

**Transcript of an Oral History Interview in the collection of the
BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
308 Forrest Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922**

Nancy Yasecko: This is Brevard County Historical Commission Oral History Video Project. Interview with Vicky (Victoria) Raymond, Melbourne, Florida, January 17th 1994. Interviewer Nancy Yasecko. Cameraman, Robert Gilbert. Camera, Sony DXCM7. Recorder, Sony BVW35. Copyright Brevard County Historical Commission 1994.

Robert Gilbert: [00:00:30] Rolling.

Nancy Yasecko: Tell us, when were you born, and where was that, and what brought you to this area?

Victoria Raymond: I was born on June 29th 1903, and my father had arthritis and my cousin lived in Melbourne, named Garen. And he came down to visit, and that's how we bought the house at the time on the river.

Nancy Yasecko: [00:01:00] So you were a young girl when you first came here?

Victoria Raymond: Well, I was in college. I'd done my first year in college and we came down during the vacation. My brother was in Cornell too, so we came down here. And of course, all we did was go to the beach. We only met the winter people, really, and we were here a short time, and then every year we'd come down and visit.

Nancy Yasecko: What was your impression? You were coming from [00:01:30] a bigger city-

Victoria Raymond: Oh, I loved it. I thought it was beautiful. I really did. They were lovely. When I got off the train, all I saw was beautiful high palm trees. It was a beautiful sight and I just loved it. Very few people here, of course. Summertime you could shoot a cannon down New Haven and nobody'd ever notice it.

Nancy Yasecko: I guess that's true.

Victoria Raymond: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nancy Yasecko: Well, [00:02:00] where was it that you were living before you came down here?

Victoria Raymond: I was living on Long Island. And I won't dare tell you where. Amityville.

Nancy Yasecko: Well you were living in an area that had been settled for a long time.

Victoria Raymond: Oh, yes. Long Island was settled for years. It was bought from the Indians. So ...

Nancy Yasecko: And it was a little rougher down here.

Victoria Raymond: Well, it was rougher, but there [00:02:30] were more trees ... more pretty places to go. Now there's no place to go for a ride. So, it was just lovely. I loved it. It was right on the river, it's a pretty spot.

Nancy Yasecko: What kind of things would you do for fun when you came down?

Victoria Raymond: Well, there really wasn't too much. We could go to the movies, we went and used to go down to Vero Beach to the movies. And that was a big deal [00:03:00] because there's not much traffic on the road. And we went to the Bahama Beach Club. Well, I guess that didn't come until probably a little bit later, but that was where all the people went to have dinner and ...

Nancy Yasecko: Would they have music?

Victoria Raymond: No, they did not then. No, this was strictly a family ... Do you know the Bahama Beach Club, where it was?

Nancy Yasecko: No, tell me.

Victoria Raymond: It was at the end of Fifth Avenue to the [00:03:30] left. And it had a big, big swimming pool. And Kitty was one of them, this is Kitty Hay, that I used to know. In fact, I was ... Kitty was born in the room up above me. Her father was head of the hospital, it was his hospital. First one in Melbourne. And I heard her first little cry. And she loved to eat different things like a ... Drink rather. [00:04:00] She had to be taken to hospital often to get her stomach pumped.

Nancy Yasecko: Well, it was a pretty small community.

Victoria Raymond: Very small, and of course in the wintertime it grew. But I wasn't here really long enough then to make any local friends except her mother, Kitty ... What was your mother's name, Kitty? Lucille Hay?

Katherine "Kitty" Hay: Lucille.

Victoria Raymond: And her father [00:04:30] was a doctor. I guess he was the first surgeon in Melbourne. And Kitty was born ... When I first came down here, her brother and sister were twins, and we used to take them to the beach and we'd sew clothes for them. And I don't think Lucille was a seamstress and I know I wasn't, but the kids all looked pretty cute together. So I guess we kept them going.

Nancy Yasecko: Would you [00:05:00] make little sun suits?

Victoria Raymond: Oh, yeah, little ... Not so much sun suits, we had little sleeves because, you know, it was cold. It wasn't really cold. It's much colder, the whole climate has changed completely. I don't even go near the ocean. I might get a drop on me.

Nancy Yasecko: There were a few cars here.

Victoria Raymond: A few is right. Not many cars. You could go for a ride out west of town. There was just two [00:05:30] lanes. And we met somebody probably about every five minutes or so, another car would come by and that was the amount of traffic here.

Nancy Yasecko: Did you ever get stuck in the sand?

Victoria Raymond: Never did, never got near enough, really. Just--we went to the beach, and we never got stuck in the sand, although, we'd pass people often that were on the rides. Mother and dad used to like to [00:06:00] go up to Rockledge and go to the ... On the [inaudible 00:06:04] ...

Nancy Yasecko: There's the Brevard Hotel up there ...

Victoria Raymond: No, the entrance, I'm talking about the entrance where they'd go in. The River Road.

Nancy Yasecko: Oh yeah, River Road there.

Victoria Raymond: We had friends on that River Road. My father thought Melbourne was heaven, he loved it. Mother liked it but she missed her friends and parties up north.

Nancy Yasecko: [00:06:30] Did your father have business here?

Victoria Raymond: No. No, he retired when he was 40 years old. And then they used to go to Europe every year. So they decided it would be nice, since the kids were gonna be ... Come down for vacations, that they'd look to Melbourne. I had a cousin here, a cousin through marriage, named Garen. His name was Garen. And we came down through them and he found a place [00:07:00] for us. It was a home on the river. It was very pretty.

