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Oral History Interview with Carmela Zuza
Brooklyn Navy Yard Oral History Collection, 2010.003.001
Interview conducted by Sady Sullivan on July 3, 2008
at the narrator's home in Hauppauge, NY,
narrator's husband and daughter also present

SADY SULLIVAN: ...first. So if you would sit where you're comfortable, and then –

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, I'm fine.

SADY SULLIVAN: Okay. And just count to ten.

ED: Is the fan too noisy?

CARMELA ZUZA: Shh.

MAE: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: No, it's fine.

CARMELA ZUZA: Okay, now ready?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

SADY SULLIVAN: Perfect, great. All right. Um, so we'll -- to, to officially start, um, I -- oh, I almost forgot the date. It's July 3rd, how could I forget, right before a holiday. Today is July 3, 2008. I am Sady Sullivan with the Brooklyn Historical Society, and this interview is part of the Brooklyn -- Brooklyn Navy Yard oral history project, and I am here today with Carmela Zuza, at her home in Hauppauge, New York, is that...?

CARMELA ZUZA: Hauppauge.

SADY SULLIVAN: Hauppauge, okay. I, I actually almost asked the cab driver on the way, I'm like, how do you pronounce it? [laughter]

MAE: We say the same thing.

CARMELA ZUZA: We didn't know -- we didn't know what it was.

SADY SULLIVAN: Hauppauge, okay, in Hauppauge, New York. Um, so, if you would introduce yourself to the recording, however you'd like.

CARMELA ZUZA: Okay. Uh, my name is Carmela Zuza, and I live at [address redacted for privacy] in Hauppauge, New York, and I'm here to, uh, be interviewed by the Historical Society of Brooklyn.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So I worked in the Navy Yard in, uh, 1942. I was eighteen years old and, uh, I -- they were hiring a lot of people, and most of the neighborhood men worked there, but my father was against me going because, uh, he figured, you're going into work in a, you know, a plant like that, it's mostly men. So I said, oh, let me try it, you know. So, uh, they put us in a, a room with what they call mechanical instructors, and they trained us for three months, and I did arc welding. So we worked on, uh, parts of the *Missouri*. We weren't allowed to go on the ship, but we worked on the inner bottoms, overhead welding and vertical welding. And, uh, when we walked into the shop, the men told us to go home where we belong, in the kitchen, so we all yelled out, "Shut up!"

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: But we showed them up, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we worked on, um, mostly the decks of the, um, *Missouri*.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: Which the -- which the men prepared and, uh, they were like, forget about it. Welding went on for months, but it was a great job, I loved it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Especially the war effort, you know. And I had to go there to work because I had to leave school, because two of my brothers were in the service and the other two were married. See, my father wasn't well at that time you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Okay? [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Great. So, so going back, just, uh, just getting some background and then we'll come back to the --

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- Navy Yard. Um, can you spell your name just for the recording, so the --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- transcriptionist..

CARMELA ZUZA: Ah, Carmela, C-a-r-m-e-l-a. Zuza, capital Z-u-z-a.

SADY SULLIVAN: Z-u-z-a.

CARMELA ZUZA: Z as in zebra.

SADY SULLIVAN: Ah. I had been spelling your last name wrong. Um, great. And where and when were you born?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, I was born at 879 Dean Street in Brooklyn.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I was one of, uh, eight children at that time, but we were nine in the family.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. And, uh --

SADY SULLIVAN: And what's your date of birth?

CARMELA ZUZA: [date redacted for privacy]-24.

SADY SULLIVAN: So you just had a birthday a month ago.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Happy birthday.

CARMELA ZUZA: Thank you.

SADY SULLIVAN: So you have eight brothers and sisters, is --

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, we were --

SADY SULLIVAN: -- you're nine total.

CARMELA ZUZA: We were five girls and four boys.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: There was nine.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow! And what about your parents, were they born in Brooklyn?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, they were born in Europe, Italy.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, okay. Where in Italy?

CARMELA ZUZA: Naples.

SADY SULLIVAN: And did they -- did they meet here or did they --

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- meet over there?

CARMELA ZUZA: My father came to America, he worked in the, uh...

MAE: I got it.

CARMELA ZUZA: In the pavement of the streets, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: He came along, then he went back and, uh, my grandmother -- my grandmother introduced him to my mother.

MAE: Hello?

CARMELA ZUZA: And he was like ten --

SADY SULLIVAN: In Italy?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yes.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they got married, and they came to America.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So were all of their kids born in the states?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yes. All in the U.S., yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm. And did you grow up speaking Italian in the home?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Do you still speak Italian?

CARMELA ZUZA: I've forgotten quite a bit of it, because my -- you know, my parents are gone and, uh, I will recognize some of the language, but it has to be the na -- the Naples dialect.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right, right.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because, well, they all speak differently, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Right. So your neighborhood when you were growing up, um, was -- were there other Italian families around?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, yeah. We had a mixed neighborhood.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: All, uh, all races.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Spanish, uh, black, uh, Italian, Irish.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was a real melting pot.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But, uh, our childhood was wonderful.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Doors were open and we played in the street, but, uh, we played in the backyard because my mother worried about us getting hurt outside, and they would put up a, a hose, and we'd be out there all summer, playing in the backyard.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter] Um, and, so, other kids on your block, did you -- who were the other kids on the block that you played with?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, there were a lot. We grew up together, and, uh, we used to go to, uh, Coney Island and when we grow up, I must have been about 12 then, and, uh, we used to go to Steeple Chase Park.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And save up our nickels and dimes and go there for the day, every Memorial Day.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, nice.

CARMELA ZUZA: So.

SADY SULLIVAN: Did you take the train? How did you get there?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, we used to go the Franklin Avenue Express, that took us right to, uh, Coney Island.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, nice.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And so in your siblings, where are you in the order?

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh, I'm, I'm next to the last one born.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: But there's only the two of us left now. My sister lives in Colorado.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: She's four years younger than me.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But they've all passed away, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, so, so we've talked about this a little bit, but I want to hear in, in great detail, how, how you came to work at the Navy Yards.

CARMELA ZUZA: Okay.

SADY SULLIVAN: So can you tell me how you heard about the job --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- and all of that.

CARMELA ZUZA: It must have been in the local papers, so everybody in the neighborhood knew that they were building the ships and, uh, they were hiring at that time. So, being the war broke out, so everybody was going, why don't you try? Go there and get a job, you know. So we all went, signed up, and most of the men knew my father, so they sort of like watched over me because I was so young, you know, eighteen years old. But I did fine.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: So, um, you, you told your father that you wanted to go apply at --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- the Yards.

CARMELA ZUZA: I says you know, it's part of the war effort, I said. I was gung ho, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: He said oh, okay, but I don't like the idea, sort of, he said. But he said, "Just watch out."

SADY SULLIVAN: What is it that he didn't like about it?

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh, to be with all the men you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They were all married and older.

SADY SULLIVAN: What was it that he was worried about?

CARMELA ZUZA: I, I don't know. He didn't have to worry about me, I took pretty good care of myself, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, and, so who did you go to apply with? Who was it that you --

CARMELA ZUZA: Ah, one of the neighbors took me. They -- we drove there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: But there was a bus that took us, because when I was being trained you know, in the welding, um, we came home late because it -- it was a like a night shift, and we got out like about 11:00 at night.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: So my father and my brothers would be at the bus stop to meet me, but I was always with one of the men that worked there, waited for me. So I was pretty watch -- well watched over.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. So the neighbor that you went with to, to apply, was that a man or a woman?

CARMELA ZUZA: A man.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: I just kicked the plug by accident.

CARMELA ZUZA: Okay.

SADY SULLIVAN: All right.

CARMELA ZUZA: So –

SADY SULLIVAN: So, starting again.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we walked –

SADY SULLIVAN: So tell me about your first day.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I remember that man to this day, he was so wonderful, the teacher that taught me. And he, uh, he showed us all these welds, like a vertical weld.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oops, sorry.

CARMELA ZUZA: A straight weld, you know a [laughter] overhead weld, which we didn't get into that until later on, but they explained what we were going to do. It was in, in electric arc welding, and he says, "You know, you're going be putting parts of the *Missouri* together." The ship. So he showed us the, the piece that was fitted, and they

started teaching us how to, you know, stroke the electric arc, and it melts it into the weld. So, I was a damn good welder, I tell ya, because I was artistically talented, and I had a very steady hand. And in fact, the jobs that I did, the men didn't believe it. They said -- and he backed me up, the, uh, mechanical instructor. He said, "She did it!" Because when you did a job he had to sign your name. That was the first day though, part -- for three months we went there and started doing a lot of welding, you know on these, uh, little parts.

SADY SULLIVAN: Were they actual parts or were they like --

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't really know.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- sort of testers?

CARMELA ZUZA: They were, they were -- they taught us on nice size plates. I don't know where they put them though.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Maybe it was part of the ship, I don't know.

MAE: Deck plates.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, like a -- well the deck plate was a big, big thing, Mae. These were little tiny things.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Do you remember the name of that instructor?

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: No. Um, and who was with you in that, in that class?

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh, we were about six women.

SADY SULLIVAN: All women?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And so --

SADY SULLIVAN: And what was the atmosphere among you all?

CARMELA ZUZA: The what?

SADY SULLIVAN: What was the atmosphere among you all?

CARMELA ZUZA: Very nice. The girls were all, you know, gung ho.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So I got very friendly with a girl that was ten years older than me. I never heard from her after we left but, uh, we'd walk in, she was quite a glamour girl. So we'd walk in and they put us, like paired us in two, to go into the shops.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That was a big day, when we'd walk in with all this gear, heavy, thick rubber things on our body, which I hated.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, tell me. Describe those to me, what you were wearing.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, it was like a -- it covered your whole body almost, like your upper body.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And we wore ah, work shoes we had to have, and then they gave us these shields you put on your head.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Of course, you've got to weld with the shield. And we were told, once we started welding, that you had to drink milk every day, because of the fumes, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, I haven't heard that.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: So why, why milk?

