

[ SD: Had you worked in the First World War?

AM: Yes, yes. I was making... out making eyelets for tents.

SD: Oh right, and was that in...?

AM: In Maples, in London, England. Brompton Road. Brompton Road, yes, that's right.

SD: Was that in a factory?

AM: No, it was in a store, and we were upatairs on the top floor. In a....just like, it 'd be like Simpson's Sears. Just like that, and we's be upstairs. We had no factory in London.

SD: Whatwere the conditions like there?

AM: Good. What I remember.

SD: What do you remember?

AM: What remember? Workin'. (Laughs) Workin' and goin' to get up early in the morning, gettin' the bus, tuppence, and we got the tube, and then you had to get the bus, tuppenty (??) bus and that would take us right to the job. So, that was our day.

SD: What time would you start?

AM: We'd start eight oclock in the morning. Eight till eight. We'd start...with the eight hours. Eight to eight didn't we, Carrie?

CG: What's that, dear?

AM: What time we start in Maples? Eight oclock in the morning?

CG: Eight in the morning.

AM: Till eight at night?

CG: Eight to nine, and sometimes ten.

AM: Never, never ten. Never.

SD: So we're talking a twelve hour day?

AM: Twelv hours, yes.

SD: Did you get breaks?

AM: Oh yes. We had our lunch, and a half hour break.

CG: We were piece work there.

AM: I wasn't. She had different work. That was...I wasn't in Maples long. That was

a long time ago.

SD: We're talking seventy years ago.

AM: Yeah, seventy. Over seventy, wouldn't it be?

AM: But before I went there in England, I was seventeen and I went and did Bar work. I was a barmaid. Seventeen. For two years, 'bout two and a half years, till I got married. I was nineteen when I got married.

SD: What kind of bar did you work in, was it a neighbourhood pub, or...?

AM: A pub, yeah. And I was the youngest of fourteen, youngest of fourteen of us. And I used to get sent to bed at ten oclock at night. I was younger so I'd get sent to bed at ten oclock at night. So that was that. And it was called the Prince of Wales Hotel, Wimbledon. You've heard of Wimbledon Tennis? It was right near there. That was a very good place, very good.

SD: When you say you were sent to bed, was that before you worked as a bar maid?

AM: No, no. That was while I was workin', workin' there. Oh yes, cause I was young, youngest one there, and I had to go to bed at ten oclock at night. Sent me to bed.

SD: At home, or did you stay there?

AM: No, we stayed there. So we stayed right there. There was fourteen of us all together.

SD: Did you ever get to go home--when would you go home?

AM: 'Bout once a week. We had one day off a week, that was all. And sometimes we never got home. Went out.

SD: And what would you do in that job?

AM: Well, pull beer. Pull beer, and work. Just pull beer, and serve, serve, that was all. That was during the war. First war, that would be.

SD: Who would the people in the bar be--what kind of people came in and drank?

AM: Well, we had New Zeal...all kinds, all kind of very nice people. We never had to ever have anybody to bounce 'em out. Never, never once. That was a real good place.

SD: Were these guys soldiers mostly, or...?

AM: Soldiers, and thats where I met mine. And, well all different kind of people. Everybody was very nice. No smart stuff. None, whatever.

SD: That's unusual for a bar.

AM: Isn't it?

SD: Were the rest of the people who worked there all women, or was it men and women?

AM: Women, fourteen women. Course we had to have a...one bar man, too. To go and do the heavy work. But there were fourteen women.

SD: Did you have to wear a uniform?

AM: No, no, no. No uniform.

SD: And then you got married?

AM: Then I got married, and that was it.

SD: That was it, forever?

AM: Yes, that was it. Then, from there--what happened?--Course the war came. Well,

the war was on, course it was. It was on. And then my sister invited me to come to Canada for a holiday, three months holiday, which I did. And when the three months was up, she didn't want me to go back home. So I left my husband in England looking after the house, and he had to give the house up, and come. And we came...he came...I came in twenty-eight, 1928. And he came in '29, the year after me. And he had to sell the house, and then we hit...you wouldn't know anything about...depression. Not a thing. It was bad. Very bad. So then I took on a job as...she got me a job on the elevator in Sylvia Court--she mentioned Sylvia Court. And I got that job for awhile, then I took on an apartment, looked after an apartment for thirteen years. Kitsilano. You've heard of Kitsilano? I worked there for thirteen years. Until the second war broke out, and I said, well, that's it, I'm gonna do war work. So I went and did war work. So I went to the British Ropes.

SD: When you looked after the apartment, did you do that with your husband?

