

Yolanda Imhoff

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Mead: This is Tina Louise Happ [Mead], Associate Librarian at the Pritzker Military Library. I am here with Yolanda Imhoff. What was your maiden name?

Imhoff: Borrelli.

Mead: Okay, Borrelli. And what year were you born?

Imhoff: 1918.

Mead: 1918. Oh my! You're coming up on it! [laughs]. And where were you born?

Imhoff: Saint James; Long Island, New York.

Mead: Now, you talk about New York a lot. Did you grown up on Long Island, or did you grow up in New York City?

Imhoff: I grew up on Long Island, and I moved into the part that is New York City when I was three.

Mead: Oh my.

Imhoff: And I lived there for about twenty-something years. And after my parents passed away, I moved into Manhattan because I was working there. And that's where I lived when joined the [US] Army.

Mead: Excellent, excellent. And did you...your brother also joined up. He joined the Army?

Imhoff: Yes.

Mead: He was drafted—the second time he was drafted?

Imhoff: We had an apartment together.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: And he was ten years older than I.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: He was drafted, and then they turned him down after I had joined the Army. But then they called him again. So, he did—he went to the Pacific. Yeah. We did correspondence back and forth.

Mead: Okay. Did you keep those letters?

Imhoff: No.

Mead: No?

Imhoff: Too bad.

Mead: Yeah. Do you remember anything about what company or division he was serving with or anything like that?

Imhoff: He was with an anti-aircraft part of the [US] Army. And he lived...they went to the island of Halmahera.

Mead: Oh, wow.

Imhoff: And that's where he was stationed with them. But he was a cook!
[laughs]

Mead: Did he do a lot of cooking before he joined the Army?

Imhoff: No! He never cooked at home. My father was a cook. But I don't know if he gained something from that. But I was so surprised. But he was glad because he didn't have to shoot anybody. So he came home in ... I think maybe December or January, after I did, that would have been ... what ... 1945 or 1946. He also picked up a thing called Dengue Fever. Yeah. It was to stay with him—it's like malaria. You keep getting attacks from it.

Mead: That's too bad. So you were working in Manhattan. What kinds of jobs did you have before joined the WAAC [Women's Army Auxiliary Corps]?

Imhoff: I was a secretary; accountant, too.

Mead: What kind of schooling did you have, did you--

Imhoff: I graduated from high school. At that time I was studying voice, to be an opera singer!

Mead: Oh!

Imhoff: But then, when my father died, I couldn't sing anymore. It just bothered me so much. And then I was taking care of my mother, because that's what he'd been doing. And she died six months later. So I never did go back even though I had a private tutor who taught some guy that was singing at the Radio City Music Hall. It was very interesting, but I couldn't go back to it. I felt very sad. But I sing in all the choirs. That's what I've been doing since then. I liked Manhattan, but I didn't feel that I could support myself on my salary. And I know I was thinking, well everybody is doing something for this war effort. And so I went to all the services and looked at them to see what they had. And for some reason I chose the United States Army. And they accepted me. I think I went there probably in January, and I went in in February.

Mead: Very fast.

Imhoff: Mmmm?

Mead: Fast. Did it seem like it was a fast process to get in?

Imhoff: Well, once I was accepted, I think I had to go through a physical. And that's about all, I think. But they didn't take long to send me a letter. I thought I had a telegram too, but the only thing I saw there was a letter that told me to report. And I did. Right on time. My family was a little probably disturbed, because ... but my sisters were all married, and my other brother was married, and they lived out on Long Island. So I felt pretty much alone even though I had a pretty good job. It wasn't paying. In those days it was more like \$20 a week—or even less. So who could live on that? Manhattan was too expensive. One of the other girls in my office was joining at the same time, but we didn't get sent together. She went to Florida to train, I think; I was sent to Iowa, Des Moines. So it was a time that was sort of a big step, but I'm not sorry. I met some wonderful friends.

Mead: Now when you went to basic, was there anything that stuck out to you as different in lifestyle from what you were living like in New York?

Imhoff: Oh, yes! Basic: you had exercising, you kept getting shots. I even had ... and see, they had male instructors. And one of them even asked me for a date.

Mead: Wasn't that against the rules?

Imhoff: I don't know. I don't think I went with him. I think I felt maybe it was. I had you know ... I met some people, see ... I was with a group from New York and we pretty much stayed together for a while. And I don't remember too much, except that I was always tired. We were kept very busy. And those shots! But it was only six weeks. And I got through it.

Mead: Now your aptitude test put you into the Radio School. Did you have any inkling when you were taking the test, or afterwards, as to way they might have put you in Radio School as opposed to anything else? I mean especially since you were working as a secretary, before?

Imhoff: Well, they gave us tests. And that was one of the tests, to test for Radio School. And somehow—and I think it has something to do with my musical knowledge—I could hear those signals. And I did. So they put me in Radio School. It had something to do with that. But I took other tests; I suppose I could have been a secretary too. But I don't know, this was something new. It didn't bother me. At that time it didn't bother me. I took care of my ears.

Mead: And what were the—what was it like at the Radio School? Midland Radio School... Do you have any memories you'd like to share?

Imhoff: Oh, yes, some very nice ones because we had four of us in an apartment. It was a studio apartment, but we had a little kitchen too. And these four girls were from New York, still. And it was a furnished place. And we were in that building; we filled it. And we had to go out for all our meals to the Mess Hall across Kansas City. We walked. We did a lot of walking. And then we had to go—walk to the Radio School. For all our meals we went over to that Mess Hall. I think ... I don't think it was spring. It wasn't bad weather. So I remember that, and I do recall that it was a nice place to live. I have that one big picture in there that shows where I was because I'm sitting on a wall. And it went down and that was the airport. So we could, you know there was—it was a wall, it just wasn't a fence that they put there. And I remember that it was nice, and I joined a church. And somehow the church got me and another girl doing something training

children. It was kind of interesting, you know. I had a picture in there that shows this girl and I walking with these children. We were parading them; we're teaching them to go into the Army. But that was interesting, and I did sing in the choir there. It was the cathedral in Kansas City. And I remember the other thing that what our entertainment was: we were not allowed out at night, pretty much after dark, and we used to ... somebody had these Ouija Boards¹. And we would get out on the stairs, because we could all get together. And that's how I got to know some of the women that were not in my room. We played with the Ouija Board. And I had never seen one of these things before. But it was fun. You know, we didn't take it seriously. And I don't remember any of the things it had told me I was going to do either. Anyway, that was one of the things that was nice. And then it turned out this girl that I knew from my job in New York came in there too. But she didn't come to our building. She was in Hotel Riesenbach, or something like that—a big hotel. They put them up in there too. She was more downtown than I was.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: I was sort of out ... by the airport. So we got together. I have some pictures of her.

