Yeah.

ESSES: What was it freedom from?

KOLKIN: Well, freedom from being considered completely feminine, and wearing dresses and things like that.

ESSES: What does it mean to be completely feminine?

KOLKIN: [laughter] I'm not sure, except that it's a --

ESSES: In that time.

KOLKIN: In that time. Well, doing the things that women are supposed to do. Like working in an office, or be a nurse, or look for a husband. And I guess that was never a priority with me. I always felt that I would get married. But later, you know, sometime later. It wasn't -- I never felt I was going to get married now. Never. Or that I wanted to.

ESSES: So your identity wasn't only based on --

KOLKIN: Absolutely not.

ESSES: -- the traditional kind of --

KOLKIN: No, it never was. I was -- I seemed never to be ready for marriage, you know. I went out a lot, and I mean, I enjoyed social life. And that was important to me. But -- Even when I was in college it was important to me. I went to an all-girls college. But you know, we got together with the boys from City College, and you know. And that was important, yeah.

ESSES: Were you different -- a little bit different from your friends that way? In terms of not wanting to get married immediately, or --

KOLKIN: Well, I guess so, with some of them. With some of them.

ESSES: While you were working at the Navy Yard.

KOLKIN: Right. Well, I suppose so. To some extent, yeah. but there were other who -- you know, I guess those of us who worked in the Navy Yard must have had something a

little bit different to begin with. I mean, in many cases probably. I mean, you wouldn't have taken the most feminine girl -- she wouldn't have gone there. It was too dirty. You know. And that would have bothered her. And that didn't bother me. I mean, you know, so long as I could clean up. But dirt didn't bother me, you know. It's -- I guess you come from a sort of somewhat different background to be able to go in there and do it, you know. I think so. And the noise is just awful. You know, you spoke about an accident. I remember one thing that happened to me. Some beams, some metal beams that we were moving, fell on one of my fingers, and oh, it was just dreadful. It was just awful. The pain was terrible. And that lasted a long time. I don't know how long.

ESSES: Did it keep you from working at all?

KOLKIN: No, it didn't keep me from working, but it -- You know, I suppose it limited some activities at work, you know.

ESSES: Mm hm. Right. Were you the one who told the story last night about a man that followed you home?

KOLKIN: Yeah.

ESSES: Yeah. What hap-- what was that?

KOLKIN: Well, you know, there too, you think I remember all the details? Well, he followed me home. I guess we were on a train together, and he suggest he, you know, take me to the house or something. And what does a guy do when he gets fresh? You know. He started right off, you know. But a little -- I can't remember how I stopped him, but I did. I either screamed or I elbowed -- I -- I really don't remember what I did.

ESSES: But you had control over the situation.

KOLKIN: Right. I mean, it wasn't persistent. And I really think that was the only time that anybody every physically -- you know? He was somebody who worked in the Yard, you know.

__: Lucy.

ESSES: Yeah?

__: I'll be back about -- [inaudible]

ESSES: Okay. Also -- what was I going to say about that? I don't know, it will come back to me. It was something about the men in the Yard. But that was the only physical difficulty I had. But, you know, you saw a lot of the unmarried men going out with the women. And many of the women liked it, you know, and encouraged it. Many did not. You know. And I had always meant to speak to Ida, and I have to do it someday. You know, because I guess I imagined it must have been very difficult for her. Not that I ever heard her tell me this. Because she was young, she was about nineteen or twenty. And she was married, and with a husband overseas. And I remember there was a quartermaster who really just had his eye on her. I mean, he would just come while she was working, and he'd come and speak to her. It was not a physical thing. And he would stay and talk to her, you know, and -- well, I had wondered what it was like from her point of view too, just in a physical sense. There's this gorgeous guy, you know, and -- I always meant to speak to her about it, and now maybe I will. I meant to and just forgot.

ESSES: So you stayed friends over the years.

KOLKIN: Yeah, yeah.

ESSES: But you knew each other before the War?

KOLKIN: No, no we didn't.

ESSES: Oh, that's nice.

KOLKIN: No, we met there.

