

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

Transcript

Mildred and Parker Cook - taped interview
December 6, 1984

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Side A

This is an interview with Mr. Parker Cook, on the 6th of December, 1984. The interviewer is Lorraine McConaghy for the Museum of History and Industry.

Q. I'm going to start out by asking you if you can describe Garfield High and Capitol Hill just before the war...

Mr. Cook Garfield High School was, of course, very prominent at that time. It was the only school up on the hill - the only big school - and it was brand new. Shiny red brick and white terracotta trim.

Capitol Hill, at that time, had several different economic districts. There was the original Capitol Hill which was, of course, the founding fathers of the city, like the Denny's and the Duthie's. They lived up around Volunteer Park.

Then, the Central Area was a black community, but it was a very small black community because there weren't very many blacks in the city. They lived around Twelfth through Twentieth, and East Madison.

Then, there was a Jewish community around Yesler Way - almost the whole length of Yesler Way, from the downtown area to Lake Washington, to Leschi.

And then the Orientals, a little south of that, getting into the Mt. Baker area. And there were a lot of Italian gardens and the Japanese, particularly, were occupying a lot of those gardens with the Italians. The Italians all went to Franklin, and the Japanese all went to Garfield.

So that was pretty much the racial and economic [make-up]...

Now, another thing - There was then, of course, as there still is, the Broadmoor area which was highly restricted and all those students went to Garfield.

Mrs. Cook And Washington Park, too, honey.

Mr. Cook Oh, yes.

Mrs. Cook Washington Park, and Denny-Blaine.

Mr. Cook Yes, a very wealthy community.

Q. Madison Park?

Mr. Cook Yes.

And I think that was one of the things that made

the school such an ideal place. Every race and every economic situation was represented there, and it didn't make any difference.

I used to think it was a wonderful thing to watch some millionaire's son from Broadmoor opening up a hole in the line so a Negro halfback could score the touchdown and get all the publicity. But Garfield won the touchdown!

As I've said so many times, of the forty-three years I was there, the first forty years - as a teacher, particularly a teacher in an art - was an ideal situation.

Q. It sounds cosmopolitan - it sounds like the best of an urban school situation.

Mr. Cook It surely was.

Well, if a teacher could get a job there, no other teacher would get that job until he died or did something so horrible that he'd be fired! (laughing)

Q. What was the curriculum like that you taught right before the war?

Mr. Cook You mean that I personally taught?

Q. Yes, you personally.

Mr. Cook Well, I personally taught nothing but music. I had music theory, and any choral classes, and the Senior Orchestra, and the band. Now that was when I first started teaching, and then in about five years another man came in that did part of the instrumental work and the band. And from then on it's been a two man department.

Q. Did you do any theatrics?

Mr. Cook Oh, yes, every year there was what we used to call Spring operetta, and we did things like "Desert Song," "The Rogue Song," "The Fortuneteller," "Red Mill," "Student Prince"...

Q. With your mixed racial classes?

Mr. Cook It didn't make any difference.

Q. It must have been really wonderful.

Mr. Cook At one time. Now, this was later on, in 1964, I received an honor from the Chamber of Commerce, and during a television interview, the interviewer said, "Well, with all the races that you have up there" - and by that time, Garfield was about 40% black, because that was after the war, and the war brought in so many of them - "how do you solve your problems? You must do it well because we don't hear anything about it."

And I said, "There aren't any."

I didn't see very many fights among students at all, but I don't think in all the years that I was there I

saw more than two that were based on race.

Q. How did you hear about the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor?

(There is a sudden increase in volume as we rearrange seating.)

Mr. Cook We got a telephone call late that afternoon from Mildred's sister whose husband was a Naval officer stationed in Adak, in the Aleutian Islands. She told us about it, and we immediately turned on our radio, and spent the whole rest of the evening listening to it and speculating.

Of course, the following morning at school, people were just kind of dazed, particularly the Japanese. Most of them were just devastated, and wondering what in the world was going to happen to them.

Q. What were their speculations? What was the range of things that the kids were talking about when you got to school?

Mr. Cook They weren't talking.
I'd say, "Well, how are you today?"
And they'd say, "Oh, Mr. Cook, we feel very sad, very sad."