Nancy Yasecko: Do you remember during the boom years of the twenties, when people were buying and selling properties?

Victoria Raymond: Yes, I don't remember it myself, but I've heard that they were on the corners, where the hotel was, the corners there were buildings on them. And they were selling and buying property. One would buy one and somebody across the street would get more, and somebody [00:07:30] else would offer more. It was just going all around the corners. It was unseen property, really.

Nancy Yasecko: Some of it might have been a little swampy, huh?

Victoria Raymond: Well I don't think this was because this was in town. Out of town, yes. They wouldn't have bought anything out of town. Except my father did get a three acre farm, which is now in Hollywood, West Melbourne.

Nancy Yasecko: Right, right. I know where that area [00:08:00] is. Where did you make most of your purchases? Were there stores in town?

Victoria Raymond: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. We had quite ... We had two drug stores, strange enough. I don't know how many people were in Melbourne at the time, but there weren't very many. And we had a furniture store and a grocery store. There were quite a few stores that [00:08:30] ended right in the corner of New Haven Avenue and ... What is the name of this street? Kitty, hurry. Right in back of us--

Nancy Yasecko: I got Melbourne.

Kitty Hay: Melbourne Avenue.

Victoria Raymond: No, back going this way.

Nancy Yasecko: Strawbridge?

Kitty Hay: Waverley?

Victoria Raymond: Waverley. And that's where the town ended. And across the street there was the ... Where the bank owner lived, the assistant. And they were all houses. The first big building [00:09:00] was when they built the school. That's before they were even [inaudible 00:09:07]. That was nothing. In Melbourne, where the shopping center is now, is just a boondocks.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah. I think it was ranch land out there. Weren't there cattle and ...

Victoria Raymond: There were doing a lot of groves. Quite a few groves out. And, uh, there was a nice garden there. I really never [00:09:30] really went out there. We used to go out to the farm once and in while because there was a house and a barn and a farm. Until my father put in a big well, a five inch well, which made it not so dry because it was high. It was one of the few properties that was high enough so that when it rained it didn't get the mud up to your ankles. It was a nice piece of property.

Nancy Yasecko: Before they put in the drainage system, there was a lot of low land wasn't there?

Victoria Raymond: Oh, I should say so. [00:10:00] After a storm, you know before a storm, everybody'd rush--rush to the ocean to see the waves because they were enormous, as far out as you could see. This was before ... I keep wanting to look at Kitty. I don't dare. Can I ask her a question?

Nancy Yasecko: Sure, take your time.

Victoria Raymond: I'll ask her later.

Nancy Yasecko: Okay.

Nancy Yasecko: But there were big storms and when it rained, I guess [00:10:30] the water just went everywhere?

Victoria Raymond: Not in town, no, because we were high. Where we were was high tide, really. But out west of town now, it would ... We'd go fishing and when we'd go alongside the river, it's around the pavement because there weren't any cars and it was different then. So it was nice.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah, [00:11:00] they--they've changed a lot of things, I'm sure. You told me you had a couple of stories to tell me?

Victoria Raymond: Well, I'm going to tell you one of when Kitty was born in the room. I told you that one.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah.

Victoria Raymond: When we first moved here ... It was just mother and dad that moved here. In 1923, they bought the house. And the back of the property was the original Dixie Highway. The new US 1 had gone through, and this was a curve in the road. And they had to [00:11:30] ... Our house was ... A path had been started in front of the house and there had been a big gate in the way back so my father put it in the front because the whole place was in enclosed by a fence. One of those little chicken wire fences. And one night mother said ... She called my father and said, "John, I hear footsteps outside." [00:12:00] And so he grabbed his gun in the dark and went out and there was a cow. I thought that was pretty funny. He came in and teased mother so for so many years. We'd left the gate open, and the woman about two blocks south of us, yeah south of us, and about near the highway had about three cows and I guess they just wandered all over the place because there were a few houses on River [00:12:30] View Drive where I lived.

That was one I thought was pretty funny. I thought of one this morning. I've forgotten.

Nancy Yasecko: That's pretty rural to have cows wandering the neighborhood.

Victoria Raymond: Oh, yes. That didn't happen for too many years because they started doing some building on the river. But when we moved there, there were just probably about five houses the whole length of River View Drive. [00:13:00] And so, the River View Drive one day ... this was before my time down here ... Mr. Jernigan with the boat with the bank and he came to my father and he wanted to make the River View Drive permanent ... enlarge it a little bit and make it permanent. And there was something I don't ... because I didn't care. It didn't make any difference to [00:13:30] me. I was north anyway. So they wanted to know if he'd be willing to sign the paper.

So he said, "If everybody's doing it, fine. I'll go along with it." So they made it a city street ... widened it and made it a city street. And that was right in front of our house.

So it was a pretty location.

Nancy Yasecko: I guess it was.

Victoria Raymond: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Nancy Yasecko: Well you were here mostly in the winter [00:14:00] but I wonder if you experienced any of the mosquitoes that people talk about.

Victoria Raymond: No, but what I do remember is the fogger going by every night. And we'd say, "Here he comes." We'd run and close the doors and the windows. 'Cause the fogger would go very fast and that also got rid of all the bugs ... which was very nice.

Nancy Yasecko: A lot more bugs here I guess than up north.

