

Museum of History and Industry
Historical Society of Seattle and King County

Transcript

Maurice Carlson - taped interview
January 8, 1985

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This is an interview with Mr. Maurice Carlson, on the 8th of January, 1985. The interviewer is Lorraine McConaghy for the Museum of History and Industry.

Q. Let me start by asking you how did you hear about Pearl Harbor? What were you doing? What did it mean to your family?

Mr. Carlson Well, it made a big difference in our family life when Pearl Harbor happened. At the time, I was working in the Seattle Police Department as a clerk in the Traffic Division. I had started there in 1938 with the big salary of \$110.00 a month. We started raising a family.

On Pearl Harbor day, we were out to my wife's folks, and we had gone to church, and we came back and we were playing cards after dinner. We didn't have the radio on all day, so we didn't know anything about Pearl Harbor. Her cousin, who was a neighbor, came over and said, "Isn't it terrible?" That's when we found out that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

We later found out that everybody in the Police Department was being called up to come to work. They didn't reach me because I wasn't at home. Next day when I went to work, I was like the rest of them - I worked twelve hours shifts with no days off for the next seven weeks. Things were real hectic.

Q. What were they expecting? Why did they want you to work those long hours?

Mr. Carlson Well, it was wartime status and an emergency. Nobody knew what was going to happen next, if they were going to bomb Seattle. No one knew what was going to happen.

Of course, they'd had a National Defense detail and Civilian Defense offices and everything, because war was going to happen, or so most of us thought. We were getting ready for it, but when it happened, no one was ready, it seemed. In my particular job, I had to work from 7:00 at night until 7:00 in the morning. I didn't have very much to do because we were in the old Public Safety Building on Yesler Way, and it was all blacked out. All I can remember is that they were long nights, and nobody knew what was happening. It was sure nice to get out in the morning into the fresh air after being closed up with some of those cigarette and cigar smokers I worked with.

Q. Were the tensions running high among the officers? How hard was it to enforce the blackouts? Were people afraid, and looking to the police for guidance and leadership?

Mr. Carlson I'm sure they were. First thing the mayor did was declare an emergency, and had them blackout all the stores. Word didn't get around, or they didn't get all their lights

turned off the first night, and there were mobs of people going downtown and breaking out windows in stores to put the lights out because they were supposed to be out. The police had their hands full.

There was a lot of military activity, and a lot of military in town. And it built up from then on.

Q. When did that encampment that you described in Seattle begin?

Mr. Carlson Well, it was after the war had started. They had a group of soldiers encamped right on the Court House lawn, south of the King County court house. When I'd get off duty at 7:00 in the morning, and walk down to get the streetcar to go home, the soldiers were in their tents there and they were marching around. They had anti-aircraft balloons up in the air, and it was that way all over the city. They had anti-aircraft balloons out by the Boeing Plant and in different areas of the city.

Q. This encampment - was it of Army people?

Mr. Carlson Yes, regular Army.

Q. With tents? Did they have weapons?

Mr. Carlson Yes.

Q. Anti-aircraft type weapons?

Mr. Carlson Yes, they set up anti-aircraft guns in Seattle at different places. I know the Army right away came in and closed off East Marginal Way down by the Boeing Plant - it was closed to all traffic. Regular commuters had to bypass that area.

Q. Did the police have any responsibility for security at any of the war production plants? Shipyards? Or Boeing?

Mr. Carlson Yes, we had a National Defense detail within the Police Department, and we worked with the security of plants like Boeing and the shipyards, and of course with the military police and the shore patrol. There was a Civilian Defense set-up and regular police officers manned the air raid sirens at the Civilian Defense headquarters in the old Armory Building. I believe at that time it was on Western Avenue, up by the Pike Market.

Q. Who had the responsibility and the right to enforce the rules of Civil Defense? If someone persisted in leaving their lights on at night, and didn't use their blackout curtains, who would be responsible, and what was the mechanism for making them comply?

Mr. Carlson Well, I think the Civil Defense had air raid wardens, and block wardens throughout the city to protect everything...

Q. But could you arrest [Civil Defense violators]?

Mr. Carlson They could call the police if they needed any help. Most people were real cooperative. They never knew what to expect next, and they complied. The radio was going all the time, telling you what to do.

Q. The Japanese-Americans - there were lots of them here in Seattle, a big community - what was the job of the Police Department with them?

Mr. Carlson Well, the Federal government, right after Pearl Harbor, rounded up some aliens who they knew might be threats and they were arrested. But the regular Japanese-Americans were required to bring their short-wave radios and cameras and surrender them to the local law enforcement people. So the Seattle Police Department had their hands full. They had a deadline of December 30 [1941] for everybody to turn in, and they were really swamped registering all their cameras and equipment.