And then the whole Japanese community here in the city just leaned over backwards to be as patriotic and loyal as possible. They tried to make the most favorable impression - which they did! It came as quite a surprise to me - and it was quite sudden - that the War Department decided that all people of Japanese ancestry who lived on the coast would be moved back from the coast. It was very suddenly done.

I lost practically all my string section in the orchestra. And they never did come back to Garfield, in any numbers at all.

Q. Did you hear from them by mail?

Mr. Cook No, no. Not very much.

You were asking some questions about - how did you express it? - the curfew laws? Of course, Seattle had always had a certain amount of curfew for the younger children, and I can remember as a little kid that I was supposed to be in at nine o'clock, or something like that. And off the streets.

So that wasn't too much of an issue.

But as you say, as you've pointed out, some of the older kids had a little more money and so they probably resented it somewhat. Although, we had no experience around school of vandalism. Nothing at all.

Q. I should mention for the tape that we were talking earlier about a rise in the incidence of juvenile cases that came before Seattle courts [during the war], and that you saw no real reflection of that at Garfield.

You were working with kids fourteen to eighteen?

Mr. Cook Almost entirely. Junior high schools hadn't started. So we took them from ninth grade through the twelfth.

Q. I wanted to ask another question about the internment, if that's all right. What was the reaction of the other students to the Japanese-American students? Was there any farewell to them?

Mr. Cook No, not particularly.

I suppose it was rather natural that there would be this great surge of patriotism because, actually, that attack on Pearl Harbor was such a surprise attack that it left the whole nation aghast. You could hardly believe it.

Everybody was very resentful. There was a lot of anti-enemy [feeling].

But there was no beating of them or teasing them or anything like that.

Q. So you would have no sense of their being put into internment camps for their own safety?

Mr. Cook No. They certainly didn't speak of that.

My concert-master blamed the Army - he said, "The Army's doing all this." And they (Japanese-Americans) resented just as much as you or I would resent being told I had to live someplace else now. They felt they were just as much Americans as we were, which of course they were - they were born here.

Q. What percentage of the student body would you say left in the internment from Garfield?

Mr. Cook Oh, I would say, maybe 10 per cent.

Mrs. Cook That would only be 200 - do you think it was only 200? The school was 2000, wasn't it?

Mr. Cook Well, maybe a little more than that, but it wasn't a lot more, because we didn't have all the Orientals. Franklin had a lot of Orientals. And Broadway - Broadway High School was still operating then, and they had a lot of Orientals. In fact, I think they had more Orientals than the other schools.

Q. Did you have any Japanese-Americans on the faculty?

Mr. Cook No.

Q. After internment, did the black kids... Well, you had said there had always been a percentage of black kids in the school, did the new black children who came with families from the South begin coming right away, or was there a lag?

Mr. Cook It was gradual, but very insistent. All of a

sudden, we realized we were getting more and more blacks, and they were less and less well-prepared. Their English was faulty, but still they weren't giving us any difficulty.

Mrs. Cook The attitude was a lot different than the blacks are now in school.

Q. From them themselves, or toward them?

Mrs. Cook Their reaction in school, their willingness to get in and study. That kind of thing. But I realize that a lot of that has changed for both black and white. The black students at that time were not like the black students now.

Mr. Cook Well, the original black students that we had - their families had lived here for a long time and they were good-average students. In fact, Homer Harris, and a lot of them, were quite outstanding.

Mrs. Cook Quincy Jones. There were a lot of outstanding blacks.

Their families did live in a certain area - there was certainly a black area in Seattle. As far as neighborhoods were concerned, there were restricted areas. It was posted on the telephone poles - there were restricted areas in this city.

Pretty much, the black students at that time were eager to get along academically as well as socially, as well as in extracurricular activities as were the whites.

Q. How would you describe the adjustment, then, of these in-migrant blacks who came after '41?

Mr. Cook They became a little more truculent as they came in. They began to kind of have a chip on their shoulder. Not really so much until '68 - when the Watts riots started.

Q. So you're talking of long after the war...

Mr. Cook Oh, during the war, no.

Q. How was their adjustment during the war, did you see any...

Mr. Cook Oh, it was very good, because they were making money up here, and they'd never ever had it before. They were happy as larks.

Q. Did they bring anything with them from the South that was perceived as a value? I'm thinking of music, frankly. Did you have any good blues singers in your classes?