Victoria Raymond: Yes, that is the one thing that all relatives and friends that came down just couldn't get over the number [00:14:30] of bugs ... and when my aunt had a pet spider, she came down to visit and she had one of the apartments upstairs. And she had a pet one and I was terrified to go in my other room 'cause that was my bedroom. But she just loved him ... just wandered all over her room. He had later was lying ... I was down stairs, I was in the downstairs bedroom and I was looking up. And right above [00:15:00] my bed was a spider crawling across the wall. Boy, I'm telling you. I made a fast jump out of that bed and ran into the kitchen to get the broom. And I finally got him. But by golly, I was on the bed by then and I could manipulate him.

And so ... they're not my favorite bug.

Nancy Yasecko: Well, no. None of the bugs are-

Victoria Raymond: They're not really pretty.

Nancy Yasecko: Or very nice. [00:15:30] Do you remember when the telephone first ... was the telephone system here when you ...

Victoria Raymond: Yes. [inaudible 00:15:41] I think it was a two-line. I think we were on a party line. But that didn't last too long, I think. I don't remember. I know during the war, I had a private phone. That of course was years later.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah.

Victoria Raymond: See I was to go home. A friend of mine ... this was after war was declared [00:16:00] ... no, right after Pearl Harbor I mean. I got a call from a friend of mine. The Rossetters, I guess you know the Rossetters and she said her husband's going to ... Where did she go? Where were Libby and Jim during the war?

Kitty Hay: Oh, in Mississippi.

Victoria Raymond: Yeah.

Kitty Hay: Hatsburg.

Victoria Raymond: I guess. I'm not sure.

Kitty Hay: And we were in Biloxi.

Victoria Raymond: Yes, I remember that. And she said that her husband [00:16:30] was a ... CO of the incoming prisoners, I think. Isn't that it? That Jim was CO of the incoming prisoners.

Kitty Hay: Yes.

Victoria Raymond: And that she was all alone and with her son. And would I come down here. And we'd go to the beach every day. And I should've known better 'cause she wasn't a beach comber like Lucille ... Libby's mother-- Kitty's mother and I were beach [00:17:00] hounds. And we just were there all day long. And Libby would come along but then she was not all that keen about it. And so ... I forgot, I lost my-

Nancy Yasecko: So you came down during the war years.

Victoria Raymond: Oh yeah and then I was caught down here. When the war was declared, I was visiting Libby. And they said it was my patriotic duty to stay here and help them because ... the town was small. They didn't have [00:17:30] any ... not prepared to put up a naval air station between ... over west town ... west of town. Not west of town but Weston Town. And so I stay and I went to work. I had never worked in my life. Went to work for the people who built the property. And then at a cocktail party, I met an officer, was head of the yard office and he said, "Why don't you just stay here? Your family will be down [00:18:00] this winter and you'll go back with them."

So I did it. I was the only one in the office. And the one that helped me the best was the warrant officer 'cause he was regular navy. The others really didn't know too much. First, I had an incident. And I really felt sorry for him because he had no idea ... probably never kept a book or never done anything and then they don't know where they put him some other place. And they brought somebody to help [00:18:30] show me how to take fingerprints.

And oh, I do have a story about ... that I thought of this morning. You might be interested.

I want to tell you about the base first.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah.

Victoria Raymond: And of course the security was very close. I mean, severe. And when you went out whether they knew you or not, you had to show your pass and so forth. And they were nice enough to give me a 24 hour pass, which made it very nice 'cause [00:19:00] one of the men was going to give some Spanish lessons. Well that lasted about 2 days. And that just faded.

But anyway, it was very nice 'cause I read fingerprints at night. And I could go in my office and read the fingerprints. And then we had the prisoners-of-war, war dogs, the general office work. And it just seemed like the little kids were so young. There were twins that came and I thought they were gonna put a quarter on me ... and [00:19:30] ask if I had any candy ... they looked so young. But they were very sweet and they used to borrow \$5 from me once in a while 'cause they wanted to take their girls, I don't know where, but ... because you couldn't go anyplace. 'Cause we had only ... the [inaudible 00:19:48] stamps.

Nancy Yasecko: Now you're telling me that they had prisoners-of-war here in this area.

Victoria Raymond: Mm-hmm (affirmative) This is later on ... the war.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah but I never heard that.

Victoria Raymond: Yes.

Nancy Yasecko: That's interesting.

Victoria Raymond: Yes. We had prisoners-of-war. [00:20:00] And my officer took me. But they had a different officer ... then mine had gone on to fly in the Pacific. And was killed in an accident in California some place years later. And ...

Nancy Yasecko: Where were the prisoners kept?

Victoria Raymond: They were out west of town. They were in a compound. And nobody ... we weren't really allowed to walk around very much. We weren't supposed to. But [00:20:30] at the end of the war, they did get more lax. They let them out and ... 'cause they gave them no trouble because they were told if they ... and they look so ... to me they looked like kids. And they were very happy to be here in the warm sunshine because if they didn't behave, they'd go to Russia.

Nancy Yasecko: These were Germans?

Victoria Raymond: Yeah. These were all Germans. And this was after the Italians got out of it.

And we had the war [00:21:00] dogs. And my officer took me around. They had a guard on each corner of the compound. And the boys were playing cards. And it was nice and warm. And they seemed perfectly content. And of course there was the—the only time that was really hard on me ... 'cause I had to take all the IDs up to the [inaudible 00:21:22] basket. That was the name of that thing. And I'd get a call from the officers of the day ... tell me [00:21:30] to pick up a bracelet. And I knew what it meant. I had to take it up ... you know I used to think all [inaudible 00:21:38] Probably the mother and dad are saying, "Oh. Thank God. My son is in this country." You know? So if you find these things boring, take it out.