ESSES: A Navy Yard friend.

KOLKIN: Yeah, right.

ESSES: Were there other friends that you had there, Navy Yard friends?

KOLKIN: No, but she does. Actually I became friendlier with one of her friends to begin with. And then I don't know, this sort of developed. And you know, we had a group of men and women. It was really a nice group. And they were really more the new workers there, rather than the old workers. You know, it was like, I was so excited about going and working with the real workers, and stuff like that. But then when I got to work in the Navy Yard I wasn't so crazy about them. You know, I had the --

yeah, because there was a lot of goof offs, there were a lot of -- lot of what? They weren't very bright, most of them. Many of them, I should say. I was quite impressed by -- there was one snapper there, he was -- who I worked with to begin with, but then later I worked with someone else. He must have been sixty-something years old, and of course he was quite old in my eyes. And I don't know if he -- I'm sure he didn't finish elementary school. I'm sure of it. But he could figure something out mathematically. I've never forgotten that to this day. That I used to do -- you know, because I would take some descriptive geometry that I had had in college and I would figure out how to expand a certain thing. You know, like a curve out of something, you know. But I had to use all my school knowledge, and he just -- And he was fantastic. You know, there was no question about it. He was the one who asked me to buy the chewing tobacco. And so -- there was certain friendliness that existed there too, though, among the people. Especially when they were on the night shift. You really didn't get to see your friends very much when you were on the night shift, there was just no time, you know. You had only Sunday. I remember -- you know, on the train, you got to know who the people were on the train, and where they got off. You know? [laughter] Whether they worked with you or not. And I remember once coming to my station, and somebody held the door open and somebody came over to me and woke me up. And said, "Hey, lady, you get off here." You know, you're known. He didn't know my name or anything, but he knew that I get off at that station. And, um, you know, they saw to it that I got out.

ESSES: So was there a sense of camaraderie?

KOLKIN: Yeah. Yes, there was. There was. There was.

ESSES: Did you have a lunch hour?

KOLKIN: Oh yeah. Half-hour or a hour, I can't remember. Yeah, we did.

ESSES: So it sounds like you had a more romantic view of what would be there.

KOLKIN: Oh sure, sure.

ESSES: Because you were a little bit disillusioned.

KOLKIN: Yeah, I was. Yes, I was. Except for the newer people who were coming in. You

know, the -- There was just a difference. I don't know. I guess it's a cultural difference, from what I had known.

ESSES: Class or cultural?

KOLKIN: Well, it was both I guess. Wasn't it? Yeah.

ESSES: So you worked there from 1941 or 2, until 194-

KOLKIN: I guess '44. Near the end of '44 I think.

ESSES: And you were married in that span. While you were still there.

KOLKIN: I was married during that time. I was married in '43. November '43. And then Al went into service in April of '44. And I went out to California around October of '44 or so.

ESSES: And you continued to work after you were married?

KOLKIN: Yes. I continued to work here, at the Navy Yard.

ESSES: Uh huh. Was that unusual?

KOLKIN: Oh no. No, that wasn't unusual. Well, first of all, what did somebody say? It was fifty dollars a month we got. I mean, we couldn't live on that. I did go back to living with my parents when he went into service. Because it didn't make sense. I couldn't get a phone. So I would go to my mother's in order to get a phone call from Al. And then she'd say, "Come here for dinner." You know, it was that kind of thing. It because silly. You know, and paying rent, an extra rent. It was very -- In those days, the forty-something dollars a month rent I paid was very significant. You know, you just didn't do things like that. Everything was so reckoned, you know, so far as money was concerned. You didn't -- You know, it really had an effect on all of us, to this day I think. You know. If only -- you can take a taxi once and a while now, you know, from here to there, where if it's not too far. I mean, I'm exaggerating a bit, and I do spend money, and I -- you can see I spend money on the house. You know, it didn't bother me doing it, and I could afford it. I don't mean that I'm doing something I can't afford. But even though we can afford it now, it's hard for a lot of us to do it. You know, because we're so accustomed to doing things the less expensive way. It was the first time when I moved here four years ago that we furnished a home right from the

beginning. In other words -- I mean, I didn't wait for 300 dollars and then go out and buy a sofa. But I was able to buy what I wanted and needed as soon as I found it. The money didn't hold me back, and I did whatever I wanted immediately. You know.