CARMELA ZUZA: It was good for your lungs, because you were breathing in -- as you are welding, you're breathing in those fumes.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: So I did that for about a year, and then my father said, "Enough is enough" because he'd see the burns on my arms, because I wouldn't wear those things on, I couldn't stand them. You're dying with the heavy rubber on your body.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: So then I get a job in the office.

SADY SULLIVAN: At the Navy Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: So that was great, and what I did, they taught me. There was a little training period. We had to go in the shops and check all the welding, because they were putting it into a computer. Well they were -- it was computerized to, uh, see how much welding went into the ship.

SADY SULLIVAN: How do you mean?

CARMELA ZUZA: Like, uh, if you went into the shop, which I knew the shops at that time, you go in and you see this guy, he'd finish a job, and he had his number on, and we had to write down the number and I had to write how many -- how much welding he did. Different --

SADY SULLIVAN: In terms of time or?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, just numbers of how much welding, pounds of welding, you know something like that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So, um, that lasted for quite a while. I worked up in the office, and they were teaching me how to read blueprints, would you believe?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And at that time, the *Franklin* came in. That was ah, badly hit during the war years, *BB Franklin*. And uh, they wouldn't let us go into those shops, because

when that came in, there were b -- still body parts on it, so you weren't allowed to go in there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we're not -- oh. So then I got friendly with all the Marines that come in on the boats.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: [laughter] And they used to see me waiting to go from one shop to another, and I got a ride on all the jeeps. [laughter] So it was fun.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then I started dating some of them. We'd go up to the Empire Rollerdrome, and I skated all the time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Where was that?

CARMELA ZUZA: Up, uh, that was by Ebbetts Field, in Brooklyn.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, it was quite a wild time. And we used to go to movies, uh, ice cream shops. That was our fun.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So there was -- is -- so you were -- there was a lot of camaraderie with pe -- within people who were working in the yards?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, oh yeah, yeah. Everybody was friendly, and a lot of the men I knew, you know, because I used to go check their jobs.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: So I'm curious. Your dad was worried about you being a, a young woman in the Navy Yard.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, well he figured maybe, you know, they would get rough me or something. Like you'd be on line and you want to get a drink of water, and they would forget you're a woman because you've got your hair all wrapped up in a cap, and I

was a little bit of a thing then, and they used to use some foul language. And then when you turn around and they see you, "Oh, I'm so sorry." You know they couldn't -- that's the way it was.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Because they didn't know you were a woman.

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I was very tiny. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Um, was there anybody who you knew, were they welcoming?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Very nice.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, they did -- just said that as a joke, when we walked in, and what are you doing here, but we worked hard. There was one woman there, she was a ship fitter. I never in my life. She was about six foot three, and she'd be using a sledgehammer, boom! I never forgot. I've still got her face before me all these years.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: She was powerful.

MAE: Was that the lady that never cashed her paychecks?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, that was in the telephone company.

MAE: Oh. [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: That was after that. Yeah.

MAE: She was an overseas operator also. [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, when I worked -- after leaving the Navy Yard.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And so then, they had the christening of the *Missouri*. The Trumans came in and the shipyard looked magnificent. They cleaned everything up, and we were on, I think the fourth or the fifth floor, in the office, watching them when they were going to christen the ship. I don't recall if it was, uh, the wife or the mother that did it actually. You couldn't see from the window. And when they christened the ship, it was a cloudy day, and the sun came all over the shipyard, and we were all crying.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because we were so excited, you know, we had a part of this, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And somebody said, "I hope it brings misery to the Japs," because we were at war with Japan then.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And it turned out that that ship, they had the peace treaty on that ship, Japanese and the Americans.

SADY SULLIVAN: That's right.

CARMELA ZUZA: But then after that, the war ended and we were crying when we were leaving. We didn't want to leave, but we were happy the war was over. We were laid off.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: So then --

SADY SULLIVAN: And who was laid off?

CARMELA ZUZA: All the -- every -- everybody, the men and the women. A lot of people got their, uh, notice.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And we used to have, uh, entertainment come in. I don't know if you remember Eddie Duchin?

SADY SULLIVAN: Uh-uh. Who was that?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well he was a bandleader, and they used to come and they used to, you know, push the, uh, bond effort, where you buy bonds, and. So at that time, we weren't paid very well, you know, not the girls anyhow. I don't know why. But anyhow, so, uh, I managed to buy five hundred dollars worth of war bonds.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, that was like, wow, you know?

MAE: We have some still. Left over from the [inaudible] --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. And, um, so then we leave the shipyard, and, uh, then the war was over. That, that, that day, I'll never forget it. When was the war, 1945? And everybody was out in the streets, hugging each other, kissing, and -- And my father, he had a, a sword from World War I, you know one of these, uh, a big sword. I don't know where he got it from. And he ma -- got everybody to march, and we marched over, into the local church and thanked God for the war being ended.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, it was nice.

SADY SULLIVAN: Was your father, uh-- did he fight in World War I?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no.

MAE: He had the, uh, Spanish flu.

CARMELA ZUZA: He had the Spanish flu and lived through it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. He was one of the lucky ones.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow. So you were in -- you were working in the Navy Yard until the war ended?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yes.

SADY SULLIVAN: OK. Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: So that was like, from '42 to '45.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. I knew everybody there. You get to know, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. I'm curious about who was there and, and what the, what the social atmosphere was like.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Well they had, they had little parties. You know, they'd have, uh, somebody bring in lunches and things -- like you do in an office.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But it was fun.

MAE: You guys used to go to Coney Island, right, the beach, and then the --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, when -- yeah, well that was when I was a child, you know younger, I used to go to the beach a lot.

MAE: With your friends.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. I told her about Memorial Day. We used to go every, every Memorial Day, to Steeple Chase.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was quite a -- going to Nathan's and having hot dogs, and we used to have chow mein on a bun.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then. They used to put the noodles on it, it was so delicious. Corn on the cob.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We had a fun childhood.

SADY SULLIVAN: So did you have a job before you worked at the Navy Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: I worked in the local... In the neighborhood they had these little factory jobs.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I worked in a knitting mill, but I was really, when this -- I think I was sixteen.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And ah, they taught me how to mend sweaters. Uh, I was learning, uh, payroll, like an all-around thing.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Knitting.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Where in the neighborhood was --

CARMELA ZUZA: It was right around the corner on, uh, Grand Avenue.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh. And so did you, the whole time you were growing up, did you live on Dean Street?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And there was a Knox, uh, hat fam -- uh, hat factory. I know you must have heard of the Knox hats?

SADY SULLIVAN: No, I haven't.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, and we used to, uh, go -- there was a bakery right on the corner where my mother lived, it was Messi Bakery.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And when we were kids, we used to go watch them. We would get on this platform and look in and see the guys baking, and they used to give us a loaf of bread every once in a while.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, it was fun.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then we'd go -- the Daily News was located right -- not far from my mother's house.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we walked there to get milk and stuff. We'd go with carriages and buy um, uh, bread and milk, which was discounted. You know, the prices were good for families.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then at Thanksgiving time, they took all the turkeys to the local bakery around the corner, and they put them in the big ovens and bake your turkey for you.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, I didn't know that.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Nobody -- well we didn't have big ovens. We had, you know, my mother had a small house.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. So everybody in the neighborhood, their turkey would be --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- cooked.

CARMELA ZUZA: You had to put your label on it or something, and they put them in these big ovens.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, that's so cool.

CARMELA ZUZA: So you went back up a couple hours later to go pick it up.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they'd make all the trimmings in the house, you know.

MAE: And a lot of street vendors too, right?

CARMELA ZUZA: And -- oh yeah, we used to have the peddlers come on the street, and the end of the day, they would go where all the big families lived, because they sold all the stuff at half price, like what they didn't sell, and my mother used to have bushels of apples, bushels of peaches. And my father had a garden, he had his own garden.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, tell me about the garden.

CARMELA ZUZA: Made his own wine. He, he grew everything. We never went to buy any -- unless the local guy came around with the, uh, with -- they had a cart with the horses --

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: -- they used to come. And, uh, my father grew -- he had a peach tree in the front, and in the back he grew corn. He grew tomatoes, what do you call it um, that vegetable that you buy Mae, uh, zucchini.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they used to grow flowers that my mother used to make stashes of pancakes with. It was a yellow flower that grew. I don't know what they called it, and she used to fry them all up and have stacks of them.

SADY SULLIVAN: She would put the flower in the pancakes?

CARMELA ZUZA: Put it in the batter, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, I wonder what that is.

CARMELA ZUZA: They were delicious. It was, uh, I can't think of the name. I have to talk to one of my old friends that might remember.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MAE: Mommy, tell her about the beer. They used to make their own beer.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, and my mother used to make homemade brew, and we had a little wine cellar downtown, uh, downstairs, where she used to keep the beer and the soda you know. And my father had a big room where they used to bring the grapes in, and our living room had grape boxes up to the ceiling.

SADY SULLIVAN: They were growing?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, the boxes -- the grapes were ready to be done, like when he made the wine.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: So -- and we used to have a box of grapes just for us, and we ate so much grapes we were, forget about it. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow. So did you grow the grapes or did your father --

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, he, he used to order it.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- grow the grapes as well?

CARMELA ZUZA: Because he used to make the wine from that.

MAE: Peaches in the wine.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh, he used to go to Mulberry Street in New York, and buy big peaches. They used to call them pequoge, that's an Italian word.

SADY SULLIVAN: How do you spell it?