Mead: And she was also going to the Radio School?

Imhoff: Yes.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: I don't know how we both got into it, you know. They just chose us to go. But, poor thing, she ... see, you had to volunteer to go overseas. And so she had volunteered; she was training ... no, she had been sent to someplace in Florida. She must have volunteered to go overseas. And I must have done it about the same time, but I didn't hear anything. And then there was this one class that had two women who were not able to stay with the group. And they were all set to go overseas. They were training! They called our place and the commanding officer called us in, and that ... she said, "They want you to go up and join that class." They'd already had three weeks of training. It was a six weeks training course. But they sent us up there and this was the time that I met Marie Popelka.

¹ Popular boardgame used for communication with the dead.

She was in that company and I knew her from Kansas City somewhat. But they called her too. So we got our orders. And I think I may even have a copy of the orders in there, because I was in charge because my name came first. That's where you can tell those things! So we went up to Fort Oglethorpe² and joined that class. And then they said one of the girls had dropped out and the other one was ill. And I said, "Who is she?" She was my friend from my job. I went to see her, and I felt so bad for her, you know. She was a tall redhead from Canada. She had been living in Maryland, and she stayed in the States. So I visited with her and I found out later that, yes, I got into that company and took my three weeks training and she was sent to the Pacific with another group. And I felt bad for her because I know that the Pacific was different. I don't know where she was stationed there. But I did see her once after the war and she'd gone back to Canada. Yeah, she was okay. She'd gotten married. So that was some of the things out of this Radio School bit.

And then it turned out I was sent to Craig Field³ in Alabama. And it didn't have a radio station there. That's typical of the Army. I think there were three of us sent there. We couldn't figure out why. So ... but they got us there. They decided [that since] they didn't have a radio station; they'd make us Link Trainer⁴ instructors. That Link Trainer is what flew the plane. So we got into these contraptions with shades on the side, cloth shades anyway, and we had these controls and the instructor would stay outside it and give the controls. Well, I wasn't getting it too well and finally I crashed the plane. So I thought, this is not for me. But then somebody else got some sense and sent me to Buckingham [Army Air] Field⁵ in Florida.

Mead: Now do you remember what happened to the two other WAACs that went to Alabama with you? Did they stay and become Link Trainers...Or?

Imhoff: No, I think, they were sent somewhere else. I wasn't sure where, but they left too. Somebody got their senses. Yeah.

² Fort Oglethorpe was US Army post in Georgia (USA), established 1902. It was declared surplus after WW2 and closed down. Most of the old posts' occupants became the community of Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, soon afterward.

³ Craig Air Force Base, was a U.S. Air Force undergraduate pilot training (UPT). Established. 1940; closed, 1977. In the present day, it is used a civilian airport and called Craig Field Airport and Industrial Complex.

⁴ Link Trainers were flight simulators developed by Edwin Link, which were used for pilot training in WWII.

⁵ US Army Air Force base established in 1942. It was declared inactive and closed in 1945.

Mead: Could explain a little bit exactly what the job of a radio operator is?

Imhoff: I'll try.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: Well for one thing, you put on earphones. And you can take copy that you hear either on a typewriter or by hand. There was a—and you had two methods of writing it...of sending. It was either the bug or the key.

Mead: Okay. And the bug is like a rotary knob?

Imhoff: It was a little thing that moved back and forth.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: And I don't know, I think the bug was a little faster than the key. So we used both. And then when we copied, we'd have to listen to the earphones. And copied—what you copied was nothing you could understand because it was five letter groups, and usually a full page of something. I remember one thing about that. We were in... France by then. This one girl—she's in some of the pictures, she's in that one when we're leaving—her name was Alice Donovan. And we called her Duffy. She was a really nice Irish girl, who after the war, she got to be the postmaster in her town. She got this message—there'd be about five of us taking messages—and she got one that said five hundred words. And it was the middle of the night. So the crew chief—she went ahead and took it. But the time was, you know, to take it, it was getting—he came over to me and said, "You know Alice is taking that big message and she's getting tired. Do you want to take over?" I said, "Okay." So I got on to the message. She'd been about halfway [through], and I finished it. And then we would send it to the code room to be decoded. The crew chief there came into our radio station and said, "You know, there wasn't one error in that whole message." And that's how I got a promotion. She already had the sentences right. So I always remember that because she passed away several years ago. She never married, but she had a niece that she was the next of kin. So I wrote to the niece to say how sorry I was and what I remembered. I told that story to her. She sent me a letter back, and said, "You know, thank you so much for telling me," because, she said, "Aunt Alice never told us anything." So I remember that very vividly. And she was a good friend. I did see her after the war, too. She moved to

Cape Cod after she retired, and we stopped to see her. My husband was great for traveling to see friends.

Mead: And so the messages were in Morse code, right?

Imhoff: Morse code.

Mead: But they weren't just only in Morse code, they were also coded? So you guys didn't know how to decode. You just knew the Morse code part; you would just take [down] what you heard, and it would go to someone else for decoding?

Imhoff: We never knew the message—what the message said. That was a different decoding room.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: I remember the Radio School because I had the most wonderful teacher. I have that picture; I have a group picture of that class when we graduated, and she's in it. I can't remember her name, but she was so kind and understanding. I had this quality of being nervous over tests, like a lot of people do. And the way you got from one speed to the next was that she'd give you a test. And she—you know she'd tell you it was a test. So every time I would just miss passing because I was so nervous. So after a while she said to me, "You passed." I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "I gave you a test and you didn't know it." And I thought that was really sweet.

Mead: Do you remember her name?

Imhoff: I may have it written down, but I don't recall it in my head. I should have it in that picture.

Mead: Well, we'll see. It was many years ago.

Imhoff: Yeah.

Mead: Now, do you remember why you decided to volunteer to overseas duty?

Imhoff: Pretty much...I hated Florida. I was running the radio station, but it was such a place. It's a village now, but at that time it was burnt-off trees and dirt. And it was so ... we'd go into Fort Myers once in a while. Out there, we'd walk back and forth to work. It was so terrible to look at. And I don't

know, I felt some other things. I did take the Officers Training Course and I passed. And I thought, should I volunteer? I decided to volunteer to go overseas because I didn't want to be in this place. So a volunteer came first. And that's when I did it, and it was an adventure.

Mead: Training, overseas training. You talked a little bit in your previous interview: could you tell me again, what were the things you guys did?