Yeah.

ESSES: So why did you move to California?

KOLKIN: Well, Al was out there.

ESSES: I see.

KOLKIN: And I went there, and I was a waitress out there for a while.

ESSES: You didn't want to work in another --

KOLKIN: Well, I couldn't, at that point. We were near Monterey and Del Monte. But -- well, there was Fort Ord out there, I guess we could have. I don't know. But when I went to San Francisco after that, I did work at the Oakland Army base. And I worked in personnel. And I was in charge of the people who worked as laborers. You know, because they felt that with my experience I would have a little more knowledge about that. So I didn't take care of people who worked in offices, or things like that. But you know, there was a whole personnel department and we worked together. But I was assigned to handle problems -- grievances or whatever -- that came from the people there.

ESSES: Did you enjoy that work?

KOLKIN: Yes, I did. And I did a lot of orientation there. You know, preparing people for work there, and got their housing and things like that. Yes, I did enjoy it. I did that for about seven or eight months, and then I came back to New York, so. And I didn't intend to go back to the Navy Yard. I really didn't.

ESSES: No. How come?

KOLKIN: Well, I guess physically it was just -- it was rough. And maybe I wasn't so young as some of the others, you know. It was -- I'm not sure why I didn't. Well, of course I left, and I don't know what my record was like. First they said -- you know, they didn't object to my going. But then later when I did finally get my -- what do you call it, dismissal notice -- not dismissal notice, but you know, the fact that I was leaving, and

it said that it was against their wishes, because I was still needed. So that was -- and I never contested it. You know. I just let it go.

ESSES: Why -- What difference does it make? Like, why would you contest that?

KOLKIN: Well, if you want to get back, maybe to work for the Federal government or something.

ESSES: I see.

KOLKIN: You know, it's on the record, I'm sure. I'm sure it's on the record somewhere, you know. It has to be. I mean, I never had to use it again, so it was not a problem for me.

ESSES: So -- Yeah. What were you going to say?

KOLKIN: No, it -- I don't know. So I did that work, and I did enjoy that. And then I came back, and I worked -- are you interested in other work or not?

ESSES: Yes, yes.

KOLKIN: Oh.

ESSES: I was just going to ask you that.

KOLKIN: Yeah, I got a job -- and I don't remember how I got it -- working for the paper workers union. And doing some bookkeeping, which I had never done before, but the old bookkeeper there broke me in. And you know, it was different, in a union it's not all kinds of double entries and -- or whatever. You know, it's collections of dues. Oh, and I also, you know, did some typing. Well, I had studied. After I got out of college I studied -- I went to a WPA school, and I studied typing and stenography and -- so I had that. And then -- Oh, and I worked up until I went into my ninth month. I was pregnant. And then I stopped working, and I stayed home. And there was no question about my going to work, I guess. I don't think I even chose to, I have to say. I spoke to somebody recently, who -- we met when our kids were about five years old, our older kids. And she said, she just couldn't stand it. We were supposed to set up some sort of playground things with our kids, merely -- you know, just informally with a batch of kids. And she got a job, she went into the Board of Ed. right away, you know. She said she just hated it, she couldn't stay home. Well, you know, I didn't find it quite that bad. And uh, and Ida had a child around that time, and she used to come around. You

know, she drove before I did. And we used to let the kids wreck the house so we could have a cup of coffee. Yeah.

ESSES: How did you feel about not working and staying home?

KOLKIN: Well, I was probably a mixture. I started doing some work, some -- well, of course I got involved in the PTA right away, as soon as the kids went to school, and I was editor of the newspaper. Then I was the president, and then I -- you know, because you had to do something, you know, to keep yourself alive. I did some part-time work. I worked as an interviewer. And I started out working one week a month. When Al came home from work -- which was about 4:30, because he worked in a shop, and they usually work early hours -- I would have dinner ready, you know, for him and the kids. And I would leave them, and he would take care, and I went out to work. That was one week a month. And I worked for a couple of hours, about two or three hours, at night.

