

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

WOMEN IN WORLD WAR II

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IN  
WORLD WAR II

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AGATHA LITTLEFIELD

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NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND  
THE NAVY IN WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEWEE: AGATHA LITTLEFIELD CROCKER

INTERVIEWER: DR. EVELYN M. CHERPAK

SUBJECT: WOMEN IN WORLD WAR II

DATE: MAY 18, 2004

EMC: This is an interview with Agatha Littlefield of West Kingston, Rhode Island. She worked at the Naval Torpedo Station during World War II at least one summer, the summer of 1942. The interview is taking place in my office at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Today's date is May 18th, 2004. I'd like to thank you, first of all, Agatha, for coming over to the War College to be interviewed on your experiences working at the Naval Torpedo Station. I'd like to set the stage by asking you a few questions about your background. First of all, where were you born and when were you born?

ALC: I was born in Newport, March 10th, 1926.

EMC: Did you spend your growing up years in Newport,

Rhode Island?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

ALC: Yes, three older brothers. No sisters. I always wanted a sister.

EMC: So you were the baby of the family?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: What did your parents or your father do for a living here?

ALC: He was a lawyer in Newport in a firm called Sheffield and Harvey.

EMC: It still exists today, doesn't it?

ALC: I don't know. There is some question, because I think they've changed it or something. I don't think it has that name anymore. But my brother Richard is still a lawyer, but I don't think he's in the firm.

EMC: Okay. Did your mother stay at home?

ALC: Yes, she did. Well, she stayed at home, but she was not at home, I mean, she was a very community-oriented person, and she was going here and going there all the time, but we had nurses and things like that, so she could zip around.

EMC: Where did you live? What street did you live on?

ALC: We lived on Redwood Street, which is right behind the Redwood Library. The house is still extant. It was a wonderful house. I have very happy memories of that house.

EMC: Oh, yes, they have some lovely homes there on Redwood. Did you attend local schools?

ALC: I did, I went to Miss Collings' School. I don't know why, because my brothers all went to public school, but I went to Miss Collings' School for eight years and then left and went to Lincoln School in Providence, which is a Quaker School and lived with an aunt during the week. I came home weekends.

EMC: Oh, interesting. When did you graduate from Lincoln?

ALC: '40, no, from Lincoln '43.

EMC: '43. Okay. Well, you were in high school, in private school, when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7th, 1941?

ALC: Right.

EMC: Do you remember where you were, and what your reaction was to that?

ALC: Absolutely. I remember at that point we moved from Redwood Street to Middletown to Indian Avenue, and that was our summer house, but during the war -- I guess it was after that -- we were at this house in Middletown on the Sakonnet River, and I was listening to the radio, because I was waiting to go back to school. I don't know whether William, my brother William, was going to drive me back or somebody. But I had the radio on, and I heard this announcement, and I came downstairs to tell my father, and he didn't believe me. And then I said, well, I just heard it. It came on again, and he said -- I remember him saying, "Pearl Harbor?" I don't even know where Pearl Harbor is, and we were all so shocked. It was sort of like the 9-11 bit. You just sort of -- forget it, it's not true.

EMC: That was a shocking thing, a shocking event that happened, and of course, the next day we declared war.

At that point in time did you have any friends in high school who were navy juniors?

ALC: Oh, yes. Most of my friends down here were navy juniors. One of whom worked, I worked with at the Torpedo Station, and her father was a captain in the navy. Steinwachs, her name was, Marion Steinwachs.

EMC: Oh, that's a name that surfaces here. We have some of his papers in the archives.

ALC: Yes. Oh, he was a wonderful man. He was a wonderful man.

EMC: Did you ever have the opportunity to go on the naval base when you were a youngster?

ALC: Oh, sure, because there was another friend named Barbara Welch, whose father was the head man here -- was he a Captain or an Admiral? I don't know. I can't remember which. But a woman named Betty Farion and George Steele. I think they got married. He was a friend. There were lots of navy juniors. Peggy Pence.

EMC: Did you know Floride Hewitt?

ALC: What was her name, Mary?

EMC: Floride Hewitt, Taylor now.

ALC: Floride. I did know a Hewitt, but that doesn't sound familiar.