CARMELA ZUZA: P-e-q-u-o-g-e. That would be a good way to remember it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And ah, he used to come back with the peaches. Of course, we were not allowed to drink the wine, you know, they figured we were kids.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh, but they used to put a little bit of wine in the glass and soak the peaches in it, so we were very happy little kids.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: But I used to sneak down in the ba -- in the cellar, because I loved that beer, and I used to take it and drink a bottle every once in a while.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: Then in the kitchen my mother had a little barrel, and before dinner she used to have ice out there, because we had the ice man, you know. And she used to chop up all the ice and put the beer and sodas in there, not much soda, once in a blue moon, and, uh, serve it with our dinner when we were eating.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I just remember my mother always cooking, big giant pots in the kitchen. But she was a good lady.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So your mom would make the beer.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And, and your father made the wine.

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh huh, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: How did she make the beer?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well she used certain things like hops, that she couldn't get when the -- during the war years, they were hard to get. But she made it for a couple of years.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It didn't taste like the beer that you have now, you know. It was more like a soda type. It was delicious.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. But it would have -- it would be alcohol.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh a little bit in it, yeah sure.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And what else? I'm trying to think.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, that's actually -- I'm so excited to hear. This is one of the side projects that I want to do, um, about, in oral histories --

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh huh.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- is, uh, the gardens and mostly the fruit trees.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Because there were so many fruit trees in Brooklyn --

CARMELA ZUZA: And my father --

SADY SULLIVAN: -- that were planted.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, and my father had fig trees tru -- too.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, they were delicious.

SADY SULLIVAN: That's my -- that, yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then in the wint -- in the winter, they used to, they used to cover them up like mummies, but they grew every year, and he had a grapevine also.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: But everybody grew stuff. We had neighbors that made root beer.

Somebody else made like a soda type of a drink. And they'd bake. My mother made all her own pasta, and she baked and baked.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: In a coal stove oven that we had and, uh, we'd just used to use it with, uh, coal.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

MAE: And no heat.

CARMELA ZUZA: We had one bathtub in the house and we had a, a boiler to warm up the water.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh so you did -- it wasn't -- it was warm water?

CARMELA ZUZA: You had to make the water hot, so you go take a bath.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then we used to -- you know, you ironed a lot in those times. We used to put up the curtains on these, uh, you, you get your fingers all cut because you put it on what they call um, it was like a stick and instead of drawing them on the line, you used to put them on, and then when the sun dried them, you pull -- pulled them off and put them up on the window. And my mother never let us wash clothes. They used to use the scrub, Scrubco. She used to send out bags of, um wet -- of, of wash, all our clothing, the bedding and everything, and when they brought it back, we had lines and that was laundry day. We had to hang up all these clothes. See. They never came back dry but we never had to wash them, we were the lucky ones.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know how she managed that but she did.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because everybody else had to scrub.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And that would be a lot of laundry, with nine --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- nine kids.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MAE: Yeah, when, when your dad had the fruit trees, when he died they all died.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, right after.

SADY SULLIVAN: The fruit trees did?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Well, he was get -- he got sick and he couldn't take care of them really, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, yeah. Do you know where he got the seeds to -- for the trees?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know any of that, no.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I remember him going out and they used to come back with stuff, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But he planted at a certain time. We never really -- we had salad. We had the arugula, all that stuff.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, and fresh -- the tomatoes were out of this world.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we really grew up eating everything. Not like today, you don't know what they're putting on the, uh, stuff today.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: The fruits don't have any smell. We had peaches that were full of juice and oh, forget about it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know where you got to go to get something like that now.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: The whole environment is like terrible.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

MAE: They freeze them. If you buy them and they freeze the fruits.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

MAE: It takes the flavor away.

CARMELA ZUZA: Unless you got actually where somebody has a farm and they, they planted it themselves you know.

MAE: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

MAE: Or in Queens. [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

MAE: We have good fruit in Queens.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: So would most of the, the food that you were eating when you were growing up, was it mostly local, that you, that you grew? What, what, what products did your family buy?

CARMELA ZUZA: Most of it was what she'd grow or what she bought from the, uh, men when they came around.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They'd bring bushels of corn. Of course, we -- he grew so much and then, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And after a while we didn't have it any more.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But, uh, they would bring like stuff that was a little bruised, and I
remember my mother cutting all the bruise off the peaches –

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: -- and pears and apples.

SAD SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But we ate -- she cooked them up sometime, you know to make like a,
what do they call that, compote or something?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Is that the right word, compote?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MAE: They ate seasonally [inaudible].

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They made a lot of chicken. We ne -- we had maybe steak once a week,
and we had a lot of um, like, uh, beans. She made beans with pasta, which we do to
this day.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Lentils. It was all good protein, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And we never had -- we never had butter. I never remember seeing
butter in the house. She used the, uh, an olive oil that was, uh, mixed with another oil.

I think it was called Gem, G-E-M, and, uh, she used a lot of that. They used to buy cases of them, [laughter] and they had to store them.

SADY SULLIVAN: And she would mix them herself?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, it was already mixed.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh, I'm trying remember. And my mother was the type that had a store in the house, because all the neighbors used to come in and buy tomatoes from her, and then she'd keep re -- you know, uh, keep supplying them.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh, we had -- believe it or not, in that time we had a, a store called Spinners that delivered, and as a little girl, I used to sit with her and make the shopping list up, go to the store, order everything, and they'd deliver it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: And that's a long time ago. I must have been about nine or ten years old.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Uh, o what else did your mom sell from your house? Did -- would she sell the beer or wine or anything?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, no. This was just the neighbors, they ran out of tomatoes or, "do you have a couple of cans of tomatoes?" Then it got to be a habit, because everybody knew she had the supply there. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So when you were going to the Navy Yard, did you, did you bring a lunch? What was the food situation there?

CARMELA ZUZA: Um, I think we brought something to drink but, uh, they had a, what do you call, a commissary there, where you could go get a sandwich and stuff.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Sometimes we brought something, if my mother made something. She used to make a lot of omelets.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we used to have the Italian bread from the bakery you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was great. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And what about -- did you ever go out, outside of the yards to eat, in any of the -- like, I've heard about some luncheonettes --

CARMELA ZUZA: Not really.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- on Sand Street.

CARMELA ZUZA: No, we never left the shipyard, no.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That area wasn't that nice at that time. You know, I don't know. There were a lot of, uh, ships and a lot of sailors coming in you know. So we really didn't leave.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: So, tell me about, um coming to the yards. How would you -- how would you get there from your house and how was your --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, with the bus.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We walked to a street called Washington Avenue, and they had a bus, I think it was five cents. It took you right to the Navy Yard. And sometimes, some of the men that worked there happened to be going the time I was going, and he took me to work.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And what -- do you remember what gate you would have come in on?

CARMELA ZUZA: Gee, I don't remember that, but it was a big gate and a lot of us walked through.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And what was that process?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, they just had the gates open. We had uh, uh, our name on a -- well, when -- before I started working, we had to go in for a physical, so they get all that information and, um, I wasn't too happy about that because ah, the doctor that was there says to me -- he -- I had to undress of course, and I was embarrassed. You know, I was young. He says, "Hmm, all of eighteen." And then I went, "oh God."

MAE: Oh, ma.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. At that time, yeah. Would you believe?

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: So I wasn't too happy with him.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Was that a Navy doctor? What?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But, um, he was messing around with somebody to even talk to me like that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It wasn't very nice.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But certain things you don't forget, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm. So when you would be coming in, it would be mostly men that were coming in to the Yards I imagine.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, we were surrounded by men, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And you don't look on the floor in the morning.

SADY SULLIVAN: What do you mean?

CARMELA ZUZA: A lot of them would spit and spit, and it was, it was messy. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. So would you come -- you had to change into, into the heavy work clothes.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh no.

SADY SULLIVAN: What would you wear on your way there?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well we wore like jean type of pants and shirt, but you put them right over those clothes.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We didn't have any changing.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But we had a locker if we wanted to you know, because a lot of them used to go out after work, you know, men that tried to date you, but I never dated anybody.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Not in the shipyard. The soldiers I did, and sailors.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: They were my skating partners. It was fun.

SADY SULLIVAN: Ice skating or roller skating?

CARMELA ZUZA: Roller skating.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, nice.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. So in the locker room, was that -- was that -- there was a separate area for the women?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, yeah, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So how many women do you think were working there when you were?

CARMELA ZUZA: We had about a dozen I would say.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh wow, not very many.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. No.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Do you remember the names of anybody that you worked with?

CARMELA ZUZA: Just this one girl I worked with, Marie. Her name was Marie Riccio. I don't even know if she's still alive. Gee, I remember her name.

SADY SULLIVAN: That's great. And where was she from?

CARMELA ZUZA: I think she was from Brooklyn.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Did you get a sense that the -- that most of the women that you were working with, what had, what had brought them to, to the Navy Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, not really. I didn't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Was there -- was there, um, a unity because you were women in, in --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, yeah. We stuck -- mostly stuck together. They would put us into one spot in the shipyard. You didn't really get all over.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But, uh, things went on, on the ships which ah, I never went on the ship. Some women did go, I don't know, but they said a lot of stuff was going on, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: What do you mean?

CARMELA ZUZA: Like sailors coming in and, you know, I don't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they said there was a girl that looked just like me. I said, well I hope I don't get blamed for things that I didn't do. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: So I stayed off the ships.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Was there a rule about going on the ships?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, you could have gone.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Providing they were -- they were allowed at that time, you know if they weren't working.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because a lot of ships came in. We used to see them coming in you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Well I did because I used to go around a lot.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So tell me about a, a typical day for you at the Yard.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. We worked and then we had a lunch hour and, uh, if you were done early, you know, you could take a walk around, go have coffee or something, but most of the time we worked pretty steady, like seven hours, with the lunch hour.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then you'd hear the whistle blow, and you'd go home.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: But you had some time during the day to, to wander around and get a look at the yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, if you wanted to, sure. I used to look in the shops.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. What --

CARMELA ZUZA: They were like big warehouses, with all the cranes, and one time there was, uh, two men got killed and we were in -- they shut the shop down.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: One of the cranes broke, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: So that's the only real tragedy that I saw there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Were you aware of other accidents happening in the yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no. No, they were pretty well -- you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. You said before that you would get burns sometimes, from the --

CARMELA ZUZA: Well when I took the rubber thing off, which I wasn't supposed to.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right. So what would happen?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, well, like, little sparks would come on you, and then you -- and then you would leave little marks.