ESSES: So you did your housework all day, and then you went to work at night.

KOLKIN: Right. Well, I didn't -- a great housekeeper I wasn't. But you know, of course I did. I mean, I had to do the laundry, and I had to keep the house clean, to some extent, and cook. Right, that's what I did. But I also went out with the kids. And I had my social kicks, I guess, that way. You know, meeting other women.

ESSES: Yeah, [inaudible] just did housework.

KOLKIN: Had to.

ESSES: -- and felt isolated.

KOLKIN: Oh, of course. I mean, that's -- there's nothing great about housework. But, you know, people think that this idea of men's sharing in the housework is a new phenomenon. Well, you know, some of us came from a tradition where we tried -- I mean, when we were first married, Al and I were first married, neither one of us knew how to cook, neither one of us knew anything. But we both --

ESSES: And you were both working.

KOLKIN: Oh, we were both working. Oh, we both did it. We both --

ESSES: You did?

KOLKIN: Oh, absolutely. There was no question.

ESSES: Equally?

KOLKIN: Well, I think so. Do you know, when I had a baby, and I -- I went to school to learn how to bathe the baby and stuff like that.

ESSES: Really, you went to school?

KOLKIN: He did too. He -- you know, we took class together. And he did. He felt more confident about bathing the baby than I did, to begin with. When it was getting up during the night for the baby, I did it except over the weekends. And he did once or twice before, and he said to me, "I just can't go to work if I have to get up during the night." So I did that. But on the weekend he got up during the night. So, I don't mean that it's always been equal. I was thinking about that also since the other night. If either one of us made plans to go out in the evening, that was okay. If both of us made separate plans to go out in the evening, you know, for something that -- but if both of them did, that was my problem. You know, getting somebody to take care of the kids, or -- and we -- I didn't leave kids with sitters much. Or else I didn't go. I stayed home. You know, so -- I mean, that was something I resented. I have to say, I really did resent that. But you know, he sometimes took classes, or he had a union meeting, or he --

ESSES: So he had more flexibility?

KOLKIN: Yeah, well he had that. But sometimes I made an appointment to do something. You know, a community meeting or -- you know, like I was involved in the American Labor Party, and the Housing Committee, or something. Yeah, I had my once a week thing there, you know. But if there was a conflict, I had to work it out. It was not his problem. You know.

ESSES: So you had final -- or primary responsibility.

KOLKIN: On that? Oh, yeah, I suppose I did. Yeah. And I supposed I had primary responsibility of getting along on the income, and you know. But I started this work, as I say, and that was sort of like extra -- for some extra money, well, when the kids were older. Like to go to camp for a few weeks, or for us to go on vacation for as long as the 150 dollars held out, or what-- You know, I mean, that was the kind of thing we

did. And it was fine. Well, we brought up two kids in a one-bedroom apartment. And was it common in those days? I don't think it was common. We did it. Al didn't want to be stuck with the idea that he'd have to work overtime if he didn't choose to. He didn't want to have to, you know. And so we didn't, you know. And we didn't move out to the suburbs, we didn't -- you know, any of that stuff. And then I started -- as I say -- I started working -- and then I worked more -- you know, I did more and more of this kind of research, interviewing. And then I got involved in the research field.

ESSES: What were you interviewing about?

KOLKIN: At that time it was mostly market research, but then I went into social research. And we did a lot of work for the State Department. I worked for the National Opinion Research Center, which is connected with the University of Chicago. And that's what I retired from, you know, recently.

ESSES: Did you end up working there full-time?

KOLKIN: Oh yeah. Well, first I started when my younger daughter was -- I have two children. My younger one was twelve, and the older one was fifteen. That's when I went back to work. I really -- you know, it took all that time. I worked a little before then, I started to work as a teacher in a private school. I really didn't like that particular job though. And then I was offered this job. And they knew I was looking for something. And I gave up the other one and I took this. I worked, you know, setting up questionnaires, training interviewers, and stuff like that. Writing materials, training materials. Things like that. That was a very exciting job.