EMC: Probably Mary.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Mary Hewitt.

ALC: Mary Hewitt, I think so.

EMC: She lives in Spokane now. So you knew a lot of people connected with the naval base or the War College. Well, once the war started things changed in Newport. Rhode Island was gearing up for war time. Did you notice any differences, any changes in the town? Was it inundated with navy personnel?

ALC: Yes, it always was. I mean, because it was a big naval port, and I remember that there were nothing but bars along Thames Street and tattoo parlors, and -- so but there was a real line, you know, between the sailors and the officers. I felt that.

EMC: Oh, definitely. Thames Street was named blood alley, I guess.



ALC: Oh, it was terrible. As I say, just bars and prostitutes. And one time I was coming on the bus down for the weekend and I sat next to a woman, and she was a prostitute, and I was, what, maybe 15 years old, and she told me -- I was asking her, and she told me all about her life and where she lived. She lived over there on some street off of -- some street, Golden Hills Street or something it was called from Bellevue Avenue down to Thames Street.

EMC: Oh.

ALC: Anyway, it was a tough area. Now, it's all been --

EMC: Oh, certainly, it was a different world then.

ALC: Yes, it really was.

EMC: You said you worked at the Naval Torpedo Station when you were in high school, the summer of '42, and you must have been, let me see, how old?

ALC: I was 16 or 17 at the time.

EMC: 16 at that point in time. What inspired you to get a job there?

ALC: The war. I was going to do my part for the war.

EMC: Did you feel very patriotic?

ALC: Oh, yes, not doing the job particularly, but I had three brothers in the navy, so I was going to do my share.

EMC: And this is what you chose to do. Did you have to go and apply for this job?

ALC: I did, and I didn't tell my father, because he never would have approved. I was too young, and I went, and now, it's on Mill Street. I had to go in and have a physical. He gave us a physical, the three women, three of us kids really, and we kind of stuck together, but we were all very adventurous.

EMC: So three girls, two of you.

ALC: Three girls, Marion Steinwachs was one of them. The other one is Mary Atwood. I don't think she was a navy junior. I think she's since died.

EMC: But you all decided to go work at the Naval Torpedo Station.

ALC: Right, absolutely.

EMC: That's interesting. You had to have a physical, and I suppose fill out a form?

ALC: Yes, and I did not tell my father about it until after I got the letter or something that I was hired or I think they told me right then, as I recall.

EMC: Well, what did he say? What did your father say?

ALC: He was very surprised and angry. And I was the youngest and the daughter, and I have always been sort of rebellious. So once I decided to do that he said, well, all right, you can try it.

EMC: See if you like it. Did your mother raise any objections?

ALC: No, she always stuck with me.

EMC: Your supporter.

ALC: Girls, we girls had to stick together.

EMC: Together, against all the men in your family.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: This was a summer job, I presume?

ALC: Oh, yes.

EMC: And where was the Torpedo Station located at this time?

ALC: Well, same place, but we had to take a ferry boat across.

EMC: And where did you catch the ferry?

ALC: I don't know what's there now, but it's sort of by the Seaman's Church Institute. I think it was called Government Landing. And there was one that went to Jamestown and then there was this little one that went back and forth between the Torpedo Station.

EMC: Oh, because I remember coming to Newport, would you believe, in 1968 before the bridge, and we had to take the ferry from Jamestown.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Government Landing. It was quite an expedition to get here really.

ALC: Yes, it was.

EMC: So you had to take the ferry back and forth, of course, to get to your job, and what department did you work in?

ALC: I don't really know. I just was on an assembly line, and they changed our job every couple of a weeks, but the one I really remember was sort of, like, a fuse cap, and we had to bang in a nail and then put it on a rack and somebody else would do the next thing, but I don't remember too much about what I was doing. I remember the people. And I remember how I felt.

EMC: It was assembly line work though?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Well, can you tell us about the people? I was going to ask you about that. You said that they really made an impression on you.

ALC: Well, the first impression was the ferry boat ride, because we were just jammed like this, you know.

EMC: Oh, really.

ALC: It was mostly men, and you stand, and I remember

that's the first time somebody pinched my bottom. And I remember telling my father.

EMC: Yes.