Mr. Cook Well, no, because, at the time, I wasn't teaching blues. I was strictly classical. And, at that

time - now I'm speaking of before the war and in the very early days of it - but after the war, we began feeling the wealth of the blues from the South. And then people like - well, probably our most famous is Quincy Jones. He entered Garfield as a sophomore in about 1955. At that time, he had a band of his own - a kid like that! - that was playing at the Black and Tan.

Mrs. Cook But that was only one, honey. You didn't have a whole crew.

Mr. Cook No, but she asked, "Did they bring anything with them?" - well, here's something.

Mrs. Cook I don't think you can say that they brought a lot with them. Ones like Quincy Jones were outstanding - and his father was a postman.

Mr. Cook Yes, he wasn't out of the South.

Mrs. Cook They had minimum income, but they had parents who had a tremendous amount of understanding and ambition for them - and discipline. I think there were eight children, weren't there? And they lived across the street from the school, and all the kids worked and were in school. I think the father was a postman, but he was determined that they were all going to be in school.

Q. Did you have any opportunity to get to know the parents of any of these newcomers?

Mr. Cook Well, not a great deal. I knew some of the real outstanding ones, yes.

Q. How did you perceive what brought them here?

Mr. Cook Well, it was purely economic. They didn't come up to get away from the South, they came up because they could get jobs here. And people like Boeing and Kaiser Aluminum and the shipyards were advertising for them, "Come on up here! Go to work, we need you."

There was good money.

Mrs. Cook And those companies sent recruiting teams all over the United States, but particularly in the South.

They were salaried men and women who went out.

Q. I have often wondered if those recruiting teams in the South were black themselves - if they targeted their audience.

Mr. Cook Well, people we know from here were white college graduates who went down there to recruit.

Q. Did you think that kids' responsibilities changed during the war? Did it get harder to be a teenager?

Mr. Cook No, I don't think so.

There was more for them to do, in my line at least. It seemed I was always having caravans of cars going out to Fort Lewis and Fort Flagler, and places around here, for USO shows. Two or three times a week.

Mrs. Cook I understood your question differently. You're talking about the individuals - was it harder for them. Parker's talking about his groups that were so busy at that time and afterwards.

Q. I was thinking of just the general run of the kids - whether he (Mr. Cook) had perceived any increase in their workload. On the phone, you'd said that it was hard to get male leads...

Mr. Cook Oh, yes, because they weren't in school.

Q. Well, that seems to me like an added responsibility that kids didn't have prior to the war.

Mr. Cook Yes, that's right, because they could get good money working at odd jobs in industry, or in commerce. And also, it was much more glamorous to wear a uniform - and a lot of them were lying about their age to get in service.

Q. Did the girls go for uniforms?

Mr. Cook Oh, boy, did they! Yes, they sure did.

Q. You'd said that it was hard to get male leads - what did you mean?

Mr. Cook I meant that there weren't boy singers in school.

Q. For the operettas?

Mr. Cook Yes, that's what I meant.

Q. So how did you compensate?

Mr. Cook I didn't have operettas - I had concerts instead, which didn't depend upon soloists.

Q. Did the music curriculum change in any other way besides that during wartime? Did you find yourself teaching a different kind of music?

Mr. Cook More popular music - particularly popular war songs, and yes, we followed the popular trend. In fact, the orchestras died out, and never did come back. Very few high schools now have them at all. They have bands, because you can develop a band player in a much shorter length of time because he's not a soloist. You have a clarinet player in an orchestra, and he's first or second clarinet and a soloist. In a band, he's one of thirty. So you can develop a band much more rapidly.

Q. Do you know of any changes in curriculum outside of

music, just of your own knowledge? Like, at Kirkland High School, they dropped the agriculture program during the war. Were there any change like that?

Mr. Cook Well, we never had an agriculture program. But yes, the sciences were beefed up - there were many more offerings in science. And particularly after the war, Garfield was one of the first to have a class in nuclear physics. So yes, there was much more interest in the sciences, and less in the humanities.

That was a strange thing, too. Before the war, just before the war, we had two teachers teaching German, one fulltime and one parttime. By fulltime, one had five classes in German and the other had two or three. Almost all of them were Japanese students, and when they were moved out, there were no students in German language any more, except a few scientists. So that shows that there was a community of interest between some of the Japanese people and the German people because there was that terrific interest on the part of the Japanese students in the German language.