ESSES: So it sounds like --

KOLKIN: All kinds of hours, all kinds of everything.

ESSES: Uh huh.

KOLKIN: And all kinds of aggravation. All kinds of deadlines.

ESSES: Sounds like working was a natural thing for you. I mean it's --

KOLKIN: Well, yeah.

ESSES: There's some women --

KOLKIN: Yeah. Although I didn't go back as soon as the kids were born.

ESSES: Right.

KOLKIN: You know what I mean? I really -- It's just, I don't think I even thought of it. I don't think Ida went back either.

ESSES: Did you have that choice? Did you really have the choice?

KOLKIN: I don't really know. Well, I don't know, I was discussing it with this other Gladys recently. She said -- oh, she said, she just couldn't stand being home. And she left -- her husband didn't want her to go back, her mother didn't want her to go back, her mother-in-law. And she said she just didn't care. She just couldn't be home.

ESSES: That's a lot of pressure to fight.

KOLKIN: I guess it was.

ESSES: It's also -- we were looking at the film, and we saw all the pressure from the media. I mean, people were saying it's unnatural for women to work, and it's natural --

KOLKIN: Where was that? That was in *Rosie the Riveter*?

ESSES: It was in *Riveter*. And I'm paraphrasing. But --

KOLKIN: Yeah, right.

ESSES: Yeah, that --

KOLKIN: Well, that's true. I mean that's --

ESSES: That somehow they're violating -- women are violating their natural role. They're not living for their husbands, they're not home with their children.

KOLKIN: Yeah. Well, listen. Yeah. And I have to say that when my own daughter went back to work -- you know, I thought that she could have waited till the kids were a little older. I mean, that --

ESSES: You did?

KOLKIN: Well, I would say so, I think. Okay. I mean, I have a feeling that there was a certain relationship that's comfortable for a child with the home.

ESSES: You mean with a man?

KOLKIN: Oh, I don't mean -- or with a -- I'm sure it could be a man. And I'm sure it could be a very good housekeeper too. I am sure that many housekeepers are more loving than mothers. I really -- you know, I mean I know that. They need a good person. I

really don't know who. But, you know, it's -- I know the difficulties. And of course you see it all around. Kids get sick and the mother's working. It's such a pain in the neck, you know. It just doesn't -- You know, we've all been through that. My kids were older at the time, it was little bit easier. You know, and --

ESSES: Do you remember the messages from the media changing, from during the War to after the War? I mean, I know that that's again, that's a very -- that's a detail --

KOLKIN: Yeah, I know. I don't think I do remember it really changing.

ESSES: You'll see, when we watch the film again.

KOLKIN: Yes, okay. Oh, I'm sure.

ESSES: Look for that.

KOLKIN: I'm sure that it happened. I'm sure that it happened.

ESSES: It's striking. It's really striking.

KOLKIN: You know that it happened. Because women worked during the War, and they didn't afterwards. You know, unless they had to. I mean, there were some women of course who worked, because they had to. And we were marginal. Our income was marginal. And my husband was on strike a few times. You know, it was certainly -- life was not simple that way. But you know, I would -- I was well brought up during the Depression. I knew if a strike was coming on, I prepared for it way in advance. You know, put money aside and -- you know. I was always a very careful kind of housekeeper that way, you know. And I find one of my daughters is -- well, she's the one with the kids. And she also, you know. I guess that's the way we brought the kids up. We just never --

[Interview interrupted.]

But I said well listen, "the kids have to learn that they have olio, you know, they have margarine during a strike." You don't have butter. You know, butter wasn't considered what it is today. Things like that, you know. And sometimes they didn't get the ice cream cone. I mean, we wouldn't deny them all the way, I'm sure. But, you know, there were certain things, and I felt that it was important for them to learn this. And, um, I'm not sorry I did it. You know. I don't think they were deprived. I don't think that

they feel that they were deprived either.

ESSES: You have two daughters you said?