ALC: But got used to it. Because I'd been pretty protected, you know.

EMC: Sheltered life.

ALC: And that is one of my most vivid memories, because all the time I was a little bit scared, but anyway, I think I'm doing this for the country. We were all patriotic in those days.

EMC: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely, so the first thing that impressed you was this ferry boat ride, like, sardines in this boat, and I assume that everybody working on your shift had to go at the same time.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: What was your shift?

ALC: I think it was about 8:00 to 3:00, something like that. Because we would bring our lunch, and we would go out and sit on the wall. There was a sea wall there. And we had half an hour, and we three didn't

all get into the same part of the assembly line, so we would kind of meet and talk and get caught up.

EMC: Did you find the work boring?

ALC: Yes, but the other thing is that I worked with Marion Steinwachs on one sort of thing, and they came up to us, somebody who was there working there all along, came up and said don't work so fast. You're upsetting our --

EMC: Routine.

ALC: Our routine, our quota, because you're working so fast we're going to have to change the rules, and we don't appreciate this, so slow down.

EMC: Well, you were young.

ALC: We were young and quick, you know.

EMC: Yes, and they didn't want to --

ALC: No.

EMC: -- work that hard or that fast.

ALC: That's right.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting, but the fact that they changed you and put you in a different part of the assembly line was really forward looking. They didn't want you to get ---

ALC: I guess so.

EMC: -- terribly bored.

ALC: I think they did rotate most everybody.

EMC: Yes.

ALC: And I can remember when I say it was sort of a cultural social shock for me, there was a woman down on the assembly line who used to be our laundress and there she was, and we were buddies. I mean, she worked for my family, and there she was, and she was always a good friend while I was there.

EMC: Well, right, you were working with people that really weren't --

ALC: Right, I had never --

EMC: -- of your social class.



ALC: You know how it is. It's not like that today.

EMC: Oh, no.

ALC: -- in those days.

EMC: There was a kind of a line.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: A definite line between people. Now, the focus is on diversity. Anyway, did any other people that you worked with stand out?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Were there a lot of men on the line?

ALC: There were mostly -- no, I would say it was maybe more women than men. But I remember there was a woman who cleaned. She had epilepsy, and one day I was sitting there, and she had it right on the floor. I'd never seen that before, and everybody said, put a stick or something and they had a wooden something they stuck in her mouth, and it didn't last too long.

EMC: Yes, it is scary.

ALC: Scary.

EMC: -- to see that, so it was basically women. Were they older women or were there any younger women?

ALC: Yes, we were the youngest there.

EMC: That were on the line. So there were not that many men that you came in contact with I guess on the line.

ALC: Well, no, on the ferry boat.

EMC: On the ferry boat. But not on the line there weren't that many, so there wasn't any harassment.

ALC: No, and you didn't think of it as harassment in those days.

EMC: Right.

ALC: You sort of thought, well, you know, it's different. All the sailors were always whistling at us, and you know, you took it as sort of a compliment. But it's different today.

EMC: Well, you accepted it, I guess.

ALC: Yes, sure.

EMC: Do you remember what building you were in?

ALC: Nope, I'm sorry.

EMC: Because there were a couple of buildings there.

ALC: I think the building is still there maybe or at least it was maybe ten years ago. The last time I was over there, I went to that hotel.

EMC: Oh, right. Did they organize, were there any activities organized for the workers that you remember?

ALC: No, absolutely not, no, and you were told that you can go out. We wanted to go eat outside in the sun, and other people didn't. They all sat, I think, there was a room where they all sat or something like that.

EMC: Oh, they must have had a lunchroom for them.

ALC: Right, but we didn't unless it was raining.

EMC: Did anybody have any injuries that you remember?

ALC: No, there was -- there was a place -- a powder,

we didn't work there, but there were a couple of boys that we knew and they were sent into this powder room where there was a lot of sulfur and stuff, and they had to put on suits, and they got kind of yellow from the sulfur, I guess. But there weren't any injuries. It was perfectly safe.

EMC: Oh, that's good. That's good. Well, you said you worked basically from 8:00 to 3:00 every -- Monday through Friday, I assume?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: No overtime?

ALC: No.

EMC: Or weekends?