AM: No, that was just my job, sixty-five dollars a month, with my suite.

SD: And what was your husband doing at this time?

AM: He...I managed to get him a job in the hospital, being an orderly. Shaugnessy. And he started right from the morgue...(Laughs) He come<sup>home</sup> and said, "What have you done to me?" I said, "Why?" He said, "I'm down in the morgue." So I said, "Go back home." However, he worked his way up, from the bottom right to the very top. Till he was seventy-three, and then he retired, at seventy-three.

SD: What job was he--did he have then?

AM: Head...he was a orderly.

SD: So he was the head orderly?

AM: One of the head orderlies in Shaugnessy Hospital. Henry Milner. That was his name.

SD: So you worked at managing an apartment. Was that hard work?

AM: Well, no, it was only twenty suites. It was hard, because we had to clean the suites, and get them all ready, and then some of the dirty beggars, they come in for a couple of months, make it filthy, and leave. And we had all that to do up. But however, I kept it for thirteen years. And that was that. So...

SD: Then you went in to Wire Rope?

AM: From there, I went in to Wire Ropes, for four and a half years, and from four and a half years I went to nursing. Fifteen years in St. Paul's hospital. Fifteen years and I get a pension. I get a pension from there.

SD: Were you a registered nurse?

AM: No, I was a nurse aide. Nurse Aide. But we may just as well have been, because we did the registered nurses work. We did their work. And I went on three shifts, you know, morning, afternoon, and midnight.

SD: Now, going back a bit, to Wire Rope...How did you find?

AM: Carlie's gone to sleep. (Laughs)

SD: How did you find that jobs were opening up in Wire Rope?

AM: Well. we went down, where they were asking for people--Carlie and I went down

with

WWII  
to look for a job, and we were...we were getting on. And we told we were too old. So that's when Carrie turned round and said, "Let's go home and poison ourselves." And as we were coming out, the man said, "Just a minute," and he put us straight to work.

[ SD: They didn't want to be responsible for you poisoning yourselves.

AM: No, so I was there four and a half years, and Carrie wasn't.

SD: What was your job?

AM: She got fired. I was on the...I don't know if you've seen, the great big coils, in the wire, wire rope. I was on those, with a machine. We just had to press a button and watch the rope come through. Course, feed the machine all the time.

SD: So you were basically coiling it?

AM: Well, it would coil on its own.

SD: I see, and it would come out and you'd make rope out of the wire?

AM: You see, they would come out, come out about five or six, and it would come out as one, see, they'd twist all up. And then it would go round the coil.

SD: Now I've got the picture. So, your job was basically to watch that process happening?

AM: Just watch, to watch. And of course, to take off---take the coil off, and put a new one back again. And also feed the others, you know, all along the machine.

[ SD: Right.

AM: If you get a chance, you should go out and see it. British Ropes. British Ropes, very interesting. Course they don't work like we worked, not now. Cause when I went out there, oh, last year, I said to the fellow, "Gee," I said, "You got a cushy job." And then just sit down, and just push a button. And we didn't, we stood up, had to stand up.

SD: Did you have to actually move the big coils of rope off, or...?

AM: Oh yes, we had to take 'em off. Course we had a lever, and then just rolled 'em off.

SD: Did you need to be physically strong for that job?

[AM: Yes, you would. We didn't have any trouble.

SD: So, how did they train you to do that?

AM: We trained ourselves, I think. Just have to.

SD: Do you remember your first day of work?

AM: Oh golly. No. She's got better memory than I have. ~~Remember~~<sup>m</sup> the first day we went to work? No?

CG: I hardly...

AM: So that's way, way back. That's over forty years.

SD: O.K., so you basically learned the job by just doing it. Was it men and women who worked there?

AM: Oh yes. Yes. Course they had bigger, bigger machines. But we had a manager, Mr. Frances, and he was a nice guy. And we had lots of fun. We had dances, used to have dances.

SD: Did the women work on one type of machine and the men on another kind of machine or...?

AM: Different ones. Some women, bigger women, and younger, well they went on a bigger machine, more powerful machine. Where these great big ones, instead of coming along this way, they'd be huge big ones, and they'd go over that way. Different way.

SD: And how did people get along at work...did they get along with each other?

AM: [Oh gosh, yes. Yeah,] we were all chums, real chums, all the time. We had picnics, picnics and dances. Oh yeah.

SD: Who organized those?

AM: They had a club. We had a club, together.

SD: Did the club get money from the compnay, or from...?

AM: No, the only time we got...they said when the war was over they were going to see/we all had a real good due. We did. We had bottles galore if we wanted them, and a good turnout. We had a real good banquet. Real good banquet we had.