Imhoff: One of the things was abandoning ship. It was a big tall ship, and we had to climb over and climb down. And that was one part of it. And there was some other pretty much rigorous things that we had to be able—oh, they had us shooting guns.

Mead: Oh you did?

Imhoff: Oh yeah! We went to the driving range. I don't remember how I did. I know I wasn't crazy about it. I think—I don't remember too much—that I remember that we did get along all right for those three weeks. And then the end of that, and we were getting ready to go overseas. They were shipping us out, and this was at Fort Oglethorpe, and next door before you got to the railroad station, it was a German prisoner of war camp. And they marched us past that thing. It made no sense to me on one part, they're going to march us right past there. And these guys were at the fence making remarks at us. That part I was really annoyed about. I thought that was kind of awful thing to do, to let us hear that. They wanted to show them I guess how strong the Army was.

Mead: You talked about that earlier, when we were walking around. You talked about getting a letter from an ex-boyfriend? What was that?

Imhoff: Yeah, when I was...I had been dating a young man in New York. We could have been good friends, but it wasn't anything further than that. And he was drafted. And I guess, I only lived in New York a few years. When he got drafted, he was sent to ... I don't know where he was sent, but anyhow, I did not do any knitting; I didn't know how to knit, but I knitted him a scarf. And I sent it to him. And when he wrote back, I don't know if he thanked me for the scarf, but he wrote me what he thought of women going in the Army. And it was really very nasty. I never wrote to him. I never wrote back.

Mead: Did you ever experience anything else like that while you were...?

Imhoff: No, because the men we worked with were very good to us. They were buddies. And I did...you know, one time in France, we had what they called and EM [Enlisted Men's] Club for enlisted men. And they had music and we would go down there to have a little fun on our time off. And when I went down there once, it was ... see, these groups would come through Chantilly, they were going their way overseas—not overseas, up to the front. And I had met this guy—we had them for lunch or dinner or something, some of them too. I met this one guy. He was very nice. Greek. And I forget where he was going, but he said, "Do you want to go to that EM Club?"—or else I asked him. We went down there, and we were dancing, and I don't know how it happened, but he was punching a little bit, teasing or something, and he hit my jaw. And you should have seen the guys that were there that knew me! They came over to him and there were going to kill him. So I really know that these guys that were with us did not feel that sentiment of nastiness.

Well he was there for a little while and he gave me his watch because it needed repair and he couldn't get to the PX [Post Exchange]⁶. So I took it to the PX for him and they were going to fix it, but nothing came back for—I don't know how long that happened. We went to Germany and they must have taken the watch with them because after I went home, my future husband, you know we decided to get married, went to the PX and I guess the guy said to him, "You know I have this thing from Yolanda, this watch," and of course, it was a man's watch. So he writes me a letter, [which] said, "Who's watch is this!" and I've never—see, he brought the watch back with him, but I had gotten rid of that guy's address in the States. So we had to keep it. I didn't know what else to do with it. You know, there were relationships ... there were good feelings between most of the men and women, I think.

Mead: Now you had when you got to England, you were saying, that you had how many women?

Imhoff: Our group, see, we went over on the [HMS] Queen Elizabeth, and our group was twenty women—this place. I don't know, there might have been other women with different jobs with us, but I didn't know them.

⁶ Retail service outlet on Army bases, as distinct from the Air Force BX (Base Exchange), etc.

Mead: And did all of—this is the group that went through overseas training together? And they all had six, but then a couple of you only had three—that group went through overseas, and then went overseas together, right?

Imhoff: Right.

Mead: Right. Okay.

Imhoff: When we were on that ship, the men were up on the deck even—but we had stateroom with thirteen women in it. Deck, three decks, and they told us that on the ship everybody would get two meals a day. But if they worked, if they volunteered for something, they'd get three meals or a sandwich in the middle of the day. And I was you know, I was a little skinny thing, but I got hungry sometimes. So I volunteered and I got three meals a day. And what I had to do, was this one room they didn't want anybody to go into; I sat on the floor and guarded the door.

Mead: Do you know what was on the other side?

Imhoff: No. I could look in, but I couldn't see anything to tell me [what it was].

Mead: And nobody ever came in the room; you just sat there and made sure?

Imhoff: Oh yeah, a couple came and tried to get in and I wouldn't let them. See, but the other girls all played cards and I didn't. So I figured I had the time in order to do that. They played penny poker or something like that.

Mead: Did you do anything to pass the time while you were sitting there guarding the door?

Imhoff: I had a book, I think. Yeah, I had something to read. Whatever I could get on that ship.

Mead: I hear that—were books passed around? Was that something that ...

Imhoff: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Mead: People probably didn't go around carrying books in their ...

Imhoff: Volumes from home.

Mead: Duffels.

Imhoff: No, if you had something, you'd be willing to lend to somebody. Give them a chance to get something, you know, different than what we were having all the time. There wasn't, unless it was in England ... there might have been some kind of a library, but I don't remember exactly. Because once we got in those tents, we used to have fun together. You know, when we'd be off our shift. We'd be there together, we'd just ... I don't know. I guess some of them played cards there, but I don't remember too much about my friends there. It was the girls that were on my shift that I did things with. And, oh I know, there were two of them. We went on a bicycle ride. Yeah, that was interesting. We got to some little town, went in and had a soda or something—what we could find. But, we didn't—well, I was only there from June to September [1944]. We landed Gourock, Scotland on D-Day. We went to a staging area for ten days and then we went to Ascot, where the big racetrack is. We didn't get into any towns—we could [have]; there was a train there. And then we got this idea to go on a bicycle ride. It was fun. And that girl, Tippy, I was pretty friendly with her too. I forget who the other one was. I think—well it's somebody who was on my shift probably. We were all there at the same time. [Laughter]

Mead: And you guys were considered the rear at that point in England?

Imhoff: Yeah, we were there. The first night we got there, they did put us up in a Nissen Hut⁷ that night. And then the alarm went, and we had to get out and go in the concrete bathroom, bath place. Which you know, it's a little safer than a Nissen Hut. We went in there and of course you could sit down. I sat right down on the drain. It was too late to do anything but get up. We stayed there and that was the night that a Buzz Bomb⁸ dropped, right nearby.

Mead: Oh wow.

Imhoff: I went back with my husband some years later, to see where that Buzz Bomb hit. Somebody, you know, they told us at the time where it hit. And I did get into London, I think maybe twice. But it was mostly just going to work. We worked. It was a big mansion there; it was a country estate. In fact that's where that Fergie—she and her husband lived there

⁷ Prefabricated metal semi-circular hut used for military purposes, especially as barracks. Named after its British Army inventor, Major Peter Norman Nissen, 1916.