ALC: No.

EMC: That's good. Were there any security precautions in place at the Naval Torpedo Station?

ALC: Not that I can remember. I don't even remember having to have a badge, but I'm sure we did have some sort of a badge.

EMC: Or some sort of identification.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: You must have.

ALC: But see, I was only there for like two months.

EMC: Right, do you remember at all what your pay was?

ALC: It wasn't much, because I can remember about the only thing I had money left over, I bought a tennis racket, and I remember that was the first thing I'd ever sort of earned myself. And I don't know what the rest of it went to, hot dogs, Cokes, chocolate eclairs or something. I have no idea, but I didn't save any money.

EMC: It probably didn't pay that much either per hour.

ALC: No, I don't think so.

EMC: I would think that they didn't. Were there any explosions at the Torpedo Station at that time or any testing that you were aware of?

ALC: No, no, but when you're 16 or 17, you're so self-absorbed, you don't really know.

EMC: That's true.

ALC: I knew that they were testing them, but I don't remember any explosions or anything. I never felt that I wasn't safe.

EMC: Right, not the kind of work that you were doing. You were there for two months.

ALC: I think so.

EMC: In the summer?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: The following summer, I assume you did not return?

ALC: No, I became a nurse's aide, and I worked in the hospital.

EMC: Oh, in Newport?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Oh, that was different.

ALC: Yes, the Newport Hospital.

EMC: Oh, that must have been interesting too as well.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: And very different, so you didn't want to return to the Torpedo Station.

ALC: No, I didn't really. I didn't like that ferry boat ride, I'll tell you.

EMC: And as you said, the work itself wasn't particularly challenging?

ALC: No.

EMC: It was just piece work.

ALC: Exactly.

EMC: And very routine. Do you have any other comments on your work at the Torpedo Station? Anything else that you can remember that stood out?

ALC: No, not really. People were nice because we were sort of young, and they were all older and we were all sort of the pets.

EMC: Did you have a foremen there?

ALC: Yes, we had somebody that was in charge. I'm very hazy about that.

EMC: Yes.

ALC: That was a man.

EMC: Right.

ALC: I'm hazy about that, and I had a friend whose name was Fletcher, whose father was on the Torpedo Station. He lived in one of those houses. Mary Alice, her name was, Fletcher, and we used to sneak down to her house during lunch sometimes and see her. But we weren't supposed to do that.

EMC: But you got away with it, if you could?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: I wanted to ask you how the Newporters reacted in general to the war. Do you have any feel for that, and for the inundation at the Naval Training Station here, thousands and thousands of enlisted people coming through?



ALC: I think Newport was very patriotic, because the navy had been a big part of Newport all the way along, so it was a gradual thing. It wasn't an explosion more or less. And I remember during the war when I was older in college and everything, I used to go to dances at the USO, which were down there in Washington Square. I don't know what it is now, and then there was the Newport Art Association that used to have dances, and we would go and do what they always portray in the movies and entertain the troops, and it was not officers. These were enlisted men.

EMC: Oh, really, so you went there not as a volunteer.

ALC: Oh, yes.

EMC: Or as a volunteer?

ALC: As a volunteer. They would just want all the young women that they could possibly find to go and dance with these kids.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting.

SPEAKER: And you loved it.

EMC: Did you?

ALC: Yes, I had a blast. Yes, that was fun, because I had three brothers, and you know, men didn't phase me.

EMC: Oh, yes. Well, what else did young people do for fun in those days during the war years? You went to the USO as you said, and the Art Association to the dances? Was that when you were at the Torpedo Station or after?

ALC: That was after.

EMC: Yes, right, during the war years.

ALC: I remember when the war was over, Marion Steinwachs' father took us down when it was over.

EMC: VJ Day?

ALC: Yes, took us down to downtown. I'll never forget that. I mean, that was just incredible.

EMC: Well, what was it like? What were people doing?

ALC: It was jammed. The boys were drinking and shouting and screaming and just hugging everybody, and there were Newporters and sailors and everything, every kind of person down there. It was like that cover of

Life or that wonderful picture in Life Magazine where the guy's kissing the girl. It was an incredible experience. They had the band and stuff, and her father was so nervous because he took these two young girls. Oh, dear, so, we were all very happy at that point.