SD: [ So, where did most of the women who worked there come from? Were they from Vancouver? ]

AM: Prairies. Prairies, and way back east, and way back, foreign countries. You know, Austrians. We had Austrians there too. Yeah, we had five sisters there. They were from another country all together. But they got on.

SD: And what would you do, let's say, in a day's work. You would come in at what time in the morning? When would you start working?

AM: We'd be at work at half past seven, in the morning.

SD: Until when would you work?

AM: We'd work out eight hours.

SD: So it was already an eight hour day by then?

AM: Eight hours. Eight hours.

SD: And was there a union in there?

AM: Towards the end we had a union. Towards the end we did.

SD: Were you part of bringing the union in?

AM: No, no.

SD: Do you remember how it got in there?

AM: I think it was after I left, they had the union. Yes, we'd talking together. [

I know when the war finished, my husband come down and he said, "Now, this is a man's job. And I want you to fire <sup>her</sup> me." So I got fired, because my husband said it wasn't a women's job. And still, some of them are still workin' there.

SD: How did you feel when he said that/

AM: Mad. Told him off. (Laughs)

SD: But it was too late, your employer already did it?

AM: Oh, he did it, yes.

SD: Were a lot of women laid off at the end of the war?

AM: Well, they...most of them went, when they went off, they went back to their homes. You know, way back, where they came from, back...Prairies. Back to their farm work and all that. So....

SD: Were women...did people talk about the end of the war coming and how did they feel about that? Did people talk at work about, "Oh gee, the war is ending, what will happen next?"

AM: No. No, they took it as it came. They took it for granted.

SD: How did you feel about working there interms of the war...did you fell patriotic or...?

AM: Yes, yes. Enjoyed it.

SD: Are there any incidents that stand out in your mind of work there over the four and a half years, that were interesting?

AM: Well ,different things happened, you know, funny things.

SD: For example.

am; Well, I was the ...they used to push me out to go and make the tea, and then another time when I was up there we had to wear uniforms, and they were calling to me, and I'd been to the bathroom and my arm of...?? fell down the toilet. (Laughs) So they were calling up and I said, "I can't come down. I'm all wet." And we didn't have another uniform with us. So, that was that. Then another time we...my friend, she was a Scotch woman--I'd love for you to go and see her. She'd tell you a good thing. And she wore her husband's--she was small, and she wore her husband's uniform, and it was baggy pants. And the boss he got hold of her by the end, rear end, and pushed her up the stairs. (Laughs)

SD: How many of you were there that worked together?

AM: Oh, I've forgotten. All kinds. Lots, lots of us. Couldn't tell you how many machines now...I gave you those papers, didn't I, for the British Ropes?

SD: Yeah. we've got those, actually.

AM: That was right.

SD: What were the problems with working there? Because people did organize a union--do you know why they wanted a union?

AM: Well, there, as I say, it came in after I left. The only union I know is when



I worked at the hospital. I was in a union there. And because I went to-- my husband said, "Don't go." I was goin' to this union, and he said, "Don't go," but I defied him and I went. So the next thing I knew I was asked to leave, because I was sixty-three, when I left the St. Paul's hospital.

SD: Oh no. Management asked you to leave.

AM: Yeah, the manager, they asked me to leave. Cause I was sixty-three.

SD: What did the union do about that? Did they fight it?

AM: No, no. I just walked out. That was it. Thought I was old enough anyway. Sixty-three. So I walked out and from then I went and did private work. For my doctor. I used to get called to go and do private work.

SD: Why would your husband tell you not to go to the union though--was he anti-union?

AM: Well, he was kind of against them. But he said, "Don't go." And I went.

SD: Do you have any other things you want to say about working ...?

AM: No, no.

SD: Did women and men <sup>get the same</sup> amount of money at Wire Rope?

AM: No, they'd be getting more.

SD: The men would?

AM: Oh yes, they'd get more than us.

SD: Did they do the same jobs though?

AM: Well, they'd do more dangerous work. So they deserved it.

SD: Did people ever talk about equal pay for women?

AM: No.

SD: Did you have children while you were working there?

AM: No, I haven't any. No, I did have one but I lost him at birth. That was in England.

SD: And...do you know what happened at the end of the war? Did the women you work with lose their jobs too?

AM: Where?

SD: Wire Rope, yeah.

AM: Well I think they finally drifted off back to their own homes, where they were living, and lookin' after their children, I guess. But they did that. But it was funny after forty years we didn't know one another. "Who are you? Who are you?"