Nancy Yasecko: No. I think this is very interesting.

Victoria Raymond: And then ... maybe you shouldn't tell this one, I think it might get out in the county. But I had [00:22:00] pretty good control over myself I think. And by that time, we had about 16 in the office so ... you know it was a big office. I was there alone. I was almost lonely.

Some of the people here, not the whole area, including Cocoa ... they had to come through our office 'cause we gave them identifications. And asked them what business they were in because they would get [00:22:30] tires. They could get tires from us and then resign. Now we had to ask them what they were doing and what their business was. And this was all kind of serious. And one said, "Well we have a funeral parlor." And I said ... I started to stutter. And she said, "It's the economy funeral service." And I just broke out, I broke out laughing. I was [00:23:00] trying to find excuses. I was embarrassed. You know? Because it was just so ... it took me so by surprise. So, that was it.

Nancy Yasecko: So you all also handled the stamps for rationing.

Victoria Raymond: Yes, all the stamps. We had stamps, food stamps, war guns ... prisoners-of-war. What other rationing is there?

Food and

Nancy Yasecko: Gasoline.

Victoria Raymond: Gasoline rationing. We had books and books of gasoline rationing. And [00:23:30] one day I was sitting in the office and this young officer came in, and I guess he wasn't an officer. He was probably just a plain airman. And he came and he said, "I hear you're the-" ... what's the word for "you're not an officer". The common—no, not the common-- What were they called?

Nancy Yasecko: Non commissioners.

Victoria Raymond: Non commissioners. He said, "I hear your friend doesn't like commissioned officers." So I said, "What way do you want to go? How much stamps do you need?" [00:24:00] You know? So I slipped him a couple of stamps ... I know some went to Cocoa. I know towards the end of the one, the twins wanted to take the girls to ... Orlando. And they needed stamps. And so they borrowed \$10 from me. And then they went and they returned it. I mean they were good when they got the pay. They came in with it. But it was kind of fun.

Nancy Yasecko: Well I heard [00:24:30] that they had some people who were doing ... spotting aircraft at this time?

Victoria Raymond: Oh yes. I found out later. I really didn't know at the time because in the very beginning, you couldn't go out at night. Everything was blacked out. And if you were caught at like the beach. If I went over to the beach in my car. And we all carried either a bottle of milk or prescription with us because we had to give the excuse that we were taking a prescription over to somebody. [00:25:00] You know? And so ... but it worked out fine. I never was caught and I just went out a few times.

But I understand there were ... there were machines ... not machines.

Nancy Yasecko: The towers that they used for the spotters.

Victoria Raymond: Well the towers. But believe it or not it was Melbourne ... that tower in the Melbourne Hotel. That was one of the towers. And then of course they had a few over at the beach, of course. [00:25:30] But they had some submarines that were coming right close ... we never knew this till after the war.

Nancy Yasecko: They didn't have any stories in the newspaper about it, or?

Victoria Raymond: No, no. This was all hush-hush. No. I guess they didn't want to get us maybe upset or worried. I mean we were upset and yet we ... we used to go out to the Castaways Club. And we had a lot of fun there. I guess they had to relax.

[00:26:00] And the [inaudible 00:26:02] had the boys tell their fish stories. They loved fish. You know the lanterns ... and so forth. And some were very funny.

Nancy Yasecko: Can you tell us a little bit about that fishing?

Victoria Raymond: Well just the old, old story. Didn't know it's old then it was new but they went fishing and when they came back ... and they were both bragging, a few men were bragging. He said, "I have one that's really good." He said, "I went fishing." And he said, "I caught a big fish. And when I [00:26:30] brought it up, it was a lantern." So the other one said, "I have a better one than that." He said, "I went fishing and I got a lantern and I brought it up and it was lit." And so they were trying ... now it's old. Then, it wasn't so old.

Nancy Yasecko: That's a good story. It's like fisherman. They always have-

Victoria Raymond: Oh yeah. Always, you know?

Nancy Yasecko: Well that was quite a bit of fishing that went on around there.

Victoria Raymond: There was. We used to fish all the time from the Melbourne causeway. And of course [00:27:00] the policemen were guarding it to see that we behaved. And yeah, I used to like to go fishing.

Nancy Yasecko: What kind of things would you catch? Do you remember?

Victoria Raymond: Yeah, whittings. And oh ... I think they were my favorite. In the ocean, you got better whiting but there were whiting. And yellow ... we call yellow fish. Those are the little ones. And trout. And then a couple of others. And of course the [00:27:30] blowfish. Got a lot of those. And I found out later that that was a part of the blowfish was a delicacy. You know?

Nancy Yasecko: Hard to believe looking at-

Victoria Raymond: Yeah, I know. Oh, it was so scary. And you know they had the ... Did the blowfish didn't have the thing ... what had the ...

Nancy Yasecko: Oh, Catfish had the ...

Victoria Raymond: Catfish. Your father took care of quite a few catfish. Believe me. They'd be walking a long [00:28:00] and some were ... They'd wear these sho- not shorts but used to call them golfing shorts. And ... they'd walk along ... somebody had caught a fish. Instead of putting it away, they'd leave it there and they'd step on it. And next time ... next second there would be a scream for Dr. Hay.

Nancy Yasecko: Now if you went fishing, were you pretty well assured that you'd catch something?