EMC: Oh, certainly. It was a great celebration. I think that occurred in many cities. How did rationing effect you at all and your family?

ALC: Well, gas, because they lived in Middletown, they got a "B" thing, I think. My mother had an "A" and my father had --

EMC: What's the difference?

ALC: Well, you got more when you had a "B."

EMC: Oh, I see.

ALC: You got that if you were a commuter, and he came into Newport, and my mother, she didn't get as much gas. When I went on to college, of course, we had rationing still.

EMC: Oh, throughout the war you had rationing.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Well, they also rationed things like sugar and butter, didn't they?

ALC: Oh, yes, sugar and butter. And lots of things you couldn't get, and I can remember we used to have to put big black curtains on our windows, because we were right on the Sakonnet River, and they were afraid that someone was going to invade right there.

EMC: Right, the black-out curtains.

ALC: And we had little slits on our headlights, painted the headlights black. And you had a little slit where the light came through, so you had to be very careful.

EMC: Oh, I didn't know that. That's kind of interesting. Did you have civil defense people going by?

ALC: Oh, yes. They had people coming by and would check if you had a little bit of light showing.

EMC: Yes.

ALC: You know, it's like with this present war. You

wish that you could do more for this present war, but we felt like we were doing an awful lot then. That's why I took the bus all the time, because there wasn't any gas to come home.

EMC: How did you get to the Torpedo Station from your home out in Middletown?

ALC: I came in with my father. You see he was a lawyer, and he came in and he would bring me in every morning. And I don't remember how I got home, but I -- my mother might have --

EMC: Picked you up, you think?

ALC: -- picked me up, or something.

EMC: Did you write letters to your brothers when they were in the war?

ALC: Some. But later on my first husband was in the war, so he got my attention rather than my brothers.

EMC: Oh, was he a Newporter?

ALC: No, no, he wasn't. He was from Providence, but he was on an LST, and my brothers, all three, William, of course, was prowling around Narragansett Bay mostly

and Florida. My youngest brother had really fought the war.

EMC: Right, in the Pacific.

ALC: Yes, he got hit by a Kamikaze.

EMC: Right, I remember that.

ALC: He's the one that we were all worried about.

EMC: Yes, out in the Pacific. And your third brother, where was he?

ALC: Edwin, well, he was being sent to school. He went to radar school and communication school, and finally, he got on a destroyer. I remember going to the commissioning of it in New York, but I think the war got over by that time. He never saw active duty that I can remember.

EMC: Oh, that's good. Yes, so by that time, so --

SPEAKER: Richard was the one that --

ALC: Richard was the one that was spent something, like, ten hours in the water before he was picked up.

EMC: Yes, that's what he said. So when you were in college for the years '43 -'44, and '44 and '45, did you do anything for the war effort during that time frame?

ALC: I still worked as a nurse's aide. I didn't have any job like the Torpedo Station. That was my initiation and stuff.

EMC: So that was in the summer.

ALC: Yes, but as I say, I did the nurse's aide all the way through, but I don't remember doing any other. I used to fold bandages or make bandages. My mother did that, and she dragged me along with her to do that.

EMC: Red Cross work, I guess.

ALC: Right. Right.

EMC: That's what people did in those days.

ALC: Knit socks. What else did I do?

EMC: But you were busy at school?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: High school and then college, so that kind of took your time.

ALC: But I did have a good time through the war, because when I was older, various friends and friends of my brothers would come through Newport, and so we were constantly entertaining people, Air Force, PT boat people.

EMC: Training here.

ALC: Training here, and I had a cousin who was up there, so it was a great time to be an 18, 19 year old. Of course, I just had a good time.

EMC: There were lots of men here in Newport attending the various schools.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: So that was great. Did you know Barbara Brandt?

ALC: Yes, and Vince Brandt is a very good friend. We see him in the summer. He goes to Maine, and we see him every summer, and he's in the same class as Johnny. Yes, he's a very nice guy. We know him much more than Barbara.



EMC: Well, Barbara's over in Jamestown. I interviewed her for the WAVES Program.

ALC: Oh.

EMC: WAVES in World War II, and she has a summer place in Jamestown. They come for the month of August or at least she used to.