KOLKIN: I have two daughters, yes.

ESSES: And what do they do?

KOLKIN: Well, the older one is forty-two, yesterday. And she works in the computer field, and she's a consultant. She lives in Massachusetts. She's divorced, long-term. And --

ESSES: Kids?

KOLKIN: No. And I expect her this weekend. Called last night or this morning rather. And that'll be nice. And she'll sleep over there. And my other daughter is going to be thirty-nine. And she's married, she has two children, and she lives in Westchester. And she works as a librarian. And, now, when they were married, she married a high school sweetheart. I mean, they had their ups and downs in between, before they got married. Both my kids were married young. And you know, it's so stupid. I guess because I didn't want them to marry young, and my mother would have liked me to marry young, so we -- okay. What the hell do they know about when to marry? You know, it's ridiculous. But anyway, when she got -- she came out -- I think she got married right after she got her Bachelor's. And I think he was still going to school, had another year. And she worked -- okay -- then she went back to school and he worked. They've been doing that all along. You know -- so she has a Master's -- oh, he has two Master's I think. Yeah. You know, so they have that kind of camaraderie, or sharing the work. She's a very good cook, and -- does he take equal responsibility? No. But they had worked that out. And I think in a good way. He does a lot of work around the house. And they moved into a shack, practically. You know, that was what they could afford. And he put on a second floor, and he -- I mean, he's done a lot of physical work there, you know. And that's fine, and he likes to do that.

ESSES: Where?

KOLKIN: In Westchester. In northern Westchester. And she said -- I remember her telling me, she didn't know what her role was. Should she'd be running and helping him? And then she suddenly didn't know what to do. There were the kids, there was -- the

housework, there was everything, and should she be helping him? And they talked that out. And she doesn't. It never even occurs to her to help him. And she does other things, you see. I've seen him do dishes. I won't say he does it all the time, but -- she does the laundry. Well, my husband just started doing the laundry, sometimes. He does the shopping much more than I. Well, he likes shopping.

ESSES: Like you said, he buys the juice.

KOLKIN: That's right. I mean, he does much more -- I mean, I buy the meat and -- I don't know, the fish. He buys all the [inaudible].

ESSES: So this stuff's kind of ridiculous.

KOLKIN: Yeah, unconsciously it just sort of happens. We don't sit down and discuss it, but -- and then again if I'm playing the piano, practicing, or I'm doing something else, he'll step in and -- you know, while I'm preparing dinner, and sometimes prepare the salad. He can't cook worth anything. But there isn't a think he can't fix. I mean, he's a -- he's probably the handiest person I've ever seen. You know, so it's -- there's no question about who does those things in the house.

ESSES: What did you both -- I have two questions, they might be the same one. How did the Navy Yard experience change you, and what did you learn from it?

KOLKIN: All right. Let me just finish though. You asked me what my other daughter does. She's a librarian in a high school. At Peekskill High School. And she's doing a great job, I think. You know, from what I hear. And she takes care of the publications the kids put out. And that's a rough job. And I think she's done some good things there. You know, just installed some good things into the library, in response to the kids and -- So. Okay. You asked me what did I get out of the Navy Yard?

ESSES: Well, how did the Navy Yard change you? Or did it? Did you feel changed by that experience?

KOLKIN: It's hard to say. You know, I don't know what I would have been like otherwise.

ESSES: That's true.

KOLKIN: Yeah. I still have some friends from the Department of Welfare, believe it or not.

ESSES: But I mean in terms of how you saw yourself. Or how you felt about yourself.

KOLKIN: I suppose so. But I don't think I could really tell you. You know. I had some other experiences, you know, during the War. For instance, when Al was near Monterey and I worked there as a waitress -- he was going to school, and it was a very intensive program. And guys stayed at a -- it was a fancy hotel that was taken over by the Navy. And we had private rooms there. Of course it was out of bounds to the men, you know. Otherwise it would have been -- I don't know. But I met women from all over the country there, you know. And I was the only Jew that many of them had ever met. If not all of them. And I'm still in contact with -- we have a round robin letter that goes, you know, from one to the other to the next, and so on. We each take out the old letter and put in a new one of our own. That goes to the next person, who gets the eight letters, you know, and so on. So that's quite an experience. And those people are completely different from me.