Q. Now that puzzles me. I had not ever thought about that. I wonder what that does mean.

Mr. Cook Well, I think just what I said. There was a community of interest, and German, of course, is the language of science. A student interested in science would go for German at some time in his life because he's going to need it, particularly when he gets up into schools like MIT.

Q. You said that your choral groups provided entertainment in the community and at the USOs - could you describe a USO to me? What was it like?

Mr. Cook United Service Organization.

It was organized exclusively for the entertainment of enlisted people of the armed forces. And we would put on concerts and sometimes we'd go out, and it would always be supervised by the chaplain. And we'd do a short concert - maybe 45 minutes to an hour - and then there'd punch and cookies and a little dancing to the juke-box. Soldiers were allowed to ask the girls to dance, but the girls weren't required to dance with them if they didn't want to. I never saw anybody refuse. (laughing) They had a good time.

Q. I bet they had fun.

Mr. Cook I'd have to herd them back into cars about ten o'clock to try to get them back home in time, cause they had to drive back to Seattle.

Q. Can you give me an idea of a program of songs that you might have performed at a USO?

Mr. Cook Oh, gee. Well, the hits from "The Sound of

Music," from "Oklahoma," from "Carousel." An awful lot of show tunes.

Mrs. Cook And the Fred Waring arrangements.

Mr. Cook Yes.

Q. Did you every try to do a small vocal group doing the Andrews Sisters, or something like that?

Mr. Cook Well, my nonnette. The International Trio - I can take credit for training them, but I didn't discover them. They were a Black, a Filipina, and a Japanese girl, and a white accompanist. And they had formed this trio, and tried out for this vaudeville entertainment. And they were good, so I really got interested in them. They sang an awful lot, throughout the city.

Q. When did they perform?

Mr. Cook In the late forties, and early fifties.

Q. Talking about the arts community here in Seattle, in general, you've said that entertainment tastes - that people were interested in entertainment in a popular way. Did movies change? Did the Symphony change? Could you see a shift in the arts community because we were at war?

Mr. Cook Yes, I think so. Interest grew in the Symphony, partly because of an unusual circumstance because Sir Thomas Beacham, one of the great British conductors, found himself stranded over here, and he didn't want to go back to Europe. So he took a job conducting the Seattle Symphony. And of course, he was a man of international reputation.

Q. That was a rather stormy time, wasn't it?

Mr. Cook Oh! It sure was! It was more fun! (laughing)
He was a peppery guy - a splendid musician. At the same time, he had a devastatingly sharp tongue. I was tickled.

I was privileged to hear some of his rehearsals, and it was really run.

Q. Could you describe one? I was just reading in the P-I, in October of '43, that he had stormed off the stage.

Mr. Cook Yes, he did. I can describe that to you.

I think that was his first concert, and a man by the name of Lynch - Fred Lynch -

Side B

- had a front row seat. And he had a camera with an infrared flash on it, and he was taking pictures during the opening number. And Sir Thomas noticed it, and he was conducting, and he turned around, and noticed the guy. He turned around and said, "Leave the hall!"

He said, "Well, I'm sorry."
And he said, "Well, you should be sorry. Leave the hall!"

So the guy did the only thing he could do. He picked up his camera and walked out of there - the full length of the theatre. Some elderly ladies were saying, "Oh, isn't that terrible!" and tittering about it.

And then Sir Thomas turned around and said, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, we will play this number as it should be - without interruption!"

That was his opening concert.

Now this may be expurgated. But one time, during rehearsal - and he loved to make fun of a player - and some young man came in at the wrong time. And Sir Thomas talked to him, and said, "Well, now, what instrument do you play?"

And the fellow said, "The triangle."

And Sir Thomas said, "Oh, now, isn't that nice? I play the triangle, too. Of course, I learned to play other things, too. Do you play other things, too?"

"Oh, yes, the drums - the bass drum."

"Okay, then, let's take this passage." And they took the passage through, and made it. And he said, "Now what is your dynamic marking there?"

And the fellow said, "Forte."

"Forte! Now that means strong! Beat the goddamn thing!!"

And that was Sir Thomas... (laughing)

Q. A strong-minded man like that - was he as willing to play Puccini and Wagner as Benjamin Britten?

Mr. Cook Oh, yes, oh, yes.