SADY SULLIVAN: I see.

CARMELA ZUZA: But --

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then my father saw that and he didn't like that.

SADY SULLIVAN: And that's when you went to work in the office?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Was that a hard transition to do?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no. They were -- they needed people there so, so I spoke to one of the, uh, bosses there and I said, you know, "I think I would like to go in the office now."

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And it was great experience.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, do you remember the, the building name or number?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, I've forgotten that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: I wish I had taken some pictures of myself, you know, with the girls.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: We didn't even think of that at that time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know?

MAE: We went online to look -

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

MAE:-- for pictures and stuff.

CARMELA ZUZA: There was none.

MAE:I was looking for her.

CARMELA ZUZA: They just -

SADY SULLIVAN: I wonder. Well I mean that -

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know if they ever took --

SADY SULLIVAN: You should come to the archive at some point, and I'll ask Daniella and we'll, we'll look for some photos that we can show you.

CARMELA ZUZA: I wonder if they took me --

SADY SULLIVAN: Because she's collecting them.

CARMELA ZUZA: -- when I didn't know, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right, right, definitely. Yeah we'll, we'll have -- we'll look.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, that would be great.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Do you know what area? Like can -- do you have a sense of you know, what was around you where -- in the places where you would work?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, there was a lot of -- that was really, uh, it was residential.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Some parts.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But I didn't -- there were restaurants down there, old, old restaurants.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But I really didn't go around you know, just confined to -- the shipyard was big enough that, you know, you really didn't go where you were not supposed to be.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right, right. So you -- so you would go to different -- you weren't always in the same shop?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, okay. So how would that -- how was that determined?

CARMELA ZUZA: It depends upon where the ship fitters had the jobs ready, and when they had those deck plates ready -- One of my girlfriends' father worked there, so he used to -- when we did the welding, which took like maybe a month to fill up one of the decks, and then he would be the, uh, man that would clean up the -- because there would be a film from the welding, and he would chip all the excess off. Then we had to make the next, next layer, because a deck plate of a ship like that... And you know what amazed me after the war? I didn't know that the, uh, *Missouri* went into action. I didn't think of that at that time, because I went on to another job.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: But watching the Discovery Channel, I was like in shock watching this, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: This ship that you helped build.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And now more so, it's in Hawaii, which I, I thought I'd get there but it didn't happen.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It's right next to the *Arizona*.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, I didn't know that that's where it was.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. My daughter went there last year, my other daughter.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And she said, "Mom, I'm standing on the deck where you welded!"

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah!

CARMELA ZUZA: She said, "And I'm crying."

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: That's wonderful, wow. So did you have a sense that what you were doing was, you know, as a woman to be welding and building ships, did you --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, I felt so patriotic. God, forget about it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: You can't beat it. When that ship was launched, oh wow! You can -- you can't explain that to anybody.

SADY SULLIVAN: Try. Tell me, tell me a bit about how you felt about --

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, we were all watching and we all worked on the ship, and all of a sudden they hit the bottle and the ship took off, that sun came out. Forget about it. It was such a feeling, and the President there, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You really felt like you did something for the war effort.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And, and you were doing something that was -- that was not common for women to be doing.

CARMELA ZUZA: No, not at all.

SADY SULLIVAN: How was your sense of that?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh I loved it. It was really a challenge, it really was.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I got -- I really got it real good, because I'd see the other guys welding and I'm going, oh my God, I can see all the holes in the welds.

SADY SULLIVAN: That they were doing?

CARMELA ZUZA: And I'm thinking about today with these cranes. You know, I wonder who welded on those cranes. I said that to my husband, I said, "I, I don't, I've seen welds that, I don't know how they got onto the ship."

SADY SULLIVAN: Mmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Believe it or not.

SADY SULLIVAN: Was there any sense of competition between the women and the men?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no. Everybody did their own thing. Of course when they -- when they put my welding out on display, and they used to put our number on it, and, uh, and they go, "A woman did that?" And I was right there and then, the, the mechanical instructors were with us a lot in the beginning. He said, "I don't believe it" this one man said, "She didn't do that." So he comes over and he said, "She did it." And people in the neighborhood, they knew me, and my daughter's -- my girlfriend's father told them, "You've got to see her work in there, you wouldn't believe it."

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: So it was quite, you know. It was nice to hear that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Was your dad proud to hear that?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, sure.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So he didn't worry any more, once you started working there?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, he was fine with it, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then when I worked in the office it was great.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then he figured I wasn't doing that electric, uh, stuff any more.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm. So where would you get the, like the equipment and all of that. Tell me about how you --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, they supplied that.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- when you came in.

CARMELA ZUZA: They had it all ready for us.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: When we graduated from, you know, the training. Well, they put gear on us when we were doing the, uh, like you sit at a table and you'd have these little plates, and the mechanical in -- instructor was right with you, and you'd start -- you went -- you'd learn. It was really on the job training.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And so would you go -- did you have one, um, was it a torch, a welding torch?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, it was --

SADY SULLIVAN: Like did you have your own stuff --?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, they furnished that, yeah. Well you had -- actually you had your own, but then they put in these, what they called the inner bottoms of the ship. They were in the shops. And then you had to get -- really, if you weren't tiny, you would have never got into it, and you had to do all vertical welding.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: All vertical welding. Then we had to do overhead welding. So it was interesting.

SADY SULLIVAN: So actually inside --

CARMELA ZUZA: Inside these inner bottoms that went into the ship.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: I never knew what an inner bottom was you know. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: What is an inner bottom? [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: It's a part of the ship that goes in the bottom of the ship I guess. They call them inner bottoms. I don't know what they put in there, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But they were like, like as big as this -- no, not quite. From here to there, it was like a box.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, very small.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they had -- the ship fitters had the pieces together, and you went in there and welded.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So it took like those, over a year of welding I did, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow. So that -- how did people -- you had to be small to fit into a box.

CARMELA ZUZA: Well you got into it okay, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: You got out okay too.

SADY SULLIVAN: How did you -- how did you get in and out?

CARMELA ZUZA: It was an opening they let you go in.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then they used to take those pieces and bring them to the ship.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUXA: Like making all the parts that go on the ship.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And so did more welding happen on the ships?

CARMELA ZUZA: They did more on -- some of it was done on the ship, oh yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: But that wasn't something that your, your team was part of?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, I wasn't familiar with it, no.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Our big --

SADY SULLIVAN: Did you have -- oh, excuse me.

CARMELA ZUZA: Our biggest job was doing the, uh, deck plates. That was a big job.

SADY SULLIVAN: How big were the deck plates?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh God, I think the ship was like, maybe ten blocks long. You, you, you can't imagine it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And we'd have sections, and they had guys doing it too.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And the girls, we were always together.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, it was something.

SADY SULLIVAN: So how big would one deck -- how long would it take you to weld one deck plate?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh God, it maybe took three weeks to a month.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: For one deck plate.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: It was a lot of work.

SADY SULLIVAN: And then how did it get moved around?

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh, what do you mean?

SADY SULLIVAN: How would it -- once you were done welding it, how did it move?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, well you had a -- you -- they used to set it on the side and
prepare the next weld.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was a continuous job.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So you did the day's work --

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: -- and you were done.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Did you have a shop number?

CARMELA ZUZA: We had something but I don't remember the numbers.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Was there any union that you were a part of?

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: No?

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: Were there unions in the Navy Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know. I really don't know at that time. Maybe they were but I,
you know, but we were very underpaid you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: As women or --?

CARMELA ZUZA: We didn't -- we didn't make -- we didn't make what the guys made.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: I forget.

SADY SULLIVAN: Do you know what -- how much you made?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh God, maybe fifty dollars a, a week, that's all.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Fifty dollars.

SADY SULLIVAN: And how much would the men be making?

CARMELA ZUZA: I -- they never told me. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: But more?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, I'm sure. They were -- well, they were supporting families and everything.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So actually, I was giving my mother what I made at that time too.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But it was very low pay, I know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So your family, when -- so you would give your money to your family, and you had two brothers? You said you were --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, they went -- well they were drafted into the ah, Army.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh, one of my brothers went to Europe and, uh, one went to, uh, Italy.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: He was in the -- I don't know if you heard of the Anzio beachhead attack there?

SADY SULLIVAN: Uh uh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Well he, um, he was the only one that survived because he had an appendix attack at the front. But over the years, I went to Europe. I saw it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We went to Italy, so we saw where the ruins were –

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: -- of that, when the, uh, the, the Americans went to Europe.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They were fighting over there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And so, uh, we talked about your arrival to the Yards. What was the end of the day like?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, you were tired. Say goodnight to everybody, go out, wait for the bus, or go home by car.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Sometimes you would get a ride?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Who was -- who would drive?

CARMELA ZUZA: Mostly the neighbors.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: The men.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They had cars, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: So there was other -- so a lot of the -- some of the men that were working at the Yards were living in your neighborhood.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, yeah. They knew my father.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Did they know your father from the neighborhood or from work?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, from the neighborhood.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And was there a sense -- I mean in terms of traveling, as a woman, did you -- was it --?

CARMELA ZUZA: I was fine.

SADY SULLIVAN: And it was -- did you usually have someone with you?

CARMELA ZUZA: No. I went alone.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And what about security in the yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, they had plenty of security around, sure.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So when you were coming and going, you just had -- how, how did they know that you were allowed there?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well you had the badge to go in.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, they check you at the gate.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They had security there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We had -- they were very well secured.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was a, it was a war plant don't forget, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: They had to be.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Were they ever surprised that a, a woman was coming in and had a badge and -- ?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, yeah, in the beginning. Then they got used to it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Um, so you said the commissary. Where would that be, do you remember?