Q. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of such things, I would guess? And they were stored for them?

Mr. Carlson I know they registered them all and kept track of them, but whatever happened to all of them... Eventually, of course, they started evacuating the people.

Q. Did the police have any role in the internment process? In the evacuation process?

Mr. Carlson Well, just to stand by and do their job, like in any emergency, but it was the Federal government that conducted the whole thing.

Q. In general, would you say that Seattle became more lawless during World War II than it had been when you first came to work?

Mr. Carlson No, I don't believe so. What happened was that by the city charter, they were supposed to have 571 police officers. They were down about 50, and they didn't hire them because they didn't have the money to hire them. They would just put off holding the examination until they got down to 50 under charter strength, and finally, in December, 1940, they closed an examination. In registration, they had over 800 candidates for police officer file. By April 7, 1941, they hired 50 and brought up the police department to the charter strength. They did hire 25 provisional police officers in December of 1940 because they were so low on manpower that they couldn't wait for the exam.

But after they hired 50 and brought the department up to charter strength in April of 1941, then they started losing them to the military. They enlisted. Then, after Pearl Harbor happened, immediately they hired 50 new police officers the next day off the civil service eligible list. Then a lot of men were going into the service, and they were coming and going - pretty soon they ran out of candidates

for the police department. Eventually, they had to hire provisional police officers who didn't have regular civil service standing to keep the department strength up. They had an auxiliary police force that backed up the local police.

Q. So you would say that the police force was kept at strength to meet - there must have been, with the increasing population and so many young single men in Seattle, some increase in certain kinds of crime - but you would say that the police department coped with that with this increase in manpower that they had?

Mr. Carlson I believe they did. I've always heard that there was less crime in hard times than in good times. There's more merriment and partyings and goings on in good times. A lot of people just stay home when they're poor, but when they have money, they carouse around.

Q. How would you describe Seattle during the war, compared to other cities, like Los Angeles, or Vancouver, or Portland? What was its character?

Mr. Carlson Well, of course, we're a seaport town, and also the Boeing plant and the shipyards are here. Some of the other cities don't have extensive [industry] like that. It's different in that all the cities on the coast were different than ones inland. They were blacked out. The shipyards were running twenty-four hours a day after the war began. Instead of everything closing down at night, it just kept going twenty-four hours a day.

Q. Were a lot of servicemen stationed here?

Mr. Carlson Yes, there were a lot of servicemen in Seattle because the Navy piers were out at 91, and the Army at Fort Lawton. They always had a lot of servicemen in Seattle but in wartime, they really beefed up everything.

Q. What did the shore patrol do? What were their responsibilities and how did they get along with the police department? What was the relationship?

Mr. Carlson Well, the police department worked very closely with the shore patrol and military police. In fact, a lot of Seattle police officers went into the service and a lot of them were stationed right here in Seattle as a member of the shore patrol or military police.

I remember one police officer friend of mine was in the shore patrol, and I was working in the booking office at the time as a report clerk where all the incoming calls came for headquarters, and all the prisoners were booked there. I'd see this officer all the time as a shore patrolman instead of a uniformed police officer. He came in one day, and had a long look on his face, and I said, "What's the matter?"

He said, "I'm getting transferred to sea duty."

I said, "Where you going?"

He said, "I've got to ride the Bremerton ferry on the shore patrol." (chuckling)

Q. What kind of crimes were men in uniform most often picked up for by the shore patrol?

Mr. Carlson Well, of course, they did have robberies and things, but most of them were just, when they were off duty, out partying around and having a good time. They'd drink a little too much, get arrested, and they'd bring them in and book them. Later on, the shore patrol and the Navy had their own brig and detention quarters at Pier 91 and Fort Lawton. But, at first, they were just brought into the Police Department and booked and then released later to the shore patrol and taken back to their units.

Q. If there was a wide-open part of Seattle, where was it? Where were the hot spots in Seattle?

Mr. Carlson Oh, I'd say downtown First Avenue. That's where all the servicemen seemed to congregate. They had USO and entertainment for them, but a lot of them ended up down on First Avenue partying around and meeting girls and having a good time and overdoing it.

Q. What was the situation with liquor here? Could you buy liquor by the drink? Was that legal or not?

Mr. Carlson No, we didn't have liquor by the drink, but there were some speakeasies around and they had liquor stores where you could buy. Liquor was rationed, you had to have a permit to buy liquor. You'd go and buy it at the state liquor store and they'd punch your card out for you. You could only buy so much - a bottle a week or so. But it seemed like there was a little bootlegging and things going on.