Q. There was never any problem?

Mr. Cook Oh, no. We still have a recording of his of the entire opera of La Boheme. In fact, you hear him singing part of the time. That's another story told about him - after one of the performances, one of the singers came up to him and sarcastically said, "You were in good voice, Sir Thomas."

And he said, "Somebody had to sing the goddamn opera." (laughing)

He gave Seattle its money's worth.

Q. Did you ever have any feedback from anyone against playing German or Italian music during the war?

Mr. Cook Oh, no. It never even occurred to me.

Now in the First World War - now I'm old enough that I remember the First World War, although I was only thirteen when it was over. But I remember then that German music was not played in the United States.

But the second time, there was none of that at all.

And it never even occurred to me that anybody might object to Italian music.

Here's one thing that might be interesting, though it's not to do with Seattle. The day that Pearl Harbor [was attacked] - December 7, 1942 - on a Sunday. On that Sunday, the Metropolitan [Opera] was to open with the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, "The Mikado."

And it opens with a male chorus, "We're the gentlemen of Japan, Da da da da da da," (singing) and they ran the show as scheduled, except "We're the gangsters from Japan." And that was the only reference they made to it. They went right along with it.

Q. Well, having done all those rehearsals, they had to put the show on!

a slight break

Q. How would you both describe Seattle's role in the homefront?

Mr. Cook Well, it was very patriotic, very enthusiastic. You could hardly ask for something that would be refused, if a person could. Like, in the way of sacrifice, or giving to this or that. In fact, I think, there were more people who wanted to be air raid wardens than there were places for them.

See, we felt very close to things. We were right here on the coast. I remember feeling that I wasn't too much worried about Germany - it was quite a ways away, but there was only one ocean between us and Japan.

We felt very enthusiastic about war support.

Q. You mentioned that on Pearl Harbor night, you talked with one another and speculated on what might happen - do you remember what your speculations were?

Mr. Cook Oh, yes. I wondered - in fact, we got the word to black out the whole city. And that means you, you know - you don't have the lights going. And Mildred and I -

Mrs. Cook We had blackout curtains.

Mr. Cook Well, we didn't have them then. We used tarpaper to blacken the windows.

[Our speculations were] Do you suppose that we will have an attack here? I didn't think we would have a fullscale landing, but I fully expected we would have some bombing, particularly with the Boeing plant.

And the Boeing plant was really stepped-up and it was fully camouflaged. That was a strange sight, of course, to see that great camp which had been nothing but these gray buildings. Not a camp, so much, as a great factory, along the Duwamish River. And all of a sudden - within a week after Pearl Harbor - we got out there on the bus along the Duwamish River, on old Highway 99, and those buildings were painted like a cliff with raw sand, and with false greenery put on top of them. It was a splendid job of camouflaging.

So, oh, yes, it was very serious.

And then, of course, the shipyards stepped up activity. We had several big shipyards that were going twentyfour hours a day.

And remember at that time the Ice Follies and the Ice Capades came through, and they would do what they called "Swingshift Shows," almost twenty-four hours a day, too, to take care of the people that worked odd hours.

Intense activity.

Mrs. Cook And civilian defense started at that time. And the Red Cross. I was on the street, and met a friend of Parker's. There's ten years difference in our ages, and she was Parker's age, but was a very dear friend of mine. We were horrified like everybody else - this was within two or three days of Pearl Harbor.

The Red Cross had an appeal immediately, advertising classes for first aid. So I took that. And then I became a first aid instructor, and I was teaching three or four classes a week, and Parker was involved...

Mr. Cook I was in the ambulance corps. I was a captain, and she was my sergeant. (laughing)

Mrs. Cook And one of the men at the university, the associate director, and Parker were the wardens, the coordinators, of the Northeast area [of Seattle]. We went through all of the process of what we would do, simulating injuries and what you would do to actually get there.

It was a tremendous involvement.

Mr. Cook Yes, mock air raids.

Q. Do you remember - were the hospitals involved?

Mrs. Cook Oh, yes, hospitals and doctors. It was city-coordinated, it wasn't just little groups of people.

And they went through these to be sure that everything did mesh.

The hospitals were involved, the doctors were involved, the area wardens, first aid teams - it was enormous.