CARMELA ZUZA: It was in one of the buildings.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't remember the building numbers.

SADY SULLIVAN: And did everybody go to eat there?

CARMELA ZUZA: A lot did, a lot did.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Most of the time we brought lunch though.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. What would you bring?

CARMELA ZUZA: Sandwiches my mother made. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And where would you eat them?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well you had a little room where you can sit, and they had tables.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You could buy coffee, you know, same like you would do today.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And you mentioned your teacher. Who was your -- who was your supervisor when you were welding?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know the name, I forget.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And do you remember any details of the other women that you were working with? Just anything that you remember.

CARMELA ZUZA: No. One was married I remember, but most of them were all single.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Were they all around your age?

CARMELA ZUZA: I guess so. Yeah, they were all young.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We had two black girls, believe it or not.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, yes.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And how was that?

CARMELA ZUZA: Fine, yeah. Well I was -- I lived in a mixed neighborhood so, you know, I lived with a lot of black people, they were wonderful. And um, we had one girl, she used to curl her hair and stick the curls out in front of the hat. [laughter] She was a real glam, all makeup. I never wore any makeup.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So she would -- so I imagine --

CARMELA ZUZA: Because it -- we called her the glamour girl. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: She was good.

SADY SULLIVAN: So she didn't get all sweaty and stuff like that?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, she worked.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm. But once you put that thing on your head, you know, nobody sees your face. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So when you would be -- when you would be coming and going, would you, would you be dressed in, in clothes that were --

CARMELA ZUZA: No, my regular pants and shirts.

SADY SULLIVAN: Okay, so regular.

CARMELA ZUZA: Nothing fancy. No, I never got dressed.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They had like a denim type pants at that time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And so you could find -- there was work clothes for women?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well they were sporty.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Sporty, like plaid shirts, and I just wore anything you know. It wasn't nothing, uh -- we didn't have to have any uniform or anything.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Um, someone was telling me about, about the shoes, that they had a hard time finding shoes that they could work in, because they were --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. We had work shoes but, uh, I had no problem getting shoes.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Of course you had to have them in the shop. Supposed something fell, you know, especially on those parts of the ship there, you had to have your feet secure.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: That was a must.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. They gave us a list of what we had to get, you know, for ourselves, for safety.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Do you remember what those things were?

CARMELA ZUZA: We wore gloves.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Those were --

CARMELA ZUZA: They were like --

SADY SULLIVAN: These were all the things that you had to buy for yourself?

CARMELA ZUZA: -- flame, flame proof gloves I think. I don't know where we bought them.

SADU SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They might have sold them there, I don't remember.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But I remember wearing the good shoes.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Do you remember where you got the shoes? Was there like a store in the yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't remember. It probably was an Army and Navy Store, something like that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They had -- of course, it was hard to get for a woman, a shoe like that, you know, in those times.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So, you mentioned this before, that there was two black women that were working with you. How would you describe, um, in your group, with the women, and also in the rest of the shop, the racial, cultural mix.

CARMELA ZUZA: No problem at all.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: No. They got treated just as well as we did.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We had lunch together with them, and -- I had a little problem with that when I worked in the phone company though.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh. Tell me what happened?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, I used to -- I was very friendly with this black girl, she worked right near me, you know, we were long distance telephone operators. And when I got married, I invited her to my wedding.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And she came with her husband, and her husband used to pick us up because we worked split shifts at the ah, Canal Street, you know, long lines, and we'd go see every play on Broadway because we worked every Wednesday, the matinees, and we paid nothing for those tickets. And then we'd go back to work. So we used -- he used to pick us up and bring us to work and then -- well getting back to the point where, uh, she used to eat lunch all by herself, so I asked her to join us and, uh, the girls that I worked with, that supposedly were my friends, that I was shocked that they were prejudiced. They wouldn't go to lunch with her. Well I said, "I'm going with her" and I did. And slow but sure they started to come around, but they were definitely --

MAE: Is that disturbing you?

CARMELA ZUZA: Is that disturbing?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MAE: [inaudible] Sorry.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: So that was the story then. But I played with all little black girls when I was little, you know, we went to the movies and everything with them. So I had no problem with that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And my mother was a very, uh -- she had no prejudices in her at all.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we learned from when we were home. A lot of this stuff, I mean, they never did anything to them and yet they feel so prejudiced. I don't understand it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, like, me living all my life now, and I can't believe it, that it got so bad.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That bothers me a lot.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, yeah. So what year was that that you were working in the phone company, when people were still not wanting to have lunch with this woman?

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

SADY SULLIVAN: What -- do you know what year that was around?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, that had to be -- I was -- one, seven, eight -- I was twenty-one.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I met you when I was twenty-four, right Ed? Yeah. It had to be, uh, when I was about twenty-two.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So that was, mm. Bad news. And I was criticized for inviting them to my wedding. Too bad. [laughter] I loved those two.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, we got very friendly.

SADY SULLIVAN: Was that -- would that be something that you would talk to about with, with your friend and -- or was?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, I never discussed it. I just accepted them for -- they want to believe that and not like somebody just because they're black, get away from me.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So, that stuff always went on I guess, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Have you seen a change, I mean, do you think it's a different scene now?

CARMELA ZUZA: Not too much.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Not too much at all.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I have friends that I went to Europe with and, for no reason, they wouldn't be -- they wouldn't even watch a black movie, believe it or not.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I never -- maybe they thought I was like them. I never discussed it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Uh huh.

CARMELA ZUZA: I just let it go.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I, I was ashamed of it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Do you think that you have a different feeling about that because you did grow up as a kid with people from everywhere?

CARMELA ZUZA: No. I, I think I was smart enough to accept people for what they are.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Not their color.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And so what about, um, in terms of gender and, and that kind of -- those kind of attitudes about being together?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I really don't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It's a sad situation.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I was told by one of my so-called friends that, "Oh, TV is getting all black now." And I says to her, "Well don't you think they deserve it? They went to college and they, they can be just as good as everybody else?" And that was the end of that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I'm proud of them, are you kidding?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, it's been -- a lot has changed in a short time.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah. People don't like it. You go shopping down in Valley Stream, and it was sad because you used to call them niggers then.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: "It's full of niggers," they'd say. Terrible.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I think maybe because I grew up -- I'm not -- I don't think I would have been like that. I'm not that type.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

MAE: Your parents weren't like that either.

CARMELA ZUZA: I didn't raise my kids like that either.

MAE: Yeah, your parents weren't.

CARMELA ZUZA: None of my children or my grandchildren.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: None of them are prejudiced.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And my father used [laughter] -- my mother used to have a, a black guy, he talked Italian. He used to come visit my mother.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh!

CARMELA ZUZA: And she used to lend -- give him money, like if he was short, he needed a quarter or fifty cents. And he'd give it back to her. His name was Hawkins, I'll never forget that.

SADY SULLIVAN: How did he learn Italian?

CARMELA ZUZA: From my mother.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh. [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, he'd come in you know, talk Italian. Oh God, it was funny. So --

SADY SULLIVAN: That's great.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Mm hmm. Do you think -- how did the other people treat the, the other two women, the two black women who were welding with you?

CARMELA ZUZA: They were fine, they were fine.

SADY SULLIVAN: So the Navy Yard was a --

CARMELA ZUZA: No, it was great.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- fine place for them. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They used to come to lunch with us and everything, we never -- just work with them. No, we were -- we had a camaraderie, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: What about ethnicities? Where were, what were people's backgrounds mostly?

CARMELA ZUZA: Um, there was Irish. Uh, mostly Italian though, were in the Navy Yard.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: A lot of the men were Italian.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because I remember all the names, you know, Italian names.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That was odd. Maybe they went in for that because of the, uh, the war, the war and the jobs becoming available, because a lot of them didn't have trades

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they went in and they were taught.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, it was like a whole big boom.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because they made money, you know, and supported their families.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And there was a lot of big families then.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Was the Navy Yard known as -- known to be a good employer for civilians?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, sure. Yeah, it was really great.

SADY SULLIVAN: And what about um, the -- what about in terms of the draft? So, were some of the men drafted or why were they...?

CARMELA ZUZA: I -- well I think the -- they were older, the men. They weren't of the draft age.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Of course my older brothers didn't get drafted and my other two did.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So most of the men that would be in the yards, they weren't drafted because of the --

CARMELA ZUZA: Of the age, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Or if they had families. You know, they would pick all the single guys first.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then maybe somebody with one child, you know that's how they did it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I hope they don't make a draft again, God.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I hope this war ends.

SADY SULLIVAN: Me too.

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know who I'm going to vote for. [laughter] I don't. I really don't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: It's hard.

SADY SULLIVAN: It will be an exciting election for sure.

CARMELA ZUZA: I was kind of thrilled with Hillary being in the running, I really got a kick out of that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: A woman being up there, you know it was quite --

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: I'm glad I lived to see that you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Is that something that -- would you have thought, if someone told you in 1942, when you were starting to weld, that there would be a woman running for president?

CARMELA ZUZA: Never.

SADY SULLIVAN: What would you think?

CARMELA ZUZA: I, I don't know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Maybe I was too young to think about that at that time, too.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: But over the years, though, you know, watching a few women come up and -- like Condoleezza Rice and all of them. Ah, forget about it. Wonderful.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then you know what, what I was proud of? I never know women were pilots.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because after I, I left the shipyard, you know I went on to become a telephone operator and all that stuff. Then I'd watch TV and, oh my God, there were a lot of woman pilots at that time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I was like, oh God. I don't think I would have done that, [laughter] although I'm not afraid to fly.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm Hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, so what is your -- what do you remember best about the Yards, and it can be visual, sensory. What's your, your most vivid memory of the Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: I think when the, uh, ship was christened. I think that was the cupcake of everything.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, because it made you feel so proud, you know? That's a ship I welded on parts of, oh my God. You know, it was like: we did it. You know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then watching the surrender, you know it was like, oh, wow.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, tell me about that day. So you were there for V -- for both, for VE and --

CARMELA ZUZA: No, not for the surrender, no, no, no.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: But knowing about it and watching it on TV, you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Um, so what was your best experience at the Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: Learning how to weld. Yeah, that was something.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: There are welders and there are welders, I found out.