Victoria Raymond: [00:28:30] Not really. The boys would get some shrimp for us. Or some kind of ... you see the inlet wasn't open then. And the fishing was much better, strangely enough. Though we had a pier in front of our place, a 300 foot pier. And we would go out, my dad and I would go out, and we'd put fish heads along the pier. Go in and have lunch. And go out and there'd be fish ... [00:29:00] you know crabs on either side ... I crabbed with a big net, the old fashion type. I just went underneath it and kind of got them up. And they were big ones. This sounds like a fish story. This is true.

He got one once, it was almost 16 inches across. They were big ones. And I swear to you, two of those made a big meal for the three of us.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah. You were telling me a little bit about fishing for crabs. [00:29:30] Where was the dock you would go fishing on?

Victoria Raymond: Oh, we went on the Melbourne causeway, over to the beach. Fish from there. So ... I'd fish mostly really at night 'cause I was in radio, during the daytime. And it was quiet. And after the hullabaloo all day and the prima donnas. And any day that anybody came [00:30:00] in cross, we'd always have big signs, "This is be-kind-to-Dean day." "This is be-kind-as-so so". So after a while, I couldn't help but laughing at ... they were so nice to him.

Nancy Yasecko: Tell a little bit about when the radio first came to Brevard.

Victoria Raymond: Oh, yeah WMMB was the first radio station. And we had the ... say the intro, "This is the pioneer voice of Brevard County." [00:30:30] They didn't keep it. When it was sold 7 years later, the name was changed. I forget what it is now. But in 1956, Chick Catterton and I put up our own radio station in Eau Gallie called WMEG. And we kept it for 5 or 6 years. And then through circumstances we ... I won't talk about it ... we had to sell it. We didn't have to sell it, we did sell it. And I [00:31:00] retire then.

Nancy Yasecko: What was your role in the radio station. Were you on air?

Victoria Raymond: No I didn't like the air. Well, I took it during an emergency when I was at WMMB. That was the first time. And I wasn't nervous that night or anything ... we were alone in the station, the engineer and I. It was about 10 o'clock at night. And the electric went off and we had to put in the auxiliary modem. And he had to go ... he [00:31:30] was on the—he was working the board that night. And he just came in and he said—I had been night practicing because I had charge of ... I was in charge of the—Oh I did have a little radio program. A waltz program. Viennese Waltzes and so forth. And Monday I would go at night and pick 'em out. And then the next day I would just be able to give a little intro.

And [00:32:00] I had one on called [City Bitty Bing? 00:32:03] by the Dorsey Brothers—I think one of the Dorsey Brothers introduced it. And it started out very, very pretty. You know, very lyrical. Not lyrical ... what do I mean?

Nancy Yasecko: Melodic?

Victoria Raymond: Melodic. And all of the sudden he burst into a jazz part of it. And Chick Catterton was passing the window and he just looked in as if he was stunned. And I was stunned. I didn't expect [00:32:30] that. Thought it was gonna be like a Viennese Waltz. I had gotten a little confident. And instead of going through the whole thing, I just would listen to the beginning. And I was caught.

And everybody was just ... they just couldn't believe it. And I sure couldn't. And so I got excited and I forgot to ... Oh gee. I forgot the terminology now, the word they used.

Nancy Yasecko: You turn one of the knobs I guess--

Victoria Raymond: [00:33:00] Yeah, turn the knobs. You know, you'd turn one off and you'd turn the other one on. And I said, "Damnation." In a very low voice. And this was in daytime, this happened. And the engineer came up. He was all excited and he pushed the button up. I had forgotten to put the "on" button and I was on the air. So I thought, "Oh my Lord! The FCC, everybody was gonna come down on me." You know, in those days, you wouldn't say "damn" for anything. [00:33:30] Oh, that was terrible. But I didn't say that actually. I said "damnations." but very low.

And my cousin called me. She said, "Oh, you're a naughty girl." Jill Garen. And I said, "No I wasn't." I denied it. And I was out one time ... I met these two women, mother and daughter. And she said, "What did you say on the phone, [00:34:00] on the T.V., on the radio?" I'll get it right yet. And "Nothing. I didn't say anything." And she said, "We thought we heard "damnations." But I know you wouldn't say that." No. So that was that.

Well we had kind of a funny thing. It had hard days and good days and bad days, like any other business. And some of them are funny. And I [00:34:30] don't really remember too much about them. But we had a lot of fun in there. And then we had loud prima donnas. This goes for boys too. 'Cause we were all boys and girls and ... that's a thousand years ago.

Nancy Yasecko: But you were a career woman then.

Victoria Raymond: Well if you want to call ... Yes, I would say so because I was ... I never really had a career as such. [00:35:00] I was assistant manager, co-manager of our station. And I was first ... I was ... the first job I had was a minimal job I just got the books ready for the next day. And I got to be advertising director and that was a big deal. We all got big [inaudible 00:35:25] names. No big salaries but big names ... in a little station.

[00:35:30] But the whole thing was, is just really like a big radio station. It was like a big radio sta- But then minimum ... Just like a ... I don't know.

Nancy Yasecko: Miniature.

Victoria Raymond: Miniature radio station, yes. You could really go into a radio station in north and really know what they were talking about because we had everything going there 'cause everything was the same except on a huge scale.

Nancy Yasecko: Well what was it like ... did you go look for advertising for the station?

Victoria Raymond: [00:36:00] Oh, yes.

Nancy Yasecko: And who would you go talk to about that?