ESSES: How did they respond to you as a Jew?

KOLKIN: They were -- oh, they were fine. They just were surprised that I was Jewish, you know. They'd never thought -- [laughter] -- they thought maybe I was Portuguese. Well that's out on the West Coast. Here nobody would say Portuguese, you'd say Italian if -- you know.

ESSES: Uh huh. Right. That's interesting.

KOLKIN: Yeah, that was interesting.

ESSES: But what about in the Navy Yard? Were there other Jews in the Navy Yard?

KOLKIN: Oh yeah, yeah.

ESSES: Lots? And you weren't among -- Did you feel like a minority there?

KOLKIN: No, I'm sure I didn't feel like a minority. I don't think among the old timers there were many Jews. Although, see, Al worked in the machine shop there. It was unusual for -- Well, it's unusual for Jews to be in the -- doing mechanical work. Later Al became a teacher. You know, and he taught industrial arts.

ESSES: In a college, or a high school?

KOLKIN: No, in a high school. And, you know, he got his degree at Brooklyn College, and then he taught. So.

ESSES: Do you remember any kind of racism? Did we talk about that last night?

KOLKIN: Oh yeah. Yeah, there is racism. Absolute racism.

ESSES: Uh huh. Anything specific?

KOLKIN: Well, I just came across something in a letter. Al had mentioned that I had written to Al about -- that I had spoken to the snapper -- this was a different snapper -- about someone who should have -- who I felt should have been promoted, a Black woman, and she wasn't. And he said, "Let her forget about it." You know.

ESSES: And she never was promoted?

KOLKIN: Well, I don't really know. I don't really know. You know, I left the Yard. I don't really know.

ESSES: Do you have his letters?

KOLKIN: Yes. Yeah.

ESSES: About the Navy Yard?

KOLKIN: Well, you know, I don't know how much I wrote about the Navy Yard.

ESSES: Well, would you be willing to read a couple of snaps from your letters.

KOLKIN: I don't know.

ESSES: Just about the Navy Yard. Nothing personal.

KOLKIN: Yes, I know, I know. Well, if we find something. I mean, he was in the process of typing them now, you know. Ugh! We were [inaudible]. Yeah.

ESSES: He likes to collect --

KOLKIN: Yes, he's the collector.

ESSES: -- the past then.

KOLKIN: Right, yeah. And we have all our letters that we had written to each other. Never looked at them till recently. The kids, you know, were sort of interested. So we thought, hey, we'll deal with it someday. After we die, they can read them. But that's kind of a thing.

ESSES: Okay. Do you have anything -- you want to add? I mean, I don't have any more questions.

KOLKIN: I don't know. I don't think so. You know, it's true that many girls did not have an

education, go to college in those days. But then again, it depended on the family you came from. You know. There was so much striving among the immigrants for their children to have a better life than they did. And you know, most of us were first generation American, born in -- you know, our parents were born --

ESSES: Where are your parents from?

KOLKIN: Russia, Poland, you know, that area.

ESSES: And what did your -- Did your mother ever work?

KOLKIN: She did for a while.

ESSES: Do you remember what she did?

KOLKIN: She did some insurance work, but it wasn't very much, and it didn't work out.

ESSES: And your dad?

KOLKIN: She was a magnificent housekeeper.

ESSES: Oh really?

KOLKIN: I mean, she was a -- I don't mean that she was so clean, that kind of thing. But she was a marvelous cook. She was miserable to live with. But she could entertain beautifully and -- She was a very beautiful woman, and very, very bright. Spoke English like a native, you know. You know, self-educated, I guess.

ESSES: Mm hm. And your dad?

KOLKIN: Well, he was a painter and a paper hanger. And he was a real estates man. And there was a time he did very well, and a time he didn't. Then there was the Depression. We lived in a house -- I was brought up in a big house. I just had my brother and me, and we had a house.