⁸ German V-1 cruise missile.

afterwards after the war. It was a big. Most of the offices were in that building, but not the radio. We had a radio shack. It was some part of the stable. And that's where they had the radios set up. They took us back and forth in a truck.

Mead: Now was that bomb raid the only one while you were in England?

Imhoff: No. I had found a friend. My cousin was in England for some time, and so when I got there, I tried to get in touch with him, and he had already gone to France. He wrote me and gave me a letter and said, "This is my friend in London, and she'll look after you if you want to go and see her." So, I got in touch with her and she was a very sweet lady. But she already had a son, a grown son. And he was in the United States, training. So she asked me to come in and I could stay at her apartment. Okay, so when I got there, it was an apartment with a stairway, I don't know, like a townhouse maybe. And she put me to sleep under the stairway. She said it's probably the safest place. And sure enough a bomb came over that night. It landed in that park, I always—Regent's Park, which was right near there. So we didn't get hit, but we put on our coats and went out, and the building across the street—all the windows were out.

Mead: Oh wow.

Imhoff: It was that close. So we went to the park and I saw the hole there.

Mead: Now, had there been a siren before?

Imhoff: Oh yes.

Mead: And she didn't have you go to a shelter or ...?

Imhoff: No, she was under the stairway with me.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: So she felt that was the safest place in the building, I guess. But it was you know, and of course, they were those Buzz Bombs. Nobody was flying them; they just were automatic. But those people really ... I saw some of the damage that was done. And I read about now and I think, you know, it was a really terrible time. They were sending children out of London, you know, to go to another house so that they wouldn't be killed. I didn't, I didn't really except for her ... I didn't really meet that

many people there. But I think that was ... only twice when I felt it, when it was that close. But they were falling all over there, especially those Buzz Bombs. My husband was there when they were flying bombers over. I don't think they'd gotten to the Buzz Bombs; I wasn't there that long.

Mead: What year was that?

Imhoff: Well, it would have been 1944.

Mead: Okay. That would make sense.

Imhoff: Yeah.

Mead: Now there were twenty women and there was a male supervisor for each shift.

Imhoff: Right.

Mead: And they were already there and had been working?

Imhoff: The men?

Mead: Mmm-mmm.

Imhoff: Yeah. They'd been working. See they had three radio stations: forward, main and rear.

Mead: Mmm-mmm.

Imhoff: Well in England, we were in the rear. The other two were already in France.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: When we got over to France, we were main [radio station].

Mead: Okay. Now, did the supervisors come with you?

Imhoff: Yeah. I think we had the same supervisor that went with us. Of course, the WAAC detachment went by itself. They didn't travel with the men. What you think of... We had bed check every night and so many restrictions. [Laughs] It was not that bad.

Mead: They had to make sure the rumors weren't true, right?

Imhoff: Right. Yeah.

Mead: Right. Did your job change at all, going from being the rear station and the main station? Did you notice a difference?

Imhoff: From being?

Mead: The job that ... did your job change at all going from being in England, being the rear station, to when you were the main station in France? Did you notice any differences in the job you were doing?

Imhoff: Well I think we had more traffic in France. Because we were then communicating with—we had more problems with the Germans jamming us. And it'd be very hard to hear the code. You know, to hear the sound. But other than that, well, the fact was that in France after the Battle of the Bulge started, we had to work. We were either working or sleeping and eating maybe. We worked around the clock, so that was one big difference and in England, we just worked our four shifts and stayed on that. But over there you never knew what shift you were going to be on. So I can remember sitting there all night and feeling ... you know my stomach would be upset. And I felt I wasn't doing my best work at night, but I guess it worked out that I did. I just wasn't feeling right. But that was the biggest thing that ... more shifts; we were all so tired. Yeah, you'd go to work, what was it? You'd go to work, then you'd go back and eat something and sleep and go back to work. So that was a big thing.

Mead: Mmm-mmm.

Imhoff: Yeah.

Mead: Constant.

Imhoff: Yeah.

Mead: How often would you get a day off?

Imhoff: I don't think we had days off. No. We used to have some hours off. But if they had you set up for a shift, it was seven days or seven nights. I don't know whether we changed those. I think we changed them once in a while. I'd set us up differently, so we didn't all work all night.

Mead: Now did you ever, being in France, did you ever speak French or have to communicate in French?

Imhoff: I did.

Mead: Yeah.

Imhoff: I had studied three years of French in high school. So when we were in that little town, Chantilly, I knew I could go up to the store and get myself—yeah, I did. I spoke French. And then when we were, we would have meals, sometimes we would be on a line with some people and they were helpers. I spoke French with them a little bit too. It was nice to use it. I wasn't that great, but I can understand a little too. It was—it's a nice little town. I don't know, I think there was a racetrack there too. Yeah, I remember that walking in the garden area around the racetrack. Yeah.

Mead: Was the food any different in France?

Imhoff: Food ... it's hard to remember what we were eating. I know we had food, but I think maybe ... I don't remember any difference.

Mead: Okay. I think usually it wasn't, but I was curious. Now you met your husband in France, is that right?

Imhoff: Right.

Mead: I'm interested because I know you talk about meeting a lot of servicemen in your time. Do you remember what was different, like way after meeting all these men--?

Imhoff: Yeah. Our cook was a girl from my hometown where I had been living for twenty-five years or twenty years. And she, her father owned a tavern there, and she was our cook. And she was, she started getting after me not long after we got to France, which was in September. Maybe by October, November she kept pestering me, you know, and she was dating some guy from the Quartermaster Corps. And that's the corps my husband was in, but these guys were supplying the food, they were different. My husband had a bigger job, like that. So she kept saying to me, "You know, I have this nice guy I'd like you meet." Well, what was happening was these companies would come through on their way to the front. They'd come and have a meal with us, go visit with us some, and then it was good-bye. And it was heart breaking. So she kept telling me, I said, "Mary, I have said good-bye to too many people. I don't want to meet anybody else." And I meant it. So—she was a pest. And she had -- I

hear this and I thought, "Oh gosh, how am I going to get rid of her?" But one night I said "OKAY!" So that's how I met my husband. He was the guy I didn't want to meet.

Mead: But do you think it was because he was stationed in the same group that you continued to date? Because you were able to see him continually, you didn't have to say good-bye.

Imhoff: We had a big attraction for each other though.

Mead: Yeah?