Victoria Raymond: Well we had three men, three boys who did the—went to advertisers. And I went too. I had a lot of fun. I'd go into Kempfer, there use to be remember Kempfer, a store, a men's store, right over here? Now the ... I think a restaurant of some kind. But this Kempfer. And you'd go in and you know, you'd say, "Well how's Jack." He's had a stomach ache. Is [00:36:30] he all right now? Has he gotten over his flu? And you know it was that kind of advertising mostly. And it was ... I liked it. 'Cause I like people and so--

And of course the advertising is the lifeline of any business. If you don't sell advertising, it happened to be that ours was advertising. We didn't sell, we'd be out of business. But we did very well, both stations.

Nancy Yasecko: Do you remember who [00:37:00] were ... which businesses advertised on a regular basis?

Victoria Raymond: Yes we had ... I had a company. A friend took a big furniture company in Vero Beach was one. We went from Vero Beach to Kidd and we had Kidd's Kiddy Club. That was Kidd's Furniture Store up in Cocoa. And this Kidd's Kiddy Club was really cute. It had the ... the kids would come on. We had the Van Croix Theater, which is the movie [00:37:30] that was here. And the girls ... I'd ask the little girls questions. And one little girl came up. She was about 3 years old, 3 or 4 years old. And we'd ask them what their name was. And she was Dr. Martin's niece. And she was all ribbons and bows, you know? And I asked her what her name was and she told me. And I said, "Where do you live?" And she said, "I live in the toughest neighborhood." She had older brothers I might add. [00:38:00] "I live in the toughest neighborhood and more you go down the street and when you get to the end, that's my house." The toughest house on the block.

And here she was ... she had her brothers, who had given her all this information. But she was so cute.

Another one said, "My mother's gonna have a baby in December." They're so honest, you know? That was fun.

And Dr. [00:38:30] Kaminski's, I went to their house. And they had a little girl 3 years old. The others were all 7 or 8. And so she got on it. And I said, "How old are you, honey?" And she said, "I'm 8." And she was only about 3 years old. It was cute things, yeah. Those things were fun.

Nancy Yasecko: It must have been fun because you're kind of making it up as you went along.

Victoria Raymond: Yes the only I said too many times, "Oh that's nice." Or something like that. And the engineer had [00:39:00] to take that out.

Nancy Yasecko: What other kind of jobs might you have looked for? There weren't too many things.

Victoria Raymond: I never looked for any. I never looked for any. These were all offered to me after I had left the Navy, I was there for five years. I just didn't bother, I went north. I stayed there all summer. And then I had my regular [00:39:30] schedule. I went back and forth. And then this radio thing came along and they were friends of mine. And he said that I'd be very good at it because I had a knowledge of languages and of music. And you know, playing the old violin. So I fell for it. And I went in there and I liked it. I found it was fun.

One woman called up once and said, "I don't mean to be funny and smart but-" she said, "the word is not 'scai-a-tica'" And [00:40:00] I said, "I don't understand." And she said, "I have it. Believe me. It's not funny. It's sciatica."

This was little Hunt, Jimmy Hunt, one of our first boys. He was a good looking ... and he just couldn't speak well. He had a beautiful voice but I mean his language was ... but nobody cared because he was on there. They just didn't care. And now they don't care certainly. Now the grammar is [00:40:30] ... no sense going to school really some of those ...

Nancy Yasecko: You did all your schooling up north didn't you?

Victoria Raymond: Yes.

Nancy Yasecko: When you went back and forth, did you take the train? Was that ...

Victoria Raymond: I always took the train, yes. I never flew down. I don't think I did, did I? No. I didn't-

The only thing I can't remember ... I would know a lot if I were home. I have my early years were interesting because [00:41:00] my father and mother used to go to the opera. And they would take me with them when I was about oh, about 11 or 12. And my father would tell me the story of the opera first, you know. And then this is where they sing. [inaudible 00:41:12] which is "God have mercy on me." And she'd sing these things because her lover's on the other side. And they have to part and the opera is always very sad.

And it has its musicals too but some of the music is gorgeous [00:41:30] ... Melodic.

Nancy Yasecko: Tell me about what it was like to travel on the train. You know people don't do that much anymore.

Victoria Raymond: Well it was great fun. When we came down once from Cornell, we went to the baggage room and we were up all night long, dancing and singing. It was great. We didn't even know it. Of course then we went back to our berths. It was about 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning. We got in at 10. So we didn't get very much sleep. [00:42:00] But when you do that, you don't expect to really. There's something that just keeps you awake. And when there's singing ... I can't stay awake ... I couldn't at that time stay away from it. And I still like it. It's my pet.

Nancy Yasecko: So I guess you all got together in the baggage car?

Victoria Raymond: Oh, in the baggage car, right. Why it was fairly empty, I don't know. But, you know, it was cold and probably people didn't travel in the winter so much. But when I traveled [00:42:30] with my aunt ... we had a sofa roll, they called it. Because it was a sofa bed and a regular ... and a bunk. And then a little bathroom. A little bitty one.

Nancy Yasecko: Well it sounds like fun.

Victoria Raymond: Oh, it was wonderful.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah. Di-

Victoria Raymond: I had wonderful years in school. I got in trouble but it was a lot of fun.

Nancy Yasecko: You ate there on the train? They had--?

Victoria Raymond: Oh, [00:43:00] the dining ... oh, that's what fascinated me the most about traveling, was going to the diner. They were so pretty. You know, they were fancy. And it had tables for about 4. You could get 5 in if you want to 'cause sometimes we got 6 in for kids from school, you know? But the service was lovely and they were all ... men were all in white coats serving. And it was really nice.

I don't think they [00:43:30] have it now, so much now.

Nancy Yasecko: I think we missed something there.

Victoria Raymond: Mm-hmm (affirmative) It was lovely traveling. They were all polite.