SADY SULLIVAN: How do you mean?

CARMELA ZUZA: Good ones and bad ones. [laughter] And in between.

SADY SULLIVAN: And you -- your -- you were a good one?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Did you ever use any of the skills that you learned in the Yard after?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Did you -- what would people say when you, later on after you were, you were no longer working there? Would you tell people that you had --

CARMELA ZUZA: I told a lot of people, they were amazed.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. What would their reaction --

CARMELA ZUZA: Definitely ama -- they were like, I don't believe you. Like wow, you did that? I still get it to this day.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: In fact, I didn't tell, uh, Pamela, the girl I met out here, my story.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Do you want to read the biography?

SADY SULLIVAN: I do, I would love to. I wonder if I could, um --

CARMELA ZUZA: You could keep that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, I was going to say if I could have a copy that would be great.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

SADY SULLIVAN: So this we will put together with the recordings.

CARMELA ZUZA: Okay.

SADY SULLIVAN: This is wonderful. When did you -- when did you write this?

CARMELA ZUZA: Um --

ED: About two years ago.

CARMELA ZUZA: When was that?

ED: About two years ago.

CARMELA ZUZA: About two years ago.

SADY SULLIVAN: Two years ago, okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Great, thank you. Um, so what was your -- did you have any bad experiences in the Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: None at all.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So what would you say was your worst experience there?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't think I had any.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: None at all.

SADY SULLIVAN: So you enjoyed going to work?

CARMELA ZUZA: I enjoyed it, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I was full of energy and so young.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I had a lot of dates with the sailors and the soldiers and --

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, tell me about --

CARMELA ZUZA: -- skating.

SADY SULLIVAN: I want to know about the social --

ED: No, don't tell her.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no I meant --

SADY SULLIVAN: Close your ears.

CARMELA ZUZA: No, I used to go to the ska -- to the roller skating rink, that was what I loved, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh, some -- a few of the girls went with me, from the neighborhood, and the fellas would ask us to skate

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then we got to know each other and we'd meet there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Go have ice cream, you know. Then a couple -- one, one soldier I met in the shipyard. It would be like something on a movie set where, uh, I'm waiting for the bus and, uh, his name was Michael, and, uh, he runs under my umbrella. It's raining. "Oh," he said, "I hope you mind me sharing the umbrella with you?" He says, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to work in the shipyard." "Oh, I'm going there too." So we got on the bus together and then he asked me out.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And we went -- we went -- oh, this has got to be funny. My mother was, uh, you know she knew I was going out with him. I went out with him a couple of months, and we went to -- we went to the city and his brother came in, the brother was in the Army and, uh, they -- somebody told my mother they saw me with a soldier and a sailor, walking into a bar.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: We went in for a drink of beer, then from there we went to a movie, and then we came home.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But then I had heard that he, uh, was killed in the war.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Michael.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, that was sad.

SADY SULLIVAN: What arm of the service was he in?

CARMELA ZUZA: He was in the Navy.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: So was he from New York?

CARMELA ZUZA: Um, no, I don't think so. He was stationed in New York. I forgot where he was from. I had letters, which I had to destroy after I got married.

SADY SULLIVAN: Why?

CARMELA ZUZA: From all the soldiers and sailors, because of him.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: He made me destroy all the letters. Oh well.

SADY SULLIVAN: So you would write -- so you would meet when they were, when they were --

CARMELA ZUZA: Ship. Uh, uh, when they were, um, in port.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And then you would keep in touch --

CARMELA ZUZA: Right.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- when they were overseas?

CARMELA ZUZA: A few letters sure, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But I remember all the -- a lot of young boys died, in the neighborhood, and they'd have the stars in the windows. It was very sad.

SADY SULLIVAN: What are the stars in the windows?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: They would, if you're --

CARMELA ZUZA: If somebody died, they would put the star on the window.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, I see.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was sad.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. So did a lot of the people that you grew up with?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Well not, not the – right, right in my neighborhood. Like around the neighborhood.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They would tell you, you know, and then you went to church, you had to have memorials.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, it was a sad time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. So you mentioned before that when the *Franklin* came in um, that it had been battle damaged.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And so that wasn't -- you weren't -- ?

CARMELA ZUZA: No I didn't, but I worked on parts of it. They brought it in the shop when they got the metal.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And we were like repairing. We did – we, we, we did repairs too.

ED: Want to hear about the *Franklin*?

SADY SULLIVAN: Excuse me?

ED: What, about the *Franklin*?

SADY SULLIVAN: What?

ED: The *Franklin*.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, she said -- she's asking me about the *Franklin*.

ED: It was bombed.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was bombed.

ED: [inaudible]

CARMELA ZUZA: He gets very emotional. All right, don't, don't, don't think about it Ed.

Calm down. All right, don't talk about it. You don't, you don't have to talk about it.

MAE: He gets very choked up with that.

CARMELA ZUZA: He's talking about the Franklin.

MAE: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: I didn't know you then Ed, remember that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Why, what --

ED: [inaudible]

CARMELA ZUZA: It was bombed

ED: [inaudible]

MAE: Don't get upset.

CARMELA ZUZA: All right, calm down. He can't help it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MAE: He gets very emotional.

CARMELA ZUZA: He gets very emotional, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: All right, dismissed. [laughter]

MAE: Here dad, drink your water.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah he does, he gets like that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Was he -- did --

CARMELA ZUZA: He's got the Parkinson's you know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, but was he on --

CARMELA ZUZA: He was in the Navy and the Marines.

SADY SULLIVAN: Okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: But he never went into action.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: He's got two discharges. [laughter] That's Rocky. You okay, Ed?

ED: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, he don't talk -- I couldn't get him to talk about those things.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

ED: That, that was a bad ship when it come back.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Well I didn't know you then Ed, and I was -- you know, I told him what happened in the shipyard, that they said don't -- I wouldn't go in there. They were taking the body parts off. They came into the Navy Yard like that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Awful.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm. hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: A lot of boys got killed in that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Would there be -- how did, um, information about the war and how -- and what was going -- how did that information travel in the Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: What do you mean, in the beginning?

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, yeah, like how would you -- would you find out stuff that other people didn't know?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, not, not really. Everything was known, you know, what went on.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, they didn't ah, say much about anything. We knew you know, what was going on, if we were winning and the different battles.

MAE: Tell her about the movies, what they used to show in the movie theater.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, well, well, during the war years, we saw the movies of all the atrocities. It was horrible.

SADY SULLIVAN: At the Yards?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, this was in, in the theaters in the neighborhood.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, right.

CARMELA ZUZA: When Hitler was, uh, they were exterminating all the people. It was like such a disbelief. Everybody was screaming and crying in the theater.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I knew a few ladies that were, uh, um, what do they call them, um --

MAE: They were survivors.

CARMELA ZUZA: Survivors.

MAE: Of the Holocaust, they had --

CARMELA ZUZA: We had one of the neighbors, when I lived in Queens, that she had the number on her. Her whole family was taken --

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: -- to be, uh, killed.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Ahem, she doesn't know why they didn't pick her. That was Annie Nozell. So she went around, this was not too long ago. She went to all the different schools and tried to tell the children.

MAE: To tell the story, yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Tell the stories of the Holocaust.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: Terrible. They were -- they had a nice business there, her family. I forgot what, what it was. And, uh, then she went back, ahem, and they wouldn't even let her go to where the house, where they lived, during that time I guess, you know? But she's since passed away.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But she told me stories that would make your hair curl.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It's terrible, a terrible time.

SADY SULLIVAN: It's good that she was able to talk about it.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So when you would see those -- the, the newsreels, would -- how would you feel then, about the work you were doing in the Navy Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, it was great.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That was a bad time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Very bad, ahem.

SADY SULLIVAN: Would news travel, um, within the yard during the day?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That's the only time I traveled.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But I didn't work at night after, uh, the training.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. What about, um, what about gossip and, and that kind of talk in the yards?

CARMELA ZUZA: I didn't hear anything.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: No, there were none.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Um, so you -- would people talk about, um, the, the sense of security in war effort? Was there, um -- did you feel like you knew more about what was going on with the war because you were working...

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, I think I did, yeah, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Some of them, they never talked about it you know, just the girls that I was with, uh, we talked about what was going on, who went away, who didn't come back, you know, stuff like that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And so did most people know people who were fighting overseas?

CARMELA ZUZA: I think so, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They all had brothers and sisters and -- I don't know about the women at that time, no. I didn't know of anybody that went into combat. Like today, it's unreal.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, leaving families and all this stuff.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So the other women that you were -- that you were welding with, were they mostly married or not married or -- ?

CARMELA ZUZA: There was I think, most of them were single.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, they were young.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I think there was one that was married.

SADY SULLIVAN: Did she have kids?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, not that I know of.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And what was the, the climate like in terms of the people that -- what was the feeling amongst people when they were working?

CARMELA ZUZA: They were fine. Yeah, it was nice. Everybody was friendly, "How are you today?" Singing. [laughter] I had a lot of fun with the Marines that were stationed there. I had a good time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Where would the Marines be from?

CARMELA ZUZA: All over.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I went -

SADY SULLIVAN: Was that neat, to be able to meet people from other parts of the country?

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh, sometimes, but I met more at the skating rink.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know. One fellow, he, uh, I went out with them, then we went, I think we went into an ice cream parlor, and he's showing me pictures of his wife and children. So I said, "You're married?" I said, "Well I can't see you any more." "But my wife said it's all right." I says, "Well it's not all right with me, goodbye."