ESSES: Is your brother --

KOLKIN: My brother?

ESSES: What does he do?

KOLKIN: Well, he went to City College, and graduated as a chemical engineer. And couldn't get a job. The Jews couldn't get jobs as engineers. And he got a job as a chemist. And then he got into civil service, for the Federal government, and he moved out to Washington. He used to send money home, because, you know, we

really didn't have money. We weren't the very poorest. We were never on welfare. And so many people were, you know, in those days. We never -- but we came pretty close.

ESSES: But you wanted to make a point about education.

KOLKIN: Uh huh. Okay. Yes, I did. But what I'm saying, that -- and many of us did go. You know, our families -- My mother didn't make the distinction so far as education was concerned between my brother and me. Although she could have easily, in the sense too, that he was very brilliant, and I was not. You know, I don't mean that I was stupid, but I wasn't brilliant. You know. I was just ordinary bright. You know. Which was tough on me, by the way. It was awful. I don't know if you're a second child and have a brilliant first. It's kind of rough. Although I see with my grandchildren, it's sort of the opposite. The first and second, you know they -- the second one --

ESSES: The second one's more of a --

[Interview interrupted.]

KOLKIN: -- has this, it's rough there too -- you can't win. The name of the game is, you can't win.

ESSES: You always compare yourself to someone else.

KOLKIN: Right, right. So -- and my cousins all -- well, I shouldn't say they all went to college, but they were, you know. I had two first cousins. Girls. Oh, they all went, except for one. There was another two I had also on the other side. All the girls went to college, except for one. My mother's sister's daughter didn't go. But the rest of us all went, and graduated. You know, everybody. So it wasn't -- I was no student. I really wasn't a student at all. I got out young, but it's because I went to school during the summer and made up, and -- you see, we went to school during the Depression. And it was a question of, you didn't know how long you could go. If you couldn't get a job, you'd go to school. So that you'd be that much ahead. You know. And in case you couldn't -- you know, you had to stop school, you'd at least be finished. So that was the thing. I wish I had been a better student at the time. But, you know, at that age there are other things that interest you more than studies. I know it from my own kids. So,

that's not unusual. But -- you know, now I'm pleased that -- I certainly am pleased that I have the education. And I go to school now many terms. Although this term I'm not going. But I do go to Hunter and take courses.

ESSES: Towards a degree, or just --

KOLKIN: No. No.

ESSES: -- for the hell of it.

KOLKIN: Just for fun.

ESSES: Uh huh. You're studying music.

KOLKIN: Yeah, I play piano now. I just started. Well, not for the first time. I took lessons when I was a kid. You know. And we had a piano, a baby grand piano, when we moved here. One of my daughters has it now, the one with the grandchildren. And my granddaughter's playing. And then we bought another piano. But I just -- about a month ago, a little bit over a month ago, I started taking lessons again. And I play terribly. And I aggravate myself. And I had a lesson this morning, and --

ESSES: I thought you said violin.

KOLKIN: Oh, no, no, no.

ESSES: Did you say violin? No, piano.

KOLKIN: No, piano. So, there I am.

ESSES: But you don't have a piano here.

KOLKIN: Yes, I do.

ESSES: Oh, right there.

KOLKIN: There it is.

ESSES: I called at a certain point. It must have been in the middle of the piano lesson.

KOLKIN: Oh, did you.

ESSES: Yeah. And no answer. I thought you were in your music lesson.

KOLKIN: Oh, well, my -- I went for the piano lesson. They don't come here, sure.

ESSES: Oh you went -- you go out.

KOLKIN: Yeah, they don't come.

ESSES: Okay, okay.

KOLKIN: Even when I was young I went. Oh, and I had dancing lessons, and piano lessons. I mean, it was all to make me more marriageable.

ESSES: [laughter]

KOLKIN: No, I'm sure of it, I'm sure of it.

ESSES: I'm sure of it too.

KOLKIN: Yeah. And I guess I resented every bit of it. I had to have elocution lessons.

ESSES: My parents -- oh, I'm going to shut this off.

KOLKIN: Yeah.