Nancy Yasecko: Did the train stop often on the way down?

Victoria Raymond: No. We got most ... The first trip that came to Melbourne, it took us 38 hours. From New York. And the last time I went on one was 1,000 years ago. It took us 23. And then we retired. [00:44:00] Most of these people sat up. If they sat up, they got off the train with swollen ankles. That was the main thing, yeah.

But I loved it. I loved the train.

Nancy Yasecko: Well I guess the train came right through town here, didn't it?

Victoria Raymond: Right to Melbourne. I'm not sure of this, but I think at one time Eau Gallie was bigger than Melbourne.

Kitty Hay: The train stop there.

Victoria Raymond: Yeah. I think they told me they stop there first. But I'm not positive about that. But I know it stopped there [00:44:30] at one time. But this used to come from say like ... I think it's St. Augustine where they change motors. I think it came probably from St. Augustine right down here, made one stop from Jacksonville and then went to Baltimore and I know my aunt and I got out of the car. And good thing we're gonna be there for half-an-hour. And we thought we'd go up to the station and get [00:45:00] a sandwich and just ... It was a lovely sunny day.

When I got to Baltimore though, I expected it to be warm. I don't know why 'cause I went to school there. You went there too, yeah. Of course she went to school like 30 years after I did.

Nancy Yasecko: It was cold then, huh?

Victoria Raymond: It was cold ... Yes, it was the winter and I guess I ... See, I hadn't been to school and I had no idea [00:45:30] that ... I thought by the time you got to Baltimore you know ... I read so many stories about down South and Baltimore and, you know, I was kid. And so, I almost expected to see them come out in their gowns and their parasols and what not. That was a let down.

Nancy Yasecko: You used the train to ship things as well didn't you? When you were down here--

Victoria Raymond: We didn't ship very much because-- [00:46:00] Yes of course. We used it to ship but mostly grapefruit, oranges, and things like that. We'd take 'em right to the train ... we'd go to the trees in our yard, big yard. And we had a lot of trees. And I'd get the wheel barrow ... I did this, I can't imagine that I did ... and we loaded down with fruit. And we had to put the basket in the back of the car. And then fill it with fruit, so we wouldn't have to lift it. [00:46:30] And from there we'd take it to the railroad station, and they'd ship it. Take it on the platform. It was gone.

Nancy Yasecko: Do you recall what they would charge you to ship that fruit?

Victoria Raymond: Yes it was \$1.25 a bushel and it was either 75 or 85 cents a half a bushel. I don't remember. But the bushels were free. You could get them in any store. We didn't realize but now a bushel is 16 or 17 dollars. [00:47:00] And to buy fruit? I don't know. You know some things you didn't do. It was just something you picked from the yard. Didn't cost a dime to buy it.

Nancy Yasecko: What about the depression era here? Do you recall?

Victoria Raymond: I don't recall—I don't recall much about the depression because I wasn't down here at that time.

Nancy Yasecko: I see.

Victoria Raymond: But I do understand a lot of the people that [00:47:30] had some pretty good jobs down here had to wind up being postmen. Not that--postmen are great. I won't

say they're not but I mean people that had businesses had to take anything they could get. And uh...But boy, things have picked up now.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah, big changes.

Victoria Raymond: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Nancy Yasecko: Well let's see what other things we haven't maybe touched on.

Victoria Raymond: I know a cute story. [00:48:00] You know when we would leave to go north there would be a ... this is after I got some school and then before I married. We'd come down and this was 1925, like 1925. And you just had a regular key to close the door. We didn't have any locks of any other kind. Just lock the windows. And one day we came back and there was no furniture in our dining [00:48:30] room. Well you know, we didn't have very much furniture in there because it was a winter home to us, definitely wasn't our home. And we had a table, it was a painted table ... very pretty though. And four chairs. And we got there, there was no furniture.

And my father was saying, "I'm gonna--When I find out who did this-" Oh he was gonna do a lot of things. And all of the sudden we saw somebody coming down the road. And it was a man holding a [00:49:00] table on his head and two boys, each with two chairs. And I said, "That's our furniture." You know, I said to my mother ... My father said he was really gonna- And the man came up the driveway, up the road ... up the cement walkway. And before anything he said, "Oh, thank you very much Mr. Martin. It was so nice. We took very good care of it." And my father couldn't get a word in edgewise. And then what he said, [00:49:30] "Oh, you're welcome."

He was gonna do everything and ...finally it was "you're welcome." And he brought the furniture back and it was very well kept. It was.

Nancy Yasecko: Just borrowed it while you were gone.

Victoria Raymond: He just borrowed it. It's all it is. And he kept very good ... took very good care of it. He did.

But, you know, to us it seemed ... it seemed fantastic to me. I was not--I thought it was funny. Really I did. Because they beat my father to it. He couldn't even say a word. [00:50:00] He said, "Well you're welcome."

Nancy Yasecko: Oh, boy. That is different.

Victoria Raymond: It was true too. But that's the way it was then is ... you probably know nobody closes doors when you run up town. The house was ... except for the ... not being locked, they were wide open.

Nancy Yasecko: You only locked it when you really left town, huh?

Victoria Raymond: Right. When we left town. Or sometimes we went up away for the weekend or something, we'd [00:50:30] just lock it but any key in the world they put in there would open the door. And we had only three doors. I guess three doors, the porch door and the other two doors.