Q. You mean backyard stills?

Mr. Carlson Well, yes, I guess so. There was bootlegging and some were buying their liquor whether they needed it or not. I know I had a liquor rationing card. I never bought much liquor. But I bought more after they rationed it than before. It was available and somebody else would want it whose requirements were more than mine. (laughing)

Q. So it was legal to buy beer in a tavern - you could buy as much beer in a tavern as you could hold and it was perfectly legal - but you couldn't buy hard liquor drinks in a tavern legally?

Mr. Carlson No, you had to buy hard liquor from liquor stores which were state liquor stores, but taverns sold beer and wine. And they did a thriving business.

Q. Was there any - well, I don't want to call it "organized crime" - but the gambling in Seattle, was that making some people very rich? Were there people in charge of vice and crime, or was it a very spread out kind of thing, run by small operators?

Mr. Carlson Well, there was no organized crime in Seattle, to my knowledge. There were speakeasies. Gambling was illegal, I know, but they had cardrooms. The city fathers had a tolerance policy that they would allow cardrooms to operate and they could gamble at certain stakes. I'm sure that some of them extended the stakes and went afterhours a little bit. But I don't think there was really any organized crime.

Q. Was prostitution pretty much done on an individual basis? Or were there houses?

Mr. Carlson There were houses in Seattle. In the late thirties, when I went to work in the Police Department, right up the street, Yesler Terrace, which later became a Housing Project, used to be called "Profanity Hill." You could walk up there and there were red lights showing in the windows.

In the Southend, and in the International District, we had Chinese lotteries going then. They were illegal but everybody knew they were there if you wanted to go down and buy a lottery ticket.

Q. As time went on, there came to be "Victory girls." Who were the Victory girls and why were they arrested sometimes?

Mr. Carlson Well, Victory girls were girls who came downtown and visited with the servicemen. I wouldn't call them prostitutes. They were just down for a good time, and to enjoy the company of the young servicemen. Some of them ended up in the hotel rooms and the police would go around and check these hotels and bring the girls in and turn the servicemen over to the shore patrol or the military police. The girls would be booked and have to go to police court, and we detained them for blood tests by the Health Department, which was in the Public Safety Building.

Q. Would you say that most of the arrests made during the war for things like public drunkenness - oh, good times, partying kinds of things - were mostly made of servicemen, or were there also shipyard workers and Boeing employees on a high weekly salary, and spending it downtown?

Mr. Carlson Well, there was a lot of drinking. A lot of people ended up being brought to jail. And, of course, traffic was serious. Gasoline was rationed, but with everybody making money and driving cars and drinking, there were a lot of traffic arrests made, too.

Q. Were the jails pretty full? Was the jail ever filled to capacity? What was the number of arrests being made?

Mr. Carlson Well, in the early '40's, I worked in the booking office where they booked the prisoners, and I remember one night we booked 135 prisoners in one eight hour shift, from 8:00 at night until 4:00 in the morning, and that's almost one every three minutes! A lot of them, though, were servicemen who were just booked and detained for a while, and then the shore patrol or military police would come down and take them back to their base. They were coming and going all the time. This was

in the old Public Safety Building on Yesler Way, and it was pretty crowded. It was not a big jail, and it got pretty crowded there.

Later on the shore patrol got their own brig at Pier 91, and the Army at Fort Lawton. Prisoners were brought in and turned over to the military and not booked at the jail. They'd just take them out to their own detention quarters.

Q. If you had to choose a story that you heard from a patrolman on a beat or whomever that described wartime Seattle, what would that story be? What was a typical kind of experience?

Mr. Carlson Well, there were so many stories. So many things happened working in the booking office, where all the incoming calls came. One clerk on each patrol shift took all the calls for each district. The phones were ringing all the time. We had three phones and two teletype machines that I operated, going all the time. We had policemen on the switchboard that did the radio broadcast. When a call would come in, a police officer would answer the call on the switchboard and direct it to the report clerk at headquarters where I was working, or they'd send it out to a police precinct, like Wallingford, if the call was out there. If we had a hot call - we had a bandit phone, and if there was a robbery in progress, they'd ring the bandit phone and while the clerk was taking the information down, the police officer on the switchboard would be listening and broadcast it. It was real efficient. It got too much for one or two people to handle all these calls. Humorous things happened, and sad and tragic things happened.