ALC: She was older. She is not that much older but at that time age -- she seemed sort of much older.

EMC: She was in college then at that point in time. Well, she graduated I think in '43, so four years older.

ALC: Vince, though I remember as a teenager, her brother. I had such a crush on him. He was a tennis player. He was so good. Isn't that funny, I still kid him about that.

EMC: In other words, World War II was a pleasant time socially for young people at least here in Newport, Rhode Island.

ALC: In Newport and during the summer. At college I began to grow up and get a little more serious about it, and the president of my house's fiance was killed,

and you were beginning to feel that time. It really began to touch us, so it wasn't such a -- and then I had my own, my fiance, I guess, he was my fiance, but we never did announce it until we got home, but I had my own agenda with the Pacific, and he was in some of those landings and stuff.

EMC: Was he a college grad?

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Most of the young men were drafted at that time.

ALC: His ship was built in Pittsburgh, I think, and they took it down the Mississippi River to New Orleans from there and then after the war, he stayed in for a while, because he had to repatriate the Japanese.

EMC: Oh, I see, and didn't get out for a while then?

ALC: No, he didn't have enough numbers or something.

EMC: Right, you had to have points to get out of the war.

ALC: Right.

EMC: Points to get you out. Did you ever run into any

WAVES here in Newport?

ALC: Well, not really. I went to Smith, and they trained the WAVES up there. They would go singing around the campus, and we all kind of thought it was a big joke. It's terrible the way you feel when you're a kid, because we weren't taking it so seriously as they were, and I had my own WAVE who married my cousin. It's amazing when you're callous and young is all I can say.

EMC: The WAVES had to take it seriously. They were being indoctrinated as well, so at least you saw them.

ALC: Oh, definitely.

EMC: Do you have any other comments to make either on Newport during the war or on the Torpedo Station?

ALC: No. Except, you know, I've seen the Torpedo Station evolve over my lifetime, and it's a terrible thing to say, but I really looked down on the people that worked at the Torpedo Station, because they were always dirty, and this was before the war, so I was a real snob as a kid.

EMC: Well, that was the thing to be in those days.

ALC: I'm a little embarrassed about it.

EMC: Yes, not popular.

ALC: No.

EMC: Well, they were factory workers is what they were.

ALC: Right.

EMC: And we really hadn't had any contact with them before.

ALC: It changed my whole life that naval experience. It was a wonderful thing for me as a person, because it got me over thinking I was better than other people. I joined in with the people I was working with. They were always having you give money for -- pass a thing around, because somebody's sister was in the hospital. It made me want to deal with people in my life, real people, you know.

EMC: That's interesting. That is a wonderful comment on your experience here and how it was life changing in a way.

ALC: It really was. It was. You know, I went on to

train to be a teacher and then a counselor and sort of being involved with that part of life, not isolated.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting. What did you teach, what grade?

ALC: Well, I started out teaching math to 7th and 8th grades, then I had children and then I went back and got a job in a place called, Sophia, which was a home in Rhode Island for unwed mothers. This was before the pill, so I set up a school there, and worked there and loved it and then I was spending more time counseling the kids, because it was really neglected, and so then I went in and got training to be a counselor and this opened up a whole new world.

EMC: That's interesting. You got a degree.

ALC: Got a degree.

EMC: Oh, you did? Where did you get that?

ALC: I got it at Rhode Island College.

EMC: In counseling?

ALC: In counseling.

EMC: And did you continue working at the school?

ALC: No, I should have. No, because then the pill came along, and they stopped having that school. I don't know what they did with those young women.

EMC: But did you work any other place after that once you got your degree?

ALC: I worked at Rhode Island School of Design and then at Brown and then my husband got sick, got cancer, so I had to stop.

EMC: Oh, but that's very interesting.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: Opened up a new world.

SPEAKER: I started a Hospice in southern Rhode Island.

EMC: Oh, well, that's good.

ALC: I've done a lot of Hospice work, too. I forget about that. I'm still involved in Hospice.

EMC: Now, what exactly do you do for them?

ALC: Well, we started a program, Hospice program in southern Rhode Island in Wakefield and with the visiting nurse and a minister, a nice guy, so we started that. It's all Hospice Care of Rhode Island. They have one here.