Mr. Cook The schools were involved. In fact, most of the first aid stations were schools.

Q. And it was all volunteer?

Mrs. Cook It was all volunteer.

It was just unbelievable and well done. You were hoping that you would never have to really walk through it, but on the practices, it went wonderfully well.

People were there where they were supposed to be. I was a first aid instructor, and I was teaching five to seven classes a week, teaching a couple in the day and a couple in the evening. And all the classes were between twenty and thirty - the idea being that everybody should know enough about first aid to not only help themselves, but to help their neighbor. And that was one of the

themes.

The main thing was, to know how to stop excessive bleeding. And so you really learned those pressure points, and you really learned where to put those bandages. That's what everybody was concentrating on - you were thinking of being hit and having excessive bleeding.

Mr. Cook Yes, you can die faster that way than you can from anything else, bleeding from an artery.

Mrs. Cook So all this was organized. And Parker and the Assistant Director of P.E. at the University of Washington were co-captains of the Northeast area for air raids.

Mr. Cook And talk about contrasts... He was a tall man, kind of a rugged type, with closecropped curly hair. And I had my stature, and I was probably about ten pounds lighter then than I am now. Between us, we were doing traction and everything. And Mildred was there, many times, because she was small, and she was the easiest one to handle as far as putting traction on.

Q. Oh, I see, you got to be the dummy! (laughing)
Besides bleeding problems like that, was there any training for burns and poison gases?

Mr. Cook Oh, Yes.

Mrs. Cook The bleeding aspect was number one.

Mr. Cook And burns - leave them alone. That was the main thing. In first aid, anything you put on them, the doctor would have to take off, so just leave it alone. Try to protect it, but leave it alone.

Mrs. Cook Actually, those are about the only two things that we were to instruct everybody - artificial resuscitation and put something over the burns, but don't touch them in any way. No medication of any kind, and no grease.

But we had the air raid drills where you were splinting legs, and things like that. And how are you going to get them into ambulances...

Mr. Cook We had makeshift ambulances, you see.

Q. Out of private automobiles?

Mr. Cook Out of private automobiles or vans and trucks - things of that sort.

Mrs. Cook It was an enormous compilation of people that would be mobilized in every neighborhood in the city.

Q. The coordination must have been just horrendous.

Mr. Cook It was, it was.
We lived just a block north of the campus, and

of course Spence Reeves, our coordinator, was on the faculty so we had the organization of the university right close by. It was a little easier for us to organize than it was many of the places which were entirely bedroom communities.

Q. Did you ever feel - you said that there was a time when you thought there might be shelling of the coast...

Mr. Cook During the first month. After that, I thought, if they haven't done it by now, they're not going to do it now because all the time was giving the United States time to recoup, to regroup their forces.

I'm really convinced that if the Japanese had known how devastating that attack was on Pearl Harbor, that they could have made a very strong bid for winning the war right then. We were practically knocked out of the Pacific, and the horrible mistake of leaving that entire fleet there like sitting ducks!

Q. In the newspapers during the war, there's so much sermonizing against optimism - editorial after editorial. Statements from Washington that people are becoming too confident about the outcome of the war - this as early as late 42 - that there might be years of the war to come. Did you perceive any over-optimism? Did it become harder to get people to work hard?

Mr. Cook It became harder for me not to be complacent. I just felt - Oh, the United States and a little country like Japan! Well, my God, there's nothing to it!

And you start to think, well, they're smart, too, and they wouldn't have attacked unless they thought that they had some chance. And then when we began to get reports on what ships were out of commission, and then we realized that [things were bad].

Well, I think all Americans have this feeling that America can't be defeated. I remember I heard one good speech, and if you'll believe it, it was by Sally Rand.

Q. The fan dancer?!

Mr. Cook The fan dancer, yes, that's right.

She was in Seattle, and it was during these first two or three months. She was speaking at a Lions Club convention, a Lions Club meeting, at which I was singing. She was doing a bubble show here in Seattle, but she was also doing a lot of USO talking.

Mrs. Cook She was out making money for the USO.

Mr. Cook Her talk was, "We Can't Lose This War, But We Could." We must not lose it, but we could lose it. She was using balloons at that time instead of fans - she called herself a bubble dancer. And she said, "Gentlemen, with the shortage of rubber, I'm running out of costume! You'd better come and see me soon!"