I remember one night I was working with another officer in the booking office and a man came up to the counter. It was about midnight, and we were eating our lunch. I had my lunch spread out on the desk, and the booking officer had his lunch spread out on the counter. He got up to book a prisoner, and a drunk staggered up to the counter. I thought, "Well, I'll not get up. I'll let him wait until the officer gets through booking the prisoner, and he can talk to him."

The next thing I knew, the drunk was eating the officer's lunch that he had spread out on the counter. So I just sat back, and thought, "Well, this is going to be interesting!" (chuckling)

Needless to say, he went to jail in a hurry. I guess he thought he was at a bar with a free lunch counter.

Q. What did you see during the war that was tragic? You said you'd seen some things that were very sad...

Mr. Carlson Well, there were a lot of family fights. Whenever they'd bring a prisoner in from a family fight or a robbery, they'd bring them in the booking office before they booked them and the captain would talk to them. I remember one night, they brought a man and wife in there. The wife had hit her husband over the head with a milk bottle. They brought them down there, but by the time they got to the police headquarters, they were all friends again and wanted to go home.

I'd come home and tell my wife some of these stories. What a quiet peaceful life we lived at home.

Q. Did the police ever get involved in problems of child neglect or child abuse? Or was that all handled by the case workers and the social services people?

Mr. Carlson Well, the police always got the initial call in any emergency. One night, my wife was waiting for me to get off-duty down at the station to get off duty at 8:00 and we were going out to a dance. The old paddy-wagon came in alongside the Public Safety Building, and they started opening the wagon and all these Indians came out, from Grandpa on down to a little babe in arms, they just came stringing out of there. Police would get a call, and they'd have to bring everybody in. Babies they'd have to book just like the others. Book them for safekeeping, and send them up to the hospital for safekeeping until the case was investigated by the other follow-up authorities.

Q. One thing I have wondered about was the transient population in Seattle. Now there was shortage of labor in the defense industries, at least, they would employ anybody that came to the doors, and the military was accepting people... Were there fewer transients on the streets? During the Depression, there were so many guys riding the rails and living from hand to mouth. Did that disappear?

Mr. Carlson Yes, I think a lot of them were able to find work and take care of themselves. During the Depression, down on Alaskan Way and the waterfront, we had Hooverville. It was a community of down-and-outers who built places to live out of boxes and crates. Back of the Rainier Brewery up on the hill, there were shacks built and people just living in those.

Q. Were those mostly single men or were there families living in those?

Mr. Carlson There were families, too, but mostly single drifters.

Q. When the defense industries began to build up here in King County, there was a tremendous influx of population from all over the United States. Where did those people tend to settle, and could you see an increase in - well, was the increase in crime at all due to that influx of war workers and their high paychecks?

Mr. Carlson Well, I really don't think we had such high crime during the wartime. People were more patriotic than maybe you would believe. There was employment for everybody that wanted to work. A lot of them worked, and they brought people in here from different parts of the country to work at plants like Boeing where they needed people. A lot of them stayed on after the war.

A lot of them that were in the military based in Seattle thought this was a great place to live, and they came back here and settled down. There were several that I knew in the shore patrol and they never went home. They joined the Seattle Police Department.

Q. So the jail being full is because the population had risen so much? The percentage of crime stayed the same, there were just more people?

Mr. Carlson There were more people, there was more activity all the time. You used to go home at 4:00 in the morning from a shift, and you never saw anybody. Later on, during wartime, there was just as much traffic then. All hours of the night - everything was going twenty-four hours a day.

Q. Seattle had always been a port town and maybe a little bit more wide open than, say, Spokane, because it had always had sailors coming into port here. Was there much of a change over and above that?

Mr. Carlson No, Seattle's always been a seaport town, and people from all over come here. From other countries, and always looking for something to do. They always seem to find a little action someplace.

Q. There was an article in the P-I in the fall of 1943 that juvenile cases in Seattle had increased a very great deal in the previous three years. What kinds of cases were juvenile involved in?

Mr. Carlson Well, growing up pains. Shoplifting, truancy, child-neglect at home. They had a women's division in the police department to handle all of those kind of investigations. I wasn't much involved in those things.

Q. I was wondering if it was harder to keep kids in high school when there were so many opportunities outside of school, working in the yards or in defense plants or even lying about your age to get into the service. I had heard about hot-rodding and siphoning gas.

Mr. Carlson Well, gasoline was a precious commodity. It was rationed, so I guess there were a lot of thefts of gasoline from cars. Somebody would have to get gas, and if they couldn't get it with their ration stamps, they went out and promoted some.

Q. Was there much fraud printing of gasoline tickets? Did the police department get involved with that, or was that Federal?