Imhoff: We did. It was—I know how it started! We went out that first night to a bar or a tavern. And we used to drink cognac with white wine for a chaser. So, we had a few—couple of those. And then we went back to the kitchen with Mary, she was with us, and the guy she was going with, they were both from Chicago. So, I remember I was standing over by the refrigerator and he was across the room. And he just all of a sudden, he came over and gave me a big kiss [laughs]. So I don't know what prompted him to do that, but he got things started a little. So then we started dating and we went out to somebody's garden. It was somebody that had -- I think some officers had a party on Sunday afternoon. And we went out there. There were daisies or something in the garden. We were walking around there, picking daisies and we ended up, I don't know if he did or I did, we made a daisy chain and we put it on my head. And he asked me to marry him, in that short time.

Mead: It's a love story.

Imhoff: So we were engaged and then... this is kind of personal, I guess I can tell you. We were near Paris, we went in once with a three-day pass, and saw the city, and took some pictures. You know, there was a WAC [Women's Army Corps] hotel and we could stay there for \$6 a night. And he had a big place for the men. And after that, after we had that three-day pass, I don't know how soon it was— he called me. We had been going out and all this other stuff. He called me and said, well—I forget her name, some girl that he'd been dating here, and when he went in the service she got married. And she'd already been married once before. So he said, "She's the girl for me," over the phone. And of course I was bewildered. She was in Paris; she was also a WAC. I don't know when she did that, but she was not married to the second guy anymore, I guess. So we didn't see each

other. We went up to Germany, and there we lived in this... Victoria Hotel, our group. And Mary was in the kitchen still. So we had taken so many pictures in that Paris trip, so I called him and said, "I made two copies. If you want any you can come over here to the kitchen". So he came over, and I sat there on the table and remember, I was in my fatigue dress. I wasn't in uniform, and that's one of the things, you know, that these guys didn't want to see what you look like out of the uniform. So I gave him the pictures and we talked a little bit. And I don't know what made me say it, but I said to him, "You're a fool." So you know, after that, he had an EM [Enlisted Men's] Club in Germany. He was running it; he'd just opened it, and opening night, I guess a few nights before, a few days before, I went in the PX to get something. And I got a tap on the shoulder and there he was. And he said, "We're opening the EM Club tonight, will you go with me?" And I said, "Okay". And we went there, and he got me down in the basement and really did propose again. Years, fifty years went by—and I didn't know what made him do that. I thought maybe his mother didn't like this girl because she had been married a few times, and she even got married again after that. So that, it was about, we were going to ... on a trip, where he then died on that trip. And this one day we were talking, and I said, "Whatever made you change your mind?" He said, "When you called me a fool." And that's the only time I let it go for fifty years. But we did, we had a good marriage. And I met that girl once. She married—she got married again and she married, I think, my sister-in-law's boss or her husband's boss or something. We were invited to the wedding because of him. Well, I met her. And she was, she sat down next to me—started grilling me. Anyway, I didn't like her, for more reasons than one. That's a little part that I don't know if you want to put that in there. It's just kind of—I've told my kids about it a couple of times. And what a surprise I got that day that he told me. And then of course, a few weeks later he was gone. So I got, I have two wonderful children. They're both so good and thoughtful and loving.

Mead: It's a nice way to remember him.

Imhoff: Yeah.

Mead: When you went into Paris, what was it like at that time?

Imhoff: It wasn't bad. You know there was still fighting. I mean they were still having -- I don't know if there was much bombing going on then. I don't

remember. There was some. Yeah, there was still some. But we didn't have any trouble there. It was very, you know —we walked a lot and saw some of the interesting things. But I think we had, you know, a pretty good impression of it. I don't think I saw much destruction. You know, it was an interesting, beautiful city.

Mead: Tell me about your time in Germany?

Imhoff: About what?

Mead: About your time in Germany?

Imhoff: Oh yeah. That was interesting because that's Saint Marie. See, Papelka and I got together in France, we were in that little hotel and she lived in a big house that was on the property with some women she knew better, but we were on the same shift. And they said they—I don't know exactly when it was; we were in France, and I had a little tiny cubbyhole room. And that's what I liked, by myself. Right next door to me, I had these two older women that mothered me, which is very nice too. They were really sweet ladies. So I was—I guess they were bringing in another crew of women from the States. And so Marie came to me one day and she looked around my room and she said, "You're going to have to have somebody else in this room. How about me?" I said, "Okay, if you take the top bunk." So she moved in with me. And that was great because we got along so well. And then when we went to Germany, we got a room together. We stayed together because they were better rooms. It was—you know, we were not allowed for fraternize with the Germans. And so I remember that we used to go out for walks. They had us marching a lot. And they did open an ice cream parlor for us, and we were able to stand in line to get ice cream. That was nice. And that hotel we were in was a much higher rating than the one we had in France. I don't remember that—we just went back and forth to work. But we didn't have much work by then. The war was over.

Mead: What were you doing? Were you still sitting at the radio station waiting for messages?

Imhoff: I don't know what we were even corresponding with somehow, but we did get some messages. We played a lot of cribbage on our shift. It was fun. We didn't have that much. And I guess that's why the Army decided to send us home. So we got there I think in June and in August, and they

decided: we don't need you anymore. Some of the women—I did meet somebody later that I knew there; she was telephone operator. She stayed there because they needed the telephones. I think most of the other women, in teletype and that went home too. So I didn't object. I was ready to go home. And we had a—they took us...they took us in a group, and I think there were—It was a little C-47⁹ they put us on. They took us to Paris or that other place, Compiègne, where they had tents. And we stayed there for a couple of days. And Marie and I got into Paris and that's when we went up into the Eiffel Tower and looked around a little bit. And they flew us to Liberté Airfield and put us on this C-47 which had side seats because it was a transport plane. But we were there—I think it was twenty-seven hours it took us to get home, back to the States. We got in there and we had to sleep. So we had our sleeping bags and we put them, head to toe on the floor of the plane. That's where we slept. I have a "Short Snorter"¹⁰ from there that the pilot—yeah, he signed it. And he was really a funny guy because I smoked then. And we were allowed to go up two at a time into the cabin and have a cigarette. Well, I went up when it was my time and I guess I was alone. The co-pilot had gotten out of his seat and so the pilot said to me, "Why don't you sit down in that seat and strap yourself in because, you see that cloud up there? We're going to go right through it. It's the center of this storm". It was lightning and everything else. And we had a crew of those planes with all our women going back. Found out later that one of them got hit by lightning, but they were okay. So we did. And so when the plane is going like this, he reaches down and picks up a box of candy and said, "Would you have one?" I almost threw it at him. But we got back safely. Went to ... oh, it was nice. We came down the coast and we'd see all the lights. And even New York. And we went to New Castle, Delaware when we landed. And I walked off the plane and got down on my hands and knees and kissed the earth. I was glad to be back because there were a few times—with the Battle of the Bulge, it was terrible. Because we had bed check, we couldn't go out at night. We had to pull dark shades and everything. So I was glad to be back. But that trip was a big memory. Because I thought he was kidding me, but... [laughs]. So I knew that Germany was not that long and it's just as well. And it was, you know, it

⁹ Douglas C-47 Skytrain. Military transport aircraft.