Q. To get back to the kids for a minute, did you ever see any fear or pessimism or tension in the kids you taught over the course of the war? Or were they confident that by the time they graduated from high school, it would be over?

Mr. Cook Yes, although a lot of the boys thought they were going in the service. And a lot of them did, because we kept compulsory service on for several years after that.

But no, I don't think any one of our friends or acquaintances - and she's right, there is quite a difference in our ages - had any real fear that we'd lose the war. Did you?

Mrs. Cook No, I think they felt very confident that eventually we would win, but I don't think anyone felt we would win it tomorrow.

It was a long haul. And everybody was just really zeroed in with food rationing and gasoline rationing - and everything was rationed, and it was almost instantaneous.

Mr. Cook And very few of them tried to cheat on it.

Mrs. Cook All services were gone - and you realized how quickly our lives had changed, and I mean really changed. That was the thing that hit everyone the hardest first - the rationing.

Mr. Cook Gasoline rationing - four gallons a week!

Q. How did you get around?

Mr. Cook Well, used the buses or walked. You used your car when you really had to.

Q. How far did four gallons take you in your car at that time?

Mr. Cook That was a strange thing - I had bought my first big car. It was a '41 Buick - it was an eight cylinder car. And that four gallons would have taken me back and forth to school. I rode the bus to school and that meant a transfer. I could drive to school in eight minutes, and it took me almost an hour to get to school on the bus.

We would use the car - we did have a place up in the mountains that we liked to go to occasionally, and we'd save our gas and go up there once every six weeks or so.

Mrs. Cook The rationing was the hardest on everybody - it was such an abrupt, fast change of lifestyle. We had never had rationing.

Food stamps - you had to have food stamps for butter and meat and things like that. Up 'til then, in the United States, you went to the store and bought what you wanted.

Mr. Cook Sugar was rationed, too.

Q. I wanted to ask you - how did you cope? how did you cook?

Mrs. Cook Well, you cooked quite differently. You didn't whip out to the kitchen and bake up a batch of cookies, or a cake, or anything that required a cup of sugar. That was too much for a recipe. And, of course, there were recipes that were designed pretty quickly to use a minimum of shortening, a minimum of sugar.

But the rationing was imposed almost immediately, and the members of the school district - all the teachers - were the ones that were just drafted, whether they like it or not.

Mr. Cook Yes, we were assigned to issue all these ration books - and it was quite a job.

Mrs. Cook And it was just unbelievably fast.

Q. (to Mr. Cook) Could you describe issuing those books?

Mr. Cook Sure. The dates would be set - and the first one was Washington's birthday, wasn't it? - and school would close. Instead of having school, we had a holiday. But no teachers got a holiday - you reported to your school, and at that time, the people who lived in that area reported there to pick up their ration books. So we had to register them, and alphabetize them, and - oh, it was one hell of a job!

And it was all - well, I was going to say "volunteer," but it wasn't, it was gratis. (laughing)

Mrs. Cook The school district superintendent who said the teachers were going to do this, which was perfectly okay because it was something that had to be done. And so to mobilize the teachers was the easiest, fastest way to get it done.

Mr. Cook It took two days, I think, and we had to do it three times. Each time, it took two days out of a weekend.

Mrs. Cook And then you'd have to go to the store, and you'd - well, the red stamps were for meat, though I forget all the colors. You saved your stamps so that you could buy X number of pounds of meat if you were going to have a special dinner or a special party.

Mr. Cook Like a roast. If you wanted a ham, you'd better save those red stamps for quite a while.

Mrs. Cook Everything was charted and you saved your red meat stamps, and you saved up for butter. That's when margarine became first colored - it used to be white - and you had to color it yourself during the war years. But it was after the war that margarine came colored like butter. But up until then, that was the difference between the rich and the poor.

Mr. Cook Well, margarine wasn't rationed, and butter was.

Mrs. Cook But, actually, it was just a status thing.

Q. What did you use to color it - yellow food coloring?

Mr. Cook Each pound would have a little capsule of coloring material with it.

Mrs. Cook There'd always been margarine and butter, but during the war years, they added the color. The poor people had always used margarine, and those that were a little more affluent had butter. But during the war years, we didn't have butter.

Mr. Cook Are you recording all this?