Nancy Yasecko: Would you be down here for Christmas time or would you go back-

Victoria Raymond: In later years I was. Mm-hmm (affirmative) Yeah, by then I had gotten married. I'd gotten divorced. And you know there was a time in there. And that's when I happened to get caught down here during the war. I was visiting my sister in Kentucky.

Nancy Yasecko: [00:51:00] Well, let's see. Some of the things that went on around here.

Victoria Raymond: We know when pink lady started. Your mother was there. Did we still have the pink ladies in 19 ... I think it was 1948, wasn't it?

Kitty Hay: At the hospital?

Victoria Raymond: Yeah. Your father had sold his and the first hospital on the US 1. Yeah that's right. And there were [00:51:30] I think it was '48 yes, 'cause mother and dad were here.

Nancy Yasecko: Well what about medical care? Were there doctors in the area?

Victoria Raymond: No ... Well yes, 'course Dr. Hay. And there was a Dr. Creel on Eau Gallie wasn't it? ... and Dr. Hicks ... in this town. But there were no surgeons. Her dad was the first surgeon, Kitty's dad ... Melbourne.

[00:52:00] And we were the first radio station in Brevard County. Of that I was always proud. And it was never mentioned.

Nancy Yasecko: We spoke to someone earlier today who said, "Oh, we were so excited when WMMB started. We felt like we were finally ... in a big city."

Victoria Raymond: Yes we had an open house. You see, you always have to start with a 500 watt station, which means that when it's dark you have to quit. And then you neatly apply for 1,000 watt. Which then goes all the way up [00:52:30] the line. And there was a joke then in the paper that there was a boy sitting at his console-- console and he was supposed to be new and he got down and said, "Hello world."

We went 20 miles, I guess. You know, "Hello world."

Anyways, then one of our men came in and he said ... you know what, this is right after the war and of course 3 years after the war ... and he said, "Guess what the [00:53:00] latest news is out, gossip. They're gonna build ten houses between Eau Gallie and Melbourne."

You know, there were so many houses empty after the war. During the war, it was terrible. I had them all over my house. And so we just didn't even believe it ... and they just said, "It's gonna be quite big." And I can't think of [00:53:30] the name of it.

Kitty Hay: Was it Levittown?

Victoria Raymond: Not ... let me think ... I'm thinking Levittown, Long Island—Levridge?

Nancy Yasecko: Loveridge?

Victoria Raymond: Loveridge. It's a name called Loveridge, man called Loveridge, who says he gonna build ten houses. And he did. And that surprised us because everything was empty, you know?

And one of our boys ... Bates, name was. He finally ended up in New York. [00:54:00] But he could not afford a place to live here. So he went outside of Cocoa, which was nothing ... no sign of the base or anything at that time. And he bought 300 feet of property on the ocean. This is just before you turn the road to Cocoa to ... I forget what he paid for it. Something like ... a hundred, two hundred dollars. It was all woods up there. And the road we had just and he had to come [00:54:30] all the way down. And we thought from Cocoa every day, that was awful. He had to come 20 miles.

He liked it though. He had the little house built very small, very rural but enough to ... there were a few houses around in there but the base had not come in yet.

And I do remember when the first astronaut broke the sound barrier. We went outside ... we had that remote studio right down the corner here. And we were all sitting ... It was a [00:55:00] nice warm sunny day ... sitting on the cement across the street. And Shepherd went up. And he broke the sound barrier. Oh the feeling you get to see him go the first time. You must remember, we never had it before. To know that that rocket had a man in it, was just ... we just prayed the whole time. We hoped he get up there and back again. And he did pretty quick. He broke the barrier and came right back down again.

Nancy Yasecko: Well I guess when the space program really started [00:55:30] up, and the missile program, that changed a lot.

Victoria Raymond: Oh, those boys had ... those astronauts were devils. They would just ... they were awful. I guess they were going to the moon and they didn't know where they were going. I guess they knew where they thought they were going. And you know, just the thought of it ... so they all used to surf all the time. And they just carried on so much that they had to send for their wives. Yeah. All they wanted [00:56:00] to do was just drink and carouse because they knew ... no tomorrow, this was their attitude.

Nancy Yasecko: I guess that's the-

Victoria Raymond: But they were nice. They were awfully nice young men. They really were.

Nancy Yasecko: Did you meet them?

Victoria Raymond: Yes. Well one-by-one. They all came to the radio station for an interview. And Cooper I remember, I said to him ... He had two kids about 10 and 11, I think they were. And I said, "What do they think about [00:56:30] that you're gonna go to the moon." And he said, "Oh, kids you know how they are. They think it's wonderful. My father is going to the moon." You know, they don't think whether if they're ever gonna make it or not. All they think of is my father is going to the moon. And sure enough they did but--

And that was another time. For a long time, every time a ... rocket went up it was very hush, very, very hush-hush. [00:57:00] And everybody knew it because the boys didn't come home for dinner that night. And everybody knew it. And of course we knew it at the station. We didn't say anything but we might just as well have. They knew it and they could tell when it was.

Nancy Yasecko: Yeah I think people in the community knew but they weren't supposed to say.

Victoria Raymond: No, it was hush-hush. It really was.

My brother came down to visit his wife and they wanted to see one go, just a plain rocket go off. And we were visiting Dr. [00:57:30] Warden, Sy Warden, over at the beach in Indialantic. And he had—and they had watched every night to see one. And we had dinner there. And my brother and Sy took a walk on the beach and Sy said, "Look up there, Lou." And they looked up and one just went right off. And he was just so excited. Just happened that they walked after dinner down at the beach and they saw it.

Nancy Yasecko: Okay, I think we are at the end of this tape. And we will cut.