EMC: Oh, they do?

ALC: And you know what they do, don't you? You know about them, about Hospice.

EMC: Well, I think they go in the home, don't they?

ALC: Yes, they have a whole program. They have a doctor and nurses and everything and volunteers that help in the home when the person is terminally ill.

EMC: Yes, that's a great program.

ALC: It really is. Wonderful people are working in it, too.

EMC: Right. That is for sure.

ALC: Yes, that's been a big thing recently.

EMC: So you were instrumental in actually starting that over in South County?

ALC: Over there in South County, yes.

EMC: Well, that's fantastic. Well, that took a lot of effort and time and energy.

ALC: Well, I had a lot of energy in those days.

EMC: Energy, too.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: That's important. Well, it sounds like you've had a very interesting career.

ALC: Oh, yes, then I married Johnny, who is a retired Episcopalian minister.

EMC: Oh, really? Oh, how interesting.

ALC: So my life went from being the wife of a manufacturing person to the wife of a clergyman and so I moved to Princeton, New Jersey, where he had a church.

EMC: Where did you ever meet? That's kind of fascinating.



ALC: We met because he was the chaplain at Brown University.

SPEAKER: All through the 60s.

EMC: Oh boy, that must have been a fun time. So you moved to Princeton for a while?

ALC: Just two years. That was plenty.

EMC: Oh, it's a beautiful community though.

ALC: It is.

EMC: It's lovely.

ALC: But being the wife of a minister was not my style.

EMC: Not really. Well, you have to do a lot for the church, and you have to do a lot with the parishioners.

ALC: Well --

SPEAKER: She didn't have to do anything.

ALC: Anything with the church.

EMC: Well, you feel like you're obligated, I would think.

ALC: No, his first wife didn't --

SPEAKER: My first wife was very firm about not getting two for the salary of one.

EMC: Oh, I see.

ALC: Which was great. She set the course.

SPEAKER: She was quite an independent lady, which made it easier for her.

ALC: I didn't have to do anything with the church.

SPEAKER: But the four of us were good friends.

ALC: When he was the chaplain at Brown, they lived a couple of blocks away from us, so that's --

EMC: You lived in Providence then?

ALC: Yes, we lived in Providence for 25 years.

SPEAKER: On Halloween you always had kids to go trick or treating, and that was always a little exhausting.

When I'd stop by there, I would get a martini. She would mix a martini for me and get me through the ordeal.

EMC: Through the ordeal.

ALC: Oh, dear, well, you didn't suffer much.

EMC: Oh, that's very interesting and then you decided to come back here to Rhode Island?

ALC: When he retired, he came back again. He's been writing a book. That's why we're back here. Right? Because I inherited this house over there in West Kingston.

EMC: Oh, is that the one here in Middletown?

ALC: No, it's in West Kingston.

EMC: Oh, I see. That was a summer home.

ALC: Yes. It was built in 1780. It's a real gem of an old house, so that's where we live. And that was all a gift --

EMC: That's very nice. That's great.

ALC: So life has been good to me.

EMC: It sounds it. You've had a lot of different experiences, and a Newport based life in the beginning anyway.

ALC: Yes.

EMC: -- and Rhode Island connections after that as well.

ALC: I don't come to Newport in the summer usually because it's such a zoo.

EMC: It is.

ALC: But we come over in the winter very often. With Richard, we try to get together and have dinner and stuff.

EMC: Oh, sure. That's great. Well, I want to thank you very much for your comments.

ALC: You're very welcome.

EMC: -- on the Torpedo Station and life after that. We'll get this transcribed and then I'll send it over to you to look at and edit if you need to.

ALC: Whatever.

EMC: Okay. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER: Will she end up with a copy?

EMC: Oh, yes, absolutely. You will get a copy, yes.

SPEAKER: Her children need a chance to read it.

EMC: Yes, yes, I'm going to send her a copy to edit, then we'll have it returned, and I'll have my transcriber go over it.

SPEAKER: Right.

EMC: -- again and make the corrections and then you get a final copy. I keep a copy for the archives, too.

ALC: Great.

EMC: Thank you.



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