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter] Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: I never forgot that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: She said it was all right! [laughter] Not that I was looking to, uh, make a commitment with anybody you know, at that time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Hot stuff. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: So how did you two meet?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, one of my friends in the phone company was getting married

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And he was their best man.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, and so you went to the wedding?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, we met at her house.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Like, uh, they were, they had the whole wedding party over. In fact, uh, she got married, I was one of the bridesmaids.

ED: I was best man.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh -- what? You were the best man, yeah. And, uh, then she met -- when she, when she found out that, uh, he wanted to go out with me, she told me I was making a big mistake, he was a liar. This is after we got engaged, so it was quite a -- you read these books about you know, stories of -- happens in real life.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: So our friendship was over.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

ED: And fifty-seven years later we're still together. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Congratulations.

CARMELA ZUZA: God.

SADY SULLIVAN: That's wonderful.

CARMELA ZUZA: It's going to be fifty-eight.

SADY SULLIVAN: Fifty-eight years.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: A long time.

SADY SULLIVAN: That's amazing.

CARMELA ZUZA: I'm surprised I remember so much.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I just don't remember the numbers of the building. I mean, who would have thought, so many years later, that I would be interviewed about this?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Your memory is amazing.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: You have really good details.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, I remember a lot.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. I actually have a map here. This is from, um, the 60s, from 1963, but um, it might -- you might be interested in it.

MAE: Do you need your glasses, ma?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. Is this the Navy Yard?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, this is the Navy Yard. So this is Flushing and this is Navy Street. This is the Sand Street gate.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, over here is -- there's a, there's a Cumberland Ave. gate.

CARMELA ZUZA: You see, I don't know where that bus stopped, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: And here's the Washington Ave. gate.

CARMELA ZUZA: That's maybe where I went in.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Because I'd come in from Washington Avenue.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yup, that would make sense.

CARMELA ZUZA: I bet you that was it, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: There was all the dry docks, I remember that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Wow. Hmm. It was very --

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah so here's -- here's the three big ones, and then there's a couple of smaller dry docks.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And here's the shipbuilding weighs.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm. Wow.

SADY SULLIVAN: And I think it was this building, 77, is there I think they had some of the offices. Would that make sense to you?

CARMELA ZUZA: Probably. Yeah, probably.

ED: You --

CARMELA ZUZA: It had to be in that area.

ED: Aren't there 16 in there somewhere?

CARMELA ZUZA: What?

ED: Building 16.

CARMELA ZUZA: Building 16. Where do you get 16 from?

ED: Phil, Phil from next door, he's talked about them.

CARMELA ZUZA: Who?

MAE: Phil next door talked about Building 16.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, Phil? Building, here's number 18.

SADY SULLIVAN: Let's see, Building 16 would be J-3. Um, J-3, so around here somewhere.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm. Well he knew a lot of people that worked there and I talked to him about it. I just re -- that would be where I would be coming in from.

SADY SULLIVAN: The Washington Gate.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And then, so did you have a long walk before you would get to where, where you would be welding?

CARMELA ZUZA: It was a nice little walk. It was a nice little walk.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Do you remember the, um, the hammerhead crane at all?

CARMELA ZUZA: Hammerhead crane?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That sounds familiar.

SADY SULLIVAN: It was -- it was a big, um, I've only seen pictures, but it, it was a really huge crane that could move this way and that way, and, and lift some of the big parts onto the ships.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, I think I remember seeing that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Hammerhead crane, yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Is there -- what are, what are some other, just some of your sensory memories, sights, sounds, smells?

CARMELA ZUZA: Just the way I feel now. You know it's like, it was fine.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And is there anything that reminds you particularly of the Yards, like other --

CARMELA ZUZA: Well when I see ships I think about it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. I watch a lot of the, uh, the Discovery Channel, the, uh, the other channel, the, uh, 47, that's the uh --

ED: That's History.

MAE: The History?

CARMELA ZUZA: History Channel.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, they have a lot. They -- whenever anything is with the *Missouri*, I watch it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And other ships too.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So tell me again, about when you -- when the war was over and then everybody was laid off --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- or a, a large number of people were laid off.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: How did they let you know?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well they told -- they gave, gave us a notice that you -- after a certain date, your job is no longer here. You know?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They weren't going to be building war ships any more I guess, whatever, because that was the war to end all wars, right?

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: But I never heard from them any more after that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Then I went to work in the telephone company, then it was another chapter you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Meeting him, getting married, having babies.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Did you -- did you want to have another job, um, with --

CARMELA ZUZA: In the shipyard?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: No. Not at that time, no.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Did you want to have another job with welding?

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADU SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We'd joke about it a few times but I could probably still do it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Um, what about -- was there, was there sort of things that you would do to help the work, like any songs or, or routines, or you know, sort of workday things?

CARMELA ZUZA: What do you mean in the shipyard?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, we used to sing.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: What did you sing?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh God, what songs? Hmm. We liked Frank Sinatra, so we sang a lot of Sinatra songs.

SADU SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I saw him at the Paramount when I was -- and, uh all the -- I was in high school then and, uh, all the, um, the, uh, girls that were playing hooky asked me to go with them, so. But my mother, I said, "Ma, I'm not going to school today." I was the only one that wasn't a hooky player, but I went.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: I was always afraid, well, my mother's going to find out. I couldn't -- I didn't want to hurt her and, you know. I was such a mature kid, you wouldn't believe it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It wasn't worth it. I wouldn't enjoy it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know if it was so good to be so righteous.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter] That's nice. That's nice that you told your mom. Mm hmm.

Um, so what did you do right after you left the Navy Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: I went to work in the telephone company. They were hiring, and, uh, they needed a long distance telephone operator. So that was another training thing.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they'd bring you in this room with this big, big board. I said, oh my God. And so the, uh, the instructor -- they put you right at work, to teach you, you know, show you the different ah. And who do I get on the phone, you will never believe. This is in the training, the real calls coming in. Fred Astaire. I was like, oh my God. Uh, uh, uh, calm down, calm down, and he goes, "Hello darling." He was the sweetest man.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Can you get me so and so. I forget where he called.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: How do you like that? That was like, oh wow. I told everybody, guess who I was talking to on the phone?

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, that's so cool.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mmm. So did they -- when you applied for that job, did they -- what did they think about the fact that you had been a welder?

CARMELA ZUZA: Hmm. They, they weren't surprised at that time, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That was a nice job.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I worked there eight years. That was my longest job. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And had you two met when you still worked in the Yard?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no, aft -- in the phone company.

SADY SULLIVAN: In the phone company, okay. Mm hmm. And so, what did you think when you found out that she had been a welder?

ED: It didn't faze me one bit.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It didn't faze you?

ED: It didn't -- I didn't think, oh wow, no good.

CARMELA ZUZA: No, you were surprised.

ED: [inaudible]

CARMELA ZUZA: Well he couldn't believe it, that I did that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: A lot of people didn't believe me.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But they know. And everybody like would say oh, that's great, oh my God, you know. Most people were like, shocked.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, yeah. What did your mom think?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh she loved the idea that I did it, yeah. She was proud of me.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Mm hmm. And did you think -- what do you think now? I mean in the -- in terms of those, the photographs of women welding. There's such --

CARMELA ZUZA: I think it's great.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, and it -- I think it really, it helped so much in terms of the women's movement.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, they really -- we paved the way for them really.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. How do you feel about that? Tell me more about that.

CARMELA ZUZA: I, I'm thrilled to death to see them get in those planes and, and, and, and all the other work they do, my God, that they're in government and everything. You know? It's great. About time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: The weak -- the weaker sex, it's not true.

SADY SULLIVAN: No. [laughter] Not at all. And so tell me about, about your family today. How many children do you have?

CARMELA ZUZA: Two girls.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, she works for a doctor.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: She was working in a pharmacy, how many years, Mae?

MAE: Too many years.

CARMELA ZUZA: Too many years. [laughter] My other daughter, she's a teacher.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: She lives in Robbinsville, New Jersey.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Teaches second graders. About ten years now she's teaching, right?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

MAE: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: And you, and you, you raised your children in Brooklyn?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, more, more -- yeah.

ED: And Queens.

MAE: Brooklyn and Queens.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

MAE: And actually, you've got three grandchildren.

CARMELA ZUZA: [laughter] Then we went along with the grandchildren, went to the beaches, picnics, and been together every day of our lives. Then he got sick, then we were living alone, and then she was more at my house than she was home, so then decided to get a house, live together.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Thank God.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Lucky woman.

SADY SULLIVAN: That's great. Um, so tell me about -- we didn't, we didn't talk too much about reading the blueprints. Tell me about that part of your job.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, well I knew the -- I knew the *BB Franklin*, the *Missouri*, *BB-63*, and I was really learning, you know, on the job. But then that, that didn't last long, then we -- I went out to do the, uh, checking the welders, which was great.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That was outdoorsy, which I loved, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. So tell me about, what would be -- what's a normal day when you're checking welds?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, I'd wait on, at certain stops, to go to the shop, and you could spend like three hours in the shop, because a lot of welding went on. And then the Marines used to come around, they, periodically and ask me where I want to go, and I used to get a ride. Otherwise, I would have walked.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, it was -- it was a lot of walking but I was young then, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And how did you know which welds to check on a given day?

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, because they gave us the numbers.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: the job numbers.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And you would know -- explain the job number system to me, because I don't --

CARMELA ZUZA: Well the job, you went in and they, they told you where the job -- you'd show it to somebody that was around, in charge, and then, uh, you'd know what jobs was done. The finished jobs I had to check. So say in one day, you would check ten jobs that are done. Then you periodically go to the different places, that's how it worked out.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I did that for a while.

SADY SULLIVAN: And was there --

CARMELA ZUZA: There were comput -- what I collected, about how much welding went into a ship. I guess they went in -- you know, the higher ups were doing that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And was there other -- who were the other, um, weld checkers?

CARMELA ZUZA: I don't know of any others. I was the only one.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, wow. Wow!