Mr. Carlson That would be more a Federal offense because the government issued all the rationing stamps.

Q. Do you know if there was any kind of counterfeiting of that kind of thing?

Mr. Carlson I don't recall any great problem in counterfeiting.

Q. Was there any incidence of racially oriented or racially motivated crime?

(as the tape ends, Mr. Carlson replies that he doesn't recall any)

Side B

Q. The homes and property belonging to the Japanese-Americans who had been interned, who moved into those houses? Do you know who took that property over on Capitol Hill and in the International District?

Mr. Carlson Well, I think a lot of them were just boarded up.

I know one time after things settled down and we were back on eight hour shifts, and everybody was busy and there were lots of extra jobs people could work at if they wanted. I always worked an extra job. At one time for six months I read light meters, not for the city, but for another electric company. They couldn't find meter readers, so they split the routes up in half routes, four hours of reading. That was a good job for me when I'd work all night eight hours up until noon I'd walk around reading meters. I read meters that had never been read for years!

One time I was out by the Charles Street dump, as they called it, and walking out there, a dog ran out and bit me. I knew where the dog came from, and they said, "Well, the dog's still here but the Japanese owners are gone. The place is boarded up. That's their dog, but I don't know who is responsible for the dog."

Q. Where did most of the Japanese-Americans live in Seattle?

Mr. Carlson Well, most of them south of the main business district, in Beacon Hill and Rainier Valley.

Q. When they handed in their cameras and short-wave radios, why would they have had short-wave radios in the first place? What was the purpose of owning them, do you know?

Mr. Carlson Well, I think just like now. People are ham radio operators and hobbyists. Everybody was suspect.

Q. When they left Seattle, were there any problems? Did they pretty much go quietly and willingly?

Mr. Carlson I don't remember any difficulties. They did what they had to do. They didn't understand why they had to leave, and probably shouldn't have had to leave, but something had to be done. There wasn't time to stop and figure everything out.

Q. Weren't there anti-aircraft gun emplacements at different points on the coast in Seattle? Do you remember where some of them were?

Mr. Carlson Out by Boeing Field, by the Boeing plant, at different high spots in the city. We had air raid sirens up at different locations. These anti-aircraft balloons - I remember them.

Q. How many of them were there? Did they fill the sky?

Mr. Carlson No, they were just in strategic places.

Q. How did they work?

Mr. Carlson These were just balloons [tied onto steel cables] up there that if any low-flying aircraft tried to come in, the balloons would be in the way. And knock them down.

Q. Did you ever go down and look at the Boeing plant with its camouflage?

Mr. Carlson I saw the buildings painted on the outside. It was painted different colors. They had plants and things on the roofs of some buildings. From the air, it just looked like a landscape and not a building.

Q. The wartime police department - were there a lot of automobiles on the force? Were there a lot of patrolmen going out in automobiles, or mostly on foot?

Mr. Carlson In the downtown area, they had a lot more foot patrolmen, the beat officers, than they do today. It's kind of mechanized now. But they had cars and motorcycles, and two way radios.

Nowadays, an individual officer gets out of his car and takes his walkie talkie with him and he's still in communication. In those days, if you left your car, you were away from your radio.

Q. Do you have any idea how many automobiles there were in the Seattle Police Force during the war?

Mr. Carlson No, I don't.

Q. A hundred?

Mr. Carlson Oh, yes!

Q. What would be the sequence of events if someone called in during the war and said that there was a robbery going on? What would happen? Who would take the call?

Mr. Carlson Well, if you called headquarters, and said there was a robbery going on or any big emergency, and somebody needed help immediately, the police officer that was on the switchboard would screen the calls and he'd take the first call. If there was a real emergency, he'd ring what we called a "bandit phone" in the booking office where I worked, and you dropped whatever you were doing and answered that call. You'd take the information on the phone and the police officer on duty on the switchboard was also the radio operator and he'd listen in. He could be putting out the information over the air while you were getting it down. You didn't have to take it down and then relay it to somebody, it was really a quick response.

Q. If a neighbor had phoned in, say a neighbor who was watching a bunch of kids joyride in front of her house, would patrolmen have gone out on that kind of a call in cars? What would the response have been?

Mr. Carlson Well, I think they'd have to the most urgent calls first. We did have a lot of calls, and there were backup calls. But the emergency calls screened on that bandit phone - there were lots of instances where we were still talking to the person complaining that somebody was breaking into their house right now. The police would arrive while they were still talking to you. They were amazed at the fast response. They'd think we were writing all this down, and they'd get a little impatient, "Well, send somebody!" We'd have to reassure them that the car's already on the way, just tell us what we need to know here.