¹⁰ A banknote inscribed by people travelling together on aircraft. Started in Alaska in the 1920s; spread afterwards throughout military and commercial aviation as a folk tradition.

was peaceful then. We did go a few places. Some of these men's groups that were in different towns would call and say, "Would you send—if some of the women wanted to come over?" I think I did that once. And I was—there was a guy that I met on the radio when I was in France? England? No, [it was] France. And he was up in the main station and we got -- I don't know how, somebody told us about each other or something. But he was a little older and very nice. And so he had given me his name. Seems, I think, I don't know whether we had any voice mail with him once in a while... So when I got up to Germany, of course he was there. And I got to know him. So I went—I went out with him a couple of times, mostly for walks. It was nice. There was a place there, a spa there. I went out with him this one time, and of course at that time it wasn't until later that I got together with my future husband. I was still not...I was footloose. So we're sitting on a bench one day and this jeep went by, and my husband was in that jeep. And I didn't think I did anything funny, but he said to me, "If you'd looked at me like that, I'd've turned my insurance over to you." You know, some of those guys were so funny. But he was very, you know—he was a very kind guy. We didn't have any kind of feelings for each other anyway. That was—he was a nice experience. And it was after that that my husband and I got together again.

Mead: Do you feel like you took anything away, or gained anything from being overseas, having taken that?

Imhoff: What I learned—what I got overseas was that camaraderie with my—the people I worked with. These women, we stuck together, and sometimes there was a little friction, but I never had any. I always, you know, appreciated having these women. And we stayed together after the war. We had a list of all of us. One of them gave it to me and we kept in touch. That was a big thing that happened. And the other thing was that—I think it was being in a different situation. I grew up in a very protected home. And being at least I had some... If I'd lived alone completely in New York, I think it would have been much harder. Even though this was not easy, I did get the experience of seeing some different things. And so I feel that it was... I'm not sorry, except that I lost my hearing. You know, I had ... and that's when the Army did not do anything, because they tested my ears when I started, and they never tested them when I got through. It was some time before I realized I had hearing loss. It was a little

uncomfortable at times because I couldn't hear people, with what they were saying, but other than that... of course now they are doing things for women that they didn't do after World War II.

Mead: Like what?

Imhoff: Well, you did not get tested for one thing. And another was that nobody ever said to me, "You could have the Army help you. You're a veteran," until we were in Hartsdale [New York]. With Benton, [which is] here in Illinois, for some years, and then when he [Mr Imhoff] was transferred to New York, we went to Hartsdale ... I'd started feeling really, you know like I couldn't hear. So I went to—my doctor sent me to audiologist, you know?

Mead: Yeah.

Imhoff: Yeah. And he—he was a nice guy, and he tested me. And he said--I was about fifty, and he said, "You have the hearing of a sixty-five-year-old." They didn't have hearing aids at that time. They had some kind of horns you could use. So he said, "There's nothing I can do for you," but he gave me vitamins to take. So I did, and then I was reading a book that I found in his office that said about this University in Idaho or someplace, that one of the Professors wrote that book about hearing loss. And in it, she put down: if you're a veteran, go to the Veterans Administration [VA] and see if they can help you. So when I got -- I didn't do it in Hartsdale because we got transferred right after that to Char[leston]... No, we retired. I kept seeing him for a few years but there was nothing else to do. So when we retired, we went to Charleston, South Carolina. So I got in touch with—I got an appointment at the Veterans Administration. And fortunately, it was very nice at that point in time. The man who was checking me was a very good friend of the one doctor I had in New York. But he was a veteran too, and he said I have the same thing you have. So he tested me every six months. Then the administration changed in the VA. So they took him out of there, I don't know where he went. They got this young guy and I had to see him. And the first—well I only saw him once, because he said to me, "I don't have to see you again." Just like that and he dismissed me. But then I had by then some primary care with a woman doctor, so I stayed with it. And there was a man there who said he was from the governor's office. And he said, "I will help you put an appeal through to get hearing aids." So he was very nice; he got it

through, and they sent it back, “No”. I don't know why. And so he sent in an appeal, and they said, “No” again. So, I think then I was going to move. Oh I know what: I got into this thing that—they were a government, they had at the hospital there, [they] had a government plan going on that they were testing hearing loss. So somebody told me about it, and I called them, and they said, “Yes, and how is your husband's hearing?” I said, “He's perfect.” “We'd like him to come into this study.” So we did that. They paid us like five cents a mile or something. But it was good because they tested, you know—and they kept testing. And meanwhile, I was going through this other thing. And they said that I could get hearing aids at about \$500 a piece. So I got them. And then they would have a doctor test my ears and check them to make sure I didn't have wax or something. So that was helpful. But then they sent in—well, that was when I was appealing, see ... that was in not in Hartsdale, that doctor I got in [was in] Charleston. The appeals had been put through, but I didn't get them from the VA. And so when I was leaving, I think just before I was going to move to Chicago, I saw that man again the said, “I'm going to put through another appeal for you, okay?” But I was moving, see, so he did. And then as soon as I was up here in Evanston, he got a notice: they turned me down again. This is the way it was then. Now they're not... they've got to change their ways. My daughter's father-in-law, he has a hearing loss. He said go to the VFW, the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mead: Mmm-mmm.

Imhoff: So I called their headquarters and they said. “We'll assign you an advocate.” And they did. He was down in Chicago. I was going up to North Chicago. He said to me, “Send whatever you were going to send to the VA, send [it] to me”. He was in the building there. So he did send it. And that's how I got hearing aids. I'd been wearing these others for ten years, I think, or something. So that was a good break. And I have appreciated that, and they even made me a member and I don't have to pay dues. But I do contribute something to them whenever they ask me. So it was a big struggle. But now, see, they have given me my hearing aids, they test them. They give me new ones when I need them. And they've taken other tests. I have got care there. I saw a cardiologist, and I had a wonderful woman up in North Chicago, whose name is—she's a Nurse Practitioner. But she's the best doctor I've had.

Mead: So you've gotten most of your health care through the VA?

Imhoff: Yeah. I also have Medicare, you know.

Mead: Yeah, yeah...