CARMELA ZUZA: I got the good job.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: I got like a break, to get away from the welding.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, my father worried about my lungs, I think that's what it was.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: He knew those were -- here, here, you had to drink your milk and you're breathing in all that stuff, which you are anyhow. You're in the shop, they have so much going on.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right, right. Did you feel that?

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: Could you feel -- ?

CARMELA ZUZA: No, no. I felt fine.

SADY SULLIVAN: So was there any -- I mean, if you're checking people's welds, you're checking some welding that some of the men are doing. Was there -- how was, how was their response?

CARMELA ZUZA: It was all men, all the men.

SADY SULLIVAN: Okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: What was their response to you being --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, they were fine with it. They knew me, a lot of them knew me.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, from working in the shop. Some I didn't know, you know, but they were all good about it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

MAE: Mommy, did you tell her what you had to quit high school, that what you were studying to be?

CARMELA ZUZA: What Mae?

MAE: High school.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah?

MAE: She was -- wanted to be a fashion designer. And tell her what you made in school, what you sewed in school.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh we made – we, well, there was a Women Garments Trade in
Downtown Brooklyn, and I think it's still there, but it might have a different name.

SADY SULLIVAN: What was it called?

CARMELA ZUZA: Women Garments Trade.

SADY SULLIVAN: That was the name of the high school?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah -- no, yeah. And, uh, we -- they taught us how to, uh, do sampling
of different stitches, like little girls' dresses, and putting the dress together, which I
already knew, I -- because I liked to sew when I was young.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And, uh, then they had a, a request from a bride. We made a bride's --
from, from, uh, nightgowns to, uh, all the, oh, personal. Panties, and -- . All hand
made.

SADY SULLIVAN: Wow.

CARMELA ZUZA: Stitched, it was beautiful. So I guess this was like a big job for the
school to do.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: And I used to do a lot of hand sewing, you know? So it was beautiful,
the fabric, the materials.

MAE: But then she, she had to drop out.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then, uh, the one that taught me how to do the sampling things
wanted me to do it, but I -- that was too farfetched at that time. I -- you know, then I
had to leave school.

SADY SULLIVAN: Why did you have to leave school?

CARMELA ZUZA: The war, my brothers went to war.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So I never completed that other year of, uh, high school.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But my father did want to send me. They had no money. They wanted to send me to a designer school, which I used to go to the Brooklyn, uh, Museum and draw from the, uh, gowns.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: I'd go there, spend a whole afternoon there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Neat.

CARMELA ZUZA: I grew up around there. We lived right -- a stone's throw from there.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right.

CARMELA ZUZA: And then they put that new library up, which was very nice too.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Grand Army Plaza.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I rode bikes all through Prospect Park, without my mother knowing.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh!

MAE: That, she didn't tell her.

CARMELA ZUZA: We used -- yeah, I told her one lie.

SADY SULLIVAN: She wouldn't have let you?

CARMELA ZUZA: They figured we'd get hurt. They didn't want us to do anything like that. We used to get the bottles and go turn them in, and fifteen cents, you had a bike for a couple of hours.

SADY SULLIVAN: Fun.

CARMELA ZUZA: So I went with all my friends to the park.

SADY SULLIVAN: Neat, neat.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. But she found out afterwards, she didn't say nothing.

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter] Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, it was a wild life, let me tell you.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was a good time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We were lucky. You know, you had the tragedies in the family, who got cancer, who died, and stuff like that, but everybody goes through that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I never thought I'd live to be eighty-four.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: God, no. It's sad when your family goes, you know, your close in-laws and stuff.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: But you cope with it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Like, he can't really handle that too well, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: He's different from me.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Women are stronger.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They sure are, boy.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. That's true.

CARMELA ZUZA: Woman power. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh god. Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: So is there things that -- I've, I've covered my, the questions that I have here, but I wonder if, if there's more details that I just don't even know to ask about.

CARMELA ZUZA: I can't think of anything else. Anything that I forgot, Mae, that I might have mentioned to you?

MAE: No. Travel.

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, we traveled. We went to California with the kids, my brother lived there. We went to San Francisco. I went on a cruise, went to Europe twice, which we loved. We went to the Bahamas. [laughter] We went -- on the cruise, we went to five different islands.

MAE: All the way from Brooklyn.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. It was quite a -- quite a ride.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: We were lucky. Then he got sick, so he retired, he was bored out of -- when he was sixty. So we had like a good eight years, then at sixty-eight he got sick. But we were lucky, we you know, we're ready for retirement now, just staying put. But still, I'm active out here now.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: I joined uh, uh, a senior club through the church.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, great.

CARMELA ZUZA: Not that confining, you know you go -- We went to see *Mamma Mia*, they took us one day. Atlantic City. You know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh, good.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, so that was fun.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Anything else I can think of.

SADY SULLIVAN: I realized I forgot to ask, um, what your, your maiden name is.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, Celardo.

SADY SULLIVAN: How do you spell that?

CARMELA ZUZA: C-as in Charles-E-L-A-R-D-O.

SADY SULLIVAN: Ah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Did I do a good job?

SADY SULLIVAN: Of -- in this interview?

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh my goodness, yeah. [laughter] Really great.

ED: It didn't sound like she knew too much. She never talked much about her boyfriends.

CARMELA ZUZA: Well, that's when he let me throw away all my letters.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh. [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: And I would have got such a kick out of them today.

ED: I would have gotten a kick out of them today, too.

CARMELA ZUZA: I know. Me especially.

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh. [laughter] But not back then.

CARMELA ZUZA: No.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: I didn't know you then so.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

ED: That's a good thing. [laughter]

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. This has been wonderful. Um, yes.

CARMELA ZUZA: So what do you do with this now, you, uh --?

SADY SULLIVAN: This interview, um, will become part of the Brooklyn Historical
Society's archives.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

SADY SULLIVAN: And also the archives at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, and then the Navy Yard Development Corporation, they are
building a historic center.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

SADY SULLIVAN: And, um, I think it's maybe in a couple of years it will be ready, and it's going to be open to the public, and they're going to have an exhibit about the history of the Yard.

CARMELA ZUZA: Uh huh.

SADY SULLIVAN: And --

CARMELA ZUZA: Something like they did in, uh, in Richmond, in California.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Which I haven't, I haven't -- I don't know much about.

CARMELA ZUZA: That's a big place, oh yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Yeah. So it's something like that, in one of the historic buildings that they're renovating and then putting an addition onto. So they're going to have a museum there, and then these parts of the oral histories will become part of the exhibit.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, how nice.

SADY SULLIVAN: So I'm not sure. We don't know --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- how it will be designed, but some of the stories, clips from this interview will be --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, that will be great.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- in the museum.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah, like they break it down and use so much of it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right, right, little pieces of the story. So I actually have um, two, um, release forms for you to sign.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

SADY SULLIVAN: -- that will give the interview --

ED: I knew there was a catch to it. [laughter] They use that if they're going to -- they use it if they have to use your clips on something, is it okay.

CARMELA ZUZA: Well you have to, okay, sure.

SADY SULLIVAN: Right, right. Um, so if you fill out here, sign here, fill out here, and all this stuff. And then, this is great. I'm excited to have your writing as well.

CARMELA ZUZA: Mm hmm.

MAE: Well that's very nice and we thought you would like it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: Today is July 3. Name of person interviewed. I put my name there, right?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yes.

MAE: Oh, it's okay. Do you want some cookies or something?

CARMELA ZUZA: Occupation. Retired, right?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. What did you -- what was your last job that you were working at?

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, I've done so many. Selling Avon and, uh --

MAE: Market research.

CARMELA ZUZA: I did, uh, market research for a while, like short-term jobs, you know. I tried babysitting once but that didn't work out, when the two kids had diarrhea together. [laughter] I think that's it. Just take that.

SADY SULLIVAN: Great.

MAE: Oh, may be used for scholarly and educational services. That would be nice.

CARMELA ZUZA: What will they do -- they like --

MAE: You know, people study history.

CARMELA ZUZA: Sure.

MAE: You're part of history.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yup. I can't read that. I cry when I read my, uh --

SADY SULLIVAN: Oh.

CARMELA ZUZA: Telephone number.

ED: Ahem.

SADY SULLIVAN: Great, thank you. So, in, in reading this, I realized, I think when I, when I stepped on the plug and turned off the machine for a second, I think that's when you were telling the story of first walking in, with the other women that you had been in training with.

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah.

SADY SULLIVAN: Um, so can you tell that to me again, so we make sure we have it?

CARMELA ZUZA: When we walked into the, into the shop?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah.

CARMELA ZUZA: The training? Oh, when the men yelled at us?

SADY SULLIVAN: Yes.

CARMELA ZUZA: And they said, "Go home in the kitchen where you belong." They were shouting at us.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So we all yelled, "Shut up!"

SADY SULLIVAN: [laughter]

CARMELA ZUZA: That was it.

SADY SULLIVAN: And did they, did they --

CARMELA ZUZA: They were -- we weren't frightened at all, yeah. I knew what I was going to do, you know, you already trained, so it wasn't where you were walking in and starting a job, you know.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: So it was great.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: A great time in my life.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. And so the teachers that had -- the teachers that taught you how to weld, they were -- they had confidence in, in your --

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh yeah, they were very nice.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: They were really gung ho with the women, which was odd at that time.

SADY SULLIVAN: Yeah, yeah, that's really nice, that the teachers were --

CARMELA ZUZA: Yeah. They were proud of us. They were glad that we wanted to do it.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. Mm hmm

CARMELA ZUZA: You know, we're like guinea pigs walking in.

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm.

CARMELA ZUZA: That little skinny thing, what's she doing here?

SADY SULLIVAN: Mm hmm. [laughter] Mm hmm. Great. Well thank you so much, this has been so great.

CARMELA ZUZA: Oh, you're welcome.

MAE: Thank you very much.

CARMELA ZUZA: It was really fun, it was fun.

SADY SULLIVAN: Good.