Q. It sounds like a really modern system that was really pretty streamlined.

Mr. Carlson Well, it finally got so big that two people couldn't handle all the stuff that was going on. Instead of one clerk taking these calls and one radio operator, they had to expand and get a central complaint bureau, and several operators taking calls, and the radio operator wasn't a switchboard operator, just on the radio. They had to relay the calls.

Q. How has law enforcement changed between then and now? The job that you were doing then, and a similar job being done by somebody else now? Is there a greater volume, or a lesser volume? Is it more mechanized? Has the kind of crime changed?

Mr. Carlson Well, I think they're always figuring out some new crime to commit. The response is more technical now. All incoming calls are recorded. If you call the police, before the car arrives there, they can run the computer and see if there have ever been any other complaints at that address or anybody wanted at that address. Before the car even gets there. And they record everything.

We used to take a call and write down some notes in shorthand until the officers came back, and then you'd type out your report on the teletype. But now everything has a case number and everything's recorded. They can play back what you did wrong or what you said wrong or what you didn't do.

Q. You have a silent partner all the time.

Mr. Carlson Of course, everybody's more trained nowadays.

Q. At the beginning of the war, for that seven week period when you were working twelve hour shifts and probably for a little while after that, during the blackouts and when there was real fear of an invasion or a coastal bombardment, Seattle was essentially under martial law. Were people's civil rights respected? Were civil liberties? Was that something that you talked about as police officers - how to protect people from lawlessness but still protect their freedoms?

Mr. Carlson That didn't seem to be such a big issue in those days. Everybody was busy. You worked with different people, and everybody had their job to do. I think everybody got along great. We didn't have much trouble with racial relations, that I remember.

Q. Were you ever afraid that we might lose the war?

Mr. Carlson I really don't think so, no. We're too great a country for that. In an emergency, everybody bands together and we'll come out on top.

Q. The islands off the coast of Alaska were taken by the Japanese and that's getting pretty close to home - did you ever consider it a possibility that Washington State might be bombarded? Or did you regard that as very unlikely?

Mr. Carlson They were more afraid in the early part of the war that that might happen than later, when they were organized and able to take care of things. They did hit Alaska, shortly after Pearl Harbor, and I had a cousin that was stationed up there. He went out and said something to his buddy, "Gee, our planes are up there early this morning."

 And he said, "Yeah, maybe they're Zeroes."
 And they were. They started bombing then.

Q. That was very big news here in Seattle. Alaska's pretty close.

Mr. Carlson Alaska's just a short distance away. A lot of people who lived in Seattle worked in Alaska, and went back and forth.

Q. How old were your older children during the war? Were they old enough to know what was going on? Were they old enough to be afraid?

Mr. Carlson No, not really. They were young. At Pearl Harbor, our daughter was not quite three years old. Later, we had a boy. He was born in '43. He was just a baby during wartime.

Q. How did you yourself cope with tire rationing and gasoline rationing? Did you ever try to make any long trips? Did you have to save up your stamps?

Mr. Carlson Well, we pooled our gas stamps with two fellows who lived in the neighborhood where I did. I picked them up and they rode with me. We just used one car [to drive to and from work].

 About as far away as we could ever get with gas rationing was to take our kids up to Birch Bay up above Bellingham where we used to go when the kids were little. We'd have to save up our gas money to drive the hundred or so miles up there for a week's vacation.

Q. It sounds like people did work together much better than we know how to do now, in order to pool their ration stamps whether

for a big dinner or to pool their gas stamps for a trip like that.

Mr. Carlson I know there were a lot of things that weren't available in the grocery stores. They'd get something in and my wife would go up to the store, pull our little girl up there in the wagon. She'd go up there and come back and say, "Hey, they've got sugar up there!" And the other neighbors would run up there to get their's, because a lot of times you'd go up there to get something and they wouldn't have it. People helped each other out.

Q. Do you remember any changes in your entertaining during the war? The way that you would have a good time? What would you do for fun?

Mr. Carlson Well, I think we had more home parties. We couldn't go out any great distance. We'd go to dances at nights and on weekends, and have parties at home. All our friends were like us - raising young families. If we'd go out on weekends for picnics, we'd bring all our kids with us.

Q. The dances that you mention - were they local bands?

Mr. Carlson Oh, yes. We went every Saturday night to Dick Parker's pavilion out north of Seattle, at about 165th and Aurora.

Q. Oh! Parker's! It's still there.

Mr. Carlson We went there every Saturday night.