Q. Yes.

Mr. Cook, to Mrs. Cook She's going to have quite a tape!

Q. I was going to ask you if this change - rationed food, rationed gas, rationed tires - did it change your social life? Did it change the way you entertained?

Mr. Cook Oh, very definitely, But we did it - the American people did it - with an air.

Now we would ride to the Symphony concerts on the buses, but we rode in tuxedo and evening dress.

Mrs. Cook Well, that was our style. (laughing)

Q. And no nylons!

Mrs. Cook And no nylons.

Mr. Cook No, they didn't have nylons, but they had rayons. Horrible! I had to look at them!

Mrs. Cook Oh, they were horrible things!

You should put that in your story, because the rayon hose that came out during the war were the most awful things you've ever seen. You'd be sitting like this, and then you'd get up, and so this (at the knee) would be bulging. They were the most horrible things - just awful.

Mr. Cook They had no elasticity to them. They'd stretch out, and then just hang there.

Mrs. Cook But I do think that the positive things of those years, of the rationing, was that there was a lot of camaraderie. Particularly in our group of friends. You always took something to somebody's home - you never went empty handed to a dinner party. And I don't meant the hostess was doing a potluck. You brought either ration stamps, or a cup of sugar, or a cube of butter, or something because you knew that that person's were nearly

exhausted.

Mr. Cook We had one member of the faculty at Garfield had built a rather nice home out at Normandy Park. It was going to be a retirement home for him, because he was getting pretty close to retirement. So he invited the entire faculty as a sort of housewarming in the spring. It was during the war, and we asked, "What should we bring?"

And he said, "No, I want to put on the dinner. My wife and I, Mrs. Cunningham and I, won't do that. But - everybody that needs sugar for his coffee, you bring the sugar. I'm not gonna give you a damn grain!" (laughing)

And so everybody brought sugar.

Mrs. Cook And you did share stamps - meat stamps, and sugar stamps, and coffee stamps - with close friends or family. You did pool. You pretty much did not go to dinner parties and expect the host and hostess to do the works.

You either brought things or shared stamps.

Mr. Cook And another funny thing was liquor. The only liquor you could buy without stamps was rum. I don't know why that was - evidently, there was enough rum being manufactured here in the United States that they could satisfy all of the demand. Whiskey and all other forms were severely rationed.

Remember the song that used to be sung?

"Drinking rum and Coca Cola!"

Mrs. Cook Right, rum and Coke was a wartime drink.

Another thing that was a wartime thing that we had to do... Coming back to nylons - if you didn't have nylons, you'd use rayon, or there was also a time we used leg paint instead of hosiery. I'm not kidding you!

Q. How was leg paint applied?

Mrs. Cook Oh, just like you'd put it on your face. You bought it in color, depending upon your skin tone. If you were a light beige, you bought the light beige, or dark beige, or what have you. And you just frankly put it on your legs -

Q. Like pancake makeup?

Mrs. Cook Just like that. And you had little peds that you slipped your feet into before you slipped into your shoes. Peds and leg paint.

Q. How did it make your legs feel?

Mrs. Cook Not very good. It was dry and it was ugly. But given the choice between the baggy rayon stockings, and the leg paint - I wore leg paint.

Q. Caught between a rock and a hard place...

Mr. Cook That's right. And you had to be very careful,

talking rather intimately, that your legs were shaved very closely.

Mrs. Cook There were a lot of things - your legs had to be shaved closely, you had to be very, very careful how you moved and sat, if you were using leg paint.

But it looked a lot better than those [rayon hose] - as Parker said. You can imagine - rayon doesn't have the give. You stand up after you'd been sitting down and you had these bumps of rayon. For women, it was just awful

Q. Some of the sacrifices you made were more serious than others, but how did you perceive the acts of, say, the United Mine Workers striking the coal mines in the East? How did you see strikes in wartime?

Mr. Cook We weren't at all sympathetic. We were never sympathetic with a strike during wartime.

Most of us, even I with a limited school-teacher's salary, was giving all I could to support the Symphony. I mean, giving it in addition to my tickets and all that. And then to have unions start to strike against the Symphony or something like that - I resented it, I really did.

Q. Did they strike the Symphony during wartime?

Mrs. Cook No, not during wartime.

However, what Parker's saying, his resentment against unions and workers striking during wartime [was widespread among Americans]