Imhoff: But that's where I was getting my tests done and check-ups. It did help me there very much. But then, when they had this—when I had this problem, a year and a half ago, not quite a year and a half, but in July of 2011. I had pneumonia and had—my daughter got me into the ER because I had a temperature. I didn't know I had pneumonia. I had been seeing my son here, no—in Washington, and got back and was sick.

Mead: What did your husband do in Washington?

Imhoff: No, not my husband.

Mead: Your son? Sorry.

Imhoff: My brother. My son -- let's get that straight. He's a freelance editor. He has his own business. He was a graduate. Both my kids graduated from Northwestern [University].

Mead: Okay. And what are their names, for the record here?

Imhoff: My son is Alfred Imhoff. But Alfred Frankel Imhoff, not—his father was Alfred George. And my daughter, of course is Christine Imhoff. She—her husband's Bernstein; that's what her daughter is too. She wanted to keep her name, but she said when she put it on her license, it didn't fit, the two names together. So she dropped his name. And he lives on the hill. He still has his own house; he worked for the World Bank for ten years. And then, there again when the administration—new administration, they changed. They cleaned out the editorial department. So he still has his house and he's doing that, and he does some very—he works for the Smithsonian and some other big places down there. What do they call them? I don't know... think tanks¹¹.

Mead: Oh.

¹¹ A think tank, or policy institute, performs research and advocacy concerning topics like social policy, political strategy, economics, military affairs, technology, and culture. Most qualify themselves as non-governmental institutions.

Imhoff: He's, oh—he still has his house. It's not easy to be on your own, earning money.

Mead: Now, when you came back from overseas, you went back to work for a time. What kind of job did you get when you came back?

Imhoff: Well, see, I was in New York. And I worked, but I went back to work where I had worked before.

Mead: Okay.

Imhoff: And that was a construction company in Manhattan. And I went back there, and I was going to stay there. So it wasn't that long, when my husband was still overseas, and he was coming back in November. And we got together on the phone and he said, "Will you move out here?" because he had a job. And I said okay. So three weeks later, I'm supposed to move out there and then the boss where my job was, she said, "You know, the telephone operator's husband is coming home and they're going to have three weeks." She said, "Will you stay then?" Okay, so I stayed there. I'd worked there a couple of years. That's where I was working when I when I went in. I said okay, that's what I did; I just stayed on there. But then I came out here and we got married in March. That was, I came out in November, I think. When we got married, I got a job at Pabst Brewery in Chicago.

Mead: Nice.

Imhoff: And it was a very nice place to work. And I was doing well there until I got pregnant. So that took care of that job. I had to lie down; I was having hemorrhaging. I did, you know, I wish, I don't know ... I think some ways my brother felt bad that I didn't wait for him to get home from the Pacific. By then he was married. I had been at his wedding, because I was still in the Army when I stood up for them in New York. I got a furlough or something, I think. So it's been—I don't feel like I did anything that turned out badly. I do sometimes feel that it would have been nice if I could have kept up with my music. I loved... I loved music and fortunately with a hearing loss [aid] I can hear music. I don't hear dialog all the time, but I can always hear the music. And so I still like to keep up as much as I could when I was in the choir until I had this thing go wrong, because he did a surgery... Now, as far as the VA, the doctor at the clinic on Dodge and Dempster [streets] in Evanston, she has I guess, the say about what

happens; what they give me. She has—I have a home care person twice a week, through the VA, and a nurse that comes every two weeks. I get certain—I do get my medications; I pay a fee though. I mean, I pay a co-pay. But it really was—you know, I feel that they're helping me now. And I still get some care from her. I have to see her every once in a while, so she knows how I'm doing. The nurse that comes is very helpful. She deals with her a lot for me. And I have one big complaint about her. My blood pressure has been high and when she checks my blood pressure, I get so upset that it goes way up. I show her what it's been every day at home. It's within reason. And she increases my medicine. Of course they didn't do the surgery or anything. I have a—my daughter has her family doctor; he's the one that said, "Take her to the ER!" So he got a cardiologist when they found something [when] they tested me at the hospital. And so before I take any of what she says, I call him. So it's happened several times and when it happened a couple of years ago, it sent me to the ER. She increased it once and she increased it again. Which she's done now again, but I'm seeing that cardiologist the 25th of October, and I'm waiting until I see him. So I feel that they are helping me now and I appreciate it. I mean, I still have, like this cataract operation. I'm going to pay for that myself. Because I think all they had up there for the eyes was an optometrist, I don't think he was ever very—you know he never said, you're getting a cataract, to me. So I went to this other guy because it was easy to get to. In Evanston, for one thing I can ride any of the transportation free. And if I want to get a taxi, I think I have tickets that cost \$3.50 or something.

Mead: It's easier to get around that way.

Imhoff: So I can get around. I don't try to do it much with that walker. It's a pain in the neck to fold it up, you know.

Mead: Yeah.

Imhoff: My daughter's a good little—she's my workhorse. She's so conscientious and wants to do everything for me. And she's worked so hard and trying to put two girls through college, so I try not to ask her. And I have this woman come twice a week to help me. And she's nice. Three hours a day she comes and then, she doesn't do housework.

Mead: But she helps.

Imhoff: Except like make the bed. But it's been helpful for me, because I need some kind of help. I know that at this point.

Mead: Yeah, well...

Imhoff: Up until this happened, I was just on my own. I did what I wanted to do. I had my car. I was still driving.

Mead: Wow.

Imhoff: But when this happened, it was almost my birthday and I would have had to take a driving test. I said—I called them and said, “How long do I have to get this test?” They said a year. So I thought, Well, I'll see. But I don't feel strong.

Mead: Yeah.

Imhoff: I don't feel that I'm right to drive, so my daughter drives when she needs it.

Mead: Well do you have any final thoughts for us about military service or your time in the service?

Imhoff: What was that?

Mead: About military service in general or your time in the service?