Q. Who were some of the big bands?

Mr. Carlson At those times, they had one band that would play there all the time. Put Anderson played at Dick Parker's every Saturday night.

 The Trianon Ballroom downtown, they'd have name bands that would travel around.

 Of course, the policemen always had the Policemen's Ball, every February 22. On Washington's Birthday weekend, they'd have the Policemen's Ball in Seattle, and the policemen in Everett and Vancouver, BC, they'd have a Policeman's Ball. We'd go back and forth to different ones at different times.

 When we went to the Policemen's Ball in Everett, they always had a big name band because these big name bands would travel around the country, and when they came to Seattle, would play at the Trianon ballroom for two or three nights, and then they'd go up to Everett and play a one night stand for the Policeman's Ball, and then go up to Vancouver to play. I remember one time we went to the Everett Policeman's Ball and Lawrence Welk's orchestra was there. My wife had known his band from back in the midwest where she grew up. So she went up and talked to Lawrence Welk, and asked him to play the "Beer Barrel Polka" -

Mrs. Carlson "Clarinet Polka."

Mr. Carlson "Clarinet Polka," correction! (chuckling) And he said, "Oh, we're too big for that now."

But later on, when he got his TV show, he was playing the "Clarinet Polka" every time.

Q. Who were some of the other really big bands then? Who did you really like to go hear?

Mr. Carlson Well, we just went to that local dance hall, but we'd go out to the Highline Spanish Castle which was on the highway to Tacoma. They had a big dancehall there and sometimes we'd go there. But usually we'd go on out to Dick Parker's pavilion.

Seems like Skinny Ennis was one band they had up at Everett one time. But there were a lot of live bands in those days.

Q. Were there big bond rallies in Seattle?

Mr. Carlson Oh, yes, we had Victory Square downtown by the Olympic Hotel. That was called Victory Square, and they had big bond rallies, "Buy savings bonds!" Dignitaries would come and give you a pep talk.

We all had our Victory gardens at home. When we bought our first house in '43, we didn't put in a lawn, we put in a big garden in the backyard.

Q. What did you raise in your garden?

Mr. Carlson We raised corn and beans, vegetables of all kinds.

Q. Did you can them?

Mr. Carlson Oh, yes, my wife still cans. Not so much any more, but in those days, we canned everything.

Q. Did most people have Victory gardens?

Mr. Carlson Oh, half the people did, I guess.

Q. Did you yourself buy bonds?

Mr. Carlson Yes, we had bonds through payroll deduction at work. I think everybody did, then.

Q. Did you go to any of those bond rallies downtown?

Mr. Carlson Oh, sure, they were fun.

Q. Who did you see? Do you remember any of the dignitaries you saw?

Mr. Carlson No, I don't remember, but they were people in the entertainment business.

Q. People like the Andrews Sisters, or actresses, or mayors?

Mr. Carlson Actors, actresses, and musicians - professional entertainers who would donate their time.

Q. Where was Victory Square and what did it look like?

Mr. Carlson They had a big bandstand at Victory Square, by the Olympic Hotel on University Street. That's one of the big wide streets downtown. In the course of the last Presidential election, that's where they would have outdoor rallies. The whole block was decorated.

Q. Did you go downtown V-E day?

Mr. Carlson I don't recall just what I did V-J day. I know there were just mobs of people downtown - that was in 1945. When the news came out on the radio from the President that the war was over, all the city offices closed and the mayor declared a two day holiday. And he closed all the city offices - except the police department. They had to stay on duty, and they were busy. There were just mobs of people downtown. Traffic could hardly move and it was just like New Year's Eve. Downtown at Fourth and Pike was just jammed with people, and traffic stalled, and in Chinatown, they were celebrating. And the policemen were standing by to make sure that things didn't get out of order too much, out of hand too much. As long as there wasn't any serious property damage or injury, they just went along with it. They were thrilled/

Q. They probably wanted to dance in the street as much as everybody else did.

Mr. Carlson You bet.

Q. It must have been a wonderful time. You had not been in the war yourself - did it ever seem as though the war had just gone on and on and on? Did you think it would be over before it was?

Mr. Carlson Well, it seemed it ended awfully suddenly. It seemed that it would go on and on and on, because of the news.

 I remember when we lived down by Lake Union in a duplex, an old lady that owned the property lived alone upstairs and things were just huckledy-buck in town. And the shipyard - we could look out our window and see the shipyard going twenty four hours a day, and I went up there one time to see her and this was in February of 1942. She was usually reading a book in Swedish about astronomy. Here she had the newspaper there and she said, "Isn't the war awful? I sure hope we don't get involved."

 Poor old lady. She was hoping we wouldn't get involved and that was two months after Pearl Harbor, and everything was happening.

Q. Would you say that Seattle changed permanently because of the war? You were on the force in '38, and on the force afterward - was there a change that never went back?

Mr. Carlson Oh, yes, things went ahead. Better training for police officers, more equipment.

Q. In Seattle itself, did that large population rise during the war go away or stay?

Mr. Carlson A lot of them stayed, and went back and got their families to bring them to Washington to live. They decided that "We don't want to go back where we grew up, we want to go out there - it's wonderful country out there."

The population increased.

When I first worked for the city, you had to be a city resident to be a city employee. Later they changed that, and people started to move out to the suburbs and commute back and forth. Seattle actually had a drop in population when that was occurring because people were moving out to Bellevue or north. The suburban areas and shopping centers were growing up, and Seattle actually had a drop in population, just like some of the other big cities where people commute back and forth.

Q. Right after the war, when Boeing decreased its workforce and the shipyards were laying off a lot of people because the war contracts were cancelled. Were there a lot of footloose people in Seattle who were unemployed?

Mr. Carlson No, I don't recall any great unemployment.

Q. So they must have converted to some kind of postwar production? They couldn't continue to build B-29's at that rate and sell them to anybody.

Mr. Carlson All those big plants went back to manufacturing other things. All during the war, they didn't manufacture automobiles. I ordered a new car in the early '40's, when they weren't manufacturing cars, and it wasn't until 1947 that I could get a new car. They started making them again in '46 but I was on a waiting list to get my new car.

Q. When did you get on the waiting list?

Mr. Carlson In the early '40's.

Q. Really! I knew they weren't making cars, but I didn't realize that the waiting lists had gone on through the whole war.

How about other big consumer items, like refrigerators, could you buy them during the war?

Mr. Carlson Well, mostly, things were concentrated on war materials. A lot of that production was cut back.

Q. There was one question I had forgotten to ask on the other side of the tape when we were talking about Seattle during wartime. What was the traffic like? Was there a big increase in traffic? Seems like with so many people car pooling, maybe there wouldn't be, but on the other hand, there were so many people trying to commute to Bremerton, or trying to get to Boeing - what was the traffic like?

Mr. Carlson It was terrific, there was a lot of traffic.

Before, all your traffic was in the daytime - pretty soon everything was going twenty-four hours a day so there was traffic all hours of the day and night. A lot of people did commute on the ferry over to Bremerton to work in the shipyard. And there was a lot of carpooling.

The street cars were packed, and then they took the street cars off and got electric trolleys and motorized buses. I remember when they took the street cars away before the war, and sold all the metal rails to Japan. They took all the scrap metal over to their country. I guess we got some of it back in a different form.

We had scrap metal drives during the war that we participated in.

Q. You individually or the police department?

Mr. Carlson The whole city. I remember getting all the scrap metal you had and taking it to a central collection place.

Q. Was it easy to get traffic signals? I have read that in Kirkland, with the shipyard building up, they were desperate to get a stoplight, and they couldn't get a priority to get one. Did Seattle have any difficulty getting goods and materials?

Mr. Carlson Well, we had traffic signals. They were blacked out, too.

Q. There must have been a lot of fender benders with blacked out traffic signals.

Mr. Carlson Probably was. In those days, when I first worked in the traffic division as a clerk there, any accident over \$25.00 damage, you had to report on a state form. If you reported every \$25.00 accident today, they'd be lined up for blocks. In those days, a person came in to report a traffic accident, and you gave them the form to fill out and they filled out one side and drew a diagram of how it happened. Then they brought it back to the counter, and we reversed the carbons, put it in the typewriter, and we asked them the questions and filled out the rest of the form for them. We used all those for statistics. If they had to do that nowadays, they'd need a real army of typists to fill out forms for them.

Q. Did a lot of the officers who had gone with the armed forces or the shore patrol come back into the Seattle Police Department after the war?

Mr. Carlson Oh, yes, most of them came back. In fact most [all] of them did. Some of them were practically at retirement and went into the service anyway because they'd had previous military service, or were in the reserves. They passed a law that everybody's job would be protected if they were in the military service. Some of them never came back because their years in the service added to their previous time, and they had enough time to retire and not come back.

Q. Was there ever any move to hire women into the police department to take the place of guys who had gone into the

service?

Mr. Carlson Well, that came a little later. We had always had police women in the Women's Division, but they never worked in a uniform until later on. They started hiring women and they started wearing uniforms - some of them threatened to quit if they had to go out and ride in prowler cars...