Imhoff: Well I... I don't know that I have any other thoughts except that I'm glad—I'm thankful for Marie, my friend. And she came to Chicago to go to ... those things for the airlines, you know, that correct the traffic. She came here to go to that school after the war. And she moved into a place near where we were living. And she's you know, we kept up our friendship; it was very nice. We stayed good friends. We got her connected—no, that was before—we finally got her connected with a friend, between another WAC and me. And she got married. She married the guy. So we were able to visit back and forth. And before that happened, this child I had, well, within a year after we were married, it turned out, she had Down syndrome and she was a very sweet little baby. They told my husband when she was born. But he didn't tell me until we were on the way to the doctor [for the] 6 weeks checkup. Well, then at that time they didn't do anything for these children. What I see today makes me sick; people have jobs... So my husband, we got an

appointment with the best child doctor in Illinois. He was at the University of Illinois. We went to see him, and he said, "Well, what you should do is go ahead and have the rest of your family, but first put her in an institution." Well, my mother was gone; my mother-in-law was not very helpful, and so my husband decided: yes, we should. And he talked to his boss. And his boss got him on a list. For—there were two places you go, Lincoln or Dixon [Illinois]. I think she went down to Dixon. I think it's up further, anyway. When she got notice to go in there, by then I was a basket case. I couldn't go. The day went that I spent the day in my neighbor's bed in the apartment downstairs and my friend Marie took the baby with my husband. And I appreciated that so much because if he had to go.... So they took her in and they told him at the time that there was a measles epidemic at the hospital. So of course she was in there a couple of months; she got the measles and then got pneumonia. And they sent us a telegram saying she had pneumonia and didn't have long. So we went down there [...] my throat gets a little catch in it...

Mead: Mmm-mmm. You got it?

Imhoff: She—we went down there on a weekend to see her. And then when we got home, a couple of days later, she had died. And that's something that has kept me feeling bad. When I saw it, it was about fifteen years after—she'd been gone a long time. She would have been in her sixties—when I saw what they'd been doing, I've seen other children grow up. They ... it's just that they don't... they aren't smart. But they do things that I'm amazed at. And like there was even a story about somebody that's an actress. So I feel, I wish I had been smarter. You know, that I knew more ... if somebody could have advised me better.

Mead: There's no way you can know that without having known someone else though.

Imhoff: No, no.

Mead: You listened to the doctors.

Imhoff: Yeah.

Mead: That's what you did.

Imhoff: Yeah, oh yeah. You know, I never did find out. It has something to do with the chromosomes.

Mead: Mmm-mmm.

Imhoff: But I don't know exactly what.

Mead: Yeah.

Imhoff: And I do have—in fact my husband has one of his cousins, of course he never saw him—one of his cousins has a boy, and he's in his teens now and he always looks so well dressed and everything. She's been very good. She started a school for him. And I have one that is my—a cousin's; it would be his granddaughter—that I see when I go to the family reunion. And this year I was visiting with her and she's a very sweet little girl. Well, she's sixteen or so. She's very sweet.

Mead: Well that's good.

Imhoff: That doesn't make me feel very good. But I'm glad to see they're doing well. So that's my one ... not about being in the Army but, one regret, big regret.

Mead: Well thank you for sharing that with me. I'm really glad you've been able to be here and talk. It's really nice to get to meet you in person.

Imhoff: It's nice to get to meet you. Do you want to see any of those books?

Mead: I do, actually

[Note: At this point, Mrs. Imhoff produces scrapbooks and goes through them with the interviewer]

Imhoff: This one [scrapbook] was done by my husband's retirement group.

Mead: Mmmm-mmm...

Imhoff: Turns out that each of us did it. And it happened that ... I took some of the stuff out of this book that was, you know, that was not ... but these, see ...

Mead: Wow...

Imhoff: Ah, these pictures... I thought I did, I ...

Mead: Well done, they are ...

Imhoff: And this is the quilt...

Mead: Oh wow...

Imhoff: And they did ... They took a picture. See, that's all mostly photographs, which I certainly wouldn't want to lose.

Mead: No, no...

Imhoff: And this is the second volume that I put most of these things ... I don't know if you even want to look at these things, but it's got most of these things that would...

Mead: Oh wow...

Imhoff: That's my discharge; this is the list of most of the places I was going; this is one of the ...

Mead; Telegrams...

Imhoff: Yeah, that's a telegram. There's a letter in the front. I don't know if I should leave anything loose. This is my pay record.

Mead: Oh wow...

Imhoff: And that was a songbook we used....

Mead; Ha ...!

Imhoff: [laughs] But this letter, I think was also... yeah, and let's see these things ...

Mead: What's that?

Imhoff: Oh! Jane Froman¹²! We saw her at the Air [Force] Club. You've heard of her?

Mead: Yeah.

Imhoff: And that's one of them [scrapbooks]. There's another one here. Bob Hope signed this for me. I saw him in Germany. So that's a lot of stories from different ... things ... I think that's self-explanatory. And this was like ... we had something for a party for some ... holiday ... Thanksgiving.

Mead: Mmmm-mmm...

Imhoff: We went to see London, Fontaine¹³ ... this thing ... And they have a museum there and I wrote to them and I sent them a copy of this ...

Mead: Ahhh ...

Imhoff: And they wrote back! And they said they'd like to see me come up but I don't think I'll get there [laughs]!

Mead; [laughs] Hmmm!

Imhoff: This is a ... This is Germany. This is Germany. This too. And that was the hotel ...

Mead: That's a lot of great stuff that you kept!

Imhoff: This is Bad Kissingen town [in Germany]. It was a spa. Oh, and this is extra stuff. I couldn't get this open to take them out. Something, well ... and that's Loretta Swit¹⁴.

Mead: [laughs]

Imhoff: [laughs] This is extra, too. It's something that somebody sent me ... I didn't ...

Mead: Yeah...

¹² (1907-1980), American singer, entertainer and actress; member of the Ziegfeld Follies. She was played by Susan Hayward in the film *With A Song In My Heart* (1952), which recounted her life and wartime work with USO, especially a serious 1943 plane crash. She was able to return to Broadway only with great effort and perseverance.

¹³ Probably Fontaine's, a swanky London nightclub with 1940s / Art Deco lounge motif. Possibly also Joan Fontaine, the American actress, if Mrs. Imhoff is referring to a wartime entertainment experience.

¹⁴ American actress, b. 1937. Best known for her portrayal of 'Hot Lips' in the TV sitcom 'MASH', set in a US Army medical unit during the Korean War.

Imhoff: I took out what I could so that they wouldn't be so heavy.

Mead: Now, what's in this?

Imhoff: That's my granddaughter's lunch I think!

Mead: Oh, ha! [laughs]

Imhoff: She's gluten-free. And she's had a lot of trouble with her stomach.

Mead: It's good to keep that. Well, why don't you hold on to that there. I'm going to grab this for you to fill out...

Imhoff: I should have put, you know, one of those name tags on this. With my address and ... Oh it's here...

Mead: Yeah. You've got one there...

Imhoff: Must be, yeah... Should I take these out because I'll lose them? [i.e., scrapbook elements]

Mead: Well, I think if you keep it upright and, in the pocket...because ... what would you put it in if you took it out?

Imhoff: I'd put them in—

[Audio interview terminates at this point]